

Destination Attribute and Tourist Destination Choice of Port Harcourt Pleasure Park and Obudu Mountain Resort

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Abstract

Leaning on the “push-pull” theory of tourism, this study examined destination attributes that influence the destination choice of tourists. Destination attribute was dimensioned with affordability, accessibility and security/safety. Two tourist sites were chosen for the study (Port Harcourt pleasure park and Obudu mountain resort) because of their similarity in characteristics; especially, for the fact that they attract high rate of customer patronage. A total sample of 323 visitors was drawn from these two sites for the study. Mean and standard deviation techniques were used to answer the research questions; while the three hypotheses of the study were tested using the Pearson's product moment correlation. The findings showed that there is a significant direct relationship between the dimensions of destination attributes and tourist destination choice. Hence, it was concluded that the dimensions of destination attribute are strong predictors of tourist destination choice. This had implications both for theory and practice. Consequently, it was recommended that owners, operators and operations managers wishing to improve the rate at which they attract tourists to their sites and facilities should ensure that their prices are affordable by the average tourist; that their sites, facilities and services are assessable to users and that there is adequate security/safety of lives and property in and around their facilities.

Keywords: *Affordability, Accessibility, Push-pull theory, Security and Safety*

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Background to the Study

The importance and contribution of tourism sector in the advancement and development of a country cannot be overstated. Tourism according to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010) is a social, cultural and economic spectacle which encompasses the motion of people to other countries or destination sites outside their original recreational environment for personal or business/occupational reasons. UNWTO (2015) reported that the rapid surge in destination development round the globe presented tourism as a key driver of socio-economic evolution which birthed the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development. International tourism is emphasized frequently and the advancement and research of domestic tourism rather abandoned; the worth of domestic tourism outflow is significantly greater than that of inbound tourism (Huybers, 2003; Pierret, 2011; Tourism, 2010). The organizations and firms responsible for the development and elevation of domestic tourism destination need to determine the factors inducing tourists' destination choices. According to Buhalis (2000), it is documented that destination site is not only a tourism product, offering a unified experience to customers, but rather it is a continuous concept, which is understood instinctively by the tourists and is reliant on a varied range of factors. Buhalis (2010) developed a framework that captured social, cultural, personal and psychological factors, attractions, obtainable amenities, affordability, human resources and various types of tourism destinations as cases of the elements which are considered in tourist decision-making.

Consumer behavior and customer decision-making have been extensively researched in different studies (Al-Tarawneh, 2012; Baker and Crompton, 2000; Chen and Chen, 2010; Hawkins et al., 1995; Hsu et al., 2009; Moutinho, 2005; Schiffman et al., 2014; Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Nevertheless, studies concerning the decision-making in choosing Obudu Mountain Resorts, Port Harcourt Pleasure Park and other tourism sites in the South-South region as a travel destination are very limited and scarce. Even though South-South has an excessive potential for growth in tourism business, there seem to be several problems related to the industry which had distorted its growth. The cost of living is rather expensive, the level of quality service delivery is poor, necessary works like marketing campaigns and promotions are not carried out to attract tourists, the promotion of the state's tourism is not in a desired scale, etc. additional challenges such as lack of investment, planning and government will, insecurity and thuggery are other factors that characterize the states and these are not favorable to the thriving of tourism. The researcher observed that there is lack of investigations in relation to Rivers and Cross Rivers states tourism potentials and how the attributes they have can influence tourists' behavior and decision-making; hence this study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to empirically analyze factors influencing the behavior and decision-making of local tourists in choosing Port Harcourt Pleasure Park and Obudu Mountain Resort as tourist destinations.

Literature/Theoretical Framework

The foundational theory of this study is the push-pull theory which centers on the external and internal factors that facilitate a tourist's desire to visit a particular tourist site. Dann (1977) referred to a destination's attributes as the 'pull elements. According to him, the pull elements such as landscape, culture, price, service, climate etc. can pull an individual to some of the

