

## ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF DESTINATION IMAGE ON TRIP BEHAVIOUR IN SELECTED TOURISTIC CENTRES IN OWERRI, IMO STATE

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### Abstract

*This study sought to determine the influence of destination image on trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in Owerri, Imo State. Five research hypotheses guided the study. The study population comprised all visitors and tourists that visited the study area during the period of the study (October-December 2019) and it is an infinite population. The sample size of 200 was purposively determined. The research instrument for data collection was subjected to reliability test using Crombach Alpha reliability technique and a reliability co-efficient of 0.79 was obtained. Convenient sampling technique was used for the study and simple regression analytical tool was used in analysing the data generated on SPSS version 25 package. Findings revealed that a significant relationship exists between destination image, and motivation (0.632); past experience (0.456); price (0.921); and service quality (0.781) at 0.05% level of significance, while the relationship between destination image and attitude (0.212) was found not to be significant at 0.05% level of significance. It was therefore concluded that destination image has significant influence on trip behaviour in the study area. In view of the findings, it was recommended among others that operators of these centres should do more in motivating potential visitors/tourists through continuous improvement in facilities and features to induce positive trip behaviour, that the tangibles should be such that guarantee a feel of pleasant and memorable experience such that can develop in the visitors/tourists the organic image of the destination, and that the tariff structure of the centres should be made to reflect the quality inherent in the services rendered.*

*Key: Destination, Image, Trip, Behaviour, Touristic centres.*

### Introduction

#### Background of the Study

Destinations are facing worldwide competition for tourists. The intense competition of tourism industry demands destinations to build and maintain a favourable image, to develop attractive tourism offerings, and to achieve visitor satisfaction and loyalty for its sustainable tourism development. Bigne, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2001), maintain that there are positive and negative associations with a destination, its people and products, which are difficult to change. Destination image might influence tourists' travel decision making and behaviour towards a destination as well as satisfaction levels and recollection of the experience. Therefore, perceived images are the basis of the evaluation or selection process and thus

provide the link between motivations and destination selection (Beelin and Martin 2004).

To understand tourists' differences in perceptions regarding certain destinations, it becomes important to understand images and motivations toward a destination in order to predict tourism demand and its impact on the tourism location. In fact, this understanding of destination image and visitors' perceptions is critical to a destination and provides the basis for more effective and efficient future strategic planning of the destination. In practical terms, this implies that image studies are a prerequisite to a successful marketing strategy. A major objective of any destination positioning strategy should be to reinforce positive images already held by the target market, correct negative images, or create a new image (Hersh, 2010).

In this context, the importance of understanding destination perceptions of visitors becomes critical to a destination. In practical terms, this could be critical of Owerri the capital of Imo State. Owerri boasts of several touristic centres including but not limited to high class hotels, exotic restaurants and fast food outfits, amusement parks, shopping malls, entertainments centres and other high profile places of interests. Observations have shown that Owerri has seemingly become a destination of choice in South East Nigeria in view of the number of visitors it attracts particularly during the weekends such that some hotels record full occupancy.

Understanding customer behaviour, has become an important component of marketing planning and was initially developed in marketing disciplines and attracted attention in research, academic and business fields. It is often suggested and accepted that satisfaction has a positive impact on consumer post-purchase behaviour and trip behaviour (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2009) which benefits companies in economic terms. Satisfied customers will return to the company in the future. Loyal customers are more willing to continue patronage with the company even when prices rise (Bigne et al, 2009) and generate more positive word-of-mouth communication with consequent additional business (Marco, 2015).

Destination image can have a direct impact on travel behaviour and plays a critical role in destination selection process (Lopes, 2011). Discussions on specific factors or groups of factors influencing destination image are relevant to sum up the overall relationship between the image formation process, what constitute the destination image and the determinants of destination image or the factors influencing a destination image.

Destination image is the sum of perceptual beliefs, knowledge, affective feeling, and total impression that a visitor holds about a destination, (Leou, Wang, and Hsiao, 2015) and it plays a critical role in determining purchase decisions in the destination-choice process, and the attractiveness of a destination. Destination choice is determined by the attributes a destination offers, and also by the characteristics of the tourists (Lopes, 2011).

Motivation, traveller's perception, revisit intention and satisfaction are important constructs in tourist behaviour research. However, tourism studies have addressed these constructs independently and the causal relationships between them have been rarely discussed. This study tries to address the causal relationship between trip behaviour and destination image in selected touristic centres in Owerri, Imo State.

