

Lesotho Tourists' Perspectives Towards the Delivery of Private Service Providers

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Abstract: Tourism is globally rated among the fastest-growing industries contributing considerably to the global Gross Domestic Product, job creation, investment, and export revenue. Meeting the demands of the tourism clientele is an essential component to yield these desired economic benefits. However, African countries such as Lesotho are missing out on the tourism economic benefits as evidenced by the rankings provided by the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index reports since 2007. This research therefore examines the perspectives of tourists towards the services offered by the private service providers in Lesotho with the aim of identifying weaknesses prohibiting Lesotho to be a competitive tourist destination. Qualitative research approach was adopted to guide this study where in-depth interviews were conducted with both international and domestic tourists. A constant comparative method of data analysis was utilised to analyse the collected primary data. The findings of the study indicated that tourists are dissatisfied with car/taxi hire, accommodation, restaurants, retail shops, and bus transport service quality. The study provided some strategies to improve service offered by the sectors under investigation.

Keywords: private service providers; tourism; tourists' perspectives; Lesotho; strategies.

1. Introduction

Tourism has been a fast-growing sector with comprehensive economic benefits, and in the opinion of decision-makers and politicians, it holds a magical economic potential (Haller, Butnaru, Hârşan, & Ştefănică, 2021; Giaoutzi & Nijkamp, 2017). Africa's tourism could also yield positive economic benefits if challenges such as facilitating investment in the accommodation and attraction sectors, and clarity on the role of both public and private sectors could be given attention (Dieke, 2020:14). In Africa, tourism has emerged into a sustainable export-oriented economic growth strategy which leads to the generation of employment and economic development (Kareem, 2008:2); however, it has been identified that tourism is poorly governed in the African continent (Siakwah, Musavengane & Leonard, 2020:255). Tourism is a set of activities, services, and sectors that offers travel experience to people travelling away from their settings (Dayananda, 2014:1); hence, the industry consists of a wide range of sectors, where the different groups within this industry offer a variety of occupations with a diversity of human capital requirements. (Gruescu, Nanu & Pirvu, 2008:168)

Tourism forms relations between economic sectors (Haller, *et.al* 2021:1139), and, for the tourism sector to survive, it needs the support from the strategic economic sectors that are related with travel and tourism, and these include transportation, accommodation, food and drink, and attractions (Hall & Lew, 2009; Banerjee, Cicowiez & Gachot, 2015; Haller, *et.al* 2021). To add to the list, intermediaries and government are also two powerful forces behind the tourism industry well-being (Cooper, 2012: ix). Likewise, country clubs and conventional and event management have also been recognised as industry groups in tourism (Westcott, 2016:331). All these organisations regardless of their motives are interlinked and if one sector underperforms, the failure has a negative spill-over effects on other players (Evans, Stonehouse & Campel, 2012:35). Clientele's satisfaction in tourism is essential for sustainability, and it has been noted that higher educated tourists and higher-income tourists tend to be more satisfied with small services like pleasant room service and hotel employees' good attitude (Udit & Kalyan,

2017:34). Also, better quality facilities in tourism means improved living conditions for the local population. (Buijtendijk & Tschunkert, 2016:21)

According to the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index reports, Lesotho tourism sector has been underperforming as it ranks lower than most countries since 2007 (World Economic Forum, 2007; 2015; 2019). In 2019, tourism accounted to 12.3% of Lesotho's total gross domestic product and 12.6% of the country's total jobs (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020). According to the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (2016:5), Malawi, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Botswana, and South Africa were the top five markets for Lesotho, and they constituted 93.6% of all international tourists. Other trending markets from 2014 to 2016 had been China, United States of America, the United Kingdom, India, Netherlands, and Germany (Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation, 2016:6). This may imply that tourists coming from countries with different backgrounds would have different perceptions of good quality services in tourism and are familiar with different standards of tourism infrastructures. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the tourists' perspectives towards the services provided by the Lesotho private service providers. Because Lesotho's tourism clientele is diverse, a study of this nature could point out strategic areas that require speedy attention of service providers, which in turn would lead to tourism effectiveness.

