

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*