

# Exploring the Relationship Between Tourist Safety and Tourist Experience: Theories from Accommodation Establishments and Attractions



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**Abstract** Accommodation and lodging together with attraction management have a significant role in ensuring that tourists are offered quality experiences. In the world of contemporary tourism, it is well-known globally that tourism markets are neither relying on products nor services but rather experiences to make tourists loyal prescribers. Therefore, experience is an important aspect of tourism development and evaluation. This means that providing safe experiences is of the greatest value for the attractiveness and competitive advantage of the tourism fraternity. The purpose of this paper is to determine if there is a relationship between tourist safety and tourist experiences supported by the literature, specifically to investigate the gap between these concepts at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho. To achieve the objective of this paper, the researchers followed the qualitative directed-summative content analysis technique to interpret meaning from the content of text data published in 62 research reports from Scopus. This method adhered to the interpretive and applied content analysis as an analytical approach to produce results and put them into context. The literature shows that the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience can be supported especially to investigate the gap between these concepts at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho.

**Keywords** Tourist safety · Tourist experience · Accommodation establishment · Tourist attraction

**JEL Classifications** L83 Sports · Gambling · Restaurants · Recreation · Tourism

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# 1 Introduction

The tourist experiences are considered the cornerstone of the hospitality and tourism industry, particularly in the sectors such as accommodation and lodging and events management. These sectors, therefore, need to reconsider their important function to exceed tourists' expectations and satisfy them with quality experiences (Parsons et al., 2018). Literature (Saner et al., 2015; Fuste & Nava, 2015; World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017) designates that in the modern world, there is a worldwide observation that tourism marketplaces are no longer relying on products and services; however, they offer experiences to satisfy tourists and ensure their loyalty. Carballo et al. (2015) describe tourist experience as a collective practice that incorporates three stages: before travelling to the destination, during the holiday at a preferred destination and post-travelling, which ultimately requires clear planning to happen. Rivera (2013) refers to the experience as something personal which replicates tangible and intangible factors that affect and endure the effect of distinctive and memorable events. Championing experience, many authors (Chen et al., 2020; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Ferrari, 2020; Hernández et al., 2015; Scott & Dung, 2017; Soria, 2016; Sotiriadis & Gursoy, 2016; Vergopoulos, 2016) hold the same sentiment that high-quality experiences make people happy; hence, experience is regarded as an important aspect of tourism development and evaluation. Sernatur (2016) therefore asserts that providing quality experiences is of the greatest value for the attractiveness and competitive advantage of the tourism fraternity. The purpose of this paper is to determine if there is a relationship between tourist safety and tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho.

Mody et al. (2017) state that scientific research linked to experience appears to be in the immaturity stage in the literature of the hospitality and tourism industry. Matovelle and Baez (2018) argue that tourist experience has received in-depth research from academicians; however, the need for different approaches for measuring it from a full picture stays in infancy. Ingram et al. (2017) postulate that as there is increasing and advancing knowledge around the tourism experience and its dimensions, determinants as well as impacts, it is furthermore important to expand methods and approaches of investigation. This motivates the current paper to determine if there is a relationship between tourist safety and tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho. The following sections entail the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience.

Given the critical importance of experience, Alawi et al. (2018) underline safety as one of the factors (e.g. presented information, cultural values, entertainment) influencing experience. Barbosa et al. (2021) highlight that amongst the destination attracting factors for people who consider migrating, safety appears as the important aspect people would assess their experiences during their stay as immigrants.

Cheng et al. (2022) contend that safety is a part of significant pre-conditions for outdoor recreation and tourism growth; hence, safety makes the list of management implications to improve tourist experience. However, none of these studies explored

if there is a gap in the safety experiences of tourists when they visit an accommodation establishment and tourist attraction. It is important to investigate this gap as both accommodation establishments and attractions are part of the tourism value chain and can influence the overall experience of the tourist. Based on these studies, researchers postulated that there is a relationship between safety and tourist experience. This motivates the present paper to determine if literature supports the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience to investigate the gap between tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho.

The paper comprises sections such as literature review, safety in tourism, the impact of tourist safety at an attraction and the impact of tourist safety at accommodation establishment, methodology, discussions and conclusion.

## 2 Literature Review

Safety in tourism, the impact of tourist safety at an attraction and the impact of tourist safety at accommodation experiences are discussed in the paragraphs below.

