

Exploring Strategies for Safety and Security in Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Ogun State

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ABSTRACT

Safety and security is one of the global forces that would transform the tourism and hotel industry in this new millennium. A tourist / guest who stay in the hotel industry at any of the tourist destinations could be prone to robbery, assault, rape, kidnap and fire outbreak. The aim of this paper is to find ways and means of mitigating the occurrences of incidents mentioned above. The methodology used for the research work include field survey and personal interviews conducted for the Ogun State Police Force, Chief Security Officers in five selected hotels and hotel personnel as well as hotel guests. The findings from the selected samples studied revealed that car theft and fire outbreaks especially in the kitchen / food production area sometimes occur in hotels, while kidnapping, rape and assault rarely occur. Therefore, the research came up with a triple tier systems approach as solution to safety and security issues in the hotel industry. This approach involves: training of staff in security and safety issues, use of plain police men as security backup in hotels, involvement of professional bodies such as Hospitality and Tourism Management Association of Nigeria (HATMAN), Nigerian Hotel and Catering Institute (NHCI) to be actively involved in organization of trainings, annual conferences, seminar, trade-fairs on latest technological development / equipment in security and safety matters for the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Safety, Security Strategy, Tourism, Hospitality

INTRODUCTION

According to Miles (2000), safety and security are elements of supply tourism and a fundamental condition for hosting guests. Safety is concerned with the protection of lives and properties against criminal activities. The hospitality industry's concern with safety and security has

increased greatly due to several terrorist attacks world wide as well as because of tourist's kidnappings, robberies, assault, fire outbreak and rape. Security of all types of hospitality and tourism operation is critical and disaster plan should be made for each kind of threat, personal safety of guest must be the first priority (Walker 2010).

Safety means freedom from danger or risk that arises from misuse of equipment, faulting equipment or fire outbreak among others. It is an environmental factor that must not be neglected in the planning and operation of hospitality set up or any other organization.

It is also the absence or threat to guests, staff and management of hospitality industry from medical complications, fire outbreak, electric shocks etc. Therefore, the provision of maintenance or high standard of safety is strategic to the health and well being of the community population especially the staff and also guest whose services are rendered. Also, the welfare of staff in hospitality organization especially those in the food production area are very important, if their safety is not guaranteed, management will certainly lose their competent staff through resignations. Security on the other hand is the absence of threat to staff, guests and hotel management from emotional harm as a result of violence (conflict, violent crime) etc. Security according to Enz and Masako (2002) means preserving guest's possessions and the hotel property.

In a nut shell, safety relates to human life while security deals with guests and hotel asset.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- i. To explore the strategies for safety and security in Tourism and Hospitality industry in Ogun State.
- ii. To explore new technological equipment available for hotel owners to improve security systems in their operations.
- iii. To give recommendations on safety and security measures in Tourism and Hospitality industry.

THE ROLE OF SAFETY AND SECURITY IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Since the inception of terrorist attacks in 2009 at Plateau State, safety and security has moved from the periphery to the centre with the government, private organizations and individual. Recently, the regime of President Mohammed Buhari has deployed the Nigerian Military to the Samisa forest in quest against the Boko-Haram insurgency and has also relocated the

military to Maiduguri, this is because insecurity will reduce the growth and development of every sector in the country.

In the same vein, Security is highly crucial fundamental situation of economic, social, ecological, biological and technical development and progress for every field and for the existence of society.

Tourism is one of the highest paying national economic sources around the world. Holcomb (2004) outlines a huge array of situations where insecurity has impacted in the reduction of tourist visits. Tourists seeks for holiday spots that offer them the option to de-stress, relax and enjoy, thus they avoid the regions of political, religious or social contradictions.

Protecting the lives of guests and employees, property, and assets of the business from criminal action includes design technology. These include building access, lighting of the public and external areas of the building, unsupervised parking areas, Security of the guest room doors, locks and windows, key control, and guarding of the property.

A hotel is responsible for creating the condition for the guest to exercise his or her personnel responsibility to the fullest and providing for general safety and security.

