Who is right? Examining the state of safety in selected medium-class hotels in Nigeria

Elochukwu A. Nwankwo[1] and Daniel N. Agbasiere[2]

[1]University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria
[2]National Institute of Hospitality and Tourism, Abuja, Nigeria

E-mail: elochukwu.nwankwo@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

This study is a comparative discourse on staff and guest viewpoints with regards to the state of safety in hotels. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the quantitative aspect of the study. The study sampled 375 respondents. This is comprised of 165 hotel staff and 210 hotel guests from selected average hotels in Southeast Nigeria. From the qualitative aspect, convenience and purposive sampling aided the selection of 55 informants for key informants' interviews. The result shows that information on safety from staff could be biased and misleading. Besides, there is minimal rate of deception and prejudice from guests' viewpoints.

Keywords: Hotels, Safety, Hotel staff, Hotel guests, safety threats.

1. Introduction

One of the unfortunate incidents that called for reinvestigation into the role of hotels in tourism development took place in 2007 when a Commissioner for Tourism and Culture in one of the states in Nigeria, categorically argued that 'hotels do not have any relationship with tourism'. This information is quite unfortunate, having come from a supposed ambassador of tourism in a state in Nigeria. Accommodation is part of the major considerations for intending tourists and other travellers. On arrival, the tourists would like to settle down before heading for his or her various tourism sites or locations in the place visited. This explains why most of the major tourist sites have accommodation provisions of all kinds to maintain a progressive patronage from various kinds of visitors coming from different geographical locations.

Notwithstanding its immense contributions, hotel has been faced with some challenges in the recent times. Among these challenges are safety issues. Even as a tourist or mere traveler is making plans for his travel and possible accommodation, he also considers his safety while on the trip. Every traveler would want to return home to reunite with his or her family in good health and mentality.

The Nigerian hotel industry has been battling with issues on safety. This is mostly with those hotels that are not in the urban areas. In most cases, guests are thrown into confusion when considering where to lodge to have their safety guaranteed. This has resulted in low patronage, and in some cases, some hotels are forced to premature closures due to poor safety assurance for guests. Some opinions from respondents have not given a true reflection of the situation in the past. Which opinion would give a true reflection of the state of safety at hotels in Nigeria? Staff or Guests? This background motivated this study which aimed at investigating safety issues in selected hotels in Southeast Nigeria from staff and guest perspectives. The implication of the study is that it would reveal

the actual safety status of hotels in Nigeria which will serve as a good management tool for hotel managements and hotel regulatory agencies on how best to improve the safety standard of hotels in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

This aspect of the study considered some studies on related topics. Emphasis was on safety threats, perception, implications, and suggestions. To this end, Abhishek, Ankit and Pradeep (2018) in their study on safety study and impact on customer relationship noted that issues of safety has the tendency of influencing the level of customership in a hotel hence safety guarantee is amongst the utmost consideration for guests to hotels. Also Adejohapeh (2014) in his study examined the indispensability of safety for tourism and travel trade in Nigeria. He noted that more safety was enjoyed in Nigeria after the civil war of 1967-1970; but currently activities of various sectional groups have plunged various geopolitical zones of the country into serious safety threats; and that this has limited patronage from tourist travel.   Moreover, Tyra and Seyhmus (2008) looked at safety as part of hotel servicescape for meeting planners and informed that the physical safety features of a hotel influence hotel choice from various customers and guests. This view was supported by Karam (2015) who noted in his study that the various political and religious crisis that has invaded the Egyptian nation has drastically reduce hotel choice of various Egyptian hotels and that, this has significantly affected the rate of patronage from both domestic and international travellers on Egyptian hotels. Jaswinder (2015) in his study classified safety threats in hotels into physical aspects, security of persons and security of systems. He noted that these classifications should be given paramount consideration by hotel managements.

In addition, Nomsa (2016) investigated security measures at selected South African hotels. He noted that despite the available security measures like relevant technological gadgets, policy measures, manpower trainings, etc, the customer patronage is still not commendable owing security issues; hence the need to upgrade the existing security measures. Also Helena and Janez (2011) in their study on safety as systematic component of wellness centres in Slovenia, asserted that effective safety measures draw trusts and patronage of quests to hotels and wellness centres in Slovenia. Some relevant studies within the shores of Nigerian made some assertions with regard to safety in Nigerian hotels. For instance Nwokorie and Kwusi (2018) noted that guests to hotels in Owerri, Nigeria, are faced with various threats to their lives and properties. Among such threats are local inversions, rodent attacks, crimes, and presence of deplorable roads. These conditions affect customer patronage and loyalty. Also Managwu and Aji (2018) worked on the effectiveness of safety measures in hotels in South-East Nigeria. Their results shows that "...the highly important and rarely usage safety measures are related to three dimensions; medical preparedness, guest room security, and emergency preparedness; and the less important and widely used measures are related to two dimensions of detectors, and access control" (Managwu & Ali, 2018 p. 40). They also inform that "… there is a statistically significant gap between the importance level and usage level of measures. Overall, the average usage level of measures (2.99) is lower than the average importance level (3.86)" (Managwu & Ali, 2018 p. 40). Similar study was also conducted at hotels in Wukari Town Taraba State Nigeria by Inyang, Anake and Chuma (2018) to evaluate visitors' safety strategies. The result of the study shows that most of hotels in the studied area do not have reasonable safety details for their guests and hence guests are exposed to various safety threats. In addition, Ajayi, Oyebade, Oluyisola and Ayodele (2018) concluded that despite the great contributions of tourism to national development, the Nigerian tourism industry has been plagued with multiplicity of security challenges, resulting in constant negative experience of most tourists to Nigeria. They also argue that that security threats to visitors' lives and properties are the bane fo sustainable tourism development in Nigeria.