In the next section, the study shall present the literature review of the tourism sectors under investigation namely, transport, accommodations, and food and beverages. The methodology utilised in the research shall then be presented to highlight how the study was carried out. The results of the study and discussions shall then follow. The conclusion of the research would lastly be presented together with the strategies recommended for the Lesotho public and private service sector to adopt.

2. Literature Review

Tourism infrastructure can refer to several services that are required to meet the demand of tourists and increase satisfaction during their stay at the destination (Jovanović & Ilić, 2016:288). This section of the study shall elaborate more on some of these infrastructure needs for the tourism industry, and this shall include the transport sector, attractions, accommodation, and food and beverages establishments.

2.1. Transport

In the tourism value chain, transport services have a vital role to play (Rizal & Asokan, 2013:337). Khan, Qianli, SongBo, Zaman and Zhang (2017:125) highlight that the link between the transport sector and tourism have been widely researched, although this area has been dominated by air transport. Spasojevic, Lohmann and Scott (2016:292) also share that today's tourism depends heavily on air transport, up-to-date airport infrastructure, a high standard of reliable and safe airline services, and worldwide air transport networks. Air transport is regarded as the major mode of transportation worldwide and in 2014, 54% of tourists travelled by air, while 46% used surface transport. (Costa, Almeida & Conceição, 2018:209)

Tourists come to a destination expecting or demanding relevant services to be provided, just like other clients in different industries. It is impossible to offer tourism services without transportation as this service is the key method of carrying tourists to the real location where tourism services are performed (Mammadov, 2012:381). In recent years, transportation modes have modernised the tourism sector by making distance travel easier, improved travel speed and time, and improved comfort level as well (Van Truong & Shimizu, 2017:3097). Litman (2018:8) further highlights that transportation factors that affect tourism in host countries include:

- Quality of transportation information provided to tourists.
- Transportation quality and quantity of available transport modes.
- Prioritisation of travelling services.

Among other tourism basics, accessibility is emphasised as a central component that defines the destination's position in the market. (Van Truong & Shimizu, 2017:3097)

2.2. Accommodation

Accommodation is a significant part of the tourism value chain (Gössling & Lund-Durlacher, 2021:1). hence, ascertaining satisfactory accommodation is instrumental for ensuring that the tourism development objectives are realised (Kuhzady, Seyfi & Béal, 2020:1). It is, therefore, rational that the enhancement of this sector is among the first key priorities during the destination planning process (Poudel, 2013:13). Accommodation in tourism normally describes traditional hotels of various categories, guest houses, serviced apartments, and commercial homes that offers lodging at a fee to visitors only for a short-term period (Gunasekaran & Anandkumarb, 2012:1127); though, most research studies in this area have focused mainly on hotels (Cassidy & Guilding, 2010:420). Accommodation services include food and beverages, cleaning, and activity organizing among others, and there should be high interactions between guests and staff members in these establishments (World Health Organization, 2020:1). The kind of personnel and resources needed to run an accommodation business are similar regardless of the type of accommodation (hotel, motel, or even a campground), as all these businesses require employees to check-in

visitors, offer housekeeping services, and provide a place for people to stay. Thus, these establishments can all be categorised under the head of accommodation and lodging. (Westcott, 2016:332)

2.3. Food and beverages sector

Today's tourists are seeking unique experiences and aspire creative behavior (Liberato, Mendes, & Liberato, 2020:705). This forward-looking society has influenced a change in the demand and consumption of both food and tourism. The attention in food tourism today provides a picture of tourism whereby culture has left the museum and is symbolised in food; making food tourism one of the central domains (Yeoman & McMahon-Beatte, 2016:95). As competition between destinations is increasing, Steinmetz (2010:2), shares that food is recognised as an essential factor that could help in attracting more tourists. Food is one motive that drives people to decide on tourist destinations (Blichfeldt & Therkelsen, 2010:1; Henderson, 2009:317). Food has a significant role to play in strengthening destination's identity, sustaining cultural heritage, and enabling the renewal of destination sociocultural fabric. (Everett & Aitchison, 2008:150)