A review of available anterior studies indicates a gap in study with regard to the destination image and trip behaviour particularly as it concerns Owerri as a destination in South East Nigeria making it difficult to understand how the city is perceived by visitors/tourists from outside the city. The concept of destination image has attracted a lot of interest in Tourism circle over the years. Many researches have been carried out in this area to determine how destination image can influence certain variables such as tourist choice of a destination, tourist decision making, choice and patronage as well as the performance of the destination among others (Marco, 2015; Leou, et al, 2015; Savas and Burcin, 2017).

However, literature search during the cause of this study revealed that not much has been done in the area of destination image and trip behaviour in Nigeria context. This present study equally is carried out to at least narrow the gap created by dearth of literature in this area and to determine the linearity between destination image and trip behaviour in the study area.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to determine the influence of destination image on trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in Owerri Imo State. The specific objectives include:

- i. To determine the influence of motivation on trip behaviour in the study area
- ii. To determine the influence of past experience on trip behaviour in the study area.
- iii. To determine the influence of attitude on trip behaviour in the study areas.
- iv. To determine the influence of destination price on trip behaviour in the study area.

- v. To determine the influence of service quality on trip behaviour in the study area.

### Research Hypotheses

The following formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between motivation and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in the study area.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between past experience and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in the study area.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between attitude and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in the study area.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between destination price and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in the study area.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between service quality and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in the study area.

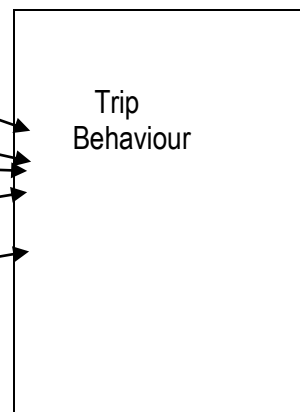
### Independent variable

#### Destination Image

Motivation
Past Experience
Attitude
Destination Price
Service Quality

### Dependent variable

#### Trip Behaviour



### Review of Related Literature

#### Destination Image

The contributions of tourism to the world economy are well documented (Savvas and Burcin 2017), it is seen to be one of the major growing sectors globally. Bigne, et al (2009) maintain that apart from oil, tourism is the next world leading export commodity. Consumers generally perceive what is expected of the product/service, which is normally based on familiarity, previous experience, values and motivations (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; and Beerli and Martin, 2004).

Krippendorf (1982) cited in Marco (2015) indicated that tourists' perception of a destination can be more important than its tangible attributes, and that "the tourist goes to a destination to see the image rather than the reality". Perception remains one of the most engrossing concepts in tourism marketing. A variety of perception studies exist in

the tourism field (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004).

Due to the intangible nature of tourism offerings, tourists must make decisions based on how a destination is perceived (Lopes, 2011). Thus, understanding tourist perception is extremely complex, as each individual has unique perceptions - and measuring perceptions is even more challenging due to the diverse characteristics of tourism products. Differences in perceptions often lead to variations in tourist behavioral intent, and a key implication of this for tourism is that perceptions, like attitudes, are crucial in constructing tourist involvement, destination image, satisfaction, and service quality (Leou, et al 2015).

Given the information possessed about a destination, the tourist will form an image of it (Bigne, et al 2009). This image is a description of

the tourist's attitude towards a number of cues related to a destination's attributes. Physical attributes of a destination act only as stimuli (pull factors) inducing certain associations, and thus the image is not what the product actually is but what the tourist's beliefs tend to construct (Marco, 2015). Perception and image are terms that are closely related and it can be deduced that the perception process affects the image a tourist has of a destination.

Tourism is intangible as well as a luxury demand such that any perceived hitch in the process of experiencing it can mar and/or divert the traffic to another destination perceived to be hitch-free. One of the major factors considered in deciding on a choice destination is its image. Destination image is defined as a total impression that tourists have about a destination (Savvas and Burcin, 2017). In other words, image places a symbol of an area into potential tourists' minds and gives them a preconceived idea of the destination. Thus, researchers have found that image is a vital concept in understanding the destination selection process of tourists (Leou, et al, 2015; Bigne, et al, 2009). Destination image, in particular, is dynamic rather than static. Accordingly, image evolution has been one of the important topics in the field of Tourism and has attracted lot discussions over the years. Definitions of destination image have developed over the years.

