Security and Tourism Development at Nature Conservation Centre Lagos, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Insecurity constitutes a challenge to tourism development globally. Yet, tourism industry is a major contributing factor to the economic development of many nations, with multiplier effects such as the creation of direct and indirect jobs and the enhancement of world's peace. This study focuses on security and tourism development in Nigeria, using Nature Conservation Centre, Lagos as a case, paying attention to the extent to which the security measures at the Centre contribute to tourists' security at the Centre, and the promotion of tourism. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in data collection, using such methods as key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, participant observation and questionnaires. A sample size of 146 research participants participated in the study. Analysed data were presented using descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, percentages and tables, while qualitative data were presented qualitatively. The study established that the management of Nature Conservative Centre is safety conscious, and has put in place safety measures to make tourists feel safe at the Centre. Security personnel are employed, and Complaints Register and other intelligence that are not made known to outsiders are available. The Centre also builds relationship with Lagos State Security Watch, the Nigeria Police via Police Community Relations Committee and community policing. The management is working towards introducing technologically innovative security measures such as E-gate, which will help to synchronise all the security system at the site. Tourists at Nature Conservative Centre feel safe, leading to an improvement in patronage. Improving on security at the Centre requires more training for security personnel, improvement on security information at strategic places, and provision of feedback on security measures. Tourists are likely to visit destinations where their lives and property are safe, while providing them with relaxation, recreation and memorable experience.

Key words: Security, conservation Centre, tourism, Lagos, Nigeria

1.1   Introduction

The tourism industry is currently the world's largest industry, contributing tremendously toward improving the standard of living in people in many countries (Smeral, 2006). According to Kennedy and Doran (2009), tourism has the ability to "harness its power in the developed world and become a force for poverty reduction and aid in the development process" (Kennedy and Doran, 2009: 183). Indeed, tourism has multiplier effects in the tourism generating regions through the creation of many direct and indirect jobs, thus reducing unemployment in such regions. International organizations perceived the economic viabilities of tourism, its contribution to world's peace, poverty alleviation and the benefits of the intercultural contacts at various destinations, and the fact that tourism is a relatively 'clean' industry if adequately managed (Cooper *et al*, 2005). Modern society, Samovar *et al.* (2007) reason, "must learn to cooperate in order to prevent their mutual self-destruction" (Samovar *et al.*, 2007: 1). International cooperation is expedient if global goals and objectives must be achieved. Goals such as achieving international security and dealing with global warming, for instance, demands the cooperation of nations. Tourism provides the platforms for people of many cultures to come in contact, hence its relevance in a globalised world, and in achieving global goals, besides enriching a nation's economy.

Aware of the importance of tourism in the Twenty First Century, governments of different countries devise various plans and policies towards ensuring productivity and sustenance of their tourism industries. The Ugandan Parliament for instance, was reported to have passed the country's Tourism Bill into law in 2007 towards ensuring overall control and monitoring of various tourism activities in Uganda for efficiency, productivity and sustenance in the industry (African Hospitality and Tourism [AHT], 2008). Also, towards ensuring standard and security of tourists in Seychelles, the government of that country through Seychelles Licensing Authority and Seychelles Tourism Board (STB), closed down the Plantation Club Resort and Casino (the largest resort hotel in Seychelles), which was established in 1989, for not meeting up with the required standard of security of tourists to Seychelles and boosting economic growth and sustenance in Seychelles through tourism (African Hospitality and Tourism, 2008). Most of these national governments have developed tourism master plans, which are to serve as guides towards a sustainable and result-oriented tourism programme. In Nigeria, the nation's most current Tourism Master Plan outlined different development strategies for the nation's tourism programme and articulated guide for investors, employers and employees in the tourism sector. This is aimed at proper monitoring and controlling of activities in the tourism sector. Such is to ensure sustainable tourism development in Nigeria

and also enhance economic viabilities of tourism to the nation's Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) (Fadipe, 2007: 23). These efforts point to the economic viabilities of tourism to national economies, besides the promotion of global peace. The importance of tourism in the economic development of any nature has therefore been identified by different governments, and efforts are made to ensure its sustainability.

