

Tourist Demographic Attributes as Determinants of Tourism Demand in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined tourist demand for destinations in the Niger Delta in relation to tourists' demographic attributes. Tourism plays a vital role in economic growth, yet weakly articulated tourism policies in the Niger Delta have limited the ability of destinations to meet the diverse needs of local and foreign tourists. Guided by the Theory of Attractive Quality and Packaging (TAQAP), the study assessed how factors such as income, education, nationality, family size, occupation, sex, and marital status influence destination demand. Twelve tourist destinations were selected across the six South-South states, and data were collected from 950 respondents using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed. Findings revealed that tourist demand is significantly influenced by individual demographic characteristics, particularly age, income, education, nationality, family composition, and occupation. The study further showed that Nigerians, small family groups, students, business and political associates, and middle-income earners constitute the major patrons of tourism destinations in the region. Consequently, the study recommends that tourism facilities and services be strategically designed to address the needs of diverse tourist segments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

To define the target market anticipated for each tourist destination in the Niger delta, it is indeed necessary for tourism providers to examine, study, and understand holistically

tourists' attitudes, needs, wants, and preferences regularly with a view to making adequate provisions of features most highly needed by tourists in the destinations. This is important as individual tourist segments show variations in their demand or preferences for various forms of tourism or tourist destinations.

In the Niger Delta, the recreational needs of both local and foreign tourists are not adequately met (Awaritefe, 2014). This phenomenon breeds low patronage, low income, and revenue generation. The improper coordination and implementation of tourism policy in the Niger Delta have led to haphazard development of tourism.

It is important to note that the study and the knowledge of tourists' attributes, tourist groups, their character, and preferences are important factors for tourism development and tourism demand in any area. In this context, there is a need for proper identification of the competitive strength of each form of tourism in terms of its potential for attracting tourists of various demographic attributes. Additionally, a detailed study of tourists and potential tourists is necessary in tourism planning and management in order to meet the needs of different segments of tourists. Tourist attributes include income, age, sex, education, nationality, family, and occupation.

It is in this context that this study evaluated the relationship between tourist attributes such as age, sex, education, income, family, nationality, occupation, and its relationship to tourist demand for tourism in the Niger Delta. This is with a view to providing insights into the tourism destination most highly desired or demanded by tourists of various demographic attributes.

Research problems

Despite the colossal benefit derived from tourism, especially amongst the developed countries of the world, Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta, reaps a meager sum despite its pristine landscape. It is important to note that information on the roles of tourist attributes on tourist demand is lacking in the Niger Delta. Moreover, there is a dearth of research to explain why tourists travel to destination centers in the Niger Delta or why they do not travel. Furthermore, the individual or group variations in tourists' demand for destinations are still not fully understood in the Niger Delta tourism literature (Awaritefe, 2014).

Although the issue of tourist demand for tourism has been addressed by past research, such as Awaritefe (2014), Kozak (2022), and Foster (2024), the study was not focused on the Niger Delta. Furthermore, the studies did not highlight the influence of tourists' attributes on tourist demand, nor did past studies identify individual groups' preferences for tourism features. Studies of tourist attributes, playing energizing roles in tourism demand, have long attracted attention in the developed and some developing countries of the world, but have not adequately addressed in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta.

Studies carried out in developed countries by Mill and Morrison (2002) highlighted that tourists show a high level of correspondence between their attributes (such as age, sex, income, marital status, education, nationality, and family) and destination choices made. Other past research, such as Ezebanche (2019), Yeledour (2022), and Seo and Yuu (2022), also observed that a relationship exists between tourists' attributes and tourism demand. But these studies were not carried out in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Furthermore, the Niger Delta States' Ministry of Tourism and allied departments are yet to offer valuable information on tourism types needed by tourists of different demographic attributes. There is also a dearth of research on tourists' attitudes, preferences, activities, as well as reasons for visiting or not visiting tourist destinations in the Niger Delta. As a result of this, a detailed study of tourists and potential tourists is necessary in tourism planning and management in order to meet the needs of different segments of tourists. In other words, the study and knowledge of tourists'

attributes, tourist groups, their characteristics, and preferences are of utmost importance for tourism development and management (Gez and Sailor 2023).

From the foregoing, it is therefore important to study and understand tourists' preferences, their status, and their attitudes towards a particular attraction or tourist destination. Furthermore, because tourists show variations in their demand for destinations based on their attributes, it is important to examine holistically tourist attitude, needs, wants, motivations, and preferences holistically. As a result, this study examined the relationship between tourist attributes and tourist demand for tourism in the Niger Delta with a view to providing insights on tourists destinations that attract tourists of different demographic attributes in the Niger Delta.

Objective of study:

The objective of this study is to identify tourist demand for destinations in relation to tourist demographic attributes.

Hypothesis.

H₀: There is no significant difference among tourists in their demand for destinations based on their demographic attributes.

Literature Review

Aside from the pull factors that influence tourists to demand a destination, Kim and Richardson (2023) and Sung (2022), in their various studies, have outlined some "push" attributes of tourists that have helped to influence or motivate their demand for destinations. These include: income, age, sex, education, nationality, gender, occupation, and family size. In other words, they maintained that the propensity to travel is related to individuals' level of education, income, age, gender, family size, nationality, and other variables. Sato, Kim, Burning, and Harada (2018) concluded that even though the 'pull' factors may exist, demand is constrained due to the "push" factors, which also include: economic (discretionary income), sociological (reference group, cultural values), or psychological factors (perceptions of risk, personality, attitudes). Janga and Caib (2020), Awaritefe (2014), Ibrahim and Gill (2023), observed that the consumer will have developed ideas of a destination from its promotion, and development of image, but the affecters or push factors which is tourist attributes will heighten or dampen the various energizers (or the pull factors) which lead to consumer's action or decision; that is, to demand or not to demand for tourism. Kadampully (2021) and Seo and Yun (2022), Awaritefe (2014) have emphasized the influence of role as deciding key factors for tourists' Choice of a destination. They assert that the important roles include those of the family members, peer groups who are normally involved in the different tasks of the purchase process, and the final resolving of decisions about when, where, and how the individual or group will travel to a destination. Corroborating that observation, Foster (2024), Ezenbacher (2019), stated that tourism demand is influenced by the tourist demographic characteristics of individuals; such as income and age, of a tourist. Tam (2022) observed that the nationality of tourists can influence his/her choice of a destination.