Not much has been studied about the Lesotho tourism industry and for policymakers and the business community, this study could contribute to understanding the experiences of tourists with regard to the services offered by the private sector. For example, early studies about Lesotho's tourism can be traced back to the early 1980s (Wellings & Crush, 1983), and not much was studied after that until the 2000s. The next studies indicated that researchers have mostly concentrated on small components of the tourism industry with a focus on specific locations, and not looking into the tourism industry holistically. For example, Lekaota (2015) only studied rural communities' participation in tourism. Rogerson and Letsie (2013) looked at the informal tourism sector in Maseru only. Mapeshoane and Pather (2017) studied the concepts of e-commerce in the Lesotho tourism industry, while Mearns (2011) studied sustainable tourism in a community-based ecotourism venture in a specific setting.

This study shall fill the knowledge gap in the tourism issues not yet uncovered in Lesotho, as no comprehensive study regarding tourists' perceptions have been undertaken in Lesotho. Tourism has been viewed as a possible weapon for Lesotho's economic development, and the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023 envisions making Lesotho a tourism destination of choice (United Nations Development Programme, 2019:98). Tourists' viewpoints regarding destinations initiatives have been noted to be important since marketing can be centred around destination's tourism initiatives (Aydin & Alvarez, 2020:1). Also, there are linkages between destination competitiveness and the quality of services provided in the destination and it is therefore crucial to study the issues from the perspectives of tourists (Dalakis, Yfantidou, Costa, Matsouka & Tsitskari, 2018). It is therefore important for Lesotho to examine the opinions of the tourists regarding the quality of services offered by the private sector service providers as this could highlight areas necessitating government and private sector attention and immediate intervention. Against this background, the study attempts to answer this research question:

What are the perspectives of tourists towards the delivery of private sector service providers?

3. Methodology

Because the proposed study requires an in-depth exploration of facts pertaining the perceptions of tourists towards service delivery, qualitative research approach was identified as an appropriate method to suit the purpose there-in. Qualitative research paves ways for a deeper understanding of various areas (Grbich, 2013:4), and can uncover new theories and variables, and further provide an understanding of variables (Thomson, 2011:80). The qualitative research approach offers exceptional opportunities for acquiring insights into the participants' experiences and underpinnings of their worldviews. (Jensen & Laurie, 2016:172)

The five main types of qualitative research designs are narrative research, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Cresswell, 2014:41). Because of the explorative nature of the subject under investigation, a case study approach was found to be more appropriate and therefore adopted to guide this study. Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010:29) explained that the case study aims to avail a thorough description and understanding of an object being studied and provide a high possibility of generalisation of theory. According to Bacon-Shone (2015:41), a case study approach can be described as an in-depth analysis of single or multiple cases where information is sourced through various means inclusive of documents, interviews, and artefacts and where data analysis is made through the description, themes, and assertions.

In this study, research population comprise of all tourists visiting Lesotho. Because this is a high population, a research sample was developed. The leading principle in choosing settings and participants for a qualitative study is frequently not to ensure representativeness or comparability, but firstly to pick groups, settings, or people that best display the characteristics or phenomena of interest (Maxwell, 2012:94). The purposive sampling was deemed the correct method as this study had a prior purpose in mind and the criteria of the participants to take part in the study is predefined. As mentioned by Alvi (2017:30) and Saldana and Omasta (2018:97), the purpose is not to include everyone available to take part, but rather those available are included mainly because they meet the defined criteria. A total of 17 tourists were selected to play a role in generating primary data in this study. Table 1 highlights the criteria used in the selection procedure.

