

## Effect of Tourism Safety on Destination Choice in Nairobi County, Kenya

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### Abstract

The study examined the effect of tourism safety on destination choice in Nairobi County, Kenya, guided by perceived risk theory. It was anchored on the pragmatist paradigm and used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. A concurrent explanatory design supported integration of findings to explain relationships and provide contextual insight. The target population comprised domestic and international tourists visiting Nairobi County, together with selected tourism managers. A sample of 300 tourists was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for large populations at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Tourism managers were selected purposively to provide contextual insights. Data were collected using structured questionnaires for tourists and semi-structured interview guides for tourism managers. A pilot study involving 30 respondents was conducted in a neighbouring tourism destination to test clarity, consistency, and reliability of the instruments. Content validity was established through expert review from tourism and research specialists, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients above the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Data analysis combined descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, and thematic analysis. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS to generate frequencies, means, standard deviations, and regression coefficients, while qualitative data was analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns. Findings indicate that tourism safety strongly influences destination choice. Descriptive results show high levels of agreement that tourists prefer destinations with low health risks, strong hygiene

standards, reliable health information, safe accommodation, effective emergency systems, and protection from crime such as kidnapping, assault, and theft. The overall mean score for tourism safety was 4.48, indicating strong agreement across safety dimensions. Regression analysis confirmed a statistically significant positive effect of tourism safety on destination choice ( $\beta = 0.497$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. Qualitative findings reinforced these results, showing that tourists prioritize personal safety, health protection, secure transport, emergency preparedness, and trustworthy travel arrangements when selecting destinations. Managers reported that Nairobi offers relatively good safety in key tourist zones, supported by increased policing, surveillance systems, and coordinated security efforts, although concerns remain regarding petty crime, fraud, and isolated security risks. The study concludes that tourism safety is key in shaping destination choice in Nairobi County. Safety perceptions influence both initial travel decisions and intentions to revisit or recommend destinations. The study recommends strengthening destination security systems, improving health and emergency preparedness communication, and enhancing coordination between tourism stakeholders and security agencies to improve tourist confidence and sustain destination competitiveness.

**Keywords:** Tourism Safety, Destination Choice, Nairobi County, Security, Crime

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## Introduction

Tourism remains one of the most significant economic drivers globally, contributing to employment, foreign exchange earnings, and regional development. However, the industry is highly sensitive to perceptions of safety and security, which have been shown to

exert a profound influence on traveller decision-making and destination competitiveness. In the post-pandemic era, the salience of safety in destination choice has intensified, with tourists increasingly weighing health, crime, terrorism, and general law-and-order risks

before making travel commitments. Recent scholarship confirms that safety perception is not merely a peripheral concern but a central determinant of destination image, visit intention, and loyalty. For instance, Ding and Wu (2022) demonstrated that tourism safety perception significantly shapes destination image, with negative safety associations directly eroding cognitive and affective evaluations of a place. Similarly, Bareša et al. (2023) found that in the post-pandemic context, perceived safety remains a pivotal factor in tourists' destination selection, particularly in destinations recovering from crisis. These findings align with broader evidence that risk perception whether related to crime, terrorism, or health crises moderates the relationship between destination attributes and travellers' behavioural intentions (Loi et al., 2024; Rather & Bhat, 2023).

In sub-Saharan Africa, where tourism potential is substantial yet vulnerability to security shocks is elevated, the nexus between safety and destination choice is especially acute. Safety concerns have been shown to deter a significant proportion of potential travellers; Nkosi (2022) reported that safety concerns significantly deterred 40% of potential travellers from choosing certain destinations in South Africa, underscoring the critical role of perception in decision-making (cited in *International Journal of Modern Hospitality and Tourism*, 2024). Oluwafemi et al. (2025) further reinforced this in the Nigerian context, demonstrating that insecurity negatively alters tourist perceptions and compresses destination choice sets. Beyond crime and terrorism, the literature also highlights that government responsiveness, digital security infrastructure, and visible policing shape tourists' sense of personal responsibility and normative safety expectations, which in turn influence

destination loyalty and recommendation behaviour (Alkier et al., 2023). In this regard, safety is increasingly understood as a multidimensional construct including personal security, health safety, digital security, and political stability that interacts dynamically with destination image and service quality perceptions.

Nairobi County in particular, presents a compelling case for examining these dynamics. As the capital city and the primary gateway to Kenya's wildlife and coastal tourism circuits, Nairobi is central to the national tourism strategy. Yet the city contends with a paradox: it offers world-class attractions, conferencing facilities, and hospitality infrastructure, yet faces persistent negative safety perceptions linked to petty crime, traffic insecurity, and sporadic terrorism threats. The Kenya Tourism Strategy notes that visitor feedback frequently cites "lack of security personnel," "police demanding payment," and general safety anxieties as negative perceptions undermining the destination experience (Tourism Research Institute, 2023). Forecasting models for Kenyan tourism indicate significant expected growth in tourist arrivals through 2025, but explicitly recommend that the government "beef up security to curb terrorism attacks and tribal conflicts in order to attract more tourists" (Mwangi & Mwangi, 2023).

Despite the evident importance of safety in shaping travel behaviour, there remains a paucity of recent empirical research specifically interrogating how tourism safety perceptions influence destination choice within Nairobi County. Much of the extant literature on Kenyan tourism has focused on wildlife safari circuits, coastal resorts, or national park attractiveness, leaving urban tourism safety particularly in the capital under-theorised. Moreover, while global studies have advanced sophisticated models linking risk perception to destination

image and loyalty, these frameworks have rarely been applied to Nairobi's unique urban tourism context, where safety concerns intersect with infrastructure quality, transportation organisation, and hospitality service standards. This study seeks to address that gap by examining the effect of tourism safety on destination choice among visitors to Nairobi County.