Furthermore, Formica and Uysal (2023), Cardoso, Araujo and Dias (2024) also added that people undertake pleasure travels for status seeking, nostalgia, escapism, self-esteem and discovering as well as for refreshment of body and mind, health purposes, sports pleasure and for wanderlust (that is the desire to leave and search for new experiences and places) and sun lust (the search for specific recreational experiences or environments). Björk

and Kauppinen (2023) described wanderlust as a push factor that motivates or exerts great influence on tourists to travel to tourist destinations. Dam (2022), Crouch (2023), Awaritefe (2014), Brasciani, Thrassou and Vrontis (2023) also observed that certain push factors motivate tourists to travel to meet new people, friends, and relatives, the desire to travel together with a group of people who share the same interest and values, as well as to find thrills and excitement, to avoid boredom, travel for health tourism, for refreshment, to see nature such as flora, fauna, zoo, game reserves, national museum and archeological sites. Pelliciadi (2023), Puopiel (2023), and Opperman (2018) observed that family determines the choice of destination. They maintained that family determines when, where, and what type of tourism to choose for a visit. Jango and Wu (2022) opined that family size influences tourists' choice of a destination. They maintained that the larger the family, the less the urge is it to travel compared to smaller families of 1- 2. Awaritefe (2013) also maintained that small families are more motivated to travel than larger families because of financial involvement.

Morgan, Richard, and Pigot (2020) identified travel motives among tourists as: travel to enjoy cruise ships on rivers and canals, stay in five-star hotels, and visits for eco-tourism, such as visits to villages and farms, for adventure tourism. Other motivators, according to Ariya, Whishitemi, and Shitati (2023), include embarking on safaris, trekking in remote areas and deserts, as well as hiking, mountain climbing, marine sports in rivers, sea, lakes, as well as boating through river rapids, hunting, and fishing. Gunn (2021) studied personal values among tourists, and the research indicates that tourist travel is also due to an impelling need to learn more about the natural environment, discover new places, improve their quality of life, participate in cultural activities, and partake in exciting events.

Theoretical Framework.

The theory that was used for this study was developed by Kano (2001). It is called "Theory of Attractive Quality and Packaging (TAQAP). This Theory focuses on the diverse ways by which tourists of various demographic attributes perceive and evaluate quality characteristics of tourism features. First impression of tourists is determined by the packaging of destination features. The Theory emphasized that customer motivation and satisfaction are hinged on the provision and packaging of quality destination features. This is because the first impression of tourists is determined by the packaging of destination features.

According to Wu (2023), tourists of different segments show correspondence between the quality of tourism products provided at destination centers and their level of patronage of that destination. In other words, the ability or inability of tourism operators to adequately conceptualize the needs of tourists of various demographic attributes and translate them into quality product supply determines tourists' level of patronage or non-patronage of a tourist destination.

It is therefore possible to assume that since tourists' needs are changing, intermediaries should also adapt their strategies and that the offer would consequently consider this evolution to arouse tourists' patronage of their destinations (Work Travel and Tourism Council, W.T.TC, 2023). In the late 1970s, British Airways suffered from a considerably slow growth rate, but in 1983 the company was reorganized in the context of quality service delivery and packaging, which recognized customers' needs and consequent provisions, which eventually led to the company's rapid growth.

In the Niger delta where the tourism industry is at the embryonic stage, the Theory of Attractive Quality and Packaging provides a basic framework for tourism managers, providing quality products that meet the needs of tourists of Various demographic segments. Tourists' attributes include sex, age, income, nationality, education, family, marital status,

and occupation. Awaritefe (2014) maintains that these attributes can influence tourist demand for a destination in one way or another.

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study is designed to use questionnaires to obtain data from respondents. The questionnaire is a quantitative approach in tourism research, which records answers to questions during which facts are collected, and the data are analyzed. From this, the researcher drew inferences regarding tourism demand in relation to tourist demographic attributes. The questionnaire was made up of two parts. The first part was designed to generate descriptive information about tourists. In this section of the questionnaire, the tourists were requested to provide information on their demographic attributes, such as their sex, age, monthly income, occupation, family size, nationality, and education. The second part focused on their general assessment of the destinations they have visited or are currently visiting, things liked and disliked, facilities enjoyed most, and suggestions for improvement of destinations visited. The research instrument was considered appropriate because it was to give the current status of the level of tourist demand for tourism products in relation to their demographic attributes in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Validity of Instrument

The research instrument was validated by the expert judgment of the Professor of Tourism studies in Delta State University, Abraka, as well as two lecturers in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, University of Delta, Agbor.

Reliability of the instrument

To test the reliability of the research instrument, thirty (30) copies of questionnaires were administered on two different occasions. 15 questionnaires were administered to respondents, on each occasion three weeks apart. The result was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha method, which revealed an Alpha value of 0.89. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89 is an indication of high positive reliability. This means that the questionnaires were reliable.

