



# **OPTIMIZING VISITORS' EXPERIENCE THROUGH BEACH SERVICE STRATEGIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BEACHES IN LAGOS STATE**

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Article history:	Abstract:
<b>Received:</b> 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 <b>Accepted:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	Beach tourism in Lagos State is characterized by intense competition between public and private tourist beaches. Although public beach services are more affordable, however, private beaches appear to draw more tourists/visitors than their public counterparts. This study was therefore undertaken to ascertain if the observed variation in the visitor-drawing ability of public and private beaches could be explained by their beach service strategies and the type of destination experience they create for their visitors. The study was a comparative research in which a descriptive survey design was adopted whereby 246 beach visitors/tourists at public and private beaches in Lagos participated in the study, drawn through the convenience sampling method. Primary data were collected through the questionnaire technique supplemented by secondary data. Research questions were analyzed with the descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviations while the null hypotheses of the study were tested using the independent sample test. The findings revealed that the services strategies (hospitality service delivery, activities, water sport equipment rentals and visitors' safety measures of private beaches were significantly better and generated more satisfying destination experience for visitors than those of the public beaches. It was recommended that management of the public beaches should introduce innovative products/ services water sport equipment rentals and beach activities in order to draw more tourists/visitors. Private beaches should maintain or improve on current available services and constantly review their offerings through regular interactions with visitors.

**Keywords:** Beach service strategies. Visitors' experience. Visitors safety. Hospitality

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The increase in the number of private and public beaches across the globe has intensified the competition that exists in the beaches and has also provided visitors with more options to choose where they relax has moved attention of visitors from the traditional public beaches to the more "visitors' friendly private beaches. This is also characteristic of the Nigerian beach recreation situation. Beach tourism marketing recognizes the importance of customer-centric services which ensure that the visitors are satisfied since their dissatisfaction can reduce patronage and revenue considerably.

The recreational usage of the beach is known to be an essential source of foreign earnings and a necessary driver of the local economy in many countries

(Houston, 2002, 2008). It therefore implies that the beach is an activity centre with numerous benefits to local and national economies. The positive impact of tourist patronage of beaches derives from the total experience of tourists with service touch points at the destination which creates memorable experience. Consequently, visitor experience plays important role in tourist satisfaction and revisit intention (Dodd, 2016).

One of the communality and features of beach recreational tourism is the competition between public and private beaches. Public beaches are owned and managed by government or their agent while private beaches are run by entrepreneurs. These rivals engage and provide their customer (visitors) with wide range of services to generate memorable experience for



repeat visit and positive word of mouth (Zehner, 2016). Deyini (2017) assert that visitors patronize a particular beach destination based on their perceived value of the place and expectation, which has attracted empirical interest of researchers. Today, there is growing literature on beach tourism and visitors behavior in developed and developing nations. (Etuk, 2019, Dop, 2018; Zehner, 2016, Dodd & Holmes, 2019). However, there is little research on comparative analysis of beach services strategies and visitors experience in private and public beaches in the Nigerian context hence our point of departure.

Furthermore, there is a general argument that supports the notion that a high variation exists between profit and non-profit organizational performance irrespective of the goal and objectives of the organization. In the context of beach tourism, private beaches appear to draw more visitors than their public sector counterparts. This is not only in Nigeria, but also in most part of the world (Tydde, 2017). The variation in patronage might be a function of the visitor experience generated by the service provision and delivery. The phenomenon finds expression in higher visitor-drawing power and revenue generation recorded by private beaches. There is now concern in the tourism sector over the current state of affairs where patronage of public beaches continue to slump despite their affordability

Tourism experts opine that tourist experience is a function of quality of tourism services provided by the tourist or hospitality organization. Accordingly, the quality and adequacy of beach services provided in terms of activities, hospitality service delivery, pricing, rentals, safety and promotion might have accounted for the variation. However, this postulation has not been empirically validated in the Nigerian context. It is against this backdrop that this study is undertaken to evaluate beach services strategies and visitor experience between private and public beaches in Lagos State.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Conceptual Clarification**

#### **2.1.1 Beach Service Strategies**

Beach service strategies are actions taken by beach management to attract and retain customers through provision of product and service to meet the needs of the tourist on the beach (Gartner & Lime, 2000). The deployment of beach service strategies are informed by changes and the trend in the globalization of tourism product and services as well as emerging new beach destinations. Today, beaches have become a

symbol of holiday tourism and a focus of the global tourism market as they are important recreational and leisure areas of the economies of coastal countries; attracting an increasingly large number of users worldwide (Vaz et al, 2009).