tourism source environment such as attractions or destinations. On the other hand, the 'pull factors' can lead a traveler to select or choose a tourist destination over another once the decision to travel has been made. The 'pull factors' are said to be external forces, which have been characterized in terms of the topographies, attractions, or attributes of a destination (Klenosky, 2002). Dann also assessed the internal forces, which he termed as 'push factors'. The 'push factors' are viewed as relating to the needs and wants of a tourist, such as the craving for escape from their everyday routine, home, environment, relaxation, rest, prestige, knowledge, experience, and social interaction. Dann's 'push-pull model' provides a simple and innate approach for understanding tourists' motivations for travel, and given further explanation on why a certain tourist choose one destination over another. Dann (1981) indicated that once an individual makes the decision to embark on a tourist trip, "where to go", "what to see" or "what to do" in relation to a particular destination can be tackled. Hence, systematically, and often both logically and temporally, push factors lead to pull factors. It means that push and pull factors can be deemed as relating to two different decisions made at two separate points in time. Tourists, firstly, are pushed by their needs and wants to make a decision of 'whether to go', and then are pulled by destinations' attributes to make a decision of 'where to go'. Therefore, destination attributes are very important for a destination to be successful in attracting more tourists.

Destination Attributes

Habitually, end points (destinations) are distinct terrestrial areas (Buhalis, 2000; Hsu, Tsai, and Wu., 2009; Blasco, Guia and Prats, 2016). Tourism destination is a distinctively multifaceted product or a collection of products and services covering an area's climate, infrastructure and superstructure as well as natural and cultural attributes. This assertion is the new understanding of a destination as an economic brand which researchers have come to agree with (Blasco et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2009; Smallman and Moore, 2010). In consumer-focused literatures, Blasco et al., (2016) opined that destination is seen as a service atmosphere enabling tourist experience. To Holloway, Humphreys and Davidson (2009), destination site is an attraction site, though admitting that the term tourist attraction is evident, any destination which appeal to individuals rationally to excite them to leave their original place of residence should be appraised as a tourist attraction.

Tourist destination sites, its features and parts should be examined, proposed and packaged according to tourists' needs. Tourism destinations comprise a number of significant essentials that entice visitors and meet their needs upon arrival. Different scholars in an attempt to define tourism destination, proposed different constituents and characteristics a destination should possess (Buhalis, 2000; Holloway, et al., 2009; Jansen-Verbeke, 1986; Mill and Morrison, 1992; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Jansen-Verbeke (1986) proposed elements of tourism destination as - primary which covers activities, physical settings and social/cultural attributes; and secondary covering catering/shopping, additional elements such as accessibility and touristic information. To Mill and Morrison (1992), destination features consist of many parts which includes attractions, facilities, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality. Buhalis (2000) advocated six chief mechanisms of a destination, which include: attractions, accessibility, amenities, available packages, activities and ancillary services. However, Holloway et al.

(2009) stated that there are only three essential elements of a destination which are attractions, amenities and accessibility. Destination features according to Moutinho (2005) include cost, attractions, amenities, travel opportunities, travel arrangements and travel information. All of these attributes are all to achieve same purposes, but in a somewhat different approach, which is to make destinations appropriate and available for tourists. For the purpose of this study, three of these attributes were further reviewed as dimensions of the criterion variable. They include affordability, accessibility and security/safety.

Affordability as Attractive Attribute

One of the considerations for choosing a particular destination is largely influenced by how much a tourist is ready and willing to part with so as to enjoy the services and products such a destination offers. This is particularly the case, when tourism products are disbursed in the form of a package. The total cost of such a package is a determining factor in the choice of a destination for all but high-income tourists (Christie and Crompton, 2001). Price, according to Dwyer and Kim (2003) is categorized into two which are, travel cost – this relating to travel to and fro a destination; and ground cost – this is relating to product and service prices inside the destination. These categories of price majorly impact tourists' decision making of a destination. Price can be said to not be a very important feature for tourists until a certain destination is assessed in relation to what it offers. Tourists will normally consider whether the quality of experience, service, products and amenities attributed to a destination satisfies them as against what they are willing to pay. Price competitiveness is usually viewed as one of the vital attributes of competitiveness for a particular destination (Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto, 2003). Literatures has indicated that the affordability sensitivity of travelers is high in certain markets (Lee *et al.*, 1996).

