

**JUDE RUKEVWE IVONGBE**

**Destination image: A comparative study between Obudu  
Mountain Resort and Tinapa, Nigeria**



UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

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**JUDE RUKEVWE IVONGBE**

**Destination image: A comparative study between Obudu  
Mountain Resort and Tinapa, Nigeria**

Master's in Tourism Organisations Management

Dissertation made under the supervision of:

Professora Doutora Dora Agapito

Professora Doutora Maria Manuela Guerreiro



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2024

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### **Destination image: A comparative study between Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa, Nigeria**

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Jude Rekevwe Ivongbe

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**DEDICATED TO**

Almighty God

My beloved immediate and extended family,

Love you all forever.

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"Every significant journey is marked by challenges, but the support of others turns those challenges into achievements. This dissertation is a testament to the incredible encouragement, inspiration, and assistance provided by numerous individuals who have made this accomplishment possible."

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the socio-economic and cultural activities involving the movement of people within a country. This research focuses on a comparative study of the destination image of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort from the perspective of visitors. Destination image is a key element influencing the decision-making process and satisfaction, which can contribute to destination competitiveness. Destination image incorporates elements related to cognitive, affective, and conative components, shaping tourists' perceptions. Landscapes and cultural heritage diversity place Nigeria high in terms of tourism development potential, but comparative studies between specific destinations in the country are missing.

Following a quantitative approach, an online questionnaire was implemented among visitors to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort. The findings indicate that whereas the two places are valued for their natural beauty, Tinapa would attract more repeat visitors because of recreational activities and facilities. Obudu would attract those who desired to enjoy a serene environment with rich cultural displays. Cognitive images were more related to modern infrastructural facilities and activities regarding Tinapa, while Obudu was more associated with quiet scenery. The affective images related to Tinapa include feelings of excitement and pleasure, while those related to Obudu encompass emotions of tranquillity and relaxation. Conative components results show that there is a higher revisit intention for Tinapa.

Some tourism management recommendations for decision-makers are related to enhancing safety, diversifying activities, and exploiting cultural and natural features. For sustainable tourism to be a reality, a collaborative effort has to be made by the government, communities, and stakeholders. It improves destination image, hence attracting more visitors promoting sustainable tourism development by understanding tourist perceptions.

Keywords: Tourism, Destination Image, Obudu Mountain Resort, Tinapa Resort, Nigeria, Tourist Behavior

## RESUMO

O turismo é uma das atividades socioeconómicas e culturais que envolvem a circulação de pessoas dentro de um país. Esta investigação centra-se num estudo comparativo da imagem do destino Obudu Mountain Resort e Tinapa Resort, na perspetiva dos visitantes. A imagem do destino é um elemento chave que influencia o processo de tomada de decisão e a satisfação, o que pode contribuir para a competitividade do destino. A imagem do destino incorpora elementos relacionados com as componentes cognitivas, afetivas e conativas, moldando as perceções dos turistas. A diversidade das paisagens e do património cultural colocam a Nigéria numa posição elevada em termos de potencial de desenvolvimento do turismo, mas faltam estudos comparativos entre destinos específicos no país.

O inquérito adotou uma abordagem quantitativa através da implementação de um questionário online entre os visitantes do Obudu Mountain Resort e do Tinapa Resort. Os dados recolhidos nestes questionários foram analisados através de estatística descritiva, o que permitiu uma visão clara das perceções cognitivas, afetivas e conativas dos turistas em relação a estes destinos.

As componentes cognitivas da imagem do destino foram avaliadas através da análise do conhecimento factual, das crenças e das perceções dos visitantes sobre os destinos. Para Tinapa, a imagem cognitiva foi fortemente influenciada pelas suas modernas instalações infraestruturais e atividades recreativas. Os turistas associaram Tinapa a uma variedade de opções de entretenimento, incluindo os seus extensos estabelecimentos comerciais, casino e lago artificial de maré. A disponibilidade destas instalações fez de Tinapa um destino atrativo para quem procura umas férias ativas e envolventes. Por outro lado, a imagem cognitiva do Obudu Mountain Resort foi moldada pelo seu ambiente sereno, beleza natural e atrações culturais. As características únicas do resort, como o passeio de teleférico e a corrida anual de montanha de Obudu, contribuíram significativamente para o seu apelo cognitivo.

Os componentes afetivos, que lidam com as respostas emocionais e os sentimentos em relação ao destino, desempenharam um papel crucial na formação das perceções dos turistas. O estudo descobriu que Tinapa provocava sentimentos de excitação e prazer entre os visitantes. O ambiente dinâmico do resort, aliado às diversas atividades lúdicas, criaram um ambiente de emoção e aventura. Em contraste, o Obudu Mountain Resort suscitou emoções de tranquilidade e

relaxamento. As paisagens pacíficas e pitorescas de Obudu proporcionam aos visitantes uma sensação de calma e serenidade, sendo um destino ideal para quem procura relaxar e conectar-se com a natureza.

As componentes conativas, que se relacionam com as intenções comportamentais dos turistas, indicaram uma maior intenção de revisitação para Tinapa. A vasta gama de atividades e instalações do resort incentivou visitas repetidas, uma vez que os turistas sentiam que havia sempre algo novo para experimentar. Além disso, a infra-estrutura moderna e as instalações bem conservadas contribuíram para a satisfação geral, reforçando o desejo de regressar. Em contraste, embora Obudu também tenha tido um elevado nível de satisfação dos visitantes, a intenção de visitar foi ligeiramente inferior em comparação com Tinapa. Isto pode ser atribuído ao apelo mais específico de Obudu, que é favorecido pelos turistas que procuram experiências específicas relacionadas com a natureza e a cultura.

As conclusões indicam que, embora ambos os destinos sejam valorizados pela sua beleza natural, é provável que Tinapa atraia mais visitantes recorrentes devido às suas atividades e instalações recreativas. Obudu, por outro lado, atrai quem deseja desfrutar de um ambiente sereno e com ricas exposições culturais. As imagens cognitivas dos destinos são distintamente diferentes, sendo Tinapa associada à modernidade e atividade, enquanto Obudu está ligada à tranquilidade e beleza natural. As respostas afetivas realçam ainda mais estas diferenças, com Tinapa a evocar excitação e Obudu a induzir paz. As componentes conativas, como a intenção de visitar, mostram uma maior inclinação para Tinapa, provavelmente devido às diversas atividades e instalações modernas que oferece.

Várias recomendações importantes surgiram deste estudo, destinadas a melhorar a imagem do destino e a melhorar a satisfação dos visitantes. Em primeiro lugar, as melhorias na segurança são cruciais para ambos os destinos. Garantir um ambiente seguro pode aumentar significativamente a confiança e a vontade dos turistas em visitar ou visitar. Em segundo lugar, a diversificação das atividades no Obudu Mountain Resort pode ajudar a atrair um público mais vasto e encorajar visitas repetidas. A incorporação de mais atividades recreativas e de lazer poderia complementar o seu ambiente sereno e as atrações culturais, tornando-o um destino mais versátil. Tinapa, por outro lado, poderia beneficiar da ênfase no seu património cultural e beleza natural, juntamente com as suas instalações modernas, para proporcionar uma experiência turística mais holística.

Para que o turismo sustentável se torne uma realidade, é necessário um esforço colaborativo entre o governo, as comunidades e as partes interessadas. As políticas governamentais devem concentrar-se nas infra-estruturas.

Palavras-chave: Turismo, Imagem de Destino, Obudu Mountain Resort, Tinapa, Nigéria, Comportamento Turístico

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

FDI – Foreign Domestic Investment

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

NTDC - Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization

WTTC - World Travel and Tourism Council

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a socio-cultural and economic activity in which people move from one place to another or further within their own country for a variety of reasons. They are referred to as tourists, and tourism refers to activities that provide unique experiences, some of which require expenditure on tourism (UNWTO, 2008). Tourism is defined as a set of activities and services to provide unique experiences through activities such as tourist attractions, accommodation, food, shopping, recreational activities, and other services available to groups and individuals known as tourists (UNWTO, 2021). Destination image is a complex concept with various frameworks proposed, ranging from uni-dimensional to tridimensional perspectives. These frameworks typically incorporate affective, cognitive, conative, and global dimensions (Afshardoost et al., 2020; Tasci et al., 2007). However, consensus on the precise components and their relative importance remains elusive, reflecting the complex nature of destination image perception (Pike, 2002; Trang, 2023). Image in the context of tourism can be defined as the overall perception and impression that individuals or groups hold about a destination, which is influenced by various factors such as personal experiences, marketing efforts, word-of-mouth, and media representations (Pike, 2002). Destination image shows how potential visitors perceive and imagine a tourist destination, a positive destination image is important for recruiting and satisfying tourists, which improves the overall competitiveness of the destination in the global tourism market (Pike, 2020). Analysis of the aspects that influence the formation of a destination image is important in order to develop successful marketing strategies and improve the overall attractiveness of a tourist destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Tourism significantly affects a country's economic growth and global reputation, making it an important business for governments looking to improve their international image and attract foreign investment (UNWTO, 2020).

If destination image refers to individuals' thoughts, ideas and impressions of a particular place, it influences the tourist decision-making process (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Trang et al., 2023). In so doing, tangible and intangible factors, such as natural/ecological and cultural/historical attractions are important in determining the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist destinations (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Trang et al., 2023).

Through its diverse natural landscapes and cultural history, Nigeria has realized the potential of the tourism sector to promote economic growth and cultural exchange. (Amalu et al, 2018) Efforts to establish themselves as major tourist destinations in the country have resulted in the development of various attractions such as Obudu Mountain and Tinapa Resorts, each offering a unique visitor experience. As such, establishing and contributing to a positive destination image in the Nigerian tourism industry is critical to attracting local and international travelers. However, comparative research on destination mapping of individual tourist destinations, such as Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort, in the whole country (Nigeria) as a destination still needs to be studied. This study attempts to close this gap by conducting a comparative study on the image of these two popular tourist destinations in Nigeria – Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The importance of tourism in the global economy cannot be overstated. It contributes significantly to the GDP of many countries, including Nigeria. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021) travel and tourism accounted for about 2.9% of Nigeria's GDP in 2019, indicating the sector's significant economic impact. The significance of this sector goes beyond just making money. It plays an important role in establishing employment opportunities, encouraging cultural exchange and strengthening national identity.

Nigeria's rich cultural legacy and different natural environments make it an ideal example of a country with diverse tourist attractions. These sites cater to many tourist interests and inclinations, from tranquil beaches to bustling urban centers and lush nature reserves to exciting cultural festivals. Obudu Mountain Resort in Cross River State symbolizes Nigeria's natural beauty and cultural diversity. The resort is known for its scenic views, including sprawling meadows, lush hills and waterfalls, all in the mountains. The resort also hosts the annual Obudu Mountain Race,

a spectacular attraction for athletes and tourists around the world, enhancing the internationally renowned Obudu Mountain Resort culturally. Local festivals and indigenous community traditions complement the tourist experience (Uwajubogu, 2022). In contrast, Tinapa in Cross River State combines commercial and leisure activities. Operating within the Calabar Free Trade Zone, it is a hub for business and tourism. Resorts have a variety of entertainment options, including shopping and wholesale and recreational entertainment offerings such as water parks, amusement parks, theme parks etc. This multi-faceted approach seeks to attract business travelers and leisure tourists (Aniah et al., 2009).