## Theoretical Review

Perceived Risk Theory was first introduced into the field of consumer behavior in 1960 by Raymond Bauer, a professor at Harvard University. Bauer (1960) argued that consumer behavior inherently involves risk because any purchasing action produces consequences that cannot be anticipated with certainty, and at least some of which are likely to be unpleasant. He defined perceived risk as a subjective phenomenon rooted in the consumer's own assessment of uncertainty and the severity of potential negative outcomes, rather than an objective measure of actual danger. This foundational insight shifted scholarly attention from objective hazards to the psychological processes through which individuals construct and respond to risk. Building on Bauer's work, Cunningham (1967) further refined the construct by conceptualizing perceived risk as the combination of two factors: uncertainty (the probability that a decision will produce unfavorable outcomes) and consequences (the severity of those outcomes if they occur). Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) subsequently operationalized the theory by identifying five distinct dimensions of perceived risk: financial, functional, physical, psychological, and social which provided a multidimensional framework for empirical measurement. Stone and Grønhaug (1993) later added a sixth dimension, time risk, and provided empirical evidence that these six dimensions collectively explain

88.8% of total perceived risk in consumer decision-making. In tourism scholarship, Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) were among the first to apply the theory to travel behavior, identifying physical equipment risk, vacation risk, and destination risk as core dimensions of tourist risk perception. Since then, the framework has been expanded to encompass political instability, disease, environmental, and cultural risk dimensions, making it one of the most widely adopted theories for explaining tourist destination choice under conditions of uncertainty.

Despite its widespread application, Perceived Risk Theory has attracted several substantive critiques, particularly in tourism research. Scholars argue that it often confuses perceived risk with uncertainty, even though uncertainty refers to unpredictability while risk involves possible negative outcomes. The theory also overemphasizes rational thinking and underplays emotions such as fear and anxiety, which can strongly shape travel decisions. Further, risk perception changes over time and is influenced by media, social interaction, and cultural context rather than remaining stable. In addition, the theory does not fully account for individual differences, as some tourists actively seek risk in activities like adventure travel. Methodological concerns also arise because self-reported risk data may not reflect actual behaviour, limiting its predictive accuracy in destination choice.

In this study, Perceived Risk Theory explains how tourists assess safety when choosing Nairobi County as a destination. Tourists evaluate multiple risk types, including physical-health risks such as crime, terrorism, and accidents; psychological risks linked to fear in unfamiliar settings; financial risks from theft or disruption; service risks tied to security quality and institutional reliability; and social risks related to how others may

view their travel choices. The theory suggests that when these perceived risks outweigh tourists' coping capacity shaped by security visibility, access to safety information, trust in authorities, and prior experience Nairobi may be excluded from consideration despite its attractions. It also captures the gap between anticipated and actual experience, where tourists often arrive with heightened concerns shaped by media but later report improved safety perceptions after visiting. This framework therefore focuses on how tourists construct and interpret safety risks during destination choice rather than measuring only objective safety conditions.

## Empirical Review

Empirical research demonstrates that perceived safety is a critical determinant of tourist destination choice, with its influence mediated and moderated by a range of psychological, situational, and destination-specific factors. In a landmark study on Chinese domestic tourism, Ding and Wu (2022) employed a mixed-methods approach combining cluster analysis, content analysis, and one-way ANOVA on data from 623 tourists in Xinjiang. Their findings revealed that tourism safety perception significantly affects the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of destination image. Tourists with high safety perception evaluated destination attributes more positively, reported higher satisfaction, and expressed stronger revisit and recommendation intentions. The study further demonstrated that safety perception shapes the stereotype image of a destination, with high-safety-perception tourists producing richer and more positive stereotype images than their low-safety-perception counterparts.

A study by Quan et al. (2023) examined safe destination choice among tourism consumers in the post-pandemic

era. Using structural equation modeling, the study found that tourists strongly preferred destinations perceived as safe and secure. Safety perceptions significantly influenced destination selection decisions and behavioral intentions, with travelers avoiding destinations associated with health, security, or crime risks. The study concluded that destination managers must prioritize safety communication to attract visitors.

Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) investigated tourists' sense of safety toward destinations from a social constructivist perspective. The study established that tourists construct safety perceptions before, during, and after travel experiences. Information from media, government advisories, social networks, and personal experiences significantly shaped perceptions of destination safety and subsequently influenced destination choice. The findings indicated that destinations perceived as safer enjoyed stronger competitive advantages in attracting tourists.

In another study, Karl (2020) analyzed travel risks and destination choice among 835 prospective tourists. The findings revealed that risk perception was among the strongest predictors of destination selection. Tourists tended to choose familiar destinations perceived as low-risk while avoiding destinations associated with security threats, political instability, health concerns, or terrorism. The study further noted that previous travel experiences moderated the relationship between perceived safety and destination choice.

Xie et al. (2021) developed a multidimensional scale for measuring tourist perceived safety and found that safety significantly influenced tourists' evaluations of destinations. The study identified physical security, health safety,

environmental safety, and social safety as critical dimensions affecting destination attractiveness and visitor decision-making. Destinations perceived as secure recorded higher visitation intentions and positive destination images.

Mwesiumo and Abdalla (2023) explored the relative importance of perceived safety, value for money, and epistemic value in destination evaluation. The study demonstrated that perceived safety was among the strongest determinants of destination preference and evaluation, surpassing several traditional tourism attractiveness factors. Tourists were more willing to select destinations that offered a sense of security regardless of other destination attributes.

In Africa, tourism safety has become increasingly important because several destinations have experienced challenges related to crime, political instability, terrorism, health emergencies, and social unrest. These factors have influenced international tourists' perceptions and destination preferences. A study conducted in Tanzania by Mwesiumo and Abdalla (2023) found that perceived safety significantly affected visitors' evaluation of tourism destinations. The study established that tourists considered safety alongside destination attractiveness and value for money when selecting destinations. Destinations perceived as safer attracted more international visitors and generated stronger intentions for future visits. Quan et al. (2023) further noted that modern tourists increasingly prioritize personal safety and health security when choosing destinations. The findings are particularly relevant to African destinations, where safety perceptions often determine tourists' willingness to visit emerging tourism markets. Destinations that communicate effective safety measures tend to perform better in attracting

tourists than those perceived as unsafe. In Nigeria, Oluwafemi et al. (2025) conducted an empirical investigation of the impact of insecurity on tourist perception of destination choice across Ondo, Oyo, and Niger States. Drawing on risk perception theory and the push-pull model, the study found that diverse forms of insecurity including political instability, violence, and security risks significantly altered tourist perceptions and compressed destination choice sets. The research emphasized that safety apprehensions dissuade visitors from traveling to areas regarded as unsafe, with insecurity negatively moderating the relationship between destination attractiveness and visit intention. In South Africa, Fakir et al. (2022) investigated visitor perceptions of safety and security at an urban tourist attraction, presenting findings at the 2022 International Business Conference. Their research confirmed that safety and security perceptions were among the most significant factors influencing tourist satisfaction and revisit intention at urban attractions. The study highlighted that visible security personnel, well-lit environments, and proactive safety communication significantly enhanced tourist comfort and destination loyalty. These findings align with broader evidence from the sub-Saharan region indicating that safety concerns deterred 40% of potential travelers from choosing certain South African destinations, with security infrastructure serving as a critical pull factor for risk-averse tourists.