#### **2.1.2 Dimensions of Beach Service Strategies Hospitality Service Delivery**

Buhalis (2000) identifies hospitality service delivery by means of accommodation and catering facilities, tourism retailing and other tourist services as elements of tourism amenities. The ability to provide high-quality hospitality services in accommodation, food/beverages and entertainment is considered a measure of destination effectiveness.

Okoli (2006) defines hospitality as a cordial, warm and friendly reception and entertainment of guests with liberality and goodwill. Thus, implying that the availability of the required hospitality infrastructure, facilities and trained service personnel to receive and enhance the memorable stay of tourists at the destination. The quality of hospitality services and other manifestations of warmth and friendships explain the extent of development for a destination

#### **Organized Activities/Programmes**

Organized activities/programmes in beaches is associated with leisure and tourism with the view of conserving natural resources. Recreation in beach waters entail boating, swimming, windsurfing, waterskiing, camping, sunbathing, white water sports, scuba diving, and dinghy sailing. These leisure or recreational activities involve body contact with water at different levels hence, but adequate literature on environmental and ecological conditions under which the water-based activities would be participated in by the local or foreign recreationists (Ouma, Hayoumbe & Agong, 2014). Dodds and Holmes (2019) identify beach soccer, boating, swimming, sea viewing and beach party entertainment, etc as some of the activities available at the beach for visitor participation and enjoyment.

#### **Water Sport Equipment Rentals**

Water sport equipment is one of the ways in which the beaches management attract visitors to the beaches. This is because visitors desire to have a worthwhile experience when they visit the beach and the provision of these equipment will help the visitor enjoy their stay. The equipment include jetski, scuba, boat cruise, surfing board, air wind surfing and other equipment to help the visitors enjoy their visits to the beach. Is it important to note that not all the beaches have these equipment for rentals, however, the availability of



these equipment for rental will greatly help in pulling visitors to the beaches ( Ekeke & Ndu, 2021 ).

### **Visitor's Safety**

The success or failure of a tourism destination depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors (Ahmed, Azam & Bose, 2010). Aguilo *et al.* (2003) defined safety as the effects of accidents or hazardous forces of nature such as hurricanes, maladies, and earthquakes, while security involves anthropogenic factors, such as political instability, economic insecurity, terrorist attacks etc. Ritchie and Crouch (2000) on the other hand identified the amplifying factors as being: location, interdependencies, safety, awareness/image/ brand, cost/value. According to Ryglava *et al.*, (2015), sense of security is the most significant quality factor for a destination. In the same vein, Zhou *et al.* (2015) assert that safety and security represent a significant element in the evaluation of the competitiveness of the tourism destination.

#### **2.1.4 Concept of Beach Visitor's Experience**

Beach visitors' experience denotes how the visitors feel when they visit certain beaches and destination. This can be measured by their reviews and intention to return after every visit. When they are well satisfied, they tend to return and when they do not their chance of returning is very slim, Visitors' experience is a process of interactions between an organization and a customer over the duration of their relationship. These interactions include a customer's attraction, awareness, discovery, cultivation, advocacy along with purchase of goods and use of services. It is measured by an individual's experience during all points of contact against his/her expectations (Gazzoli, Murat, Kim, 2013).

### **Visitor Satisfaction as a Measure Visitors' Experience**

Zehner (2017) asserts that tourist satisfaction measurement is the determination of the extent to which destination products and services match or fall below visitors' expectations. The author argues that it is important to measure tourist satisfaction because tourists' patronage of a destination derives largely from tourist satisfaction. Aliman, Hashim, Wahid and Harudin (2016) aver that the primary purpose of measuring and explaining tourist satisfaction is to understand how well tourism service providers at a particular destination recognize and respond to the needs of its visitors, and to identify which elements of the destination's offer need improvement. For this reason, tourists' comments, complaints and

suggestions are an invaluable source of ideas for improvements and innovations.

### **2.3 Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development**

#### **Hospitality Service Delivery and Visitors Experience**

Dodds and Holmes (2019) examined the factors that satisfies and drives tourists to return. The objective of the study was to determine whether satisfaction levels of beach visitors could be predicted using hierarchical linear regression. The study revealed that high quality of hospitality service delivery was one of the factors contributing to visitors' overall satisfaction levels and increase their likelihood to return. Kukoyi and Iwuagwu (2015) also examined hospitality service delivery and customer satisfaction in government-owned hospitals and their private counterparts in Lagos State. The findings of the study revealed difference in the quality of hospitality services in the two organizations. However, the extent to which variation exists in the Nigerian beach tourism context need to be validated. Thus, our underlying proposition is stated thus:

H1: There is a difference in hospitality service delivery and visitors' experience between private and public beaches in Lagos State, Nigeria.