The Obudu Mountain Resort and the unique landscapes of Tinapa represent the many possibilities of the tourism industry in Nigeria. Obudu offers a tourism experience based on heritage, nature and culture, while Tinapa offers a modern environment that caters to the needs of business and leisure activities. Understanding and using these images is essential for sustainable development of the Nigerian tourism industry (Benson, 2014). Curating and marketing these images of these places is crucial to the attractiveness of Nigeria as a tourist destination. By doing so, Nigeria can boost its tourism sector, promote sustainable development and facilitate cultural exchanges, thereby increasing its international standing in the tourism industry.

The Nigerian tourism industry is a vibrant and important sector of the country's economy, reflecting the country's rich cultural diversity and natural beauty. The Tourism Development Corporation of Nigeria has highlighted the critical importance of the sector in the country's financial emphasis. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) supported this view, noting that travel and tourism will account for more than 2.9% of Nigeria's GDP in 2019, reflecting the huge economic importance of the region (WTTC, 2019).

The tourism industry in Nigeria is exciting because it has a wide variety of attractions. From lush tropical rainforests in the south to the Sahelian deserts in the north, the country boasts of breathtaking landscapes. Its Atlantic Ocean coast is home to some of the best beaches, including Lagos, Calabar and Port Harcourt, offering beachgoers sun, sand and sea. Nigeria's cultural festivals are a strong manifestation of the country's rich heritage. These festivals include the famous Calabar Carnival, the Eyo Festival in Lagos and the Durbar Festival in northern Nigeria, which mixes colorful costumes and traditional dance, that attracts domestic and international tourists. These events are tourist attractions and places of cultural exchange (Uwajubogu, 2022).

Nigeria's historical sites offer a glimpse into the country's rich history. Ancient Kano, Benin historical wall, Osun-Osogbo-sacred tree, Sukur-Cultural Visual and UNESCO-world sites, historical cultural development of Lagos, National Museum, Lagos state. They feature an insertional protagonist (Benson, 2014).

The Nigerian tourism industry is characterized by its diversity, which includes cultural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism and leisure tourism. Currently, Ecotourism in Nigeria is becoming increasingly popular, with its growing interest increasing in national parks like Yankari Game Reserve and Cross River National Park. Adventure tourism is on the rise, with activities such as hiking the Jos Plain, whitewater rafting on the Cross River and participating in rock climbing in many parts of the country Leisure tourism is another important area, with resorts such as Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Business Resort offering a combination of leisure, leisure and business services These resorts accommodate a variety of tastes, offering domestic and international between tourists seeking leisure or business-related travel options (Amalu et al., 2012).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

While the importance of tourism in the Nigerian economy is widely acknowledged, greater clarity is needed to understand the specific components that make up the destination image of various tourist destinations in the country and understand how these factors influence visitor choice and behavior (Pike, 2020; Dominique, 2011). This is especially evident when comparing tourist destinations such as Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort. Located in the mountains of Cross River State, Obudu Mountain Resort is known for its pristine natural resources and rich cultural heritage. The tourism model focuses on nature and tradition, attracting people who enjoy natural beauty and cultural experience in particular (Uwajubogu, 2022). In contrast, Tinapa in Cross River State offers a unique combination of shopping and leisure. It promotes itself as a modern destination for business tourism, equipped with shopping, entertainment and leisure facilities (Aniah et al., 2009). The unique characteristics of these two resorts provide an excellent opportunity to examine the effect of destination images on tourists' behavioral intentions and satisfaction. Previous studies have focused on the overall elements of tourism in Nigeria or on a

specific location (Uwajubogu, 2022) rather than conducting comparative studies of destinations (Benson 2014). The lack of comprehensive comparative research results in a paucity of knowledge, especially under how destination characteristics contribute to the overall perception and attractiveness of tourist destinations in Nigeria.

### **1.3 Significance of The Study**

Comparing the images of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa destinations has important implications for destination marketing and management strategies. Understanding the nature of each destination can help stakeholders, including tourism councils and resort managers, develop tailored marketing campaigns and build products and services that meet tourist expectations (Pike, 2008). Therefore, a thorough understanding of the destination image held by potential visitors to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa can help improve their competitive position, successful destination marketing and improve their competition.

### **1.4 Research Objective and Research Questions**

The general objective of this dissertation is to conduct a comparative study of the visitors' image of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort as tourism destinations.

Following the research objective, we aim to answer the following **research question**:

- 1) To what extent is the image of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort as tourism destinations similar or different from visitors' perspective?
- 2) To what extent factors influencing the visit of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort are similar or different?
- 3) To what extent the visitors' levels of satisfaction and intention to return to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort are similar or different?

## **1.5. Structure of the Dissertation**

This research study is divided into six chapters, each important to the exploration and comprehension of destination image, with a particular emphasis on a comparative examination of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa in Cross River State, Nigeria.

**Chapter 1: Introduction** – The study's basis is laid in the first chapter, presenting the research problem and its context. The research explores the importance of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort, two prominent locations in Cross River State, within a specific setting. The chapter also defines the study's aims, framed within the context of comparing these two locations.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review** – This section comprehensively assesses existing studies on destination image, tourist satisfaction, and tourist behavior. This chapter delves into how these themes relate specifically to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa, building on earlier research to construct a theoretical framework. The literature review examines the relationship between destination image, visitor satisfaction, and tourist behavior.

**Chapter 3: Research Methodological Approach** –The methodology chapter goes into detail about the many stages of the research. It describes the data-gathering procedures, including sample selection, research design and analytical tools. This chapter is essential for comprehending the methodology employed in the comparative analysis of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa.

**Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion** – This section specifically focuses on presenting the findings of the investigation. The data acquired from the field, specifically about Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa. The chapter presents the data mainly through descriptive statistical techniques, focusing on the comparative elements of the two locations.

**Chapter 5: Conclusions** – The final chapter discusses the study's findings, including its limits and noteworthy discoveries relevant to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa. It provides recommendations for future study and practical consequences for Cross River State destination managers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature conducted in this chapter serves as a theoretical background for this dissertation. It hopes to gain important insights by reviewing previous scholarly literature on this topic and identifying current gaps in the literature. This approach is necessary to realize the importance and appropriateness of the comparison between Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort in Nigeria.

Due to its importance in influencing tourist behavior and destination choice, the concept of destination image has been extensively studied in tourism research (Uwajubogu, 2022). It also affects the attitudes of tourists towards a destination, with a variety of factors, from personal experience to outside influences.

#### **2.1 To Understand the Image of a Tourist Destination**

Destination image has been established as one of the most important concepts in tourism studies, which very much influences tourist behavior, destination choice, and overall satisfaction. The image of a destination can be defined as the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes that a potential tourist has of a certain place. This is through personal experience and marketing and informal reports. Destination image is a multi-dimensional construct that is roughly divided into cognitive, affective, and conative. Cognitive refers to knowledge and beliefs in the mind towards a destination's concrete features and characteristics. Affective, on the other hand, is about emotions and feelings that are elicited towards a destination by potential tourists. Conative refers to the intentions and behaviors that tourists portray. An example is intentions such as visiting or proposing a destination to others among others (Pike, 2002). The place image is of utmost importance since it has a great deal of doing with competitive positioning aimed at by the tourist destinations. In this line, a strong destination image is capable of drawing visitors and achieving their entire satisfaction that boosts their frequency rates with positive word of mouth. On the other hand, negative ones may deter tourists and hurt the reputation of tourist destinations.

Evaluating destination image is an important aspect of tourism research and significantly influences tourist decision-making and satisfaction. Beerli and Martín (2004) and Echtner and Ritchie (1993) assert that both objective knowledge and the psychological destination image are shaped by various factors, including emotional responses. Understanding tourist behavior and preferences is crucial as it sheds light on the significance of cognitive (knowledge-based) and affective (feeling-based) factors, as highlighted by (Qu et al., 2011).

**Table 2.1** Definitions of Destination Image.

<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Murphy et al. (2013)	A summation of pieces of information and associations connected to a destination, which includes numerous components of the destination and individual perception
Bigné et al. (2001)	The subjective understanding of authenticity made by the tourist.
Kim & Richardson (2003)	A totality of impressions, ideas, beliefs, prospects, and feelings gathered toward a place over time
Esu (2015)	As a composite of mental impressions an actual or potential tourist gets from the evaluation of the psychological or functional attributes of a destination and also the psychological and functional imagery or holistic of the environment of a destination.
Trang et al. (2023)	A key determinant of tourists' destination choice and loyalty formation. The sum of beliefs, ideals, and impressions individuals have regarding a certain place which in this context is a destination

Source: Adapted from literature conducted by the author

The concept of destination image has been explored by various scholars from different perspectives. Murphy et al. (2013) define it as a characterizing destination image as a summation of pieces of information and associations connected to a destination, encompassing various components and individual perceptions. Bigné et al. (2001) contribute to the discourse by

highlighting the subjective nature of destination image, framing it as the subjective understanding of authenticity made by the tourist.

Further insights into destination image are provided by Kim and Richardson (2003), who conceptualize it as a totality of impressions, ideas, beliefs, prospects, and feelings gathered toward a place over time. Rajesh (2013) adds depth to this understanding by describing destination image as a composite of mental impressions acquired through the evaluation of both psychological and functional attributes of a destination, as well as the holistic imagery of its environment. Trang et al. (2023) underscore the significance of destination image as a key determinant of tourists' destination choice and loyalty formation, emphasizing its role as the sum of beliefs, ideals, and impressions individuals hold regarding a particular destination. These diverse perspectives collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of destination image and its multifaceted nature.

## **2.2 Components of Destination Image**

A destination is believed to represent the cognitive aspects of tourists, their emotional reactions and affective aspects, as well as their behavioral intentions and affective decisions (Trang et al 2023). The destination image can be described as multi-dimensional (Pearce, 2005). According to Agapito et al. (2013), sensory elements including visual, auditory, smell, taste, and touch play an important role in establishing the emotional and experiential image of the destination. These sensory perceptions play an important role in the immediate emotional response, creating lasting memories and deep emotional connections to the place according to Agapito et al. (2014), these experiences may be able to transform a typical tourist visit into a highly enjoyable and emotionally impactful journey. The sensory appeal of the place can include natural beauty and architectural appeal, as well as auditory, taste and smell experiences unique to the local setting.

The concept of destination image is a comprehensive and complicated attitudinal construct that includes various interconnected components. This concept is investigated across multiple dimensions in tourism research, providing a more in-depth understanding of how tourists perceive and interact with a destination, as described below.

**2.2.1 Cognitive component:** The cognitive component of the destination image includes individuals' factual knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). It involves a rational assessment of the observable qualities that contribute to the overall attractiveness of the destination. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of the cognitive dimension in shaping tourists' perceptions and decision-making processes. (Trang et al. 2023) studied destination image and highlighted the important role of factual knowledge in influencing tourists' intentions. They emphasized that visitors' psychological assessments, including assessments of infrastructure, attractions, climate, and historical significance, significantly influence their destination preferences and choices. Again also, scholars such as Baloglu and McCleary (2019) emphasized the importance of conceptualization in destination imaging Their study found that tourists' beliefs about destination planning, strategies accessibility, safety, and cultural heritage significantly influence both their perceptions and perceptions of the destination This highlights the important role of observable attributes in tourists' psychological assessment of destinations and the role of information emphasize sources and has done so. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) examined the impact of online content and digital media on tourists' destination knowledge. It was found that the increase in users of online platforms and resources has greatly expanded the availability of destination-related information to tourists, thereby influencing their perceptions.

