

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INBOUND TOURISTS' VIEWS ON SAFETY AT THE MOLE ENCLAVE  
IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

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BY

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Name: Owusu Kontor Fofie

Signature:..... Date:.....

## SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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## ABSTRACT

Ensuring the safety of tourists has become an indispensable element in a destination's offering in order to ensure the maximum receipt from the tourism industry. This is because safety issues in these times highly influence tourists' choice of a destination. This thesis assesses inbound tourists' perception of safety at Mole Enclave in the Northern Region of Ghana. The Cultural Theory of Risk was used to analyse the perception of safety of inbound tourist.

With the use of accidental sampling method and questionnaires, data was collected from 128 inbound tourists that visited the Mole Enclave. Data was analysed with the use of SPSS version 16. Simple descriptive statistical presentations like frequency table, bar chart and pie charts were used to analyse the data. Chi-Square test was also used to test the significant relationships in the background characteristics and inbound tourists' pre-trip conception of safety and also overall perception of safety of the destination.

Generally, the study found that inbound tourists perceived the Mole Enclave to be safe for tourism activities. However, they had some concerns about the levels of some of the safety attributes especially on health matters as well as security.

Based on these findings, it was concluded that among other things, inbound tourists will select the Mole Enclave as a safe destination to visit. It is recommended that stakeholders in the promotion of tourism at the destination put in place additional measures such as streamlining tourism activities at Larabanga, improving quality of food service rendered by local food vendors and improving road network at the enclave to further enhance safety levels.

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Fofie

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSM	-	Cerebrospinal Meningitis
GHS	-	Ghana Health Service
GTA	-	Ghana Tourism Authority
MOH	-	Ministry of Health
MORH	-	Ministry of Roads and Highways
MOT	-	Ministry of Tourism
MTTU	-	Motor Traffic and Transport Union
SARS	-	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SPSS	-	Statistical Product and Service Solution
UNWTO	-	United Nation World Tourism Organisation
WTO	-	World Tourism Organisation

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

People have been travelling from one geographic region to the other, and their travels have, hardly, been safe most of the time, no matter the period and the means of transport. However, in recent times, the issues of safety and security have become more important not only for the community, but also for the tourist as well (Cavlek, 2002). This is because safety is a basic need in all spheres of human activity of which tourism is included (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 1996). Safety and security issues in travel and tourism came to fore during the evolution of mass tourism from the beginning of the 1950s (Kovari & Zamanyi, 2007). This was as a result of the fact that traveling was not a preserve of a narrow social stratum or class anymore but the whole widening middle class, coupled with the fact that the scope of tourism covered more and more countries and regions in the world and not only the developed or advanced countries but also, countries of the so called third world as well as the rapid and scenic development of transport [aviation, automotive industry] (Kovari & Zamanyi, 2007).

Until a little over a decade ago, the emphasis of tourist safety was laid on the connection between tourism and crime (Tarlow, 2009). The September, 11, 2001 terrorist attack (Henderson, 2007; Laws & Prideaux, 2005; Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006; Tarlow, 2002; Wilks & Page, 2003), the emergence of Severe

Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, the London Bombings of 7/7 in 2005 and the German Bakery Blast in Pune in February, 2010 gave a twist to the perception of this issue and more tourism scholars started analyzing the relationship between tourism, on one hand, and tourist safety on the other hand. In view of this, safety and security in tourism industry has been identified as a major force capable of driving changes in the tourism sector in the new millennium (Breda & Costa, 2006; Freyer & Schroder, 2007; Tarlow, 2009).

The technological advances in travel safety especially, aircraft safety have motivated mass movement of people to faraway places from their home countries. This notwithstanding, their welfare at the destination has become a matter of general concern to them and the industry, in general. According to WTO (1996), 'safety and security are vital to ensure quality in tourism and should be one of the utmost important objectives of tourism destinations' (UNWTO, 1996: p. 11). Peace, safety and security are the basic prerequisites for successful tourism development (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006). In view of this, destinations must be free from all forms of hazards and attacks in order to portray a good image and to attract a good number of visitors.

