

Crime in Tourism Destinations: Implications on Tourism Behaviour among Participants in Cross River State, Nigeria

¹Ukam, Leonard Edadi, ²Eteng, Salvation Ubi

^{1,2}University of Cross River State, Calabar, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Ukam, Leonard Edadi

Date of Submission: 15-12-2024

Date of Acceptance: 25-12-2024

ABSTRACT

The paper examined crime prevalence and its implication on tourism behaviour among tourists in Cross River State, Nigeria. Data were obtained using 200 copies of questionnaire. Tourism activities and destinations were identified and the types/levels of crime were studied. The implications of crime on tourism was equally ascertained. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For instance, modal values and Pearson product moment correlation were employed in carrying out analysis. The findings of the study revealed that tourists in the study area are exposed to both violent and non-violent crimes. It was also noted that the levels of victimization of tourists across destinations showed differences. Equally, it was observed that the relationship between crime victimization and participation level moderate indicating a negative relationship between the two variables. This suffices that, as crime victimization increases, participation level tends to decrease, and vice versa. Based on the findings, it was inferred that security across tourism destinations be prioritized.

Keywords; crime, crime victimization, tourism, tourism behaviour, tourism destinations

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, crimes are acts or omissions that constitute violation of laws which governments or authorities can prescribe punishments. Crimes are typically classified as offenses against the state, society, or public order, even if the immediate victim is an individual. The specifics of what constitute crimes vary across jurisdictions. Hence, crimes are basically due to several factors. For instance, social factors such as poverty, lack of education, peer pressure, cultural norms as well as economic factors that manifest in unemployment,

economic disparities and urbanisation can influence crime. Other causes of crime maybe psychological, environmental or even political. Irrespective of the direction of crime, it has direct and indirect effect on development and sustainability. For instance, crime may result in negative psychological and emotional impact, economic costs, social and economic impacts as well as impede development (Williams, 2010). With the implications above, it is clear that destinations, sites, facilities and infrastructure are largely to face negative implications when affected by crimes. Destinations at the forefront of being affected among the numerous in tourism sites. Crimes therefore significantly limit tourists participation in tourism facilities by creating an environment of fear, insecurity, and negative perceptions about tourism destinations. Obviously, reports on viral incidents involving crimes, such as theft, assaults, or terrorist activities, can create a perception that a destination is unsafe. Equally, destinations with high crime rates often struggle to attract tourists, even if the majority of crime occurs far from tourist areas.

From the foregoing, it is clear that crime in tourism destinations have the potentials of affecting tourism sites negatively. There are several tourism sites in Cross River State. In fact, studies (Ukwayi, Ojong, Bassey and Emeka, 2012; Achu, Enyia, Joseph, Njong, Ekene, Ereh, Nsor, Honey, Riman and Takim, (2024) have identified Cross River State as a major tourism destination hotspot in Nigeria. This assertion imply that Cross River State is on the global map of tourism. Sadly, crime being an unavoidable phenomenon has occurred in tourism destinations within the Cross River State in time past. However, the level to which crimes have affected tourism behaviour among tourists have not been documented in available literature. Based on this observation coupled with the need to fill the

identified knowledge gap, the study was necessitated.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Crimes are inimical to development because they unravel negative effects on tourism activities and tourists' behaviour. Williams (2010) asserts that crimes against tourists affect tourism by damaging the destination's image. Notably, when a place is known for theft, assault and kidnapping, the level to which such destinations will attract people is likely to drop drastically. Glensor and Peak (2004) noted that the most important prerequisite for a successful tourism industry is a reputation for keeping crime under control and guaranteeing tourists' safety. This is against the backdrop that, tourists will naturally prefer destinations that are safe and serene to make their tourism activities enjoyable. Although crimes in tourism destinations may be perpetuated by several elements, it has negative returns on tourism behaviour. Glensor and Peak (2004) noted that tourists contribute reasonably to crime risks by through vacation behaviours. Glensor and Peak (2004) therefore noted that some tourists carry large sums of money which has a way of triggering crimes. Other vacation behaviours such as participating in excesses and dangerous practices in sport and leisure activities such as driving, gaming, and drinking as well as visiting dangerous locations at night, leaving properties in view among others all trigger crime (Glensor and Peak, 2004; Williams, 2010).

Mussa, (2023) assessed the perceptions on criminal activities and tourism development in Nungwi Village, Zanzibar. Mussa (2023) used the descriptive study design and quantitative approach. He basically used descriptive statistics in carrying out data analysis. Mussa's study noted that unlike other tourist areas where crimes of different kind were a setback for tourism development, crimes in the Nungwi tourist area were not perceived as a setback for tourism development. However, the use of guns by police officers to ensure peace and security had some threatening implications in the eyes of stakeholders who participated in the study. He recommended that the use of guns to protect tourist areas should be prevented.