#### **Organized Activities/Programmes and Visitors' Experience**

In their studies of beach destinations activities, tourist experience and revisit intentions of visitors at the Caribbean and Mediterranean islands, Periera and Don-Santos (2017) confirmed that varying level of beach activities such as a sunbathing and picnicking, swimming, boating, nature observation, motorized and non-motorized water sports, beach volleyball and beach soccer were important elements of beach management that created a positive influence on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention to the beaches.

Christopher (2016) investigated recreational park development strategies and leisure consumption behavior in public and private recreational parks/gardens in Port Harcourt, The study revealed among other things that private recreational parks management provided more activities/programmes for visitors participation and enjoyment than those available at government-owned centres. Consequently, we state our hypothesis thus:

H2: There is a difference in organized beach activities and visitors' experience between private and public beaches in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### Water Sport Equipment Rentals and Visitors Experience

Jennings (2007) examined water based experience associated with stable, movable, and moving platform and the attendant water based sport/activities such as sailing, motorboat, surfing and windsurfing, kayaking, scuba, diving, jetski as well as their impact on leisure and recreational experience. The finding established a strong and positive correlation between the provision of adequate and high quality water sport rental services and memorable beach experience. Curso (2010) investigated beach quality management, the purpose of which was to evaluate the quality of infrastructure of five beaches in the Algarve Sotanvento of Portugal and ascertain beach users' preference. The study revealed varying levels of visitors' satisfaction with the beach physical attributes and beach equipment. Nevertheless, there is limited knowledge regarding water sports equipment rentals at private and public beaches in Lagos State. Therefore, we need to test the hypothesis that follows:

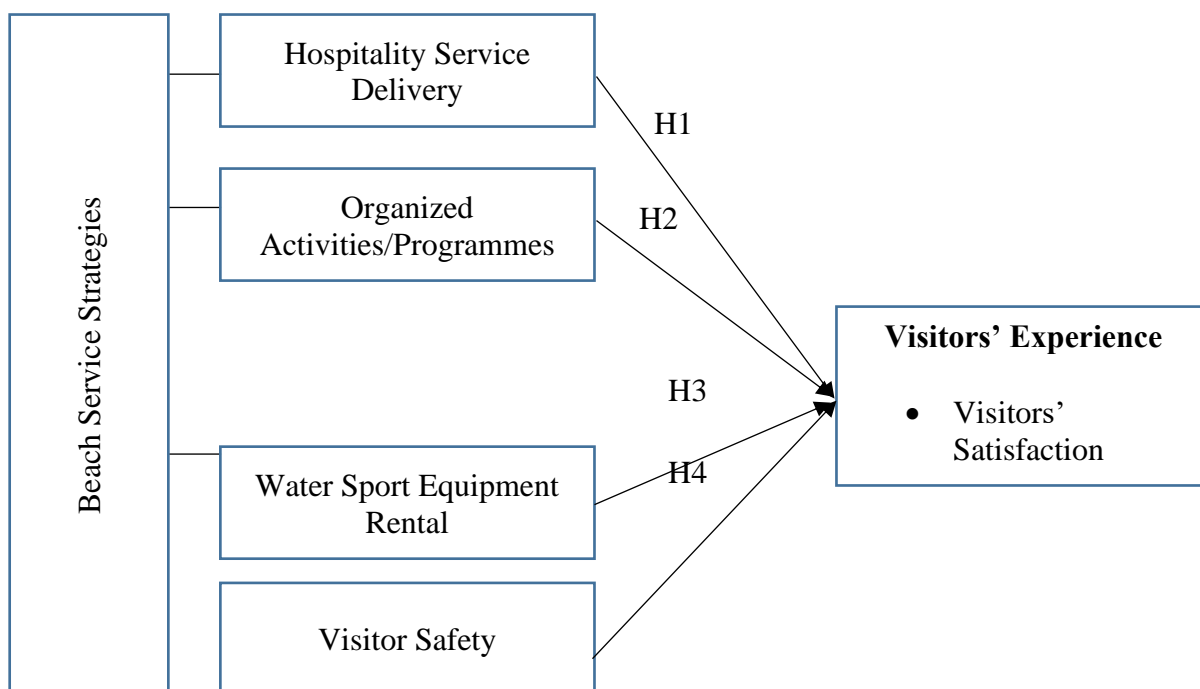
H3: There is a difference in water sports equipment rentals and visitors' experience between private and public beaches in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### Visitors' Safety and Visitors Experience

