
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Safety and Security Measures at Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary in Ghana

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| ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess the safety and security measures at Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary in Ghana. The study used a case study design. Interviews and observation were used to gather data from 10 management staff. The study revealed that safety signs, a first aid box, a fire extinguisher, washrooms, dustbins, tour guides, security personnel, visitors seating and an emergency unit were available at the site. However, CCTV cameras, metal detectors and ambulances were not available. The study further established that safety and security measures at the site were generally inadequate; management did not consider the site to be under any threat since the monkeys had never caused any severe harm or injury to tourists, which would call for stringent security measures. The study recommends that tourism stakeholders should endeavour to provide CCTV cameras, metal detectors and ambulances to deal with any incidents that may arise at the destination.

| KEYWORDS

Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, destination, safety, security.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

In tourist destinations, safety and security systems are critical. According to Hosie and Pforr (2016) and Prince and Kim (2021), the tourist sector is more vulnerable than ever to accidents involving safety and security. They contend that incidents such as disasters, terrorist attacks, and all crime-related activities frequently have a direct and immediate influence on the sector. Since individuals all over the world are connected via the internet, it is feasible to effortlessly share, obtain, and distribute information. Such frequent and easy access to various forms of media and news not only alters the image of multiple places but also impacts consumer attitudes and views of these regions, ultimately influencing consumption behaviour (Prince and Kim, 2021).

As a result, the achievement or failure of a tourist destination is dependent on providing a safe and secure environment for tourists (Amir et al., 2018). Thus, tourism as a business must safeguard and assist visitors to any given place (Shi et al., 2022; Carballo et al., 2017; Karl and Schmude, 2017). This can be done by ensuring that, for example, gaps in safety and security are not tolerated in all tourist locations. Tourists are now becoming more conscious of the safety and security risks at the locations they visit. There has been a paradigm shift from real safety and security concerns among travellers to proactive behaviour. Their feeling of security has been severely tested as the frequency and intensity of disasters have increased (Fang, 2020). For obvious reasons, tourists continue to prioritise safety and security concerns in their trip planning (Agarwal et al., 2021; Mawby and Vakhitova, 2022; Zou and Mawby, 2020). On the supply side, destinations deemed dangerous have been known to lose visitor appeal and, as a result, patronage (Cohen, 2019; Lisowska, 2017). Egypt, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Tunisia, and Cameroon have experienced a decline in tourist patronage as a result of recent terrorist acts, demonstrating tourism's sensitivity to negative events (Hills, 2019; Neagu, 2017).

Throughout 2015, there have been instances that have heightened interest in the safety and security of visitors to tourist destinations. The Islamic terrorist attacks on the Tunisian beach resort and the Tunis Bardo museum in June and March 2015 are noteworthy (CNN News, 2015, cited by Poku, 2016). Another horrific episode was the November 2015 attack in Paris by Islamic extremists. In September 2015, a stampede in Saudi Arabia killed over 700 Hajj pilgrims and wounded over 900 more (CNN News, 2015, cited by Poku, 2016). In Ghana, for example, the collapse of the canopy walkway at Bunso in the Eastern region in July 2015 led to an estimated 20 people suffering varying degrees of damage (Citi FM online, 2015, cited by Poku, 2016). The biggest hazard to visitors visiting tourist attractions in many African countries, including Ghana, is safety and security (Du Plessis et al., 2017). Poku and Boakye (2019) carried out a study on safety and security at Kakum National Park in the Central Region of Ghana. The study showed that great work had been placed towards tourism safety and security problems, but there is still little literature from the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary in the Bono East Region of Ghana. As a result, the research aims at assessing safety and security measures at that Sanctuary. The study is guided by the following research question: what is the safety and security situation at the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Safety and Security

