



EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN CAR WASH BUSINESS IN MKOLANI WARD; NYAMAGANA DISTRICT, MWANZA CITY, TANZANIA

BY

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Abstract

Service of quality is one of the factors that influence customer satisfaction in service-oriented organization, Mwanza City, Tanzania. It has been noted that car wash personnel do not know how to treat their customers. This study investigated the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in car wash centers. The study advanced general objective and three specific research objectives: To examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in the car wash business and (i) determining the effect of responsiveness on customer satisfaction among car wash customers; (ii) determining the effect of assurance on customer satisfaction among car wash customers; and (iii) determining the effect of tangibility on customer satisfaction among car wash customers. The study employed a positivist approach to research, allowing it to adopt a quantitative research design. A questionnaire was administered to 202 customers of car wash services in six wards in the Nyamagana District of Mwanza. Its understanding helps the organization develop appropriate marketing strategy. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Specifically, descriptive statistics, including mean values and standard deviation, were reported for the indicators of the principal constructs.

The regression results revealed that responsiveness, assurance, and tangibility were positive and significantly related to customer satisfaction in car wash businesses. The study found that responsiveness, assurance, and tangibility has a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction. It found that only part of SERVQUAL model dimensions were applicable in car wash business in Tanzania. The study recommends the proprietor of car wash business consider improving the quality of their services to improve customer satisfaction and improve services over time and train their employees on customer needs if they go the extra mile in business success. It also further recommends conducting market research continuously to understand better customers changing needs and tailor the service offerings accordingly. Further, car wash should implement structures that protect the surrounding environment from pollution from car wash outflows.

Keywords; Service Quality, Customer satisfaction, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The car wash business in developed countries has been identified to be strong and uses modern technology in its operation, and employs a large number of people with professionalism; in the African context, Tanzania's inclusive car wash business is growing while facing different challenges

including unskilled personnel with specialization on the business. The words "service" and "quality" together make up "service quality." Kotler and Armstrong, (2017)

Service quality pertains to a service provider's ability to meet client's needs effectively, hence improving the firm's overall performance (Zeithaml, et al., 2018; Alawni, et al., 2021).

Five dimensions in service quality (SERVIQUAL) tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) have been considered for this research. General purpose of this research to examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in car wash business. This study focused on the variable's responsiveness, tangibility, and assurance leaving the two variables reliability and empathy. Justifications for using three elements of the SERVIQUAL model and leaving the other two variables, reliability and empathy is three variables are applicable to car wash, and partial not all five SERVIQUAL dimensions not applicable in this study. Reliability is about performing tasks dependably; now, it refers to service provided to customers' assets rather than customers on their behalf. This variable for this dimension does not apply to an innate. Empathy is about being empathetic to an individual rather than an asset because, as in this incidence, the service has been performed on vehicles that do not require empathy. Hence this variable is not relevant in this study.

Because of the above reasons, only parts of the SERVIQUAL model were examined. Car wash services started Africa in South Africa and quickly entered all African countries. Monnakgotla, (2018). The car wash was introduced in Tanzania in early 2000. Since then, there has been increasing demand for the service, especially in urban areas, in line with the number of vehicles entering the Tanzanian market.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the preceding sections, empirical studies from various regions indicate that most studies evaluated the relationship between service quality and consumer satisfaction, for example, in various service industries. (Kalemu, (2017); Mutinda, (2020); Alawni, *et al.*(2021); Herman, (2022); Joseph and Batonda (2022); Barua, *et al.* (2017); Bahadur, *et al.* (2018); Namupala, (2018); Acquaye & Ofosu-Boateng, (2020); Kobero & Swalehe, (2022). However, the ranking of SERVQUAL service quality dimensions in terms of customer satisfaction varied not only by country but also within the same nation.

The study conducted by Barua, *et al.* (2017) aimed to investigate the perceived reliability-based customer satisfaction model inside self-service technology, specifically in (St. Louis. The research findings unveiled the presence of a disparity among nations. Alawni, *et al.* 2021) conducted a study that revealed a significant positive association between the parameters contributing to service quality and customer satisfaction within Saudi insurance businesses. A study conducted by (Ahmad & Samer-Kanin, 2017) within the automobile sector showed that customers viewed reliability and assurance as the most significant elements of quality. Tangibility and responsiveness followed closely, while empathy was the least important dimension.

