

## Safety and Security Concerns in Nigeria's Tourism Sector: The Issue of Geotourism Destinations

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**Abstract:** Safety and security have become a source of concern for tourism stakeholders and beyond, due to their role in destination attractiveness and their capacity to affect tourists' intent to travel. Unfortunately, insecurity appears to be a common feature in many emerging economies like Nigeria, where herdsmen, religious and political violence, kidnapping, etc. affect tourism development and growth. This study aims to: comprehend the safety and security features of Ogbunike Cave; second, identify the challenges to safety and security in the cave; and third, document ways to ensure sustainable safety and security in the cave. Using in-depth interviews and secondary data, the study showed poor safety and security measures for visitors in the cave. The implication of this is that visitors' safety is not guaranteed, and this may likely affect the attractiveness of the cave and cause limited patronage. The study, woven from the perspective of protection motivation theory (PMT), suggests that the protection of visitors in tourism destinations like caves should be paramount. A safe and secure destination remains attractive, with highly competitive value; therefore, police posts, first aid boxes, emergency numbers, and log books appear useful for sustainable safety and security measures in caves. The study is novel, it appears to be the first to discuss the safety and security of Ogbunike Cave, and the implications may extend to other caves in the state and beyond. The suggestions are invaluable to tourism planners and stakeholders.

**Keywords:** *Destinations, Geotourism, Ogbunike, Security & Safety*

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### 1. Introduction and Background

Safety and security, hereinafter referred to as S&S, are major variables that affect destination attractiveness and competitiveness due to their ability to affect tourists' decisions in choosing destinations (Santana-Gallego et al., 2019). But where S&S is ignored, the destination is bound to lose or be edged out in the ever-competitive tourism market (Badiora et al., 2022). S&S in tourism has also become a source of concern to tourism stakeholders across the globe, causing it to appear in the Africa Union Agenda of 2063 with the interest of making Africa a preferred destination. Both are major factors that influence tourist's decisions (Chili, 2018; Ayorekire, 2017) towards visiting destinations. This entails that the S&S of a destination has a likelihood of determining its success or failure (Owiyo & Mulwa, 2018). Therefore, being a reoccurring debate in scholarship, it becomes necessary to look at the S&S of tourist destinations like caves in Nigeria, using Ogbunike cave as a case study. The cave was selected since it seems to be the only cave with both local and international attention and is currently on the tentative list of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) world heritage lists in Nigeria.

Ogbunike cave is located in Ogbunike community in Anambra State, and the state has other caves, but the majority of these caves are not fully developed; some attract visitors, while others appear to be less attractive (Odum, 2019) due to the government's limited attention to tourism in the region (Odum, 2020). Conversely, caves in Nigeria may have been affected by issues of S&S in the nation generally due to incessant security threats and challenges—religious crises, ethno-religious riots and killings, and kidnapping, among others—that seem to be affecting the tourism sector (Abdullahi et al., 2016). S&S is a vital element for any destination to remain competitive, attract investment, and have a positive image as a destination for travelers or tourists (Manjunatha, 2022). This makes it important for academic investigation, especially in emerging economies where tourism is listed as an agent of economic emancipation (Manjunatha, 2022).

This study is anchored on S&S in caves, using Ogbunike Cave as a case study. This study has become imperative due to little or no study addressing S&S concerns around the destination—Ogbunike cave—despite the cave receiving enormous attention in scholarship. The cave's tourist/visitor profile has been classified (Odum, 2019), its attractiveness evaluated (Odum, 2020), etc. And the literature seems silent on the issue of S&S in the cave. While a destination's S&S are vital concern to travelers and affects tourists' intent to travel, especially overseas

and unfamiliar destinations (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005, as cited in Zou & Yu, 2022; Chili, 2018), It is a current issue within tourism scholarship due to its impacts on revenue generation, image, and economic growth in most countries (Manjunatha, 2022; Manrique-de-Lara-Penate et al., 2022) that seem to perceive tourism as a means of boosting the economy, such as Nigeria (Odum, 2024). Given this backdrop, there is a need to look at available S&S features in destinations like caves in Nigeria and what the likely implications are. This is a path scarcely explored but needs to be explored for STDs, especially in ecotourism destinations in emerging economies using a destination like Ogbunike Cave. The first objective of the study is to look at S&S measures available in Ogbunike cave for visitors (geo-tourists), while the second objective is to list the challenges of S&S for visitors (geo-tourists) in the cave, and lastly, identify ways for sustainable S&S measures for visitors (geo-tourists) in the cave.