Ultimately, researchers agree that destination image is a valuable concept with regard to tourist destination choice (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004). Destination image is also a key marketing tool that can have a powerful influence over tourist decisions about where to take their vacation. According to Lopes (2011) a destination with a strong image is more easily differentiated from its competitors, and tourists are more likely to consider and select destinations with stronger and more positive images. It therefore follows that destinations with strong infrastructure, sufficient investment, positive images, and a variety of products gain much more share from the market.

Destination image emanates from the concept of brand image, which refers to a set of beliefs associated with a particular brand widely

studied in marketing and consumer behavior perspectives (Frias, 2008). It has been conceptualized in various ways; however, the concept is frequently approached from two conceptualizations, namely as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has on a decision" (Crompton, 1979 cited in Lopes 2011) and "a person's perception of available attributes or activities of a destination" (Gartner, 1986, cited in Lopes 2011).

This study will adopt a combination of both conceptualizations, since both emphasis on the mental image of a destination. Gunn's (1972) seven-stage theory explains tourists' experiences on the basis of seven stages of imagery change, namely accumulation of mental images about a vacation experience, change in those images, choosing to take a vacation, travel to the destination, participation at the destination, return travel and the new accumulation of images based on the travel experience. Consequently, tourist Destination images can be tailored or altered over the seven stages.

### **Dimensions of Destination Image**

Destinations with recognizable images and tourists' positive perceptions have more probability of being chosen. Also, the destination image perceived post-visit influences tourist satisfaction and intention to repeat the visit in the future, and their communication with friends and family (word of mouth). This certainly depends on the destination capacity in providing experiences that correspond with the image travellers held of the destination.

The stages of image formation are based on the different tourists' perceptions, considering also the impact of all internal and external factors that can influence the tourists' image of the destination, as the following analysis shows. Thus, it's important to make a distinction between perception "a priori", perception "in situ" and perception "a posteriori":

Perception "a priori" is the mental construction an individual makes of a place without having a physical connection with the place. This means that tourists have already "visited" a place before they physically visit it.

Perception “in situ” is a key moment in the tourists’ experience, because it contrasts what they have imagined. Tourists never arrive with a null perception: they have a previous image of the place that can be confirmed or not.

Perception “a posteriori” indicates that tourists’ experience doesn’t end with the trip, but they consume some elements in their daily life. For instance, the roles that photographs have in order to capture a moment of the trip or specific elements of the destination.

According to Gunn (1988), images are developed at two different levels. He cited organic level and induced level. The organic image develops internally because of actual experience or visitation, and the induced image forms because of externally received and processed information such as publicity, advertisement, news reports or word of mouth. Basically, image development is linked to many forms of information. However, image is also formed on the basis of an exchange value between the value sought and expected, and the efforts made to get this value. Always Gunn (1988) identifies the following multiple stages in the process of tourists image formation: (1) accumulating mental images of the destination - organic image; (2) modifying the initial image after more information - induced image; (3) deciding to visit the destination; (4) visiting the destination; (5) sharing the destination; (6) returning home and (7) modifying the image based on the experience. In this way, the third level of image formation is the experiential image that is the result of a visit. Given the differences in the ways these images are formed, the images are open to change to different extents and in different ways. Therefore, it is beneficial for destinations to understand what drives tourists to travel and what destinations can offer to meet those needs.

### **Factors that Influence Destination Image**

Destination image, as identified by Baloglu and McCleary (1999), is formed by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors are the individual (tourist) characteristics like, among others, personality, past experiences, and motivations that influence the formation of tourists’

destination image. External factors are stimulus factors and include socio-economic factors such as culture, price, destination marketing, among other factors that influence destination image formation.

### **Internal Factors:**

Internal factors are those psychological factors such as personality, past experiences, attitude, learning, expectations and motives that affect an individual’s perceptual process to a considerable extent (Beerli and Martin, 2004). These factors, in turn, affect tourists’ formation of destination image. Factors that are compatible with a tourist’s learning, interest, attitude and personality are likely to get more attention than others Nvugen (2008).