Nevertheless, within the governmental and housing sector of Nekemte Municipality, located in Ethiopia, buyers' satisfaction level with the quality of administration estimates was below the desired level. Additionally, customers

expressed dissatisfaction with the help provided by the service provider. According to Gabena, (2019), there is a possibility of national variance in terms of customers' preconceptions and understanding. In their study, Acquaye & Ofosu-Boateng, (2020) undertook additional research to examine the impact of service quality and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty within the hospitality sector in Ghana.

Namupala, (2019) conducted a study investigating the influence of service quality factors on consumer satisfaction among NamPower's private customers in Namibia. Nevertheless, research has indicated that a company's degree of responsiveness and compassion have distinct impacts on consumer loyalty, independent of one another.

The objective of the research undertaken by Joseph & Batonda, (2022) in Tanzania was to investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction at TANESCO, a public sector organisation that functions distinctively from private sector establishments such as vehicle wash and detailing services. Kobero & Swalehe, (2022) conducted a recent study to explore the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Tanzanian higher education institutions.

The main aim of this study is to fill the knowledge gap about the inconclusive results and a limited number of investigations on SERVQUAL conducted in the private sector of Tanzania. The primary aim of this research is to investigate the influence of the service quality attributes of SERVQUAL on customer satisfaction in a specific set of vehicle wash and detailing establishments in Mkolani ward, Nyamagana district, Mwanza, Tanzania.

In addition, several studies in other service industries, conducted in Ethiopia Municipality revealed that consumers were unhappy with the service they received. (Gabena, 2019) asserts that there can be regional differences in the assumptions and knowledge of consumers. This study sought to examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in car wash business.

1.2 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study was to examine the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in the car wash business in Mkolani ward, Nyamagana District, Tanzania. The essay had three objectives, to determine the effect of responsiveness on customer satisfaction among car wash customers. To determine the effect of assurance on customer satisfaction among car wash customers. To determine the effect of tangibility on customer satisfaction among car wash customers.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.2 SERVQUAL MODEL

SERVQUAL model theory reveals a relationship between the three dimensions of SERVQUAL model, and the findings that show positive significance, meaning car wash customers are

more interested in quality service when using car wash services.

(Parasuraman, *et al.* 1988) introduced a theoretical framework that presented a refined criterion for assessing service quality. Additionally, they developed a measurement tool known as the SERVQUAL scale, which aimed to quantify service quality.

The ten dimensions of original SERVIQUAL were found to be connected and then condensed into the five dimensions of service quality by (Parasuraman, *et al.* 1988) in a subsequent study. Dependability is a component of reliability. Empathy is a component of caring and personalized customer care. Tangibility is a component of reliability. Assurance is a component of reliability. The ability to respond to consumer needs is a component of responsiveness. The five components of service quality that customers use to assess service quality have also been identified and confirmed (Tjiptono, 2012, p. 75).

SERVQUAL will be employed in this study despite its criticism because the services provided by Car Wash and Detailing companies are a good fit for the model. In service-oriented businesses, SERVQUAL is the most widely used and general approach for assessing service quality (Tjiptono 2012).

Assurance

Assurance is the staff's knowledge, skill, courtesy, and reliability, devoid of peril, risk, or doubt. When competition is extremely strong and fierce, members of a company must appear more competent, i.e. knowledgeable and skilled in their respective professions. Therefore, when applied to Car Wash Business's service delivery, assurance indicates whether or not consumers perceive the employees' competence.

A favorable customer perception in this regard will foster confidence and trust in Car Wash Business and result in a certain level of customer satisfaction. However, a negative consumer perception will deter prospective clients.

