SERVICE QUALITY AND PASSENGER SATISFACTION IN RIFT VALLEY RAILWAYS
CORPORATION-KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this is my original work (Unless where quoted) and has not been presented to any institution or university other than University of Nairobi for academic credit. I further declare that I have followed all the applicable ethical guidelines in conducting the research.

Signed: _____   Date: ———————————————

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The research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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Zipporah Kiruthu.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Milestone achievement to my dear daughter Natasha Ongeso Buluma for whom i wake up every morning, Bevlyn, Grandmother Esther Ongeso Nasikawa, and not forgetting my dear parents Fridah and Dismas for upholding education values in my life and for sacrificing so much to put me through school, am indeed indebted to you.

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Thirdly, the entire university of Nairobi Fraternity for assisting me achieve my academic dream. The university is one of its kind, to give not only the academic empowerment, but also provide adequate preparation to its graduates, to achieve higher in the market. I take this greatest opportunity to recognize the department of Management Science; their excellent customer service goes far in driving the University to greater heights. Though I may not appreciate all those who supported me by name, let me say "Thank you all and God bless you"

Last and most importantly, I thank God for this greatest achievement he's bestowed unto me.

ABSTRACT

According to World Bank study (2009), by 1990s most of the African railways were in poor shape requiring large investments in infrastructure and rolling stock, and a new business oriented approach to their activities. To address the crisis, many governments considered concessions as a possible solution, and between the mid 1990s and 2009 most of the sub-Saharan railways were concessioned. In Kenya, Railway operations were concenssioned to Rift Valley railways in 2006 for a period of 25 years for freight and 6 years, later reviewed to 7 years for passenger. Since concession, there has been a decline in the number of passengers in Kenya. RVR was transporting 7.28 Million passengers by year 2013 compared 7.92 million passengers (decline by 8%) before concession in the year 2006 (Economic Survey Report, 2013). The major challenges facing the railway industry in Kenya that affects its capability to offer quality service to passengers includes adverse conditions of operating railway transport services including obsolete, non-functional infrastructure; reduced connectivity between the countries in the region; very low traffic for the existing railway network; unsatisfactory agreements for operating passenger transport services with negative impact on the financial stability of operators and lack of resources to finance the maintenance and rehabilitation of infrastructure (World Bank, 2009).

This study sought to find out what service quality attributes passenger value and how much they were satisfied, a questionnaire consisting of 36 statements that were grouped and related to one of the eight service quality dimensions of the SERVQUAL model were administered to 90 passengers, 60 responded (66.67%). Majority respondents expectations were high with mean score 4.76 while majority lowly perceived serviced offered with mean score 2.44. Only 3.4% of passengers were satisfied with SQ. Attributes to do with seating space, Comfort, On-time delivery, Frequency of Trains as scheduled received lower ratings. The management should be carrying out satisfaction reviews to know exactly what customers really value and restructure their processes to deliver on those attributes prioritizing those that customers are very dissatisfied on.

List of Abbreviations

ASQ   American Society for Quality

BPR   Business Process Re-engineering

GDP   Gross domestic product

GoK   Government of Kenya

ICT   Information communication technology

ISO   International Standards Organization

KRC   Kenya Railways Corporation

NTSA   Transport Authority

RVR   Rift Valley Railways

SERVQUAL Service Quality

SGR   Standard Gauge Railway

SQ   Service Quality

TCRP   Transit Cooperative Research Plan (TCRP) Report 100

TQM   Total Quality Management

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Background of the Study.

Operations management focuses on the planning and controlling the internal business processes to produce and distribute products and services (Ot Chan Dy, 2009). The transformation process is categorized into manufacturing and service operations. Service Operations are concerned with delivery of four core performance objectives which managers should address, quality of Services, speed of transformation, cost of transformation and flexibility embedded in the service delivery system (Don J.F. Jeng, 2008).

One of the most important elements in customer satisfaction and company profitability is quality of service. In addition, managers need to identify weaknesses and consider planning for improvement in quality, thereby improving efficiency, profitability and overall performance. Because of that, interest in this area (service quality) has increased during recent decades and researchers have continued to find the best way of measuring quality from the customer perspective (Rohaizat Baharun and Setareh Feiz, 2012). In the world of business, customers are crucial. Companies must keep satisfying their customers to improve profitability and market share to survive in the competition. Companies need to find what their customers need, what they want, and what they value. In recent decades, scientists found that the quality of services has a significant influence on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and therefore profitability (Baharun etal, 2012).

Researchers believe that the service quality theory is based on the literature of customer satisfaction and product quality (Brady & Cronin, 2001). There are many service quality models but scientists are not of one mind about these models and measurements. Service quality has different dimensions regarding the various service sectors (Pollack, 2009) nevertheless, service quality measurement enables managers to recognize quality problems and enhance the efficiency and quality of services to exceed expectations and reach customer satisfaction.

Service quality perception has widely been studied in last three decades. It is because of its difference in measurements with goods due to service quality nature, which is intangible,

heterogeneous and inseparable. Zeithaml (1988) define service quality as an assessment of customer from the overall excellence of service. In recent decades, many models have been developed for measuring service quality and the first attempt was by Gronroos in 1984 who distinguish between technical quality as an outcome for performance of service and functional quality as a subjective perception of service delivered.

Various scholars have considered different dimensions of service quality and there are many service quality models but scientists are not of one mind about these models and measurements. (Baharun, etal, 2012). Service quality has different dimensions regarding the various service sectors (Pollack, 2009)

Railway is a very vital prerequisite for economic growth; the commuter rail industry has a host of service delivery exchanges in their comprehensive operation (Colins Bosch, 2009). The nature of the core services does not result in a single service encounter or customer transaction episode with contact personnel but rather a series of transactions from the time a commuter enters the station precinct to purchase a ticket until the time they depart the environment at the destination station. Hart (1998) argues that customer expectations might not be fully established at the point of first contact with service personnel but rather that expectations become more prominent after a series of interactions during the service delivery. Service Quality dimensions as it relates to RVR has been divided into eight groups which are Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness Assurance, Empathy, Service Product, Service Delivery, and Social Responsibility as explained in Appendix1. Passenger satisfaction is the dependent variable.

1.1.1 Service Quality

American society for quality (ASQ) defines quality as the total features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. A service is an activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature. It normally, but not necessarily, takes place in interactions between customers and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider (Shahin, 2006). For services, the assessment of quality is made during the service delivery process. Service quality has been defined as customer perception of how well a service meets or exceeds their expectations (Czepiel 1990).

Service quality can be measured in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, and customer attitude (Sachdev and Verma 2004). Ekinci (2003) indicates that service quality leads to customer satisfaction. Rust and Oliver (1994) define satisfaction as the "customer fulfillment to put forth the role of service quality in affecting customer satisfaction.

According to the research of Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) and Sasser, Olsen and Wyckoff (1978), service quality, as perceived by consumers, stems from a comparison of what they feel service firms should offer with their perceptions of the actual performance of firms providing the service. According to Van Pham and Simpson (2006), various factors are thought to influence consumer expectations and that service quality expectations are based on the notion of what a consumer feels a service provider should offer (desires or wants) and can be construed as predictions rather than what they would offer (satisfaction association).. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) intimates that perceived service quality is the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumer's perceptions and expectations. Perceived service quality could be due customer's previous experience, opinion leaders or communication about a service in an organization. Customer satisfaction has been commonly accepted as an indicator of service quality (Geetika et al. 2008; Sachdev and Verma 2004; Ekinci 2003; Czepiel 1990). However, the literature shows that there is no consensus on the determinants of service quality and different dimensions of service quality have been considered by various researchers in different sectors.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. They developed a service quality model based on gap analysis. The various gaps visualized in the model are:
In *Gap 1*, they measured the difference between consumers' expectation and management's perceptions of those expectations, i.e. not knowing what consumers expect, *Gap 2* measure difference between management's perceptions of consumer's expectations and service quality specifications, i.e. improper service-quality standards. *Gap 3* investigates the difference between service quality specifications and service actually delivered i.e. the service performance gap.Gap4 measures the difference between service delivery and the communications to

consumers about service delivery, i.e. whether promises match delivery and *gap 5* which measures difference between customer's expectations and perceptions about service delivery.

1.1.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the overall level of attainment of a customer's expectations. It is measured as the percentage of customer expectations which has actually been fulfilled. According to Klaus,(1985), satisfaction is the consumer's subjective evaluation of a consumption experience, based on some relationship between the consumer's perceptions and objective attributes of the product/service" Satisfaction from service quality is usually evaluated in terms of technical quality and functional quality (Gronroos 1984). Usually, customers do not have much information about the technical aspects of a service and therefore, functional quality becomes the major factor from which to form perceptions of service quality (Donabedian 1980, 1982). One of the most important factors and antecedents of customer satisfaction is quality of services.