In conclusion, these studies have been able to identify that safety issues have huge implications for the growth and sustainability of hotel industry. Cases from some parts of Nigeria supported this view. Unfortunately, most of these studies addressed the issue of threat at Nigerian hotels from staff and observation viewpoints. There is need to factor in the position of guests hence they are the centre of safety threats at hotels. Juxtaposing the views

of staff and guest on safety will lead to a more valid argument on safety issues at medium class hotels in Nigeria. However, this will the investigation from another dimension with a view to seeking unbiased report on the state of safety in medium class hotels in Nigeria. Five research questions that were raised for the study, focused on identify various safety threats at medium sized hotels in Nigeria, causes of those threats, and existing safety measures. Another aspect of the research questions tends to address the implications of the identified safety threats on these hotels and how to improve on the safety standard of these hotels. The hypotheses for the study, further argue that the views of the staff and guests at these hotels, on these research questions have no significant difference. These hypotheses, which were generated from the initial pilot survey and literature review, will be subjected to test. However, this study tends to x-ray the guests and staff views of hotel safety in the Southeast Nigeria with greater emphasis on middle class hotels.

3. Concept Definition

This aspect of the study looks at the understanding of some basic concepts used in the study. First and foremost, hotel safety as one of the concepts, has been defined as every effort that is put together to eradicate threats to guests' lives and properties during their stay in a particular hotel (Nwokorie & Kwusi, 2018; Managwu & Aji, 2018, Iyang, 2018). It also has to do with mental satisfaction and guarantee guests have concerning a particular hotel. Such mental satisfaction also contributes to the sense of comfort in hotel. Jaswinder (2015) had informed that those efforts by hotel management to ensure safety of guests' lives and properties, are always on the interior designs of hotel, while some other study added that such is equally applicable to the exterior designs of hotel (See Greoenenboom & Jones, 2003; Hilliard & Baloglu, 2008; Cebekhulu, 2016; Alananzeh, 2017; Chauhan, Shukia & Negi, 2018). However, for the purpose of this study, safety as it concerns hotel industry has to do with the protection for lives and properties of guests in hotels and the available measures that are put in place to check possible threats to guests' safety in hotels.

Moreover, guests and staff are also among those concepts that were used in the study. Some studies have defined guests as lodging customers to hotel, who among other patronages while in hotel, must lodge for at least one night to be classified as guests to that hotel (See Nwankwo, 2007; Tyra & Seyhmus, 2008; Jaswinder, 2014; Ghazi, 2015). Guests are quite different from some other customers to a hotel who may have visited hotel for some other patronage apart from lodging. In as much as other businesses bring revenue to hotel, lodging facility remains one of the integral purposes of establishment of most hotels. These other services are geared towards supporting the lodging facility.

Staff has been defined by Armstrong (2009) and Nwankwo (2017) as the total number of employees that have been engaged to work in an organization with an agreement to make some payments after a period of time in return for services rendered. This paraphrased definition is quite apt hence it cuts across various aspects of employee engagement in an organization. In hotel business, there are different categories of staff that are engaged with varying agreements. For instance there are casual staff, contract staff, temporary staff, permanent staff and consulting staff. Among these categories of staff, permanent staff are the main employees of hotel and they are the basis for this investigation. This is because the nature of their engagement gives them access to information and full responsibility of the hotel. They stand a better chance to tell more about hotel than some other categories of staff whose engagements are not complete or whole but on temporary basis.

Moreover, hotel has been defined as a commercial accommodation unit, either publicly or privately owned, that is constructed primarily to attend to the accommodation needs of tourists, other travellers and even residents, in a particular location (see Groenenboom & Jones, 2003; Hilliard & Baloglu, 2008; Enz, 2009; Ghazi, 2015; Nwankwo, 2017; Alananzeh, 2017; Inyang, Anake & Chuma 2018). No matter the different classifications or typologies of hotel, provision of accommodation is central in their rendered services. For instance, in Nigeria, the

Nigerian Tourism Development Commission (NTDC) has an arm known as Hotels Inspectorate Division (HID) that is responsible for the classifications of hotels, and control and monitoring of activities of hotels in the country. This body has been able to classify most of the standard hotels in Nigeria into five classes namely, One Star, Two Star, Three Star, Four Star and Five Star, with one star being the least in quality and standard. For the purpose of his study, hotels were classified as average, under average and above average. The study laid emphasis on the average hotels. This is because the average hotels are greater in number and also have over 60% of the totality of guests and other patronage in hotel business in Nigeria.