Sampling procedure:

As a result of the nature of the destination centers in the Niger Delta, the random survey technique was considered most appropriate in selecting the twelve (12) tourist destinations for study. Information needed for this study was obtained in random surveys of tourists at the various sites in the destinations. The tourism destinations were chosen on the basis of tourism types or strata. Every Friday and Sunday of each week for two months were used for a questionnaire survey of tourists. These 3 days offered the highest frequency of visits to tourists' destinations in the Niger Delta (Awaritefe, 2014). The questionnaires were delivered to the tourists by hand, and the respondents were allowed adequate time to fill out the questionnaires and return them before leaving the destination Centers. A total of 1060 questionnaires were administered to tourists in the study area. Out of this figure, 950 questionnaires were retrieved from tourists and used as the data for the analysis, while 110 were not retrieved from tourists (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires in the Study Area

The 6 Tourism Regions	The 12 Tourist Destinations	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Questionnaire Returned	Number of Questionnaire not Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaires Returned
Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region	Ossosso Tourist Centre, Ossosso	86	75	11	87.20	12.79
	Igarra Tourist Destination, Igarra	74	70	4	94.59	5.40
River Ethiopie/ Abraka Tourism Region	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	102	92	10	89.19	9.80
	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	110	88	22	80	20
Yenagoa Tourism Region	OxBow Lake Tourist Center Yenagoa	76	71	5	93.42	6.57
	Peace Park Tourist Destination, Yenagoa	66	62	4	93.93	6.06
Port Harcourt Tourism Region	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	80	75	5	93.75	6.25
	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	112	101	11	91.07	9.82
Eket Tourism Region	Ibeno Beach, Ibeno, Eket	84	73	11	86.90	13.09
	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	96	88	8	91.66	8.33
Calabar Tourism Region	National Museum Calabar	70	63	7	90	10
	Tinapa Tourist Centre, Calabar	104	92	12	88.46	11.53
	Total	1060	950	110	91.56	7.44

Source: Field Work, 2024.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective here is to determine the relationship between tourist income levels and the level of demand for destinations. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Tourist participation in Destination by Income

Tourism Features	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Income groups (₦)	Ossosso Tourist Destination, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Ibeno, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	Total
0-100,000	17 (22.66)	12 (17.14)	8 (8.69)	5 (5.68)	25 (35.21)	13 (20.96)	25 (33.33)	20 (19.80)	24 (32.87)	15 (17.04)	7 (11.11)	10 (10.86)	181 (19.05)
101,000-200,000	20 (26.66)	28 (40)	32 (34.78)	35 (39.77)	20 (28.16)	18 (29.03)	21 (28)	27 (26.73)	15 (20.54)	25 (28.40)	19 (30.15)	28 (30.43)	259 (27.26)
201,000-300,000	30 (40)	24 (34.28)	30 (32.60)	18 (20.45)	13 (18.30)	20 (32.25)	24 (32)	22 (21.78)	20 (27.39)	18 (20.45)	22 (34.92)	18 (19.56)	288 (30.31)
301,000 & above	8 (10.66)	6 (8.57)	22 (23.91)	30 (34.09)	13 (18.30)	11 (17.74)	05 (6.66)	32 (31.68)	14 (19.17)	30 (34.09)	15 (23.80)	36 (39.13)	222 (23.36)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73 (100)	88 (100)	63 (100)	92 (100)	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2023.

Below, we presented tourist participation in destination centers according to their income levels. Table 2 reveals that one of the major patrons to tourist destinations in the Niger Delta is drawn from the income group of 101,000 – 200,000 per month. This income group constitutes 40 percent of patrons in Igarra tourist center, 34.78% in Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka, and 39.77% in Gordons Hotel Resort, Abraka. Furthermore, tourists who earn between 201,000 – 300,000 naira form the major patrons to Ossosso tourist destination, accounting for 40 percent. It also accounts for 29.03% in peace park destination center yanegoa and 30.15% percent in National Museum, Calabar.

Furthermore, Tourists who earn between 0 - 100,000 naira per month form the bulk of tourists to Ox-Bow Lake tourist center, representing (35.21%). It also forms the major patrons of PortHarcourt Zoo, accounting for (33.33%) and Ibeno Beach, Eket (32.87%). Additionally, the great majority of tourists who visit Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt, are those whose income is between 301,000 naira and above, constituting 31.68%. This income group also accounts for the great majority of patrons at Grace Garden Hotel Resort, Eket, accounting for (34.09%) as well as in Tinapa Resort Center, Calabar (39.13%).

3.1 Marital Status and Tourist Destination Demand

The objective of this section is to determine the relationship between and Marital Status of tourists and their demand for destinations. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Tourists' Participation in Destinations According to Marital Status

Tourism Features	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abakra Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Marital Status	Ossosso Tourist Destination, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abakra	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abakra	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Ibeno, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	Total
Married	10 (13.33)	12 (15.71)	11 (11.95)	20 (22.73)	18 (25.35)	8 (12.90)	16 (21.33)	20 (19.80)	11 (15.06)	18 (20.45)	15 (23.80)	10 (10.86)	169 (17.78)
Single	20 (38.66)	27 (38.75)	40 (43.47)	22 (25)	21 (29.57)	10 (16.12)	20 (26.66)	23 (22.77)	24 (32)	24 (27.27)	16 (25.39)	21 (22.82)	268 (28.21)
Single Mother	12 (16)	10 (14.28)	15 (16.30)	10 (11.36)	12 (16.90)	11 (17.74)	15 (20)	18 (17.82)	11 (15.06)	15 (17.04)	10 (15.87)	25 (27.17)	164 (17.26)
Single Father	15 (20)	14 (20)	16 (17.39)	14 (15.90)	6 (8.45)	6 (8.45)	10 (13.33)	17 (16.83)	15 (20.54)	20 (22.72)	9 (14.28)	20 (21.73)	162 (17.05)
Widow	5 (6.66)	3 (4.28)	06 (6.52)	12 (13.63)	6 (8.45)	6 (8.45)	7 (9.33)	10 (9.90)	10 (13.69)	5 (5.68)	8 (12.69)	6 (6.52)	86 (9.05)
Widower	4 (5.33)	4 (5.71)	14 (15.21)	10 (11.26)	8 (11.26)	8 (12.90)	7 (9.33)	13 (12.87)	2 (27.39)	16 (18.81)	5 (7.93)	10 (10.86)	101 (10.63)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73 (100)	88 (100)	63 (100)	92 (100)	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2024