IMPACT OF SAFETY AND SECURITY ON TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

According to Bolan and Williams (2005), consumer's choice behavior is intensively shaped by a destinations image and therefore it should not be underestimated regarding the competition in the market place. This suggests that the fact that there is crisis in locations does not disturb some tourist from visiting such places. It is the opinion of the tourist from visiting such places. It is the opinion of the tourist to either cancel their visit or retain their visit to a tourist destination.

IMPACT OF SAFETY AND SECURITY ON THE TOURIST BEHAVIOUR

When there is any incident of insecurity, tourist tends to cancel their trips to such destinations, and if par-adventure tourists are already in such destinations, they move to a secure destination or abandon the location and return home (Forest, 2006).

For instance the Boko Haram insurgence in the North East Nigeria will not encourage high influx of tourist activities, the Niger-Delta militants will also reduce the activities of tourist in the two states concerned, while

vandalisation of oil pipe lines in South West could also discourage the activities of tourist in such areas as Arepo and Apapa for the fear of insecurity.

RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO SAFETY

The occupational safety and health Act (1970) (OSHA)

This Act requires all employers to provide safe equipment and safe work places for their employees and makes them virtually insurers of their safety. The Act provides severe penalties for violations and places the responsibilities for enforcing the Act in the hands of the occupational safety and health administration. This Act which became effective in April 28, 1971 makes it illegal not to have a safe establishment. This act therefore, provides that each employer has a duty to furnish the employees a place of employment that is safe and free from hazards that may cause death or serious physical harm.

The Health and Safety at work Act 1974 (HASAWA) This Act embraces all the safety legislation including the office, shops and railway premises Act 1963. The main aims of the Act are:

- To extend the coverage and protection of the law to all employees.
- To increase awareness of safety amongst all those at work – managers and all their staff.

The following are the employer's responsibilities as stated by law.

1. It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure that there is provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health and safety at work of his employees.
2. So far as is reasonably practicable as regards any place of work under the employees control, there should be maintenance of a condition that is safe without risk to health and the provision and maintenance of means to and exists from the premises that are safe and without risks.
3. Provisions and maintenance of working environment for employees that is so far as is reasonably practicable safe, without risk to health and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.

Employees responsibilities as stated by the law are: It shall be the duty of every employee while at work.

1. To take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work.
2. As regards any duty of requirements imposed on his employer or any other person to cooperate with his employer so far as is necessary to meet or comply with any duty requirement concerning health and safety.
3. Not to interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare.

THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1992

This Act is an amendment to the Act of 1974 which is more explicit by highlighting what is required under the Act. The specific requirements of these regulations for employers are:

1. To carry out a risk assessment to identify what needs to be done to comply with health and safety laws in relation to both employees and those that may be affected by the activities of the business.
2. This is also to make arrangement system as highlighted by the assessment to ensure the health and safety of employees and others.
3. To keep a record of both the risk assessment and the safety arrangement unless there are less than five employees.
4. To have emergency procedures in place.
5. To instruct staff in various aspects of safety to their jobs and in their work place.

This law is imposed on the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, Safety and welfare at work of his entire employee. The law may affect the employer if there is breach of safety rules on his part or due to negligence on his part. Also, the act enables safety representatives to be established in organizations where they have recognized trade union. The contravention of this law may lead to an establishment being fined or closed down while an employer who gets himself involved in committing certain offences through consent, or negligence can be fined or imprisoned for one or two years, while offending employees can also be prosecuted or face the same penalties.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In carrying out the survey of this research, these methods of data collection were employed:

1. Simple Observations were made in the hotels of interest (medium sizes) by listening to and looking at the environment/ Premises of the hotels to see the safety and security gadgets that are in place.
2. Oral Interviews with police officers (face to face) were conducted at the Ibara Police station.
3. Questionnaires were administered to the security officials of hotels sampled.
4. For security reasons, hotel names are not mentioned. A, B, C, D and E will only be used to represent the hotels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- a. All the five hotels admitted that fire outbreak at the food production area mostly occurred, while hotel A and C also added that car theft sometimes occurred. Meanwhile there has not been the record of terrorism, rape, kidnapping, and drowning in all the hotels under survey these hotels.
- b. There are discrepancies in the actions taken by all the hotels in case of fire outbreak. Hotel A simply will sound the alarm while guests and staff are to move out through the safe exit immediately, hotel B makes announcement to evacuate the hotel immediately or wait for further instructions, Hotel C and D calls the guests to stay calm until further announcement, while Hotel E declined.