In Kenya, tourism safety remains a significant factor influencing destination choice due to concerns related to terrorism, crime, political demonstrations, and travel advisories. Both domestic and international tourists consider safety when selecting destinations within the country. Mutinda and Mayaka (2012), whose findings remain widely cited in Kenyan tourism literature, examined

factors influencing domestic tourists' destination choices among Nairobi residents. The study found that personal safety ranked among the most influential factors affecting destination selection. Respondents preferred destinations perceived as secure and accessible, indicating that safety considerations significantly influenced domestic tourism decisions. Mwangi and Mwangi (2023) developed a seasonal autoregressive integrated moving average (SARIMA) model to forecast tourist arrivals to Kenya. Their forecasting model explicitly incorporated security variables, with results indicating that the government's ability to "beef up security to curb terrorism attacks and tribal conflicts" was a prerequisite for attracting more tourists. The model projected significant expected growth in tourist arrivals through 2025 but cautioned that these projections were contingent upon sustained improvements in national security infrastructure and visible policing at tourist sites. The Kenya Tourism Strategy, documented by the Tourism Research Institute (2023), synthesized visitor feedback from across the country, revealing that negative safety perceptions frequently cited "lack of security personnel," "police demanding payment," and general safety anxieties as primary deterrents to destination choice. The strategy noted that while Kenya's wildlife and coastal attractions remained globally competitive, urban destinations particularly Nairobi faced persistent challenges in overcoming negative safety stereotypes. The report recommended integrated approaches combining visible security, digital safety infrastructure, and community policing to enhance tourist confidence and expand destination choice sets to include urban tourism circuits.

The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that tourism safety significantly influences destination choice globally, across Africa, and in Kenya.

However, most global studies focus on perceived risk, health safety, and destination image, while African studies largely examine destination competitiveness and tourist arrivals. In Kenya, available studies have predominantly examined general determinants of destination choice, with limited empirical focus on how specific dimensions of tourism safety directly influence destination choice among tourists in Nairobi County. Based on the empirical literature reviewed, the following null hypotheses are proposed for testing:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Tourism Safety has no significant effect on Destination Choice of Nairobi County, Kenya

## Methodology

This study was anchored on the pragmatist paradigm and adopted a mixed-methods approach which enabled the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The study adopted a concurrent explanatory research design. The design was suitable because it enabled the researcher to assess the influence of tourism safety on destination choice through statistical analysis while also exploring participants' perceptions and experiences regarding tourism safety. The study was conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi was selected because it serves as Kenya's principal tourism and economic hub and acts as the main gateway for international visitors through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. The county hosts numerous tourism attractions, including business tourism facilities, urban attractions, and wildlife experiences such as Nairobi National Park.

The target population comprised domestic and international tourists visiting star-rated hotels in Nairobi County. Based on data from the Tourism Regulatory Authority (TRA, 2025), the

estimated tourist population during the study period was 2,279 respondents. The tourist population was calculated using hotel bed capacity, occupancy rates, average length of stay, and the anticipated data collection period. Tourists were selected as the target population because they are the primary decision-makers regarding destination choice and are directly affected by perceptions of tourism safety. Their views provided relevant information regarding the extent to which safety considerations influence destination selection decisions within Nairobi County. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. From a target population of 2,279 tourists, a sample of 340 respondents was obtained.

The study employed stratified sampling and systematic random sampling techniques. Stratified sampling was used to categorize respondents according to hotel classification levels to enhance representativeness across different categories of star-rated hotels. Thereafter, systematic random sampling was used to select tourists within the hotels. This approach minimized selection bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected from tourists using structured questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from relevant literature, tourism reports, government publications, and academic sources. The use of both data sources provided a strong foundation for understanding tourism safety and destination choice. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from tourists. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly

Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument was designed to capture respondents' perceptions regarding tourism safety and destination choice.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for safety and security in selected star-rated hotels. The interviews provided in-depth information regarding tourism safety issues and their perceived influence on tourists' destination decisions.

A pilot study was conducted in Eldoret City, which shares similar tourism and hospitality characteristics with Nairobi. The pilot involved 40 tourists and 5 hotel managers, representing approximately 10% of the actual study sample. Validity was established through face validity, content validity, and construct validity. Face and content validity were assessed through expert review by university lecturers who examined the instruments for relevance, clarity, and coverage of the study objectives. Construct validity was assessed using exploratory factor analysis to determine whether questionnaire items adequately measured the intended constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable for establishing internal consistency of the measurement scales (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The reliability analysis confirmed that the questionnaire items consistently measured tourism safety and destination choice constructs.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Interview transcripts were coded and categorized into themes related to tourism safety and destination choice. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages,

means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and perceptions regarding tourism safety. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the influence of tourism safety on destination choice.

The regression model adopted was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = Destination Choice

X<sub>1</sub> = Tourism Safety

β<sub>0</sub> = Constant

β<sub>1</sub> = Regression Coefficient

ε = Error Term

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Statistics for Tourism Safety

The study sought to find out respondents' views on the effects of tourism safety on destination choice. The results in Table 1 present the descriptive statistics for the tourism safety statements. Tourists prefer destinations with low health risks, as a substantial majority agreed (89.0%), while 7.3% disagreed and 3.7% were neutral. The high mean score (M = 4.35) and relatively low standard deviation (SD = 1.02) indicate agreement and general consistency in perceptions, highlighting the importance of minimizing health risks in destination choice. Tourists also prefer destinations that adhere to health safety standards, with an overwhelming proportion agreeing (94.7%), few neutral (3.0%), and few disagreeing (2.4%). The high mean (M = 4.53) and low (SD = 0.70) reflect strong emphasis on formal health safety compliance. This shows that health-related safety considerations are a major priority in destination selection.

Tourists prefer destinations where food safety and general hygiene are maintained, as reflected by very high agreement (93.3%), few neutral responses (4.3%), and minimal disagreement (2.3%).

The high mean score (M = 4.58) and low variability (SD = 0.74) demonstrate strong consensus on the importance of hygiene standards. Tourists also prefer destinations that provide information on health safety, with 92.7% agreeing, 4.7% neutral, and 2.6% disagreeing. The mean score (M = 4.48) and standard deviation (SD = 0.76) indicate consistent positive perceptions regarding accessible health information. This indicates that both hygiene practices and availability of health information are critical components of perceived safety.

