CUSTOMERS SAFETY CONCERN AND THE PATRONAGE OF TOURISM OUTFITS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

"The study aimed at investigating the extent of safety considerations that customers relate to the patronage of tourism outfits in South-South, Nigeria." To achieve this objective, the significance of safety to visitor's choice of patronizing tourism outfits was examined. This study adopted the survey research design approach and the population of the study was all on-sight guests found at different hotels located within the region were visiting and staying over for different purposes. The use of this target audience was justified by the definition of tourists by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. Since the total population was unknown, a pilot survey was carried out to help ascertain elements in the confidence interval formula; to achieve an adequate sample size for the study, which resulted in 798 respondents (rounded up to 800). The sampling of respondents was done through the use of a convenient sampling technique. The findings of the study revealed a high relationship between the dependent variable (patronage of tourism outfits) and the independent variable (safety considerations. In a bid to ascertain the extent to which safety impacted customer's patronage of tourism outfits, findings also showed that there was a tendency for tourism outfits to over secure their outfits, hence contradict their motive of ensuring the safety of their customers. It was recommended that the tourism image of the region could improve if factors such as a stable political environment in the region are ensured as some militancy and activities of insurgencies are often said to emanate from political indifferences and uncertainties. The government and other major tourism stakeholders should also endeavour to put in place adequate measures for the protection of lives and properties. However, it was emphasized that tourism outfits should avoid over safety as this may work to their detriment.

KEYWORDS: *Safety, Security, Tourism, Visitors, Customers, patronage*

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, like other developing countries tourism is a growing industry. It has become a catalyst of development, directly and indirectly impacting on household economies, availing opportunities for employment, promoting cultural awareness, preserving local culture and traditions and an avenue for tapping into the technological exposure of developed nations (World Tourism Organization and International Labour Organisation, WTO and ILO, 2013). Tourism also serves as a source of revenue to the host country among other gains, it contributes to both national and local treasuries through a variety of taxes (both direct, such as taxes on aviation and accommodation, and indirect, such as VAT on sales), charged

on the use of different services (World Tourism and Travel Council, 2018). Although the tourism industry has become one of the fastest-growing industries, it also has some obstacles due to occurrences of world natural disasters, economic recessions and frequent fluctuations in world economic indicators. Criminal activities such as kidnapping, terrorism and war, the emergence and spreading of epidemic diseases like SARS, Lasser fever, Corona Virus, among others, has also become a threat to the sectors operations (Garg, 2015).

Olsen and Cassee (1996) have identified five global forces that are capable of threatening the smooth operations of the tourism industry in the new millennium. These five; are crime, terrorism, food safety, health issues, and natural disasters, all of which are basic safety concerns. Evidence from the literature has shown that traveller's behavior in their decision making for what destination they are going to visit, will always tie-up with the travel risks (Henderson, 2007; Murthy, 2008; Oluwole & Olufemi, 2011). According to Hassan (2000) even with the best efforts, a tourist destination can only develop or be revived when it offers a high level of safety and security. Safety is undoubtedly related to the field of tourism and has been so since its origins. Incidents of safety in most cases cause changes in tourists' behavior and the perception of risk (Kurež and Prevolšek, 2015). This is attributed to the fact that consumers have a relative knowledge of what they want and their expectations before embarking and/or during a tour experience, and safety is often cited as a major concern.

Safety can be seen like the physical environment (such as mountain climbing, beach surfing and exploring wildlife reserves); accidents (during car or bike racing, boat mishaps, carnival event fire or explosions); health-related disease outbreak (like the sudden outbreak of the Ebola virus, Corona Virus, bird flu, laser fever, yellow fever, monkey-pox or even water bore diseases); the chances of involving in criminal activities (such as pick-pocketing, phone snatching or stealing), or even the possibility of a   tourist being attacked or kidnapped.   In particular, tourism is a sector that tends to gain media attention easily both nationally and internationally, so if the safety image of the destination in the tourist-generating regions is in doubt, this may eventually result to the tourism activity and image of the host being affected (Tan, Chong and Ho, 2017).