This study is essential and timely in Nigeria, as tourist' centers have become no-go areas in recent years (Ayatonye, 2022) as a result of ethnic clashes, religious extremism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and ritual killings (Umeakuka, 2022). Therefore, there is a need to look at S&S concerns around caves as part of tourist destinations in Nigeria. This has become imperative as understanding the available S&S features of ecotourism destinations is cardinal to increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of tourist destinations (Amaro et al., 2023) such as Ogbunike Cave. This study is new concerning Ogbunike cave, and probably one of the first studies to explore S&S issues in speleological studies in the southeastern region of Nigeria. The implications of the study for issues of S&S in STDs in emerging economies cannot be overemphasized. Given the inestimable value of S&S in tourism destinations, especially in the area of image-making and generating tourist traffic with economic gains, among others, a study of this nature is needed, and the value of tourism scholarship cannot be overemphasized. Moreover, the results are of practical relevance to tourism planners and stakeholders, especially in the area of planning for a destination and preparing destinations like caves for competitiveness. Therefore, in studying S&S around caves such as Ogbunike, protection motivation theory (PMT) is highly invaluable due to its ability to assess and prepare people for risk management. This article starts with a review of the literature on the concept of S&S and studies on S&S surrounding the tourism sector in Nigeria, followed by previous studies on the Ogbunike cave, highlighting the research gap for this study. The research methodology, results, discussion, and conclusions, along with the limitations of the study, were presented lastly, along with the need for further studies.

## 2. Literature Review

Safety and Security (S&S): S&S are interrelated since they connote different things (Cró et al. 2020). Meanwhile, it is worth to distinguish between the two. In the words of Nas (2015, p. 53), safety is “the state of being away from hazards caused by natural forces or human errors randomly. The source of hazards is formed by natural forces and/or human errors.” Nas further defined security as “the state of being away from hazards caused by the deliberate intention of humans to cause harm, and the source of hazards is posed by humans deliberately” (Nas, 2015, p. 53). Within the tourism context, some scholars made some clarifications. Scholars like Mansfeld and Pizam, who construed security to essentially mean the personal security of tourists and their property (i.e., belongings) against an external or intentional threat (such as crimes, terrorism, or wars), then said safety entails protection from the unintentional consequences of an unintentional act(s) (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006, as cited in Kaszas & Keller, 2022). As stated earlier, it seems safety and security are related, as the two concepts cannot be separated (Kaszás & Keller, 2022). Therefore, it becomes a bit easy to say that safety and security entail shielding tourists or visitors from any form of danger, irrespective of whether the danger is natural, human, intentional, or unintentional, to return home holistically the way, he or she started the travel. Moreover, both S&S affect tourists' decisions in choosing a destination, especially in developing regions like Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond (Zou & Yu, 2022; Chili, 2018). Although the interest here is to look at safety and security in a geo-tourism destination—Ogbunike Cave in Anambra State, Nigeria, West Africa.

Types of safety and security dangers in the natural environment: Herzog & Smith (1988) think that there are two types of S&S dangers associated with natural settings, namely, social and physical dangers. The latter comprises person-to-person attack, while the latter is danger from the physical structure or features of the [natural] environment, such as an attack by [wild] animals or the impact of weather (Poku & Kwaku, 2019). The concern of the study will not be to look at S&S issues around the cave from a non-human actor perspective,

but rather the availability of S&S features that will give visitors a sense of S&S to consider Ogbunike Cave as a safe destination for a visit and probably recommend it to others and repeat visits. Therefore, we need to look at S&S of Nigeria as a destination.