## **I.Key Features of Cognitive Components**

### **a) Attractions and Landmarks**

Attractions, man-made and natural, and landmarks are the two most important cognitive elements used to shape destination image. Attractions man-made attractions usually are characterized by historical sites, monuments, museums, facilities for entertainment; (Gutiérrez et al., 2008) For example, the Obudu Mountain Resort is a landscape packed with many attractions, including unique facilities like the cable car ride or the annual Obudu Mountain Race, and is more likely to create a landmark of high consideration.

b) **Accommodation and Facilities**

Quality and availability of accommodation facilities and amenities are very key cognitive factors. Tourists will check on the varieties in terms of lodging, from luxurious hotels to budget-scale accommodations and the presence of amenities, such as restaurants, shopping centers, and others. Those aspects will, in turn, enhance their perceptions of being at comfort due to convenience at the destination (Pike, 2002).

c) **Accessibility/Infrastructure**

Infrastructure, such as transportation network, roads, airports, and public services, puts into place, take pre-eminence into the cognitive judgment of a destination. The easier the accessibility and the better the infrastructure, the destination is much well appealing since tourists are assured of comfort and safety while traveling. For example, Tinapa Business and Leisure Resort is easily accessed on a well-developed road network and in close proximity to Calabar Airport.

d) **Safety and security**

Safety and security are the highest ordered cognitive considerations of any tourist. The safety perceptions of a destination, for instance its levels of crime, political stability, as well as health risks have a high impact on the decision on the tourists. If the destination is perceived to be safe and secure, then more people will visit compared to if a negative perception is put across about safety, few people will visit the destination according to (Pike, 2002).

e) **The price of transportation**, services-based industries, meals, and experiences is a prominent cognitive component that affects the choices of tourists. Tourists consider whether a destination offers a good or poor value for money, considering the quality and the price of the services and experiences (Trang et al., 2023). Destinations that are low cost, while having a high perceived value, are more attractive for a wider range of customers.

f) **Environmental Quality**

Herein comprises another crucial cognitive element, that of environmental quality, comprising cleanliness, the level of pollution, and the preservation of natural and culture resources.

Destinations that are attentive to environmental sustainability and project clean natural settings generally enjoy positive cognitive image by tourists (Agapito, 2020).

## **II. Influence of Cognitive Components on Tourist Behavior**

The extent of cognitive involvement is critical for tourist decision-making and behavior. If the cognitive appraisal is towards positive attributes of the destination, then it results in satisfaction, loyalty, and a tendency towards purchase repetition. A negative cognitive perception can be a hindrance of potential visitors and decrease the overall satisfaction.

Tourists accumulate and decode cognitive knowledge in a finalization of a destination selection. Elements such as attraction availability, quality of accommodation, and safety are all assessed and interpreted in critical thought to create an informed travel choice (Pike, 2002).

### **a) Expectation and Satisfaction**

Cognitive elements impact the anticipations of tourists before visiting. The satisfaction levels can be raised or satisfied if the actual product and the perceptions of tourists are the same, and if the latter is not, then the dissatisfaction can be pulled (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

### **b) Behavioral Intentions**

Positive cognitive perceptions heighten the likelihood of the destination being referred to others and re-visit to it. Cognitive satisfaction, being derived from the tangible attributes, are powerful outcome loyalty for the case, word-of-mouth will be in effect (Trang et al., 2023).

## **III. Ways to Enhance Cognitive Factors for Destination Image Development**

To reinforce cognitive elements of destination image, the following can be the strategies:

a) **Infrastructure and accessibility:** The infrastructure and accessibility of the destination can be improved. Infrastructure development, which surely includes the transportation networks and accessibility, seriously adds to the cognitive image. Ensuring safe arrivals and sound delivery of services will inevitably assure more visits of tourists to destinations (Pike, 2002).

b) **Safety and Security Measures**

Safety can be achieved at high levels; thus, it assures good perception of tourists; levels of safety are increased when co-operation with the local authority and real-time reporting of the safety situation are undertaken, and high-level relationship and trust from the tourists will be given. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993)

c) **High Quality Accommodation and Amenities**

The cognitive appeal of any destination can be raised if there is a variety of options to be found throughout that place, both in terms of quality and standard. Regular updating of facilities and staff training, where services are provided with excellence, might end in a favourable cognitive evaluation (Agapito, 2020).

#### **IV.Promotion of Cost-Effective Packages**

a) **Value for money, Package tours**

Packages that in one way or another help in saving trip expenses would act as a motivation for budget travelers. The destination becomes more attractive if advertised as the affordable one with maximum service qualities in the destination (Trang et al., 2023).

b) **Green Destination**

Environmental sustainability destination promotion and green practices help improve the cognitive image of the destination. The natural and cultural environments should be maintained to be clean and attractive, attracting the highest number of tourists enduringly (Agapito, 2020).

**2.2.2 Affective Dimension:** The emotional dimension of destination imagery focuses on individuals' emotional reactions and feelings toward the destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). It reflects the cognitive and experiential aspects of the destination image, delving into the emotional connections, attachments and emotions evoked by the destination. A recent study by

Trang et al. (2023) shed new light on the emotional component of destination imagery. Their study examined how visitors' emotional experiences and emotional reactions shaped their perceptions of destinations. Emotional factors were found to play an important role in influencing tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, highlighting the importance of understanding and managing emotional factors in destination marketing and planning construction roles using emphasis. In addition, Chen and Tsai (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of destination imagery studies, focusing on the affective dimension. The findings revealed the significant influence of emotional factors such as pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort on tourists' evaluation of destination attractiveness and desirability. The study highlighted the importance of destinations do managers emphasize sensory experiences with visitors' feelings and preferences.

In addition, a recent study by Agapito (2020) highlights the role of sensory experiences in tourists' emotional responses to destinations. These studies examined how sensory elements such as visual aesthetics, sound, smell and taste contribute to the sensory appeal of destinations and enhance overall tourist satisfaction and enjoyment.

## **I. Key Elements of Affective Components**

### **a) Emotional Responses to Scenery and Environment**

A destination's natural beauty and environmental quality can create effective emotional response. For instance, the tranquil landscapes of Obudu Mountain Resort may evoke feelings of serenity and awe, while the lively, dynamic environment of Tinapa may engender excitement and liveliness.

### **b) Cultural and Social Atmosphere**

Cultural richness and social environment are the vivid reason for the development of affective reaction at any particular destination. Promoting local tradition, festivals, and social life tends to arouse fascination, curiosity, and cultural enrichment among travelers. Cultural events, as supported by the Obudu Mountain Race or the recreational amenities as provided by Tinapa could lead to a strong sentiment with these places through a positive emotional experience (Seaman, 2008).

c) **Relaxation and Recreation**

Tourist destinations with facilities for relaxation and leisure-related activities are successful in generating positive affective response. The tourist requires a site where to unwind, feel stressed lessened, whilst at the same time having fun. Obudu Mountain Resort, being part of natural fascination, is more predisposed to relaxation, whilst Tinapa offers an area with lots of recreational equipment which offers countless opportunities to cater to different leisure tastes. (Pike, 2002).

d) **Adventure and Excitement**

Adventure tourism activities as Hiking, Zip Lining, and Water Sports can altogether improve the affective appeal of a place (pomfret, 2006). Both Obudu and Tinapa offer passionate activities for people who love such activities. Sense of Belonging and Hospitality Fear of the unknown is the principal explanation for xenophobia and even racism.

Give an overall sense of homeliness and embrace and account for a feeling of comfort and security. Interaction with locals, friendliness of service, and atmosphere will account for sum up a tourist's affective responses. Both destinations can create more appropriate affective appeal to visitors by making a more hospitable and welcoming environment.

## **II. Affective Components and How It Affect's Tourist's Behavior**

Affective elements are all about designing the behavior of the tourist since the point of the first decision to visit a place, post visit evaluation, to intention. Good emotion will lead to more satisfaction, more loyalty, and positive recommendations.

a) **Destination Choice**

Affective components influence tourists' destination through their emotional connection to the place. Tourists will mostly travel to places that provide people a positive feeling regarding their intent to experience during the journey (Pike, 2002).

b) Satisfaction of Tourists

Among the many experiences at a destination, emotional experiences have a very significant contribution to overall tourist satisfaction. Destinations that elicit feelings like happiness, relaxation, and excitement are the most likable to be memorable and provide high rates of satisfaction to visitors (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

c) Repeat Visits and Loyalty

Positive affective responses can foster tourists' intentions to revisit a destination and develop loyalty to the brand. Emotional bonding, through memorable experiences, boosts revisitation and long-term loyalty (Trang et al., 2023).

d) Word-of-Mouth and Recommendations

Thus, travelers having good emotional experiences are more likely to communicate them with others in the form of word-of-mouth and recommendations. As a result, affective components are essential for attracting potential visitors through word-of-mouth and personal recommendations (Agapito, 2020).

### **III. Destination Image Enhancement: Affective Elements**

Destination managers and marketers can take several steps to increase the effective elements of the destination image. These include:

a) Creation of Memorable Experiences

Unique and memorable experiences that raise a strong emotional response can be the basis for developing the affective appeal of a destination. It can comprise of cultural festivals, adventure activities, and relaxation retreats among others, depending on different emotional inclinations.

b) Cultural and Social Marketing:

Tourist promotion that will adhere to the culture of the local people has a higher chance of forming positive emotional ties. Organizing diversified cultural events, interactive activities, as well as various social events help increase the sentimental value of the place sotto voce (Agapito, 2020).

c) Greater Quality of Hospitality and Service

It can also improve the emotional experience of tourists if staff is trained to serve in the best manner possible in a friendly environment. Feelings of belonging and comfort emanate from encounters with service providers as well as locals (Pearce, 2005).

d) Marketing Emotional Benefits

A promotional campaign that emphasizes the emotional values of a visit to the destination will automatically reach out to the tourists whose aim is to identify particular places that can trigger certain emotional feelings. Powerful imagery, testimonials, and stories that arouse resonance in desired emotions can be an excellent means of popularizing a destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

e) Experience Customization

Personalized experiences based on the individual emotional preferences can heighten the affective appeal of a destination. Personalization can be done by providing designed-packages activities, and services (Trang et al. 2023).

**2.2.3 Conative Dimension:** The conative dimension of destination image examines individual behavioral intentions, decisions, and actions related to a particular destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). It encompasses the overall mood, feeling and image of the destination based on the likelihood that individuals will visit, recommend, or return to the destination Recent studies including Trang et al. (2023), emphasized the importance of the conative dimension in understanding tourist behavior towards destinations. Trang et al.'s study examined tourists' perceptions and behaviors related to destination choice and found that individual conative responses, such as willingness to visit or recommend a destination, are influenced by their overall mood and emotional attachment between them and the destination Moreover, scholars such as Pearce (2005). have examined the role of conative dimension in destination image formation in the digital age. Their study examined how online promotions and interactions on social media influence tourists' behavioral perceptions of destinations. Online positive sentiments and recommendations were found to significantly influence tourists' decision to visit or participate in

a destination, emphasizing the importance of the conative dimension in shaping tourist behavior. Moreover, recent developments in destination image research have highlighted the role of sustainable practices and responsible tourism in influencing tourist behavioral intentions.