Accessibility as Attractive Attribute

Accessibility was defined by Kim (1998), as the “ease or difficulty with which tourists reach the destination of their choice”. Convenience is a factor considered during tourists' destination choice. Tourists are most likely to choose an accessible destination when presented with a choice between similar destinations. Thus, destinations which are more accessible, convenient and proximate, is more likely to be accepted over destinations offering similar products that are less proximate (McKercher, 1998). According to Crouch and Ritchie (1996), the accessibility or proximity of a destination is influenced by factors such as broader economic, social or political concerns and government policies such as regulation of the airline industry, entry visas and permits, route connections, hubs, landing slots, airport capacities, and competition among others. From this point of view, it becomes problematic to evaluate the accessibility of a destination, based on supply-side. McKercher (1998) postulated that accessibility could be measured by the difference in the time, cost, distance, or effort required to access different destinations, based on demand-side. Accessibility can be an attractive attribute for a destination in Rivers state. In a study by Zhang and Lam (1999) of mainland Chinese travelers' motivation to visit Hong Kong, based on the 'push-pull' framework. The findings showed that accessibility and the convenience the travelers enjoy to Hong Kong is one of the top three significant pull factors that attracted mainland Chinese to Hong Kong.

Security as Attractive Attribute

Although there are many attributes associated with a destination, security is of priority for tourists when deciding on destination selection. Pizam and Mansfeld (1996) opined that security, serenity and peace are topmost factors for tourism development. According to them, tourists may not want to spend their limited resources or money on chaotic and insecure destinations that are capable of jeopardizing their safety and well-being. It has been empirically proven by tourism scholars that safety and security of a destination are critical determining factors of its competitiveness. This implies that insecurity de-markets the potentials of a destination. Insecure situations according to Dwyer and Kim (2003) include political instability/unrest, probability of terrorism, crime rates, record of transportation safety, corruption of police/administrative services, quality of sanitation, prevalence of outbreak of disease, and quality/unreliability of medical services. All these are evident in the Nigerian tourism space hence, reasons why the amazing potentials of tourism are still dormant and in their very raw state. The world is globalized hence; any serious crime against visiting and indigenous tourists hits the international headlines and impacts negatively on the image of the destination both in the short and long runs (Christie and Crompton, 2001). An example is the 1992 Florida, USA, tourist murders; the news created significant media consideration and resulted in a substantial loss of tourism patronage (Dimanche and Lepetic, 1999). The travel and tourism industry is very delicate to crisis. After the terrorists' attacks of September 11, the size of tourism related visitors in United States of America (USA) significantly reduced; and till date, U.S.A are yet to recovered from that frightening event. Particular destinations, such as the USA and countries in the Middle East, are experiencing greater downturns in visitors than others because of tourists' safety and security considerations (Dwyer and Kim, 2003). Tourists' perceptions of safety and security to a destination will have a significant effect on the destination's image. Researchers have testified that the image of a destination can significantly impact on tourists' destination choice (Goodrich, 1978; Hunt, 1975; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Scott *et al.*, 1978). Hence, a good safety and security image can attract more tourists to visit a particular destination.

Consumer Behavior, Decision-Making and Tourist Destination Choice

Scholars have asserted that understanding of how tourists behave and what motivate them is important for tourism organizations in order to appropriately create the demand tourists want and also help tourists in decision-making (Blasco *et al.*, 2016; Decrop and Kozak, 2014; Djeri *et al.*, 2007; Hsu *et al.*, 2009; Van and Slabbert, 2011). Tourist behavior is a problematic concept to research due to emotional factors that vary significantly in its study (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). Tourist behavior can be defined as the attitudes, decisions, activities, ideas or experiences in using, buying, estimating and searching of products and services that satisfy tourism needs (Cohen, Prayag and Moita, 2014; Schiffman *et al.*, 2014; Van Vuuren and Slabbert, 2011). How people articulate decisions to apply their available assets (time, money, effort) on purchasing things is the main concentration of tourist behavior scholars. Scholars have acknowledged tourist decision process as a very complex, multi-faceted course that includes diverse interconnected stages or sub-decisions, elements and concepts (Cohen *et al.*, 2014; Hsu *et al.*, 2009; Smallman and Moore, 2010). Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2011) stated that the continuous interaction and reaction of an individual to environmental, societal or organizational factors is regarded as behavior. Tourist decision-making can be defined as the act and process of selecting

from among available solutions of a problem in alignment to the demands of the present circumstance (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). The major problem encountered during decision-making process is that of choice (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). This was explained and proven through the choice set approach theory. To Djeri, (2007), decision-making presumes making a choice between two or more than two options. According to Moutinho (1987), the multiplicity of available choices to consumers fuels their confusion to making a decision. This confusion motivates the consumer to choose what will return immediate value for money. Generally, tourists are guided by funneling process of choices among different destinations.