Security and safety in tourism in Nigeria: S&S is a basic concern for any tourist; they influence travelers' decisions and intentions (Kaszás & Keller, 2022) for travel plans. This means promoting tourism in Nigeria requires an adequate S&S network around tourist facilities to protect visitors. Unfortunately, some West African nations, including Nigeria, are experiencing insecurity. Boko-haram is a major security threat to tourism in the northern region of Nigeria, ethnic-related violence in Plateau, Adamawa, and Taraba, among others; unwanted killing and kidnapping, especially of students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Umeakuka, 2022); and recently, in August 2024, reports of kidnapped twenty (20) medical students filled the internet (Sunday PUNCH, 2024). All these unpleasant news and images may affect Nigeria negatively, making it look unsafe for tourists, and this has some implications. Some scholars observed that “when safety and security cues are lacking or fail to meet expectations, tourists generally view a destination as less safe” (Zou & Yu, 2022, P.1).

Similarly, there are pockets of insecurity in Anambra State, making S&S in the state appear compromised. For instance, a civilian governor in Anambra State was kidnapped in broad daylight (Anedo & Anedo, 2019). If a governor was kidnapped, what would happen to citizens and non-citizens, especially visitors? While this seems like rhetoric, it is worrisome for a state and nation that want to develop sustainable tourism. Although some scholars proffered ways out of the situation, Akingbohunge (2024) suggested the need to dialogue with terrorist groups in Nigeria, though in a careful manner. Collaboration with neighboring countries and international partners can be an effective means of reducing and disorganizing transactional criminal networks involved with kidnapping and integrating security studies into the national educational curriculum, starting from the primary to the tertiary stage.

Summarily, it is evident with copious evidence of insecurity of life and property in Nigeria. Despite government-conducted efforts, insecurity thrives. This probably affects tourism and ancillary services enormously. While different studies have tried to pigeonhole these challenges and offer solutions, these issues persist. Meanwhile, the present study tries to mirror the general outlook but shifts focus to a particular destination—Ogbunike Cave—and explores S&S concerns around it with attendant implications for similar destinations.

Previous studies on caves and Ogbunike cave: Within the southeastern region of Nigeria, caves have attracted a lot of scholarship. Enugu State has different caves, such as the Agu-Owuru cave in Ezeagu. Its tourism and tourism merits were explored using SWOT analysis. The cave has the potential to create job opportunities, improve the standard of living of the host community, and attract infrastructural development (Okonkwo et al., 2017). Onualor cave in the Ojebe-Ogene area was explored for the possibility of palaeo-environmental change in the vegetation of the site (Daniel & Ibeanu, 2020). Okpatu Cave in Udi Local Government Area (LGA) is located in Amaagu village, Ibite- Okpatu. Given the size of the entrance, evidence from oral tradition doubts if people lived in the cave, but it was used as a shield for children during the Nigerian genocide of 1967–1970, tagged the Nigeria-Biafra war (Okpoko et al., 2016). Ebonyi State has Nkpurukem and Amanchor caves. Nkpurukem cave is poorly developed or unharnessed, and visitors deface the cave, which is a grave threat to the heritage (Emeafor, 2016), Amanchor cave is equally undeveloped and lacks infrastructure due to the poor or limited political will of the government. Although the locals are highly interested in seeing the cave develop and are ready to partner with the government for such (Emeafor & Odum, 2019), this will ensure sustainability. Ogbunike Cave, located in the Ogbunike community in Anambra State, has attracted local, national, and international attention. The cave is listed on the UNESCO tentative list, making it a potential heritage site in Anambra State. The Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) has visited the cave several times, and it is listed as one of the natural heritages in Nigeria, while the Anambra government has shown some efforts to develop the cave. Scholars have studied the cave from different perspectives: the attractiveness of the cave as a potential tourist attraction (Odum, 2017); public-private partnership (PPP) as a means of developing the cave (Odum et al., 2018); traditional conservation measures as a way of conserving the cave (Odum, 2019); sectoral performance and development of rural communities in Africa, using Ogbunike cave as a case study (Oriaku, 2021).

The list of studies stated above is anchored mainly on the need to harness caves, including Ogbunike Cave, and how best to develop them to reap the full benefits of tourism, employment, and income for host communities. Conversely, none of these studies looked at the S&S dimensions of Ogbunike Cave concerning the afore-written objectives. S&S seems to concern all tourism stakeholders, including tourists (Abukhalifeh & Chandran, 2020), and it influences the decision of tourists to visit a destination or not (Chili, 2018), which means it is a cardinal component of STD in tourism destinations.