Tangible

Physical evidence (tangible) includes physical facilities, apparatus, personnel, and communication channels. This encompasses various aspects such as the architectural aesthetics of office buildings and rooms, the provision of parking facilities, the efficacy, tidiness, and ergonomic qualities of the workspace, the adequacy of communication equipment, and the professional demeanour of employees (Tjiptono, 2012). Therefore, customers tend to seek tangible indicators of the services' quality, such as buildings, equipment, and personnel (Wahab & Suhaimi, 2012).

The atmosphere of the Car Wash Business has a substantial effect on customers. It affects their perception.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the delivery personnel's desire to help customers and provide responsive services (Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1988). The term "responsiveness" can refer to the speed with which staffs handle transactions and the alertness with which clients manage the service-consuming process. It can

also refer to the level of response, initiative, and alertness of employees when assisting customers and offering quick service. For service delivery by Car Wash and Detailing BUSINESS (CWD), responsiveness entails the timely provision of washing and detailing the car by well-trained personnel and their willingness to go the extra mile.

This dimension pertains to the responsiveness and efficiency of Car Wash Business workers in addressing customer issues, requirements, inquiries, or complaints (Ladhari, 2009). The weakness here is when car wash workers have no personnel desire to help their customers and do not provide responsible services.

In my research, I used only three dimensions of SERVIQUAL: Responsiveness, Assurance, and Tangibility, it found the other two SERVIQUAL dimensions namely reliability and empathy were not relevant in the car wash business. A weakness is when there are negative perceptions in contrast to what car wash consumers anticipate, such as physical appearance and others.

Quality is relative to the observer. According to Assauri in Adam (2015, p. 13), an institution's survival depends on excellence. It has evolved into a sustainable competitive advantage for most businesses, particularly those that offer nearly identical products. Customers will seek out products from businesses that can provide the finest delivery service.

The concept of viewing quality from a service perspective entails that service quality should be focused on satisfying customers' expectations, including their needs and requirements, as well as evaluating how well the provided service meets or surpasses those expectations

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Responsiveness

In their study, Shakeerah, *et al.* (2020) undertook a quantitative investigation to examine the impact of responsiveness, dependability, and tangibility on consumer satisfaction in Malaysia. The results suggest a positive relationship between tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and overall consumer happiness. These findings provide valuable assistance to potential researchers and policymakers, enabling them to devise and implement initiatives to enhance the quality of consumer service inside the nation.

In a study done in Iran by Srinivasan *et al.* (2021) Impact of responsiveness on customer satisfaction in Telecommunication sector. The main aim of the study were to identify the various variables influencing customers on responsiveness factor and to analyse the influence of responsiveness factor on customer satisfaction. They found that there is a significant relationship between responsiveness factor and customer satisfaction in the Telecommunication sector.

In Kenyan study conducted by Uyoga D & Charles L, (2019), on relationship between customer responsiveness service performance and satisfaction among airline passengers in Kenya found that customer responsiveness has been conceptualized as a dimension of service performance where

market intelligence was used to meet the need of customers. The study introduced another facet, as the way a customer behaves towards on self when an employee approaches them. The study found that customers are satisfied when they respond to employees and that service performance mediates the relationship between customer responsiveness and customer satisfaction. A customer is an essential part of the process in a service performance and its evaluation. Customer responsiveness is very important for service industry that when handled properly can be an asset in the point of distribution in the aviation sector.

Assurance

Darmayunata & Mildawati, (2022) conducted a study in Indonesia to investigate the influence of responsiveness, assurance, and empathy on community satisfaction inside the education office of Pekanbaru City. This indicates that empathy is a variable that significantly affects individuals' satisfaction. This study examined and provided evidence that commitment influences Pekanbaru City education office employees' responsiveness, confidence, and empathy about community service satisfaction.

Every individual needs service, which necessitates assisting others in procuring the resources necessary to perform service. Existence and service are inextricably linked, even at the most extreme level. When service quality is perceived, it is deemed adequate. If the service exceeds the customer's expectations, the perceived quality of the service is exceptional and high. In contrast, when service falls short of expectations, service quality is deemed substandard.

Components of assurance include communication, credibility, security, competence, and courtesy. Assurance is the knowledge of employees' benevolence and capacity to enhance consumers' faith in the company. To exhibit empathy, one must pay close, individual, or personal attention to customers, comprehend their unique needs, and make time for convenience.