Increasingly also, nations of the world are realising the importance of security for the development of tourism and its sustainability. The security of tourists while on a tourist visit rests mostly on the standard of safety and security at tourist destinations, and the larger society where the tourism site is located. And tourists are motivated to travel to destinations with improved security standard (Cooper *et al.*, 2005). The ultimate desire of tourists in their various tourist destinations is hampered due to the high rate of risk, just as the standard of security in a tourist site is enhanced by the security consciousness of various aspects of the tourism industry. Ejarque, (2005) identified elements to be considered in the analysis of tourist destination competitiveness to include, "the geographical location, environmental and physical conditions, demographical situation, existing tourist attractions, image perceived and image associated with the tourist destination, tourist resources natural, cultural, activities, infrastructure and service" (Ejarque, 2005 cited in Dugulan, *et al.*, 2010:1). The availability and accessibility of these tourist attractions are necessary for a sustainable tourism development of a destination (Agnew, 1997; Ekechukwu, 2008). To this end, sustainable tourism planning of any destination requires the availability and preservation of potential tourist attraction, and security of tourists to motivate tourist traffic and sustainable economic growth and development of the area.

According to Olsen and Cassee (1996, as cited by Chiang 2000) safety and security are one of the overall five global forces that drive the tourism industry in the Twenty First Century. For consumers of tourism, security is probably one of the most important elements within this industry. Although security in the tourism sector has always been an important matter in the past decades, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to deal with due to economic growth and rising population (Hall *et al.* 2003), besides international integration and intercultural contacts. As a population grows, so does the likelihood of security issues increase because the number of people that carry out such activities also increases. Mansfeld and Pizam (2006) argue that every security incident such as war, civil unrest, terrorism or crime does not only have a negative effect on the destination itself but also to the local community, the tourists and its stakeholders. Security incidents do not only affect the concerned destination but often also the surrounded regions and in the worst case the whole tourism system (Hall *et al.*, 2003). Especially in developing countries where there is obvious lack of capacity to manage various forms of risks such as natural and man-made disaster, which are common, it is important to reduce or control the risk factors in order to make tourist destinations more attractive to tourists. The development of a tourism sector cannot be achieved in a single day. It is a slow and time-consuming process that requires a lot of effort. However, the improvement of a proper security system may be the first step towards it. Exploring security and tourism development in Nigeria, using Nature Conservation Centre, Lagos as a case, this article pays attention to the relations between security and tourism. It explores the extent to which security measures at Nature Conservation Centre contribute to making the Centre safe for tourists' visits, thereby promoting tourism. It is important we point out that 'Nature Conservation Centre' and the names of research participants as used in this article are pseudonyms, as the real names of the site and the research participants have been concealed for the purpose of the protection of the organisation and the workers. The use of pseudonyms in an ethnographic research in not novel as this has been used severally by anthropologists and other qualitative researchers (see for instance Ukpokolo, 2012; 2013, Ezeh, 2012). This article, specifically, attempts to provide answers to the following questions: What are the tourist attractions at Nature Conservation Centre? What security issues are common in select local government areas in Lagos State where the Nature Conservation Centre is located? What are the security measures put in place at Nature Conservation Centre to mitigate security threats at the Centre? How can security measures at Nature Conservation Centre be improved upon? The argument in this article is that there is an unavoidable link between security and tourism development. The article provides a case in point to establish this interconnectedness. Tourists are drawn to destinations where their lives and property are safe, while at the same time providing them with relaxation, recreation and memorable experience, hence the need for stakeholders in tourism industry to provide measures to mitigate threats of insecurity.

1.2   Theoretical Framing

This study adopted Maslow's Motivational Theory proposed in 1970, particularly, the 'Maslow's Hierarchical Model' as an explanatory framework. The major concern of this theory is to underscore what