Safety and security are critical components in providing excellent tourism. The ability of a tourism location to provide a safe and secure environment for guests influences its success or failure more than any other economic activity (Peri et al., 2018). In general, safety is defined as protecting persons from unexpected events of any kind, whereas security is defined as protection against a person or item that aims to harm another (Zou and Yu, 2022). Most visitors to international tourist locations are concerned about safety and security, and these concerns have dominated study designs in recent years (Spencer and Tarlow, 2021; Wang et al., 2019) and may impact travel decisions. The idea of safety and security, according to Mazur et al. (2020), has grown into a complicated multidimensional concept with several components. Among them are political security, public safety, health and sanitation, personal data security, tourist legal protection, disaster relief, environmental security, and accurate information. Despite the fact that numerous research used the terms interchangeably, safety and security are two separate theoretical notions (Jarumaneerat, 2022; Cherkani et al., 2018; Abukhalifeh and Chandran, 2020). According to Yen et al. (2021), safety is defined as the minimization of threats/risk factors in order to safeguard visitors from harm or death. Although some individuals want thrills and danger, safety has developed as a basic human need (Çakar, 2020). Prince and Kim(2021) listed several harmful tourist practices. Animal assaults, disease transfer, natural disasters, and dangerous travel conditions are among them. In contrast, security is typically characterised as the lack of danger, risk, or uncertainty (Beirman, 2020). Prince and Kim(2021) also highlighted four categories of security crises that influence the relaxation and tourism industry: terrorism, criminality, war, and civil or political upheaval. Based on the above, a difference between the two different yet related notions may be formed. Following the experts' differences, this study considers safety to be a subset of security that focuses on preventing harm to visitors (whether from accidents or criminal activity). Getting lost in the forest, getting bitten by a snake or bug, and falling are all known safety hazards in destinations (Gstatener Lee and Weiler, 2020; Zou and Yu, 2022).

2.2 Perceptions of Safety and Security at Destinations

The decision of a visitor to visit a destination is highly impacted by their perception of safety and security (Mahatme and Mekoth, 2020). These perceptions of a destination may be undermined by a series of activities. These factors, alone or in combination, hurt perceptions of a tourist destination's safety, security, or desirability (Carino, 2017). Risk influences how people perceive a destination and whether or not they intend to visit it. It is the chance of coming across a risk when travelling or the knowledge of security and the possibility of damage while travelling (Carino, 2017). Tourists are more inclined to acquire negative perceptions of a location when they feel threatened (Carino, 2017) and vice versa. Hotel customers were more terrified of crime when it occurred in their rooms, according to Leung et al. (2018). Furthermore, travellers who have a direct or indirect encounter with a crime, for example, are more apprehensive about comparable threats (Odufuwa, 2019; Karl et al., 2020). It is commonly accepted that socio-demographic characteristics impact tourists' feelings of safety and security. In risk perception studies, for example, gender has been proven to play a substantial influence. Researchers such as Deng and Ritchie (2018), Wang et al. (2019), Karl and Schmude (2017), Gstaettner et al. (2022), and Valeri. (2022) discovered a link between gender and risk perceptions, whereas other studies (Rahman et al., 2021; Karl, 2018; Garg, 2015) discovered an insignificant link.

The previous study has found that culture and country affect risk perception and travel inclinations (Rittichainuwat et al., 2018; Chien et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2015). Mawby et al. (2021) found that European visitors to Istanbul were less concerned about security issues than respondents from other continents. On the other hand, Isaac and Van den Badem (2020) call the premise for comparing cultures in terms of risk perceptions into question, saying that such a comparison would have to include a diverse list of nations and, more crucially, the distinct sorts of dangers operationalized for each research. In the research, travel behavior-related characteristics have also been found to impact tourists' feelings of safety and security. The frequency of tourist visits is one of the most important of these. So far, empirical evidence suggests that the frequency with which visitors become acquainted with the tourist destination tends to reduce risk perceptions (Ozascilar et al., 2019). Tourists have been known to use several techniques

to prevent being victimized (or revictimized) (Tamborra et al., 2022). Different types of tourists react differently to threats. According to Valeri (2022), risk-averse individuals are more impacted by particular crises, whereas risk-tolerant individuals are less influenced by crises. Leisure visitors are more inclined than locals to incur risks while on vacation and to disregard safety precautions. This is due to a lack of knowledge and awareness about local threats as well as widespread beliefs that nothing bad could happen to them while on vacation (Santos et al., 2018). Tourists are increasingly using information search as a risk reduction strategy (Pratt and Liu, 2016; Jog and Mekoth, 2017).