Safety and security of tourism are multifaceted concepts and pertain to all aspects of tourism products. The concepts have become basic elements which are considered in selecting a tourism destination. The pre-trip conception of safety is a major determinant in travellers' decision to visit a destination (Beirman, 2003). This claim is affirmed by Anderson (1993) that perceived risk influences tourists' behaviour to avoid or cancel planned trips to particular destinations rather than realities or actual risks circumstances (p. 45). This is an indication of the fact that potential tourists, through various means

available to them, subject a destination to a safety profiling before finally, making the decision to visit. Personal safety of tourists at the destination is relevant to them and destination managers should be ready to provide all that it takes to ensure their safety. This will enhance the tourists' experience and to a large extent preserve the image of the destination.

“Safety is seen as the freedom from danger, hazards or risks” (Mopeli, 2009: p. 76). As a legal concept, it implies a state of absolute security from a wide range of threats and accidental injury or death due to measures considered to guard against accidents. On the other hand, Mopeli (2009) explains “security as the state of being or feeling secured or safety of a state or organization against criminal activities and attacks” (p. 77).

In the words of Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992), many factors contribute to the perception of safety associated with tourism. In view of this, different researchers have over the years differently classified safety attributes that pertain at destinations. A research by Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) categorized risks (safety attributes) into: health and well-being; criminal harm (muggings, assaults, terrorism, etc.); transportation (automotive breakdowns, etc.); service providers (inadequate lodging, etc.); the environment (weather, road conditions, etc.); social factors (racism, poor treatment, unfriendly people, etc.) and financial concerns (losing money, poor value for money, etc.) In the growing body of knowledge on perceived risk and international tourism, a similar list of risk factors is dominating the discussion. These are terrorism, war, political instability, crime, disease and other health concerns, and cultural differences (Brunt, Mawby, & Hambly, 2000; Carter, 1998; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; Soñmez & Graefe, 1998). The focus of



this research is largely based on classification by Mansfeld and Pizam (2006) that concentrated on crime, terrorism, health hazards, food, attraction and transport safety. Incidents of food borne diseases or poison, outbreak of diseases, terrorist attacks, fatal accidents and criminal activities perpetrated against inbound tourists determine the perception of safety levels formed by inbound tourists and can make or unmake a destination depending on the level of its management.

As elucidated by Reisinger and Movondo (2006), “the prominence of these factors in the minds of the inbound tourists is due partly to their salience in the global media” (p. 15). The media has the power to influence the safety perception of individuals through the daily information that is sent out about the destination. Information about destinations especially, the negative ones spread very fast because of the present day technology specifically, the numerous social network platforms. Mydans (2008) supports this claim that the current media attention given to safety issues in tourism buttresses the seriousness with which tourists seek for their personal safety at destinations (p. 134). For example, both the Bangkok Post and the New York Times report the necessity to openly address safety issues after the sexual assaults and killings of foreign tourists in Thailand (Jitpleecheep, 2007; Mydans, 2008). This notwithstanding, some potential tourists will opt for such destinations even though they are reported as unsafe due to the fact that some level of personal security could be procured at the level of the tourists themselves.

There have not been reported cases of terrorism or serious crimes that have taken lives and caused injuries to many people at a go in Ghana. As Boakye (2008) postulates, Ghana is by and large considered to be safe. This

notwithstanding, Ghana has had her share of insecurity. The nation is engulfed with so many ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts. The northern part of Ghana is one area in the country that is bedeviled with this infamous act. As Odonkor and Mason (1994) elucidate, conflict in the Bawku area has occurred at least on five occasions in the past 20 years (p. 10).

Anderson (1993) established that risk perception influences tourists' behaviour to avoid or cancel travel to a particular destination rather than realities or actual risk circumstances. When tourists perceive a destination to be unsafe, they will entertain some level of fear and may be cautious of visiting such a destination. The ultimate negative consequence to the destination is jeopardizing the image which may in the short or long term affect inflows to the destination. Tourists' safety at the destination is, therefore, a non-negotiable issue and imperative attribute for countries to establish and maintain sustainable tourism. This study, therefore, focuses on how inbound tourists perceive the Mole enclave in terms of its safety (risks) they are likely to be exposed to and some measures they will adopt to procure safety.