motivates a tourist to travel to a given tourist destination. We argue that what motivate a tourist to make a move away from home is 'Needs'. Following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model, the needs are arranged in a hierarchical order. As Cooper *et al.,* noted, "if one of the needs in the hierarchy was satisfied, then the lowest needs, the psychological ones, would dominate behaviours" (Cooper *et al.*, 2005: 54). The idea is that "if these were satisfied, however, they would no longer motivate and the individual would be motivated by the next level in the hierarchy" (Cooper *et al.*, 2005: 54). Below is the Maslow's hierarchy of needs;
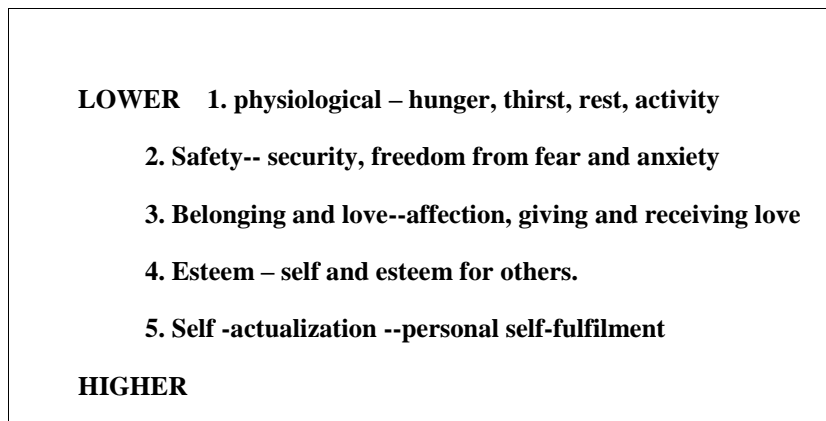
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LOWER   **1. physiological – hunger, thirst, rest, activity**

2. Safety-- security, freedom from fear and anxiety

3. Belonging and love--affection, giving and receiving love

4. Esteem – self and esteem for others.

5. Self -actualization --personal self-fulfilment

HIGHER

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Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Adopted from Cooper *et al.*, 2005).

From Figure 1 above, it is seen that among the major motivations of travel from one's home to another place is security. Maslow further identified two motivational types which are simplified as thus:

- Deficiency or tension-reducing motives
- Inductive or arousal-seeking motives (Cooper *et al.*, 2005).

The implication is that security is prioritised when tourists make decisions on where to visit for tourism activities. The standard of security in the tourist destination is among the major factors that motivates tourist to select a particular tourist destination for their recreation or other tourism purposes. Risk prone destinations are likely to be avoided. The motivational theory does not only apply to destinations but also to various tourist products and services. Tourism products and services that are risk prone stand to attract less or minimal patronage from prospective tourists.

1.3   Research Context and Methods

Nature Conservation Centre where this study was carried out covers a land area of 78 hectare is located on a peninsula, and near the Lagos Lagoon. It protects the wetlands, which consists of swamp and savannah habitats. It is endowed with an abundance of plant and animal life. Its huge tract of wetlands is set aside for wildlife viewing. Raised walkways enable viewing of animals like monkeys, crocodiles, snakes and various birds. There is also a conservation centre and a library. The wetlands consists of eight system of footpaths, with hiking trails and stepping stones to cross waterways. Side attractions along the trail include swamp outlook, bird hide, rest stops and the tree house. The 1.8km nature trail behind the foremost main buildings is connected by two wooden tracks. A sturdy wooden track leading to the nature trail reveals an expansive stretch of marshland and savannah grassland teeming with wildlife, as well as rich aquatic flora and fauna. There's also a tree house which is a twenty-one meters-high tree platform where one can have a panoramic view of the picnic area, reserve, visitor's centre and children's playground. The bird hide overlooks a swamp, which is home to crocodiles and monitor lizards. The nature reserve traverses a mosaic of vegetation types, secondary forest, swamp forest and Savannah grassland. Several bird species can be seen here and it is also a popular site for school excursions.

The study adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches, and data were generated through participant observation, key informant interviews and questionnaire. Written materials such as textbooks, journals, past related projects, magazines, encyclopaedia and Internet were also consulted. Purposive sampling procedure was adopted for the key informant interview, and random sampling was employed for the administration of questionnaires to visiting tourists. Visiting tourists to the destination were identified and a total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were randomly distributed to them over a period of four weeks to get their view on the study topic out of which one hundred and forty-four (144) of the

questionnaires were retrieved. Two workers at the Centre – one in managerial position at the Centre and a security personnel - were the key informants. In all, 146 people eventually participated in the research out of the initial 150 participants. Data gathered from the field work survey was analysed Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and result presented in frequency counts, percentages and tables. The actual names of the informants have not been used in the data presentation as earlier indicated for the purpose of confidentiality and anonymity.