Statement of Problem

It can be assumed that consumers are rational and have a fair knowledge of a wide range of tourism alternatives from which to choose given their safety needs. Thus, consumers are value maximizers within the bounds of search, cost/price, fair knowledge, mobility, income, and safety alertness. The problem of safety continues to rests on the paradox that consumers patronize tourism-related services that are presumed to estimate which offer would give the most perceived value. The likelihood of a repeat visit and positive recommendations to others is largely predicated on the extent to which the perceived value is realized, with priority to their safety.

Our contribution to the existing literature on safety considerations in tourism will be based on examining how significant safety considerations are to visitor's choice of a tourism outfit. In line with this, we will investigate the extent of relationships that exist between the safety of a destination and visitors' patronage of tourism services in South-South, Nigeria. Following the research objective, the main research question is; to what extent do customer's safety considerations determine their patronage choice of tourism outfits within the South-South region of Nigeria?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Tourism and Tourists

According to the United Nation World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2013), tourism consist of social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that involves the movement of people to places or countries that are outside their usual environment, this may be for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are referred to as visitors who may be either tourists or excursionists and may be residents or non-residents. Thus, tourism has to do with activities some of which imply tourism expenditures by visitors, residents or non-residents. Tourists are people who travel or have reason to stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours, and not more than one consecutive year, for purpose of leisure, business and other reasons not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited Tourists often make destination choices after considering constraints such as time, their budget, and physical distance, which are weighed against tourism potentials and the destinations' image (Garg, 2015). Some reasons why tourists engage in tourism include cultural, historical, recreational, environmental, political, religious, social, and ethnic considerations. Tourists could also be attracted to specific destinations based on the level of development of the tourism destination, attractions at the destination, provision of infrastructural amenities, the quality of the environment, quality of accommodation, price level in the destination, provision of transportation and the accessibility to tourism potentials/sites, among others (Ibimilua, 2009).

The South-South region of Nigeria is enriched with all forms of tourism potentials ranging from natural sceneries, historical and heritage forms of tourism, arts and crafts, traditional and cultural festivals, among others. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the tourism sites that are available in the South-South region;

Table 1: Some Tourism Sites in States of the South-South Region Include

S/no.	States of the South-South region	Tourism sites
1.	Akwa Ibom State	Unity park (Cenotaph); the Amalgamation house; the Mary Slessor Presbyterian church Itu; Akwa Ibom National Museum; the Oron Museum; the Lord Luggard resident Ikot Abasi; the Slave Master's lodge Okopedi, Itu; the Mary Slessor tomb, Itu; the Royal Niger boatyard behind Lord Luggard's house; the Sculptural Women Monument; the Akwa Ibom Nest-like International Stadium; The Ibom Tropicana and entertainment Centre; Le Meridien Ibom Hotel and Gold resort; the Mobil tank farm; the Ibeno beach; the Mbo forest game reserve; the Ekpe festivals; the Ikot Ekpene Craft Market; other sites scattered within the state as well as registered 2 Star and 3 Star Hotels in the State.
2.	Bayelsa State	The Ox-bow Lake in Yenegoa; the Peace Park Yenegoa; Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro Monument; Akassa Lighthouse; Akassa Slave Transit Camp and Tunnel; Agge Beach, Ekeremor; the Olodi Museum and Mangrove Museum, Nembe; Apoi Creek Forest; Mangrove Creeks; Okpoama in Beach, Brass; Akasa wildlife forest; the Mungo Park residence; Nigeria's first Oil well, Oloibiri; the ancient Nembe war Canoe Regatta; the Ossiama fish Lake in Southern Ijaw; Koluama holiday Resort, southern Ijaw; the Agricultural Palm Beach Ekeremor; Lake Efi in Sabagreia; the Samson Siasia Stadium; Bayelsa ferry terminal and resorts; tradition and cultural events as well as numerous 2 and 3-star hotels scattered around the state.