Tourists prefer destinations that focus on preventive health measures such as vaccination initiatives, with 87.3% agreeing, 8.0% neutral, and 4.7% disagreeing. Although the mean score is high (M = 4.53), the relatively larger standard deviation (SD = 2.51) reflects greater variation in opinions. Tourists also prefer destinations where personal safety is guaranteed, with 92.0% agreeing, 4.3% neutral, and 3.6% disagreeing. The high mean (M = 4.55) and low (SD = 0.80) indicate strong and consistent agreement on the importance of personal safety. This shows that while preventive health measures are valued, assurance of personal safety remains consistently important across respondents.

Tourists prefer destinations free from kidnapping, with 89.3% agreement, 5.0% neutral, and 5.6% disagreement. The mean score (M = 4.46) and standard deviation (SD = 0.91) reflect agreement with moderate consistency. Similarly, destinations free from assault recorded 90.0% agreement, 6.0% neutral, and 4.0% disagreement, with a mean of 4.50 and SD of 0.86. These findings indicate that protection from serious personal threats is a key consideration in destination choice.

Tourists prefer destinations free from pickpocketing, with 86.0% agreement, 7.0% neutral, and 7.0%

disagreement. The mean ( $M = 4.37$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD = 1.03$ ) show positive perceptions with slightly higher variability. Destinations where personal property is safe also received strong agreement (90.0%), with a mean of 4.53 and  $SD$  of 0.86. This indicates that both major and minor forms of crime influence perceptions of safety, with property protection remaining highly important.

Tourists prefer destinations with low cases of fraudulent activities, with 88.6% agreement, 6.7% neutral, and 4.7% disagreement. The mean score ( $M = 4.42$ ) and  $SD$  (0.92) indicate consistent perceptions. Destinations with measures against any form of harm or risk also recorded high agreement (91.0%), with a mean of 4.48 and  $SD$  of 0.79. This reflects strong support for comprehensive safety measures that address multiple types of risk.

Tourists prefer destinations that provide information on emergency services, with 91.6% agreement, 4.7% neutral, and 3.7% disagreement. The mean ( $M = 4.51$ ) and  $SD$  (0.78) indicate consistent valuation of emergency information. Safe accommodation facilities recorded the highest agreement (95.3%), with a mean of 4.62 and  $SD$  of 0.69. This indicates that access to emergency support and safe lodging facilities are central to tourists' sense of security.

Tourists also prefer destinations that monitor the safety of facilities (93.3% agreed), adopt environmentally safe practices (89.7% agreed), and have disaster response plans (90.0% agreed), with mean scores ranging from 4.41 to 4.54 and low variability. Regular inspection practices (89.0% agreed) and minimal environmental hazards (87.3% agreed) were also highly rated.

Destinations with emergency and evacuation plans recorded 91.0% agreement, with a mean of 4.52 and  $SD$  of

0.77. This indicates that continuous monitoring, environmental safety, and preparedness measures are integral components of overall destination safety.

The overall mean score of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.60 demonstrate strong and consistent agreement that tourism safety significantly influences destination choice. The high mean scores and low dispersion confirm that tourism safety is a dominant and decisive factor shaping tourists' destination choice. This reflects a unified perception that safety considerations strongly guide travel decisions.

Tourists prefer destinations that prioritize comprehensive safety and risk management because safety is a key factor in travel decision-making. Health-related aspects such as hygiene, low disease risk, and access to medical services strongly influence destination choice, especially where health concerns are prominent. Tourists are more likely to visit destinations with clear health protocols and reliable safety information. Personal safety is also critical, with tourists favoring destinations that are free from crime, harassment, and other security threats. Visible security measures and effective law enforcement increase confidence and willingness to travel. In addition, emergency preparedness and safe accommodation facilities contribute to perceptions of security by assuring tourists that risks are well managed. Environmental conditions further shape destination choice, as clean and well-maintained environments are often associated with better safety and stronger management systems. Poor environmental quality can reduce tourists' trust and willingness to visit.

Overall, tourists consider safety as a combination of health, personal security, emergency readiness, accommodation safety, and environmental conditions, all of which

jointly influence destination preference and choice.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics for Tourism Safety

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
I prefer destinations;	%	%	%	%	%		
With low health risks.	5.0	2.3	3.7	31.0	58.0	4.35	1.02
That adhere to health safety standards.	0.7	1.7	3.0	33.7	61.0	4.53	0.70
Where food and general hygiene is adhered	1.3	1.0	4.3	25.0	68.3	4.58	0.74
That provide information on health safety.	1.3	1.3	4.7	33.0	59.7	4.48	0.76
That focus on health preventive measures for vaccines.	1.7	3.0	8.0	29.0	58.3	4.53	2.51
Where personal safety is guaranteed.	1.3	2.3	4.3	23.7	68.3	4.55	0.80
Free from kidnapping.	2.3	3.3	5.0	25.0	64.3	4.46	0.91
Free from assault.	2.0	2.0	6.0	24.3	65.7	4.50	0.86
Free from pick pocketing.	4.3	2.7	7.0	23.7	62.3	4.37	1.03
Personal properties are safe.	2.0	2.3	5.7	20.3	69.7	4.53	0.86
With low cases of fraudulent activities.	3.0	1.7	6.7	27.3	61.3	4.42	0.92
That have measures against any form of harm or risk.	1.0	2.3	5.7	29.3	61.7	4.48	0.79
That provide information on emergency services.	0.7	3.0	4.7	28.3	63.3	4.51	0.78
With safe accommodation facilities	1.0	1.0	2.7	26.0	69.3	4.62	0.69
That monitors safety of facilities.	1.0	1.7	4.0	29.0	64.3	4.54	0.74
That have adopted practices that make the environment safe.	1.0	1.3	8.0	32.0	57.7	4.44	0.78
That have plans to respond to natural disasters.	1.0	2.0	7.0	35.0	55.0	4.41	0.79
Which has adopted regular inspection practices.	1.0	3.0	7.0	31.7	57.3	4.41	0.83
With minimal environmental hazards.	1.7	2.3	8.7	31.3	56.0	4.38	0.87
That have emergency and evacuation plans.	1.0	1.7	6.3	26.3	64.7	4.52	0.77
<b>Overall mean</b>						4.48	0.60

Source: Data Analysis (2025)

An open-ended question asked participants, “Which safety precautions did you consider before travelling?” The responses, coded from Q1–Q300, revealed that tourists take a wide range of safety measures, placing strong emphasis on personal security, health protection, and overall preparedness to ensure a safe and secure travel experience.