The level of demand for destinations by tourists in various destination centers according to marital status is presented below: Table 3 reveals that the bulk of tourists who patronize destination centers in the Niger Delta are mostly single tourists. Single tourists constitute 28.21% of all tourist indications.

This income group constitutes the highest patrons in the Ossosso tourist destination, Ossosso accounting for (38.66%). It also represents the highest number of patrons in the Igarra tourist destination, accounting for 38.75%. In Rivotel Hotel and Resort, Abakra, the single tourists represent the highest patrons, accounting for (43.47%). It is also the highest in Gordons Hotel Resort, Abakra (25%), and 29.57% in Ox-Bow Lake tourist destination, Yenagoa. Furthermore, the single tourists also form the bulk of tourists in Port Harcourt Zoo (26.66%), Port Harcourt pleasure park, Port Harcourt (22.77%), as well as in Ibeno beach, Ibeno (32%). Table 3 also reveals that single mothers constitute the highest patrons to the Peace Park Resort destination, Yenagoa, accounting for (17.74%) and the Tinapa Resort destination, Calabar (27.17%).

3.2 Family Size and Tourism Participation

The main objective here is to determine the relationship between family size and tourist demand for destinations. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Tourism Participation in Destinations According to Family Size

Tourism Features	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiopie/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Family Size	Ossosso Tourist Destination, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivote Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordons Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	Total
1-2	35 (46.66%)	34 (48.57%)	40 (43.4%)	33 (37.5%)	24 (33.8%)	33 (46.74%)	20 (26.66%)	40 (39.60%)	34 (46.57%)	34 (38.63%)	30 (47.61%)	37 (40.21%)	390 (41.05%)
2-3	27 (36%)	24 (34.2%)	30 (33.6%)	35 (39.77%)	22 (30.9%)	11 (17.74%)	21 (28%)	35 (34.65%)	36 (49.31%)	28 (31.81%)	20 (31.74%)	32 (34.78%)	321 (33.78%)
3-4	8 (10.66%)	4 (5.71%)	13 (14.13%)	12 (13.63%)	15 (21.12%)	18 (29.03%)	30 (40%)	20 (19.80%)	8 (10.95%)	16 (18.18%)	6 (9.52%)	14 (15.21%)	164 (17.26%)
4 and above	5 (6.66%)	8 (11.42%)	9 (9.78%)	8 (9.09%)	10 (14.8%)	04 (6.4%)	4 (5.33%)	6 (5.94%)	5 (6.84%)	10 (11.36%)	7 (11.11%)	9 (9.78%)	85 (8.94%)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73 (100)	88 (100)	63 (100)	92 (100)	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2024

The demand for tourism by family tourists in various destination centers is presented below. Table 4 reveals that 41.05% of the total number of tourists who patronized the Niger Delta tourism are family members of 1 -2. This group of tourists also forms the majority of patrons to the following destination centers: Ossosso tourist destination, Ossosso (46.66%), Igarra tourist center, Igarra (48.57%), Rivotel hotel and golf resort, Abraka (43.4%). Others include Ox-Bow Lake destination (33.8%), Peace Park Resort center (46.74%), Port Harcourt pleasure park (39.60%), Grace Garden hotel resort, Eket (38.63%), National Museum, Calabar (47.61%), as well as Tinapa tourist center, Calabar (40.21%).

Contrarily, the bulk of tourists patronage to Gordon's resort hotel, Abraka are drawn from families of 2-3, accounting for (39.77%). The same is observed in Ibeno beach, Ibeno, Eket (49.31%). However, in Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt, larger families of 3 – 4 form the major patrons, accounting for 40 percent.

3.3 Level of Tourist Participation in Destinations According to Nationality

The objective here is to determine the relationship between the Nationality of tourists and tourists' demand for destinations. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Tourism Participation According to Nationality

Nationality of Tourist	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		Total
	Osso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	
Nigerians	45 (60)	55 (78.5)	70 (76.8)	58 (65.90)	64 (90)	52 (83.80)	53 (70.66)	80 (79.2)	65 (89.04)	64 (92.72)	33 (52.38)	80 (86.95)	719 (75.68)
Foreigners (black)	30 (40)	15 (21.42)	22 (23.91)	30 (34.09)	07 (10)	10 (16.12)	22 (29.33)	21 (20.79)	8 (10.95)	24 (27.27)	30 (47.61)	12 (13.04)	23 (24.32)
Total	75	70	92	88	71	62	75	101	73	88	63	92	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2024

The level of tourist demand for the destination according to Nationality in the various tourist destinations is presented below. Table 5 reveals that Nigerians constitute the bulk of tourists market in each of the twelve destination centers studied, accounting for 75.68% of all tourists' indications. Contrarily, foreigners account for 24.32%. In Ossosso tourist center, Nigerians account for 60%, while foreigners account for 40%. In the Igarra tourist center, Nigerians accounted for 78.8%, while foreigners accounted for (21.42%). In the same vein, Nigerians constitutes 76.8% in Rivotel hotel and Resort, Abraka, while foreigners represent (23.91%). Also, Nigerians form the bulk of tourists in Gordons hotel resort, Abraka, accounting for 65.90%, while the foreigners constitute only (34.09%). Nigerians also form the highest patrons in the Ox-Bow Lake tourist center, Yanegoa (90%), Peace Park, Yanegoa (83.80%), Port Harcourt Zoo (70.66%), and Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt (79.2%). Other tourist destinations that receive more Nigerians than foreign tourists include: Ibeno beach, Eket (89.04%), Grace Garden hotel resort, Eket (92.72%), National Museum Calabar (52.38%), and Tinapa Tourist center, Calabar (86.95%).