3.	Cross Rivers State	The Calabar Resident Museum; the Calabar slave Park; the Tinapa business resort; the Obong of Calabar's Palace; the Obudu Mountain resorts; Afi mountain wildlife sanctuary; the Cross River state National park, Akamkpa; the Ikom volcanic stone Monoliths; the Agbokim waterfalls; the Kwa falls; The Spiraling Ox-bow Calabar River; The Calabar Marina Resort; the Calabar Drill Monkey Sanctuary; the annual Calabar Carnival; the annual Leboku Yam Festivals; The Calabar boat regatta, numerous 2 and 3-star Hotels among other developed and natural tourists sites.
4.	Delta State	Osuivie of A gbarho Palace; The Olu of Warri Palace; The Otuogu beach; the Warri township stadium; the Mungo Park House, Asaba; The Lander Brothers Anchorage, Asaba; The Expatriate graveyard, Asaba; Ogbogonogo Modern Market, Asaba; Warri Kingdom royal Cemetary; Chief Nana's palace and living history museum, Koko Warri; Effurun garden park, Warri; the red Mangrove park, Warri; Abraka turf and country club, Abraka; Abraka River Resort Motel, Abraka; Gordon's River Resort Abraka; Kwale Games reserve; Delta shopping mall, Warri; the River Ethiope; the Araya Bible site; Jamieson River in Sapoba; Leisure paradise amusement park, Effurun; Olona Ranch and holiday resort, Onicha-Olona; Escarvos Beach in Escavos, Eni Lake, Isoko, Benbo game village, Abraka, and other 2 and 3 Star hotels scattered within the State.
5.	Edo State	Okomu National Park Ovia south; Benin city national Museum; Osos Tourist Center; the Benin Moat (Iya); Okonni Wildlife sanctuary; The Emotan Statue; The Royal Palace of the Oba of Benin; Sanik Hut; Joker club and Lounge; Edi international hospital; the National Gallery of arts, Benin; Oba Akenzua cultural center; Somorika Hills; Somorika the tombstone of Captain James Phillip at Ovia North-east; Igu-Eromwon quarters, Benin; Chief Ogiamen's house built 1130AD; Ososo tourists center; Igun Bronze casters and crafts center, Benin; The Gele seaport, Benin city; Egedege Nkaro at Benin; the Holy Aruosa Cathedral Benin.
6.	Rivers State	Upper Orashi Forest Reserve at Ahoada; Finima Beach and Nature Park at Bonny Island; Zoology Garden Port Harcourt; the Isaac Boro Park, Port Harcourt; Port Harcourt tourists Beach, port Harcourt; the rivers state museum; Statue of King Jaja of Okpobo; the Okrika Aquatic stadium; the water glass boatyard; the Isaka holiday resort, Port Harcourt; the Biseni Forest, North-west Ahoada; Protea Hotel garden city, Port Harcourt; Ifoko beach, Ifoko community; Blue Elephant King Porekule road, Port Harcourt; Pleasure park Port Harcourt; the Port Harcourt golf club; the Yakubu Gowon Stadium; The Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium, Omagua; The Mile One market and numerous other sites, 2 and 3-star Hotels scattered within the state.

Source: Compiled by the Researcher, 2019.

According to Adeleke (2009), Nigeria is tailor-made for tourism and it is over 389 ethnic groups give it a rich cultural heritage and it is blessed with unique wildlife, natural sceneries, and a very favorable climate. Ithas over 7000 tourist centers and tourism is becoming an essential part of the country's economy,with the concerted efforts of government and its attention towards the development of the sector (Yusuff and Akinde, 2015). These centers consisting of developed sites, natural sceneries, historical and heritage sites, cultural and traditional events as well as festivities, and more which are spread across different regions (North-central, North East, North West, Southeast, Southwest, and South-south), states and localities across the country. South-south Nigeria also referred to as the 'Niger Delta' is made up of Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta and Edo States, and is rich in tourism potentials. But the very worrisome trend in the region is its state of insecurity and safety.

Safety in Tourism

A critical factor in determining the competitiveness of a country's travel and tourism industry is its safety considerations (Bello and Adebayo, 2009). The tourists and tourism investors are likely to be deterred from traveling to or investing in a

country perceived to be insecure (UNWTO, 2009). According to Breda and Costa (2005) Concern for safety, whether real or perceived, has been clearly identified as adversely affecting tourism behavior, in turn influencing destination choice and experience satisfaction. Safety considerations in the travel and tourism context refers a destinations ability to offer protection of life, health, physical, psychological, and economic integrity to the travelers, tourism staff, and the people who constitute the host communities (Okoli, 2001). The issue of safety in the context in view has become a complex multidimensional notion, having a wide range of components belonging to it, such as; consumer protection, personal data safety, public safety, health and sanitation, political safety ,environmental safety, legal protection of tourists, safety in communication, disaster protection, getting authentic information, quality assurance of services offered and rendered and so on (Kôvári and Zimányi, 2011).