### **Personality:**

Personality refers to those psychological characteristics of people which determine and reflect their reaction to environmental influences (Pravag 2009). It can be defined as the configuration of a person’s characteristics and ways of behaving, which determine his/her adjustment to the environment in a unique way Beerli and Martin (2004). According to the researchers, personality is created by patterns of behavior and mental structures, while Nvugen (2008) adds that it is an emphasis of an individual’s past history on his/her current behavior. Marco (2015) states that marketers have discovered that personality is associated with self-image, which is how consumers like to see themselves, which in turn affects their buying behavior. While researchers (Beerli and Martin, 2004) seem to indicate that individual traits are not good predictors of behavior, it is a well-known that marketers use personality traits to describe individuals and to differentiate between them. The consideration of personality traits is important in order to appraise destination behavior trends.

### **Past Experiences:**

Tourists gain experience of a visit to a destination, through a variety of sources. The tourist then builds an inventory of destinations comprised of good and bad experiences. This information/inventory will be stored and used as

future reference, when selecting a tourism destination in future (Marco, 2015). Past experiences have an impact on what tourists perceive. According to Beerli and Martin (2004), every person has a unique perception which is affected by all events in the individual's life. These events affect tourist thinking and play a vital role in perception. Learning from previous experiences has a critical effect throughout the stages of the perceptual process. Lopes (2011) states that past experiences are closely associated with everyday life and play a major role in consumer choice. Therefore, positive experiences that are reinforced in similar situations may generate strong biases towards that situation which in turn influences the consumer's final choice.

#### **Attitudes:**

Attitudes are a combination of knowledge and feelings (both positive and negative) about an event, person or object. An attitude encompasses an individual's value system, which represents personal standards of what is good and bad and also right and wrong (Pravag 2009). According to the author, attitude is a predisposition created by learning and experience - to respond in a consistent way towards an object such as a product or destination. If tourists have a negative experience at a hotel or restaurant, it is likely that a negative attitude is developed which will deter them from returning.

#### **Expectations:**

Expectations are pre-trial beliefs a tourist has about the performance of a service or a destination. This is used as the standard or reference against which the actual performance (moment of truth) is judged.

#### **Motivation:**

Motivation can be defined as a need or set of needs that is the driving force within individuals (push factors), and which pushes them into action or to seek satisfaction of a need or set of needs (Leou, et al, 2015). According to the researchers motivation is a state of need, or a condition that exerts a 'push' on the individual toward certain types of actions that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction. Travel factors

are the internal factors at work within individuals - expressed as needs, wants and desires - which lead some people to a place much higher in value than others, and influence the type of destinations and tourist experiences chosen.

#### **External factors:**

The ways in which consumers think, believe and act are largely determined by the external factors in society. The needs consumers experience, the alternatives considered, and the ways in which they are evaluated, are all affected by external social forces. There is a strong link between internal (personal) factors previously discussed and the external factors. The following external factors are briefly explained here.

#### **Culture:**

Pravag and Hosany (2013) describes culture as values, ideas, attitudes and meaningful symbols, as well as artifacts elaborated in a society. He further states that these elements are transmitted from one generation to another and serve to shape human behavior. It is a diverse pool of knowledge and shared realities and norms that constitute learned systems of meaning in a particular society.

#### **Price:**

Consumers do not buy products because of the actual value of the products, but because the price of the product closely matches the perceived value of the product. According to Pravag (2009), price must accurately reflect the value of the offering. When purchasing tourism offerings, consumers often use price as an indication of quality - which means that price gives them the first indication of how to determine the quality of an offering. With tourism, price information is readily available on the Internet, in newspapers and other media - as well as through any travel agency. If the offering is priced too high in relation to what consumers think it is worth - then consumers will not buy it. If the price is too low, however, the offering may be perceived as being of inferior quality, and, again, consumers will not buy it.

It is crucial that the quality of the offering meets the expectations that the price has generated

in consumer minds. Prices that compare favorably with the reference point are deemed fair, while prices that compare unfavorably are deemed unfair. Perceptions of price fairness in turn will influence consumer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Price is linked to performance, expectations, perceptions of quality and prestige, satisfying needs, and perceived benefits.

### **Service Quality:**

The quality of service that tourists receive goes a long way in influencing a return trip to that destination. Consumers assess service quality from both functional perspective that is how it is rendered and the actions of the service providers during the interaction; and the technical perspective which has to do with the outcome of the service received. It follows therefore that service failure might occur from either perspectives or from both. Service failure occurs when consumers experience defects in service quality and this ultimately robs off on the image of the destination and might affect return trip. The findings of a study by Anyanwu (2019) on Service Quality and Consumer Based Brand Equity in Chain Fast Food Establishment in South East Nigeria, support the above stand point.