### **I. Conative Component Key Elements**

#### a) Intent to Visit

Intent to visit is a major conative component that describes a tourist's choice of a specific destination. This is one of the most important decisions affected by the overall image of a destination that is formed through cognitive evaluations of attributes as well as affective responses to the environment and experiences therein (Pike, 2002). A strong and positive image raises the likelihood of tourists deciding to visit.

#### b) Willingness to Recommend

Another critical conative dimension is the willingness to recommend a destination to friends, family, or colleagues. If satisfied and with good experiences, these kind of tourists are more likely to recommend the place. They will influence others' decisions through word-of-mouth (Agapito, 2020).

#### c) Loyalty and Repeat Visits

A major conative outcome would be repeat visiting behavior, manifesting in loyalty. In that respect, tourists who can establish strong emotional bonds and obtain positive experiences from the destination stand a better chance of revisiting the place. Loyalty demonstrates continued preference or satisfaction with a destination (Trang et al., 2023).

d) Engaging in Destination Activities

This decision to participate in certain activities or attractions at the destination is guided by the conative components. These will range from adventure sports, cultural tours, and relaxation as per the perceived image and interests of the tourists (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

e) Perception and Behavioral Change

Conative components also refer to the change in behaviors that occur from gaining new knowledge or experiences. For example, if the destination image is changed positively by marketing campaigns or word-of-mouth, then tourists can change their travel plans and choose to visit the newly perceived destination, as proposed by (Pike 2002).

## **II. Effects of Conative Components on Visitor Behavior**

Conative components are very instrumental in actualizing perceived and emotional responses into travel behaviors. Knowing how can aid destination managers and marketers in developing strategies that can positively influence the behavioral intentions and actions of tourists.

a) Interest Conversion into Action

The step from interest to actual booking and traveling is a very crucial stage affected by conative elements. Good marketing and a positive image of the destination spur interest to act and translate interest into concrete travel plans as suggested by Pike (2002).

b) Facilitating Recommendations and Advocacy

The satisfied tourist will most likely recommend the destination to others, having had some enjoyable experiences. Encouragement in terms of loyalty programs and referral incentives, coupled with positive engagement, would galvanize word-of-mouth marketing (Agapito, 2020).

c) Long-term Loyalty Building

Designing long-term loyalty building techniques requires memorable experience creation and high service quality. Loyal tourists mean steady visitation and a reliable source of income for the destination (Trang et al., 2023).

d) Adapting to Tourist Feedback

The knowledge of tourist behavioral intentions and feedback enables a destination to adapt and change its offerings. The negative feedback can be remediated and the positive ones can be strengthened to ensure better experiences in the future with a stronger conative outcome (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

### III. Improving Conative Elements towards Destination Image Building

The conative elements in destination image may be improved through the following strategies by destination managers and marketers:

a) Geographically-targeted campaigns

Interest can then be effectively converted into action through the development of marketing campaigns that emphasize positive cognitive and affective aspects of the destination. Clear, cogent messages that resonate with desires and expectations will drive travel decisions (Pike, 2002).

#### Loyalty Programs and Incentives

Loyalty programs with rewards for revisits and referrals can improve tourist commitment to visiting the destination. This can be facilitated by incentives, such as discounts and special offers, inducing tourists to revisit and refer to the place (Agapito, 2020).

Visitor experience: The enhancement of quality-related issues related to services, facilities, and tourist experience should be a continuous concern if positive conative responses are to be expected. A satisfied tourist is more likely to show loyalty and recommend the visited destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

b) Effective Strategies for Communication

Positive experiences and testimonials related to any place can be shared on various communication platforms, including social media, travel blogs, and review sites, to influence the behavior of potential tourists. Source credibility is established through sharing proper visitors' experiences that constitute engaging content and builds trust among the target audience (Trang et al., 2023).

c) Responding to Feedback

Active seeking and responding to tourist feedback decrease the concerns and improve the positive attributes. Improvement commitment shown by feedback led to a positive image formed, resulting in repeated visits (Pike, 2002).

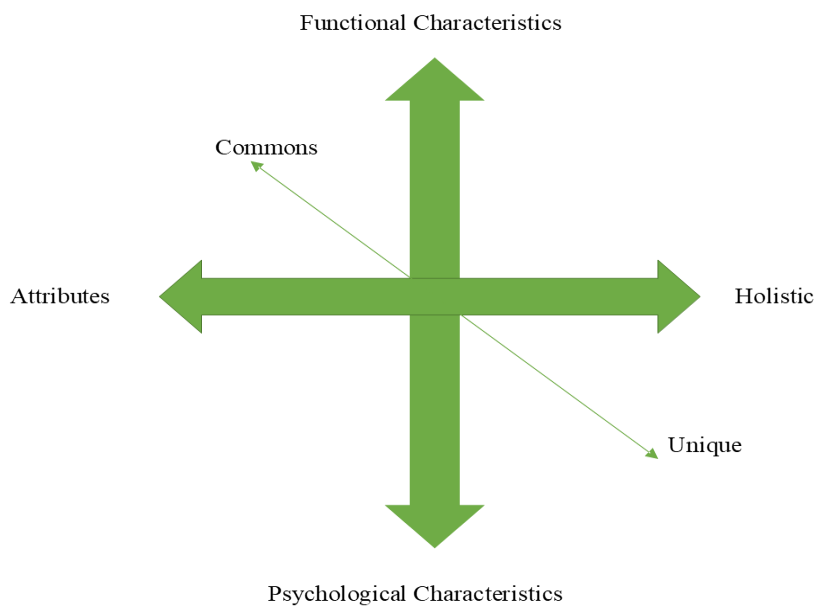
**2.2.4 Global Dimension:** The global dimension of destination image encompasses the holistic and overarching perception of a destination, taking into account its overall image on a global scale (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). It represents the collective impressions and reputations of a destination across diverse audiences and markets, shaping its competitiveness and positioning in the global tourism landscape.

Recent research has shed light on the significance of the global dimension in destination image studies, emphasizing its role in influencing tourists' perceptions and choices. For instance, Chen (2021) conducted a study on destination image and tourist behavior, highlighting the impact of global perceptions on tourists' destination preferences. Their findings revealed that a destination's global reputation and recognition significantly influence tourists' decision-making processes, indicating the importance of the global dimension in shaping tourist behavior.

Furthermore, scholars such as Kim and Richardson (2003) have explored the role of destination branding and marketing strategies in enhancing the global image of destinations. Their research investigated how destination marketing organizations leverage branding initiatives to cultivate positive global perceptions of destinations and attract international tourists. They found that effective branding strategies contribute to the enhancement of a destination's global image, thereby bolstering its competitiveness in the global tourism market.

Moreover, recent studies have examined the implications of geopolitical factors and socio-cultural trends on the global dimension of destination image. For example, Liu and Pratt (2017) investigated the impact of political instability and cultural perceptions on tourists' global perceptions of destinations. Their study revealed that geopolitical events and cultural representations influence tourists' overall impressions of destinations, highlighting the interconnectedness between global perceptions and socio-political dynamics.

**Fig. 2.1:** Components of destination image



Source: Echtner & Ritchie (1991)

Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) multidimensional model of destination image emphasizes the complex interplay between perceptions, emotions, and cognitions to influence individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward destinations. This comprehensive framework provides valuable insights for destination marketers, planners and tourism stakeholders, and provides a deeper understanding of the determinants of destination image and formulate strategies for effective implementation. The cognitive component of the destination image includes personal knowledge of facts and information about the destination, including attractions, amenities, accessibility, and historical significance (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). This dimension reflects the tangible aspects of the destination that individuals consider when forming their perceptions and preferences. Through various sources such as advertisements, brochures, and online forums, individuals collect objective data that reflect their psychological evaluations of destinations. In contrast, the emotional component of the destination image goes deeper into individuals' emotional responses and feelings about the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). This aspect captures the intangible aspects of a place, including climate, scenery, cultural richness, and overall weather. Emotional ties to a destination are formed through sensory experiences, cultural immersion and interactions with local communities, which trigger positive and negative emotions that affect individuals' moods and behaviors.

In addition, the conative dimension of destination image involves individual behavioral intentions or actions related to visiting a destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). This dimension reflects individuals' intention to visit the destination, frequency of visits, length of stay, spending habits, the likelihood of recommending the destination to others, future visit intentions behavioral intentions and the influence of psychosocial assessment of the destination. Recognizing that these dimensions are interconnected enables destination marketers, policymakers, and tourism participants to develop strategies for effectively managing destination image and they have increased competition in destinations (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Marketing efforts can provide consistent and emotionally relevant brands of targeted marketing and propaganda campaigns, to enhance the visitors' experiences, and improve traveler retention, and understanding in the crowd. faceted nature of the lawn patterns. or selective intermediaries use preventive measures, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of tourist destinations.

Both Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) multidimensional model of destination image and Peirce's (2005) approach to destination image provide a valuable framework for understanding how individuals perceive and evaluate destinations when Echtner and Ritchie focus on ideas, feelings, and cognitions and further, where despite differences including factual knowledge, beliefs, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions, both models emphasize the importance of place highlighting the role of destination images in influencing travelers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Echtner and Ritchie's model provides a structured framework for analyzing destination imagery, with specific dimensions representing cognitive, emotional, and affective aspects. This model provides a comprehensive understanding of how individuals form perceptions of places destinations based on factual knowledge, emotional reactions, and behavioral intentions. The approach offers a broader perspective, including the examination of other considerations such as beliefs and values of destination image. If we consider how where the picture is being approached in terms of multiple dimensions, Peirce's model captures the complexity of individual thinking and evaluation.

Many destination-related factors appear to contain many cognitive, emotional, and affective elements. The cognitive dimension refers to tourists' beliefs and knowledge about a destination, including their perceptions of its quality (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). This element is crucial, as it shapes the initial perception of the destination. The emotional dimension involves feelings and emotions aroused by the destination in travelers (Bigné et al., 2001). This emotional response is important in determining overall tourist experience and satisfaction. Although sometimes overlooked in specific research, cognitive or behavioral factors are equally important. They describe the likelihood of a tourist's future activities or behaviors, such as the intention to return or promote a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). Echtner and Ritchie's (1991, 1993) three-stage framework incorporates knowledge of destination images. These designs cover a variety of topics, from individual attributes, such as residential and tourist attractions, to general concepts that encompass general perceptions of the area. It also includes utilitarian attributes, such as climate and mood, and psychological attributes together. It provides differentiation, which is specific to a particular area.

Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between affective factors and emotional factors. Research indicates that cognitive decisions strongly influence emotional responses (Herle, 2018)

An individual's emotional attachment to a place's safety, cultural diversity, and aesthetics can be highly influential, as exemplified by the visitor's experience. Destination image is a dynamic construct influenced by cognitive, emotional, and stochastic factors (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Trang et al., 2023). These factors constitute a comprehensive spatial picture that is influenced by individual characteristics, general perceptions, functional and psychological aspects, and specific destination-distinguishing features.