Security and safety concerns and facilities in eco-tourist destinations: Literature outside Africa shows that European Union (EU) member states are taking the issue of S&S in tourism destinations seriously; there is a positive relationship between S&S and the success of tourism destinations in Europe (Kaszás & Keller, 2022). Within emerging economies, scholars like Manjunatha list the following: intentionally dressing as the locals, the availability of local police stations and security officers, the availability of information booths and police booths, tourist offices kept open 24/7, helpline centers, security patrols at night, and security checkpoints, among others, as a means of S&S for foreign tourists' satisfaction in a destination, using the Karnataka region of India (see Manjunatha, 2022). The availability of these factors is meant to guarantee the S&S of tourists in a tourist destination, and this is likely to affect tourists' decisions. There are studies on the impact of S&S on the attitude of consumers (including tourists), and empirical evidence suggests there is a positive correlation between the S&S of a destination and the tourists' behavior, especially with an interest in making a demand for such safe and secured destinations. Based on this premise, Chili used South African townships (i.e., Cape Town) in his study and showed that 'tourists as consumers regard their safety and security as a factor that derives the choice of their destination, and it is undebatable that the demand for any destination depends squarely on how tourists as visitors perceive it in terms of safety and security' (Chili, 2018, p. 10). This shows how indispensable S&S is in the marketing and promotion of tourist destinations, of which ecotourism destinations in emerging economies like Nigeria need to assure their visitors and tourists, and makes a study of this nature in Nigeria very important for STD.

Within Nigeria, some ecotourism destinations seem to fall short in providing S&S for tourists and visitors. Badiora et al. (2022), in their study of the Osun-Osogbo geopark, revealed the insufficient status of the S&S architecture in the destination. This situation was a result of the management's reliance on a record of no threat to S&S at the destination. A similar incident was recorded in the Gurara tourist center in Niger State. Using empirical evidence from the Gurara tourist center and reviewed literature, Hayes made the following remarks: "Most tourist centers in Nigeria have not been fully designed with consideration for security and safety" (Hayes, 2021, p. 81). Given this scenario, there is a need to look at S&S facilities in Ogbunike cave to plan for STD and how data from the destination can be used for sustainable S&S planning for eco-destinations like caves within and outside Nigeria. This will be done through the lens of protection motivation theory (PMT).

Protection Motivation Theory (PMT): Protection motivation theory is credited to Rogers R.W. in 1975 and was later revised in 1983 in a bid to explain and discuss the "impact of persuasive communication on behavior, with an emphasis on cognitive mechanisms underpinning the rational to follow or not to follow a recommended behavior" (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2023, p.1). Essentially, it was one of the first theories focused on the psychological conditions explaining and discussing the tendency of people (including travelers and tourists) to protect themselves (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2023) from danger or unsafe locations or environments. The theory of PMT fits into this study because S&S is about perception, and where S&S seems to be low or fall short of the standard, tourists tend to view the destination as being less safe (Zuo & Yu, 2022), exposing visitors to danger or threat. Meanwhile, PMT is applied where a threat exists (Rogers, 1983), though initially construed to comprehend the relationship between fear and change in attitude (Rogers, 1975). According to Oakley, Himmelweit, Leinster, and Casado (2020), PMT has two main stages, which comprise threat appraisal, which has to do with the perceived risk of the threat. Here, it is composed of two elements: perceived vulnerability (the possibility of the threat occurring?) and perceived severity (how unpleasant will the impact of the threat be?). (Oakley et al., 2020). In the context of this study, it becomes relevant to ask: what is the likely possibility of a danger like a tourist falling and hitting their head on the cave wall or being kidnapped or attacked by humans or animals while visiting a destination, and what are the implications?