### **Trip Behaviour**

Tourists are subject to certain behaviour before, during and after travelling. This is conceptualised as travel behaviour. This behaviour is the direct result of interaction between certain personal and environmental variables on a continuous basis. Notice is given to the influence of people and situations on both sides and the reaction according to this influence. Travel behaviour can therefore be defined as the way tourists behave according to their attitudes towards a certain product and their response by making use of the product (Lopes, 2011).

Pravag and Hosany (2013) state that specific decisions embrace one or more of the behavioural intentions based on the need to behave in a certain way according to highly defined situations. In order to predict travel behaviour it is important to understand how individual characteristics of a person interact with the characteristics of the situation, therefore

understanding the positive and negative evaluative factors influencing destination choices of the tourists.

Various researchers have identified factors influencing travel behaviour of tourists such as variables motivating the tourist to travel, attitude of the tourist, various situational factors and environmental factors which influence the personal significance of the tourist (Md Shah 2011). According to Gartner (1986) (as cited by Frias, 2008) motivation initiates the decision-making process. This occurs when a certain need or want cannot be met at home. Motivations surface when a tourist wants to satisfy a need or want and this can be seen as a very important variable in relation to their travel decisions and the outcome of satisfaction (Watkins 2006; Yu 2008; Frias, 2008).

According Pravag and Hosany (2013) travel motivations can be considered as one of the most important psychological influences of tourist behaviour. Motivations are the inner state of a person, or certain needs and wants of a person, which force them to act or behave in a specific way and thus sustaining human behaviour. Maslow's theory is one of the most frequently used to explain the premise of motivation. Maslow uses five sets of goals which are also referred to as basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Nvugen 2008). Tourists may need to escape, relax, to gain relief of physical- and mental tension and for typical sun-lust reasons. Crompton (1977, cited in Frias 2008) identified seven socio-psychological factors which motivate a tourist to travel: escape from an everyday environment, discovery and evaluation of oneself, relaxing or participation in recreational activities, gaining a certain level of prestige, for the purpose of regression, strengthening family ties and facilitating their level of social interaction.

It is important to understand and have adequate knowledge about the motivations influencing the travel behaviour of tourists; for motivations have direct impact on the decisions tourists make.

Travel behaviour and travel motivation are therefore considered as important fields in tourism research literature. The prediction of travel behaviour and knowledge of travel motivation play

an important role in tourism marketing, in order to create demand and assist tourists in decision-making (Bigne, et al 2009). Thus, by having adequate knowledge and understanding of tourist behaviour, strategies and policies can be developed and implemented to increase the demand for tourism (Savvas and Burcin, 2017).

### **Factors Influencing Trip Behaviour**

**Accessibility:** Of all socio-economic factors, accessibility is the most important one. All tourist centers must be easily accessible by various modes of transportation like roads, railways, air and water. To enjoy nature's beautiful sites seeing, traveling by roads and railways is a better option. If a tourist plans to reach a remote tour-destination in the quickest possible time, then airway is the most suitable choice. Generally, waterways are seldom selected unless a tourist decides to enjoy a luxury cruise experience in sea and or interested to visit an isolated archipelago.

**Accommodation:** Places of tourists' interest must be capable enough to provide good accommodation and catering facilities. A type of accommodation required by tourists depends on their lives-styles, standard of living, capacity to spend money, nature of services expected, etc. Classification of accommodation centers (i.e. various hotels, motels, dormitories, etc.) on basis of rating like five stars and below is essential so that tourists can make a proper choice and plan their trips appropriately. Generally, tourism mostly prospers in those areas where good lodging and food facilities are available at reasonable prices.

**Amenities:** Growth of tourism at a particular place is also influenced by crucial factors such as: how well the site is maintained for touring activities like skiing, roping, paragliding, rowing, fishing, surfing, safari adventure, etc. Whether emergency facilities are available or not, so on.

**Ancillary services:** If a tour destination is equipped by ancillary (supplementary) services like banking and finance, the Internet and telecom connectivity, hospitals, insurance, so on. Then such a place succeeds to hold (retain) more tourists for a longer time. This overall helps to boost the local economy

to some extent. Other factors that can influence travel include safety, security, climate, environmental features, among others.