More so, the study has more focus on hotels in Southeast Nigeria with minor inferences in some other hotels in the country. Southeast Nigeria comprises five states i.e. Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi, and Abia. Southeast is one of the six geopolitical zones of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Other geopolitical zones include South-south, South-west, North-west, North-central and North-east. The states in the Southeast region of the country have similar socio-economic background with favourable investment opportunities for both public and private sector investments. These states have the presence of many multi-national companies coupled with some other large local companies. This attribute motivated increase in human population, more especially in the major cities in those states. This however explains the reason for the huge presence of different classes of hotels to accommodate different levels of income earners in the area. For the purpose of this study, selected hotels for the study were sampled from different state capitals for equal representation of opinions. These include Awka, Umuahia, Enugu, Owerri, and Abakaliki. Inferences were made from some other regions like South-south, North-central and Southwest geopolitical zones of the country.

4. Methodology

Quantitatively, descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Southeast Nigeria with a population of all hotel staff and guests in all the public and privately owned hotels in the region. Cluster and purposive sampling techniques aided the careful selection of 15 hotels of minimum standard from Southeast Nigeria. Also cluster and convenience sampling techniques aided the sampling of 375 respondents comprising 165 hotel staff and 210 hotel guests were used for the study. An instrument titled Questionnaire on Safety Issues in Hotel Management was used for data collection. The questionnaire was a structured type consisting of 65 items in five different clusters A, B, C, D and E. All the clusters of the questionnaire were structured on a 4-point scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (Agree), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The instrument was face validated by three experts in instrument development and two hotel managers. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was estimated to be 0.89 using Cronbach alpha method. The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test of independent samples. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the five research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Moreover, from the qualitative aspect, convenient and purposive sampling techniques aided the sampling of 55 key informants (30 guest and 25 hotel staff) from the study population for structured interview sections that lasted not less than one hour thirty minutes. Initially, these key informants found it difficult to offer their time for the study, but were later motivated by the research objectives. Observation was also another qualitative approach to the study. In this regard efforts were made to observe some claims from both respondents and informants. This was complemented by a critical review of previous studies which gave insight into the research line on the subject matter. The information gathered were analysed accordingly.

5. Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the various safety

threats in the selected hotels.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the causes of the identified safety threats.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the state of the existing safety threats.

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the implications of the identified threats.

Ho5: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the ways of improving the safety standards of the selected hotels.

6. Results

6.1 RQ-1: What are the safety threats in the selected hotels?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of hotel staff and guests on safety threats in hotels

Item Statement	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1 There is frequent robbery attack in this hotel	Hotel Staff	165	1.64	.70	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.76	.97	Disagree
2 There have been cases of kidnapping in this hotel	Hotel Staff	165	1.82	.80	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.66	.83	Agree
3 Quarrels always ensue between guests and hotels staff	Hotel Staff	165	2.17	.90	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.00	.92	Disagree
4 Theft of personal items in the rooms	Hotel Staff	165	1.92	.88	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.80	.90	Disagree
5 Electrocution is possible in hotel rooms	Hotel Staff	165	1.70	.68	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.95	.97	Disagree
6 Possible stomach poison from the food consumed	Hotel Staff	165	1.77	.79	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.85	.91	Agree
7 Food prepared do not have nutritional values	Hotel Staff	165	1.70	.78	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.90	.89	Disagree
8 There is possibility of bomb explosion in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.07	.82	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.95	.92	Disagree
9 Stomach poison from consumption of beverages in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	1.79	.69	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.02	.83	Agree
10 Contagious diseases are contacted in the rooms	Hotel Staff	165	1.86	.80	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.92	.85	Disagree
11 There are cases of mosquito bites and other animal attacks in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.23	.82	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.42	.80	Agree
12 There are attitudinal crisis amongst guests and staff in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.16	.86	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.02	.80	Agree
Overall Mean	Hotel Staff	165	1.90	.66	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.51	.73	Agree

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on safety threats in hotels. It shows that there is a disparity in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the safety threats in hotels. The overall mean ratings of 1.90 and 2.51 for hotel staff and guests respectively indicate that hotel staff are of the opinion that there are no safety threats in hotels while hotel guests are of the opinion that there are some safety threats in hotels such as cases of kidnapping in hotel, possible stomach poison from the food consumed, stomach poison from consumption of beverages in hotel and cases of mosquito bites and other animal attacks in hotels.