The answer to the above question links to the second stage, which is coping appraisal. The coping appraisal has

three (3) components: response efficacy (what or how effective will a response be? ), self-efficacy (how can one respond to it? ), and response cost (what will a response look like?). (Oakley et al., 2020). What it implies is that there is a need to prepare for a response in case of danger in the cave. Simply put, the availability of coping (S&) mechanisms tends to look at S&S facilities in the destination. Rezende, Gosling, and Castro (2023) explained TMP as a spectrum to understand how attitudes and behaviors may change when individuals (i.e., tourists) see themselves in the face of threats. PMT, when applied in tourism studies, appears as a predictive model to assess risks and prepare for them. It has been used in tourism studies in recent times, where Wang, Liu-Latres, Ritchie, and Mills (2019) explored how travelers will protect themselves during travel; Wenjia, Sanghoon, and HakJun (2020) applied PMT to understand international tourists' behavioral intentions under the threat of air pollution: A case of Beijing, China, among others. Application of PMT in ecotourism studies seems scarce, and it is ideal for this study due to the risks and possibility of dangers associated with insecurity in Nigeria, the Ogbunike community, and the cave itself; it shows the need for proper S&S features for the protection of visitors.

### 3. Research Methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this study, the reason being that it is "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Van Mannen, 1979, p. 520). Furthermore, Denzin (1989) argued that a qualitative (interpretative) research approach produces a thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, views, and knowledge and explains the intents of their actions. Conversely, it is a method that tends to be all-inclusive in understanding human experience in particular settings (Rahman, 2016). An in-depth interview was used to get details from respondents. The respondents were mainly staff of the Department of Tourism, Anambra State Ministry of Entertainment, Culture, and Tourism, six (6) in number. The six respondents include the Director of Tourism and five senior tourism officers. Male respondents constitute 67%, while female respondents are 33%; this is a mere representation of the staff that was available on the scheduled date of the interview. Meanwhile, a similar study using a small number of participants (10) has been carried out in Ghana (Noble et al., 2022). The implication of this is that S&S studies concerning caves are still limited in emerging nations like Nigeria. Secondary: it shows limited manpower working in government tourism units or departments.

The study was supported with secondary data, mainly journal publications, conference proceedings, online national daily publications, and publications of international organizations. Essentially, secondary is used in this study because it is usually used to validate data mainly collected from primary quantitative research and helps in strengthening, testing, and refuting previously collected data (Bastis, 2020). The results were presented and discussed thematically.

### 4. Results

This section presents the results based on the listed objectives, and the presentation is in prose form with thematic headings. Although the male respondents were large in number, due to the poor number of respondents during the interview, there are no observable differences in the responses of different sexes; the responses were sorted into themes for easy comprehension below.

#### **Safety and security measures for visitors in Ogbunike Cave**

Ogbunike Cave has four guides on the spot who take care of visitors. The tour guide gives visitors instructions on what to do and how to behave within and around the cave. It was reported that there has not been any known danger associated with and around the cave for visitors. When visitors choose to swim, they are always escorted to the area where they will swim; likewise, when they want to go inside the cave, the tour guide goes in with them. There is a staircase leading to the cave, and moving down to the cave is easy.

Tour guides are indigenes of the community; they guide visitors on where to follow and give directions on what to do to avoid stumbling or getting hurt while in the cave and its water. The cave is deified, so they direct visitors to what to do to avoid incurring the wrath or anger of the deity associated with the cave. For example, ladies in

their menstrual period are forbidden from entering the cave.

Visitors on no account constitute harm to another visitor in or around the cave. There is a written penalty for such an act; nevertheless, fighting has not been heard of in the cave. The tour guide(s) on the spot and Ogbunike community vigilantes are part of the major security network within and around the cave. Essentially, before entering the caves, there is a need for lighting, which is provided by the visitor or the tour guide. Beyond this, there are no other physical S&S features in Ogbunike Cave.

### **Challenges of safety and security measures for geo-tourists in Ogbunike Cave**

The major challenge of safety and security measures in Ogbunike Cave is the lack of a first-aid box in case of emergency. There is no first-aid box in situ within or around the cave; rather, emergencies require that visitors be taken out of the cave to a nearby clinic or hospital.

There is no equipped security unit or department apart from tour guides, who are indigenes of Ogbunike. Kidnappers can capitalize on a lack of such an ambush for both the visitors and tour guides that went down to the cave with visitors.

There are no safety measures for visitors or tour guides against snake bites or bee stings. Moreover, there is no helmet for visitors or tour guides to protect them from falls from the cave. This is linked to limited funding for the cave, as most administrations in the state have given meager attention to the cave and concentrated on building physical features like shopping malls, conveniences, and seats for visitors.