Table (1): Criteria used in the selection procedure

Organisation	Purpose of selection	Number of participants
Domestic tourists	Perceptions on product offerings, service delivery standards, and ease of travelling	11
International tourists	Perceptions on product offerings, service delivery standards, and ease of travelling	6

From this table, it could be learned that both domestic and international tourists were included in the sample, as they may have different perceptions of Lesotho as a travel destination. These tourists were selected with the assistance of tour guides and registers from the tourist attractions. Data was collected through face-to-face with five participants and telephonically with 12 participants because of distance barrier. A structured interview guide was used to guide the discussions. To establish the tourists' suitability in the study, the interview guide first looked at the reasons for visitation, countries previously visited, and transport mode used when travelling inside Lesotho. This was to establish a tourist's experience within the destination setting and knowledgeability of other destinations except Lesotho. Secondly, the interview guide focused on the tourists' opinions regarding the services provided by the car/taxi hire, accommodation establishments, restaurants, bus services, and foreign exchange services as the study aim was to establish tourists' experiences of services offered by these sectors. All manuscripts have attached an identification using alphabets and numbers to maintain anonymity so that the researcher can easily identify each participant. International tourists were named (IT1, IT2, IT3, IT4, IT5, and IT6) while domestic tourists were named (DT1, DT2, DT3, DT4, DT5, DT6, DT7, DT8, DT9, DT10 and DT11) in this research. To analyse the data, this study utilised a combination of content analysis and constant comparative data analysis methods. In content analysis, data is presented in words and themes that enable the possibility of drawing some interpretation of the results. (Bengtsson, 2016:10)

4. Results and Discussions

This section shall be divided in three sections namely, tourist's visitation information, results of tourists' service quality satisfaction and discussions of findings.

4.1. Tourists' visitation information

Reasons for tourist's visitation in Lesotho seemed to be linked to vacations, attending events, gospel preaching, workshops and meetings, sporting events, school trips, and visiting families. The diversity in this regard holds value to this study as different service providers are met. Transports to and from Lesotho seemed to be through both air and road transport. The only mode of transport used to travel around Lesotho was cited to be road transport. Countries visited by the selected tourists include Czech Republic, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates, Germany, Mozambique, Kenya, Angola, Mauritius, Australia, Tanzania, Uganda, Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, eSwatini, Botswana, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana, Gambia, Ireland, Switzerland, China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Egypt, and Thailand. This highlights that the selected tourists have experienced tourism offerings from different regions of the world and their perspectives regarding tourism offerings in Lesotho could be diverse. Average time spent in Lesotho seemed to range from one day to more than two months. This is also an advantage to this study because the higher the number of days spent in a destination, the more services consumed, and the more tourists could meet more service providers.

4.2. Results of tourists' service quality satisfaction

The results were clustered under six sub-headings namely, car/taxi hire service quality satisfaction, bus transport service quality satisfaction, accommodation establishments' service quality satisfaction, foreign exchange service quality satisfaction, restaurant facility service quality satisfaction, restaurant facility service quality satisfaction, and retail shops service quality satisfaction.

• Car/taxi hire service quality satisfaction

Two international and three domestic tourists shared a similar view that private transport (car hire/taxis) are available and operate throughout the country and that they are satisfied with service providers visibility and service provision. However, eight domestic and five international tourists appeared to be unsatisfied about the service highlighting that these taxis are not registered and do not have formal offices, which some mentioned is a security concern. Also, dissatisfaction regarding this service was also linked to the fact that the registered taxi hire service providers do not advertise their businesses, hence a lot of travellers do not even know how to contact them. Two domestic tourists further highlighted that they only call the car/taxi hire service providers that they personally know. As noted by three of these participants:

IT3: there is no information regarding their offices. I normally use referrals because I do not trust random taxis.