2.3 Dangers at Tourist Destinations

Tourist attractions, according to the research, pose a substantially higher-than-average level of danger when compared to other sorts of attractions (Verplanken et al., 2020; Perpiña et al., 2017). To begin, tourist attractions may contain harmful animals, invisible impediments, or criminals lurking in plain sight, as well as falling limbs (Wang et al., 2019). Second, tourist sites may become fearful if they become disoriented (Estevão and Costa, 2020; Anderson et al., 2018; Baran et al., 2018, Nordbø and Prebensen, 2015). Enclosed, gloomy, and thickly covered forests may be more terrifying than soothing for visitors (Bell et al., 2022). Ko and Song (2021) classified safety and security threats in natural environments as social and physical threats. Physical risk is defined as a danger that arises from the physical structure of the environment (for example, being attacked by an animal or getting injured due to tripping over obstacles) (Stevenson and Farrell, 2018; Osland et al., 2017). Other dangers to visitors have included being assaulted by another person (Stevenson and Farrell, 2018; Cavaco et al., 2022), as well as the dread of walking on a snake, falling over a tree, being trapped in a rainstorm, or being chased by a swarm of bees (Peterson et al., 2018; Baran, 2018; Lis et al., 2019). Tourists' emotions of risk have been linked to the physical arrangement of tourist attractions (Zhang et al., 2021).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study is driven by the researchers' suggested destination safety and security construction framework. Figure 1 below is the conceptual framework of the study.

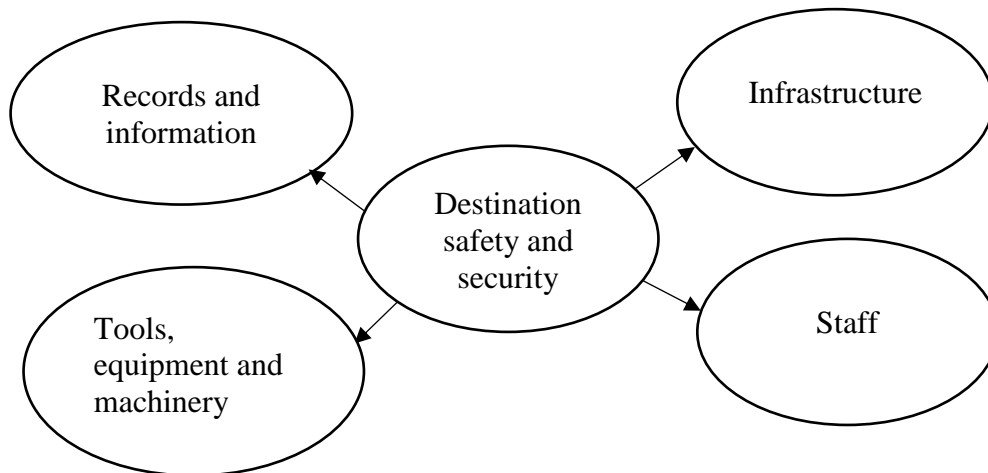


Figure 1: Destination Safety and Security Construction Framework
Source: Researchers' constructed framework

The framework splits destination safety and security construction into four interrelated dimensions: records and information, tools, equipment and machinery, infrastructure, and staff. These are then activated one by one.

The first step is the records and information. A safe and secure environment requires good records on safety and security regulations, as well as open information with all users. These would also entail the installation of signage and the education of visitors on safety and security considerations. To explore records and information, the following indicators were employed in this study: an accident book, security policy, and safety signage.

The framework also includes accessible tools, equipment, and machinery. Without the necessary tools and equipment, it is impossible to achieve safety and security. Among the elements evaluated for this study were fire extinguishers, appropriate lighting systems, CCTV cameras, metal detectors, an ambulance, and a first aid box.

Infrastructure is the third component of the safety and security architecture. In order to ensure the safety and security of this study, infrastructure such as seating areas, sanitary amenities such as washrooms and dustbins, and a sick bay must be available.

Finally, personnel are at the core of any safety and security system (Maple, 2017); safety is about, for, and depends on the staff. To that end, the staff dimension was explored using structures like tour guides, security guards, an on-site specialised safety and security officer, and personnel with first aid training.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted at the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary. It is located 3 km north of Busunya, the district capital, and includes a slave cave at Bono Manso. The Monkey Sanctuary is 4.4 km² in size and is home to black and white Colobus Mona Monkeys. The woodland also serves as a natural home for several butterfly species.



Figure 2: Map of the Buabeng Fiema Monkey Sanctuary

The case study design was adopted since the study's goal was to assess the safety and security procedures at the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary. This design allows the researchers to collect and analyse data within the context of the phenomena.