3.4 Tourism Demand in Relation to Educational Segmentation of Tourists

The objective here is to evaluate the relationship between the level of education and tourists' demand for the destination. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Tourism Participation Destinations according to Educational Levels

	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa- Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Educa tional Levels of Touris ts	Ossosso Tourist Destinati on, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordons l Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace- park Resort Destinati on, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	PortHarc ourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destin ation, Calabar	Total
Mater s/Ph. D	5 (6.66)	3 (12.85)	14 (15.21)	14 (15.90)	11 (15.49)	6 (9.67)	10 (13.33)	3 (13.33)	8 (10.95)	12 (13.63)	8 (12.69)	9 (9.78)	103 (10.84)
B.A/ B.Sc/ B.Ed	12 (16)	10 (14.28)	28 (30.43)	28 (31.81)	7 (9.85)	13 (20.96)	12 (16)	43 (16)	20 (27.39)	30 (34.09)	8 (12.69)	54 (58.6 9)	265 (27.89)
HND/ OND	8 (10.66)	6 (8.57)	10 (10.86)	15 (19.04)	7 (9.85)	11 (17.74)	14 (18.66)	23 (18.66)	14 (19)	16 (18.18)	6 (9.52)	11 (11.9 5)	141 (14.84)
Secon dary/ Prima rylea vers	20 (26.66)	19 (27.14)	10 (10.86)	8 (9.09)	23 (32.3)	18 (29.03)	21 (28)	10 (9.90)	10 (13.69)	14 (15.90)	11 (17.46)	8 (8.69)	172 (18)
Unde rgrad uates	30 (40)	32 (45.71)	30 (32.60)	33 (37.5)	23 (32.39)	14 (22.58)	18 (24)	22 (21.78)	21 (28.76)	16 (18.18)	30 (47.61)	10 (10.8 6)	279 (28.52)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73 (100)	88 (100)	63 (100)	92 (100)	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2023

The level of demand of destination centers according to tourists' education is presented in Table 6 below: Table 6 above shows that the highest number of patrons to tourist destinations in the Niger Delta of Nigeria are the undergraduates. They constitute 28.57% of all total tourists' indications and form the highest patrons in 9 tourist destinations, including Ossosso tourist destination, Ossosso (40%), Igarra destination center (45.71%), Rivotel hotel and resort, Abraka (32.60%), Gordons hotel resort, Abraka (37.5%), as well as in Ox-Bow Lake tourist center, Yenagoa (32.39%). They also form the highest patrons to Ibeno beach, Eket (28.76%), Grace Garden Hotel resort, Eket (18.18%), and National Museum, Calabar (47.61%). Contrarily, Tinapa resort destination receives the B.A, B, sc(Ed) graduates as the highest patrons, accounting for (58.69%). While Peace Park destination, Yenagoa, and Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt receive the Secondary/Primary school pupils as their highest patrons, both accounting for 29.03% and 28% respectively.

3.5 Tourists' Demand for Destinations by Age

The objective here is to determine the relationship between age and tourist demand for destinations. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Participation of Tourists in Destinations by Age

	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Age of Tourists	Ossosso Tourist Destination, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	Total
0-20	20 (26.66)	14 (20)	28 (30.43)	25 (28.40)	28 (39.43)	15 (24.19)	22 (29.33)	10 (9.90)	21 (28.76)	21 (23.86)	10 (15.87)	13 (14.13)	227 (23.89)
21-40	35 (46.66)	32(45.71)	40 (43.47)	35 (39.77)	30 (42.25)	25 (40.32)	38 (50.66)	31 (30.69)	33 (45.20)	36 (40.90)	30 (47.61)	28(30.43)	393 (41.36)
41-60	12 (16)	20 (28.57)	13 (14.13)	18 (20.45)	8 (11.26)	18 (29.03)	6 (8)	48 (47.52)	12 (16.43)	25 (28.40)	20 (31.74)	33 (35.86)	233 (24.52)
61 and above	8 (10.66)	4 (5.71)	11 (11.95)	10 (11.36)	5 (7.0)	4 (6.45)	9 (12)	12 (11.88)	7 (9.58)	6 (6.81)	3 (4.76)	18 (19.56)	97 (10.21)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73 (100)	88 (100)	63 (100)	92 (100)	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2024

The level of tourists' demand for destinations according to age is presented below. Table 7 reveals that tourists who patronize tourism in the Niger Delta are within the age group of 21-40 years (41.36%), followed by the 41 - 60 years age group, which accounts for 24.52%. Table 7 also reveals that the age group of 21 – 40 years constitutes the highest patrons in almost all the destination centers for study, except in Port Harcourt Pleasure Park and Tinapa Resort center, Calabar. In Ossosso tourist center, Ossosso, 21 – 40 years constitutes the highest patrons, accounting for (46.66%). It also forms the highest patrons in Igarra tourist destination (45.71%), Rivotel hotel and golf resort, Abraka (43.47%), as well as in Gordons hotel and Resort (39.77%). It also forms the highest patrons in Ox-Bow Lake destination, Yanegoa (42.25%), Peace Park Resort destination, Yanegoa (40.32%), Ibeno beach, Eket (45.20%), Grace Garden hotel, Eket (40.90%), and in the National Museum, Calabar 47.61%). Table 7 also reveals that the highest number of patrons to Port Harcourt Pleasure Park and Tinapa resort destination center is made up of 41-60 years of age, accounting for (47.52%) and (35.86%) respectively.