Fire outbreak has so much devastating effect and could be experienced where sufficient measures are not taken to prevent its occurrence. This is because someone could be seriously hurt or killed during the incident, and it might also take months to rebuild the business.

- c. The physical system to ensure security in hotels according to the suggestion from Hospitality and Tourism Management Association of Nigeria (HATMAN) include the planning and design of the hotel property, access system to guestrooms, and the installation of surveillance equipment in the hotels.

HOTEL PLANNING AND DESIGN

The five 3 star hotels under studied all agreed that lighting of the whole premises is very important in ensuring adequate safety and security. Also they all admit that the CCTV camera is one of the security equipment that serves as deterrent to insecurity. Hotels D and E have it installed at the security check point, front office, restaurant, lobby, corridor and stair case, hotel A, has it installed at the cashier's office, front office and corridors,

Hotel C has it located at the front office, swimming pool, restaurant / bar and at the lobby, while hotel B only has it at the security check point and the corridors

The physical systems to ensure security in a hotel include the planning and design of the hotel property, access systems to guestrooms, and the installation of surveillance equipment. The design of the hotel including its lighting and fixtures has much impact on the design of its security system. The design of the hotel can cause limitations to the efficient use of certain security equipment. For example, it is difficult to position the CCTV if the building is circular in its design. Therefore it is recommended that the opinions of the security department or security consultant and not just that of the architect be sought when designing a new hotel or renovating existing ones.

ACCESS SYSTEMS TO GUESTROOMS

Hotels D and E makes use of the electronic access systems to gain access to their guest rooms, while hotels A,B,C still makes use of the lock and key. Restricting access to guest rooms is the key element in ensuring security in hotels. The types of access systems to guest rooms which the hotels under survey used range from lock and key to online key cards. The electronic access system is card based, i.e. instead of using an ordinary key; a guest now uses a plastic card to unlock a door and it is changed on the arrival of each guest. Key cards just like metal keys have different levels of usage. For example, the chambermaids usually use the floor master key, which is used to access the rooms for cleaning in a specific floor only. The main advantage of the electronic system is that each entry to a room is read and recorded, this means that with the key card system, it is possible for a hotel to trace the specific time a person enters the room on a particular day. It also create a secure room without trouble of replacing lost convectional keys, this therefore serves as a deterrent to attempts of unauthorized entry.

SECURITY EQUIPMENT

Hotel D and E located their close circuit televisions at the security post, front office, corridors, restaurant, bar and cashier's office Hotel A and B located their CCTV at the front office, security post and corridors, while the Hotel C located it at the swimming pool and corridors.

In ensuring the safety of hotel guests, all the hotels surveyed installed various types of security equipment on their premises. These include CCTV system, safe deposit boxes, and fire alarm system. The CCTV systems are

normally attached to automatic recorders which can reproduce any frames or pictures of the events recorded. The system acts not only as a deterrent against crime, but also produces recorded evidence. Two of the hotels visited have individual safe box in their guest's rooms, while the other three has safe deposit boxes located at the cashier's office only. The aim of the safe box is to deposit any valuables such as airline tickets, passports, foreign currency and travelers' cheques. All the Hotels instruct their receptionists to remind their guest when they check-in to keep all their valuables in the safe deposit boxes at the cashier's office or in the mini-safes provided in their rooms.

According to the Hotels, their CCTV cameras are usually located at the following places: lobby, corridors, lifts, staircase, swimming pool, restaurants, cashier's office, front desk, club, perimeter, and security check point.