Over two weeks, primary data was gathered by direct observation. The observation method was chosen because it provided the researchers with an objective, firsthand description of reality. The participant observation method was utilised to provide evidence for items that were available as well as the explanation for those that were unavailable. A two-week stay in Buabeng-Fiema village provided a deeper perspective on the Monkey Sanctuary's safety and security status.

Furthermore, 10 management staff were interviewed under trees at the site, which was deemed convenient for the participants. The interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes for each participant. This method is appropriate since the interviewees were able to give details on what pertains to the safety and security procedures at the site. The instruments were validated by giving them to colleague lecturers in the field of safety and security to read through and make input to perfect them.

In addition, observation data was first produced and reviewed by comparing it to the Framework's predicted criteria. Deductive analysis was used to extract the fundamental themes contained in the managers' reactions from their narratives. The method was divided into six parts, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2022). The first two steps required analytical data transcription and coding. In the third through fifth rounds, themes were created and labelled within a narrower scope. The last stage was developing a story based on the research concerns that motivated the investigation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The information is delivered in two parts. The findings of the observations are provided in the first layer in the context of the suggested destination safety and security construction framework, and management viewpoints are documented in the second layer. Overall, the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary's safety and security procedures occur to be deficient. This description is inspired by the fact that nine of twenty (45%) needed elements for a safe destination were unavailable. Even among those regarded as accessible, more than half were insufficient (Table 1), either because they did not meet the projected quantities or were insufficient.

However, internal relativities existed throughout the many dimensions. While the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary scored well in terms of infrastructure, its records and information aspects were deemed to be the least accessible (Table 1). The many dimensions are presented and discussed one after the other.

Table 1: Safety and Security Measures at Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary

Safety and Security Measures	Available	Not available
Records and information		
Security policy		*
Accident record book		*
Safety and security documents		*
Safety signs	Inadequate	
Tools, equipment, and machinery		
Ambulance		*
Good lighting system	Inadequate	
CCTV cameras		*
First aid box	Inadequate	
Fire extinguisher	Inadequate	
Metal detector at the entrance		*
Infrastructure		
Washroom	Adequate	
Provision of dustbins	Adequate	
Visitors seating	Inadequate	
Emergency units	Adequate	
Sick bay		*
Staff		
Security personnel/guards	Inadequate	
Tour guides	Inadequate	
Employee identification	Well-uniformed	
Staff with training in first aid procedures	Inadequate	
Police personnel		*

Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

4.2 Records and information

According to the findings, the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary fared badly in terms of records and information on safety and security for both workers and tourists. There was no security policy, accident record book, or safety and security documentation, much alone ones that were conspicuous enough to be exhibited to personnel and visitors (Table 1). The study found just one piece of safety sign, which was mostly focussed on the visitors' receiving centre and not on the major tourist destination, where risks are more likely to occur. Furthermore, one safety sign noticed at the tourist centre was dim, damaged, or improperly positioned.

While management verified the findings, they provided a few explanations. There was no specific reason for the absence of a security policy and safety and security document, but they made a blanket guarantee of their dedication to safeguarding guests, as indicated in this comment.

Oh no, we just do not have these items... however, we make every effort to protect all visitors to our site to the best of our abilities (Management staff, male).

Management felt no need for an accident record book in response to its absence. The following statement expresses this sentiment:

We have given little thought to an accident record book because we do not record frequent or major accidents at the site. Since their introduction, the monkeys have never attacked or hurt any guests. We continually remind children who accompany their parents not to throw anything at the monkeys (Management staff, male).

4.3 Tools and equipment

In addition, the study identified a pervasive shortage of safety and security tools, equipment, and machinery in the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary. During the investigation, just two fire extinguishers and one first aid box were given as needed equipment.

Notably, the single first aid box found was in the manager's office at the main tourist receiving centre, over 100m from the main Monkey Sanctuary, where accidents and injuries are common. The first aid box included paracetamol sachets, a bottle of Gentian Violet, a pair of gloves, a plaster bundle, a bottle of spirit, and one bandage. The survey discovered that the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary lacked an ambulance, CCTV cameras, and a metal detector. Furthermore, apart from the bulbs observed at the site's entry, there were no good lighting systems at the Monkey Sanctuary, as most of them were not in good condition.