The consequences of customer satisfaction are loyalty (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007) and repurchase intention (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993) which leads companies to more profit. One of the most important factors and antecedents of customer satisfaction is quality of services. Service Quality has a direct and strong effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Cronin &Taylor, 1992; Ganguli & Roy, 2011; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, &Berry, 1988). High service quality has an impact on organizational outcomes such as improving profitability, high market share, customer loyalty and probability of purchase (Brady & Cronin, 2001). The above findings by various researchers therefore imply that any company that aspires to improve its profitability should always improve its service quality offering to customers and thereby getting them satisfied.

1.1.3 Rift Valley Railways.

The transport industry in Kenya has been rapidly growing; the road transport which is the main competitor for railways in Kenya has steadily improved since 2002 with huge investments in road construction. The air transport sector too has been expanding with commissioning of new airports like Isiolo airport and renovation of other existing airports and air strips (Economic survey report. 2013,). However, the slow response of railways to adapt to the new market conditions resulted in a dramatic traffic decline in rail transport. Since 2001, Africa has shown a drop of 7 percent in passenger services. (World Bank. 2006)

According to World Bank study (di Borgo et al 2006)*;* by 1990s most of the African railways were in poor shape requiring large investments in infrastructure and rolling stock, and a new business oriented approach to their activities. To address the crisis, many governments considered concessions as a possible solution, and between the mid 1990s and 2009 most of the sub-Saharan railways were concessioned, (Richard Bullock 2009). In Kenya, Railway operations were concenssioned to Rift Valley railways in 2006 for a period of 25 years for freight and 6 years, later reviewed to 7 years for passenger with subsequent one (1) extension.

Since concession, there has been a decline in the number of passengers in Kenya. RVR was transporting 7.28 Million passengers by year 2013 compared 7.92 million passengers (decline by 8%) before concession in the year 2006(Economic Survey Report, 2013). The major challenges facing the railway industry in Kenya that affects its capability to offer quality service to passengers according to World Bank study, 2009 includes adverse conditions of operating railway transport services including obsolete, non-functional infrastructure; reduced connectivity between the countries in the region; very low traffic for the existing railway network; unsatisfactory agreements for operating passenger transport services with negative impact on the financial stability of operators and chronic lack of resources to finance the maintenance and rehabilitation of infrastructure inducing the vicious circle of continuous decrease of quality of services.

Rift Valley Railways (RVR) offers commuter services to Nairobi residents to Ruiru through Umoja and Dandora; Embakasi Village through Doonholm and Pipeline; Kikuyu through Kibera and Dagoreti, and Syokimau through Imara Daima as well as long distance passenger services to Mombasa and Kisumu (Rvr journey schedule report. 2014). According to Daily Nation (Nov 2013), these areas in Nairobi are densely populated and if efficiently tapped into, RVR can triple its revenue collection. In November 2012, KR unveiled Syokimau Commuter which was described as more modern passenger train with modern Train stations at Syokimau, Imara Daima(2013) and Makadara(2013) to attract high end and middle class customers, however one year after its launch, the Syokimau train service has been making losses that eat into Kenya Railways Corporation's other revenue streams. Despite reducing prices by half, the line has not been operating up to capacity, Daily Nation (Nov 2013). This is due to high unpredictability and unreliability of service offered according to passengers.

According to *M. Devi Prasad* & B. Raja Shekhar (2010) on their study on Impact of Service Quality Management (SQM) Practices on south central railways in India, evaluation of service quality of Railways may give the true picture about the short comings in Railway passenger service and assist the managers to monitor and control the quality of services provided to passengers. It's in this light and the impending Standard gauge railway line construction that RVR should re-strategize and analyze the customer value, map a value stream and strive to create processes for efficient commuter services that captures imagination of passengers.

1.2 Research Problem

The lack of competitiveness of railways in Kenya is mainly generated by the unsatisfactory frequency of services, low speed, and low level of predictability of arrival time, and poor safety and security records. The railway operating lines, built about one hundred and twenty years ago (in the year 1901) to modest technical standards and non-modernized, are unprepared to compete for time-sensitive traffic (World Bank, 2006). RVR chief executive officer Mr Carlos Andrade while commending on funding for new locomotives and published in International Railways Journal on Monday, September 22, 2014 alludes to the fact that Insufficient locomotive power

was the single biggest obstacle preventing a step change in the volumes they transport and that new financing not only alleviates the bottleneck but is also a vote of confidence by a major international lender in its operations.

Providing service quality is widely recognized as a critical business requirement (Voss et al, 2004; Vilares & Coehlo, 2003; Van der Weile et al, 2002) in order to keep and attract more passengers. Public transport providers must offer high service quality to satisfy and fulfill a wide range of customer's needs (Oliver 1980; Anable 2005).

According to M. Devi Prasad & B. Raja Shekhar (2010) on their study on Impact of Service Quality Management (SQM) Practices on south central railways in India, evaluation of service quality of Railways may give the true picture about the short comings in Railway passenger service and assist the managers to monitor and control the quality of services provided to passengers, in their findings, Service Delivery was the most while Social responsibility was the least important dimension. Survey conducted by The Gallup Organization (March 2011), Hungary upon the request of Directorate-General Mobility and Transport Coordinated by European Commission was conducted to examine European EU rail passengers' satisfaction with various features of the rail services quality including the trains themselves, railway stations and the rail network in 25 of the 27 EU Member States and found out that passengers from different countries viewed different dimensions to be of greatest importance.

Vanniarajan and Stephen (2008) identified the attributes that passengers use to evaluate the service quality of Indian Railways as reliability, assurance, empathy, tangibles, and responsiveness. Agrawal (2008) identified employee behavior as most important determinant of customer (passenger) satisfaction with Indian Railway services. Eboli and Mazzulla (2007) measured customer satisfaction in the context of bus service on various factors including availability of shelter and benches at bus stops, cleanliness, overcrowding, information system, safety, personnel security, helpfulness of personnel, and physical condition of bus stops. TCRP

Report 88 (TCRP Report 100, Chapter 2) in USA also identifies quality in Bus and rail transport at stations.

Krishna et al (2010) on service quality and customer satisfaction in retailing in India concluded that customers have highest expectations on promptness of service, accuracy and security. Akoko (2012) studied service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction in Kenyan telecommunication sector, in his findings, reliability was the most while tangibility dimension was the least important. Musyoka (2013) established that there was a positive relationship between service quality and library user satisfaction among universities in Kenya. He established that service quality accounted for 73.9% of user satisfaction and that reliability dimension was the most while tangibility was the least important. None of these studies has focussed on the relationship between Service Quality and Passenger satisfaction in railway transport in Kenya. Kiange (2011) investigated manager's perceptions of customer expectations in hotel industry in Kenya. The results showed that assurance, empathy and tangibles were regarded as the most important factors affecting service quality. This research did not take into account the customer's expectations. Musili (2009) studied the perceived quality of passenger services provided by RVR consortium and found that perceived service quality was poor with resultant average of 37.5% satisfaction.

This study intends to bridge this gap by exploring the relationship between railway service quality attributes used to assess service quality of railway passenger service at RVR by answering the following research questions derived from the topic:

i.   What are the customer expectations and perceptions on different routes in rift valley railways   commuter transport in Kenya?

ii.   What is the level of passenger satisfaction on service quality dimensions and service quality gap in rift valley railways commuter transport in Kenya?

iii. What is the relationship between service quality and passenger satisfaction in railway transport in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between implementation of service quality and passenger satisfaction in railway transport sub-sector in Kenya.

However, there are other specific objectives of the study which include:

i. To establish customer expectations, perceptions in rift valley commuter transport in Kenya.

ii. To determine the level of passenger satisfaction on service quality dimensions and service quality gap in rift valley commuter transport in Kenya.

iii. To determine the relationship between service quality and passenger satisfaction in rift valley commuter transport in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The contribution of the study to theory will be to confirm and reinforce the theoretically expected relationship that using service quality does have a positive impact on the attainment of customer satisfaction. Specific beneficiaries of this research shall be; RVR on what the passengers actually expect and how they perceive service delivered. Transport industry on what their passengers expect. National transport and safety authority (NTSA) to enhance service quality standards in passenger railway transport and researchers in the area of service quality in transport sector.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter will assess the various theoretical body of knowledge and major theories on service quality operations as well as empirical literature review where the authoritative definitions of service quality, determinants, measurement and Service quality at Rift valley railways passenger services will be reviewed. The section will summarise the relationship between Service quality and Customer satisfaction as established in the review and finally explaining the Conceptual framework for the study.