The above implies that, in the eventuality of an accident in the cave, there is no known immediate response. This does present the cave well as an attractive destination, as S&S is a cardinal feature for any STD, and safety includes being protected from risk or injury (Zou & Yu, 2022).

### **Sustainable safety and security measures for geo-tourists in the Ogbunike cave**

**Police post in the cave:** The presence of a police post will likely help to deter kidnappers, Fulani herdsmen, ritualists, and other criminal elements from attacking visitors who visit the cave; to some extent, tour guides need to be protected. The presence of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) will make both local and international visitors feel safer within and around the cave. This aligns with the suggestions of previous studies in India (Manjunatha, 2022).

**First aid and clinic:** a miniature clinic will be useful around Ogbunike Cave. It will be ideal to have one and station health personnel therein, as some of the respondents admitted that, in case of emergency, a nearby clinic will be of immense value. They explained that the tour guide knows nothing concerning health; they can only make calls, and something that requires a professional touch to save lives will take longer, especially if people are in the lower section of the cave. In such a situation, any time wasted may lead to death. For instance, high blood pressure due to the stress of going down and coming up can cause a fall that will need to be handled immediately to avoid excessive bleeding if there is a cut on the tourist. The role of the clinic in Ogbunike Cave cannot be overemphasized, especially in emergencies. The clinic can be useful to the host community as well. This position was recorded in the literature (Manjunatha, 2022; Badiora et al., 2022).

**Emergency number and log book:** there is a need to have emergency numbers written boldly on signposts in the cave. This number will be needed in case of any danger or threat so that visitors can know how to navigate and stay away from danger or threat pending the arrival of the rescue team.

Secondly, there is a need to log people in and out of the cave. When people come for a picnic, they are usually large in number, like over fifty (50) people. There is a need to have a book where they will write their numbers, names, and contact information in case there is a need. This log book will need to be signed out by each visitor in such a manner that there will be no case of a missing person or loss that is unrecorded.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Ogbunike Cave is one of the natural attractions in Anambra State; it has generated local, national, and international attention over the years. Scholars have explored different aspects of the cave, but none have focused on S&S, a gap covered in this study with attendant implications for STDs in Anambra State and beyond.

There is this belief that the cave is not generally under any known threat beyond the common fear of Fulani herdsmen and kidnapping, which is not peculiar to the cave. Although the S&S in the cave appears not to be sufficient, it is assumed that the tour guides, who are Indigenous, also protect visitors coming to the cave. There is this general belief that there are no serious S&S issues associated with the cave. This observation is similar to the studies of a natural destination in Osun State, the Osun-Oshogbo sacred grove, where the management believed there was no recorded threat to S&S and relied on their record of not having any threat (Badiora et al., 2022); a similar result was recorded in a related study on S&S in a monkey sanctuary in Ghana (Noble et al., 2022). Such a position needs to be reviewed, as caves can crumble and cave in with high chances of injuring visitors. Besides, an accident can happen, and that explains why it is an accident because it is not planned. Negative word-of-mouth (WOM) by visitors about the absence or limited S&S measures will affect the cave's attractiveness. Because WOM has a serious impact on consumer attitudes and, to some extent, decisions (Xu et al., 2020), there is a need to upgrade the S&S in Ogbunike Cave.

There is no safety measure for visitors and tour guides concerning using helmets to cover the heads of visitors and tour guides in this cave. Caves are open to shock or hazard where there is a case of weathering of sand and large chunks of cave walls or as a result of denudation (Onwudufor & Odum, 2015). The chances of hitting a visitor are high, but unfortunately, there is no human control over such occurrences, making helmets a necessity for tourist safety. Meanwhile, the National Speleological Society advised that a helmet is one of the key items to be in the travel box of visitors going to caves (Jones, 2016), and this is meant to be compulsory, especially for visitors, to maintain safety and security in the cave. Because any case of death in the cave might affect the cave and its number of visitors. Nevertheless, this lack of or poor S&S in tourism destinations appears to be a recurring incident within tourist destinations in Nigeria. Hayes (2021) reported a similar observation in the Gurara tourist center of Niger State. He went further to say, "Most tourist centers in Nigeria have not been fully designed with consideration for security and safety" (Hayes 2021, p. 81). The implication of this limited attention to S&S is that most tourist destinations are open to any form of danger, and this is a negative implication for a nation that wants to develop tourism, especially emerging economies like Nigeria.