- i. Loss of keys or key cards is dealt with seriously by the Hotels. The procedures carried out by the Hotels are similar. The hotel which uses the key-lock system i.e. hotel A, B, and C handles loss of keys by changing the lock and key of that particular room door. This is the most sensible and efficient method of preventing any authorized access and protecting the guests. According to Hotels D and E, if a guest loses his/her key card, the hotel would first verify the identity of the guest to confirm that he/she is a genuine guest before they override the previous card and issue the guest with a new one. There will be record of the loss of the key card in their system while the security unit is duly informed. The same procedures of overriding the lost cards are carried out in the situation that it is the hotel staff that loses the key card.
- ii. The procedures taken by the hotels under survey for cases of theft are similar. Usually they take the following actions:
 - A guest's complaint of theft will be first referred to the duty manager who together with a security officer (usually a senior officer), would check to ensure that the complaint is valid;
 - The security department will carry out an internal investigation if it is confirmed that there has been a theft;
 - A senior officer will simultaneously accompany the guest to make a police report;
 - If a suspect is caught; he/she will be handed over to the police;

- iii. If the culprit is a hotel staff member of the theft occurred because of the Hotels negligence, the hotel will normally compensate the guest in kind and sometimes monetary means, depending on the value of the properties stolen; and

STRUCTURE OF SECURITY DEPARTMENT

The structure and reporting levels of the security departments in the various hotels surveyed vary slightly. In hotel C, because it has fewer departments, the security manager reports directly to the General Manager. Whereas for Hotels A, B, D, and E, the security department is under the charge of the Director of Room Operations, who would then report to the General Manger. All four hotels surveyed maintain their own security department, i.e. the security personnel are employees of the hotels. Only a handful of hotels in Ogun State take care of their security needs. When determining whether it is necessary to maintain an internal security department, the issue of cost vs. control prevails. It is basically a management decision. From the questionnaires answered and interviews conducted, the strength of a security department ranges from ten people for Hotel C (the smallest hotel) to about twenty for Hotel A (the largest hotel in the study). The number of security staff employed depends on the size and layout of the hotel and also on the number of potential risk areas that are identified by the respective security chief. According to police officers, the shortage of labour in Ogun state has also affected the number of security personnel employed by all hotels. For example, if security manager is given the budget to employ twenty security officers but is only able to employ fourteen suitably qualified staff.

TRAINING OF SECURITY PERSONNEL

The survey disclosed that the security training undertaken by the different hotels is very similar. The person-in-charge of hotel security training is usually the head of the security department, i.e. the Director of Security or the Security Manager.

Hotels A and B conduct training courses for the hotel staff according to a security manual. During classroom training, the security officers are taught the basic security procedures and theories, while hotels C, D, and E are taught how to use the various security equipment and how to handle a situation such as a crime that as a crime that has been committed. Such as what they should do upon arriving at the crime scene. In the Police officers view, security officers should learn how to conduct proper investigations, as well as how to make arrests. They are instructed about their powers and

limitations and made to understand the discipline and professionalism expected from them.

TRAINING OF NON-SECURITY PERSONNEL

In Hotels A and C, training is conducted when new staff is hired or when the crime rate in the hotel or its surroundings rises. It can therefore be said that in these hotels is held irregularly. In Hotel B and D, training is conducted every two months and in Hotel E, monthly. It may be inferred that the length of time devoted to training in a hotel will depend on the availability of manpower and the size of the hotel.

When training the non – security staff members, the common crimes in the hotel industry are brought to their attention. Their roles in the prevention of crimes are also emphasized. In some hotels, security training forms part of the orientation program for any new staff. On-the-job training usually involves the new security officers following their patrol until they become sufficiently experienced to work independently. In addition to providing internal training, the Hotels also enroll their security and other staff for the various security courses conducted by the Nigerian Hotel and Catering Institute (NHCI). Some of the subjects conducted include security operations, basic fire fighting, first-aid and security awareness courses. One of the differences in the security training among the Hotels is the point in time that the training is given.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion Hotel safety and security cannot be overemphasised. The following safety and security measures are therefore recommended:

- Save escape routes: The free passage exits of persons in the events of fire outbreak
- Save materials: Constraint on the use of highly flammable materials in surfaces.
- Functional alarm system: All occupants must be able to hear the alarm in case of fire outbreak. Safety instructions each room must display a plan of the escape route and emergency procedures.
- Functional emergency fire fighting equipment e.g. Sprinklers, fire extinguisher, fire blanket e.t.c.
- Training: Hotels staff must be provided with suitable emergency instruction.
- Training of staff on save working habits

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