Odeku (2020) assessed kidnappings of international tourists in Nigeria. Odeku noted that the hospitality sector and in particular, the lodging and hotel accommodation seems to be most affected by kidnapping phenomenon in Nigeria. Thus, most hotels are no longer safe for foreign tourists in view of the constant and persistent

kidnapping. Apart from the lodgings being unsafe, it is also very dangerous for foreign tourists visiting Nigeria to use road transportation to their hotel accommodation or to go touring anywhere in Nigeria as these roads are also targeted by kidnappers. Most of the attempts at kidnapping in lodgings are often successful as the kidnappers work in collaboration with hotel workers and car hire services drivers who avail the kidnappers with necessary information about the movement, accommodation and destinations of the victims, mostly foreign visitors or tourists. He suggested for crime management in the study area through involvement of intelligent security operatives.

Achu, Enyia, Joseph, Njong, Ekene, Ereh, Nsor, Honey, Riman and Takim, (2024) examined the impact of crime on sustainable tourism development in the southern senatorial district of Cross River State, Nigeria. Their study focused on kidnapping, armed robbery, and drug abuse/trafficking in relation to the Calabar Carnival. They employed a survey design and obtained data from 384 respondents through questionnaire administration and interviews. They further analysed data using simple linear regression analysis. Their findings indicated that there is a significant association between kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse/trafficking, and sustainable tourism, particularly the Calabar Carnival. This suggested that crime occurring at increased levels during the period of the carnival. Based on their observations, they recommended the prioritization of local community involvement in tourism management to address security concerns while enhancing security personnel training in tourism education and modern policing techniques.

Ukwayi, Ojong, Bassey and Emeka (2012) examined the impact of crime on sustainable tourism in Cross River State, Nigeria. They argued that the rehabilitation, development of tourism potentials and the introduction of the biggest carnival event in Cross River State constitute a great threat to residents and tourists who have interest to visit Cross River State and Calabar in particular as a tourism destination. Notably, Ukwayi et al., (2012) noted that the carnival event in Cross River State has turned the State Capital Calabar into a crime prone environment. They investigated crime occurrence in Eight major streets and three major resorts. They relied on police report in obtaining data. Furthermore, they used two hundred copies of questionnaire which were distributed in Calabar Metropolis. Their findings revealed that December recorded the highest crime rate against tourists and residents in the areas. This

is basically the period of the carnival. They also observed that Tinapa Resort environment recorded the highest number of crime against tourists which show that residents in the Tinapa area are more vulnerable and victimise by perpetrators of crime in the area. From the literature, it is clear that the major crime types in destination sites as well as the level of criminal activities in tourism destinations have not been studied. Thus, this study was necessitated.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area is Cross River State. It is located between Latitudes $4^{\circ}28'$ and $6^{\circ}55'$ North of the Equator and Longitudes $7^{\circ}50'$ and $9^{\circ}28'$ East of the Greenwich Meridian. Cross River State is bounded in the North by Benue State, in the North West by Ebonyi State, in the South by Akwa Ibom State and Atlantic Ocean, in the East by the Republic of Cameroon and West by Abia State (Figure 1). It estimated population of 2,892,988 people (National Population Commission, 2006). It has a total land area measuring about 23,074km²

which is divided into 18 local government areas from three political (senatorial) districts, North, Central and South. The North senatorial district has 5 local councils, central 6 and South 7 respectively. There are several tourism destinations spread across the state. For instance, there is the Obudu Ranch resort, the Tinapa business and leisure resort, Marina resort etc. The state is renowned for tourism activities.

Data were obtained on seven major tourism destinations and activities in the study area. Questionnaire were the main instrument for data collection. A total of 200 copies of questionnaire distributed in the tourism destinations. Resort operators were equally contacted for supply of information. Data that were obtained were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, Pearson product moment correlation was used in showing the relationship that exist between criminal victimization and level of participation in tourism activities among tourists in the study area.