Alananzeh (2017) studied impact of safety issues and hygiene perceptions on customer satisfaction in four and five star hotels in Aqaba, Jordan. Findings revealed that there was significant difference regarding guests' satisfaction with safety measures in the hotels. Akubo (2016) carried out a study to test the proposition that customer perception of safety can significantly influence airline brands choice and loyalty. A key finding of the study was that there was no difference in perception of security concern by passengers of all the airline brands covered in the study. Nevertheless, visitors' safety and visitors experience the Nigerian beach tourism context need to be empirically substantiated, hence our hunch is stated thus:

H4: There is a difference in visitors' safety and visitors' experience between private and public beaches in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The implied interactions among the variables of the study which formed the basis of our hypotheses formation are depicted in our operational framework in fig.1.



### 3. Methodology

This study used the cross sectional survey design. The non- experimental design was used because the variables under study are not under the control of the researcher and the research intends to generate new fact without intentional manipulation of the variables.



The population of the study comprised visitors of both private and public beaches in Lagos Nigeria. However, the assessable population of this study was restricted to selected public and private beaches in Lagos, Nigeria. The reason for this selection is due to easy accessibility, safety measures as well as the drawing power of the beaches.

**Table 1 Name of Beaches and average number of visitors.**

S/N	Selected Beach	Category
1.	Tarkwa Bay Beach	Private
2.	Landmark Beach	Private
3.	Whispering Palm Beach	Private
4.	Elegushi Beach	Public
5.	La Casa Ilashe	Public
6.	Jaybee Beach Camp	Public

The convenience sampling was used in selecting respondents from the entire population. This technique was used based on the accessibility of the visitors and their willingness to participate in the study. As a result of the large and unknown population, the sample size was determined using Freund and William's formula at 0.05 level of significance whereby a sample size of 246 visitors was statically determined. Considering the sample size of 246, the researcher purposively distributed 54 copies of questionnaires in each of the selected private and public beaches in Lagos.

**Table 2: Names of Beach and sample size of each firm**

S/N	Selected Beach	Sample Size
1.	Tarkwa Bay Beach	41
2.	Landmark Beach	41
3.	Whispering Palm Beach	41
4.	Elegushi Beach	41
5.	La Casa Ilashe	41
6.	Jaybee Beach Camp	41
	Total	246

The independent variable Beach Service Strategies was measured using four dimensions. The dimensions include Hospitality Service Delivery (5 items), Organized Activities/Programme (5 items), Water Sport Equipment Rental (5 items) and Visitor Safety (5 items) while the dependent variable which is Visitors' Experience was measured using 5 items. In addition to this, four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree) was used to assess the variables under review. Furthermore, demographic data of the visitors were also collected.

Validity of the survey instrument was determined through expert opinion (Professionals in the field and academics in tourism and hospitality management). Corrective measures and modification were made where necessary to improve the quality of the instrument before they were administered. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by serving test at two different times to the same respondents and the determining the correlation of the two set of scores (test-retest reliability). Only items that give an alpha value of 0.7 and above after the Cronbach alpha test was used were considered.

**Table 3 Reliability Test**

	Variable	Reliability
Beach Service Strategies	Hospitality Service Quality	.735
	Organized Activities/ Programmes	.756
	Water Sport Equipment Rentals	.821
	Visitor Safety	.821
Visitor's Experience	Visitors Satisfaction	.721

The study utilized descriptive analytical tools (percentage, frequencies, mean score and standard deviation) the demographic variable while the difference in mean was used to analyze and compare the beach service strategies and visitors' experience in public and private beaches in Lagos. Independent sample t-test was adopted to test the hypotheses of the study.



#### 4. Analysis and Results

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Profile of Respondents**

S/No	Demographic variables	No.	Percentage
1	<b>Category of Visitors</b>		
	Foreign tourists/visitors	18	9
	Domestic tourists/visitors	189	91
	Total	207	100
2.	<b>Age of Respondents</b>		
	18 - 25	56	27
	26 - 35	73	35
	36 - 45	61	30
	46 and above	17	8
	Total	207	100
3	<b>Marital status of Respondents</b>		
	Single	136	66
	Married	61	30
	Divorced/ Separate	10	4
Total		207	100
4	<b>Gender of Respondents</b>		
	Male	130	63
	Female	77	27
	Total	207	100
5.	<b>Educational Background of Respondents</b>		
	WASC/GCE	69	33
	OND/NCE	42	20
	BSC/HND	66	32
	MBA/MSC	22	11
	PhD	2	4
	Total	207	100
6.	<b>Nationality of Respondents</b>		
	Nigerians	164	79
	Foreigners	43	21
	Total	207	100
7.	<b>Purpose of Visit</b>		
	Appreciation of nature / Leisure	118	57
	Educational excursion	56	27
	Group meeting/Celebration	33	16
	Total	207	100
8.	<b>Frequency of Visit</b>		
	First-time Visitor	65	31
	Repeat Visitor	142	69
	Total	207	100
9	<b>Travel Party</b>		
	Alone	51	25
	Families/Relatives/friends	127	61
	Organized groups	29	14