### **2.3 The Influence of Destination Image on Tourist Behavior**

The concept of destination image is important in the tourism industry because it affects the overall decision-making process and experience of travelers. According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999), tourists' perceptions of destination features such as natural landscapes, cultural experiences and service quality can greatly influence their decision. Tasci et al. (2007) states this theory holds that destination image affects not only visitor decisions but also satisfaction and post-visit memory, which affect repeat visits and word-of-mouth referrals. The complexity of the destination image encompasses both perceptual and perceptual factors, reflecting its dual nature. The cognitive components refer to information and beliefs about the destination; Emotional factors are related to feelings and emotions. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) emphasized these two characteristics, arguing that objective knowledge and subjective perceptions, as well as affective reactions, shape the overall image of a destination. Dora Agapito's research provides an important perspective on how destination image composition affects the emotional dimension. According to Agapito et al. (2013), sensory perceptions (visual, auditory, smell, taste, touch) are important for the sensory aspects of the destination image. These emotional encounters enhance the awareness of the emotional dimension of the destination, creating lasting memories and emotional connections to the destination. Agapito's research highlights the importance of communicating emotional elements integrated into the overall visitor experience to emphasize the sensory appeal and memorability of the destination.

Personal experiences, word of mouth, and media imagery all influence the creation of a destination image. Agapito et al. (2013) highlights the role of the media in influencing the formation of prospective visitors' behavior, especially when they lack personal experience. Places in the media

can significantly affect their reputation, shaping passenger expectations and behavior. The impact of destination imagery on tourist behavior extends to post-visit research, which plays an important role in shaping future destination-related behaviors and intentions Chen and Tsai (2007) state that the post-visit intentions of tourists can lead to iterative ideas or suggestions if innate expectations are met or exceeded.

Furthermore, it is increasingly recognized as an important influence in forming a destination image and influencing tourist behavior, especially in the era of social media Xiang and Gretzel (2010) found that online information and research influence travelers' opinions and greater decision-making influence. Cultural factors greatly influence how the image of a destination is perceived. Uwajubogu (2022) describes how travelers from different cultures perceive and interpret destination imagery differently, which affects their travel behavior and preferences. This cultural aspect is important for venues that want to attract a diverse international audience.

#### **2.4 The Tourism Sector and Destination Image of Nigeria**

Nigeria's tourism sector, rich cultural heritage and diverse natural landscapes are vital to its economy and global identity. The contribution of the sector to the gross domestic product (GDP) and employment has steadily increased, according to the Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) and the World Travel Tourism Council (2019), contributing 2.9% to Nigeria's GDP on in 2019. This increase reflects Nigeria's number of attractions and ranges from vibrant cities that attract a wide range of travelers to wildlife reserves and cultural festivals. Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa in Cross River State are examples of Nigeria's many tourist destinations in this dynamic context. The Obudu Mountain Resort offers visitors an experience of tradition and nature, showcasing breathtaking landscapes and a vibrant cultural history. Located in the mountains of Cross River State, the resort attracts tourists with its breathtaking surroundings, which include rolling meadows and hills with deep forests (Uwajubogu, 2022). The annual Obudu Hill Race continues to thrive on global appeal, attracting racers and tourists all over the world. Tinapa, on the other hand, is an office and leisure destination that offers modern, professional entertainment. Built as part of the Calabar Free Trade Zone, it features wholesale shopping and retail and leisure entertainment, including a water park, theatre and stadium This unique mix of business and leisure seeks to attract a wide range of visitors, including business travelers and tourists they relax and do (Amalu et al., 2012).

Understanding the destination image of places like Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa is important in the tourism industry in Nigeria. These destinations, each with their own unique attractions, contribute to images of Nigeria as a major tourist destination. The traditional nature-based charm of Obudu contrasts sharply with Tinapa's quirky mix of shopping and leisure, each appealing to specific tourist groups. Despite the promise, the Nigerian tourism industry faces challenges such as lack of infrastructure, security issues and the need for more effective marketing strategies. These challenges affect Nigeria's overall reputation and competitiveness as a tourist destination the size of the place. Addressing these issues through investments, enhanced security measures and successful marketing efforts, especially in the digital space, is essential for the sustainable growth and development of the sector (Agapito et al., 2014).

## **2.5 The Importance of Destination Image to Nigeria's Tourism Sector**

Destination image is a critical factor in the tourism industry due to its role in shaping the perceptions and expectations of people toward any destination. In the context of Nigeria, the role of destination image cannot be overemphasized. Destination image would play magic in attractions, from domestic and international tourists visiting Nigeria to a great extent; hence, it would be a significant contribution to the economic growth, cultural exchange, and development processes of the nation.

### **2.5.1 Impact on tourism decision making**

Research in recent years highlights the significant impact of destination image on visitors' decision-making processes, highlighting the important role it plays in shaping their intentions and choices (Pike, 2020). In the Nigerian tourism industry, the impact of destination image on tourism decisions has gained increasing importance. A positive and inspiring image of Nigeria can be a motivating force for potential visitors, motivating them to explore the rich cultural, historical and natural attractions that the country has to offer (Uwajubogu, 2022). Nigeria's cultural heritage, from its vibrant mountains to historic sites, can be a draw for tourists seeking uniqueness and luxury. Positive destination image not only appeals but also acts as a catalyst, motivating tourists to travel for exploration in and find things in the Nigerian landscape that help towards creating the right image, to give potential visitors hope and joy.

Conversely, inaccurate or incorrect destination images can negatively affect tourist decisions, acting as a deterrent to potential travelers (Rajesh 2020). Misconceptions or misinformation can raise fears about safety, political stability, or travel experiences in general, and may impede the growth and development of the Nigerian tourism industry. Emphasize the importance of actively cultivating images that are positive truth is addressed and promoted to combat any negative views. Understanding the psychological and emotional impact of destination image on visitors is important for destination managers and planners. Research shows that destination image not only influences initial decisions but also explains visitors' overall satisfaction as well as post-visit memories (Tasci et al, 2007). Thus, investing in infrastructure that enhances and accurately represents the Nigerian destination image becomes an important strategy for achieving sustainable tourism growth. As the tourism industry becomes increasingly competitive globally, destination image emerges as a key differentiator. Strategic Destination Image Management can position Nigeria as an attractive and distinctive destination, which stands out from the myriad options available to today's travelers. To achieve this, it is necessary to research and continuously monitor the destination visualization image, to enable timely intervention and adaptation of marketing strategies to passengers in line with changing preferences and expectations.

### **2.5.2 Growing the Nigerian Tourism Industry through Positive Destination Image**

A positive destination image is a driver of economic growth in the Nigerian tourism industry. Recent research highlights the significant impact of positive mood on international investment, entrepreneurial incentives, and significant tourism-related growth (Dominique, 2011). This section examines the contribution of finance to the management and development of Nigeria's destination image. Dominique (2011) highlight that a positive destination image not only attracts tourists but also acts as a magnet for international investment. These investments also contribute to the expansion of the tourism sector, which has a significant impact on the wider economy. The best ideas can attract FDI in areas of infrastructure, accommodation, and other amenities that enhance the overall tourist experience (Orbasli et al, 2009). One of the major economic benefits of a good destination image is the business it stimulates. As tourists come to explore the beauty and richness of Nigeria, the demand for industries such as hospitality, tourism and local handicrafts increases,

creating employment opportunities for local people (Dominique, 2011). Giving is a driver of sustainable economic growth.

Moreover, the economic benefits extend beyond immediate income to the provision of vital tourism-related services. Orbasli et al. (2009) highlighted that a positive destination image attracts private and public investment in infrastructure projects including transportation networks, preservation of cultural heritage and modernization. These developments do not generate tourists overall experience not only enhances but contributes to the longevity of the Nigerian tourism industry. Therefore, a strategic destination image becomes important for Nigeria to maximize the economic benefits of tourism. Ensuring that a country's attractions are properly and accurately portrayed domestically and internationally is important to attract tourists and investments worthy of a Virtuous Cycle as identified by Dominique (2011) can increase tourist arrivals and spending, and ultimately help the country's economic well-being.

### **2.5.3. Cultural Preservation and Promotion**

Nigeria, a country with rich cultural heritage plays an important role in preserving and promoting destination image cultural heritage this sector of tourism is not only for cultural exchange but as a means of attracting eager tourists to participate in Nigeria to various traditional, festive, historical places (Awaritefe, 2004).

The cultural fabric of Nigeria is woven from many ethnic groups, each with their own unique traditions, languages and artistic expressions. The effective representation of this cultural richness through the images of destinations not only attracts global tourists but also facilitates cross-cultural dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation (Dominique, 2011). Tourists seeking an authentic cultural experience are drawn to places that actively promote and preserve their cultural heritage. Efforts in destination image management are incredibly linked to the presentation of Nigeria's unique culture on the global stage. Multi-channel communication including digital media and promotional campaigns is very important to present a vibrant, dynamic and culturally rich destination (Esu 2015). Cultural preservation and promotion The impact of destination image goes beyond tourist numbers; It is about preserving the cultural essence of Nigeria for future generations and establishing it as the country's cultural hub.

Cultural events and festivals play an important role in creating a destination image. Festivals such as the Osun-Osogbo Festival, Court Festival and Oyo Festival represent cultural performances that not only attract tourists but also contribute to a positive and sustainable image of the destination (Awaritefe, 2004). The careful observation and dissemination of this information in the broader context of Nigerian cultural richness is helpful, serving as a powerful tool in the destination of image management. Nigerian architectural wonders and historical landmarks, such as the Sukur Cultural Center and Ogbunike Caves, further enhance the image of the place as a cultural heritage repository, making the place a dynamic medium where these cultural assets come to the fore and capture the attention of tourists (Agapito et al, 2011).

The interaction between destination image and cultural preservation is not without its challenges. Misconceptions or misinformation can weaken or distort culture. Therefore, destination managers must balance cultural heritage with authenticity and market appeal (Orbasli et al, 2009). In addition, cultural preservation efforts should be integrated into destination design, ensuring that tourism development is consistent with sustainable cultural preservation (Benson 2014).

#### **2.5.4 Social and Environmental Sustainability**

The relationship between destination image and sustainable tourism practices in Nigeria has important implications for the long-term social and environmental well-being of the country.

Benson (2014) highlights the critical impact of destination image in promoting sustainable tourism in Nigeria. Positive images not only attract tourists but also influence their behavior towards responsible tourism behavior. Sustainable tourism as a concept is the key to reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and local communities. Tourists affected by a positive destination image are more likely to respect and support local culture and participate in activities that help protect the environment

The relationship between destination image and sustainable tourist behavior is consistent with the broader global trend towards ethical travel Tourism, which is largely responsible for environmental and cultural impacts apart from their travel results, find places that match their values (Pike, 2020).

A positive place image that presents Nigeria as a responsible and sustainable tourist destination helps attract eco-friendly travelers to the country.

Moreover, sustainable tourism practices have a significant impact on the social structure of destination communities. The positive image associated with responsible tourism engages and empowers communities. Identifying local people as custodians of cultural heritage is central to creating and maintaining a positive destination image (Yusuf et al., 2019). A reciprocal relationship develops, whereby a positive portrayal of local people in destination photographs enhances the overall attractiveness of the place, thereby increasing tourism flows, Dominique (2011) and Yusuf et al. (2019) highlight the economic and social benefits of responsible tourism. Sustainable tourism influenced by destination image contributes to sustaining the economic well-being of local people by creating employment opportunities and supporting SMEs Besides, preservation of cultural heritage with destination encouraging positive images ensures that traditions and customs are passed on to different generations.