3.6 Levels of Patronage of Tourist Destination by Gender

The main objective here is to determine tourist demand for the destination in relation to their gender or sex. Table 8 below summarizes the data obtained from respondents.

Table 8: Tourist participation in tourist destinations by gender

	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Gender of Tourists	Ossosso Tourist Destination, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	Total
Male	42 (56)	48 (68)	62 (67.39)	58 (65.98)	40 (56.33)	42 (67.74)	52 (69.33)	61 (60.39)	41 (56.16)	56 (63.63)	41 (65.07)	63 (68.47)	606 (63.78)

Female	33 (44)	22 (31)	30 (32.60)	30 (34.09)	31 (43.66)	20 (32.25)	23 (30.66)	40 (39.60)	32 (43.83)	32 (36.36)	22 (34.92)	29 (31.52)	344 (36.21)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73	88 (100)	63	92	

Source: Field work, 2024

The level of tourists' demand for the destination according to gender is presented below. Table 8 reveals that the bulk of the tourist market in the Niger Delta of Nigeria is the menfolk, accounting for two-thirds (2/3) or 63.78% of the total tourist patronage of the destination centers. The male tourists also participate more in all the tourist destinations than their female counterparts. For example, in Ossosso tourist center, the male tourists account for 56% while the female accounts for 44%. In the Igarra tourist destination, the male tourists account for 68% of patronage, while the female tourist represents 31%. Furthermore, tourists who patronize Rivotel hotel and resort, Abraka are also drawn from the male folk, accounting for 67.39%, while the female tourists represent (32.60%). In Gordons resort hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka, the male tourists constitute the highest patrons, accounting for (65.98%), while the female tourists account for (34.09%) of the total tourist patronage of the destination center.

Tourists who patronize the Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Destination, Yenagoa, are also drawn from the male tourists, accounting for 56.33%. The female tourists represent only (43.66%). In the Peace Park resort destination, out of the general tourists who patronize the center, the male tourists represent the highest, accounting for 67.74%, while the female tourists constitute only (32.25%). Furthermore, out of the total number of tourists who patronize the Port Harcourt Zoo, the male tourists account for 69.33% while the females account for (30.66%). In the same vein, in Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, the male folks are more in number, accounting for 60.39%, while the female tourists account for 39.60%. Again, Table 8 reveals that the greater number of tourists who patronize the Ibeno Beach, Eket are male tourists, of the male folk accounting for 56.16%. The same applies to Grace Garden Hotel and resort, Eket, where the male tourists constitute the highest patrons, accounting for 63.63%, National Museum Calabar (65.07%), and Tinapa Resort destination, Calabar (68.47%).

3.7 Patronage of Tourism Destinations by Occupation

The objective here is to determine the relationship between the occupation of tourists and their demand for destinations. The data obtained from respondents are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Participation of Tourism Destinations by Occupation

	Ossosso/Igarra Tourism Region, Edo State		River Ethiope/Abraka Tourism Region, Delta State		Yenagoa Tourism Region, Bayelsa State		Port Harcourt Tourism Region, Rivers State		Eket Tourism Region, Akwa-Ibom State		Calabar Tourism Region, Cross River State		
Occupation	Ossosso Tourist Destination, Ossosso	Igarra Tourist Center, Igarra	Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort, Abraka	Gordon's Resort Hotel and McCarthy Beach, Abraka	Ox-Bow Lake Tourist Center, Yenagoa	Peace-park Resort Destination, Yenagoa	Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt	Ibeno Beach, Eket	Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket	National Museum Calabar	Tinapa Resort Destination, Calabar	Total
Civil Servants	5 (6.66)	11 (15.71)	4 (4.34)	7 (7.95)	5 (7.07)	12 (19.35)	5 (6.66)	15 (14.85)	15 (20.54)	10 (11.36)	15 (23.80)	15 (16.30)	119 (12.52)

Professionals/ Technocrats	5 (6.66)	7 (10)	4 (4.37)	9 (10.22)	5 (7.07)	7 (11.29)	13 (17.35)	4 (5.47)	4 (5.44)	5 (5.68)	6 (9.52)	16 (17.39)	85 (8.94)
Public Servants	14 (18.66)	11 (15.71)	30 (30.62)	23 (26.13)	10 (14.08)	14 (22.58)	11 (14.66)	26 (25.74)	6 (8.21)	30 (34.09)	5 (7.93)	20 (21.73)	200 (21.05)
Artisans	12 (16)	11 (15.71)	6 (6.52)	12 (13.63)	6 (8.45)	3 (4.83)	3 (8)	4 (5.47)	4 (5.47)	7 (7.95)	4 (6.34)	6 (6.52)	78 (8.21)
Traders /Business people	16 (21.33)	10 (14.28)	25 (27.17)	17 (19.31)	25 (35.21)	12 (19.35)	18 (24)	36 (35.64)	18 (24.65)	31 (35.22)	18 (28.57)	24 (26.08)	250 (26.31)
Academics	20 (28.57)	20 (28.57)	23 (25)	20 (22.72)	20 (28.16)	14 (22.58)	25 (33.33)	16 (15.84)	26 (35.61)	5 (5.68)	15 (23.80)	11 (11.92)	218 (22.94)
Total	75 (100)	70 (100)	92 (100)	88 (100)	71 (100)	62 (100)	75 (100)	101 (100)	73 (100)	88 (100)	63 (100)	92 (100)	950 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2024