Participants highlighted concerns related to “*physical and personal safety*” (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q20), noting the importance of “*police presence especially with low cases of theft*” (Q54) and ensuring “*safety from natural hazards, terrorism and general insecurity*” (Q21, Q22, Q24, Q26, Q27, Q29). Many respondents stressed the need “*to stay in a safe and secure place*” (Q31, Q34), preferring environments that are “*free from assault*” (Q35, Q37, Q39, Q40) and “*well-guarded and secured with police officers*” (Q47), as well as destinations characterized by a “*low crime rate*” (Q49, Q51, Q53, Q55). Concerns about crime further extended to “*low cases of kidnapping*” (Q13) and “*low cases of fraud*” (Q14), while others preferred “*destinations that have safety measures and preparedness*” (Q15) and considered “*political stability and safety of the city center*” (Q44) as essential.

In addition to physical safety, health considerations were prominent, with participants emphasizing “*health safety*” (Q43, Q45, Q48, Q52) and reporting preventive actions such as “*took vaccines*” (Q8, Q16, Q17, Q36, Q42, Q46, Q57, Q58). Tourists also underscored the importance of basic well-being during travel, citing “*safe accommodation*” (Q4, Q52) and “*food safety*” (Q52) as key factors in destination choice.

Trust in travel arrangements emerged as another important precaution, with some respondents stating “*I always book with travel agents whom I trust*” (Q7), reflecting reliance on

reputable intermediaries to minimize risks. Furthermore, the “*safety standard of the local transport*” (Q31) was identified as a critical consideration, indicating that mobility and infrastructure safety influence travel decisions.

Tourists also demonstrated awareness of the importance of communication and preparedness, as reflected in actions such as “*informing family and friends of my location*” (Q50) and ensuring “*reliable communication*” (Q59). Finally, individual preparedness measures were evident, with participants noting practical steps like “*warm clothes to protect from cold weather*” (Q56), showing attentiveness to environmental conditions and personal comfort during travel.

Interviews with managers sought to explore how they perceive the safety of Nairobi County for tourists. Interviews revealed that safety in Nairobi is generally considered moderate to good, with improvements noted in key tourist areas. Manager 1 reported, “*Tourism safety in Nairobi County can be rated as moderate and improving. While the county faces security challenges, significant efforts by security agencies and stakeholders, including increased police patrols, surveillance systems, private security involvement, and collaboration with tourism stakeholders, have enhanced safety for visitors, particularly in major hotels and parks.*”

Manager 2 observed, “*Safety is relatively good, especially in locations frequently visited by tourists. Measures implemented by hoteliers and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) ensure that visitors remain safe within their facilities.*” Manager 3 noted, “*Tourism safety and security in Nairobi County is moderate to good. Security has improved in major tourist areas, hotels, and airports, though some parts of the city still require caution, particularly at night.*”

Manager 4 rated Nairobi 5 out of 10, stating, *“On a scale of 1–10, Nairobi can be rated a 5 due to issues such as smuggling, especially in the Central Business District, and high population density in smaller estates.”* Manager 5 highlighted, *“Nairobi is relatively safe with proper precautions, but the city faces significant security challenges. Tourism safety depends on location, awareness, and visitor behavior. Core tourist circuits and urban areas like Nairobi City are generally safe, whereas border or high-risk regions present more security concerns.”*

Manager 6 mentioned, *“Overall safety is good, although there is a minimal risk of terrorism in Nairobi and the coastal areas.”* Manager 7 emphasized, *“Safety is moderate, supported by the presence of high-profile security and the tourist police unit monitoring major destinations.”* Manager 8 described Nairobi’s safety as, *“Nairobi’s safety and security can be considered top-notch. Although not perfect, there have been minimal cases of tourists facing security threats, and the tourism industry has been highly effective in ensuring guest safety during transit, at attractions, and in accommodations.”*

The interviews further identified common safety concerns reported by tourists. Managers 1, 3, 4, and 5 noted, *“Petty crimes, such as pickpocketing, bag snatching, phone theft, and occasional harassment by street vendors, particularly in crowded areas, are frequently encountered.”* Managers 1, 3, and 5 highlighted, *“Taxi-related scams and fraud, including fake tour operators, overpriced fares, and counterfeit currency exchanges, were also noted as recurring issues.”*

More serious crimes, such as carjacking, armed robbery, and kidnapping, were reported by Managers 2, 5, 6, and 7, with isolated terrorism threats noted by Managers 5 and 7. Manager 8 additionally noted, *“Non-crime-related*

*risks, such as injuries during touristic activities, road accidents, wildlife attacks, and loss or damage of personal belongings, also affect tourists.”* Overall, these findings suggest that while Nairobi offers relatively safe experiences in designated tourist areas, visitors remain exposed to minor and occasional major risks, highlighting the need for preventive measures and guidance.

### **Descriptive Statistics for Destination Choice**

The study assessed the views of the respondents on destination choice using nine statements rated on a five Likert scale. Table 2 presents the results. Majority of respondents (80.3%) agreed that they choose destinations based on recommendations from family and friends, while 9.0% were neutral and 10.6% disagreed. The relatively high mean score (4.11) indicates general agreement, while the standard deviation (1.17) suggests moderate variability in reliance on close social networks when making destination choices.

Most respondents (71.0%) agreed that online reviews influence their destination choice, 14.7% were neutral, and 14.3% disagreed. The mean score of 3.89 reflects agreement, though to a lesser extent than family and friends, while the standard deviation (1.23) indicates some variation in how strongly tourists’ value online reviews. A large proportion of respondents (82.6%) agreed that past experience influences their destination choice, with 9.0% neutral and only 8.4% disagree.

This statement recorded one of the highest mean scores (4.22), and the standard deviation (1.07) indicates relatively high consensus, underscoring the importance of prior experience in destination choice. Just over three-fifths of respondents (60.7%) agreed that social media influencers affect their destination

choice, while 18.0% were neutral and 21.3% disagreed. The mean score of 3.57 indicates moderate agreement, and the higher standard deviation (1.35) suggests considerable variation in opinions regarding the credibility and influence of social media influencers.

Most respondents (57.4%) agreed that recommendations from travel agencies influence their destination choice, 21.3% were neutral, and 21.3% disagreed. The mean score of 3.60 indicates moderate agreement, while the standard deviation (1.31) reflects noticeable differences in respondents' reliance on travel agencies. More than half of the respondents (52.0%) agreed that destination marketers influence their destination choice, while 21.3% were neutral and 26.6% disagreed. The mean score of 3.45 suggests marginal agreement, and the relatively high standard deviation (1.36) indicates diverse perceptions of the effectiveness of destination marketing efforts.