Azam et al, (2020) conducted a research on how do empathy and assurance matter in determining customer's satisfaction? The results of the study suggest that there exists a favorable correlation between customer service and empathy, assurance, and customer happiness in Malaysia. There are three key findings that are likely to be of interest to potential scholars and policymakers who will develop policies, involved in the development of customer service in the country.

The study conducted by Hidayati et al, (2020), The effect of responsiveness, assurance, empathy quality of service on the level of community satisfaction in the education office in Pekanbaru City Indonesia. The study indicates a favorable correlation between assurance, empathy, and responsiveness. This finding suggests that community satisfaction is significantly influenced by three distinct independent variables, namely responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Tangibility

The study conducted by Ngaliman, *et al.* (2019) studied the impact of tangibles, responsiveness, and dependability on

customer satisfaction with delivery services. According to the study's findings, responsiveness and reliability directly impact consumer satisfaction, while tangibles have no direct bearing on either of those variables. Response time has a direct bearing on dependability. One of the most discussed subjects among management researchers is customer satisfaction. Even though dependability may lead to customer satisfaction, it is uncommon to use the potential variable reliability as a mediating variable to quantify customer satisfaction. Contend that tangibles and timeliness can impact client satisfaction and repeat business.

Employees that view customers as indispensable will have a long-lasting beneficial effect on the corporation. To deliver high-quality service to satisfy customers all personnel must be innovative and committed to their work.

A business must produce and use tangibles, supporting equipment, and staff appearance used to carry out tasks or provide customer service can make a lasting impression. Physical tools, including how personnel and customers seem, can lead to psychological disorders that slow down consumer responsiveness.

Customers enjoy pleasant circumstances when they transact for services offered by the company. Thus, tangibles and employees' consistent demeanor are part of the growing demand for employees to promptly follow customers' wishes. Customers will have a positive opinion of an employee's capacity to use their skills to build customer-saving talents.

In Sureshbabu T, (2017) studied how satisfied customers were with actual banking services. According to the study's statistical findings, customer satisfaction levels differ based on the type of bank, how frequently customers visit, and how long they have been doing business with the company. This study focused on Thanjavur's banking customers, whilst the other looked at Nairobi, Kenya's four- and five-star hotel guests.

In all industries and service sectors, customer satisfaction analysis is a recurrent subject of study. The perception of the discrepancy between a product or service's actual performance and its expected performance by users, buyers, or consumers is the key to success in today's fiercely competitive industry to turn customer needs, wants, and desires into enduring connections.

Financiers promote high-quality, customer-focused services by using service quality parameters. However, rewarding all bank customers requires tangible financial services. This study sought to ascertain whether the kind of bank, the number of year's respondents had been with their banks, and the frequency of respondents' visits to their banks affected the respondents' degree of satisfaction with a range of concrete aspects of banking service.

The study's statistical results showed that customer satisfaction levels vary depending on the type of bank, how often they visit, and how long they have dealt with the company. However, the current study will offer recommendations for future assessments of public,

commercial, and international banks' tangibility services satisfaction concerning various demographic parameters, the time an account has been opened, and the frequency of trips to India.

Nyabundi et al, (2020), conducted a research on Effect of tangibility on customer satisfaction among microfinance banks customers in Kenya. The researcher analysis reveals that an increase in tangibility is significantly correlated with customer satisfaction, accounting for 63.1% of the variation. Furthermore, the correction made in the analysis demonstrates a significant correlation ($r = 0.631, p < 0.05$) between tangibility and customer satisfaction, indicating that 63.1% of the variations in customer satisfaction can be attributed to tangibles.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework was developed after thoroughly analysing current scholarly literature on the correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction in service sector organizations. The study's conceptual framework is visually illustrated in Figure 2.1, presenting a graphical representation of the interconnectedness between the independent and dependent variables.

The study will analyze the independent service quality variables, including responsiveness, assurance, and tangibility. The present study will employ the SERVQUAL approach to evaluate customer expectations and perceptions about these features. On the other hand, the dependent variable is operationally defined as customer satisfaction, which includes repeat purchases and good word-of-mouth recommendations.

Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between the independent factors that indicate the features of service quality and the dependent variable of customer satisfaction (Kalemu, 2017; Mutinda, 2020; Alawni et al., 2021; Herman, 2022; Joseph & Batonda, 2022).

This research examines the relationship between various attributes of service quality and customer satisfaction within the specific domain of vehicle wash and detailing services in Tanzania. This study will focus on the Mkolani ward, which is situated inside the Nyamagana district.

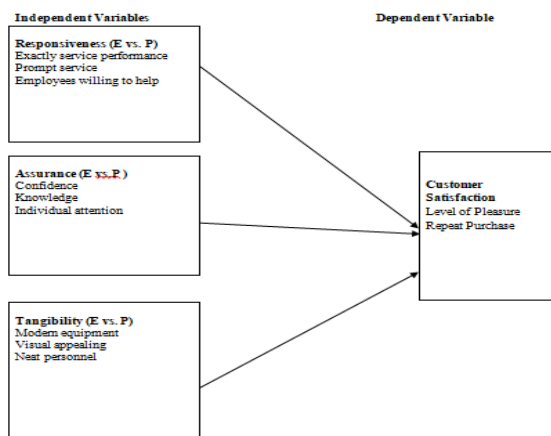


Fig. 2.1: Conceptual Frame work
Source: Researcher (2023)

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design by targeting a large sample of respondents and relating to measuring the quantity of something. This cluster sampling technique enabled the study to achieve groups of car wash customers and select samples using random or systematic random sampling. The researcher will use economic clusters; the corresponding sample size is 291

A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to analyse the study's findings, using a semi-structured questionnaire, primary data was gathered from respondents. Using inferential statistics involves applying correlation and regression analytic approaches.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1

Q1	Gender	Frequency N=202	Percentage
	Male	166	82.1%
	Female	36	17.9%

Table shows that more males possess cars in Nyamagana district. This can be linked to the nature of male heads dominated families, are majority having economic power to lead to household income.

Table 2

Q2	Age Respondents	Frequency N=202	Percentage
	21-30 years	30	14.8%
	31-40 years	76	37.6%
	41-50 years	67	33.2%
	Above 50 years	29	14.4%

Table shows that most customers of car wash are middle-aged people. This suggests that more customer care is needed to handle mature people who are more culturally attached

Table 3

Q3	Location of car wash	Frequency N=202	Percentage
	Buhongwa	65	32.2%
	Nyegezi	42	20.8%
	Lwanhama	35	17.3%
	Luchebele	15	7.4%
	Mkuyuni	25	12.4%
	Butimba	20	9.9%

Results from the table suggest that more car wash customers visit Buhongwa car wash and are less likely they visit Luchebele area for the car wash services.

Table 4
Reliability Test

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Responsiveness	3	.828
Assurance	3	.854
Tangibility	3	.802

Customer satisfaction 3 .921

Reliability indicated that all factors had Alpha Values greater than .802. According to the findings of (Saunders, *et al.* 2016), Alpha values equal to or greater than 0.70 confirm high loadings, indicating the reliability of the indicators and the validity of the measurement scale for subsequent analysis and the instrument has internal consistence.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.015	1.319		4.600	
Responsiveness	.483	.063	.351	1.466	.000
Assurance	.366	.035	.371	2.145	.000
Tangibility	.457	.056	.240	2.172	.000

. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

The three variables namely, (Responsiveness, Assurance, and Tangibility) were positively related to customer satisfaction and were also significant, meaning that each of these service quality dimensions is important in influencing customer satisfaction. It found that Responsiveness has highest influence followed by Tangibility and then assurance.

Responsiveness

The results can be interpreted as increased Responsiveness in providing services at the car wash may increase customer satisfaction. In other words, the more car owners improve responsiveness in the treatment of customer complaints, the more likely they will increase the number of people seeking services to clean their cars in the particular car wash dealer. The result indicates that responsiveness at Nyamagana district, which revealed the .483% at p-value of .000, t value of 1.466.