6.2 RQ- 2: What are the causes of the identified safety threats?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of hotel staff and guests on causes of the identified safety threats

Item Statement	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1 Activities of dubious guests in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.23	.85	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.96	.75	Agree
2 Activities of dubious staff in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.29	.79	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.60	.74	Agree
3 Porous and insufficient security network in the hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.09	.83	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.81	.73	Agree
4 Poor and irregular fumigation of hotel rooms and premises	Hotel Staff	165	1.96	.95	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.90	.75	Agree
5 Poor monitoring of hotel activities by the relevant public agencies	Hotel Staff	165	2.16	.91	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.84	.83	Agree
6 Purchase of expired and/or fake beverages	Hotel Staff	165	2.16	.82	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.79	.88	Agree
7 Engagement of unqualified and unlicensed kitchen chefs in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.26	.83	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.21	.80	Disagree
8 None use of bomb detectors in hotels	Hotel Staff	165	2.27	.94	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.14	.83	Disagree
9 Engagement of untrained and inexperience security personnel	Hotel Staff	165	2.47	.99	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.30	.80	Disagree
10 Limited number of security operatives	Hotel Staff	165	2.47	.96	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.19	.82	Disagree
11 Poor food preservation facilities in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.41	.89	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.26	.84	Disagree
12 Irregular electrical and electronics monitoring & maintenance in the rooms	Hotel Staff	165	2.40	.89	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.14	.83	Disagree
13 Poor and irregular staff training on guest management	Hotel Staff	165	2.44	.93	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.89	.94	Agree
14 Poor attitudes of hotel staff towards guests	Hotel Staff	165	2.41	.90	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.30	.94	Disagree
15 Poorly trained kitchen staff on food preservation and nutritional values	Hotel Staff	165	2.15	.87	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.93	.78	Agree
16 Insufficient security checks for guests and other visitors on their arrival	Hotel Staff	165	2.38	.92	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.19	.73	Disagree
Overall Mean	Hotel Staff	165	2.28	.73	Disagree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.61	.63	Agree

Table 2 shows that there is variation in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the causes of the identified safety threats. It reveals that hotel staff disagreed to the statements of the items in Table 2 as the causes of the safety threats in hotels while hotel guests agree to the statements of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 15 as the causes of safety threats in hotels. The overall mean ratings of 2.28 and 2.61 for hotel staff and guests respectively show that hotel guests had higher mean rating to the items than hotel staff.

6.3 RQ-3: What is the state of the existing safety measures?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of hotel staff and guests on state of the existing safety measures

Item Statement	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1 There is constant police patrol in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.83	.90	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.19	.90	Disagree
2 There is bomb detector in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.64	.85	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.85	.89	Disagree
3 There are efficient CCTV cameras in hotel	Hotel Staff	165	2.89	.93	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.90	.78	Disagree

Item Statement	Status	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
4 Adequate number of security personnel are engaged for hotel security	Hotel Staff	165	2.67	.98	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.66	.89	Disagree
5 Hotel security is armed with modern security gadgets	Hotel Staff	165	2.63	.95	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.54	.79	Disagree
6 There are thorough checks for people and cars at the entrance	Hotel Staff	165	2.80	.91	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.61	.87	Disagree
7 There is maximum cooperation with the DSS and other security operatives	Hotel Staff	165	2.79	.99	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.80	.90	Agree
8 Food are prepared by qualified and trained chefs and cooks	Hotel Staff	165	2.65	1.02	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.02	.83	Agree
9 Food materials are checked and verified before use	Hotel Staff	165	2.72	1.00	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.95	.75	Agree
10 Expired beverages are constantly detected and disposed	Hotel Staff	165	2.64	.99	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.92	.91	Agree
11 There is adequate conservation mechanism for food materials	Hotel Staff	165	2.52	.96	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.95	.78	Disagree
12 Rooms are constantly cleaned and kept neat by the housekeepers	Hotel Staff	165	2.55	.93	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.02	.70	Agree
13 The security personnel are periodically trained and updated	Hotel Staff	165	2.55	.92	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.83	.81	Agree
14 There is periodic and efficient security patrol along the room corridors	Hotel Staff	165	2.70	.94	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.32	.77	Disagree
15 Outbreak of contagious diseases are constantly checked	Hotel Staff	165	2.72	.97	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	1.11	.79	Disagree
16 The housekeeping department is equipped with modern cleaning devices.	Hotel Staff	165	2.79	.92	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.04	.90	Agree
Overall Mean	Hotel Staff	165	2.65	.76	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.26	.57	Disagree

Table 3 shows that the mean ratings of hotel staff to the items are not the same with those of hotel guests. It reveals that hotel staff agreed to the statement of the items as the state of the existing safety measures in hotels while hotel guests disagreed to the statements of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 14 and 15 as the state of the existing safety measures in hotels. Besides, the overall mean ratings of 2.65 and 2.26 for hotel staff and guests respectively imply that hotel guests had lower mean rating than hotel staff.