2.2 Service Quality

A service is an activity or series of activities of more or less intangible nature. It normally, but not necessarily, takes place in interactions between customers and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider (Shahin, 2006). For services, the assessment of quality is made during the service delivery process.

Service quality has become the major strategic value-adding driver for the firm in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Devlin, Gwynne and Ennew, 2002). It is generally accepted that service quality is more difficult for the customer to conceptualize for measurement and evaluation than goods quality. According to Boothe (1990 in Pitt, 1991), most researchers now concur that service quality involves a comparison by the customer of service expectations with actual performance perceptions, and that only the customer is able to make that specific service definition. It is thus deduced that service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Expectation has been defined as something one would expect to happen or get while perception has been defined as seeing or noticing what has happened. It is therefore deduced that the difference between the two forms the conceptual basis and definition for service quality. Pitt (1991) further emphasizes the necessity for this service quality delivery to conform to expectations on a consistent basis.

According to the research of Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Sasser, Olsen and Wyckoff (1978),as well as extensive focus group interviews, clearly supports the conception that service quality, as perceived by consumers, stems from a comparison of what they feel service firms should offer with their perceptions of the actual performance of firms providing the service. Based on this notion, Parasuraman et al. (1988) claim that perceived service quality is the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumers" perceptions and expectations. The same authors caution about the varying interpretations of the definition of expectations as used by the service quality literature and the consumer satisfaction literature. Service quality expectations are based on the notion of what a consumer feels a service provider should offer (desires or wants) and can be construed as predictions rather than what they would offer (satisfaction association). According to Van Pham and Simpson (2006), various factors are thought to influence consumer expectations. From their related studies, they claim that there are conflicting findings to determine the role that frequency of use plays in forming expectations but acknowledge that this aspect requires further investigation.

Providing excellent service quality is widely recognized as a critical business requirement (Voss et al, 2004; Vilares & Coehlo, 2003; Van der Weile et al, 2002). It is 'not just a corporate offering, but a competitive weapon' (Rosen et al, 2003) which is essential to corporate profitability and survival (Newman & Cowling, 1996). However, service quality, particularly within the Services sector, remains a complex concept and there is little consensus as to the drivers for effective delivery (Voss etal, 2004; Johnston, 1995).

The service profit chain, first proposed by Heskett etal (1994), provides one of the most powerful and widely supported perspectives on this issue. Within the service profit chain, service quality is driven, primarily, by employee satisfaction, which, in turn is influenced by Human Resource practices. The overall chain sees service quality driving customer satisfaction, which creates customer loyalty leading to growth and profit. The original propositions were based on research in 20 large service organisations and subsequent research has broadly supported the proposed linkages (Loveman, 1998; Rucci et al, 1998; Brooks, 2000; Anderson & Mittal, 2000).

The specific relationship between employee satisfaction, service quality and customer satisfaction has been the subject of a number of empirical studies. The relationship is often described as the 'satisfaction mirror' reinforcing the idea that business success results from employee satisfaction being 'reflected' in terms of customer satisfaction (Schlesinger & Heskett, 1991; Norman & Ramirez, 1993; Liedtka et al, 1997). Whilst Silvestro and Cross (2000) cast some doubts on the strength of the relationship, the balance of evidence suggests that employee satisfaction is a key driver of service quality. Voss et al (2004), for example, find that employee satisfaction directly affects both service quality and customer satisfaction, whilst Vilares and Coehlo(2003) are so convinced about the fit that they recommend changes to one of the existing customer satisfaction indexes (ECSI) to recognize the cause and effect relationship between employee behavior and customer satisfaction.

The recognition that hard factors are critical to service quality has led some researchers to explore what determines performance on these dimensions. Here, process management seems to play an important role. Roth & Jackson (1995), in an investigation into the strategic determinants of service quality, find that business process management has a significant impact on service quality. Indeed, they report that business process capabilities had a larger impact on service quality than did people capabilities and conclude that the area of robust business process capabilities requires greater scrutiny in service management. Frei et al (1997). Using data from a large sample of American Banks, they analyzed amongst other issues, the relationship between process performance and customer satisfaction. Their findings suggest that consistent process performance is critical to customer satisfaction. Moreover, banks with good, consistent processes enjoy higher financial performance. Critically, it is the performance of the overall 'basket' of processes, rather than performance of one or two individuals or processes, which determines satisfaction levels.

Newman's analysis of a SERVQUAL implementation in a large UK Bank reinforces the idea that delivering the promise is critical to service quality (Newman, 2001).Whilst the SERVQUAL focus on 'soft' issues such as empathy and assurance, and they resonate strongly with the Service marketing community, his findings suggest that effective delivery on hard factors is a necessary

pre-condition for overall service quality. 'Where hard quality, especially reliability of service delivery, is low, then 'soft' quality cannot compensate'. Similarly, Lassar et al (2000) in a study of Private Banking customers, find a much stronger relationship between technical quality and satisfaction than functional quality and satisfaction.

Subsequent research by Tsikriktsis & Heineke (2004) reinforces the importance of effective process performance in driving service quality. Their analysis of customer dissatisfaction data in the US Airline industry leads them to conclude that reduction of customer dissatisfaction depends upon improvement in process quality. Woodall (2001) argues that an increasing number of companies are focusing on process management in order to ensure effective performance on hard quality dimensions. He cites the recent explosion of Six Sigma initiatives as evidence that companies are taking dissatisfaction seriously and suggests that the emphasis within Six Sigma on defect free processes is seen as a welcome balance to the prevailing focus on softer attributes. This new focus on processes is predicated on the view that it is the horizontal linkages between key activities that impact the customer (Zairi, 1997), managing end to end processes is an ongoing requirement if a company is to meet customer requirements and that Process capabilities and execution determine critical aspects of the customer encounter such as speed, accuracy etc.

2.2.1 Service Quality Measurement.
Various scholars have considered different dimensions of service quality and there are many service quality models but scientists are not of one mind about these models and measurements. (Baharun, etal 2012). Service quality has different dimensions regarding the various service sectors (Pollack, 2009) nevertheless, service quality measurement enables managers to recognize quality problems and enhance the efficiency and quality of services to exceed expectations and reach customer satisfaction.

Gronoos (1984) considers technical, functional, and reputational quality; Technical service quality addresses the outcomes of service delivery. In this context, Operational measures seem relevant. Whilst the conceptual separation of functional and technical service quality proposed by Gronroos (1984) has been widely supported, Kang & James (2004), highlight the difficulties

faced when trying to operationalize these constructs. Gronroos model was general and without offering any technique on measuring technical and functional quality.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985) made the new model of service quality measurement called SERVQUAL Model,In conceptualizing the basic service quality model, Parasuraman et al. (1985) identified 10 key determinants of service quality as perceived by the service provider and the consumer, namely, reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/ knowing the customer, and tangibility(Latter reduced to 5 dimensions) to formulate a service quality framework. They suggest using the gap or difference between expected level of service and perception on delivered level of service for measuring service quality with five dimensions: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurances, Empathy, and Tangibility. SERVQUAL is an analytical tool, which can help managers in identifying the gaps between variables affecting the quality of the offering services (Seth, Deshmukh, & Vrat, 2005). There is general agreement among researchers that SERVQUAL dimensions can be modified to suit different service sectors and as such, it is the model that has been widely used. Svensson (2004) in his study laid the importance of customizing a particular model to match the study context.

In 1996 Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz proposed the multilevel model for service quality. They suggest changing the structure of service quality models to three-stage model: overall perceptions of service quality, primary dimensions, and Sub dimensions. This model was for evaluating service quality in retail store. Although multilevel propose a new structure, it needs to generalize for different areas and consider the effect of some other factors such as environment, price, etc. In addition, there is lack of identifying attributes or factors that define the sub dimensions.

The Hierarchical model by Brady & Cronin (2001) shows the customer experience at different levels and various dimensions of service. Some researchers worked on the hierarchical model and found reliability for this framework in various services. Like all the measurements, hierarchical model has difference in factors and importance of sub dimensions in regards to services such as Health care (Chahal & Kumari, 2010;Dagger, Sweeney, & Johnson, 2007),

Sport (Ko, 2000), Mobile health (Akter, D'Ambra, & Ray, 2010),hairdresser (barber) and phone service subscribers (Pollack, 2009).