Assurance

This discovery suggests that when car wash services provide consumers with assurances of trust, honesty, and confidence, there is a corresponding increase in customer repurchases behavior and the likelihood of returning their vehicles for washing. Essential as it settles the critical role of Assurance as an indicator of quality services in the car wash industry which is growing fast among wards in Nyamagana district.

When car wash owners increase trust and confidence in their customers in the delivery of services, many people will prefer to seek services in their respective car wash areas the regression results showed an unstandardized Beta co-efficient of 0.366 and a t-value of 2.145, which produced a p-value of .000.

Tangibility

Customers anticipate clean and professional facilities and employees who are orderly and well-groomed (Johnson, *et al.*, 2021) advocates that the facilities of the car were: pressured water, equipment, and the employees of the car wash areas significantly influenced the customers to go back and take their cars for washing. The unstandardized Beta co-efficient was .457 and a t-test of 2.175, which was significant at .000

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The more car wash owners improve responsiveness in on-time dealing with their customer’s complaints, the more likely they will increase the expected number of people seeking services to clean their cars in the particular car wash dealer. The car wash owners should use equipment and facilities that give the positive perception to car owners that their cars are being washed using modern equipment, service personnel should immediately attend to the customers as soon as they enter bay as sign their willing to help customers, on timely basis.

Therefore, car wash owners are advised to increase trust and confidence in their customers in the delivery of services to attract more people to re-visit the respective car wash areas.

Results imply that proprietors of car wash establishments must consider the physical facilities for car wash services and also the nature of the workers who provide services daily, as the customers have proven to value the items of tangibility as important and hence can influence them to re-visit a particular car wash center. The proprietor should train the service delivery personnel on three service quality dimensions strengthening the importance of each dimension and their influence on customer satisfaction.



The regression results revealed that the three factors significantly predict service quality in the car wash sector. With the coefficient correlation of responsiveness (R .483%), Assurance (A .366%), and tangibility (T .457%), while the most valued by customers was responsiveness (R .483%). The regression results revealed that all three variables were acceptable predictors for customer satisfaction in the car wash business.

The study concluded that the car wash employees provide their services timely but they lack honesty, customer care

The study concluded that it is important for car wash owners to consider the physical facilities for car wash services and also the nature of the workers who provide services on a daily basis, as the customers have proven to value the items of tangibility. Therefore the study demonstrated in some cases such as car wash only a few dimensions of SERVIQUAL are applicable.

Therefore, this study suggests that owner of car wash centers sensitize their employees to consider the need to respond quickly to customer complaints, consider the confidentiality of their information and items they find in their cars, and also consider improving their physical facilities such as materials used for cleaning and also to provide initial training to their employees

The management and stakeholders of a car wash business should ensure that the service quality dimension is captured by taking reasonable measures such as ensuring that car wash customers feel safe while using the car wash and retaining the positive behaviour of car wash employees, such as remaining polite, being able to answer all questions asked by car wash customers, and maintaining car wash customers' confidence.

The car wash administration should prioritize the tangible elements of service provision, including the upkeep of contemporary materials, well-organized offices, and neat uniforms and attire. This will foster a sense of assurance among the service provider's personnel and their clientele utilizing the car wash services. This study therefore filled this knowledge gap and examined the effect of three dimensions of SERVIQUAL model in car wash business in Mkolani ward, Nyamagana District, Tanzania.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study has two major limitations. First, the study focused on Nyamagana District car wash centers and did not consider other areas. This was due to time limit attached to submitting the thesis for the MBA. Future studies should consider expanding this geographical scope to foster better results. Similarly, the sample size of 202 respondents could be considered small by some quantitative scholars. Future scholars could also increase this sample size because Mwanza is a growing city to reflect the actual scenario in Mwanza.

Second, this study used a quantitative research design with objective answers using pre-existed variables to test the relationship between variables (Hair et al., 2010). This methodological design has a large sample size but falls short

of not listening to the respondents to know their perception regarding the three variables (Responsiveness, Assurance, and Tangibility). Hence, it is recommended that future studies focus on using mixed methods to get both a large sample size and to hear from the respondents and compare and contrast the findings.

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