A majority (55.0%) of respondents agreed that tourism websites influence their destination choice, 23.7% were neutral, and 21.4% disagreed. The mean score of 3.55 indicates moderate agreement, while the relatively high standard deviation (SD = 1.30) shows noticeable variation in responses. This reflects mixed levels of trust and reliance on official tourism websites, with some tourists using them as key sources of information while others remain uncertain or less influenced.

Fewer respondents (47.0%) agreed that guidebooks influence their destination choice, with 24.3% neutral and 28.7% disagreeing. This lower level of agreement indicates that guidebooks play a less significant role in influencing decisions compared to other information sources, reflecting a reduced reliance on traditional and static sources of travel information.

The mean score of 3.28 indicates a position close to neutral, and the high standard deviation (1.39) suggests wide variation in attitudes, possibly reflecting declining reliance on traditional guidebooks. Just over half of the respondents (51.0%) agreed that travel blogs influence their destination choice, 23.7% were neutral, and 25.4% disagreed. The mean score of 3.41 suggests modest agreement, while the standard deviation (1.37) indicates substantial diversity in how travel blogs are perceived and used.

The overall mean score of 3.68 with a standard deviation of 0.87 indicates that respondents generally agreed that various information sources influence their destination choice, though the strength of influence varies by source. Personal and experiential factors particularly; past experience and recommendations from family and friends, exert the strongest influence and show higher consensus. In contrast, institutional and digital promotional sources such as destination marketers, guidebooks, and travel blogs exhibit weaker influence and greater variability in perceptions. The results suggest that interpersonal trust and direct experience play a more decisive role in tourist destination choice than formal marketing channels.

Overall, respondents agreed that multiple information sources influence their tourist destination choice, as reflected by an overall mean score of 3.68. Interpersonal and experiential sources, particularly past experience and recommendations from family and friends, attracted the strongest levels of agreement and higher mean scores, suggesting greater consistency in their influence. Digital sources such as online reviews, tourism websites, and travel blogs also showed moderate agreement, although with greater variability in responses. In contrast, more formal or

traditional sources, including destination marketers, travel agencies, and guidebooks, attracted comparatively lower agreement and higher dispersion, indicating mixed perceptions among

respondents. Tourists tend to rely more on trusted personal networks and prior experiences than on institutional or promotional information when making destination choices.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics for Destination Choice

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
<b>I visit/choose destinations:</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
Based on recommendations from family and friends.	7.3	3.3	9.0	32.0	48.3	4.11	1.17
Based on recommendations from online reviews.	8.0	6.3	14.7	31.0	40.0	3.89	1.23
Based on past experience/visit.	4.7	3.7	9.0	30.3	52.3	4.22	1.07
Based on recommendations from social media influencers.	13.3	8.0	18.0	30.0	30.7	3.57	1.35
Based on recommendations from travel agencies.	9.3	12.0	21.3	23.7	33.7	3.60	1.31
Based on recommendations from destination marketers.	11.3	15.3	21.3	21.3	30.7	3.45	1.36
Based on recommendations from tourism websites.	9.7	11.7	23.7	24.0	31.0	3.55	1.30
Based on recommendations from guidebooks.	16.0	12.7	24.3	21.0	26.0	3.28	1.39
Based on recommendations from travel blogs.	13.7	11.7	23.7	21.7	29.3	3.41	1.37
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.87</b>

Source: Data Analysis (2025)

Qualitative data collected from questionnaires using open ended questions elicited responses on the attributes that would make them recommend a destination to others. Respondents were coded using the questionnaire numbers (e.g., Q1–Q300). Qualitative data collected from questionnaires using open-ended questions elicited responses on the attributes that would make them recommend a destination to others and factors that influence a decision to revisit a destination.

The question on “What attributes would make you recommend a destination to others?” Elicited responses that several

key factors emerged as influential in shaping tourists’ decisions to recommend a destination. Participants frequently referred to “accessibility and cost” (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q8, Q11, Q12, Q19, Q20, Q23, Q25, Q26, Q30), alongside “unique/good experience and past memories” (Q32, Q33) and “excellent service and pricing” (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q7, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q19, Q21, Q23, Q24, Q31, Q34, Q48, Q56, Q60), indicating that affordability and quality of experience are central to recommendations.

Cultural and social aspects were also emphasized, with respondents highlighting “unique cultural experiences, heritage, iconic places and the warmth

and welcoming nature of the Kenyan people” (Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q29, Q31, Q35, Q42, Q43, Q45, Q47, Q50, Q57, Q60) and “great impeccable culinary cuisines and traditional economics”, reflecting the importance of culture and gastronomy.

Environmental and climatic attributes were also identified, including “good weather/climate” (Q4, Q5, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q12, Q13, Q53), “natural beauty” (Q14, Q34, Q50), “beautiful/scenery places” (Q27, Q49, Q51, Q53, Q55, Q60), and “environment” (Q30, Q51), as well as opportunities for “relaxation” (Q24).

Safety considerations remained critical, with participants noting “safety” (Q4, Q5, Q17, Q18, Q42), “security and adherence to security alerts and vigilance” (Q17, Q30, Q37, Q40, Q45, Q58), and “feeling safe from crime, harassment and political instability, with well-managed tourist sites and clear security measures” (Q31), including “secure accommodation at the hotels” (Q38).

Tourism infrastructure and attractions further shaped recommendations, with respondents mentioning “quality services” (Q39, Q45, Q48, Q59), “accommodation facilities” (Q7, Q57, Q58), “park (animal viewing)” (Q6, Q43, Q54), “variety of attractions” (Q22), “attractions” (Q44), and “scenery” (Q48). Additionally, some participants identified “business opportunities” (Q28) as a motivating factor, indicating that both leisure and economic considerations influence the likelihood of recommending a destination to others.

With regard to the question on “What factors would influence your decision to revisit a destination?” the responses alluded that several elements play a significant role, with past experiences and personal connections emerging as key determinants. Many participants highlighted “previous/past

memories and experience” (Q1, Q2, Q7, Q8, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q27, Q29) and “personal connections” (Q31, Q33, Q37, Q39, Q48, Q50, Q60), indicating that positive emotional ties and established relationships strongly motivate tourists to plan repeat visits.