Total	207	100
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Section 1 of Table 4 above shows the information on the category of visitors. The table revealed that 18 respondents (9%) were foreign while 189 respondents (91%) were domestic. This implies that domestic respondents were of the majority.

Section 2 of Table 4 above shows the information on the age of visitors. The table revealed that 56 respondents (27%) were within 18-25 years bracket. 73 respondents (35%) were in the age range of 26-35. 61 respondents (30%) were within the age bracket of 36-45 while 17 respondents were of 46 years of age and more. This shows that youths were of the majority.

Section 3 of Table 4 above shows the information on the marital status of respondents. The table revealed that 136 respondents (66%) single while 61 respondents (30%) were married. Those of divorced/separated status were 10 respondents (4%). This result points out that majority of the respondents were single.

Section 4 of Table 4 shows the gender of respondents. 130 respondents (63%) were male, while 77 respondents (27%) were female. This information implies that majority of the respondents were male.

Section 5 of Table 4 shows the educational background of respondents: WASC/GCE (69) (33%), OND/NCE (42) (20%), B.Sc/HND (66) (33%), M.Sc/MBA (22) (11%), Ph.D (2) (4%). The above information shows that respondents with B.SC/HND were of the majority.

Section 6 of Table 4 shows the Nationality of respondents. 164 respondents (79%) were Nigerians, 45 respondents (21%) were foreigners. From the above information, it is established that respondents from Nigeria were of the majority.

Section 7 of Table 4 shows the purpose of the visit. 118 respondents (57%) came for Appreciation of nature/ leisure, 56 respondents (27%) came for educational excursion, while 33 respondents (16%) came for group meeting. This, shows that respondents who came for appreciation of nature/leisure were of the majority.

Section 8 of Table 4 shows the frequency of visit. 65 respondents (25%) were first-time visitors, while 142 respondents (69%) were repeat-visitors. From this information, it shows that majority of the respondents were repeat visitors.

Section 9 of Table 4 shows the data on travel party. 51 respondents (25%) travelled alone, 127 respondents (61%) travelled with families/relatives/friends while 29 respondents (14%) travelled with groups. From this information, it shows that majority of the respondents traveled with families/friends/relatives to the beaches.

### 4.3: Univariate Analysis

**Table 5: Data Related to Visitors' Perception of Hospitality Service Delivery at the Beaches**

n = 207

Items	Public Beaches	Private Beaches
	Mean Std.	Mean Std.
Good hotel accommodations are located around the beach	3.828 0.765	4.175 0.637
Restaurants at the beach serve good food and drinks	2.260 0.626	4.041 0.621
The locals are receptive and welcoming	3.874 1.621	4.215 0.682
Service personnel are courteous and friendly	2.120 0.883	4.348 0.719

Service provisions are fast and attentive	2.411 1.732	4. 1.297	010
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Table 5 shows the result of descriptive statistics on hospitality service items with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 outputs. The mean scores on the five items of hospitality services are greater in the private beaches than in their public counterparts, as they are above the 3.5 threshold (criterion mean score) on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This shows an appreciable agreement on the items of hospitality by most of the respondents. This suggests that good hospitality services were more emphasized at the private beaches than in the public beaches.

**Table 6: Data Related to Organized Activities and Programmes at the Beaches**

n = 207

Items	Public Beaches		Private Beaches	
	Mean Dev	Std.	Mean Dev.	Std.
Ocean viewing as an exciting and leaning opportunity	4.061	0.728	4.152	0.620
Availability of water sports	3.612	0.670	4.219	0.798
Organized beach soccer and beach volley ball games	3.710	0.791	4.454	0.813
Regular beach parties and picnicking	4.082	0.832	4.345	0.710
Horse riding always available	3.784	0.973	4.108	.885

Table 6 shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of beach activities with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 outputs. The mean scores on all the 5 items of beach activities are greater at the private beaches than at the public ones, as they were above the 3.5 threshold (criterion mean score) on five point Likert scale which is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This shows an appreciable agreement on the items of beach activities by most of the respondents. This suggests that beach activities exhibited greater intensity at the private beaches than in their public scale rivals.