6.4 RQ-4: What are the implications of the identified safety threats?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of hotel staff and guests on the implications of the identified threats

Item Statement	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1 Poor safety standard can cause low patronage	Hotel Staff	165	2.88	.98	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.21	.74	Agree
2 Guests are precautious over using Nigerian hotels	Hotel Staff	165	2.73	1.03	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.97	.70	Agree
3 Guests are selective on the kind of hotels to lodge in	Hotel Staff	165	2.82	.91	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.04	.78	Agree
4 Most guests prefer to eat outside hotel due to fear of stomach poison	Hotel Staff	165	2.82	1.01	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.83	.89	Agree
5 Most guests prefer to come in with their beverages	Hotel Staff	165	2.97	.91	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.83	.87	Agree
6 Low patronage from guests bring about food and beverages wastages	Hotel Staff	165	2.90	.97	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.83	.78	Agree
7 Untimely closure of some hotels as a result of low patronage	Hotel Staff	165	3.09	.80	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	2.83	.72	Agree
8 Industrial congestion due to the search for urban or city guests	Hotel Staff	165	3.00	.93	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.07	.59	Agree
9 Increased unemployment in the industry as a result of low patronage	Hotel Staff	165	3.28	.86	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.11	.62	Agree
10 Guests prefer to use related establishments instead of hotels	Hotel Staff	165	3.19	.81	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.14	.77	Agree
Overall Mean	Hotel Staff	165	2.97	.69	Agree

Hotel Guests	210	2.99	.50	Agree

Table 4 shows the mean ratings of both hotel staff and guests to items 1 to 10 which boarder on the implications of safety threats to hotel management. It shows that the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests to the items are more than 2.50 criterion mean; implying that they agreed to the statements of the items as the implications of safety threats to hotel managements. However, the overall mean ratings of 2.97 and 2.99 for hotel staff and guests respectively imply that hotel guests had higher mean rating than hotel staff.

6.5 RQ-5: How can safety standards be improved in the selected hotels?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of hotel staff and guests on safety
standards be improved in hotels

Item Statement	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1 Security personnel should be periodically trained and updated	Hotel Staff	165	3.24	.67	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.35	.57	Agree
2 There should be constant update on modern security gadgets and best practices	Hotel Staff	165	3.28	.63	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.47	.58	Agree
3 Constant visit by the public sanitary inspection teams to hotel	Hotel Staff	165	3.16	.67	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.38	.61	Agree
4 Employment of qualified food nutritionists	Hotel Staff	165	3.24	.71	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.40	.65	Agree
5 Periodic training of kitchen staff on food hygiene and implications	Hotel Staff	165	3.30	.64	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.45	.62	Agree
6 Daily monitoring of electrical and electronics facilities in hotel rooms	Hotel Staff	165	3.30	.69	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.38	.61	Agree
7 Use of mini questionnaires to ascertain guest satisfaction on safety	Hotel Staff	165	3.30	.64	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.40	.58	Agree
8 Periodic and unbiased monitoring by hotel Inspectorate Board of NTDC	Hotel Staff	165	3.27	.64	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.30	.67	Agree
9 Periodic and efficient monitoring of food and beverages by the NAFDAC	Hotel Staff	165	3.21	.61	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.42	.58	Agree
10 Periodic workshops on bomb explosion and other security issues by the military	Hotel Staff	165	3.21	.61	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.42	.58	Agree
11 Establishment of safety units for periodic safety `reports	1	165	3.24	.62	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.47	.58	Agree
Overall Mean	Hotel Staff	165	3.25	.58	Agree
	Hotel Guests	210	3.40	.51	Agree

Table 5 shows that the mean ratings of both hotel staff and guests to items 1 to 11 are more than 2.50 criterion mean. This means that both hotel staff and guests agreed to the statements of the items as the ways of improving safety standards in hotels. However, the overall mean ratings of 3.25 and 3.40 for hotel staff and guests respectively indicate that hotel guests had higher mean ratings to the items than hotel staff.

7. Hypotheses

7.1 Ho₁: *There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the various safety threats in the selected hotels.*

Table 6: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the
various safety threats in hotels

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hotel Staff	165	1.90	.66			

				373	-3.166	.002
Hotel Guests	210	2.51	.73			

Table 6 reveals that the calculated value of t (-3.166) for the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the various safety threats in hotels, had an associated probability value of 0.002. Since the associated probability value of 0.002 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the various safety threats in hotels in favour of the ratings of hotel guests.

7.2 Ho2: *There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the causes of the identified safety threats.*

Table 7: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the causes of the identified safety threats.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hotel Staff	165	2.28	.73			
Hotel Guests	210	2.61	.63	373	-4.214	.001

Table 6 reveals that the calculated value of t (-4.214) for the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the causes of the identified safety threats in hotels, had an associated probability value of 0.001. Since the associated probability value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the cause of the identified safety threats in hotels in favour of the ratings of hotel guests.

7.3 Ho3: *There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the state of the existing safety threats.*

Table 8: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the state of the existing safety threats in hotels

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hotel Staff	165	2.65	.76			
Hotel Guests	210	2.26	.57	373	5.632	.000

Table 8 reveals that the calculated value of t (5.632) for the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the state of the existing safety threats in hotels, had an associated probability value of 0.000. Since the associated probability value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the state of the existing safety threats in hotels in favour of the ratings of hotel staff.

7.4 Ho4: *There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the implications of the identified threats.*

Table 9: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the

implications of safety threats on hotels

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hotel Staff	165	2.97	.69			
Hotel Guests	210	2.99	.50	373	-1.023	.082

Table 9 reveals that the calculated value of t (-1.023) for the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the implications of safety threats in hotels management, had an associated probability value of 0.082. Since the associated probability value of 0.082 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on the implications of safety threats in hotels.