Decision-making is categorized into five stages which include recognition of problem, alternative information search, alternative evaluation and selection (choice), selection and purchase, and post purchase process (Hawkins et al., 1995; Moutinho, 1987; Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). According to Um and Crompton (1990), there are three basic phases in a tourism destination choice. The first phase is the awareness set; the second is disposing of some of those destinations to produce a deliberation or consideration set; and the last is destination chosen from those in the consideration set. Tourists are seen to have massive amount of information that they have to analyze and, consequently, choose a destination they need (Crompton, 1992). The process of tourist decision-making when picking a destination is influenced by variable factors, dependent on the tourist needs and conducts, as well as of the influence of macro factors (Djeri et al., 2007). Micro decision-making factors include craving for escape, rest, relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure, and social interaction; while macro factors are based on attractiveness of the destination, including tangible resources, and tourist's perceptions and expectations (Hsu et al., 2009).

Empirical Literature

Affordability and Tourist Destination Choice

Tourism is either for leisure, business or recreation (WTO, 2015). In as much as tourism is an activity encouraged by many, one factor that has further hindered the participation in tourism is the cost of participation. A study by Javid and Roma (2016) titled "Factors Influencing Local Tourists' Decision-Making on Choosing a Destination: A Case of Azerbaijan" showed that tourist decision is mostly influenced by the price they are willing to pay. This research which sought to understand the elements that motivate tourists, further stated that since consumers are rational, they look out only for the services that give value for money. The study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was used to give understanding to the topic and assess conclusions. Primary data was collected by surveying domestic travelers of Azerbaijan. Survey results were analyzed by descriptive statistics, non-parametric tests and factor analysis. The researchers considered other destination attributes but stated that since people can only spend on value they perceive they will get; they are less motivated to choose destinations that will not offer consummate value. Affordability is a major motivator and it plays a major role in the destination choice making process. If the price of a destination is high, there are tendencies that such a destination will not enjoy good tourist consideration and patronage. Affordability is the ability of the visitor to able to meet the cost of purchasing a destination and the use of its amenities. Tourists consider the price they are charged before choosing a destination, hence their demand for value for money. If a destination is not affordable, it will scare its potential visitors. Studies conducted in destinations in Europe, Asia and United Arab Emirate has

shown that due to the cost of destinations, middle class people find it difficult to visit even when they want to. In Lau (2004), affordability ranked the highest of all attributes when respondents were asked of the attribute that mattered most to them. This finding indicated that tourists consider more affordable destinations ahead of pricy ones; not even minding the sophistication of other destinations. This implies that even when a destination has all the features and attractive attributes, if the price is expensive, tourists would most likely not consider such a destination. Nevertheless, these needs to be tested in the context of this study; hence, the hypothesis that:

H₀:1 There is no significant relationship between affordability and tourist destination choice.

Accessibility and Tourist Destination Choice

It has been repeatedly found that accessibility is a crucial factor in tourism industry (Weed and Bull, 2004), as it is one of the determinants for destination competitiveness (Mill and Morrison, 1992). Guiver and Stanford (2014) have propounded that the accessibility of a destination tends to enhance its attractiveness as well as enhance tourists' satisfaction (Darcy, 2010). On their part, Frías-Jamilena, Barrio-García and López-Moreno (2013) asserted that better accessibility quality tends to enhance tourists' perceived value in relation to their spending; and will increase their satisfaction level. According to Lichen (2005) one of the key elements in the tourist decision making process is the accessibility of a potential tourist destination. The scholar in his work on destination attributes that attracts international tourist to Cape Town South Africa, which involved 350 international tourists in ten selected destinations further revealed that accessibility to the destination, shopping malls, hospitals and other attractive sceneries influence tourist decision. Similarly, Geoffrey (2004) in his experimental study involving 275 meeting planners that were interviewed on convention site selection determinants found that accessibility to any other facility apart from the destination is unimportant in deciding for a tourist destination. Based on this review, there seem to be a general acceptance of the fact that accessibility significantly correlates with tourist destination choice. However, this needs to be tested in the context of this study. Hence the hypothesis that:

H₀:2 There is no significant relationship between accessibility and tourist destination choice.