**Table 7: Data Related to Responses to Water Sports Equipment Rentals**

n = 207

Items	Public Beaches		Private Beaches	
	X Std.		X Std.	
Availability of scuba services for rent at the beach	3.802 0.729		4.110 0.995	
Availability of cruise boats for rent at the beach	3.720 0.651		4.035 0.521	
Availability of surf board for rent at the beach	2.287 0.825		4.535 0.673	
Availability of air wind surf and kite surf for rent at the beach	1.945 1.645		4.237 0.289	
Availability of jet ski services for rent at the beach	3.842 0.256		4.107 1.032	

Table 7 shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of water sports equipment rental services at the beaches with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 outputs. The mean scores on all the three items of water sports equipment rentals are greater at private beaches than at the public category, as they are above the 3.5 threshold

(criterion mean score) on five point Likert scale which is acceptable. This means that most of the respondents agreed to the statements. What this demonstrates is that water sports service rentals were more emphasized at the private beaches than at the public counterparts.

**Table 8: Data Related to Visitors' Safety at the Beaches**

n = 207

Items	Public Beaches		Private Beaches	
	X	Std.	X	Std.
Feeling a sense of safety during each visit to the beach	3.572	0.821	4.091	0.637
Provision of life jacket for water-based activities	3.614	0.695	4.216	0.829
Availability and compliance with COVID-19 safety and hygiene protocols	3.812	0.720	4.087	0.774
Routine security checks at entry and exit points	3.809	0.923	4.105	0.638
Armed security personnel presence at the beach	3.742	0.881	4.041	1.031

The information in Table 8 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of visitors' safety with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 output. All the mean scores of the 5 items of visitors' safety are greater at the private beaches than at the public beaches category, as they are greater than the 3.5 threshold (criterion mean score) on five point Likert scale as regards acceptability. This implies that visitors' safety was more emphasized at the private beaches than at the public counterparts.

**Table 9: Data Related to Visitors' Satisfaction at the Beaches**

n = 207

Items	Public Beaches		Private Beaches	
	X	Std.	X	Std.
Always an enjoyable experience at the beach	4.020	.821	4.039	.718
Visiting the beach meets recreational needs	3.444	.727	4.852	.685
Beach services exceeded my expectations	2.012	.850	3.614	.728
Satisfied with money and time spent at beach	3.363	.816	4.372	.641
Satisfied with overall services at the beach	3.056	.642	4.298	.809
Willingness to return to the same beach	4.082	.451	4.438	.483

Table 9 shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of visitors' satisfaction with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.0 outputs. The mean scores on all the 6 items of visitors' safety are greater at private beaches than at the public beaches category as they are above the 3.5 threshold (criterion mean score) on the Likert 5-point scale as regards acceptability. This means that most of the respondents agreed to the statements. What this demonstrates is that private beaches generated higher visitors' satisfaction than their public counterparts.

## Bivariate Analysis

In order to evaluate the differences in beach service strategies and visitors' experience at public and private beaches in Lagos State, independent sample t-test was conducted to test the hypotheses of the study.

#### Test of Hypothesis 1

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the hospitality services and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos..

**Table 10: Group Statistics of Mean Difference in Hospitality Services at Public and Private Beaches**

Variable	Beach Ownership Structure	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation
Hospitality services	Public	207	3.533	.764
	Private	207	4.009	.665

**Table 11: Independent Sample Test**

		Levine's Test for Equality of variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
Hospitality Services	Equal variances assumed	0.69	.744	-2.113	140	.003
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.13	143.22	.003

The results presented in tables 10 and 11 indicate there is a significant difference in hospitality services delivery and visitors' satisfaction at the public and private beaches in Lagos. Public beaches exhibit (M= 3.533, Std Dev = .764) and private beaches (M = 4.009, Std = .665);  $t(143) = -2.13$ ,  $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ . This implies that the higher the score, the higher the practice of hospitality services. By the result, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative accepted which shows that hospitality services and visitors' satisfaction were more emphasized at private beaches than at their public counterparts.

#### Testing Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There is no significant difference in organized activities and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos.

**Table 12: Group Statistics of Mean Difference in Activities at Public and Private Beaches**

	Beach Ownership Structure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Activities	Public	207	3.850	.798
	Private	207	4.316	.766

**Table 13: Independent Sample Test**

		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
Activities	Equal variances assumed	8.722	.654	-4.010	140	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.010	140.08	.001

The results in Tables 12 and 13 show that a significant difference exists in activities and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos, Public beaches display (M = 3.850, Std. Dev = .798) and Private beaches exhibit (M = 4.316, Std. Dev = .766;  $T(140) = -4.010$ ,  $p = .001 < 0.05$ . Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative, which implies that organized activities and visitors' satisfaction were more emphasized at private beaches than at the public beach market scales.