Tourist levels of patronage of the destination according to their occupations are presented below. Table 9 shows that among the occupational segmentation of tourists, people in business are more inclined to tourism participation in the Niger delta than other occupational groups, accounting for 26.31%, this is followed by academic tourists (22.94%). Business tourists constitute the highest patrons in the Ox-Bow Lake tourist destination, Yanegoa accounts for (35.21%). In Port Harcourt pleasure park, Port Harcourt, the business tourist accounts for (35.65%), Grace Garden hotel resort, Eket (35.22), National Museum, Calabar (28.57%), and in Tinapa resort center, Calabar (26.08%). Contrarily, the academic tourists constitute the highest patrons in Ossosso destination center and Igarra tourist destination, each accounting for (28.57%). Furthermore, the public servants constitute the highest patrons in Rivotel and Golf Resort Abraka(30.62%), Gordons hotel resort, Abraka (26.13%), and in Peace Park resort Center (22.58%).

3.8 Statistical Test for the Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the findings presented above, we have tested the Hypothesis of the study, which states H_0 : there is no significant difference amongst tourists in their demand for destinations based on their demographic attributes. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) for this study is: there is a significant difference amongst tourists in their demand for destinations based on their demographic attributes. To test the hypothesis of the study, the multiple regression method of analysis was adopted to determine whether or not tourist demand for destinations varies according to their demographic attributes. This was done by identifying the attributes of tourists in relation to their participation in destination centers for the study. Tourist attributes are: income, marital status, family size, nationality, education, age, gender, and occupation. The result of the analysis shows that significant differences exist amongst tourists in their demand for destinations based on their demographic attributes.

Table 10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.972 ^a	.946	.946	2.798

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tourist Destination

Note: R^2 .946, $F(1,) = 16477.320$, $p = .000$

R^2 with a coefficient of .946 implies that tourist explains 95% of the variation experienced in demographic attributes. These results show that there is a significant relationship between tourist destinations and demographic attributes.

Table 11: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	129003.414	1	129003.414	16477.320	.000 ^b
Residual	7422.034	948	7.829		
Total	136425.448	949			

a. Dependent Variable: Tourist Destination

b. Predictors: (Constant), Demographic Features

Table 12: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.509	.202		2.327	.000
Demographic Features	1.370	.011	.972	2.364	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Tourist Destinations

The results of hypothesis THREE ($\beta = .011$, $t = 128.364$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$)

Tourist Destination explains 95% of the variation experienced in demographic attributes. The F-ratio 16477.320 shows that the independent variable (demographic attributes) is a major determinant of tourist destination. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between demographic attributes/features and tourist destinations ($\beta = .011$, $t = 128.364$, $p < 0.05$). This is an indication that demographic attributes/features enhance the demand for tourist destinations. The findings suggest that a strong relationship exists between tourist demographic attributes and tourist destinations, with demographic attributes contributing 1.1% to tourist destinations.

It can be observed that the independent variable is statistically significant because its significance value is 0.000, which means $P < 0.05$ or $0.05 > P$. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between tourist demographic attributes and tourist destinations

3.9 Decision Findings

Based on the analysis above, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while the alternative (H_1) is accepted. It is concluded that there is a significant difference among tourists in their demand for tourist destinations in relation to available demographic attributes. The details in Table 2 reveal that the great majority of tourists fall within the income group of 201,000-300,000 Naira, accounting for 30.31% of all tourists, indicating and representing 1/3 of the bulk of tourists' patronage in the Niger Delta. This income group is followed by tourists whose income is within 101-200,000 naira per month. Table 2 also reveals that tourists in the income group of 201,000-300,000 naira constitute the bulk of patrons to Ossosso tourist destination, Ossosso, accounting for (40%). However, in the Igarra destination center, the bulk of tourists there are mainly from the income group of 101,000-200,000 naira per month, accounting for (40%). The largest group of patrons of the Rivotel Hotel and Golf Resort,

Abraka, earn between 101,000 and 200,000 naira monthly. Also, in Gordon's resort hotel and McCarthy beach, Abraka tourists who earn between 101,000 and 200,000 monthly (39.77%) constitute the highest tourist market.

Tourists who earn 0-100,000 per month form the bulk of tourists to Ox-Bow Lake, Yanegoa (33.21%), Port Harcourt Zoo, Port Harcourt (37.33%), Ibeno Beach, Ibeno, Eket (32.87%). Furthermore, tourists whose income falls within 201,000-300,000 naira per month are mainly found in peace park tourist destination, Yenagoa (32.25%), and national museum, Calabar (34.92%). The tourists who earn from 300,000 and above are the largest patrons of Tinapa Tourists Resort, Calabar (39.13%), and Grace Garden Hotel and Resort, Eket (34.09%). Furthermore, among the marital segmentation of tourists, the single tourists form the bulk of tourists to the Niger delta tourists' destinations, accounting for (28.61%) of all tourists' patronage. Single tourists also constitute the largest patrons in almost all the destination centers, except in peace park resort destination, Yenagoa, and the Tinapa Resort destination, Calabar, with their largest patrons drawn from the single mother tourists. Segregating tourists into family sizes, Table 4 reveals that 41.05% of the total number of tourists who patronize destination centers in the Niger Delta are drawn from smaller families of 1-2. This family group of 1-2 also forms the largest patrons to almost all the tourist destinations in the Niger delta, except for Gordon's resort hotel and McCarthy beach, Abraka, and Ibeno beach, Ibeno, Eket, which bulk of tourists are drawn from families of 2-3, accounting for 39.77% and 40% respectively