7.5 Ho$_5$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on the ways of improving the safety standards of the selected hotels.

Table 10: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and hotel guests on
ways of improving the safety standards in hotels

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hotel Staff	165	3.25	.58			
Hotel Guests	210	3.40	.51	373	-1.471	.152

Table 10 reveals that the calculated value of t (-1.471) for the difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on ways of improving safety standards in hotels, had an associated probability value of 0.152. Since the associated probability value of 0.152 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted meaning that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of hotel staff and guests on ways of improving safety standards in hotels.

8. Discussion of Findings

The data as presented and interpreted in five previous sections shall be discussed in this section under each of the four paradigms (i.e. threats, causes, measures, implications and the way forward). This shall be within the comparative understanding of guests and staff views from those sampled hotels, with emphasis on the four dimensions of data collection for the study (i.e. questionnaires, interviews, observations and written works).

From the list of possible threats (See Table 4), most of the guests agreed to their existence as against the opinion of staff. Could it be that those staff were trying to defend their individual hotels? Observational studies that were conducted during the study support the views of guests coupled with results from related studies (See Inyang, Snake & Chuma, 2018; Nwokorie & Kwusi, 2018; Managwu &Aji, 2018; Cebekhulu, 2016; Groenenboom & Jones, 2003). Also Adora (2010) stressed on the presence of kidnapping at most of the average hotels in Nigeria. Absolute ignorance and claims that there are no safety threats at those visited hotels implies that there could be business or marketing mindset on the part of hotel staff while attempting questions in items 2,6,9,11,12 and 13. Table 4 recorded more pronounced response for their presence as threats by most guests. However, based on the

evidence from the quantitative survey, observational study and previous study, it can be concluded that the opening of guests with regards to the identified safety threats may be upheld.

More so, statements in Table 5 were used to investigate the possible causes of the identified safety threats at the sampled hotels. From the item statements in Table 5, there was an outright disagreement by guests and staff on some item statements as among the causes of safety threats. This includes items in 7,8,9,10,11,12 and14. During the interview sections most of these listed item statements were found to be weak when investigated as amongst the causes of safety threats. For instance item 14 (poor attitude of staff towards guests) was said (during interviews) to have been taken care of long before now since many of those hotels now train their staff on guest handling (Ofobruku, 2012). The staff indifference to guests' opinion could still be connected to their earlier insistence that there are no safety threats at those hotels (See Table 4). Nwokorie and Kwusi (2018), Managwu and Aji (2019), Onyang, Snake and Chuma (2018), who worked on similar studies in some parts of Nigeria confirmed presence of some safety threats at some hotels in Nigeria. Also Adejohapeh (2014), Ukwayi, Ojong, Austin and Emeka (2012), Adora 2010, Nwokorie, Everest and Ojo (2014), Bello, Bollo and Rays (2014), etc, have also noted in their studies that Nigeria as a nation is not yet completely free from some safety threats which has been the bane of the growth of tourism and the hospitality industry in the country since independence. In addition, similar studies outside the shores of Nigeria had informed that safety threats are not completely eradicated in most average hotels, but their influence is subject to the existence of more active measures (See Cebekhulu, 2016; Chauhan, Shukia & Neji, 2018; Karam, 2015; Nomsa, 2016; Helena & Janez, 2011; etc). This implies that there are safety threats and their causes, with relevant measures targeted at addressing those causes.

Also, item statements in Table 6 were used to investigate the availability of safety measures to check potential and available safety threats. The guests' indifference to the availability of some of the safety measures may be out of ignorance. They (guests) may not have the ample opportunity in hotel to notice the presence of some of these measures. This could have been the case with items 1 to 5 of the item statements. Also the contrary opinion of staff is also in contradictory to their earlier position that there are no safety threats at such hotels. Cebekhulu, (2016), Chauhan, Shukia and Neji (2018), Inyang, Anake and Chuma (2018), and Managwu and Aji (2018), in their separate studies on safety measures at hotels informed that most average hotels in the developing nations have minimal effective safety measures owing to the huge cost and scarcity of some of these sophisticated measures. Apart from this, Managwu and Aji (2018) also informed that some of the safety measures in average hotels in Nigeria are either non-functional or out of date. This was also confirmed through evidences from observational studies. Moreover, the guests may not have been completely right in their opinion in this regard since prejudice may have affected their decisions as a result of treatments they may have been given in some of these average hotels (Nomsa, 2016; Karam, 2015; Tyra & Seyhmus, 2008). Yet this opinion is not too far from the truth since presence of adequate and effective safety measures would have prevented guests from being exposed to many safety threats as cited in Table 4. However, this study may conclude that there are insufficient safety measures at some of the average hotels in Nigeria. Also it is worthy to note that the availability sophisticated and effective safety measures has implications for hotels pricing system or cost of products and services.