2.3 Customer Satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is the overall level of attainment of a customer's expectations. It is measured as the percentage of customer expectations which has actually been fulfilled.

According to Klaus, (1985), satisfaction is the consumer's subjective evaluation of a consumption experience, based on some relationship between the consumer's perceptions and objective attributes of the product/service.

According Zeithaml et al. (1996, in Molinari and Blaber, 2008), customer service can produce customer behaviours that can indicate whether a customer will remain with or defect from an organization. They also claim that replacing lost customers comes at an elevated cost, and recommend that customer defection should be a key performance gauge for senior management and a fundamental component of incentive programmes. Retention is important because it can cost five times more to obtain a new customer than to keep an existing one (Weinstein et al., 1999b in Molinari and Blaber, 2008).

Satisfaction from service quality is usually evaluated in terms of technical quality and functional quality (Gronroos 1984). Usually, customers do not have much information about the technical aspects of a service and therefore, functional quality becomes the major factor from which to form perceptions of service quality (Donabedian 1980, 1982). Some consequences of customer satisfaction is loyalty (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007) and repurchase intention (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993) which lead companies to more profit. One of the most important factors and antecedents of customer satisfaction is quality of services.

Krishna etal (2010) on service quality and customer satisfaction in retailing in India concluded that customers have highest expectations on promptness of service, accuracy and security. Manyi (2011) while studying the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction found that all five dimensions of SERVQUAL were significantly related to customer satisfaction, this

studies were consistent with Akoko (2012) who came to the same conclusion in the study on the communication industry. Musyoka (2013) established that there was a positive relationship between service quality and library user satisfaction among universities in Kenya. Service Quality therefore has a direct and strong effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Cronin &Taylor, 1992; Ganguli & Roy, 2011; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, &Berry, 1988).

2.4 Railways Passenger Transport

Increasing travel demand and preferences in using private vehicles is causing rapid motorization in many countries around the world. Most people are now highly dependent on private motorize travel (Ellaway et al. 2003). This phenomenon was caused because of attractiveness of car and people love to drive (Beirão & Sarsfield Cabral 2007). An increased private motorization has resulted in an increased traffic congestion which in turn results in longer travel times for many people (Beirão & Sarsfield Cabral 2007; Asri & Hidayat 2005). In addition to congestion, private motorization is also affecting the safety of vulnerable road users (Kodukula 2009), high consumption of non-renewable resource (Abmann & Sieber 2005), and causes serious threat to the quality of human environments (Goodwin 1996; Greene & Wegener 1997).

In order to prevent more problems caused by this increase in motorization it is highly recommended by many researchers as well as public decision makers to provide an attractive public transport service as an alternative transport mode in many cities (Kodukula 2009),.

Railway is a very vital prerequisite for economic growth, In spite of the volume losses in 2008-2009 due to the financial crisis. In 2010 the rail transport for freight and passengers increased worldwide by more than 40 percent compared with 2000. The trend varies for the different regions. The most dynamic growth was achieved in Asia (74 percent for freight and 67 percent for passengers), while America and Europe registered sound increases in freight transport (25 and 40 percent respectively) and limited increase for passengers (103-106 percent). Since 2001, Africa has shown a very modest increase of freight transport of only 7 percent and a drop of 7 percent in passenger services (World Bank, 2006).

In India according to Hemant Sharma and Nagendra Sohani, (2013), some services have been particularly important for this improving performance in India specially the travel related services and transport services. Indian Railway contributed 11% GDP (2010 -2011) to annual Growth in India's Services. It is one of the world's largest railway networks comprising 115,000 km of track over a route of 65,000 km and 7,500 stations. Both passengers and freight can be transported to anywhere of India by the help of Indian Railways. The attributes of service quality include time, health, cleanliness, food, water availability, medical facilities and safety of passengers with SQ gap (-1.81).

In the USA, Amtrak operates more than 300 trains each day on 21,300 miles (34,000 km) of track with select segments having civil operating speeds of 150 mph (240 km/h) and connecting more than 500 destinations in 46 states in addition to three Canadian provinces (Amtrak Fact Sheet, 2008). According Amtrak 2013, in fiscal year 2012, Amtrak served a record 31.2 million passengers and had $2.88 billion in revenue while employing more than 20,000 people. In Japan, rail transport is a major means of passenger transport, especially for mass and high-speed travel between major cities and for commuter transport in metropolitan areas. There are 27,268 km of rail crisscrossing the country. JR (a group of companies formed after privatization of JNR) controlled 20,135 km of these lines as of March 31, 1996, with the remaining 7,133 km in the hands of private enterprise local railway companies. Japan's railways carried 22.24 billion passengers (395.9 billion passenger-kilometers) in fiscal 2006 (Annual Report of Rail Transport Statistics, July 2007). Japanese railways are among the most punctual in the world. The average delay on the Tokaido Shinkansen in fiscal 2006 was only 0.3 minutes When trains are delayed for as little as five minutes, the conductor makes an announcement apologizing for the delay and the railway company may provide a "delay certificate" as no one would expect a train to be this late (Central Japan Railway Company Annual Report, 2007).

The commuter rail industry has a host of service delivery exchanges in their comprehensive operation (Colins Bosch, 2009). The nature of the core services at RVR just like Metrorail in South Africa does not result in a single service encounter or customer transaction episode with

contact personnel but rather a series of transactions from the time a commuter enters the station precinct to purchase a ticket until the time they depart the environment at the destination station. Hart (1998) argues that customer expectations might not be fully established at the point of first contact with service personnel but rather that expectations become more prominent after a series of interactions during the service delivery. Zeithaml et al. (2006) concur, emphasizing that services research needs to continually monitor service performance because performance is subject to human variability and heterogeneity. There has been previous research regarding the impact of the relationship between customer contact employees and the customer (Johnson et al., 1988 in Edwards, 2004) but unfortunately none that specifically deals with this aspect could be located in the rail commuter industry.

Sillock (1981) conceptualized service quality for public transport industry as the measures of accessibility, reliability, comfort, convenience and safety. Traditionally, the performance indicators for public transport are divided into two categories: efficiency and effectiveness. Under the efficiency category, the measures are concerned with the process that produce the services while the effectiveness category are used to determine how well the services provided are with respect to the objectives that are set for them(Pullen,1993). The gap model of service quality and concept of transport service quality showed that service quality should be measured on multidimensional basis. SERVQUAL is much more humanistic, or customer-related, while most of the measures used in public transport industry are much more mechanistic, or have technical focus, or use more objective measures.

Transit Cooperative Research Plan (TCRP) Report 100 (Chapter 2) defines transit quality as "the overall measured or perceived performance of transit service from the passenger's point of view." TCRP Report 88 (TCRP Report 100, Chapter 2) defines five categories of measures that wholly or partially reflect the passenger's point-of-view in transit services: (1) availability of transit service, (2) service monitoring, (3) travel time, (4) safety and security, and (5) maintenance and construction activity on passenger trips. TCRP Report 100 (Chapter 7) identifies the following elements at railway stations for determining quality: space per passenger (crowding), facilities for disabled persons (ramps etc.), facilities for evacuation, security

(including presence of law enforcement personnel, video cameras, and emergency call boxes), visibility, lighting, and clarity of station layout and way-finding.

While there are a number of studies on rail passenger service quality (eg.Disney, 1988, 1999; Hann and Drea 1998; Drea and Hanna 2000; Tripp and Drea 2002), there is very little published literature that reports the use of SERVQUAL in the assessment of railway passenger service quality. Allen and DiCesare (1976) in their study on Indian Railways considered that quality of service for public transport industry contain two categories: user and non user categories. Under the user category, it consists of speed, reliability, comfort, convenience, safety, special services and innovations. For the non user category, it is composed of system efficiency, pollution and demand.

According to *M. Devi Prasad* & B. Raja Shekhar (2010) on their study on Impact of Service Quality Management (SQM) Practices on south central railways in India, evaluation of service quality of Railways may give the true picture about the short comings in Railway passenger service and assist the managers to monitor and control the quality of services provided to passengers.