In terms of environmental sustainability, a positive destination image is associated with efforts to conserve and protect natural resources. Tourism activities consistent with environmental conservation, such as eco-friendly accommodation and responsible wildlife tourism, are more likely to be adopted in areas with positive images (Rajesh, 2020).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The data was collected in two settings: Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort, both situated in Nigeria. This section presents the setting under analysis and details the methodological aspects of this research. The methodology considered the main research objective and research questions presented in the Introduction.

#### **3.1. Study Context**

##### **3.1.1 Obudu Mountain Resort**

Obudu Mountain Resort, also known as Obudu Cattle Ranch, is located on the Obudu Plateau in Cross River State, Nigeria. Established in 1951, Obudu Mountain Resort has become one of Nigeria's most prominent tourist destinations, renowned for its picturesque landscapes, temperate climate, and rich biodiversity. The resort, situated at an altitude of 1,576 meters above sea level, offers a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of city life, attracting nature lovers, adventurers, and those seeking relaxation (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2023).

The resort features several attractions, including a cable car system, which is the longest in Africa, and offers a thrilling ride with panoramic views of the surrounding mountains. Other notable amenities include a well-maintained 9-hole golf course, a water park, natural swimming pools, and numerous hiking trails that provide breathtaking views of the lush green landscape and unique rock formations. The resort also boasts modern accommodations and conference facilities, catering to leisure and business travelers (Mohammed et al., 2019).

Over the years, Obudu Mountain Resort has become a significant tourist destination, attracting local and international visitors. However, recent statistics indicate a shift in the demographic composition of visitors due to rising insecurity and political challenges across the country. While

the resort previously enjoyed a mix of domestic and international tourists, recent trends show a predominant increase in domestic tourism (Mohammed et al., 2019).

**i. Statistics of Visitors:** According to the Cross River State Tourism Bureau, the total number of visitors to Obudu Mountain Resort in 2023 was approximately 30,000. This figure represents a significant decrease from the pre-2019 numbers, which averaged around 60,000 visitors annually. The decline is attributed mainly to increased security concerns and travel advisories affecting international tourists. The impact of political instability and periodic communal clashes in some parts of the country has also contributed to the decline in international arrivals (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2023).

Most current visitors are domestic tourists, with local schools and organizations frequently organizing trips and events at the resort. The peak tourist season at Obudu Mountain Resort typically spans from November to February, coinciding with the cooler, more temperate weather that enhances the appeal of outdoor activities. Despite the challenges, the resort remains a preferred destination for many Nigerians seeking a tranquil and scenic getaway. In addition, efforts by the state government and private investors to improve infrastructure and security at the resort have been crucial in maintaining a steady flow of domestic tourists (Mohammed et al., 2019).

To address security concerns, the management of Obudu Mountain Resort has implemented several measures, including increased security patrols, collaboration with local communities, and the establishment of a rapid response unit to handle emergencies. These efforts aim to reassure visitors of their safety and encourage more tourists to visit the resort. Additionally, promotional campaigns highlighting the resort's unique attractions and safe environment were launched to attract more domestic tourists (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2023).

Efforts are also being made to diversify the activities available to visitors to cater to a broader range of interests and age groups. These include cultural festivals, culinary tours showcasing local cuisine, and adventure sports such as paragliding and mountain biking. By expanding the range of

activities, the resort aims to increase its appeal to a broader audience and encourage more extended stays, which could positively impact local businesses and the economy (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2023).

Some images of this resort can be observed in Figures 3.1 to 3.8.

**Fig. 3.1:** Obudu Mountain Resort Entrance Gate



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.2** Obudu Mountain Resort Accommodation



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.3** Obudu Mountain Resort holy mountain



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.4:** Obudu Mountain Resort Trail



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.5** Obudu Mountain Resort Cable vehicle



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.6** Obudu Mountain Resort Cattle Hill



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.7** Obudu Mountain Resort Open Air Park



Source: Own

**Fig 3.8 :** Obudu Mountain Resort hill side pool and water slider



Source: Own

### **3.1.2 Tinapa Resort**

Tinapa Resort is a business and leisure resort located near Calabar, the capital of Cross River State, Nigeria. Conceived as a significant economic and tourism hub, Tinapa was designed to provide world-class business facilities and leisure attractions. The resort, inaugurated in 2007, aims to boost the state's tourism sector and provide a comprehensive business and leisure destination. The resort boasts a variety of amenities, including a massive shopping mall, a film studio known as Tinapa Studios, a casino, an artificial tidal lake, and an array of recreational facilities (Aniah, 2009).

Since its inception, Tinapa Resort has faced several operational challenges, ranging from economic downturns to infrastructural deficits. However, efforts by the state government and private investors have led to gradual improvements and a steady flow of visitors. Similar to Obudu Mountain Resort, Tinapa has also seen a shift towards a predominantly domestic visitor base (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2023).

- i. **Statistics of Visitors:** In 2023, Tinapa Resort recorded approximately 25,000 visitors, slightly up from 23,000 in 2022. This modest increase can be attributed to enhanced marketing campaigns targeting local tourists and hosting several high-profile events and conferences. Most visitors are

domestic tourists from various parts of Nigeria, drawn by the resort's business facilities and leisure offerings (Aniah, 2009).

Tinapa's visitor demographics reflect a growing trend of local tourism driven by the country's current security and economic situation. The resort remains a popular venue for business conferences, trade exhibitions, and social events, contributing to its resilience amidst broader tourism sector challenges (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2023).

Despite the challenges, Tinapa Resort attracts visitors due to its strategic location and diverse offerings. The state government has also proactively addressed security concerns around the resort, including increasing security presence and enhancing surveillance measures. These efforts aim to provide a safe environment for visitors and ensure the continued growth of tourism at Tinapa Resort (Aniah, 2009).

In addition to improving security, concerted efforts have been made to upgrade the infrastructure and services at Tinapa Resort. These include refurbishing existing facilities, improving transportation links, and expanding the range of visitor activities. By focusing on these areas, the resort aims to provide a more comprehensive and satisfying experience for tourists, encouraging repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Some images of this resort can be observed in Figures 3.9 to 3.13.

**Fig. 3.9:** Tinapa Accommodation



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.10:** Tinapa Water Slider



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.11:** Tinapa sport pool



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.12:** Tinapa zig-zag Footbridge



Source: Own

**Fig. 3.13:** Tinapa Conference Hall



Source: Own

### **3.2. Instrument of data collection and sample**

A questionnaire was administered to tourists who had already visited both Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort. The instrument for data collection was created based on the literature review focused on destination image (ex. Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Pearce, 2005; Trang et al., 2023) and adapted to the context of analysis. It was also guaranteed that the time for answering questions online was short to allow for more responses. A pre-test was carried out, and the questionnaire was tested with eight respondents to ensure readability and that the short time of response was aligned with the availability of respondents to answer the questionnaire online.

Apart from limitations of time and financial resources, at the time of the study, that was one critical factor in Nigeria regarding tourists' perception of safety. With the activities of groups like Boko Haram, registered as an international terrorist organization by many international organizations, it has carried out many attacks mainly within the northeastern part of Nigeria. It brought anxiety to many and impacted negatively the reputation of Nigeria as a safe place to visit. This problem has further been exacerbated by the existence of other security issues such as banditry, kidnappings, and communal clashes in some parts of the country (Badiora et al., 2020). Most travel advisories from countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada emphasized the risks of travel to Nigeria, citing kidnap of foreigners, armed robbery, and other terrorist attacks. These advisories have a far-reaching effect on the number of international tourists, with the choices of potential visitors going to other places perceived as safer, and the lingering perception of risk continuing to be influential in a negative way on tourism.

The fact explained above prevented data collection in loco. Most of the tourists who visited Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa during the period of the development of the present dissertation were domestic tourists. This has called for a greater focus on domestic tourism to sustain the industry amid dwindling international arrivals. Therefore, an online questionnaire in English was produced in Google Forms for the convenience of data collection. A non-probabilistic sample was used by following the snowball method (Cetin, 2018). The data collection was conducted during March and April 2024. The author used social media platforms to reach the population under study: adults who have already visited Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa as tourist destinations.

The questionnaire was composed of 12 questions related to factors influencing the visit, destination image, satisfaction, intention to revisit, and sociodemographics. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

### **3.3. Data analysis**

The dataset in Excel produced in Google Forms was transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics were mainly carried out to analyze the answers provided by the respondents.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

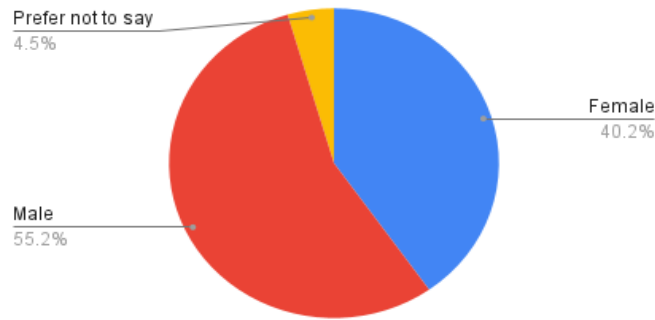
Findings and discussions of the results are presented in this section. In this regard, the chapter aims to interpret data from tourists' questionnaires that visited Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort. Analysis looks into the destination image by comparing these two major tourist destinations in Nigeria. By comparing visitors' perceptions and attitudes, recommendations can enhance the attractiveness of these destinations (Kotler et al., 2014).

#### **4.2 Sample Profile**

In pursuit of addressing the research questions and achieving the objective of this study, a total of 286 responses were collected from individuals who have visited Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa, two prominent tourist destinations in Nigeria.

The sample is composed of 55.2% of male participants (n=158) and 40.2% of female participants (n=115), while 4.5% (n=13) prefer not to say (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 - Gender**



Source: Own

Understanding the nationality of the respondents is an important aspect of this study. Table 4.1 shows the majority (97.6%) of respondents are Nigerians. This suggests that tourism at both Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort greatly relies on domestic tourists. Also, the low response rate from international tourists reflects several underlying factors. First, safety in Nigeria has been of concern to international tourists. Security concerns related to terrorism, insurgency, and communal conflicts have compelled many countries to issue travel advisories against non-essential travel to Nigeria. Some of these advisories have highlighted risks involving kidnapping and armed robbery, among other violent crimes. This has remained a determinant factor in the number of international tourists who can make a decision to visit the country, according to (Badiora et al., 2020).

**Table 4.1.** Nationality of respondents.

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
American	2	0.7
Ghanian	2	0.7
Nigerian	279	97.6
Togolese	1	0.3
United Kingdom (British)	2	0.7
Total	286	100.0

Source: Own

Economic factors are the major determinants that make domestic tourists the dominant ones. The world economic downturn and the cost of international travel have shifted Nigerians' attention to the allurements of domestic tourism. This could also be ascribed to the increasing awareness and publicity of local tourism spots, attracting greater numbers of locals to visit such destinations. In this regard, it can be noticed the presence of large numbers in terms of local school excursions and diocesan organizational activities in such resorts (Yusuff & Aliu, 2019).