DT1: I do not use them at all because I do not trust them. At the airport, they go around asking people if they need transport, so, using them could be very risky.

DT7: There are no adequate number of private taxi/car hire services. I only know one..... because a friend gave me his numbers. Otherwise, I would never know about this service.

- **Bus transport service quality satisfaction**

All international tourists seem dissatisfied with minibus-taxi drop off points being far from destinations, overloading, and lack of drivers' English proficiency. As noted by one participant:

IT3: These buses are always late because they cannot depart the bus stop if they are not full. Again, they are always stuffy and overloaded.

Three domestic tourists seem satisfied that public transport is easily accessible within the country. As noted by one participant:

DT1: It is easily reachable all over the country.

Nine domestic tourists noted their dissatisfaction with the use of multiple minibuses-taxis to reach some destinations because these taxis only cover short distances only to make them change minibuses two or three times to get to their destinations. Five domestic tourists complained that sometimes the bus drops them off 12 to 15 kilometres away from their destination causing them to hire horses or pickup trucks to take them to the hotels or tourist attractions. Also, all 17 tourists complained that this service is time-consuming as a traveller cannot plan properly because public transport providers operate without fixed programme time schedules. Additionally, it was pointed out that unavailability of signage indicating the public taxi ranks also poses a challenge to smooth travelling. As noted by two of these participants:

DT6: I have hired horses three times because the bus dropped me about 12 kilometres away from the hotel I booked.

DT8: Bus stops are sometimes too far from the tourist attractions. This forces us to use pickup trucks that operates informally to take us to the destination. The challenge is that these trucks are always overloaded, and some passengers sit at the back of these vans.... with animals sometimes.

- **Accommodation establishments' service quality satisfaction**

One international and two domestic tourists appear to be satisfied with Lesotho's easily accessible accommodation and pricing. However, nine domestic and six international tourists noted their dissatisfaction with staff that are unable to speak English a universal language, chefs' incompetence, lack of customer care skills, and unappealing dress attire. It was also added that hygiene at hotels does not reflect the hotel grade. Six domestic tourists rate the service levels as average to good, while all international tourist rates it low in all respects, from room to food and service, especially when compared to other countries. Ten domestic and five international tourists further complained about unsatisfactory water and room heating systems, untidiness, and lack of staff professionalism in some lodging facilities. As noted by one participant:

DT1: The facilities are acceptable, normally in good condition and as compared to the countries I have visited, Lesotho accommodation establishment offers normal services. I can't complain.

- **Foreign exchange service quality satisfaction**

Domestic tourists do not use the service as they travel in their own country, so could not comment about foreign exchange service quality. Six international tourists did not need to use foreign exchange facilities, so could not comment about foreign exchange service quality. However, service satisfaction was noted by one international and two domestic tourists, especially if using a local bank for obtaining forex.

- **Restaurant facility service quality satisfaction**

Only one international- and a domestic tourist were content with local food cuisine and added that non-local ordinary food is also available. A major challenge mentioned by five international and ten domestic tourists are the lack of available restaurants or coffee shops in Lesotho. It was mentioned by these participants that good restaurants are mainly in hotels and or only available in Maseru (the capital of Lesotho) or at some franchise takeaways in only five districts (Lesotho has 10 districts). These same participants further noted that food quality other than in hotels are poor, except at international franchises like Shoprite and KFC that sell western food. Lack of food hygiene and access to fresh food from the shacks on the roadsides when travelling between districts is disappointing and were considered unhygienic by international tourists. Three domestic tourists added that the trading hours of local eating facilities are inadequate (not 24/7), even in Lesotho's capital Maseru, as tourists can only obtain fast food after hours at gas filling stations. Three domestic tourists also mentioned that they carry their lunch packs due to unavailability of proper eating facilities outside Maseru. Furthermore, tourists expressed their dissatisfaction on the issue that there is no restaurants information on the internet, therefore a visitor cannot establish where to buy food. As noted by two of these participants:

DT2: The number of restaurants around Maseru is inadequate. One only has to use international chain stores.