2.5. Summary of Literature Review.

A review of literature suggests a strong relationship between Service quality and customer satisfaction. However, the relative importance of dimensions is dependent on the industry; also different industries have different variables and standards to measure. According to the research of Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Sasser, Olsen and Wyckoff (1978), clearly supports the conception that service quality, as perceived by consumers, stems from a comparison of what they feel service firms should offer with their perceptions of the actual performance of firms providing the service. Service quality has different dimensions regarding the various service sectors (Pollack, 2009) nevertheless, service quality measurement enables managers to recognize quality problems and enhance the efficiency and quality of services to exceed expectations and

reach customer satisfaction. The commuter rail industry has a host of service delivery exchanges in their comprehensive operation (Colins Bosch, 2009). The nature of the core services at RVR just like other commuter rails does not result in a single service encounter or customer transaction episode with contact personnel but rather a series of transactions from the time a commuter enters the station precinct to purchase a ticket until the time they depart the environment at the destination station. Hart (1998) argues that customer expectations might not be fully established at the point of first contact with service personnel but rather that expectations become more prominent after a series of interactions during the service delivery. Zeithaml et al. (2006) concur, emphasizing that services research needs to continually monitor service performance because performance is subject to human variability and heterogeneity.

Krishna etal (2010), Manyi (2011), Akoko (2012) and Musyoka (2013) established that there was a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in different service sectors.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

It is expected that the eight dimensions of service quality below have a positive relationship with passenger satisfaction as shown by research done by *B. Raja Shekhar and M. Devi Prasad (2010)* Service Quality (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, Service Product, Service Delivery, and Social Responsibility) is the independent variable. Passenger satisfaction is the dependent variable. This model was derived on the basis of statistical evidence of Geetika, Shefali Nandan (2010) in the research published in Journal of Public Transportation, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2010. It has been modified to fit into this study.

Figure **1: Conceptual Framework**

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE   DEPENDENT VARIABLE

S E R V I C E Q U A L I T Y	TANGIBLES
	RELIABILITY
	RESPONSSIVENESS
	ASSURANCE
	EMPATHY
	SERVICE PRODUCT
	SERVICE DELIVERY
	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PASSENGER SATISFACTION
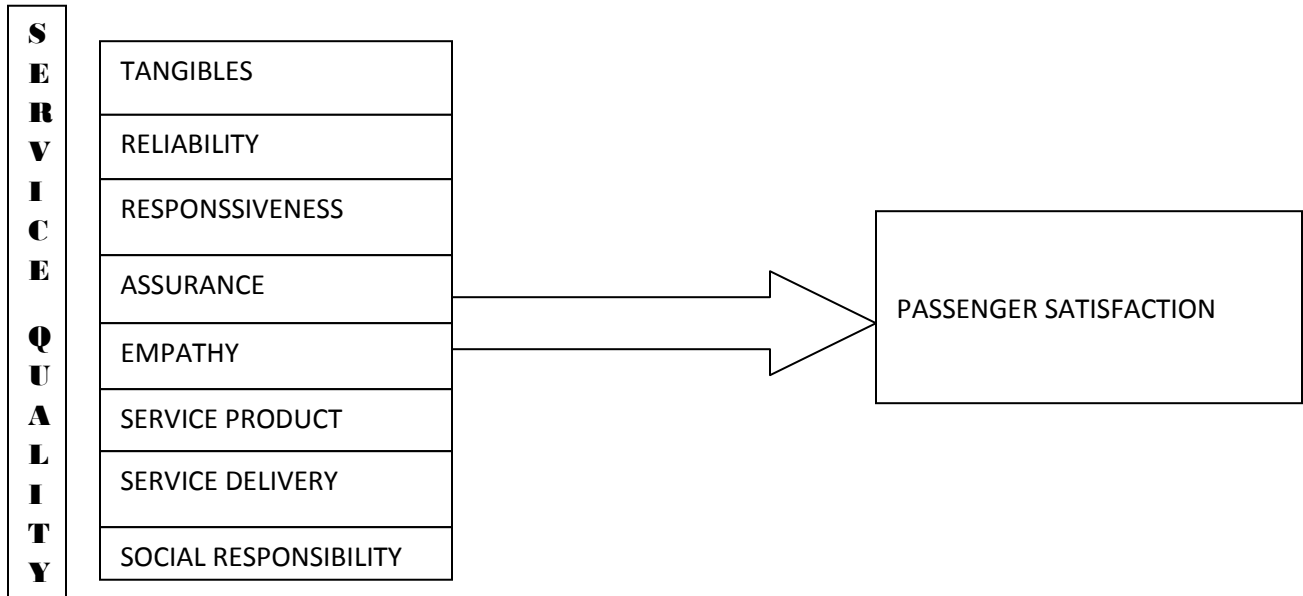
Source; (Researcher, 2014)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive research design. This was chosen because this study sought to determine existence of relationships among variables. A descriptive study is concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between variables (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Thus, this approach was appropriate for this study as it helped to describe the state of affairs as they existed without manipulation of variables (Kothari, 2004). The studies by Musyoka (2013), Krishna et al (2010) and Janet (2011) adopted this design and their objectives were achieved.

3.2 Population

The population for this study was about 20,000 (RVR manager monthly reports, 2014) people using the different trains to and from Nairobi daily.

3.3 Sample and Sampling

To eliminate systematic bias and due to large population of passengers using train services, the study took a survey approach. Tull and Hawkins (1990 in Edwards, 2004) define survey research as the systematic gathering of information from respondents in order to understand and predict some aspect of behavior of the population of interest, generally in the form of a questionnaire. The population was stratified in 5 different strata (Each stratum representing a different destination). Simple random selection of passenger respondents within each stratum was used. Since passengers who use similar facilities are exposed to the same service levels, they are homogenous. In this regard, a sample of **90** passengers randomly sampled from different coaches on different trains was representative and was surveyed as follows.

Table 1(Sample size)

Stratum/Train	Average No. Of Coaches	Estimated Number Of Passengers	Sample size(2per Coach)
Ruiru Eagles	20	8,600	40
Kahawa Cheetahs	15	4,200	20
Embakasi Airport Peacock	10	4,000	15
Kikuyu Buffalo	8	2,000	10
Syokimau Commuters	7	1,200	05
Total		**20,000**	**90**

Source; RVR 2014 (Data on Strata, No. of coaches and Population per strata)

As the numbers in the table above, sample size vary in each cluster because of population differences in each. Passengers per coach shall be randomly surveyed.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisting of 36 statements that were grouped and related to one of the eight service quality dimensions of the SERVQUAL model was administered to 90 passengers (respondents). The questionnaire had structured and closed ended questions with three parts: Part I being the statements to measure their Expectations level Part II on responses on perceptions levels and part III Satisfaction Level. A five point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree", which elicits a score of 1, to "strongly agree" which elicits a score of 5 was adopted. The researcher adopted a drop and pick later method.

3.5 Data Analysis

Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Quantitative data collected was then analysed and interpreted in line with study objectives through use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Quantitative data collected was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics to generate percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies.

The first research objective was addressed by Part I &II of the questionnaire; the second objective was addressed by the gap model, whereby the difference (Pi-Ei) is be the gap score of service quality on each dimension. The expression of evaluation model is as follows:

$$SQ = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (Pi - Ei)$$

In the expression

SQ – Scores of perception of service quality

Pi - Scores of perception of indicator I of both customers and RVR management.

Ei - Scores of expectation of indicator I

All the scores in the sample are added in order to get arithmetic average scores, which is called the average score of service quality.

$$AVSQ = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (Pi - Ei) \frac{}{N}$$

In the expression AVSQ - Average score of service quality

SQi - Perception of service quality of passenger I

N - Total numbers in sample.

The overall satisfaction was addressed by part III of the questionnaire.

On research objective three, linear regression Model was used to evaluate the relationship between Service Quality and Passenger Satisfaction as follows.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \acute{\varepsilon}$$

Where, Y is Passenger satisfaction, X_1-X_8, Dimensions of Service Quality, β_{is} is regression coefficient, α is a constant (the intercept of the model) and $\acute{\varepsilon}$ is the Error Term.

CHAPTER FOUR; **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on research. This chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation of the findings of the data collected using questionnaires. The findings of the research study were presented using tables to give relevant meaning to the findings.

4.2 Respondents Rate

A total of 90 respondents were sampled for the research study. Out of these 63 responded and 3 questionnaires were invalid this gave a respondent rate of 70% response rate.

Table 2, Response rate

Stratum/Train	Target Sample	Achieved Sample	% Achieved
Ruiru Eagles	40	24	60
Kahawa Cheetahs	20	12	60
Embakasi Airport Peacock	15	12	80
Kikuyu Buffalo	10	7	70
Syokimau Commuters	5	5	100
Total	**90**	**60**	**66.67**

4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis.

This study sought to establish the relationship between SERVQUAL dimensions and passenger satisfaction at RVR.perceptions, expectations, service quality gaps and passenger satisfaction data were collected, presented using tables and analyzed per each dimension as follows.