Moreover, Table 7 shows a checklist of possible implications of the Identified threats on hotel patronage. The opinions of the two categories of respondents for the study (staff & guests) attest to the fact that there are huge implications for the rate of patronage as a result of safety standard of a given hotel. This implies that hotels with very low safety threats stand a chance of commanding huge patronage in the industry than hotels with high safety threats. During the interview sections, most of the respondents (staff) stressed that hotels have wastages and other income losses as a result of low patronage. To this regard, they strive to improve every aspect of the hotel to guarantee a reasonable or more patronage. What this statement implies is that some of these hotels design effective safety measures in anticipation of potential safety threats to secure their growing patronage. Gaydukevich (2017), Ukwayi, Ojong, Austine and Emeka (2012), Adora (2010), Wang and Wang (2009), Norizawati and Tarmiji

(2014), Nwokorie, Everest and Ojo (2014), and Adejohapeh, (2014) in their separate studies assert that low safety guarantee at the hospitality industry has huge implications for business patronage and sustainability. And also this negativity discourages both current and prospective investors to the industry. Sometimes, unhealthy business competition is ignited in the struggle for the search of limited number of guests by much number of hotels (see item statement 8 in Table 7). This explains why over eighty percent of hotels in the study area are clustered in the few urban and semi-urban centres in search of guests. Another side of the story was that during the interview sessions, one of the informants (guest) pointed out that one of the reasons most of these hotels are clustering at the urban and semi-urban centres make efforts to improve their safety guarantee was just to measure up with the safety standard of some other competing hotels in the industry. However, it can be deduced that safety standard has huge implications for business growth and sustainability for the hotel industry in Nigeria.

Finally, results in Table 7 gave rise to the items in Table 8. A careful consideration of various implications of safety threats for business growth and sustainability motivated search for improved safety guarantee for hotels in Nigeria. For the fact that staff have a higher mean rating on ways of improving safety standard in hotels is a confirmation that, not minding the current poor state of safety guarantee at the studied hotels in Nigeria, various hotel managements aspire to sort for further ways of improving the state of safety in their hotels. Some of the previous studies noted that a higher percentage of hotel managers in Nigeria work out modalities on improving their safety standard not minding the limited resources for safety upgrade and availability of needed equipments. Also, hotel that is constantly seeking for improved safety standard in its business stand the chance of competing favourably in the competitive hotel industry (Nwokorie & Kwusi, 2018; Managwu & Aji, 2018; Inyang, Anake & Chuma, 2018; Nwankwo, 2007). However, some major constraints were outlined during the interview sessions by staff and guests as the bane to effective improvement on hotel safety in Nigeria. This include, limited capital available for such expenses, scarcity of most of the sophisticated safety equipments, not being privy to current information on hotel safety, constant increase and variations in hotel crimes, selfishness amongst the management staff and poor periodic training of staff on hotel safety. Staff and guests attest to the fact that there is need for urgent, effective and periodic improvement on hotel safety to sustain patronage.

9. Conclusion

This study was aimed at investigating the guests and staff views with respect to safety issues at some selected hotels in Southeast Nigeria. Results from the discussion showed that despite the indifference on staff and guest views, there are safety threats in the selected hotels. The majority of the causes were human induced, while the available measures were insufficient, incapable, outdated and/or redundant. And this has huge implications for hotel patronage and business sustainability in a highly competitive hotel industry. Further implication is on the international misconceptions or tourist visits to Nigeria and the growing Nigeria tourism industry.

Moreover, the way forward was further investigated to see how to improve the safety standard of hotels in the region visited. There was a reasonable agreement between staff and guest views. They suggested periodic safety training for staff, constant review of existing safety policies, timely response to safety calls, periodic upgrade of safety equipments and institution of a functional safety units at hotels were identified as the way out (also see Groenenboom & Jones, 2003; Hilliard & Balogulu, 2008; Cebekhulu, 2016, etc). Although inadequate access to sophisticated safety equipment and challenges of funding were outlined as among the major challenges to actualizing the identified solutions, safety mentality and consciousness are the keys. Also observation shows that most of the staff of these hotels are not safety conscious. This is more worrisome among the management staff. The situation explains why some safety facilities and policies are either outdated or out of use without concerted efforts to upgrade them.

In conclusion, information from various sources used for the study (questionnaires, key informant interviews, systematic observation, and documentary sources) shows that guests are more honest with information on hotel safety in Nigeria than hotel staff. Misinformation on safety status of Nigerian hotels may not be healthy for the industry. Safety issues need concerted efforts by management and staff of hotels in Nigeria and some other developing nations. Considering the huge damaging implications safety has for the growth and sustainability of the hotel industry, the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) through its relevant unit (Hotels Inspectorate Division-HID), should have a collective safety design for hotels in Nigeria according to the star ratings. Adequate compliance to this policy and periodic review for the safety policy design is highly recommended if international best practices for safety at hotels are to be achieved in the Nigerian hotel industry. This will not only restore the confidence of guests to these hotels, but also promote international tourist visits to Nigeria (Adora, 2010; Adejohapeh, 2014; Ajayi, Oyebade, Oluyisola & Ayodele, 2018; Inyang, Anake & Chuma, 2018).