This study is anchored on the theory of Travel Motivation. According to Crompton (1979), as cited in Lopes (2011), the need for relaxation, exploration, social interaction and enhancement of kinship relationships act as dominant push motives in the vacation decision. In reality, pull motives are aroused by the destination and include factors like scenic attractions, historical sites, climatic and other environmental features among others. Push factors are organic (emerge from within the prospective tourist) and are thought to establish the desire for travel while pull factors are thought to explain actual destination choice.

According to Maslow, there are five needs forming a hierarchy, progressing from the lower to the higher needs. Maslow argued that if the lower needs [physiological {hunger, thirst, rest}, safety {security}, belonging and love {affection, giving and receiving love}] are fulfilled the individual would be motivated by needs of the next level of the hierarchy. Therefore, it is believed that this theory is apt for the study to achieve the objectives set.

### **Empirical Literature**

Studies have been carried out by researchers to determine the relationships between destination image and repeat purchase, trip return, satisfaction, destination loyalty among other variables in different climates over the years. A few of these anterior studies are presented here.

Marco (2015) carried out a study on the topic "The tourist imagery, the Destination image and the Brand Image in Oporto City. The study was a quantitative study and used a sample size of 30 while descriptive statistics was employed in analyzing the data generated. Findings showed that the imagery that foreign tourists have influenced the image of Oporto city.

Similarly, Leou, et al, (2015), carried out a study on the topic "The relationship between destination image and satisfaction in Macao". The researchers employed quantitative methods to measure the functional and psychological attributes of the destination image. Findings revealed that the



perceptions of destination image vary among people and Macao World Heritage could have part moderation effect on the relationship between destination image and satisfaction.

Furthermore, Savas and Burcin (2017) carried out a study on "The impact of Destination Image and the Intention to Revisit: a study regarding Arab tourists". Data was obtained from a total of 385 Arab tourists for the study. Descriptive analyses such as percentage, frequency as well as statistical tests such as factor analysis (confirmatory), and reliability analysis were used in the analysis of the obtained data. Furthermore, structural equation model (SEM) was used to analyze the impact of destination image (cognitive and affective) on the intention of Arab tourists to revisit Istanbul. The study concluded that cognitive image did have an impact on the intention of Arab tourists to revisit Istanbul; however affective image was not effective in terms of intent to revisit.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study was a descriptive survey and it was considered appropriate for this present study because it has been used successfully in previous studies Macor (2015); Leou, et al (2015); Savas and Burcin (2017).

### Study Area

Owerri is the seat of power of Imo State which is one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria which lies between latitudes 5<sup>o</sup>, 24' and 5<sup>o</sup> 30' North of the equator and between longitudes 7<sup>o</sup> 32' and 7<sup>o</sup> 21' East of the Greenwich meridian. This is a tropical rainforest zone, located in the South-eastern zone of Nigeria. Owerri has been described as relaxation rendezvous in South East Nigeria in view of numerous touristic centres that define her land scape; exotic hotels, restaurants, entertainment outfits and lounges, exotic shopping malls and other numerous places of interest both natural and man-made. The geographical scope of the study was limited to Owerri municipality as only touristic centres in operation within this scope were used for the study.

### Population for the Study

The population comprised all visitors/tourists that visited touristic centres in Owerri between October and December 2019 and it was an infinite population.

### Sample, Sampling Technique, and Data Collection

The researcher purposively took 200 visitors/tourists drawn from different touristic centres as respondents. A convenient sampling technique was used and only accessible visitors/tourists filled copies of the research instrument administered for the study which were collected on the spot to increase the return rate using three trained research assistants. Copies of the research instrument which was an adapted version of a pre-validated questionnaire on a 4-point rating scale which reliability test result gave a coefficient of 0.79 (Crombach Alpha) were distributed based on observed visitor/tourist throughput regarding the touristic centres selected for the study. The breakdown is shown below:

Mimi's Place	= 40
Ibari Ogwa	= 40
Mbari Cultural Centre	= 20
Kilimanjaro	= 25
Shoprite	=50
Crunchies	=25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>=200</b>

### Data Collection, Analysis, and Findings

Data was collected by administering two hundred (200) copies of the research instrument to six (6) touristic centres according to observed visitor/tourist throughput as shown above. Out of these number of copies, only one hundred and fifty eight (158) copies were considered useable for the study, representing 79% of the total number administered. Data was analysed using single Regression analytical technique on SPSS version 25.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between motivation and trip behaviour in selected touristic Centres in Owerri.