4.3.1 Perceptions and Expectations.

Table 3, Tangibles

Key; SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation

		1	2	3	4	5		
Tangibles (Expectations)	The station appears clean and Neat	0	0	0	9	51	4.85	0.36
	The Train appears clean and Neat	0	0	3	10	47	4.73	0.55
	The staff appears Well groomed and neat.	0	0	0	10	50	4.83	0.38
	The train and the Station is fitted with ICT	0	0	2	15	43	4.68	0.54
	Information given at the station and on timetable is clear	0	0	2	14	44	4.7	0.53
	Physical facilities at the station and on train are appealing	0	0	5	15	40	4.58	0.65
	AVERAGE						**4.73**	**0.50**
Tangibles (Perceptions)	The station appears clean and Neat	9	14	20	12	9	2.83	1.67
	The Train appears clean and Neat	8	13	18	15	6	2.97	1.19
	The staff appears Well groomed and neat.	8	13	18	15	6	3.02	1.1
	The train and the Station is fitted with ICT	8	13	18	15	6	1.92	1
	Information given at the station and on timetable is clear	14	23	12	9	2	2.37	1.1
	Physical facilities at the station and on train are appealing	16	23	12	7	2	2.27	1.09
	AVERAGE						**2.56**	**1.19**

The study sought to investigate the perception and expectation of tangibles on customer satisfaction as shown on the table3. From the findings, majority of the respondent expectations of tangibles from all routes are very high (Average of 4.73) as opposed to perception of the most respondents, (Average of 2.56). Their expectations is that the station appears and train appears clean and neat, the train and the station should be fitted with ICT, information given at the station and the time table should be clear and physical facilities at the station and on train should

be appealing. The perception results however reveals that majority of the respondents are of the idea that the performance is dismal as shown in the table 3 above.

Table 4, Reliability

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	Std Deviation
Reliability (Perception)	Frequency of Trains is always as scheduled	32	20	5	3	0	1.65	0.84
	Train service is always is always on time	31	19	5	3	2	1.77	1.03
	Information about the status of the train is always updated during Travel	16	23	11	8	2	2.28	1.11
	There is a Complaint handling system	22	13	10	12	3	2.35	1.30
	Dependable in handling your service problem	22	12	15	9	2	2.28	1.21
	AVERAGE						**2.07**	**1.10**
Reliability (Perceptions)	Frequency of Trains is always as scheduled	0	0	3	5	52	4.81	0.50
	Train service is always on time	0	1	4	10	45	4.65	0.68
	Information about the status of the train is always updated during Travel	0	0	0	11	49	4.81	0.39
	There is a Complaint handling system	0	0	0	12	48	4.8	0.4
	Dependable in handling your service problem	0	0	1	15	44	4.71	0.49
	AVERAGE						**4.76**	**0.49**

On Reliability the findings reveal that majority of the respondent expectations from all routes are higher than tangibility (Average of 4.76) as opposed to perception of the most respondents, (Average of 2.07), which is also lower than tangibility. Frequency of Trains being on schedule and Train service being always on time attracted the most dissatisfaction.

Table 5; Responsiveness

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation
Responsiveness (Expectations)	Customers are told exactly when service will be offered.	0	0	1	10	49	4.80	0.44
	There is availability of staff in handling requests.	0	0	0	11	49	4.75	0.57
	Services are always offered promptly.	0	0	0	9	51	4.85	0.36
	Staff are always willing to help and in caring fashion.	0	0	2	11	47	4.75	0.51
	AVERAGE						**4.79**	**0.47**
Responsiveness (Perception)	Customers are told exactly when service will be offered.	13	9	11	12	5	2.62	1.26
	There is availability of staff in handling requests.	17	11	14	15	3	2.60	1.28
	Services are always offered promptly.	12	17	23	7	1	2.47	0.99
	Staff are always willing to help and in caring fashion.	8	12	19	16	5	2.97	1.64
	AVERAGE						**2.67**	**1.29**

On responsiveness, the findings reveal that majority of the respondent expectations from all routes are higher than tangibility, Reliability (Average of 4.79) as opposed to perception of the most respondents, (Average of 2.67), which is higher than tangibility, Reliability. Promptness of service delivery attracted the most dissatisfaction.

Table 6; Empathy

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation
Empathy (Expectations)	Train should operate in hours which are convenient to most customers	0	0	1	8	51	4.83	0.42
	RVR should understand your needs	0	0	1	15	44	4.72	0.49
	RVR should have your best interest at heart	0	0	1	12	47	4.77	0.46
	There should be a coach attendant/helper whenever needed.	0	0	1	15	44	4.72	0.49
	AVERAGE						**4.76**	**0.47**
Empathy (Perceptions)	Train operates in hours which are convenient to most customers	12	11	24	12	1	2.65	1.07
	RVR understands your needs	18	12	18	10	2	2.43	1.18
	RVR have your best interest at heart	22	15	15	5	3	2.20	1.18
	There is a coach attendant/helper whenever needed.	22	15	13	9	1	2.20	1.45
	AVERAGE						**2.37**	**1.22**

On Empathy, the findings reveal that majority of the respondent expectations from all routes were high (Average of 4.76) as opposed to perception of the most respondents, (Average of 2.37).

Table 7; Service Product

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation
Service Product (Expectations)	There should be enough seating space on the train.	0	0	6	8	46	4.61	0.66
	The Station should appear Modern	0	1	1	4	54	4.85	0.52
	There should be waiting space at the station	0	0	1	9	50	4.82	0.43
	The train journey ride is comfortable	0	1	2	7	50	4.75	0.68
	AVERAGE						**4.76**	**0.57**
Service Product (Perception)	There is availability of enough seating on the train	30	12	10	7	1	1.95	1.14
	The Station appears Modern	13	12	6	10	2	2.03	1.26
	Availability of waiting space at the station	19	12	9	16	4	2.57	1.36
	The train journey ride is comfortable	21	9	12	13	5	2.53	1.38
	AVERAGE						**2.27**	**1.29**

On Service product, only 1.7% of customers are satisfied with availability of enough seating on the train, majority of customers strongly disagree. Service quality gap was quite high (-2.49), with seating space availability with (-2.66), however expectations on seating space was lower compared to other attributes. Expectations on modernity of station were highest with the highest SQ gap (-2.82).

Table 8 Service Delivery;

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation
Service Delivery (Perceptions)	Travelling time of the trains are reasonable	18	19	8	11	4	2.40	1.28
	Punctuality of trains is maintained	19	19	12	9	1	2.23	1.11
	Rail journey is Smooth	17	9	12	14	8	3.03	1.44
	The ticketing process is efficient.	14	9	7	21	9	2.80	1.29
AVERAGE							**2.62**	**1.28**
Service Delivery (Expectations)	Travelling time of the trains are reasonable	0	1	3	10	46	4.67	0.73
	Punctuality of trains is maintained	0	1	2	5	52	4.78	0.67
	Rail journey is Smooth	0	1	1	9	49	4.75	0.65
	The ticketing process is efficient.	0	1	2	3	49	4.78	0.49
AVERAGE							**4.75**	**0.64**

On service delivery, majority of respondents strongly disagree or disagree therefore dissatisfied by Punctuality of trains, Expectations on the same was also highest on this dimension resulting in the highest SQ gap (-2.55).

Table 9 Social Responsibility;

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation
Social Responsibility (Perception)	There are Safety signs on the train and at the stations.	12	14	14	14	6	2.73	1.34
	Safety Equipment and Signs are clearly labeled.	16	11	10	19	4	2.80	1.29
	Security on the train and at the station is adequate.	11	7	14	19	9	2.73	1.34
	Railways makes a lot of contribution to the society	8	8	16	17	11	3.13	1.33

		SD	D	N	A	SA	mean	std Deviation
	Railways provide affordable travel to all sections of the society	8	4	9	20	19	3.63	1.35
AVERAGE							**3.04**	**1.22**
Social Responsibility (Expectations)	There are Safety signs on the train and at the stations.	0	1	2	11	46	4.72	0.69
	Safety Equipment and Signs are clearly labeled.	0	1	2	11	46	4.68	0.7
	Security on the train and at the station is adequate.	1	0	0	10	49	4.77	0.62
	Railways makes a lot of contribution to the society	0	1	3	11	45	4.67	0.66
	Railways provide affordable travel to all sections of the society	0	0	1	9	50	4.82	0.43
AVERAGE							**4.73**	**0.53**

On the expectation table majority of the respondents strongly agree and agree that Railways should provide affordable travel to all sections of the society, Security and safety be maintained. 31.7% of respondents strongly agree that RVR provide affordable travel to all sections of the society and 33.3% Agree. Customers are highly satisfied and neutral on this dimension than any other 7 dimensions conceptualized in this study with SQ gap of (-1.69). This however is still way below 1.