### 4.3 Frequency of Visits to the Destinations

This section examines the frequency of visits by respondents to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa, providing insights into the patterns of repeat visitation which are crucial for understanding visitor loyalty and the popularity of these destinations.

#### *Frequency of Visits to Obudu Mountain Resort*

As shown in Table 4.2, most of the respondents (62.2%) have visited Obudu Mountain Resort between 1 to 3 times. It can be verified that there are many repeat visitors to the resort, which is not very surprising given the fact that most of the participants are local visitors.

**Table 4.2:** Frequency of Visit - Obudu Mountain Resort

No. of visits	Frequency	Percent
1 – 3	178	62.2
3 -5	65	22.7
5 – 10	37	12.9
Above 10	6	2.1
Total	286	100.0

Source: Own

In contrast, Table 4.3 shows that 50.3% of the sampled population have visited Tinapa 1 - 3 times. This slightly lower percentage, compared with Obudu Mountain Resort, may indicate that Tinapa attracts fewer repeat visitors or that, overall, its visitors are more evenly distributed across the different frequencies of visit. A striking 30.8% of the respondents have visited Tinapa 3-5 times, which is higher than the equivalent group for Obudu Mountain Resort. This might mean Tinapa could be very attractive to visitors who come back within this frequency of visits. Again, 15.7% of the respondents had come five to ten times, while 3.1% visited more than ten times, indicating a slightly higher amount of repeat visits from frequent visitors when compared with Obudu Mountain Resort.

**Table 4.3:** Frequency of Visit – Tinapa Resort

No. of visits	Frequency	Percent
1 – 3	144	50.3
3 -5	88	30.8
5 – 10	45	15.7
Above 10	9	3.1
Total	286	100.0

Source: Own

### ***Factors Influencing Visits to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa***

Discussion of the factors that make visitors prefer Obudu Mountain Resort to Tinapa, or vice versa (Tables 4.4. and 4.5), is important to understanding their destination impressions. This section examines critical elements that inform decisions to visit the destination.

**Tables 4.4:** Factors Influencing Visits – Obudu Mountain Resort

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Natural beauty	93	32.52
Cultural attractions	68	23.78
Recreational activities	61	21.33
Facilities/services	61	21.33
Good food	3	1.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Own

**Table 4.5:** Factors Influencing Visits – Tinapa Resort

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Natural beauty	80	27.97
Recreational activities	72	25.17
Facilities/services	69	24.13
Cultural attractions	62	21.68
Good food	3	1.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Own

### **Natural Beauty**

Obudu Mountain Resort: This factor has the highest mentions, 93, having a weighted percentage of 32.52%. This indicates that scenic landscapes and natural attractions in Obudu form a large part of the perceived destination image.

Tinapa Resort: The most prominent element is also the beauty of nature. With 80 mentions, and a weighted percentage of 27.97%, this confirms the fact that one of the major elements that draws people to Tinapa includes the beauty of the natural environment.

### **Recreational Activities**

Obudu Mountain Resort: The value of recreational activities was the major factor with 61 mentions and a weighted percentage of 21.33%. This shows that plurality in leisure facilities is very important if tourist attraction is to be achieved.

Tinapa Resort: The respondents placed a little more value on recreational activities as a factor than Obudu Mountain Resort, with 72 mentions and a weighted percentage of 25.17%. This result may suggest the numerous leisure-related offerings in Tinapa contribute substantially to its appeal.

### **Cultural Attractions**

Obudu Mountain Resort: These were the second most important factors for the visitors, with mentions of 68 and a weighted percentage of 23.78%. This indicates that cultural experiences and local traditions at Obudu are valued.

Tinapa Resort: At Tinapa, 62 respondents mentioned cultural attractions as major attractions, translating to a weighted percentage of 21.68%. This means that nearly equal importance is attached to the cultural experience among visitors to Tinapa.

### **Facilities/Services**

Obudu Mountain Resort: The importance of facilities and services comes immediately after recreational activities, having contributed 61 times to the research with a weighted percentage of 21.33%. This shows that good facilities are very important in determining the whole experience of the visitors.

Tinapa Resort: In Tinapa, the importance of facilities and services is higher, contributing 69 times to the study and having a weighted percentage of 24.13%. Good standard facilities are thus as important as other facilities in attracting visitors to Tinapa.

### **Good Food**

Good food was a factor spontaneously mentioned by participants in the item “Others”. While this factor is relatively limited compared to other factors, good food adds to the experience of the visitors. The factor has the lowest frequency in both destinations, with mentions of 3 and a weighted percentage of 1.05% in both destinations.

### ***Comparative Analysis***

Natural Beauty: While both destinations highlight it as the most important factor, it is, however, somewhat more crucial in Obudu than Tinapa.

Recreational Activities and Facilities/Services: This dimension is slightly stronger in Tinapa, evincing that recreational facilities and services are one of the strongest points to which people are attracted to this destination.

Cultural Attractions: In both destinations, the rating for cultural attractions was very similar, indicating that the cultural experience is equally important for visitors in both places.

Good Food: It was not as salient, but good food did make a modest contribution to the visitor decision to visit both locations.

### ***Overall Satisfaction with Recent Visits to both Resorts***

The overall satisfaction of visitors with their most recent visits to the Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort was measured (Tables 4.6 and Table 4.7). The range of satisfaction ratings (from 1 to 5) for both resorts indicates a wide variance in visitor experiences, with some visitors being very dissatisfied (rating of 1) and others being very satisfied (rating of 5).

**Table 4.6:** Overall satisfaction with the most recent visit to Obudu Mountain Resort

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	30	10.5
<b>2</b>	69	24.1
<b>3</b>	79	27.6
<b>4</b>	65	22.7
<b>5</b>	43	15.0
<b>Total</b>	286	100.0

Source: Own

**Table 4.7:** Overall satisfaction with the most recent visit to Tinapa

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	27	9.4
<b>2</b>	41	14.3
<b>3</b>	83	29.0
<b>4</b>	84	29.4
<b>5</b>	51	17.8
<b>Total</b>	286	100.0

Source: Own

### ***Comparative Analysis***

The overall satisfaction ratings for Obudu Mountain Resort show a diverse range of responses, as can be observed in Table 4.6. The median satisfaction rating is 3, indicating that most visitors had a neutral experience. However, the distribution shows a significant portion of visitors were dissatisfied, with a combined 34.6% rating their visit as 1 or 2. This suggests areas where improvements could enhance visitor satisfaction at this point in time since the question refers to the last visit and not to all visits. While many visitors had a neutral experience, there is a fairly high proportion of the visitors who were not satisfied with their visit. The relatively lower

percentage of visitors who rated their experience as very satisfied (15.0%), shows room for improvement in the services and amenities provided by the resort.

The overall satisfaction ratings for Tinapa Resort seem to be slightly more positive regarding Tinapa Resort (Table 4.7). The median is 4, indicating a generally more positive visitor experience. The proportion of highly satisfied visitors (Rating 5) is higher at Tinapa (17.8%) compared to Obudu (15.0%). Additionally, the combined percentage of dissatisfied visitors (Rating 1 and 2) is lower for Tinapa (23.7%) compared to Obudu (34.6%). The results suggest that Tinapa may serve its visitors better. Better facilities, more engaging activities, or superior quality of service could be underpinned by these results since this destination has a specific focus on business travel.

### *Attributes Describing each Resort*

Identification of the key attributes that influence this choice by the tourist is paramount in destination management and marketing. These destination attributes, in summation, form the destination image, which is very instrumental in attracting and holding visitors (Stephens, 2009). In view of that fact, this section evaluates the primary attributes that describe Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort. The results from the survey determine the main attribute that best describes each of the two destinations under consideration in this research so as to give an indicator of their zones of strengths and weaknesses (Tables 4.8 and 4.9).

**Table: 4.8:** Attributes of Obudu Mountain Resort

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Natural Beauty	80	28.0
Recreational Activities	60	21.0
Hospitality	56	19.5
Cultural Richness	50	17.5
Safety/Security	40	14.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Own

## *Attributes of Obudu Mountain Resort*

### **Natural beauty**

Natural beauty was the main attribute highlighted by 28.0% of respondents related to Obudu Mountain Resort and 26.2% related to Tinapa. This means beautiful landscapes stand out. The high frequencies of mentioning suggest that destinations which underline their natural beauty are attractive to a wider audience. Indeed, these findings converge with Kim & Richardson (2003), who focused on explaining the high effect natural landscapes have on the destination image and tourist preferences.

### **Recreational Activities**

The respondents highly regard recreational activities, accounting for 21.0% of mentions for Obudu and 24.5% for Tinapa. This further goes to show that to attract tourists, it is necessary to offer diversified recreational activities. Offering various forms of recreation means access to a wide scope of different activities, which helps in developing the tourist's experience. Abeidallah and Samira (2023) share these assertions further, whereby they stress that people come and stay at a place basis due to engaging activities.

### **Hospitality**

Of the total sample, 19.5% of respondents associate hospitality with Obudu and 23.1% with Tinapa, which shows the importance of pleasant experiences with the local people and those who offer services. Good hospitality can make the stay of the traveler all the more rewarding, which makes the person happy and willing to come again. For Murphy et al. (2013), positive service encounters are a major initiator of customer loyalty and increase word-of-mouth recommendations.

### **Cultural Richness**

This attribute is noted by 17.5% of the respondents for Obudu and 19.2% for Tinapa, which suggests this is a relevant aspect of both destination images, although more pronounced in Tinapa. This is a tangible reason for a trip to see and experience cultural heritage first-hand. Benson (2014)

stresses that cultural tourism not only provides satisfaction but also ensures that the activity of the tourist is sustained.

### **Safety and Security**

Safe and security compose an attribute associated by 14.0% of respondents regarding Obudu, while 17.5% of respondents stated that for Tinapa. Ensuring tourists' safety while visiting is an essential ingredient that would determine whether or not they feel great visiting the destination in the short and long run. Liu and Pratt (2017) argue the role of destination image, tourist behavior in their perceptions of safety and the multi-destinations, especially in emerging economies.

**Table: 4.9:** Attributes of Tinapa

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Natural Beauty	75	26.2
Recreational Activities	70	24.5
Hospitality	66	23.1
Cultural Richness	55	19.2
Safety/Security	50	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Own

### ***Comparative Analysis***

Natural beauty is the attribute most associated with both resorts. The percentage mentioned for Obudu is higher than Tinapa, 28.0% versus 26.2%.

Seemingly more recreational activities are perceived to be available in Tinapa (24.5%) than Obudu (21%).

Tinapa is more related to perceived hospitality (23.1%) compared to Obudu (19.5%), with better perceived Hospitality at Tinapa.

The relative share of cultural richness is appreciated in both resorts. However, Tinapa has a slightly higher percentage of responses: 19.2% over 17.5% for Obudu.

The perception of safety and security is the attribute that is less associated with both destinations. In Tinapa is slightly favourable (17.5%), as compared to Obudu (14.0%).

### **Likelihood to Revisit each Resort**

The probability of revisiting Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa provides very useful information about visitors' loyalty. What is being explained here is that it carries the propensity for tourists to return to each of these vacation spots, thereby eliciting definitively strong and not-so-strong points for both resorts. The objective of the current work is to throw light on such revisit intentions to elicit how Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa fare in terms of long-term appeal and overall visitor experience.