**Table 1.1: Model Summary**

Model	R	t-value	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate	F
1	.459 <sup>a</sup>	1.213	0.632	.81233	1.984

- a. Predictor: (Constant): motivation  
 b. Dependent variable: trip behaviour

Results of regression analysis are shown in table 1.1 above. Regression analysis was conducted with trip behaviour as the dependent variable and motivation as the independent variable. The adjusted R square is 0.632 which reveals that 63.2% of trip behaviour is explained by motivation variable. Results show that the F value is 1.984 that is significant at  $p=0.000$ , suggesting that motivation has explained the 63.2% variance in trip behaviour

at 5% significance level. Therefore, results of regression analysis reject the null Hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that motivation has a significant relationship with trip behaviour.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between past experience and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in Owerri.

**Table 1.2: Model Summary**

Model	R	t-value	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate	F
1	.119 <sup>a</sup>	1.337	0.456	.45672	1.332

- a. Predictor: (Constant), past experience  
 b. Dependent variable: trip behaviour

Results of regression analysis are shown in table 1.2 above. Regression analysis was conducted with trip behaviour as the dependent variable and past experience as the independent variable. The adjusted R square is 0.456 which reveals 45.6% of trip behaviour is explained by past experience. Results show that the F value is 1.332 that is significant at  $p=0.005$ , suggesting that past experience has explained the 45.6% variance in trip

behaviour at the 5% significance level. Therefore, results of regression analysis reject the null Hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that past experience has a significant relationship with trip behaviour.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between attitude and trip behaviour in selected tourist sites in Imo state

**Table 1.3 Model Summary**

Model	B	t-value	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate	F
1	.021 <sup>a</sup>	1.231	0.212	.65801	1.110

- a. Predictors: (Constant), attitude  
 b. Dependent variable: trip behaviour

Table 1.3 above shows regression analysis conducted with trip behaviour as the dependent variable and attitude as the independent variable. The adjusted R square is 0.212 which reveals that 21.2% of total variance in trip behaviour is explained by attitude variable. Results show that the F value is 1.110 that is significant at  $p=0.000$ , suggesting that attitude has explained the 21% of

the variance in trip behaviour at 5% level of significance. Therefore, results of regression analysis support the null hypothesis thus the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between attitude and trip behaviour was rejected.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between destination price and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in Owerri.

**Table 1.4 Model Summary**

Model	B	t-value	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate	F
1	.087 <sup>a</sup>	2.331	0.921	.73654	2.411

- a. Predictor: (Constant), destination price  
b. Dependent variable: trip behaviour

Table 1.4 above shows regression analysis conducted with trip behaviour as the dependent variable and destination price as the independent variable. The adjusted R square is 0.921 which reveals that 92.1% of total variance in trip behaviour is explained by destination price variable. Results show that the F value is 2.411 that is significant at  $p=0.000$ , suggesting that destination price has explained the 92.1% of the variance of trip

behaviour at the 5% significance level. Therefore, results of regression analysis support the alternative hypothesis. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected and its alternative hypothesis which states that destination price is positively related to trip behaviour was accepted.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between service quality and trip behaviour in selected touristic centres in Owerri.

**Table 1.5 Model Summary**

Model	B	t-value	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate	F
1	.073 <sup>a</sup>	2.131	0.781	.75674	2.309

- a. Predictor: (Constant), service quality  
b. Dependent variable: trip behaviour

Table 1.5 above shows regression analysis conducted with trip behaviour as the dependent variable and service quality as the independent variable. The adjusted R square is 0.781 which reveals that 78.1% of total variance in trip behaviour is explained by service quality variable. Results show that the F value is 2.309 that is significant at  $p=0.000$ , suggesting that service quality has explained the 78.1% variance in trip behaviour at the 1% significance level. Therefore, results of regression analysis support the alternative hypothesis. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected and its alternative hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between service quality and trip behaviour.

behaviour in the study area. This implies that a unit increase in motivation will lead to 0.632 increases in trip behaviour and vice versa. This result ultimately confirms that there is a motivating factor (push factor) behind every travel. Every tourist has a need to satisfy by travelling to a certain destination. This finding is in line with the studies carried out by Pravag and Hosany (2013); Marco (2015); and Kahn, et al (2017).