Table 10, Assurance.

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.	SD	D	N	A	S A	mean	std Deviation
Assurance (Expectations)	Staff should be courteous	0	0	2	11	47	4.75	0.51
	Customers should be promptly informed whenever there is delay	0	1	0	13	46	4.73	0.55
	Staffs should be knowledgeable when answering questions.	0	0	0	7	53	4.89	0.32

	Information should be given whenever there is change in itinerary	0	0	1	12	47	4.77	0.46
	AVERAGE	**0**	**0.25**	**0.75**	**10.75**	**48.25**	**4.79**	**0.46**
Assurance (Perception)	Staff are courteous	8	12	19	16	5	2.75	1.19
	Customers are promptly informed whenever there is delay	11	14	18	13	4	2.65	1.07
	Staffs are knowledgeable when answering questions.	14	14	14	15	3	2.43	1.18
	Information is given whenever there is change in itinerary	11	9	17	20	3	2.20	1.18
	AVERAGE	**11**	**12.25**	**17**	**16**	**3.75**	**2.51**	**1.16**

On the expectation table majority of the respondents strongly agree and agree that Staff should be courteous, Customers should be promptly informed whenever there is delay, Staff should be knowledgeable when answering questions and Information should be given whenever there is change in itinerary, however majority are neutral and highest dissatisfaction on Information being given whenever there is change in itinerary. The overall Sq Gap is (-2.28).

4.3.2 Service Quality Gap

The second objective of the study was to determine the level of passenger satisfaction gap on service quality dimension, using.

$$AVSQ = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{(Pi - Ei)}{N}$$

The table below shows the Service quality gap in eight dimensions as operationalized in the above formulae.

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Ei	Pi	GAP (Pi-Ei)
Tangibles	4.73	2.56	**-2.17**
Reliability	4.76	2.07	**-2.69**
Responsiveness	4.79	2.67	**-2.12**
Assurance	4.79	2.51	**-2.88**
Empathy	4.76	2.37	**-2.37**
service product	4.76	2.27	**-2.49**
service delivery	4.75	2.62	**-2.13**
Social responsibility	4.76	2.49	**-2.27**
Average	**4.76**	**2.44**	**-2.32**

Table 11; Service Quality Gap (Source: Research, 2014)

From the findings in the table above, SQ gap averaged (-2.32) as perception fell short of expectations. The gap is the overall service quality as perceived to have been offered by passengers. It is possible to achieve both positive and negative outcomes for individual attributes within the same dimension i.e. some attributes meeting/surpassing expectations (an overall Service Quality Difference Score of ≥ 0) and some not, Bosch (2009).

4.3.3 Relationship of Passenger Satisfaction and SQ.

The study sought to investigate the level of satisfaction of the respondents from the findings, majority of the respondents are dissatisfied i.e 26.7% dissatisfied and 31.7% very dissatisfied. Only 3.4% were satisfied.

Table 12; Satisfaction.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	STRONGLY DISAGREE	19	31.7
	DISAGREE	16	26.7
	NEUTRAL	23	38.3
	AGREE	1	1.7
	STROGLY AGREE	1	1.7
	TOTAL	**60**	**100.0**

Only 3.4% of passengers are satisfied, majorities are dissatisfied (58.4%) while 38.3% are indifferent with quality of service offered by RVR and this is validated by the service quality gap that was revealed in the objective two whereby the respondent's perception did not match the expectation leading to negative satisfaction gap.

The relationship between service quality and passenger satisfaction as was the third objective of this study was established using the following correlation analysis:

Table 13 Relationship between perception, expectations and passenger satisfaction.

Correlations		Perception	Expectation	SQ(Gap)	Satisfaction
Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	-.979**	-.732	.859
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.040	.042
		60	60	60	60
Expectation	Pearson Correlation	-.979**	1	.696	-.836
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.192	.078
	N	60	60	60	60
SQ (Gap)	Pearson Correlation	-.732	.696	1	-.329
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.160	.042		.023
	N		60	60	60
		60			
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.859	-.836	-.329	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.078	.050	
	N	60	60	60	60
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

The results of correlation reveals that expectation was negatively correlated to perception with a Pearson correlation coefficient of r=-.979 and at level of significance of 0.04 is statistically significant as the P value is less than 0.05

The results also reveal that level of satisfaction was positively correlated to expectation with Pearson correlation of r0.696 and at level of significance 0.042 is statistically significant

The results also reveal that perception and satisfaction was negatively correlated with Pearson correlation of r-.732 and at level of significance 0.04 is statistically significant.

Regression was done to determine the relationship between customer perception and expectation, satisfaction and service quality and level of satisfaction. As per the methodology, the model is represented by

$$Y=\alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\beta_5X_5+\beta_6X_6+\beta_7X_7+\beta_8X_8+\acute{\epsilon}$$

Table 14 Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.982[a]	.965	.859	.07330

a. Predictors: (Constant), Level of Satisfaction, Expectation, Perception

It can be seen from the results provided in table 14 that the adjusted R-square is 0.859. This indicates that the eight independent variables explain 85.9 percent of the variations in overall satisfaction.

Table 15 Coefficients

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	29.527	53.568		.551	.079
Perception/ expectation	-1.171	.858	-2.314	-1.365	.043
Level of satisfaction	-1.419	3.722	-.603	-.381	.468
Satisfaction and service quality	.770	.424	1.154	1.814	.032

a. Level of satisfaction

$Y=\alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\beta_5X_5+\beta_6X_6+\beta_7X_7+\beta_8X_8+\acute{\epsilon}$

Satisfaction =Constant+ Perception/expectation+ passenger satisfaction Relationship between sq and service quality

Y=29.527-2.314 perception/expectation-0.603Level of satisfaction+1.154satisfaction and sq

4.4 Intepretation of findings.

In the analysis of data as illustrated in the tables and statistical findings above, its evident that service quality has a significant relationship to Passenger satisfaction. From the interpretation of SQ gap, passengers are not satisfied on the overall service quality provided thus enhibitting a negative SQ gap (-2.32), this negative gap is collaboratted by the research of Prasad, M. D. (2010) on South Indian railways(with negative SQ gap of -1.44), Bosch, C. (2009) on Metrorail in South Africa (SQ Gap of -3.57).

According to Choudhury (2009), the strength of co-efficients is measured against the parameters of statistical correlation measured by what is called coefficient of correlation (r). Its numerical value ranges from +1.0 to -1.0. It gives us an indication of the strength of relationship. In general, $r > 0$ indicates positive relationship, $r < 0$ indicates negative relationship while $r = 0$

indicates no relationship (or that the variables are independent and not related). Here r = +1.0 describes a perfect positive correlation and r = -1.0 describes a perfect negative correlation.Closer the coefficients are to +1.0 and -1.0, greater is the strength.

From the interpretation of the correlation co-efficients derived from this study, the correlation co-efficients are 0.859 and -0.836 (Closer to 1 & -1) for perception and expectation respectively, illustrating the stability of significance, of the various variables with satisfaction as found out by Krishna etal (2010) who established a strong relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in retailing in India, Akoko (2012) who came to the same conclusion in the study on the communication industry in Kenya, Musyoka (2013), on the relationship between service quality and library user satisfaction among universities in Kenya, (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Cronin &Taylor, 1992; Ganguli & Roy, 2011; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, &Berry, 1988) who through their respective studies concluded that service quality had a direct and strong effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

CHAPTER FIVE; SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine service quality and passenger satisfaction. The research objectives were to determine customer perception and expectation, level of passenger satisfaction and the relationship between service quality dimension and passenger satisfaction.

The results of the study were presented and discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter summary of the main findings are done and conclusion drawn, recommendation for action are made and areas for further study identified

5.2 Summary of findings

Perception and expectation on passenger satisfaction.

The first objective of the study was to determine perceptions and expectations of service quality at RVR. The study established that the respondents had high expectations on all 8 dimensions of SERVQUAL, the study strongly agreed that there is need for implementation of service quality dimensions based on understanding of what the customer wants in order satisfy them. Service quality as perceived by majority of customers was very low leading to a very high service quality gap.

The relationship between Level of passenger satisfaction and Service Quality

The second objective of the study was to determine level of passenger satisfaction on service quality dimension, from the findings, correlation of level of passenger satisfaction on service quality dimensions is significantly correlated to service quality.
Relationship between passenger satisfaction and service quality at Rift valley railways showed a negative correlation.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that perception is directly proportional to expectation of the respondents and that it is significant to passenger satisfaction proving the previous studies. Perception of the respondents is significantly related to their satisfaction. The study concludes that passengers using RVR are dissatisfied and the management needs to do more to keep them satisfied and attract more passengers.