The details in Table 4.6 reveal that Nigerians or domestic tourists form the largest segment of tourists to destination centers in the Niger delta, accounting for (75.68%) of all the total tourists' patronage in the region, while foreigners constitute only (24.32%). By the educational segmentation of tourists, the undergraduate tourists form the bulk of tourists to destination centers in the Niger Delta, accounting for 28.52%. The undergraduates also constitute the largest patrons to Ossosso tourist destination (40%) and Igarra, tourists' destination (45.71%), as well as in Rivotel Hotel Resort (32.60%), Gordons Resort, and McCarthy beach (37.5%). The same is applicable in Ox-Bow Lake, Yanegoa, Ibeno beach, Eket (28.76%), and the National Museum, Calabar (47.61%). Aside from the undergraduates, the secondary and primary schools form the largest Patrons in Igarra tourist center (27.14%), in Ox-Bow Lake destination (32.39%), in Peace Park resort destination Yanegoa (29.03%), as well as in Port Harcourt Zoo (28%).

Based on age segregation of Tourist, Table 7 reveals that the bulk of tourists to the Niger delta destination centers fall within the age group of 21-40 years accounting for (41.36%), it also account for the highest patrons in almost all the destination centers in the Niger delta except in Port Harcourt pleasure park and Tinapa Resort destination where, 41-60 years age group form the bulk of tourists accounting for (47.52%) and (35.86%) respectively. Furthermore, Table 8 shows that the bulk of the tourist market in the Niger delta, on the basis of tourists' gender, is male, accounting for 2/3 or 63.78% of the total tourist patronage of the destination centers. The female folk account for (36.21%). By occupational patronage of destination centers in the Niger delta, the business people form the highest patrons to Ox-Bow Lake destination, Yanegoa accounting for (33.21%), Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt (35.64%), Grace Garden hotel, Eket (35.22%) National Museum, Calabar (28.57%), and Tinapa resort destination (26.08%). The public servants constitute the largest patrons to Rivotel hotel and golf resort, Abraka (26.13%), and Gordons resort hotel and McCarthy beach, Abraka (26.13%). Furthermore, the academics tourist constitutes the largest tourist group in Ossosso tourist destination, Ossosso (30.66%), Igarra tourist center, Igarra (25.57%), Port Harcourt Zoo (33.33%), as well as Ibeno beach, Eket (35.61%).

4. CONCLUSION

One of the key takeaways from the study is the recognition of the challenges faced by destinations in meeting tourist expectations. The discrepancies between promotional images and the actual experiences offered at destinations often lead to dissatisfaction, which can have long-term implications for the sustainability of tourism in the Niger delta. Addressing these gaps requires a concerted effort from stakeholders to improve infrastructure, enhance service quality, and ensure that the reality of the destination aligns with its marketed image. This is particularly crucial in an era where tourists are increasingly discerning and have access to a wealth of information that shapes their expectations.

Looking ahead, the findings of this study have significant implications for the future of tourism development in the Niger Delta and similar regions. As the global tourism industry continues to evolve, destinations must adapt to changing traveler preferences and emerging trends. There is a growing demand for authentic, immersive experiences that allow tourists to connect with local cultures and environments. This presents an opportunity for the Niger Delta to leverage its unique natural and cultural assets to attract a broader audience. However, achieving this will require strategic planning, investment in sustainable tourism practices, and collaboration between the government, private sector, and local communities.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of continuous research and data-driven decision-making in tourism management. By understanding the motivations and preferences of different tourist segments, destinations can tailor their offerings to meet specific needs, thereby enhancing visitor satisfaction and fostering repeat visitation. As the region moves forward, it will be essential to prioritize innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability to ensure that tourism development benefits both visitors and local communities. In doing so, the Niger Delta can position itself as a competitive and resilient tourism destination in the years to come. The Niger Delta, with its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse tourist attractions, has immense potential to become a leading tourism destination in Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to guide tourism development in the region.

First, effective promotion and marketing strategies are crucial for attracting both domestic and international tourists. Targeted campaigns using radio, television, social media, and print media should highlight the unique features of each destination, emphasizing their appeal to specific tourist segments.

Second, facilities should be tailored to cater for the diverse needs of different tourist segments. Families, for instance, require amenities such as playgrounds, family suites, and Kid-friendly activities. Cooperative and group tourists, on the other hand, value facilities for conferences, seminars, and team-building activities. Students and academic groups are drawn to destinations with educational values, such as museums and nature reserves. By developing targeted amenities, destination managers can ensure that the needs of all tourist groups are met, thereby enhancing satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits.

Third, the development of wildlife and adventure tourism presents a significant opportunity for the region. Tourists expressed a strong desire for game reserves and wildlife attractions, which are currently underdeveloped. Establishing standard game reserves and wildlife parks will attract tourists interested in nature and adventure tourism. Additionally, introducing activities such as hiking, rock climbing, and boat cruising will cater to adventure-seeking tourists, further diversifying the region's tourism offerings.

Fourth, subsidized tourism packages and government incentives should be introduced to encourage mass participation, particularly among low-income earners and students. Offering discounted rates for accommodation, transportation, and entry fees will make tourism more affordable and accessible. Government initiatives, such as student

allowances, bursary awards, and tax holidays for private tourism operators, will also stimulate participation and support the growth of the tourism sector.

Fifth, given that the majority of tourists are Nigerians, efforts should be concentrated on promoting domestic tourism. Local campaigns that highlight the cultural, historical, and recreational attractions of the Niger Delta will encourage Nigerian citizens to explore their own country. Engaging local communities in tourism activities will create a sense of ownership and ensure

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