D5: Proper eating facilities are only found in Maseru, if one travels outside the city centre, the only option left is to eat at hotels.

- **Retail shops service quality satisfaction**

One international and one domestic tourist seem satisfied about the services offered by retail shops across the country. On the contrary, six international and ten domestic tourists expressed satisfaction about the availability of retail shops in Maseru, but lack thereof in the other nine districts. These 16 tourists expressed their dissatisfaction with the retail shops' stock range as they only sell basic commodities, have very limited stock, expired stock, and unhygienic. Lack of access to electricity was cited as a reason for limited stock range. As noted by two of these participants:

IT2: The food is not fresh if one moves out of Maseru because most of the retail shops in the rural areas do not have electricity to keep the fridges on.

DT6: If one travels to the mountain area, the retail supermarkets are full of dusts, out of stock, and mostly sell groceries. There is nothing ready to eat that one can buy, there are even no fridges to keep drinks cool in a hot summer day.

4.3. Discussions

Only three tourists expressed satisfaction regarding car/taxi hire transport services, while 14 others were not pleased with the service. Dissatisfaction relating to this service was linked to the fact that some of these taxis are not registered, hence, hold a threat to travellers' safety and security. Unsatisfactory quality of transport service in a host destination has a negative impact on the development of domestic tourism (Brusiltseva & Akhmedova, 2019:6). On the other hand, Kovari and Zimanyi (2011:59) affirmed that compromised safety and security issues influence tourism performance, thus, this subject is regarded as an essential condition of tourism. All international tourists seemed dissatisfied with the bus transport services drop offs, overloading, signage, and schedules while three domestic tourists seemed to be satisfied with this service. This affirms the views of Bajadaa and Titheridge (2017:4110) that international tourists' knowledge of bus services in host countries is limited as compared to the citizens of host countries.

Furthermore, only three tourists expressed satisfaction regarding the service quality of the accommodation establishments in Lesotho. However, the majority of tourists (14) reported dissatisfaction regarding the services provided by accommodation establishments citing issues such as sub-standard meals, unhygienic, language barriers, and poor customer services. As noted by Khanalizadeh, Kakaei and Daneshzad (2018:8), proper development of lodging establishments can increase the number of tourists visiting a destination. Unhygienic conditions in accommodation establishments poses severe health risks which can affect tourists' inflow into a destination (World Health Organisation, 2012:1). Again, another impediment prohibiting tourism competitiveness is labour supply challenges, which include insufficiency of relevant skills (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2017:12). Further, one of the challenges facing the hospitality industry is the inability to communicate in foreign languages (Luka 2015:75). To overcome hospitality skills shortages, the government of India ran a series of hospitality short courses targeted to the youth, which included food and beverages services, bakery, front office and housekeeping. (Singh, 2018:578)

The majority of tourists seemed not to be utilising the foreign exchange services. Three tourists who regularly use this service noted satisfaction regarding the foreign exchange banking services. On the other hand, only two tourists expressed satisfaction towards the local restaurants' quality of services while 15 tourists indicated dissatisfaction in this regard. The dissatisfaction with this service was linked to issues such as a low number of appropriate eating facilities countrywide (except in the main city), less opening hours and visibility of these facilities. Experiencing local food in a tourist destination has become an important tourism activity which in-turn influence revisit intentions and serve as a marketing tool (Sert, 2019:1611). One strategy that was recommended by the Botswana government was to promote the establishment of canteens selling local cuisines near tourists' attractions to introduce travellers to the local eating style. (Dewah, 2014:141)