### **Problem Statement**

Northern Region of Ghana has over the years witnessed several pockets of ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts. The region has been a home to endemic conflicts and one of the worst regions in this regard in the history of the country (DISCAP, 2002). The 1994 ethnic strife between the Kokombas and Nanumbas that was triggered by a dispute over ownership of a guinea fowl turned into a bloody encounter and caused the death of many people. Despite this, the region continues to record growth in its arrivals over the years. In 2012,

it recorded a total of 15,202 tourists to the region (GTA). As put by Cavlek (2002), all disasters can divert tourism flows away from affected destinations, but war, terrorism or political instability has a greater negative psychological effect on potential tourists when planning vacations.

People are normally more susceptible to health hazards while travelling and can range from minor upsets to infections caused by serious disasters (Breda & Costa, 2006:). Health situation in the region cannot be said to be one of the best, considering the fact that people travel many kilometres before they access a medical facility. It is one of the regions in the country that records high incidence of Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) cases (Ghana Health Services [GHS] 2006). This is as a result of the harsh climatic condition that is prevalent in the region. This disease is recorded almost every year in endemic proportions.

In the words of Cavlek (2002), unsafe destinations are unable to successfully compete with safe destinations, despite efforts to promote high quality attractions (p. 500). That means, the opposite which will be a safe destination has every potential to attract tourists. The region, having some of the nation's best attractions such as the Mole National Park and Larabanga Mosque, can attract a good number of tourists to itself if safety issues at the destination are not compromised.

Many studies have been conducted across the world on safety and security of tourism. Some of these are: Mansfeld and Pizam (2006); Cavlek (2002), Breda and Costa (2006); Tarlow (2007), Reisinger and Mavondo, (2005). These and many other studies concentrated on evaluating the 'normal'

destination safety elements: health, terrorism, natural disasters, crime and political instability.

Studies conducted on safety of inbound tourists in the country did not examine the entire destination's safety attributes. The concentration was only on one safety attribute (crime) with the neglect of other attributes that make up a destination's safety. Studies conducted by Boakye (2008; 2010; 2012) focused on the relationship between tourism and vulnerability (crime) of inbound tourists. Given this literature gap of neglecting other safety attributes, it is an issue that calls for major concern and in no doubt requires delving deep into the safety concerns of inbound tourists to the Mole enclave in the Northern Region of Ghana.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the inbound tourists' pre-trip conceptions of safety at the Mole enclave?
2. What are the views of inbound tourists on safety at the Mole enclave?
3. What are the risks inbound tourists are exposed to at the Mole enclave?
4. What strategies are adopted by inbound tourists to reduce risks at the Mole enclave?

### **Objectives of the Research**

#### **General Objective**

The general objective of the research is to assess inbound tourists' perception of safety at Mole enclave in the Northern Region of Ghana.

### **Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the research are to:

1. Assess inbound tourists' pre-trip conception of safety about the Mole Enclave.
2. Assess inbound tourists' perception of safety at Mole enclave.
3. Evaluate risks inbound tourists are exposed to at Mole enclave.
4. Analyze strategies adopted by inbound tourists to procure safety at Mole Enclave.

### **Significance of the Study**

The Northern Region of Ghana is endowed with many attractions that help promote tourism in Ghana; the Mole National Park which is the biggest natural reserve in the country, Larabanga Mosque, which is the oldest ancient mosque in the country, the mystery stone, Salaga Slave Market and other minor attractions. It also has a host of festivals like the Damba Festival, Bugum Chugu Festival, Kpini Chugu, Gobandawu and others. These attractions of various categories draw both domestic and international tourists to the destination. In 2012, a total of 15,202 comprising 7,545 inbound and 7,657 domestic tourists visited the region (GTA, 2012).

By 2007, Ghana had emerged as the third leading destination for international tourism in the West African sub-region (WTO, 1996). Inbound tourists' contribution to the total tourism receipt of Ghana cannot be underestimated. There abound a number of tourism support services in the region as well in the areas of accommodation, food and beverage and

entertainment which put the region in a good standing in Ghana in terms of destinations in the country.

This research will contribute knowledge and ideas to the existing literature on safety and security of inbound tourists to destinations. This is because the study brings to bare the inbound tourists' pre-trip conception of safety, their views on safety at the destination, risks inbound tourists are exposed to at the destination, the strategies taken to reduce risks. The final document could be a reference material for future researchers and may serve as a baseline for others to build on safety issues that confront inbound tourists at destinations.