Safety/Security and Tourist Destination Choice

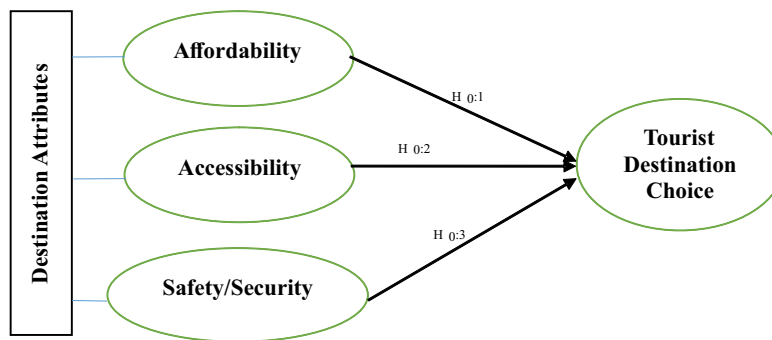
A study by Demos (1992) inspected the subject of tourists' insights while on holiday in Washington, DC. Demos' research engaged visitors (holiday makers, business people and those visiting friends or relatives) to the city during the early 1990s in a conversation. The research was necessitated by the likelihood that the city's tourism industry was under threat due to surge in crime rate. The study found that the number of tourists' previous visits and their demographic profile such as gender, marital status, and level of education influenced their perceptions. Furthermore, the study showcased that a third of visitors were very much anxious about the security challenges in the city, and 39% sued that they felt insecure in the city after dark. Nevertheless, only a third of visitors, mainly those with sophisticated educational status were more likely to consider security in destination choice making process and as such will quickly report security threats than visitors with lower educational levels. This category of visitors saw

security as the basic element that might discourage them from returning to Washington DC; otherwise, most professed that insecurity in the city would not daunt them from a return visit. In a related investigation, Pinhey and Iverson (1994) examined security apprehensions by concentrating on distinctive holiday activities between tourists to Guam. They informed that Japanese visitors to Guam were more likely to report security issues when they participated in activities that did not take them too far away from their hotels. They also noted that younger, wealthy Japanese tourists felt less secured when taking part in a number of leisure pursuits than other respondents. Pinhey and Iverson focused on several issues that influence tourist choice; but their study did not take into cognizance other destination attributes such as food, accommodation, transportation and visiting tourist attractions.

On their part, Milman and Bach (1999), evaluated the impact of the industry's insecurity preventative measures on tourists' perception of security in Orlando, Florida. They discovered that respondents, who were surveyed at various hotels and motels, generally perceived central Florida to be a better secured destination. Their findings revealed that traveler's preceding experience to insecurity influenced their general sense of security; and that certain security strategies, such as CCTV (closed circuit television), better quality illumination and the engaging of hotel security staff, gave visitors a greater sense of safety. In a follow up study, Brunt et al. (2000) surveyed British tourists to assess their observations and experiences of crime while on holiday. Dissimilar to most other studies, their investigation did not make use of official police statistics but their own findings from a victim survey. Additionally, the survey instruments related to the respondent's previous holiday experiences. Their findings, though collated from a diverse standpoint, match the prevailing tourist victimization literature, such as the investigations carried by Chesney-Lind and Lind (1986), de Albuquerque and McElroy (1999), as well as Harper (2001), which asserted that tourists are more vulnerable to victimization than local residents which form a big factor in deciding for a destination. Brunt et al's study also found that tourists showed low levels of concern about safety, and even those that had been victims of crime (mainly property or motor vehicle theft) usually felt that their holiday location had been safe. Nevertheless, Mawby (2000) later reviewed the findings of Brunt et al (2000) in the context of a risk–fear paradox. Mawby opined that criminologists have revealed that the fear of crime appears to be out of proportion to the real risk of crime. On one hand, the reports of insecurity amplify the threat of crime at tourism destinations. On the other hand, tourists' fears can well be vindicated, given the indication provided by tourism researchers of high crime rates in tourist areas and the tendency of tourists to fall victims of such. Mawby further advised that tourists should be informed of the risks of visiting tourist areas before making decision of tourism destinations. These postulations indicate that while some people accept that safety and security are major factors to be considered in tourist destination choice, some others think otherwise. Hence the need to hypothesize on the proposed relationship in the context of this study that:

H₀:3 There is no significant relationship between safety/security and tourist destination choice.