### 2.1 *Safety in Tourism*

In the tourism industry, safety is a complex problem that is steadily rated as one of the highest matters confronting the fraternity (Edgell et al., 2008). Globally, studies have been conducted on the impact of safety on the tourism industry, of which a few are highlighted in the preceding discussion. In Europe, Varna University of Management (2021) states that there are factors (e.g. crime) impacting tourists' safety and fear of visiting the destination. In Asia, Tegar and Gurning (2018) have underlined that image linked to safety is one of the main important factors that tourists consider in the selection of a destination. Still, in Asia, Mohammed et al. (2020) have highlighted that safety is amongst factors (e.g. landscape, services) that are given negative reviews by tourists in Malaysia's Marine Park. In North America, McGee (2017) indicates that safety warning is identified as the need necessary to protect visitors in the US Natchez Trace Parkway. In Africa, Starmer-Smith (2008) highlights that government research shows that more than a third of tourists have pinpointed safety as a major concern restricting them from revisiting South Africa. Under safety, violence and crime (e.g. gun-related crimes and break-ins) are specified as types of crimes currently targeting tourists in Lesotho (Smartraveller, 2021). In addition, security is cited to be the risk that upsurges at night and during weekends (Smartraveller, 2021). Muggers in the capital city of Lesotho-Maseru target foreigners, and therefore, advice is made to people to avoid walking and driving in remote areas, especially at night (Government of United Kingdom, 2022).

In the study on young tourists' perception of fear on holiday by Mura (2010), it is found that perceptions of safety and security are considered when choosing a

destination. Mura (2010) continues to emphasise that perceptions of fear and tourist experience are said to remain in infancy. Mohamad et al. (2020) postulate that social factors such as safety and tourist experience as socio-economic carrying capacity factors are identified as aspects that should be given the extra effort and instant consideration because they are constructs showing moderate carrying capacity equal standards. These authors argue that there is a relationship between safety and tourist experience, which will further be explored in the paragraphs below.

## ***2.2 Impact of Tourist Safety at an Attraction***

Damster (2005) states that the primary objective of any attraction, such as an event, is to offer its attendees a pleasurable experience. Hence, Perić et al. (2016) postulate that event attendees are more concerned about their safety than any other kind of audience. Hence, safety at an attraction such as an event is a crucial aspect for event attendees and a significant aspect of the tourist experience. In the study of event sport tourism experience, Peric et al. (2018) propose that safety needs to be offered as an important aspect of customer value. Beard and Russ (2017) and Dashper et al. (2021) assert that attractions such as events are by nature all about experiences that should be unusual, recollected and beyond the everyday. Rutley (1997) implies that to pleasurable experience can only be attained by creating a conducive environment that directs all participants to the required behaviour. In the case of attraction such as hosting events (e.g. festivals, fairs and game concerts), it is necessary to obtain participants' voluntary compliance to the set regulations to guide the accepted and anticipated behaviour to ensure safety and pleasurable experiences (Rutley, 1997).

Nadda et al. (2020) express that customers (event attendees) are understood to attend an event after considering the unlikelihood of threats, such as terrorism, and whether an event will be safe. Bladen et al. (2012) indicate that safety is one of the aspects that can be used as a basis for posing restrictions on attraction aspects such as event design. Should safety be managed competently and effectively, the experience will never be compromised, and as a result, the attraction such as events can be hosted safely (Bladen et al., 2012). Werner and Ye (2020) proclaimed that for attractions such as events, experience and safety are amongst the forces impacting the event fraternity. Authors (Yeoman et al., 2015; Yeoman, Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummond & McMahon-Beattie, 2012) indicate that safety has been pinpointed as one of the aspects that positively impacted visitor experience when the change approach to safety was adopted for the Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts, in Somerset in the United Kingdom (UK).

### ***2.3 Impact of Tourist Safety on Accommodation Experiences***

Safety and security appear to be aspects that tourists take into consideration when deciding on the selection of accommodation (Anichiti et al., 2021). In February 1945, the recommendation was made to the Board of Directors of Hotel Association of New York City to create a new department within the organisation with the primary objective of inspiring all members to get involved in preventing accidents and creating ideas that can likely ensure more safety in the hotel operations. Also, the recommendations were intended to cut accidents and finally promote positive experiences for specific members (United States Bureau of Labour Standards, 1962). Prioritising the safety and health of hotel guests and staff, Hyatt hotels adopted new standards and procedures to reimagine the hotel experience (Gursoy et al., 2021). Furthermore, Brownell (2008) and Lashley (2017) reveal that feelings of safety are acknowledged as some of the significant aspects that women become satisfied with when their hotel experience incorporates them.