Only two tourists expressed satisfaction with the quality of services provided by retail shops across the country, on the contrary, the other 15 tourists pointed out their dissatisfaction in this area. Tourism holds an opportunity for retail businesses in host locations, hence, it is suggested that retail shops located in booming tourist attractions should consider the type of customers they have which may or may not be local and might have different needs from the local customers. Therefore, retail shop owners are urged to take note of opportunities brought by tourists and create retail business ideas that are sure to drive sales by providing the items required by diverse customers. (Sheehan, 2018)

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The dissatisfaction of tourism service quality in accommodation establishments were highlighted as poor customer service, unhygienic facilities and practices, lack of customer service skills, and high prices. These matters could discourage tourists to come to Lesotho. International participants who utilised banking foreign exchange

services seemed satisfied with this service. Additionally, it appeared that most tourists are highly dissatisfied with the Lesotho restaurant facilities outside the main town Maseru because of inadequate number of facilities offering Western cuisine, inadequate opening hours, and low visibility of these facilities. Most tourists also seemed to be highly dissatisfied with the retail shop service quality. This opinion was further shaped by the belief that these shops only consider the needs of the local community and not travellers' needs. In Lesotho, one of the major challenges facing tourism businesses is less level of collaborations established between these players, which is prohibiting the growth and development of all tourism business players (Rasethuntsa, 2021:402).

For the tourism sector to survive, services emanating from the transportation, accommodation, food and drink, and attractions should be adequate (Hall & Lew, 2009; Banerjee, Cicowiez & Gachot, 2015). Tourists come to a destination expecting or demanding relevant services to be provided, just like other clients in different industries. For example, it is impossible to offer tourism services without transportation as this service is the key method of carrying tourists to the real location where tourism services are performed (Mammadov, 2012:381). All international tourists were highly unsatisfied with the local bus services and according to Bajadaa and Titheridge (2017:4110), quality of transport services in a destination could have negative impact on factors that encourage tourists' attitude, for example, crowding in buses and increased waiting times. It could be summarised that both local and international tourists are dissatisfied with most of the business services supporting the Lesotho tourism industry and this could be an element leading to Lesotho's less market share in the global tourism market. It can therefore be recommended that:

- Public bus services should have scheduled times for departure and arrival at least operating from 06:00 to 22:00 daily to accommodate tourists' schedules.
- The government should enforce a regulation that all private car/taxi hire operators must display clear logos containing their names, phone numbers, and registration details. This will enable travellers to differentiate between a registered and unregistered private transport service. A list of the registered private transport services could be placed on the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) websites to ensure that all visitors have access to this information and make informed transport choices.
- LTDC should facilitate workshops to equip the Lesotho accommodation provision industry about pricing skills, especially for different hotel star gradings.
- Lesotho eateries should consider using online food ordering (using restaurant's website) where a customer can have wider Western food option choices and their food delivered to accommodate travellers without vehicles, especially those around the city centre.
- LTDC should promote investment in restaurant services in towns other than Maseru. Locals could also be encouraged to sell local cuisines near tourist attractions, for example, through food trucks. Attraction centres should at least have coffee machines and vending machines or some non-perishable refreshments available.
- Retail shops near tourist attraction should be offered compulsory training at least once a year regarding the opportunity of servicing travellers and brainstorm on what products they can offer as souvenirs.

The adoption of these recommendations could therefore add value to the Lesotho private sector as quality service could be improved. Most of the recommended strategies also do not require many resources to implement. This study is considered significant because it has managed to fill a gap in the literature due to the fact that there are no studies investigating the perspective of tourists regarding Lesotho private sector services. Again, only few studies have investigated issues relating to Lesotho tourism, therefore, this study has added some knowledge in this regard. The study has also managed to voice some viewpoints of the Lesotho tourism clientele and this new knowledge could also inform policies during reviews. Future research could concentrate on identifying the tourists' perspectives on the quality of services provided by tourist attractions and also focus on what attracts tourists to Lesotho. These areas could also guide both the Lesotho public and private sector to areas that requires improvement to attain the country's vision of making Lesotho a destination of choice.

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