Again, bringing the perception of safety of inbound tourists to fore will help inform major stakeholders like the GTA and service providers on the need to adhere to and enforce safety standards at the destination. Safety standards are set in order to ensure quality of service delivery to customers. These standards could be ignored by service providers because of perceived additional cost that will be incurred. They stay away in order to cut down operational cost to the detriment of the tourists' safety. These acts of providers compromise on the safety of tourists and jeopardize the destination's image which eventually leads to a fall in inbound tourists' arrivals and a subsequent drop in service provider's revenue. With these facts made known to providers, efforts will be made to adhere to safety standards to ensure adequate safety of inbound tourists.

Finally, this research will provide a base for community education. Education of the community will be best carried out if it has a basis. The local outfit will be made known the need to avoid any act that will compromise on

the safety of inbound tourists. As expressed by Harper (2000), people who victimize tourists seem to have a calculated plan that work for them (p. 1053). These offenders are mostly from the community in which tourism takes place and one way or the other a beneficiary of tourism. This will spare the destination the resources of making damage control should they wait for the region to be branded as unsafe for tourists.

### **Limitation of the study**

The inability of the researcher to lay hands on data of inbound tourists to the destination from the GTA was a limitation. The reliance on data on inbound tourists to Mole National Park may not be a true reflection of all inbound tourists that visited the Mole Enclave. Some inbound tourists who visited the enclave but did not visit Mole National Park were not captured in their data. This affected the sample size determination of the study.

### **Delimitations of the study**

Safety perception of inbound tourists is quite encompassing. Different safety attributes could be assessed depending on the researcher. But the focus of this research was on transport, food, accommodation, attraction, crime, terrorism and health. Also, the concentration of the study is limited to only the Mole enclave though that is not the only attractive destination in the Northern Region and other parts of the country.

The choice of the quantitative paradigm of data collection could pose a limitation to the study. The limiting nature of this method to allow the researcher to further probe may prevent full understanding of inbound tourists'

perception of safety at the Mole enclave. This method may not provide in-depth results because it will not give much room to explore inbound tourists' pre-trip perception of safety, risks they are exposed to and the risk reduction strategies employed to reduce risks. It must, again, be noted that some unintentional omissions during coding and analysis of the data will affect the findings and conclusions of the study.

Lastly, the adoption of the accidental sampling method of data collection in sampling inbound tourists to participate in this study poses another limitation. It is because this sampling procedure is qualitative in nature and raises issues of representativeness and generalization.

### **Definition of terms**

Social researchers have always placed emphasis on the need to understand the terminology and usage of concepts in a research inquiry (Magi, 2005:). They have stressed that for purposes of contextualized and better understanding, concepts must to be spelt out in a non-ambiguous manner so as to give the working meaning for the study document under investigation. In this section of the research, attempt has been made to give clear meaning and operational definition of some concepts that have been used throughout the study to avoid diverse meanings and interpretations which can cause ambiguity and likelihood to perplexity.

#### *Inbound tourist*

“Any person who travels to a country other than that in which he/she has his/her usual residence but outside his/her usual environment for a period not exceeding 12months and whose main purpose of visit is other than the



exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited, and who stays at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the country visited” (UNWTO, 1996).

### *Crime*

According to Magi (2005), “crime is a violation of communal rules of behaviour as interpreted and expressed by the criminal law, which echoes public opinion, traditional values and the viewpoint of individuals currently holding social and political power” (p. 17).

### *Safety*

According to Collier (1994), “safety is seen as the state of being free from danger, or more practically, the application of techniques and devices that minimize, control, or prevent accidents” (p. 14).

### *Security*

Mopeli (2009) explains security as any means or devices designed to safeguard persons and property against a broad range of hazards, including crime, fire, accidents, espionage, sabotage, subversion, and attack.

### *Risk*

Rosa (2003) defines risk as “a situation or an event where something of human value (including humans themselves) is at stake and where the outcome is unknown”.