Fig. 1: Diagrammatic Model of Possible Relationship between Destination Attributes and Tourist Destination Choice



Source: Adapted from Buhalis (2000); Brunt, Mawby and Hambly (2000)

Methodology

The research sites of this study are Obudu Mountain Resort in Calabar and Port Harcourt Pleasure Park in Rivers State. These two sites were chosen because of their similarities in terms of their features (i.e. their destination attributes) and acceptance among tourists. They provide homestay services, and the availability of natural scenery. The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study; while a research questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The target population comprised visitors who to the study sites. Due to the infinite nature of this population, the Cochran's formula for sample size determination in an infinite population was used to determine the number of visitors to be sampled. According to Cochran (1977) the formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{(Z_{\alpha/2})^2 PQ}{e^2}$$

Where

P = Probability that the sample will possess the required attributes.

Q = Probability that the sample will not possess the required attributes (1- *P*).

e = Tolerable error (0.05).

Z/₂ = 1.96 from the critical table *Z* of 0.05 under infinity .

= 0.05, the significant level

n = Sample size

Applying this formula to the present study, the sample size *n* is put at 323 which is obtained as follows:

$$n = \frac{(Z_{\alpha/2})^2 PQ}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.7)(0.3)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416)(0.7)(0.3)}{(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{0.806746}{0.0025} = 322.69 = 323$$

To effectively capture responses from both tourist sites, the obtained sample size was purposively distributed to visitors of the two sites; with Port Harcourt Pleasure Park getting 160 while Obudu Mountain Resort got 163. Thereafter, 310 copies of the responded questionnaire were retrieved and found useful for the analysis; representing a 95.9 percentage return rate. The variables were measured with 5-items each on a 5-point Likert-like scale ranging from 5 to 1 measured as follows: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = disagree, 2 = strongly disagree and 1 = undecided. Validity of the instrument was ascertained using face and construct validity; while reliability of the instrument was determined via the Cronbach Alpha test which reported acceptable reliability values of 0.787 for Affordability, .754 for Accessibility, .786 for Safety/security and .798 for customer satisfaction. Frequency and percentages were used for analyzing respondents' demographics; while mean and standard deviation techniques were used to perform the univariate analysis. Pearson's Product moment correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. These computations were performed with the aid of SPSS version 20.0. The variables were operationally measured by asking such questions as “The price of the service and amenities attracted me here” and “I considered the price implications before settling for this destination” for affordability; “The transportation around this destination is good” and “The location of this destination is very strategic” for accessibility; “There is adequate security within and around this destination site” and “Security and safety were my first major consideration” for security/safety and

Results and Discussion of Findings

The results have been presented in tables with accompanying explanations.

Table 1: Results for Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	121	39.0
	Female	189	61.0
	Total	310	100
Age	From 20-29	82	26.5
	From 30-39	102	32.9
	From 40-49	78	25.1
	More Than 50 years	48	15.5
	Total	310	100
Educational Qualification	O'Level	101	32.6
	OND	77	24.8
	HND/ B.Sc	79	25.5
	PGD/ M.Sc	47	15.2
	Ph. D	6	1.9
	Total	310	100

Source: Survey Report, 2019

From table 1, gender distribution of the respondents indicates that 61.0% of the respondents were females, and 39.0% were males. This implied that majority of the participants in this study were females. The age distribution of respondents was divided into four groups, and the lowest age groups were those between the ages 20 to 29 years which comprised of 26.5% of the sampled population. The analysis further showed that about 32.9% of the respondents were within the age of 30 to 39, while those within the age 40 to 49 were about 25.1% and 15.5% were above 50 years of age. This shows that majority of participants used for the current study have their age range within 36 to 41 years, followed by those with age bracket 30 to 35. Those above 50 years were the least percentage of the total sampled population. Analysis of participants' educational qualification showed that about 32.6% have O'Level, 24.8% OND, 25.5% HND/B.Sc, 15.2% PGD/M.Sc and 1.9% P.hD. This implies that majority of participants are holders of O'level certificate, followed by those with HND and B. SC certificate.