The study further concluded that passenger satisfaction gap is determined by the difference between expectation and perception and that whereby the negative difference shows the negative correlation to passenger satisfaction.

Finally the study concluded that service quality is significantly related to passenger satisfaction and therefore service quality dimensions implementation leads to passenger satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendation

The study established that customer expectation might not necessarily be their perception, therefore there is need to conduct customer evaluation over time in order to understand their changing expectations so as to match their perception. The study also revealed that Staff greatly affects satisfaction, their appearance, knowledge and interpersonal attributes have been rated as highly expected and therefore RVR should regularly train them on the need of the required culture to satisfy passengers as well as simplifying and continually improving its processes to keep up with the changing world.

RVR should recognize attributes to which customers are dissatisfied most and set up measures to mitigate on them to improve overall satisfaction. For instance, the SQ gap is prominent on assurance dimension and higher expectations on responsiveness dimension, this are attributes which RVR can easily address without necessarily incurring more.

Ticketing system should be improved, reusing tickets for example is a common phenomenon through which RVR loses money, before rolling out e-ticketing, RVR should use differentiated colored tickets for morning and evening to avoid the evening tickets being re-used in the morning.

On Communication, in many occasions, passengers are never informed whenever there is a delay and they are kept at the station until so late before they are either informed that the train will be late or has broken down thus won't be able to depart. Rvr must be informing the passengers at the point of ticketing for them to make decisions whether to wait or find other means, this way, the passengers will feel valued and that RVR has their best interest at heart. With advent of technology RVR can quickly address this dissatisfaction by using social media platforms to update the passengers on status of each train. From observation, there are instances where some trains are withdrawn without prior communication to passengers, e.g To Kahawa. RVR should endeavor to always inform their passengers whenever there is a plan to withdraw any train.

From observation, there are many occasions where trains break down thus unable to complete the journey, Radically, RVR should consider suspending operations on affected routes(after advising passengers) and embark on serious repairs and resume when sure that acceptable service levels have been attained rather than seriously inconveniencing customers. This too can be perceived as having best interest by RVR from customers' point of view otherwise a bad image may lead to passenger apathy in future.

It is also important for RVR to be flexible, for instance from observation, both Riuru and Kahawa trains should be stopping at Donhom to drop and pick Donholm passengers for this does not result to any operational risks. Relying on Embakasi train only for donholm passengers lock out many who would like to travel either earlier or later. Apart from, Syokimau passengers, RVR does not have an effective complain handling system, implementing this through customer service should be very easy to implement.

The GoK should intervene by offering reasonable concession period and clearly set out the minimum terms on the numbers of passengers to be transported per month and maximum

number per coach guidelines. Alternatively GoK should encourage competition on railway passenger services.

5.5 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Respondents were unwilling to undertake the research because they felt that nothing would be done and therefore it was a waste of time. I explained to them that it was purely for academic purposes, however that I would share the findings with management of RVR to enable them improve.

Further research can be done on the management's perceptions on passenger expectations; also further research can focus on the impact of Standard Gauge Railway construction on Passenger service quality Expectations.

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Appendix 1.

PART I: EXPECTATIONS ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICE (AS IT SHOULD BE)

This part concerns your expectations on the level of service quality. Please show the extent to which you think the railway transport should possess the features described by each statement. Do this by putting a tick ($\sqrt{}$) in the appropriate box. "1" means you strongly disagree while a "5" means that you strongly agree. You may tick any of the number in the middle that shows how strong your feelings are. There are no rights or wrong answers.

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Tangibles	The station should appear clean and Neat	1	2	3	4	5
	The Train should appear clean and Neat	1	2	3	4	5
	The staff Must appear Well groomed and neat	1	2	3	4	5
	The train and the Station should be fitted with ICT	1	2	3	4	5
	Information given at the station and on timetable should be clear	1	2	3	4	5
	Physical facilities at the station and on train should be appealing	1	2	3	4	5
Reliability	Frequency of Trains should always be as scheduled	1	2	3	4	5
	Train service should always be on time	1	2	3	4	5
	Information about the status of the train should always updated during Travel	1	2	3	4	5
	There should a Complaint handling system	1	2	3	4	5
	Dependability in handling your service problem should always be exhibited	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	Customers should be told exactly when service will be offered.	1	2	3	4	5
	There must be available staff to handle requests.	1	2	3	4	5
	Services should always be offered promptly.	1	2	3	4	5

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	Staff should always be willing to help and in caring fashion.	1	2	3	4	5
Assurance	Staff should be courteous	1	2	3	4	5
	Customers should be promptly informed whenever there is delay	1	2	3	4	5
	Staff must be knowledgeable when answering questions.	1	2	3	4	5
	Information should be given whenever there is change in itinerary	1	2	3	4	5
Empathy	Train should operates in hours which are convenient to most customers	1	2	3	4	5
	RVR should understand your needs	1	2	3	4	5
	RVR should have your best interest at heart	1	2	3	4	5
	There should be a coach attendant/helper whenever needed.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Product	There should be availability of enough seating on the train.	1	2	3	4	5
	The Station should appear Modern	1	2	3	4	5
	There should be availability of waiting space at the station.	1	2	3	4	5
	The train journey ride should be comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Delivery	Travelling time of the trains should be reasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
	Punctuality of trains should be maintained.	1	2	3	4	5
	Rail journey should be Smooth	1	2	3	4	5
	The ticketing process should be efficient.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Responsibility	There should be Safety signs on the train and at the stations.	1	2	3	4	5
	Safety Equipment and Signs should be clearly labelled.	1	2	3	4	5
	There should be adequate security on the train and at the station	1	2	3	4	5
	Railways should make a lot of contribution to the society	1	2	3	4	5
	Railways should provide affordable travel to all sections of the society	1	2	3	4	5

PART II: PERCEPTIONS ON THE Q U A L I T Y OF SERVICE (AS IT IS)

This part concerns your perceptions on the level of service quality. Please show the extent to which you think the railway transport has performed in respect to the features described by each statement.

Do this by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate box. "1" means you strongly disagree while a "5" means that you strongly agree. You may tick any of the number in the middle that shows how strong your feelings are. There are no rights or wrong answers.

DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY	Please Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Tangibles	The station appears clean and Neat	1	2	3	4	5
	The Train appears clean and Neat	1	2	3	4	5
	The staff appears Well groomed and neat.	1	2	3	4	5
	The train and the Station is fitted with ICT	1	2	3	4	5
	Information given at the station and on timetable is clear	1	2	3	4	5
	Physical facilities at the station and on train are appealing	1	2	3	4	5
Reliability	Frequency of Trains is always as scheduled	1	2	3	4	5
	Train service is always is always on time	1	2	3	4	5
	Information about the status of the train is always updated during Travel	1	2	3	4	5
	There is a Complaint handling system	1	2	3	4	5
	Dependable in handling your service problem	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	Customers are told exactly when service will be offered.	1	2	3	4	5
	There is availability of staff in handling requests.	1	2	3	4	5
	Services are always offered promptly.	1	2	3	4	5
	Staff are always willing to help and in caring fashion.	1	2	3	4	5
Assurance	Staff are courteous	1	2	3	4	5
	Customers are promptly informed whenever there is delay	1	2	3	4	5
	Staffs are knowledgeable when answering questions.	1	2	3	4	5
	Information is given whenever there is change in itinerary	1	2	3	4	5
Empathy	Train operates in hours which are convenient to most customers	1	2	3	4	5

	RVR understands your needs	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	RVR have your best interest at heart	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	There is a coach attendant/helper whenever needed.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Service Product	There is availability of enough seating on the train	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	The Station appears Modern	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Availability of waiting space at the station	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	The train journey ride is comfortable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Service Delivery	Travelling time of the trains are reasonable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Punctuality of trains is maintained	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Rail journey is Smooth	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	The ticketing process is efficient.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Social Responsibility	There are Safety signs on the train and at the stations.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Safety Equipment and Signs are clearly labelled.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Security on the train and at the station is adequate.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Railways makes a lot of contribution to the society	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	Railways provide affordable travel to all sections of the society	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

PART III: SATISFACTION ON THE QUALITY OF SERVICE

Generally, How Satisfied are you with the service offered by RVR?

1. Very Satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very Dissatisfied.

How Long Have you been using the train?
   1. Over 6 months

   2. Below 6 Months