Previous researches have pointed out four major safety risk factors, which they emphasize to include but not limited to; crime (Albuquerque and McElroy, 1999; Brunt Dimanche and Lepetic, 1999; Mawby, and Hambly, 2000; Alleyne and Boxill, 2003; Barker, Page, and Meyer, 2003; George, 2003; Lepp and Gibson, 2003); health related risks (Cartwright, 2000; MacLaurin, MacLaurin, and Loi, 2000; MacLaurin, 2001); terrorism (Pizam and Fleischer, 2002; Coshall, 2003; Tarlow, 2003; Kuto and Groves, 2004); war and political instability (Weaver, 2000; Neumayer, 2004), as well as kidnapping.

Impact of Safety on Tourism

- According to Pizman and Mansfeld (2006), the impact of safety on tourism could be considered in the following areas;

- Impact on the destination; all forms of safety-related incidences that occur at tourists' destinations such as terrorism, political upheaval, war, or crimes would negatively affect the destination's image and cause a decline in tourists' arrivals. It can also force many investors in other productive sectors to pull out.

- Impact on tourist's behavior; personal safety is a major concern for tourists. In this regard, most tourists will seek safe and secure destinations and avoid those that have been plagued by all sorts of violent incidences.

- Impact on the tourism industry; safety incidences at tourism destinations results in diminishing tourists' arrivals, which will consequently affect the destinations loss in both professional employees and entrepreneurs. The long-term implication is a need to re-invest large sums of money on the rehabilitation of the affected infrastructure and superstructures once the safety situation is over.

- Impact on host government; frequent and reoccurring safety incidences force host government to reduce their involvement in tourism development and promotion due to the high risk involved and the vulnerability of the industry. Thus, government policies may also be affected.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The study is anchored on the theory of Planned behavior propounded by Icek Ajzen (1988, 1991) which originated from Ajzen and Fishbein's (1975, 1980) Theory of Reasoned Action. The theory has become one of the most cited models for the prediction of human social behavior. Both theories are based on the premise that individuals make logical, reasoned decisions based on information available to them. The theory of planned behavior is used to predict leisure intentions and behavior of tourists. The theory is comprised of 6 constructs that collectively represent a person's actual control over the behavior as seen in Figure1
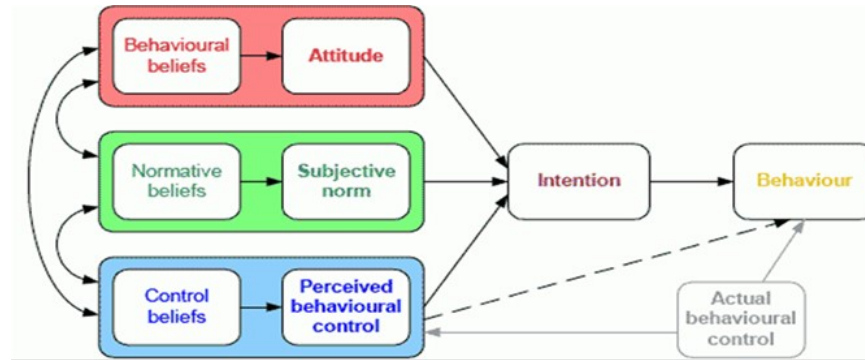
Figure 1: Model of Theory of Planned Behavior.
Source: Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour.

- Behavioral beliefs explain the motivational factors that influence a given behavior where the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed.

- Attitude refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior of interest. It involves considering the outcomes of performing the behavior.

- Subjective Norms are an individual's perception about the particular behavior, which is influenced by the judgement of opinion leaders like parents, spouse, friends, teachers, and so on.