Table 2: Analysis of Research Questions on Affordability

	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	The price of the service and amenities attracted me here	3.67	1.33	Accepted
2.	I considered the price implications before settling for this destination	3.79	1.33	Accepted
3.	I prefer this destination than travelling oversea because of the cost implications	3.57	1.34	Accepted
4.	The site is affordable for both low- and high-income earners	3.96	1.24	Accepted

Source: Survey Report, 2019.

Table 2 indicated that respondents subscribed to items 1-4. The items in these areas were accepted since their mean values were above the criterion mean of 3.0. Hence, it is evident that the respondents agreed that cost i.e. affordability was vital in their choice of the destination. Respondents also pointed that the cost of services and products at the destinations if it is pocket friendly will influence the decision of more customers; thereby increasing the destination patronage and competitiveness.

Table 3: Analysis of Research Questions on Accessibility

	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	The transportation around this destination is good	3.86	1.20	Accepted
2.	The location of this destination is very strategic	3.69	1.36	Accepted
3.	It was easy locating this destination	3.69	1.35	Accepted
4.	Accessing other facilities from here is very easy	3.63	1.37	Accepted

Source: Survey Report, 2019.

Table 3 indicated that all items in 5-8 were accepted as applicable since their mean values were above the criterion mean of 3.0. This implies that the respondents subscribed to the fact that the accessibility of the destination played a major role in their decision of which tourist site to visit.

Table 4: Analysis of Research Questions on Safety/Security

	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	The community has strong government presence	3.69	1.49	Accepted
2.	There is adequate security within and around this destination site	3.90	1.27	Accepted
3.	Security and safety were my first major consideration	3.71	1.32	Accepted
4.	Insecurity discourages tourists from going to their preferred destinations	3.71	1.27	Accepted

Source: Survey Report, 2019.

Table 4 indicated that all items in 9-12 were accepted as applicable since their mean values were above the criterion mean of 3.0. It is therefore evident that visitors are security conscious of the destination(s) they want to visit; as such, consider it a very big factor in their decision-making process.

Table 5: Analysis of Research Question on Tourist Destination Choice

	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	The landscape of this destination influenced my decision of this destination facility	3.67	1.33	Accepted
2.	the fact that I get to learn of other cultures from this tourism facility influenced my decision-making process	3.79	1.33	Accepted
3.	The history about the host community attitude was a good element in my consideration of this destination	3.57	1.34	Accepted
4.	The structures, infrastructures and tourism superstructures here are fascinating	3.96	1.24	Accepted

Source: Survey Report, 2019

It is evident from table 5 that all items in 13-16 were accepted by the respondents as applicable since their mean values were above the criterion mean of 3.0. This implies that the respondents agreed that both the pull and push attributes of the destination influenced their decision-to accept these sites as their destinations of choice. This simply points to the fact that when the landscape, cultural values, host community reception and good tourism facilities are in place, it will influence the decision of more customers for these sites thereby, increasing the destination patronage and competitiveness.

Result and Discussion of Hypothesis One

H₀:1 There is no significant relationship between affordability and tourist destination choice.

Decision rule:

If p-value is greater than alpha value, uphold the null hypothesis and disregard the alternate. However, if p-value is less than alpha value, disregard the null hypothesis and uphold the alternate. Table 5 shows the SPSS output of this analysis.

Table 5: Correlation between Affordability and Tourist Destination Choice

		Affordability	Tourist Destination Choice
Affordability	Pearson Correlation	1	.891**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	310	310
Tourist Destination Choice	Pearson Correlation	.891**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	310	310

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Data Analysis Output, 2019.

The output on table 5 shows that the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.891$) between affordability and tourist destination choice has a strong positive linear relationship. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.79$) indicates that 79% of tourist's choice decision can be explained by affordability attribute; leaving the remaining 21% to other exogenous variables. The probability value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was not upheld; implying that there is a significant relationship between affordability and tourist destination choice. This finding agrees with that of Javid and Roma (2016) who postulated that price is a major influencer of customers' decisions as tourists want to get value for money. It equally agreed with the finding of Lau (2004) who hypothesized that pricing as an attraction strategy is a motivating factor for destination choice. Support was also found in Huybers (2003) assertion on price as an attribute that motivates patronage was upheld.

Result and Discussion of Hypothesis Two

H₀:2 There is no significant relationship between accessibility and tourist destination choice.