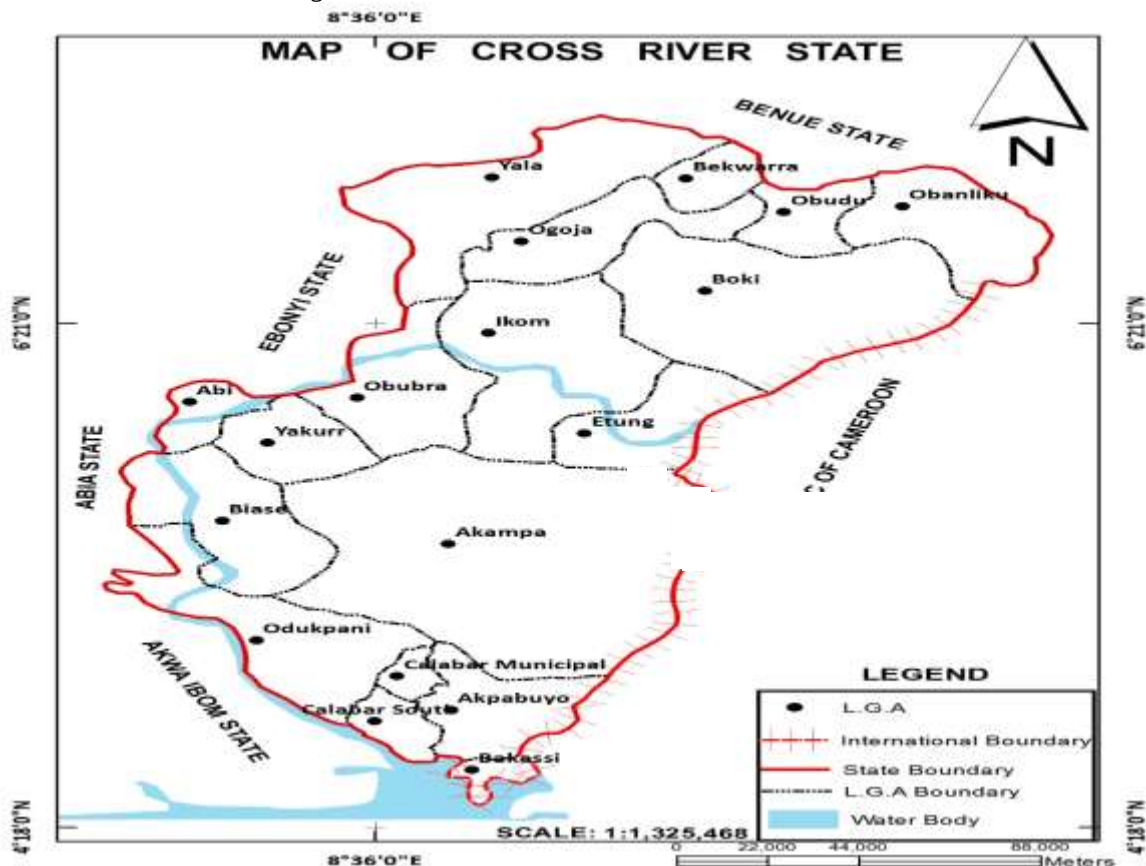


Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing Cross River State

Source: GIS Laboratory, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Cross River State, (2023)

IV. FINDINGS

Table 1: Crime Types Experienced by Tourists

Crime type	Frequency	Percentage
Violent crime	29	14.5
Non-violent crime	68	34
No crime at all	103	51.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the crime types that are experienced by tourists in the study area. It was noted that 14.5 percent have faced victimization that are violent in nature. Such crimes are manifested through assault and robbery while 34

percent tourists have faced victimization in non-violent crimes. Such crimes include theft, vandalism and fraud. However, 51.5 percent have not experienced any crime victimization while embarking on tourism activities in the study area.

Table 2: Level of Crime Victimization

Location/Tourism activity	Crime level
Carnival Calabar	3
Tinapa resort	2
Obudu ranch resort	1
Kwa falls	2
Marina resort	2
Cross River National Park	1
Agbokim water falls	1

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Key: 3= High, 2=Low, 1 = No crime

The level to which tourists are victimized in destinations is shown in Table 3. Using a 3-point grading system, it is clear that tourists basically face serious victimization during the carnival Calabar. Such crimes include robbery, theft, assault

etc. However, crime in Tinapa resort, Kwa falls and marina resort are low. It was equally noted that tourists in the National Park, Obudu ranch resort and Kwa falls were not facing any forms of criminal victimization.

Table 3: Involvement in tourism activities

Location/Tourism activity	Level of involvement
Carnival Calabar	2
Tinapa business resort	2
Obudu ranch resort	2
Kwa falls	2
Marina resort	2
National Park, Akamkpa	3
Agbokim water falls	2

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Key: 3= very frequent, 2=rarely, 1 =never

The level to which tourists participate in tourism activities in the study area was examined in Table 3. The Table indicates a variation in the levels of involvement of tourists in destinations. The data in the Table revealed that due to possibilities of crime, tourist predominantly do not frequently participate in tourism activities.

Table 4: Correlations

		Crime victimization	Participation level
Crimevictimization	Pearson Correlation	1	-.417
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.352
	N	7	7
Participationlevel	Pearson Correlation	-.417	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.352	
	N	7	7

Source: Statistical Computations, 2024

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in assessing the relationship between crime victimization and participation level of tourists in Cross River State. The Pearson Correlation between Crime Victimization and Participation Level is -0.417. This value indicates a moderate, negative relationship between the two variables. As crime victimization increases, participation level tends to decrease, and vice versa. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.352. Since the p-value is greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, the correlation is not statistically significant. This means the observed relationship could be due to random chance and is not strong enough to be considered meaningful in this sample. Conclusively, there is a moderate, negative correlation between Crime Victimization and Participation Level (-0.417), but this relationship is not statistically significant ($p = 0.352$).

V. CONCLUSION

The study noted that tourists are faced with varied levels of criminal victimization while embarking on tourism activities in cross River State. For instance, tourists are victimized through violent and non-violent crimes. The levels to which tourists are victimized significantly affect their perception and levels of involvement in tourism activities. Thus, it was noted that as crime victimization I destination increases, participation level tends to decrease. This is expected being that, tourists will naturally prefer safe destinations for relaxation, fun and enjoyment. Based on the observations in the study, it is recommended that security across tourism destinations be prioritized.

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