- Normative beliefs are considered as the social norms or standards in a group of people. It is referred to as the customary codes of behavior in a group of people or larger cultural context.

- Control beliefs are considered as the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behavior. Perceived power contributes to a person perceived behavioral control over each of those factors.

- Perceived behavioral control refers to a person's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest. Perceived behavioral control differs across situations and actions, which may result in a person having varying perceptions of behavioral control depending on the situation. This construct was the main element that was later added which created a shift from the theory of reasoned action to theory of planned behavior.

- Tourism studies have particularly adopted the theory of planned behavior to explain how tourists behave, develop intent or make decisions in different travel context some of such studies include; Sonmez and Graefe(1998); Kuo and Dai (2012), Hsu and Huang (2012); Sparks(2007), Norman, Conner and Bello (2000), Lam and Hsu (2006); and Quintal, Lee and Soutar (2010).This study finds basis on the theory of planned behavior to explain the safety concerns in the tourism context. It may be said that the levels of perceived safety may prevent actions or intents of tourists to visit a destination as safety of a destination is considered a motivational factor by tourists.

Empirical Frame Work

Adongoi, Aniekan and Abraham (2019) conducted a study on sea robbery and its implication on tourism development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Their main objective was to examine the problem of sea robbery and its implication on tourism development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The researchers adopted a survey research design approach for their study. The target population were maritime business operators in the region. A multi stage sampling technique was

employed to select respondents from 3 littoral states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta states) in the region. Using the Taro Yamane sample size determination technique, 400 respondents made up the sample for the study and a Likert scaled questionnaire was used in the collection of primary data from respondents. The hypotheses formulated were tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correction (PPMC) and the results revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between sea robbery and tourism development in the Niger Delta region. The findings according to the authors implied that the activities of sea robbery in the region, if left unchecked, would have an adverse effect on the number of international and domestic tourists visiting. The authors recommended that proactive policing of Nigeria territorial waters and tourism destinations is necessary and should be considered by the government and maritime stakeholders. They suggested that law-making bodies should evolve legal regimes that stipulate severe punishment for sea related crimes to serve as deterrence to those who may consider indulging in such crimes.

Payam (2016) conducted a study on tourists' safety and the need for tourism police in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their main objective was to show the necessity of tourism police for tourism destinations and give some insight about the relationship between tourism and tourism safety and present some practical recommendations on tourism police for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study was a desk research and reviewed related articles on the subject of tourism and tourist's safety and policing. From the reviews, the author found that if tourism police are provided and utilized correctly and properly, they can become an economic development tool for the tourism industry. The author emphasized that although the more uniformed police are visible at the tourism destinations, the more secure tourists feel about the destination. But it is also very important to note that too much police presence constantly reminds tourists of crime.

Bello, Bello and Raja,(2014) carried out a study on issues and challenges of travel and tourism business confidence index in Nigeria. The study's main objective was to examine travel and tourism business confidence indices in Nigeria. The researchers relied on secondary data from the 2013 travel and competitiveness index report of 140 countries including Nigeria conducted by the world economic forum in collaboration with Deloitte; International Air transport association (IATA) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

The authors examined the position of Nigeria among 140 countries, on the bases of 3 key indices; travel and tourism regulatory framework (of which safety and safety, health and hygiene, and environment sustainability was considered); travel and tourism business environment and infrastructures; and travel and tourism human, cultural and natural resources, on a five point Likert scale. The scale showed: 1-30 as excellent, 31-60 good, 61-90 as fair, showed 91-120 and 121- above as poor Findings showed that Nigeria was rated poor in travel and tourism policy rules and regulations (117). Fair in environmental sustainability (63), very poor in safety and safety (136), health and hygiene (133) and prioritization of travel and tourism business (133) Their study identified that safety in Nigeria was not encouraging, as the country was rated poor and was a bad trend and serious setback for Nigeria, despite her diverse tourism potentials. The researchers elaborated that no tourist or tourism investor will like to visit or invest in an area or country where the safety of their life and properties are not guaranteed. Hence, safety and safety are cardinal to sustainable tourism development. To corroborate these findings the authors also found that health and hygiene policies and infrastructure that support the tourism industry in Nigeria was rated poor. They recommended that Nigeria government should give serious attentions to these factors if they intend to make the country a tourist destination hub of Africa. They also recommended that the government of Nigeria should formulate appropriate

policies and administrative framework capable of driving her travel and tourism sector, thereby boosting the confidence of the investors and in the long run attract massive investments to the country