Economic considerations were also prominent, with respondents highlighting “pricing, cost and affordability” (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q18, Q35, Q49, Q60), as well as “available financial resources” (Q28) and “value” (Q26), suggesting that financial capacity and perceived worth of the experience significantly influence revisit intentions. Accessibility was also mentioned, with participants noting “accessibility” (Q48) as an important enabling factor.

Tourism experience and destination offerings played a major role, as tourists emphasized “variety of tourism products, attractions, culture, good hospitality and food” (Q2, Q4, Q49, Q59, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q19, Q31, Q36, Q44, Q45, Q46, Q51, Q53, Q59), along with “entertainment” (Q22) and “cultural experience” (Q22, Q51), reflecting the importance of diverse and enriching experiences. Additionally, factors such as “enjoyable” (Q43) and “hospitality” (Q55, Q58) further reinforced the appeal of the destination.

Safety and stability were critical considerations, with participants noting “peace and security” (Q4, Q21, Q23, Q24, Q35, Q53, Q57, Q58) and “safety” (Q4, Q5, Q22), indicating that a secure environment is essential for encouraging repeat visits. This was complemented by the importance of “service quality” (Q4, Q31, Q42, Q45, Q48, Q52, Q54) and the overall “ambience” (Q9, Q25), which contribute to comfort and satisfaction.

Environmental and destination-specific attributes were also influential, including “good weather/climate” (Q4, Q10, Q22, Q31, Q34, Q40, Q47), “nature”

(Q31, Q34), *“unique/beautiful scenery”* (Q34, Q35, Q46, Q47), and *“wildlife”* (Q38), all of which enhance the attractiveness of the destination. Other contextual factors included *“location”* (Q11), *“destination image and reputation”* (Q17), and *“recommendations from social media”* (Q40), showing the role of perception and external influence.

Finally, some tourists indicated motivations beyond repeat familiarity, such as *“exploration of new destinations”* (Q20), while others considered *“business opportunities”* (Q6), demonstrating that both personal preferences and practical considerations shape decisions to revisit a destination.

Interviews with Managers to examine the factors that make Nairobi a preferred destination elicited responses. Manager interviews revealed that tourists are attracted by a combination of urban and natural experiences. Manager 1 said,

*“Tourists choose Nairobi County because it offers a unique combination of urban life and natural attractions. Nairobi National Park allows visitors to experience wildlife within a capital city. The city is a major transport and business hub with good hotels, conference facilities, shopping malls, museums, and cultural sites. Nairobi also acts as a gateway to other tourist destinations in Kenya, enhancing convenience for travelers. Its cultural diversity, entertainment options, and accessibility further strengthen its appeal to tourists.”*

Manager 2 stated, *“Nairobi is the most preferred destination due to its strategic location, availability of key amenities for tourists, and well-developed infrastructure compared to other towns.”*

Manager 3 highlighted, *“Nairobi is attractive because it combines wildlife, city life, culture, and business opportunities. Tourists enjoy Nairobi National Park, quality hotels, shopping malls, conference facilities, and convenient transport*

*connections through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.”*

Manager 4 added, *“Nairobi is known for its unique hospitality, car arts, and nightlife. It is the only capital city with a national park, making it a distinctive destination. Nairobi is also recognized for the ‘Big Five,’ diverse cuisines, and vibrant lifestyle.”*

Manager 5 remarked, *“Nairobi is a beautiful and attractive destination offering a variety of safari tours, hot air balloon experiences, rich cultural heritage, and value for money. The city provides a wide range of accommodations, from luxury to budget options, ensuring there is something for every type of tourist.”*

Manager 6 said, *“Nairobi County attracts tourists due to favorable weather, welcoming locals, abundant fresh food, and good security.”*

Interviews also revealed the influence of travel advisories. Managers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 noted, *“Travel advisories often result in reduced tourist arrivals, lower hotel occupancy, and decreased revenue, and they can negatively impact the city’s image and investor confidence.”*

Manager 4 observed, *“Travel advisors facilitate tourists’ movement around Nairobi by providing guided tours, which often encourage repeat visits and attract more tourists. They also help visitors secure quality accommodation, contributing to increased tourism revenue for the city.”*

### **Factor Analysis for Tourism safety**

Tourism safety statements were subjected to factor analysis and three components with Eigen values greater than 1 were extracted which cumulatively explained 61.547% of variance as shown in Table 3. When rotated using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization reveals that three components. The rotated component matrix showed the first component had eight items that explained 25.94% of the

total variance. The second component had five items that explained 18.671% of the total variance. The third component had four item that explained 16.935% of the total variance. Three items; that monitors safety of facilities, with safe

accommodation facilities and that focus on health preventive measures for vaccine were removed. All the seventeen items used to measure tourism safety were retained computed and renamed safety for further analysis.

**Table 3:** Tourism safety Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
Free from assault.	.830		
Free from kidnapping.	.796		
With low cases of fraudulent activities.	.772		
Free from pick pocketing.	.734		
Personal properties are safe.	.730		
That have measures against any form of harm or risk.	.688		
Where personal safety is guaranteed.	.682		
That provide information on emergency services.	.520		
Which has adopted regular inspection practices.		.830	
That have plans to respond to natural disasters.		.826	
With minimal environmental hazards.		.687	
That have adopted practices that make the environment safe.		.683	
That have emergency and evacuation plans.		.667	
Where food and general hygiene is adhered to.			.739
That adhere to health safety standards.			.739
With low health risks.			.682
That provide information on health safety.			.668
That monitors safety of facilities.			
With safe accommodation facilities			
That focus on health preventive measures for vaccines.			
<b>Total Variance Explained</b>	<b>61.547</b>		
Total Eigenvalues	9.559	1.582	1.168
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings % of Variance	25.941	18.671	16.935

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.*

*Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.*

*Rotation converged in 6 iterations.*

#### **Tourist destination choice Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

Based on Kaiser Criterion, tourist destination choice has two factors computed out the nine statements. When rotated using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization reveals that three components with Eigen values greater than 1 were extracted which cumulatively explained 59.86% of variance with first

factor explaining 41.65% and second factor explaining 18.21% (Table 4). The rotated component matrix of destination choice showed the first component had six items and second component had three items. All the nine items used to measure destination choice were retained computed and renamed choice for further analysis.