Results in Table 1.2 above revealed that the adjusted R square is 0.456 suggesting that 45.6% of trip behaviour is explained by past experience. This by implication means that past experience has a significant relationship with trip behaviour such that a unit increase in past experience will lead to 0.456 increase in trip behaviour and vice versa. The findings of Lehto, et al (2004); Lopes (2011); and Kahn, et al (2017) lend credence to this finding. Tourists and visitors alike draw from the reservoir of past experiences (good or bad) while making decisions on present and future travel plans and this ultimately influences trip behaviour. Travel itself is

### Discussion of Findings

Result of regression analysis shown in Table 1.1 revealed that the adjusted R square is 0.632 suggesting that 63.2% of trip behaviour is explained by motivation variable. This implies that motivation has a significant relationship with trip

intangible and the only thing that is taken away from it by the traveller is experience and the experience is recalled from the memory during decision making when another travel is to be made. This follows that a destination with a strong motivation is more easily differentiated from its competitors and a tourist destination with stronger and more positive image are more likely to be considered and selected at the end of the decision-making process.

Results in Table 1.3 revealed that the adjusted R square is 0.212 suggesting that 21.2% of total variance in trip behaviour is explained by attitude variable. Thus, null hypothesis was accepted which states that attitude is not significantly related to trip behaviour. This implies that a unit increase in attitude will lead to 0.212 increases in trip behaviour and vice versa. This follows that attitude might not have a positive influence on trip behaviour. This finding is contrary to the findings of Frias (2012); Ana and Riu (2015). However, researchers such as Echtner and Ritchie (2003) opined that attitude can play an important role in dissemination of information for potential tourists, whether through images, interaction and multimedia on the Web, making it possible to configure a stronger and lighter image of a destination

Results in Table 1.4 showed that the adjusted R square is 0.921 suggesting that 92.1% of total variance in trip behaviour is explained by destination price variable. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected and its alternative hypothesis that destination price is significantly related to trip behaviour accepted. This implies that a unit increase in price will lead to 0.921 increases in trip behaviour and vice versa. The findings of Nvugen (2008); Pravag (2009); Md Shah (2011) and Pravag (2012) support this finding. In the context of modern marketing, consumers of goods and services are seen to be price sensitive and at the same time associate price with perceived quality of goods and services received. This becomes a critical issue during purchase decision making including destination choice as consumers seek for customer value. Consumers want to see quality in price. Therefore, any destination that is perceived to have fallen short of customer value by the visitors /

tourists might not be considered during choice of destination/purchase decision making.

Results in Table 1.5 revealed that the adjusted R square is 0.781 suggesting that 78.1% of total variance in trip behaviour is explained by service quality variable. This implies that a unit increase in service quality will lead to 0.921 increases in trip behaviour and vice versa. This finding is in line with the findings of Nam, et al, (2011); He and Li (2011); Fayes and Noor (2017); and Anyanwu (2019). Service quality has a positive relationship with brand/destination loyalty and thus ultimately influences trip behaviour. As a luxury demand, the quality of goods and services rendered to the tourists/visitors at the destinations should be such that positively influence consumer (visitor/tourist) decision making both in the present and in future purchases.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In conclusion, findings have revealed that there is a positive relationship destination image and trip behaviour in the study area, therefore it is concluded that destination image can influence trip behaviour in touristic centres in Owerri, Imo state. Based on the findings of this research work, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. Operators of touristic centres should do more in motivating potential tourists/ visitors to the centres through continuous improvement in their facilities and features such that can induce positive trip behaviour and serve as irresistible pull factors.
- ii. Operators of touristic centres should ensure that tangibles (both natural and artificial) are such that will make customers have a good feel of pleasant and memorable experience that will contribute in the development of organic image of the destination in the customers and motivate them to repeat the visit as tourism itself is a luxury demand.
- iii. Operators should ensure that their tariff structure is such that reflects quality of services rendered as anything short of this might present a negative image of the centre to the potential visitor/tourist and influence trip behaviour.

- iv. Operators of these touristic centres should ensure that flawless and professional services devoid of defects are delivered at all times as these help in keeping the destination positively in the minds of customers. Total quality management should be embraced as a practice.

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