Table 6: Correlation between Accessibility and Tourist Destination Choice

		Accessibility	Tourist Destination Choice
Accessibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.932**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	310	310
Tourist Destination Choice	Pearson Correlation	.932**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	310	310

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Data Analysis Output, 2019.

The output of table 6 indicated that the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.932$) between accessibility and tourist destination choice has a strong positive linear relationship. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.87$) indicates that about 87% of tourist destination choice can be explained by accessibility attribute. The probabilities value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was not upheld. This means that, there is a significant relationship between accessibility and tourist destination choice. The findings of hypothesis two revealed that accessibility is an attribute customers/tourists consider during decision-making. This finding agrees with that of Weed and Bull (2004) who in their study found that accessible destinations are better placed to attract visitors. Other findings that support this claim are Mill and Morrison (1992), Guiver and Stanford (2014). These studies all found that accessibility is a destination attribute that contributes greatly to destination patronage.

Result and Discussion of Hypothesis Three

H₀:3 There is no significant relationship between security/safety and tourist destination choice.

Table 7: Correlation between Security/Safety and Tourist Destination Choice

		Accessibility	Tourist Destination Choice
Security/Safety	Pearson Correlation	1	.890**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	310	310
Tourist Destination Choice	Pearson Correlation	.890**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	310	310

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Data Analysis Output, 2019.

The output on table 7, indicates that the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.890$) between Security/Safety and tourist destination choice has a strong positive linear relationship. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.79$) indicates that about 79% of tourist destination choice can be explained by the security/safety attribute. The probability value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) shows a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was not upheld. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between security/safety and tourist destination choice. This finding corroborates that of Demos (1992) who in his work conjectured that security attribute is a huge concern that influences decision on tourist destinations. Demos stated that no tourist wants to visit a site where their wellbeing and safety will be in jeopardy. Also supportive is the finding of Milman and Bach (1999) who used their study to state that security forms the most basic consideration during a tourist destination decision-making process. According to them, insecurity gives a destination bad image; as such, scares potential visitors. Support for this finding was also found in Brunt et al (2000) when they used the outcome of their study to postulate that crime prone areas or hostile destinations will not attract tourists' patronage.

Conclusions and Implications

The study examined the relationship between destination attributes and tourist destination choice. The criterion variable was dimensioned with affordability, accessibility and security/safety. Two tourist sites were chosen for the study (Port Harcourt Pleasure Park and Obudu mountain resort) because of the similar characteristics they possess in terms of high rate of customer patronage. A total sample of 323 visitors was drawn from these two sites for the study. However, the analyses were based on 310 copies of the responded questionnaire. The findings showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between destination attributes and tourist destination choice in the two sites of this study. In other words, the dimensions of destination attribute are strong predictors of tourist destination choice. The implication of this is that this study affirms earlier position of scholars who had hypothesized that destination attributes influenced the decision of tourists in their choice of destinations. This also affirms the push-pull theory that tourists are attracted to a particular destination by

the factors in that environment that are of interest to the tourist and are capable of satisfying his cravings. In practice, the findings imply that tourist site operators can improve the rate at which tourists choose their sites by ensuring that their sites and facilities possess attributes and qualities that are of interest to most tourists. Such attributes as affordability, accessibility and security/safety are proven to be some of the most desired features.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings, conclusions and implications of this study, it was recommended that owners, operators and operations managers wishing to improve the rate at which they attract tourists to their sites and facilities should endeavor to do the following:

1. They should ensure that their prices are affordable by the average tourist. This they can achieve through effective cost management and pricing strategy. For instance, they can liaise with manufacturers or producers of some of the facilities they use to make supplies to them and work out a convenient payment plan. This will significantly reduce cost and make their services affordable unlike when they make purchases from markers or suppliers.
2. They need to make their sites, facilities and services assessable to users. To ensure this, they can lobby relevant authorities and organizations to create and maintain access roads to their facilities. They can as well collaborate with sister and neighboring organizations achieve this. The use of different forms of media especially the internet and social media can help to create the need awareness and access to their products and services.
3. They must of necessity ensure the security and safety of lives and property in and around their facilities. As challenging as this may be, they can employ the services security personnel, local vigilante groups, host community collaborations and extensive use of modern security gadgets like CCTV cameras as well as necessary safety and precautionary measures.

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