It is quite commendable that personal hygiene is encouraged in the cave, as it is boldly written at the entrance that women in their menstruation should not visit the cave. This may have a relationship with the socio-cultural value attached to the cave because the cave is a deity. Disobedience to the written instructions might attract consequences for visitors and the Ogbunike community at large. Moreover, adherence to traditional rules tends to ensure S&S, as the traditional rules are part of the conservation measures of the cave (Odum, 2019). A rule of this nature might protect the cave from unforeseen consequences due to its deified status, but such rules need to be reviewed as female tourists may, in some cases, be unable to predict when the menstruation cycle will start. Additionally, there is a need for a first-aid box and clinic for visitors in tourism destinations like Ogbunike Cave, as trained personnel will be the first to attend to emergencies before taking any injured visitor(s) to the hospital.

There is a need for proper funding as it has a way of maintaining S&S in the cave. Funding will likely give room for the tour guide and cave security to have helmets for visitors and get 'clocking in and out' devices. Possibility: A circuit-camera television (CCTV) will go a long way toward monitoring visitors from a distance and identifying threats to visitors on time. An emergency telephone line for emergencies was lacking. This is similar to the findings of Badiora et al., where similar equipment was lacking in the geopark in Osun State. The absence of such equipment as CCTV and emergency lines may not be unconnected to a lack of funds as a result of limited government attention to the destination, the Ogbunike cave. Similar studies of S&S in the Karnataka region of India and a Nigerian geopark (Osun- Oshogbo site) suggested the need to improve the S&S situation in destinations using equipment like CCTV (Manjunatha, 2022; Badiora et al., 2022). Equipment of such nature can record events both day and night and help in planning security measures in the cave.

## Conclusion

This is a preliminary investigation into S&S concerns in Ogbunike Cave, looking at the availability of S&S features, the challenges of using such features if they are available, and sustainable S&S measures in the cave. Summarily, there is a need to look at S&S features in Ogbunike Cave comprehensively, as it seems to be abysmally poor or limited, although it appears to be a common observable scenario in other tourism destinations in Nigeria and her neighbors like Ghana (see Noble et al., 2023). While Ogbunike Cave is just a destination that cannot be generalized, it offers a glimpse of S&S measures available in emerging economies, and this may not be unconnected to the challenges facing the tourism sector in developing nations, such as underfunding, centralized management design of the sector, poor collaboration with stakeholders, etc. (Lambulira & Bello, 2022), specifically, government attention to tourism in the southeastern region of Nigeria appears limited, indicating why tourism development in the region is still between the exploration stage and the development stage of Butler's tourism area life cycle (TALC) model. Conversely, using PMT, it becomes relevant to factor in protective measures for visitors to tourism destinations like caves, as S&S is vital for any meaningful and beneficial STD plans.

As observed in the literature, S&S are major factors that affect the decisions of travelers and also affect travel in tourism (Santana-Gallego et al., 2019); therefore, poor S&S in Ogbunike cave may have the possibility of affecting its attractiveness, in as much as Nigeria is facing a myriad of insecurity challenges. S&S concerns in Ogbunike Cave are surmountable whenever the government (state and federal government), NTDC, and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) show concerted effort in developing and promoting the cave.

## Limitations and the need for further studies

Nigeria has innumerable and yet-to-be-identified caves; therefore, using just one cave to make general postulations on issues of S&S may not be feasible; rather, it gives a perspective that is likely obtainable in other caves, which requires further studies. Probably, a study of S&S issues in caves within the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Secondly, the government ministry in charge of tourism in Anambra State has a limited number of staff in the tourism department of the afore-written ministry. The views expressed are from the supply side of tourism, besides the limited number of staff. The views of related ministries, such as the environment, need to be explored. This implies there is a need to explore other studies from the demand side, especially geo-tourists, who can give their views on the issue of S&S as tourists decisions are usually influenced by S&S in tourist destinations (Abukhalifeh & Chandran, 2020; Chili, 2018), including caves.

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