- In Fada (2007) view, a number of means to enhance safety of the tourism industry in Nigeria include;
- The industry should understand and promote ethical values common to humanity with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral belief. Tourist themselves should also observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all people and recognize their worth
- Tourism and leisure activities should be conducted in harmony with the attitudes and traditions of the host regions and countries and respect should be given to their law practices and customs.
- It is the task of the government to provide protection for tourists and visitors as well as their belongings. The Nigerians government should pay particular attention to the safety of foreign tourists owing to the particular vulnerability they may have. Any attack, assault, kidnapping or threats against tourists or workers in the leisure and tourism industry as well as the willful destruction of tourism facilities or elements of cultural or natural heritage, should be severely condemned and punished in accordance with their respective national laws.
- To enhance safety of tourism and leisure pursuit in Nigerian, tourists and visitors should benefit from the same right as the citizens of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study utilized the survey design as the main research design.

Study area: the South-South region of Nigeria, was adopted as the study area. The regional so referred to as the 'Niger Delta' is made up of 6 states namely; Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta and Edo.

Population of the study: The population for this study consisted of all onsite guests found at different hotels locations within the region who were visiting and staying over for different purposes. The target population was considered fit for the study and justified by the definition of a tourists by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO,2013).

Sample size determination: It was not possible to have a total figure of people visiting the region within the time of this study, as such the population of the study was treated as a large population. To determine a sample size for the study, a pilot survey was carried out among selected guests at hotels in Port Harcourt city, Uyo and Calabar. The following assumptions were then made as revealed by the pilot survey; that at least fifty percent (50%) of the population would always make different forms of enquiry on the state of safety of the place before embarking on a trip to that destination. The pilot study also revealed that 21 hotels among those accessed had a strong safety presence in and around the vicinity.

Sampling technique: The confidence interval method was utilized at 95% level of confidence which is given as 1.96, at a tolerable error of 5%. The standard formula and workings for determining the sample size for this study is as given in Appendix I. From the result, the sample size of 38 represents the number of respondents who were accessed at each state, as per different hotels. A total of 798 which was rounded up to 800 respondents were therefore contacted from 21 hotels across the 6 states of the Region (4 Hotels in each state capital). 800 respondents were further split to each of the 6 state to allow for even distribution of copies of questionnaire which resulted to 133 respondents for each state in the region. The sampling procedure for selecting the respondents was the convenience sampling method, which allowed the researcher to interview accessible respondents.

Data collection: Primary data source with the use of the Preference and Patronage Structured Questionnaire (PPQ) containing multi-choice and dichotomous questions, made up the main data collection instrument for this study.

Data analysis method: The Cronbach's alpha (coefficient alpha) was used in testing the reliability of the instrument and the coefficient alpha stood at 0.91. Given this result the instrument was adjudged reliable enough and seen to be excellent. To ascertain the extent of relation among the variables, the simple regression analysis was adopted in analyzing the collected data

RESULT OF DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Judging from the frequency distribution, it is evident that 55% of the respondents agreed that safety considerations had a high relationship with their destination choice.

Table 2: Component Analysis of Tourism Destinations Patronage in South-South Nigeria Show

S/No	Element of destination Patronage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Frequency of visit Very often Occasionally Very rarely	105 431 264	13.1 53.9 33.0
2	Condition of Decision Making Preference for a particular hotel Availability Circumstantial	357 238 205	44.6 29.8 25.6
Source: Field survey 2019.			

- The degree of visitors travels was used to check the dimension of destination patronage in South-South, Nigeria. The analysis shows that about 13 percent of the respondents visited and patronized tourism outfits in the region very often, as the region has peculiar features that fit into their tourism needs.53.9% visited occasionally and 33.0 very rarely, these segments of persons could be said to visit the region to satisfy precisely business, official or ceremonial obligations.