## **Organization of the thesis**

The thesis is organised into five different chapters with each chapter made up of various subtopics. Chapter One is an introductory chapter to the study. It takes a look at the background of the study, the problem statement, the

research questions, the general and the specific objectives of the study, the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, operational definitions and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two looks at the review of relevant literature to the study. It, specifically, looks at risks and risks perception of inbound tourists, importance of safety to the destination's image and some risks reduction strategies employed by inbound tourists to procure safety. It also discusses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that are relevant to the study.

Chapter Three brings to fore the research methodology used in the study. It delves into the study area, study design, research paradigm, data and sources, target population, sample size determination, sampling procedures/techniques, data collection and instrument, recruitment of field assistants and pre-testing of instrument, fieldwork and challenges, ethical issues and data processing and analysis.

Chapter Four looks at the presentation of results and discussions. It used bar charts, pie charts, cross-tabulations and frequencies as well as Chi Square to present findings on various background characteristics of respondents among others. Lastly, the fifth chapter looks at the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **Summary**

This chapter looked at the introductory phase of the study. It considered issues on the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives of the study, rationale for the study, limitation and delimitation of the study, definition of relevant terminologies and the organization of the

study. The next chapter delves into a review of related literature to put findings into perspective.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter takes a look at literature on safety and security. It looks at definition of some key variables in the research. It also reviews risks and risks perception of tourists, pre-trip conception of safety, importance of safety to image of destination. It again reviews the theories and framework that underpin the study. This review is much important because it facilitates and influences the research at every stage from the inception to conclusion. It provides framework in which findings, facts and relationships can be placed and also helps to introduce and refine ideas that are relevant to the scope of the research.

#### **Perceptions of risk and tourism**

Perceived risk is highly associated to a destination's image (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). While destination's image has been studied since the early 1970s (Gunn, 1972; Hunt, 1975), in general the emphasis of this part of study has been on the natural, cultural, social and infrastructural attributes of a destination (e.g. Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Gartner, 1993;). Indeed, a wide-ranging body of knowledge has been gathered (Tasci & Gartner, 2007), though as Gallarza et al. (2002) identified, there is a lack of consistency in both the operationalization and conceptualization of destination image. Many destination image scales include

attributes about risk factors such as safety and politics; however, till now, a related but separate body of literature has developed around the issue of perceived risk and tourism, though perception of risk (safety) is inherently related to image. Obviously, recognizing factors that influence perceptions of risk are likely to enhance a better comprehension of the connection between destination image and plan to travel. This has become more pressing in recent times as issues of tourist safety and risk have become particularly topical (Soñmez & Graefe, 1998), and a developing pool of literature demonstrating the negative effects on travel and tourism accumulating from a range of factors in, or around a destination (Coshall, 2003).

Risk is an essential factor when considering international tourism. Peace, calm, and safety are essential and prerequisite factors to attracting tourists to any destination (Soñmez, 1998b). In the literature of consumer behaviour, seven different types of risk have been outlined: equipment risk, psychological risk, physical risk, financial risk, time risk, social risk, and satisfaction risk. All of these have been used to examine tourism-related decisions. Equipment risk is the possibility of mechanical, equipment, or organizational problems or difficulty while on vacation; financial risk is the chance that the vacation will not provide the expected value for the money spent; physical risk is the likelihood of physical danger, injury, or sickness while on vacation; satisfaction risk is the chance that the vacation will not generate expected personal satisfaction; social risk is the possibility that the vacation will inform or affect others' opinion of the person; and time risk is the possibility that the vacation will be a waste of time or take too much time of the individual (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). Taking a clue from this study,

Soñmez and Graefe (1998a) identified nine types of risk related with international travel: health, financial, physical, political instability, psychological, social, satisfaction, terrorism, and time. For travellers from US, terrorism, political instability, transportation reliability, and satisfaction risk were observed to be most often related with international travel. In a related study, Lepp and Gibson (2003) observed US-born young adults' perceptions of risk associated with international travel. Seven risk factors were identified by them: health, terrorism, political instability, strange food, a nation's political and religious dogma, cultural barriers and crime. Using Cohen's (1972) tourist role typology, Lepp and Gibson observed that tourists who seek more novelty in their travels, (Cohen's explorers and drifters), in effect perceive less risk associated with international travel than those who classify themselves as the familiarity seeking organized mass tourists.