#### Testing Hypothesis 3

Ho3: There is no significant difference in water sport equipment rental services provided and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos.

**Table 14: Group Statistics of Mean Difference in Water Sports Equipment Rentals at Public and Private Beaches**

	Beach Ownership Structure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Water Sports Equipment Rentals	Public	207	2.069	.735
	Private	207	4.560	.729

**Table 15: Independent Samples Test**

		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
Discounting	Equal variances assumed	.497	.439	-81.342	142	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-81.342	139.8	.000

The results in Tables 14 and 15 show that there is a significant difference in water sports equipment service rentals and visitors' satisfaction at the public and private beaches in Lagos. Public beaches exhibit ( $M = 2.069$ , Std. Dev = .735) and private beaches ( $M = 4.560$ , Std. Dev = .729;  $T(142) = -4.39$ ;  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ). By this result, the study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho3) and accepts the alternative, which states that water sports equipment rentals and visitors' satisfaction exhibited significantly higher intensity at private beaches than at the public beaches

#### Testing Hypothesis 4

Ho4: There is no significant difference in visitors' safety measures and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos.

**Table 16 & 17: Group Statistic of Mean Difference in Visitors' Safety Measures at Public Private Beaches**

	Beach Ownership Structure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Visitors' Safety	Public	207	2.597	.789
	Private	207	4.001	.719

		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
Visitors' Safety	Equal variances assumed	.814	.388	-895	136	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			-895	134.782	.001

The results in Tables 16 and 17 indicate that there is a significant difference in visitors' safety measures and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos. Public beaches display ( $M=2.597$ , Std Dev =.798) and private beaches exhibit ( $M=4.001$ , Std. Dev =.719).  $T= 139 =-895$ ;  $p=.001 < .005$ . Consequently, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative which implies that visitors' safety measures and visitors' satisfaction were more

emphasized at private beaches that at their public counterparts.

#### **5. DISCUSSION** **Difference in Hospitality Service Delivery and Visitors' Experience in Public and Private Beaches**

The study findings showed that there was a significant difference between hospitality service delivery and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in



Lagos State. Public beaches exhibit ( $M = 3.533$ , Std Dev = .764) and private beaches ( $M = 4.009$ , Std = .665);  $t(143) = -2.13$ ,  $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ . This implies that hospitality service delivery was better at private beaches than at public beaches. This finding is consistent with previous studies in other organizational and geographic contexts which showed that private sector services were more efficient and those of the public sector (Dodds & Holmes, 2019; Kukoyi & Iwuagwu, 2015; Femila, 2013). The reason the private beaches provided better hospitality services (connotes the provision of tourist accommodation, food and beverages, and entertainment than their public counterparts may be due to the profit-making motive which is low or lacking in the government-owned establishments. Besides, most government-managed assets have not been known to be profitable, either due to mismanagement, lack of funding or they were not established as commercial entities in the first place.

#### **Difference in Organized Activities and Visitors' Experience in Public and Private Beaches**

The group statistics of means difference and result of independent sample test in our analysis in tables 12 and 13 showed a significant difference in organized activities and visitors' satisfaction in public and private beaches in Lagos State. Public beaches display ( $M = 3.850$ , Std. Dev = .798) and Private beaches exhibit ( $M = 4.316$ , Std. Dev = .766;  $T(140) = -4.010$ ,  $p = .001 < 0.05$ ). This suggests that private beaches provided more activities for visitors' participation and satisfaction than their public counterparts. This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies in other organizational and geographic contexts which established a strong, positive and significant effect of beach activities on tourists' satisfaction (Dudds and Holmes, 2019; Wang, 2015; Ramachujen, 2013). Morrison (2002) explained the importance of activities in destination marketing by noting that programming involves developing special activities, events, or programmes to increase tourist spending or to give added appeal to a package or other hospitality/travel service. Activities constitute part of a destination product; these include all activities available and what visitors and tourists do during their visit at the destination.

The reason the public beaches could not match their private counterparts may be premised on the fact most public beaches are not run as revenue generating ventures as such lack the drive to create memorable destination experience for visitors through beach activities.