In the study conducted in Romanian by Anichiti et al. (2021) with an attempt to find tourists' experience of safety in hotels, it was found that executives of tourist accommodation sectors are required to evaluate safety needs continuously to maintain conditions and standards provided to visitors. Clifton (2019) indicates that the ability to manage safety in hospitality establishments offers experience and acts as a practice to prevent and solve the challenges that impact the hospitality fraternity. Peric et al. (2018) contend that traveller safety is one of the key aspects related to tourist experience, particularly for attractions such as sports events where sports travellers are quick to detect safety concerns when compared with non-sports travellers.

In the study on fear of crime amongst British holiday makers by Mawby et al. (2000), respondents were asked to reveal their experiences of crime during the vacation and their view of safety. In their response, harassment was rated amongst the highest experiences by tourists. Laily et al. (2020) have identified safety as one of the five factors, besides location, services and facilities, environment and ambiance, by tourists at the end of the trip evaluation of tourist experience. Lee (2015) indicates that tourist experience is influenced by safety and sustainability as one of the three (e.g. information services, recreation facilities) factors at the destination. Therefore, Le et al. (2020) propose that security can be enhanced not only to ensure better safety but also to increase tourist satisfaction.

Against this background, the study aims to determine the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience to investigate the gap between tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and tourist attractions in Lesotho.

### 3 Methodology

To achieve the objective of this paper, researchers followed qualitative directed-summative content analysis technique to interpret meaning from the content of the text data (62 published research reports), hence adhering to the interpretive paradigm (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), and applied content analysis as an analytical approach to produce results and put them into context (White & Marsh, 2006). Adopting the directed approach, researchers started analysis with theory from published research reports on Scopus using tourist safety and tourist experience as guidance for initial code (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Assuming summative design, researchers applied content analysis to count and compare content to interpret underlying context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Based on all these articles, the researchers declare that the selected articles are motivated by the article's contents' relevancy and accessibility (content validity). To do this, the researchers firstly wrote the paper and then afterwards compiled the articles' statistics in a table. Researchers, therefore, pronounce that selection was not motivated by any act of biases and any act of discrimination or any sought of continent preferences.

### 4 Results

The findings show that there is theoretical support for the relationship between safety and tourist experience to investigate the gap between tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho. Table 1 illustrates the studies in support of this theoretical relationship.

Table 1 above contains information supporting the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience. Supporting such aforementioned correlation, Vitouladiti (2014) postulates that the development of the management of natural environment and safety leads to improvement of the inclusive gained experience. Xie et al. (2021) state that safety for tourists at places visited is essential to their enjoyment and experiences. Wan (2017) indicates that at some stage in travel, unsafe feelings and experiences reduce tourists' positive temperament and wish to participate in tourism activities and destroy the quality of their travel experience. Anichiti et al. (2021) postulate that the reliable methods adopted by hotels to ensure the safety of guests have an affirmative influence on the societies residing in geographic areas where hotels are located. Henceforward, tourists may have pleasurable experiences when staying in the area. Peric et al. (2018) assert that safety and security are shown to be significant aspects of the tourist experience and a complete prerequisite for positive tourist management.

In addition to the findings from Tables 1 and 2 shows the 62 studies (conducted in different continents) that the researchers reviewed.

As shown in Table 2, of the 62 studies that were reviewed following the Scopus search, 29 (47.8%) were conducted in Europe and 16 (25.8%) were conducted in Asia.

**Table 1** Studies showing the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience

Researcher	Segment	Findings	Mean/Chi-square
Vitouladiti (2014)	Destination image marketing in tourism and tour operating	Safety leads to improvement of general attained experience	$n = 376$ ; 3.80 ( $a = 0,05$ )
Anichiti et al. (2021)	Safety and security in hotels	Reliable methods adopted by hotels to ensure the safety of guests correspondingly have an affirmative influence on the societies which are geographic areas where hotels are established; henceforward, tourists may like pleasurable experiences when staying in the area	$p = 0.9605$
Xie et al. (2021)	Travel research	Safety for tourists at places visited is essential to their enjoyment and experiences	$n = 1,830$ $p = 0.362 > 0.05$ $p < 0.01$
Wan (2017)	Travel safety	Factors (safety seekers, safety balanced, risk-takers) show diverse safety attitudes towards various aspects of the travel experience	$n = 535$ ( $p > 0.001$ )
Peric et al. (2018)	Event sport tourism	Safety has to be a component of customer value (e.g. experience)	Mean = 4.16