Some researchers have specified that risk perception may be associated with personality traits. Soñmez and Graefe (1998b) indicated two types of tourists, risk averse individuals and risk seeking individuals. They found that risk averse individuals are likely to select destinations that are perceived as safe, while, risk seekers are likely to show less concern about selecting destinations based on safety issues. In relating these kinds of tourists to preferred vacation attributes, Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) observed that risk neutral tourists resort to seeking out more adventure and excitement in their vacation experiences (p. 18). This line of thought is certainly indicative of the fact that personality trait of the individual might influence the degree of risk that is perceived in a destination. The classic work of Plog (1974) certainly supports this idea. In his work, Plog observed five kinds of traveller based on

the type of personality classified on a continuum from the psychocentrics, (those who prefer inclusive tours that give them a sense of safety and security), to the allocentrics (those who prefer adventure and spontaneity in their travels). More recently, Plog (1974) adopted the concept of 'venturesomeness' to explain the tendency for different tourists to select different travel plans and products. He was of the view that venturesomeness is a better predictor of travel intentions and choices than demographic attributes of the individual such as income, so that those with higher in venturesomeness, having the propensity to travel more often and choosing more adventure in their vacations.

### **Risk perceptions and background characteristics**

Past experience can also affect perception of risk at every destination. International tourists that have experience may perceive less risk (Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Soñmez & Graefe, 1998b). Negative experiences may make potential tourists nervous about future options although past international experience may provide some level of confidence for future travel. On the other hand, when perception of risk has a stronger impact on avoidance rather than likelihood of making a trip to a destination, past travel experience would subdue behavioural intentions (Soñmez & Graefe, 1998b).

Gender on the other hand also affects perception of risk. Though Soñmez and Graefe (1998a) failed to find the influence of gender on perception of risk, many other studies have establish that gender does influence touristic choices (Carr, 2001; Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Pizam et al., 2004). Lepp and Gibson established that women perceived a higher degree of risk with regard to health and food. Kozak et al. established that older

male tourists with experiences were less likely to amend their travel arrangements when they are faced with potential health, terrorism, or natural disaster related risks. Pizam et al., using a combined risk and sensation seeking variable, established that males exhibited more tendency for adventurous and spontaneous vacations. In similar instance, Carr observed that among the young tourists who made a trip to London, UK, there were differences in gender in the perceptions of risk associated with the city at night, with more women perceiving greater risk. Nevertheless, Carr (2001) also pointed out that gender may not be the only characteristic that influence risk perception and tourist behaviour, other factors such as the type of personality might also be influential (p. 211).

Perception of risk related to international tourism has also been established to differ by country of origin. Hurley (1988) and Tremblay (1989) observed that European tourists are less susceptible to the threat of international terrorism than American tourists. One explanation given by Tremblay is that North American tourists have frequently been targets of terrorist attack and have been exposed to more strong media coverage of terrorist events. Kozak et al. (2007) adopted Hofstede's (2001) concept of Uncertainty Avoidance Theory to examine perceptions of risk related to international travel. They established that citizens from different countries could be characterized in terms of low, medium, and high risk avoidance, with residents of Australia and the United States characterized as in the mid-range of uncertainty avoidance. In similar, Reisinger and Movondo (2006) opined that travellers from the US, in addition to those from Hong Kong and Australia, were likely to perceive high risk associated with international travel and had



greater levels of anxiety. Indeed, in another related research, they identified that anxiety levels had a significant influence on perceptions of safety and travel intentions (Reisinger & Movondo, 2005).

Previous studies indicate that perceptions of risk about a destination are affected by personal features (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992; Soñmez & Graefe, 1998), tourist type or role (Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992), information sources and search (Kozak, et al., 2007; Pizam et al., 2004; Soñmez & Graefe, 1998a), type of personality (Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Pizam et al., 2002; 2004; Reisinger & Movondo, 2005). Besides these, education as an indicator of social class has also been observed to affect people's perception of risk (Soñmez & Graefe, 1998b).