#### **Difference in Water Sports Equipment Rentals and Visitors' Experience in Public and Private Beaches**

The group statistics of means difference and result of independent sample test in our analysis in tables 14 and 15 showed significant difference in visitors' safety measures and visitors' satisfaction at public and private beaches in Lagos State. Public beaches exhibit ( $M = 2.069$ , Std. Dev = .735) and private beaches ( $M = 4.560$ , Std. Dev = .729;  $T(142) = -4.39$ ;  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ). This implies that private beaches provided more and better water sports equipment rental services for visitors' than their public rivals. This finding is supported by many previous findings in other organizational and geographical contexts (Dennison, 2017; Hezimm, 2016; Lerousi & Kiake, 2012). This finding is not surprising because water sport experience is one of the adventure tourism objectives of beach goers who want to test their skills or challenge nature. Most of these equipment are expensive which many government-managed beaches do not have because of poor funding or lack of sound marketing approach. In any case, private beaches generate good income from their investment in water sports equipment rental services, which also serves as a source of competitive advantage.

#### **Difference in Visitors' Safety and Visitors' Experience in Public and Private Beaches**

The group statistics of means difference and result of independent sample test in our analysis in Tables 16 and 17 showed significant difference in activities and visitors' satisfaction in public and private beaches in Lagos State. Public beaches display ( $M = 2.597$ , Std Dev = .798) and private beaches exhibit ( $M = 4.001$ , Std. Dev = .719).  $T = 139 = -895$ ;  $p = .001 < .005$ .

This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies such as Esirih (2020), Akubo (2016), Chahal and Devi (2015), Byron and Eredeson (2014), Oshonik (2014), Achumba and Akpo (2013), Nwagbosa (2012) in other tourism market contexts. The above result is understandable in the context of destination choice because tourists will be unwilling to travel to destinations where their safety cannot be guaranteed. A tourist destination characterized by terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, diseases and other health concerns cannot generate high visitor-drawing power for the destination. As noted by WTTC (2012), safety and security constitute key factors in determining the competitiveness destinations especially in the post COVID-19 era.



## **6. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study compared beach service strategies and visitors' experience between public and private beaches in Lagos State. The findings of this study are hereby summarized as follows:

- i. Private beaches provided better hospitality services and more satisfying beach experience to visitors than public beaches in Lagos State.
- ii. Private beaches provided more activities for tourists' participation and more satisfying beach experience to visitors than their public counterparts in Lagos State.
- iii. Private beaches provided better water sports equipment rentals for memorable, satisfying destination experience to visitors than their public beaches in Lagos State.
- iv. Private beaches provided more visitors' safety measures and more satisfying beach experience to visitors than public beaches in Lagos State.

As gleaned from the group statistics of means difference and result of independent sample tests in our analyses, private beaches deployed better service strategies for visitors' experience than public beaches. This may have accounted for higher patronage of private beaches than their government-owned (public) rivals. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that a significant difference exists in the service strategies and visitors' experience in private and public beaches in Lagos State.

The implication is that variation in beach experience is therefore, a function of the service strategies deployed. Effective, reliable, and adequate services are keys to enjoying sustainable patronage through tourists' satisfaction. This also implies that private beaches provided better beach services in hospitality, organized activities/programming; water sports equipment rentals and visitors' safety for satisfying and memorable experience than public beaches. We suspect that there are certain factors that may be responsible for this variation in service delivery such as the quality of management/leadership, profit-making motive, adequate financing, commitment, passion and strategic focus, which are lacking in many public organizations, including government-owned beaches. However, this should be confirmed through further research. The significant difference in their beach service strategies may therefore explain variation in visitors' patronage, and ultimately, their competitiveness in the short and long runs.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are put forth:

- i. The management of public beaches in Lagos State should introduce innovative products/ services in water sport equipment rentals and beach activities in order to draw more tourists/visitors.
- ii. The management of private beaches should maintain or improve on current available services and constantly review their offerings through regular interactions with visitors for sustainable customer retention.
- iii. The Lagos State government through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism should provide adequately fund public beaches to provide better services for memorable beach experience to visitors.
- iv. Public beaches should put in place adequate safety and security measures for beach visitors.

## **7. LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study was a comparative research into the beach service strategies and visitors' experience at public and private beaches in Lagos State, Nigeria. Our variables were limited to hospitality services, organized beach activities, water sports equipment rentals, visitors' safety measures and visitors' experience (visitors' satisfaction). Future research may consider other strategies and measures and their effect on visitors' patronage in the public and private beach market scales. In addition, more comparative studies should be carried out in other tourism and hospitality sectors for more insights and robustness. Finally, future research should also consider visitors demographic profile, destination image in the patronage of private and public beaches in Lagos State as well as the socio-economic effects of beach service strategies on the development of coastal host communities.

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