- Considering the conditions under which choices were made, 44.60% said that they had preference for a particular state in the region and 29.8 chose any of the state within the regionfor leisure, while 25.6% chose to travel depending on the circumstances (business, official or ceremonial obligation) they were found. This reveals that a greater number of respondents have preference to visit a particular state in the South-South, perhaps because of certain tourism features possessed by the State.

Table 3: Variations in the Index of Patronage Across Socio-Economic Status with Respect to Safety Considerations

Item	Respondents Profile	Level of Importance Attached to Safety Considerations in Relation to Patronage of Tourism Outfits			Pooled	Value	Sig.	Remark
		Poor	Moderate	High				
1.	Sex Male Female	0.557 0.498	0.613 0.618	0.770 0.697	0.692 0.636	17.174	0.00	Sig
2.	Age 20 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51 and above	0.321 0.576 0.604 0.604	0.627 0.640 0.548 0.625	0.689 0.737 0.780 0.833	0.622 0.675 0.679 0.746	10.526	0.00	Sig
3.	Educational Level WAEC B.Sc/HND Masters Ph.D Professional Qualification	0.433 0.431 0.628 0.570 0.576	0.648 0.626 0.636 0.552 0.417	0.667 0.779 0.742 0.802 0.628	0.625 0.696 0.689 0.659 0.594	4.744	0.00	Sig
4.	Occupation Govt. Employee Business Men Political Appointment Others	0.521 0.472 0.637 0.381	0.642 0.582 0.595 0.583	0.729 0.746 0.801 0.706	0.663 0.681 0.701 0.597	10.406	0.00	Sig.

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 3 shows the variation in the extent to which safety considerations impact on the patronage of Tourism outfits in the different locations within the South-south region the analysis was done for the different socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents. The result of the analysis showed a significant variation in all aspects of the socio-economic variables. This means that irrespective of the differences in age, sex, educational level and occupation, all the respondents agreed that there was a relationship between safety considerations and the tourism outfits they patronize. This shows a high level of safety consciousness among the respondents irrespective of the different social classes they belong.

In an attempt to answer the research question on what extent of relationship exist between safety and safety of a destination an dvisitors' patronage of tourism services in South-south, Nigeria, factors identified are presented on Table 4;

Table 4: Extent of Relationship between Patronage of Tourism Outfits and Safety Considerations in South-South, Nigeria

Variables	Extent of Relationship				
	HE	ME	LE	NA	Total
Availability of safety personnel and safety gadgets	411 (51.4%)	133 (16.6%)	132 16.5%	124 15.5%	800 (100%)
The state's volatility to crime and kidnap related vices	571 (71.4%)	66 (8.3%)	98 (12.3%)	65 (8.1%)	800 (100%)
General safety status of the Location.	337 (42.1%)	103 (12.9%)	290 (36.3%)	70 (8.8%)	800 (100%)
TOTAL	1319	302	520	259	2400
Proportion of N	440	101	173	86	800
Percentage	(55%)	(12.6%)	(21.6%)	(10.8%)	(100%)

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents with respect to the level of relationship between safety consideration and their patronage of tourism outfits in the South-south region of Nigeria. The variables that constitute the safety considerations include availability of safety personnel and safety gadgets, the state volatility to crime and kidnap related vices and the General status of the location safety. Four hundred and forty 440 (55%) of the respondents said that there was a high level of relationship between safety considerations and their patronage of hotels in Akwa Ibom State. 101 (12.6%) and 173(21.6%) said that there was medium and low relationship respectively. 86 (10.8%) said that safety considerations were not in any way related to their patronage of tourism outfits in the Region.

Result of the Hypotheses Test

- To test the hypotheses, the simple regression analysis was used. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and the significance of the relationship was put at 95% level of probability (P-value of 0.05).

- Outputs from the test of hypothesis on the relationship between safety considerations and the Patronage of tourism outfits, fit into the simple regression equation as; $Tp = f(Sc)$

- (Where T_p=Tourism patronage and Sc = Safety Considerations)

- $Tp = a_o + b_ISc + e$

- Thus, $Tp = -.730.480 + 183.262$

- $t_1 = (-10.270)\ (-13.84)$

- $R^2 = .989$

- F= 173.825

Inferring from the regression result presented here safety considerations play a vital role in the patronage of tourism outfits, as the F calculated of (173.825) is greater than the table value of 18.51. With this, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that customers make reference to safety considerations of the tourism destination before making their choices of patronage. In other words, tourism outfits in the region with good safety network and better safety provisions are considered before the ones with low or no safety precautions.