2.   Tourist Attractions at Nature Conservation Centre

Nature Conservation Centre (NCC) came into being as a place that would serve as an outdoor focal point to reorient the ecological reality of Nigerians. The centre was conceived to be a site that would promote environmental education and sustainable environmental management. With time, the Centre has become a model for involving members of the local community in natural resource management and conservation, and has grown to be a much sought after tourism destination. Presently, the Lagos State government has officially recognised NCC and has listed it as the pristine heritage and monument site in Lagos State. One of our respondents, Mr Thomson John, averred that NCC is one of the most urban nature parks in Nigeria and the African sub-region. He noted that people from all over Africa and beyond come to visit the centre and, in 2014 and 2015 it was the TripAdvisor winner as a prime destination for both years consecutively. According to Mr Thomson John, the Centre is a pearl of ecotourism and "it's an open door laboratory for research students just like you", (referring to one of the authors). Findings indicate that researchers visit NCC as for the purpose of academic research, particularly students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The site has therefore contributed to scientific knowledge in Nigeria and beyond.

Meanwhile, Mr Benson David, the Manager, noted that NCC was found by a Lagosian family. According to him, the site was intended to be a place to act as a conservation and tourist attraction for people living in the area, and for key animals that live inside this forest. Mr Thomson John, another worker at NCC enumerated some of the tourist attractions that bring tourists to the centre to include the canopy walk (see Plate 1), which is known to be the longest canopy walk in Africa and the crocodile swamp, which can be found below the reconstructed nature trail (see Plate 3).

Plate 2: Tree House located at Nature Conservation Centre (Source: Fieldwork, August 2018).

It is known to be habitat to a lot of crocodiles and different species of fishes and other animals. Another attraction is the tree house (see Plate 2) which is a twenty-one meters-high tree

Plate 3: Nature trail located at Nature Conservation Centre (Source: Fieldwork, August 2018).

platform where one can have a panoramic view of the picnic area, reserve, Visitor's Centre and Children's Playground among the trees, and also the picnic park and gazebos. The open grasslands are home to bushbucks, Maxwell's duikers, giant rats, hogs, mongooses, chameleons, squirrels, an impressive variety of birdlife and rare species of monkey called the *mona* monkey (see Plate 4).

Plate 4: Mona Monkey in Nature reserve at Nature Conservation Centre (Source: Fieldwork, August 2018).

3. Crime in Select Local Government Areas in Lagos

Urban insecurity threatens the quality of life, human rights, social and economic stability and also sustainable tourism development in cities around the world. Without a deliberate effort to address this situation, the prospects of sustainable tourism development remains bleak. Rapid urban growth has increasingly undermined the capacity of most cities to provide adequate basic facilities for their citizens. Yet each year, cities experience influx of new entrants who, together with the increasing native population, expand the number of squatter settlements, which exacerbate the problem of urban safety and security (Salau, 2009). According to Tibaijuka (2007), about 60 per cent of all urban residents in developing countries have been victims of crime. Therefore, rapid urbanisation remains a major contribution to urban insecurity in Africa.

Having attained a megacity status with a population of 17.5million, a population density rate of 20,000 per square metre (Lagos State Government, 2012), and an annual population increase of 375,000 persons per annum (Lagos State Government/UNDP 2011, Lagos State Government, 2012), Lagos State serves as a major migration destination for indigenes of Nigeria's hinterlands as well as surrounding African countries. As such, there is severe strain on existing social infrastructure and an increase in the population of unemployed and underemployed persons. Thus, surrounding slums and shantytowns of the Lagos Metropolis offer fertile breeding grounds for criminal activities. The rate of crime occurrence has grown to near epidemic proportions mainly due to population explosion, economic inequality and deprivation, social disorganization, poor governance and law enforcement incapacity (Murray *et al.*, 2001).

According to Oduwaye and Lawanson (2007), Lagos State is faced with a plethora of security issues ranging from the high prevalence of miscreants, that is, area boys, juvenile delinquency, kidnapping, cultism, to ethnic clashes and political violence. Urban gangs or area boys are mainly located in the slums of Mushin, Shitta and Isale Eko areas. Land disputes and extortion, usually accompanied by widespread violence, are common among the *Omo-Oniles* ('owners of the land') of Ajah and other emerging settlements on the fringes of the metropolis. According to Nigerian Police Crime Report (2017), ethnic clashes usually occur in the shantytowns of Idi-Araba and Ladipo-Mushin. Incidents of crime are also more frequent in the low income areas of Agege (1,858) and Somolu (1,350), compared to the middle and high income areas of Surulere (654), Apapa (503) and Eti-Osa (361) as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Crimes reported in Some Local Government Areas of Lagos Metropolis from 2013- 2017