REFERENCES

Abhishek, C., Ankit, S. & Pradeep, N. (2018). Safety measures adopted by hotels and their impacts on customer relationship management. *International Journal of Research- Granthaalaya 6(1)*, 118-125.

Adejohapeh, M. (2014). Examining the indispensability of safety for town and travel trade in Nigeria: *Proceeding of the IIER International Conference Dubai, UAE, 14th December 2014.*

Adora, C. U. (2010). Managing tourism in Nigeria: The security option *Management Science and Engineering.* Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 14-25.

Ajayi, O.O., Oyebade, J.O., Oluyisola, O.O. & Ayodele, I.A. (2018). Security challenges facing Nigerian tourism in the 21st Century. Book of proceedings from 2018 HATMAN National Conference 24th – 28th of October. Page 71-75.

Alananzeh, O.A. (2017). The impact of safety issues and hygiene perceptions on customer satisfaction: A case study of four and five star hotels in Aqaba, Jordan. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research 6(1)*, 1-7.

Armstrong, M. (2009). *Armstrong's handbook for human resource management practice.* 11th Edition. London: Kogan Page

Bello, Y. O., Bello, M. B. & Raya, N. R. Y. (2014). Travel and tourism business confidence index in Nigeria: Issues and challenges. *International African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure.* Vol. 3(2).

Cebekhulu, N.P. (2016). Assessing security measures at hotels: A case study from Gauteng. M.A. Thesis, University of South Africa.

Chauhan, A; Shukia, A & Negi, P. (2018). Safety measures adopted by hotels and their impact on customer relationship management. *International Journal of Research – Granthaalayah, 6(1)*, 118-125.

Enz, C. A. (2009). The physical safety features of U.S hotels. School of Hotel Administration: *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*. Vol. 50, Issue 4. Pp 553-560.

Gaydukevich, L. M. (2017). Security problems in international tourism. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations.* No. 1, pp 28-35.

Ghazi, K. M. (2015). Safety Measures in Egyptians Hotel. *J.Hotel Bus Manage.* 4:116.

Groenenboom, K. & Jones, P. (2003). Issues of security in hotels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management 15, (1)*, 14-19.

Helena, C. and Janez, M. (2015). Safety as systematic component of wellness centers in Slovenia. *Academica Turistica*, Year 4, No 2.

Hilliard, T.W. & Baloglu, S. (2008). Safety as part of hotel services cape for meeting planners. *Journal of Convention and Event Journalism 9(1)*, 15-34.

Inyang, O.E., Anake, C.U. & Chuma, O.V. (2018). An evaluation of visitor's safety strategies by Hotels in Wukari town, Taraba State, Nigeria. Book of proceedings from 2018 HATMAN National Conference 24th – 28th of October. Page 50-56.

Jasiwinder, S. (2014). Safety concerns in hospitality industry. *International Journal of Management and Commence Innovation.* Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp. (1-5).

Karam, M.G. (2015). Safety measures in Egyptian hotels. *Journal of Hotel and Business Management 4(1)*, 1-11.

Managwu, L.C. & Aji, R.U. (2018). Effectiveness of safety measures in Hotels in South-East Nigeria: The guests' viewpoint. Book of proceedings from 2018 HATMAN National Conference 24th – 28th October. Page 33-40.

Nomsa, P. C. (2016). Assessing security measures at hotels: A case study from Gauteng. Master of Arts Thesis, University of South African.

Norizawati, M. A. & Tarmiji, M. (2014). Issues of safety. New Challenging to Malaysia tourism Industry.*SHS Web of Conferences.* 12, 01083.

Nwankwo, A. E. (2007). *A guide to Hotel Management in a developing country Nigeria in view.* Nsukka. University of Nigeria Press Ltd.

Nwankwo, E.A. (2017). *Fundamentals of tourism studies*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria University Press Ltd.

Nwokorie, E.C., Everest, D.A. & Ojo, O.O. (2014). Emerging security challenges for tourism development: Effect on the Nigerian Economy. *Journal of Women in Technical Education 7(2)*, 33-40.

Nwokorie, E.C. & Kwusi, N.R. (2018). Impact of security challenges on hotel industry in
   Owerri, Nigeria. Book of Proceedings from 2018 HATMAN National Conference 24th – 28th October.
   Page 1-8.

Ofobruku, S. A. (2012). Hospitality and tourism manpower training and education in Nigeria. *International Afro
   Asian Journal of Social Sciences.* Vol. 3, No. 34.

Tyra, W. H. & Seyhmus, B. (2008). Safety as part of hotel services cape for
   meeting planners. *Journal of convention and event tourism.* Vol. 9(1).

Ukwayi, J. K., Ojong, F. E., Austin, E. B. & Emeka, J. O. (2012). "Impact of Crime on sustainable tourism in
   Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Research on Humanities and Social Sciences,* Vol. 2, No. 11.

Wang, J. & Wang, J. (2009). Issues, challenges, and trends that are facing hospitality industry.   *Management
   Science and Engineering 3(4)*, 53-58