Source (Adapted from: Vitouladiti, 2014; Wan, 2017; Peric et al., 2018; Xie et al., 2021; Anichiti et al., 2021)

From North America, 12 (19.4%) studies were relevant to support the investigation of the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experiences. From Africa, 2 (3.2%) studies were reviewed, which is similar to the number of relevant studies from South America. Finally, only 1 (1.6%) study that was conducted in Oceania was reviewed. From the literature, the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience is supported. A study in this context has not been done in Lesotho; hence, the present study seeks to find the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience.

Based on the discussion of findings, the following theoretical framework is proposed in Fig. 1.

**Table 2** Systematic literature review of studies related to tourist safety and tourist experience

Continents	Asia	Africa	Europe	North America	South America	Oceania
Authors	Alawi et al. (2018), Albattat and Romli, (2017); Chen et al., (2020); Cheng et al., (2022); Tegar and Gurning (2018); Mohammed et al., (2020); Hsieh and Chuang (2020) Hsieh and Shannon (2005); Laily et al., (2020); Lee (2015); Mohamad et al., (2020); Mura (2010); Mohammed et al., (2020); Tegar and Gurning (2018); Xie et al., (2021); Werner and Ye (2020)	Stamer-Smith (2008); Smarttraveller (2021)	Anichiti et al., (2021); Barbosa et al., (2021); Beard and Russ (2017); Bladen et al., (2017); Brownell (2008); Carballo et al., (2015); Clifton, (2019); Cutler and Carmichael (2010); Dashper et al., ed(s), (2021); Gursoy et al., (2021); Edgell et al., (2008); Varna University of Management (2021); Government of United Kingdom (2022); Ferrari (2020) Ingram et al., (2017) Maaby et al., (2000); Nadda et al., (2020) Peric et al., (2018); Perić et al., (2016); Rivera (2013) Saner et al., (2015) Soria (2016); Sotiriadis and Gursoy (2016); UNWTO (2017) Vergopoulos (2016) Yeoman et al., (2015) Yeoman et al., (2004); Yeoman (2012); Vitouladiti (2014)	McCree (2017) Fusté and Jiménez (2015); Hernández et al., (2015) Lashley et al., (2017); Parsons et al., (2018); Rutley (1997); Tarlow (2002); United States Bureau of Labour Standards (1962); White and Marsh (2006); Wan (2017)	Matovelle and Baez (2018); Sernatur (2016)	Scott and Dung (2017)

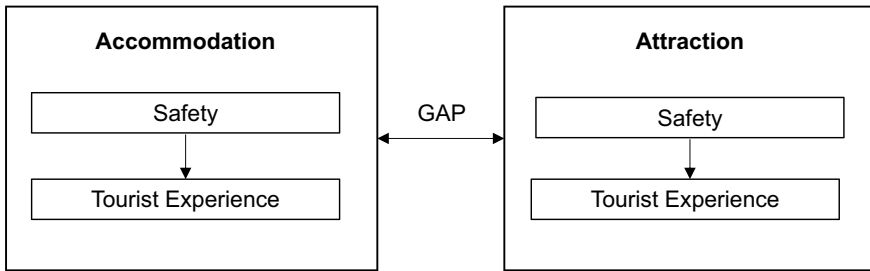
(continued)



**Table 2** (continued)

Continents	Asia	Africa	Europe	North America	South America	Oceania
No. of articles	16	2	29	12	2	1

*Source* (Authors own contribution)



**Fig. 1** Theoretical model of the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience in measuring the gap between tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and attraction attractions. *Source* (Author's own compilation).

## 5 Conclusion

This paper focused on content analysis to determine the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience to investigate the gap between tourist experiences at accommodation establishments and attractions in Lesotho. The findings of this paper found that there is theoretical support to investigate the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience to be further explored in a developing tourism destination such as Lesotho. This paper is significant to managers of accommodation establishments and tourist attractions to strategically plan and develop the safety measures to be implemented to improve experiences offered to tourists during their visits to accommodation establishments and attractions.

This paper followed qualitative content analysis; further research is encouraged to use quantitative research methods and adopt surveys to collect primary data to run statistical analysis to validate the relationship between tourist safety and tourist experience. By so doing, future research can generalise quantitative findings to the whole population from which the study sample is drawn.

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