Local Govt Area	Burglary	Armed Robbery	Bank Robbery	Threatening and Violence	Common Assault	Murder	False Pretence	Car Theft	Sudden Unnatural Death	Total
Eti Osa	49	81	5	21	115	7	22	56	5	361
Apapa	40	67	11	19	171	12	52	120	11	503
Ikeja	54	97	14	39	121	39	22	101	3	490
Surulere	42	72	12	31	198	54	44	192	9	654
Kosofe	49	121	10	49	216	83	48	174	13	763
Oshodi Isolo	60	80	29	28	188	63	12	178	10	648
Somolu	65	216	34	197	474	110	54	183	17	1350
Agege	128	394	10	286	501	205	82	234	18	1,858

Source: Nigeria Police Crime Report (2017)

Some crime mitigation efforts adopted by both government and community associations include the establishment of patrol teams of police and military personnel, such as the Rapid Response Squad, the use of technology enabled device such as toll free emergency telephone numbers and enactment of curfew on vehicular and human movement, such as the ban on commercial motorcycles from 10:00 pm to 6:00 pm, manning of street gates from dusk to dawn by private security guards, neighbourhood watch and other vigilante groups among others. According to Mr Thomson John, a worker at Nature Conservation Centre:

> The Centre is fortunate not to have recorded any ugly incident pertaining to security issues based on the network of security operations we have. … We also have men of the Lagos neighbourhood security corps on ground always to compliment the internal security arrangement that we have put on ground so visitors that visit and come to Nature Conservation Centre and researchers too that come as well are secured and safe within our facilities (Mr Thomson John, Personal Communication).

He further stated that in the past "area boys" (neighbourhood urchins) constituted a challenge to the Centre. With the formation of Neighbourhood Security Watch by the Lagos State Government, this has been curtailed. He concluded that there is really no security issues at NCC. Also restrictions have been placed on the movement of commercial motorcycles and tricycles in the area. These efforts have yielded results as not much security challenge is at the period of research associated with NCC. A security personnel who works at NCC pointed out that tourists are safety conscious and they would not travel to a place that can pose a threat to their lives and properties.

4.   Measures Put in Place at Nature Conservation Centre to Guide against Security Threats

To prevent incidence of security breach at NCC, particularly attacks from hoodlums and car vandalisation, the management of NCC employed Lagos State Security Watch to compliment internal security efforts, especially during festive periods and weekends, which are the Centre's peak periods. The Lagos State Security Watch helps to beef up the Centre's internal security. An informant, Mr Benson David maintained that there are some security intelligence that cannot be made known to outsiders, including researchers. Mr. Benson David hints:

> This is a conservation; this place is like a conservation where they come and watch and play. So there are a lot of things that we do ourselves not everything can be divulged to you, there are some things that we don't need to divulge to outsider (Mr. Benson David, Oral Communication).

The location of NCC also provides an enabling environment for security management. Besides the networking with neighbouring communities, the management of the Centre have "an understanding with the community, you know Nature Conservation Centre is like an island, you can only assess it through the main express way so it's difficult for any security breach to go unnoticed" our informant posited. Security patrol vans are stationed at strategic places to forestall security breach, particularly along the Lagos - Epe express Olugboroga the community. The Police Stations in Ajiwe and Ogonmbo also re-enforce regular surveillance operations. Visitors are scrutinised at the point of entry and exit. Besides, there is a general area surveillance from the platform of a popular oil company, which complements the one provided by the Centre.

Table 2: Security Measures at Nature Conservative Centre

S/N	Research Statements	Degree of Effects				Total
	Responses	Not Really	A Little Extent	Moderate Extent	Large Extent	
1.	The security measures put in place by Nature Conservation Centre makes one feel comfortable around the centre	25	33	54	32	144
	Percentage	17	23	38	22	100%
2.	There are inadequacies in the security measures put in place by Nature conservation centre	60	40	29	15	144
	Percentage	42	28	20	10	100%
3.	The security personnel at Nature Conservation Centre are well equipped	54	33	41	16	144
	Percentage	38	23	28	11	100%

4.	The security feedback of Nature Conservation Centre encourages one to visit the centre	51	29	37	27	144
	Percentage	35	20	26	19	100%
5.	One feels safe during visit at Nature conservation centre	17	33	49	45	144
	Percentage	12	23	34	31	100%

From the Table 4 above, it is evident that majority of the respondents agreed that they feel safe at the Centre. For instance, 60% of the respondents do not think that the security that the security measure at the Centre is inadequate, while 15% feel that security measures are inadequate.   Interestingly they also noted that the security personnel at the Centre need to be better equipped. Tourists also suggested that the management of the Centre needs to make security feedback available to tourists. For instance, some observed that they would love to have more information on security issues at the facilities at the point of entry. This suggests that there is the need for improvement.