**Table 4:** Tourist destination choice Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Based on recommendations from guidebooks.	.825	
Based on recommendations from destination marketers.	.821	
Based on recommendations from travel blogs.	.796	
Based on recommendations from tourism websites.	.789	
Based on recommendations from travel agencies.	.743	
Based on recommendations from social media influencers.	.581	
Based on recommendations from family and friends.		.834
Based on past experience/visit.		.576
Based on recommendations from online reviews.		.564
<b>Total Variance Explained</b>	<b>59.861</b>	
Total Eigenvalues	4.216	1.172
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings % of Variance	41.650	18.211

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

### Hypothesis Testing

The objective of the study sought to determine the effect of tourism safety on destination choice in Nairobi County, Kenya. The corresponding null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) stated that tourism safety has no

significant effect on destination choice in Nairobi County. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero	Partial	Tolerance	VIF	
1 (Constant)	.772	.282		2.73	.007	.216	1.328					
Tourism Safety	.497	.052	.465	9.48	.000	.394	.600	.483	.482	.463	.994	1.006

a. Dependent Variable: Destination Choice

The findings indicate that tourism safety has a statistically significant and positive effect on destination choice ( $\beta = 0.465$ ,  $B = 0.497$ ,  $t = 9.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The positive regression coefficient implies that an increase in perceived tourism safety leads to an increase in tourists' likelihood

of selecting Nairobi County as a destination. Specifically, a one-unit improvement in tourism safety was associated with a 0.497-unit increase in destination choice. The 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.394 to 0.600 did not include zero, further confirming the

significance and stability of the relationship. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.465 suggests that tourism safety exerts a substantial influence on destination choice. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected, and the study concluded that tourism safety significantly influences destination choice in Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings suggest that tourists are more likely to select destinations where they perceive lower risks related to crime, health threats, environmental hazards, and personal security. Safety appears to enhance tourists' confidence in a destination and contributes positively to destination attractiveness. The results demonstrate that safety is not merely a supporting tourism attribute but a key determinant of travel decision-making. The findings are consistent with Ding and Wu (2022), who examined domestic tourists in Xinjiang using cluster analysis, content analysis, and one-way ANOVA. Their study found that tourism safety perception significantly influenced cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of destination image. Tourists with higher safety perceptions reported greater satisfaction, stronger revisit intentions, and a higher likelihood of recommending destinations to others. Similarly, the present study demonstrates that positive perceptions of safety encourage tourists to select Nairobi County as a preferred destination. The results also agree with Quan et al. (2023), who found that tourists in the post-pandemic tourism environment strongly preferred destinations perceived as safe and secure. Their study established that safety perceptions significantly influenced destination selection decisions and behavioral intentions, with travelers actively avoiding destinations associated with crime, insecurity, or health risks. The current findings support this position by showing that tourism safety significantly

predicts destination choice among tourists visiting Nairobi County.

Further support comes from Wang et al. (2022), who found that tourists construct safety perceptions before, during, and after travel experiences. Their study demonstrated that information obtained from media reports, travel advisories, social networks, and previous experiences significantly shapes destination safety perceptions and influences destination choice. This observation aligns with the current findings, suggesting that tourists visiting Nairobi County are likely influenced by available information regarding safety conditions before making travel decisions.

The study findings are also consistent with Karl (2020), who identified risk perception as one of the strongest predictors of destination selection. The study reported that tourists preferred destinations perceived as low-risk and avoided areas associated with terrorism, political instability, health threats, or crime. Similar patterns emerge from the current study, where tourists demonstrated a greater likelihood of choosing Nairobi County when they perceived the destination to be safe and secure.

Additionally, the findings corroborate those of Xie et al. (2021), who developed a multidimensional tourist safety scale and established that safety significantly affects destination evaluations. Their research identified physical safety, health safety, environmental safety, and social safety as important dimensions influencing destination attractiveness and visitation intentions. The positive relationship observed in the present study suggests that these dimensions collectively contribute to tourists' decisions to select Nairobi County as a destination.

The findings also align with Oluwafemi et al. (2025), who investigated

the impact of insecurity on tourist destination choice in Nigeria. Their study found that insecurity significantly altered tourists' perceptions and reduced the attractiveness of destinations perceived as unsafe. The researchers concluded that security concerns weaken the relationship between destination attractiveness and visitation intention. This supports the present findings that tourism safety is an important determinant of destination choice and that destinations perceived as unsafe are less likely to be selected.

Similarly, Mutinda and Mayaka (2012), who found that personal safety was among the most influential determinants of destination choice among domestic tourists in Nairobi. Their study revealed that tourists preferred destinations perceived as secure, accessible, and safe. The present study extends this evidence by statistically demonstrating that tourism safety remains a significant predictor of destination choice among contemporary tourists in Nairobi County.

## Conclusion

Results reveals that tourism safety is a significant determinant of destination choice in Nairobi County. Quantitative findings revealed strong agreement among tourists that health safety, personal security, crime prevention, emergency preparedness, safe accommodation, environmental safety, and risk management influence their travel decisions, as reflected in the high overall mean score of 4.48. Regression analysis further confirmed that tourism safety has a significant positive effect on destination choice. Qualitative findings reinforced these results, with tourists identifying personal security, health protection, safe accommodation, reliable transport, and emergency preparedness as key considerations before travel. Managers similarly indicated that while

Nairobi is generally perceived as moderately safe, safety concerns such as petty crime, fraud, and isolated security threats continue to influence tourist perceptions. The findings demonstrate that tourists are more likely to select, recommend, and revisit destinations where they perceive strong safety measures, effective security systems, and comprehensive risk management practices. Therefore, maintaining high standards of tourism safety remains fundamental to enhancing Nairobi County's attractiveness, competitiveness, and sustainability as a tourism destination.

## Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Tourism policymakers, county authorities, and tourism industry stakeholders should strengthen destination safety management as a core tourism development strategy. The national and county governments should enhance visible security presence in tourist zones, transport hubs, accommodation facilities, and major attractions through increased tourist policing, surveillance systems, and coordinated security operations. Tourism establishments should implement and regularly communicate health and safety protocols, emergency response procedures, disaster preparedness plans, and crime prevention measures to build visitor confidence. Destination marketers should actively promote Nairobi's safety initiatives, emergency support systems, and security improvements through tourism campaigns, digital platforms, and travel advisories to counter negative perceptions. Tourism operators should also strengthen collaboration with security agencies, health authorities, transport providers, and local communities to address risks related to crime, fraud, health emergencies, and environmental hazards. Continuous safety audits, staff training, visitor awareness

programs, and investment in safe accommodation and transport infrastructure would further improve tourists' perceptions of safety, increase destination preference, encourage repeat visitation, and support sustained growth of the tourism sector in Nairobi County.

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