Concerning the non-availability of an ambulance, management indicated that, while it acknowledged its importance, it had no substantial influence on the operation of the Monkey Sanctuary since it had an alternative provision in the form of a stand-by vehicle.

Although we do not have an ambulance, a car has been made available to transport patients to the hospital/clinic in an emergency. On busy days, we additionally arrange for community nurses to be on-call at the location in case of an emergency (Manager, male).

Further investigation found that this car was driven by the same driver that drove workers to and from work. The car stayed on the site until the Sanctuary closed in the evening.

There were no CCTV cameras or a metal detector on the scene. The management gave no specific explanation for this but did indicate that steps had been put in place to improve safety and security at the Sanctuary. One management staff stated:

Tourists who visited the Sanctuary posed little threat or harm; hence there was no record of severe crime or terrorism. Management also underlined that tour guides and other employees at the visitor centre kept an eye out for any suspicious behaviour among visitors (Management staff, male).

4.4 Infrastructure

The study found that virtually all of the fundamental facilities for safety and security (washrooms, dustbins, emergency places, and visitor seats) were available and of appropriate quality. The sick bay was the sole facility that was not available at the time of the investigation. There were eight dustbins spotted at the public welcome area and the Monkey Sanctuary. According to the study's findings, there was also an emergency unit and a tourist centre with enough benches (about 20 benches). In terms of sanitary amenities, the Monkey Sanctuary has separate washrooms for males and females that are clean and operational.

The absence of a sick bay at the site was confirmed by a staff who stated that:

The lack of this health facility was due to the fact that no serious incidents happened at the Sanctuary (Site manager, male).

4.5 Staff

The research discovered two male security workers and one male tour guide. It was observed the workers were well-uniformed for easy identification by tourists. Moreover, some of the staff had been given first aid training, and no police personnel was found at the site during the study period. One of the management staff stated:

Yes, it's bad that you couldn't see the police personnel at the Monkey Sanctuary during this time. We normally had several here when there were going to be a lot of tourists, but for various reasons, we couldn't have them here all the time (Tour guide, male).

5. Discussion

The Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary performed better in the safety and security construction framework's infrastructure and personnel dimensions than in the tools, equipment and machinery, records, and information dimensions. Such data may be used to deliver tailored safety and security solutions. The Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary had no security policy, accident record book, or safety and security records, according to the research. This finding is in line with the finding of Imbeah and Bujdoso (2018) that there was no tourist safety policy or accident record book at the various tourist locations in the Central Region of Ghana. The management has given little thought to an accident record book because they have not experienced major accidents at the site, and since their introduction, the monkeys have never attacked or hurt any tourists. This reaction suggests using a firefighting measurement strategy; nevertheless, having an easily available instructional document on hand is required (Wilks et al., 2021). Moreso, to oversee the measures put in place to protect tourists at Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary, a record of safety and security policy is necessary.

Since no serious accidents had been reported in the past, management appeared to assume that the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary was not under reasonable threat or risk. According to one of the accounts, the fact that they had not had a big accident all these years contributed to their sense of safety. As a result, they saw no reason to provide some of the things listed in Table 1 (ambulance, CCTV cameras, and a metal detector.) since they considered that visitors visiting the Monkey Sanctuary posed little threat or damage. Surprisingly, management could make such a claim, especially because they didn't keep track of accidents. These findings are consistent with Poku and Boakye's (2019) studies that found that the safety and security situation in Kakum National Park is typically poor, with no ambulance, CCTV cameras, or metal detector present.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The study was conducted to assess the safety and security measures at Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary in Ghana. The study concludes that safety signs, a first aid box, a fire extinguisher, a washroom, dustbins, tour guides, security guards, visitors seating and an emergency unit were available at the Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary. However, CCTV cameras, metal detectors and an ambulance were not available at the site. Monkey Sanctuary's management was satisfied with the safety and security procedures put in place at the site since the monkeys had never caused any severe harm or injury to tourists that would call for stringent security measures. This study would assist tourism stakeholders and tourists in understanding the current data on the safety and security measures at Buabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary.

Furthermore, the findings of this study might serve as a baseline for a longitudinal and comparative investigation of the safety and security status of various types of destinations.

The researchers recommended that tourism stakeholders should endeavour to provide CCTV cameras, ambulances and metal detectors to deal with any incident that may arise at the destination.

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