**Table 4.10:** Likelihood to Revisit Obudu mountain Resort

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	28	9.8
<b>2</b>	47	16.4
<b>3</b>	83	29.0
<b>4</b>	71	24.8
<b>5</b>	57	19.9
<b>Total</b>	286	100.0

Source: Own

Regarding Obudu Mountain Resort, results suggest that many visitors were neither likely nor unlikely to visit Obudu Mountain Resort, since 29.0% of the responses are neutral. However, considering that 24.8% of participants mentioned they were likely (4) to revisit together and 19.9% said they were very likely (5), a sum of 44.7% is quite of reasonable future interest. Considering the other extreme, very unlikely (1) and unlikely (2) collected 26.2% together, showing there is room for bettering repeat visits to the destination and understanding the research behind those responses.

**Table 4.11 :Likelihood to Revisit Tinapa Resort**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid</b>
<b>1</b>	15	5.3
<b>2</b>	34	11.9
<b>3</b>	65	22.8
<b>4</b>	102	35.8
<b>5</b>	69	24.2
<b>Total</b>	286	100

Source: Own

The data for Tinapa Resort shows a higher rate of intention to revisit, with a large proportion of visitors rating their likelihood of revisiting either as likely (4), 35.8%, or very likely (5), 24.2%, which totals 60.0%. Thus, it generally holds a stronger future interest in revisiting Tinapa than in Obudu. For those who are very unlikely (5) or unlikely (4) to revisit, 17.2% is lower compared to the one recorded for Obudu, pointing to an indication of generally higher satisfaction and positive experiences by visitors at Tinapa.

### *Comparative Analysis*

**Table 4.12:** Comparison Rating of Likelihood to Visit the Destinations

	<b>How likely are you to revisit Obudu Mountain Resort in the future? (1-5)</b>	<b>How likely are you to revisit Tinapa in the future? (1-5)</b>
<b>N</b>	286	285
<b>Median</b>	3	4
<b>Mode</b>	3	4
<b>Minimum</b>	1	1
<b>Maximum</b>	5	5

Source: Own

In Obudu Mountain Resort, the median rating for the likelihood of revisit is 3.00, which indicates that respondents are generally indifferent to revisiting. For Tinapa, the median of visit intention is 4.00. This indicates that participants are more willing to revisit Tinapa than Obudu. The same trend can be verified for mode. In both resorts, the minimum rating is 1, and the maximum is 5 regarding intentions to revisit these destinations. The interpretation of this is that Tinapa has a greater potential to attract repeat visitors compared to Obudu Mountain Resort. This high tendency to revisit may result from better facilities, more exciting activities, or generally a greater visitor experience than what is obtained at Obudu Mountain Resort, including a higher perception of safety and security.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Research Main Objective

This research compared and contrasted destination images at Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa, two very strong, prominent tourist destinations within the country. This dissertation intended to establish an understanding of how these places are perceived by visitors, identify the key attributes which form destination images for them, and analyze what factors influence visitors' decision-making, as well as visitors' satisfaction and intention to revisit. From a practical perspective, this dissertation aimed to provide useful information for destination managers, marketers, and policymakers in making destinations more appealing and competitive.

#### 5.2 The Key Findings

The study yielded a number of outcomes in relation to the destination images for Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort:

**Natural Beauty:** Both destinations within Nigeria are greatly regarded in terms of natural beauty, with a slight inclination to Obudu Mountain Resort. This is the most important aspect for both resorts, in terms of cognitive attributes and factors influencing the decision to visit these destinations. This point retains the impression that landscapes should be maintained, preserved and valued to get many people touring. Indeed, natural scenery has been one important aspect mentioned in destination image studies, which highlight its multi-sensory dimension (Trang et al., 2023).

**Recreational Activities:** Tinapa is associated with more exciting recreational activity than Obudu resort, and this seems also to be an important factor to visit the former destination. Since this is

also a relevant factor mentioned by visitors to Obudu Resort, this finding calls for Obudu Resort to dynamize more diversified leisure activities for visitors.

**Cultural Attractions:** The perception of the association of the resort to cultural attractions is similar, but the existence of cultural attractions seems to be a more important factor for more respondents to Obudu resort. This finding suggests that the cultural experience should be reinforced in Obudu resort.

**Safety/Security:** This factor was slightly favourable towards Tinapa compared to Obudu in terms of destination image. The implementation of measures that do not leave the tourists with a sense of insecurity is of utmost importance. It is the means towards gaining confidence in traveling to both destinations.

**Hospitality:** Tinapa resort has better-scored indexes in the overall hospitality sector, thus having better interactions between service providers and locals and visitors. There is, therefore, a great need for Obudu resort improve hospitability aspects.

**Overall satisfaction:** in different terms, Tinapa received more moderate satisfaction compared to Obudu resort. Future studies could delve into the areas that the tourists were more unsatisfied with in Obudu, which could boost revisit to the tour site.

**Likelihood of Visiting Again:** It was found that visitors were more likely to revisit Tinapa compared to Obudu, which shows that Obudu should improve its products and experiences to inspire visitors' satisfaction and intention to return.

The findings are in agreement with available literature on the destination image and tourist behaviors showing that among the factors combining tourist perceptions, natural beauty, recreational activities, cultural richness, safety, and hospitality are included in the choice behaviors of destination preferences and perceptions (Liu & Pratt, 2017).

### 5.3 Managerial Recommendations

For improving the level of competitiveness and attractiveness to Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort, based on the findings, it is recommended that destination managers and policymakers do the following:

- **Recreational activities:** There is a need for Obudu Mountain Resort to diversify its recreational activities to see more visitors. Extra developed adventure sports, cultural festivals, and activities that can embrace families can put it on the drawing board of holiday spots.
- **Safety and security:** Both destinations should seek to improve their safety measures so as tourists are guaranteed security. This can be met by liaising with local communities and other police forces.
- **Cultural Experiences:** More emphasis should be laid on cultural experiences or local traditions, to meet the visitor experience at both destinations. Cultural events such as tours, exhibitions, and other tourist attractions targeting culturally inclined tourists should also be developed.
- **More Hospitality Training:** The government and resort management could invest further in the training on hospitality regarding staff and service providers. This builds impressive relations with visitors, which slightly influences the level of visitor satisfaction. Most visitor perceptions are based on the experience type they gain from the locals (Uwajubogu, 2022).
- **Tailored Marketing Campaigns:** Marketing campaigns that are targeted to highlight the special attributes of each destination can help attract specific visitor segments. Natural beauty, recreational activities, and cultural richness seem to be factors that can attract more visitors.
- **Manage Visitor Feedback:** The visitor suggestions and feedback need to be taken and analyzed on a regular basis to be able to identify the grey areas. Improvement in visitor satisfaction and loyalty can be realized with the guidelines of these concerns and continuous upgrading of the offerings based on the feedback.

Considering the findings, it becomes clear this area depends on domestic tourism, which in turn dictates that any attempt to develop the tourist district must focus first on improving the experience of domestic tourists. This is related to ensuring good infrastructure, safety, and quality services that will satisfy the local visitors. The promotional campaigns can be done through cultural festivals, historical sites, as well as the natural beauty of these places so as to attract more domestic visitors. Addressing safety and security issues is key to attracting more international tourists who are impacted by secondary sources (e.g. news, social media, word-of-mouth) related to perception of these attributes. There is a need for the Nigerian government and all the stakeholders in tourism to enhance security, give accurate information regarding safety, and work collaboratively with international tourism bodies so as to regain trust. It helps if positive messages, that is to say, testimonials of successful security improvements and positive tourist encounters, are promoted to the public to shift its perception of the issue. In the long term, one may need to diversify the base of tourists to ensure that it includes other African nations that are nearby and, therefore, potentially safer international markets. Combination packages of activities that include cultural and adventure offerings, mixed with relaxation activities, would make the destination more attractive to the now more diversified groups.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research**

There were a few limitations of the study that need to be kept in perspective while interpreting the findings:

- **Sample:** the majority of the respondents of this survey are domestic tourists. Therefore, future studies should ensure that there are more diversified respondents within the sample, such as international tourists. This will give a holistic understanding of the destination images perceived within a particular area.
- **Safety:** the perception of safety, besides the political situation, in Nigeria, appears to be a strong factor that influences both the perception and the tourist's intention to visit at the point in time where the data was collected. Therefore, future research should identify improved security effects on destination image and its consequences for the tourist's behavior.

- Potential response bias: people with either o great experiences or very negative experiences could be motivators to fill out and return the survey. Balanced representation would give a better impression in future research about different visitor experiences.
  
- Logistical constraints: funds and time constraints limited the ability to conduct fullscale coverage of the tourism survey. In the future, with more funding and an extended period of time, research could cover more destinations and respondents, considering a longer questionnaire, including open-ended questions or interviews.

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## Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

The following questionnaire aims to understand the destination image of Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa, Nigeria, as tourism destinations. It is important that you answer as sincerely and objectively as possible. The authors of this academic study assure confidentiality to the respondent (older than 17 year old). Thank you in advance for your time, effort, and cooperation. This research is conducted for a master dissertation at the University of Algarve. Questions about the questionnaire can be addressed to [a77680@ualg.pt](mailto:a77680@ualg.pt)

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I declare that I have read the information provided above and agree to participate in this research	<input type="radio"/> I Agree
I declare that I have read and accept the Google Forms privacy policy - <a href="https://policies.google.com/privacy">https://policies.google.com/privacy</a> .	<input type="radio"/> I Agree

1. Have you visited **Obudu Mountain Resort and Tinapa Resort, Nigeria**, before?

Yes (next question)  No (the questionnaire is ended)

2. What **factors** influenced your decision to visit **Obudu Mountain Resort** (select all that apply):

Natural beauty

Cultural attractions

Recreational activities

Facilities/services

Other. Which one: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What **factors** influenced your decision to visit **Tinapa Resort** (select all that apply):

Natural beauty

Cultural attractions

Recreational activities

Facilities/services

Other. Which one: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Rate your overall **satisfaction** with your most recent visit to **Obudu Mountain Resort** (1- Bad; 5- Excellent)

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Bad</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<b>Excellent</b>

5. Rate your overall **satisfaction** with your most recent visit to **Tinapa Resort** (1- Bad; 5- Excellent)

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Bad</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<b>Excellent</b>

6. Which **attributes** do you think best describe **Obudu Mountain Resort**? (select all that apply):

- Natural beauty
- Cultural attractions
- Recreational activities
- Hospitality
- Safety/security
- Other. Which one: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which **attributes** do you think best describe **Tinapa Resort**? (select all that apply):

- Natural beauty
- Cultural attractions
- Recreational activities
- Hospitality
- Safety/security
- Other. Which one: \_\_\_\_\_

8. How likely are you to **revisit Obudu Mountain Resort** in the future? (1-Most unlikely; 5-Most definitely)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Most unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most likely

9. How likely are you to **revisit Tinapa Resort** in the future? (1-Most unlikely; 5-Most definitely)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Most unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most likely

10. **Gender:**

Female  Male  Other

11. **Nationality:**

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Please indicate the number of times you have **visited:**

**Obudu Mountain Resort:**

1-3 times  3-5 times  5-10 times  More than 10 times

**Tinapa Resort:**

1-3 times  3-5 times  5-10 times  More than 10 times