The statistical significance of the independent variables was established through the use of the t statistics. The value of the t= statistics is given as 13.184, which is greater than the table value of 2.35. This confirms that there is a positive relationship between the patronage of tourism outfits and safety considerations of the South-south region in

Nigeria. It can be said that tourism outfits in states of the South-south region with good safety provisions are considered more than those with safety volatility. This means that if more investments are made in the area of safety in the states of the region, it will greatly impact positively on the image of the state and also the region and encourage visitor's choice of patronage. Tourism stakeholders should however, be careful not to over-secure their outfits as this may lead to some negative impact on the visitors as shown by the negative values of -730.489 and -10.270 that is reflected in the regression result and equation.

With R^2 of 0.989, the regression shows a good fit and reflects a very high predictive power. This implies that Safety considerations is considered to account for about 98.9% changes in the patronage of tourism outfits while 1.1% may be credited to variables which were not included in the model. This means that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between safety considerations and the patronage of tourism outfits is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. With this, it can be said that the safety considerations contributed significantly to the respondents' choice of visiting the Region for tourism related activities.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed a high relationship between the dependent variable (patronage of tourism outfits) and the independent variable (safety considerations). The determinants of patronage were, safety considerations like; Availability of safety personnel and safety gadgets, the state's volatility to crime and kidnap related vices, issues related to food safety and the general safety status of the Location. Collectively, safety considerations accounted for 98.9% and an important discovery was the fact that over safety could lead to reduced patronage of the tourism outfits in the states of the region.

The findings of this study are in line with what other authors had found out. Bello, Bello and Raja, (2014) had emphasized safety and safety are cardinal to sustainable tourism development. They elaborated that no tourist or tourism investor will like to visit or invest in an area or country where the safety of their life and properties are not guaranteed. This work also collaborates with Danube and Oklahoma (2007), opined that customer patronage of tourism destination in the south-south region faced safety challenges and the government had a vast role to play in creating an enabling environment for tourism destinations to thrive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that the tourism image of the region could improve if factors such as a stable political environment in the region is ensured as some militancy and activities of insurgencies emanate from certain forms of political indifferences. The government and other major tourism stakeholders should also put in place adequate measures for the protection of lives and properties. This will entail;

- Improved presence of law enforcement agents in and around tourism sites within the region

- In addition, contact numbers should be given on how to reach law enforcements, this will allow visitors to reach appropriate authorities in the case of suspicious infringement on their safety.

- Community policing and local vigilante groups should also be encouraged to enhance better safety in the area. These safety officers should be trained and retrained for better service delivery.

- the installation of appropriate safety gadgets in all tourism outfits in the region should also be adopted.

- Provision of good road networks and safety checkpoints on the road to check incessant robberies and kidnappings in the region will help encourage safety of visitors as well.

- As much as the provision of adequate safety is a plus to the image of tourism outfits, these outfits should avoid over safety as this may work to their detriment. An example of over safety could be the presence of too many policemen at a particular site at a time. That could suggest imminent danger in the psych of the visitors.

- Food safety was an important factor also raised by respondents who emphasized in this sense that they were quite conscious of the kinds of food they ate during their visits to places, to avoid food poisoning related incidences as a result of food contamination.

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APPENDIX

$n = (Zcl\ 2)\ ([P*Q]/e2)$

Where n = Sample size

Zcl =The standard Z value associated with the level of confidence

P = Estimate of expected population proportion having the desired characteristics based on prior information (pilot survey).

Q = 1 P = the estimate not having the characteristics of interest.

e = Acceptable tolerable level of error (stated in percentage).

The sample size is calculated as follows:

$= 1.962\ ([.50*.50]/.052)$

$= 3.8416(0.25/0.025)$

$= 3.8416(10)$

$= 38.\ 44\ = 38$