Due to secure atmosphere at the site, NCC experiences massive tourist patronage. Indeed, patronage of the Centre has increased astronomically over the years. Thus, Mr Thomson John, a worker at the Centre noted:

> The last four years has been astonishing, the patronage has been very encouraging, and precisely in 2014 we had about 15,000 tourists which then rose exponentially in 2015 to 26,000 and in 2017 we had an unprecedented number of 52,000 plus visitors visiting and this year alone it has surpass 60,000 visitors mark that we set for ourselves and we are still awaiting *Eid el Kabir* (*Ileya* Festival) celebration and also the peak period is usually Christmas and New Year where it is expected that the number of tourists will be around100,000 individuals (Mr Thomson John, Oral Communication).

Growth in patronage is an indication of the trust tourists have of the site. The management of the Centre employs strategies that have consistently minimize security challenges, and they hinted that they are working towards improving the existing measures.

5. Improving Security at Nature Conservation Centre

The management is of NCC plans to constantly change with the tide in order to better secure the site. The idea is to make the management several steps ahead of criminals that may want to constitute security threat at NCC. NCC has therefore initiated more innovative and technologically-driven security measures. For instance, it was discovered that the Centre runs an exchange programme with other conservative and recreation centres, and share useful security intelligence. A worker at the Centre opined that the Centre is making effort to partner with State Government and other stakeholders including the leaders of the immediate communities around the Centre such as *Olugborogan*, Alpha Beach community, and also the Paramount ruler of *Eti Osa* the *Ajiran* of *Ojomu* land. He stressed that the Centre will continue to maintain cordial relationship with the State security through Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC). This is for the purpose of providing continuous security support.

Table 3: Improving Security Measures at Nature Conservation Centre

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
• Security personnel at Nature Conservation Centre need more training and capacity building		
• Agreed	67	47%
• Strongly Agreed	39	27%
• Disagreed	33	23%
• Strongly Disagreed	5	3%
Total	144	100%

• Nature Conservation Centre requires upgrading of the security equipment and addition of more to ensure safety and security of tourists		
• Agreed	76	53%
• Strongly Agreed	45	31%
• Disagreed	17	12%
• Strongly Disagreed	6	4%
Total	144	100%
3. Nature Conservation Centre should make available security information at strategic places within the centre		
• Agreed	75	52%
• Strongly Agreed	60	42%
• Disagreed	6	4%
• Strongly Disagreed	3	2%
Total	144	100%
4. Security assessment feedback should be communicated to intending tourists		
• Agreed	74	51%
• Strongly Agreed	60	42%
• Disagreed	8	6%
• Strongly Disagreed	2	1%
Total	144	100%
5. Tourists should be well briefed on personal safety and security tips about the centre at entry points		
• Agreed	59	41%
• Strongly Agreed	75	52%
• Disagreed	6	4%
• Strongly Disagreed	4	3%
Total	144	100%

Table 3 above indicates that there is the need for the management of NCC to communicate security issues that can help tourists at the point of entry. Currently there seems to be disconnect between the management and the tourists in this area. However, it is also evident that tourists want more training for security personnel at the Centre. For instance, 47% of the respondents agreed while 37% agree and strongly agree respectively that the security personnel at Nature Conservation Centre need more training and capacity building. There is therefore the need for the upgrading of security equipment and the addition of more to continue to sustain the enthusiasm of tourists who patronise the site. Importantly also, findings indicate that tourists would want NCC to make available security information at strategic places within the centre. Respondents also desire that more security assessment feedback and personal safety tips be communicated to tourists at the entry point. For instance, 52% of the respondents strongly agree that tourists should be briefed on personal safety through the provision of security tips at the points of entry, while 3% strongly disagree. This will guide their personal decisions while enjoying the facilities at the site. Currently there are no security threats at NCC. Tourists however feel that management need to be more proactive to be able to curtail unforeseen circumstances. Presently, it is evident that the management of NCC engages members of the local community in the policing of the site due to the knowledge they have of the terrain where NCC is located. This gives members of the local community a sense of ownership of the site. The security measures yield positive results as demonstrated by the responses of the tourists and improvement in patronage.

Studies indicate that globally hoodlums target recreation centres due to the high degree of access, usually 24 hours a day. Horner and Swarbrooke (2004) posit that parks have many public spaces and entrances and exits and tourists may gather around such places. Often times, security issue are rarely prioritized at the initial stage in the architectural design of most conservative centres. As Gill *et al.* (2002) rightly pointed out, certain features such as grand lobbies and spacious entrances are vulnerable to the activities of criminals, including terrorism. They further note that parks commonly strive to create an environment, which is both welcoming and secure against all forms of criminality. Managers of conservation centres therefore face the challenge of putting in place security measures that are conspicuously visible while at the same time avoiding upsetting the tourists who may view the management's activities as

an act of over-intrusion. It is therefore implies that some security activities need be as discreet as possible, yet still ensuring an obvious presence to act as deterrent to intending criminals. Continuous training for employees on handling this situation is obviously necessary in any conservation centre.

Findings of this work revealed that tourists at Nature Conservation Centre are safety conscious although they would like the management of the conservation centre to make room for feedback as regards the security measures put in place. Research have proven that destinations with high crime rates are often avoided for safer destinations, hence the need to ensure that necessary measures are put in place to guarantee the security of tourists. NCC enjoys high patronage due to the trust tourists have of their security apparatuses. As Bolan and Williams (2008) stress, the consumer choice behavior is strongly shaped by a destinations' image and therefore it should not be underestimated regarding the competition in the marketplace. Considering the security challenges in Nigeria, many tourists tend to be sure of the security measures at any destination before embarking on visits. NCC management partners with contractors and consultants who routinely come around to see to the proper functioning of the facilities. This maintenance schedule enhances the state of security at the Centre. In addition, the oil company is a partaker in this conservation and this contributes significantly to the development of this conservation as they jointly work to ensure security in the neighbourhood and at NCC. There are also a lot of sponsors, beside corporate organisations that come to support the Centre. The centre also has a complaint box and a visitor's complaint register where tourists make their concerns known to the management. NCC has it presence on E- platforms such as TripAdvisor, which makes NCC visible to aspiring tourists, while providing platform where people can review their facilities and services. The feedback and review encourage them to improve on their services. The relationship between the NCC and the neighbourhood security agents tremendously contribute in keeping the Centre, tourists and their property safe.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are therefore made on security and tourism development at Nature Conservation Centre and Nigeria as a whole:

- Stakeholders in the tourism industry should endeavour to formulate necessary security policies that are favourable to tourism in various tourism sites, and also ensure that these policies are well implemented.
- Various legislations protecting tourists and tourist attractions in Nigeria should be revisited and maximum implementation ensured. Laws such as the one backing up the Nigerian Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) for instance need to be revised to incorporate new realities. Important agencies like the Nigerian Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation, should work hand in hand with the tourism committees in the National Assembly to make appropriate laws.
- The situation of security generally in Nigeria needs to be improved upon. The current security situation in the country is having negative effects on tourism development
- Leadership at the host communities needs to be incorporated in decisions on the management of tourism sites located in their areas. This bottom-top approach will enable the local stakeholders to contribute in security needs of their area.
- There is the need for regular assessment of security system in the tourism industry to ensure that they are up to date. Such periodic assessments would enable them to ascertain the rate or level of risk factors in their tourism sites.

7. Conclusion

People will always travel from their abode to other destinations seeking destinations of intrigue, in nature and/or culture. Despite the abundance of tourism destinations, each has its own unique features that acts as its selling label. With the bulk of potentials and natural features of Nature Conservation Centre, couple with security measures in place at the Centre.

Security is an important aspect to consider while initiating developmental strategies of tourism. The feeling and assurance of safety is a first step to build tourists' confidence about a destination. With a well-structured plan, the socio-economic prospects of tourism development at Nature Conservation Centre would manifest into more positive impacts such as increase in income, creation of employment, cultural exchange, protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, and provision of social amenities. These positive impacts would benefit the management of the Centre, the surrounding communities and Nigeria at large.

Conservation values being encouraged at this Centre will promote ecotourism. There is no doubt that there is the need to sustain this site. Nature Conservative Centre needs to be supported with more security apparatuses for the sustenance of continuous patronage, which in turn contributes to tourism development in the country.

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