### **Risk perception and role of tourists**

One of the finest and widely known typologies of tourist was developed by Cohen (1972). It looked at institutionalization of tourists. He identified four types of international tourists, based on tourists' preference for novelty (strangeness) or familiarity: the organized mass tourist, the individual mass tourist (Institutionalized tourists), the explorer and the drifter (Non-Institutionalized). The organized mass tourists match most closely with the stereotypical image of tourists. They are risk averse individuals and prefer the utmost amount of familiarity. They have preference for package tours and stay mainly within their 'environment bubble' of the known throughout the travel. Similarly, independent mass tourists also put a premium on familiarity and prefer the regular tourist routes. However, they move independently and have more control over their itinerary and time. Explorers have a preference for mix

of familiarity and novelty. They try to avoid the 'environmental bubble' and have interaction with the locals. On the other hand, compared with drifters, explorers exercise caution and do not completely integrate themselves in the host community. Drifters portray the opposite extreme of the organized mass tourist and take novelty as a premium. They try to stay away from the regular tourist route and totally integrate themselves in the host society. Again, they are the risk seekers. Pearce (1982; 1985) tested empirically Cohen's theoretical model that tourist roles could be distinguished from one another based on a number of features, with the degree of novelty and familiarity they required in a destination being one of them.

Similarly, Lepp and Gibson (2003) established that the tourist role could be taken as an indicator of the degree of novelty required in a destination (p. 679). Differences that exist among tourists in terms of novelty seeking result in differences in the level of risk they perceive to go together with international tourism. Hence, novelty seekers may tolerate greater levels of risk.

### **Risk and perceived risk**

The perception of safety and security has become a major determinant in travellers' decisions to visit a place (Beirman, 2003: p. 17). This has been so because tourists one way or the other have become targets of assailants. Anderson (1993) established that risk perception influences tourists' behaviour to avoid or cancel travel to a particular destination rather than realities or actual risk circumstances. In general, tourists make their travel decisions based on perceptions rather than reality on the ground (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992: p.

26), and these perceptions formed by tourists could be true or otherwise. This implies that there could be difference in actual risks and perceived risks. Thus, researchers have differentiated the two concepts. Laws and Prideaux (2005) and Glaesser (2003) define risk as “the probability of an unwanted occurrence that leads to the possible negative consequences of a consumer’s behavior” (p. 65). In contrast, Mansfeld (2006); Reichel, Fuchs and Uriely (2007) explains perceived risk as a consumer perception of the overall negativity of an action that if beyond a tolerable level might affect travel behaviour. Several situations and Incidents inform customers of perceived risk at a destination. According to Mansfeld (2006), natural disasters, political unrest, wars, epidemics, and terrorism lead to perceived travel risks whereas tourists’ ignorance of the likelihood of such events engage them in real risks (Wilks & Page, 2006: p. 16). It must be noted that news reports and word-of-mouth information about tourist destinations raise consumers’ perceptions of risks. This is due to high credibility that has been attached to it and its ability to reach large audiences in a short period of time. As stated by Tasci and Gartner (2007), the media is particularly influential in altering people’s perceptions of a destination (p. 424). Making a wrong travel decision becomes a perceived risk (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006: p. 95). Tourists are therefore already at the point of being affected by any risk at the destination from the very moment that decision was taken to travel to the chosen destination. When the perceived risk is too high, potential tourists change their plans or behaviour, such as non-booking, cancellation, or withdrawing from the perceived risk destinations (Mansfeld, 2006; Sasso, 2005).

### **Pre-Trip Conception of Safety**

In the words of Reisinger and Mavondo (2005), it is of great importance to understand how potential tourists experience their environment in terms of safety in order to create a conducive environment for tourism development (p. 216). This implies that tourism cannot grow in places that are perceived as unsafe and as such treacherous for tourists. Sjöberg (2002) argues that Safety and physical security are prerequisite for normal tourism development of every destination. In recent times, safety and security for international travellers have become a global issue and much discussion and media space have been assigned to it. This media coverage coupled with other factors inform the potential tourist of what is likely to be met when they decide to visit a destination at the expense of the other. Mansfeld (2006), alludes that inadequate personal safety is seen as a major deterrent to the international traveller. International tourists who feel that their personal security cannot be assured and could be compromised, may perceive the destination as unsafe to visit. Countries most at times issue out directives to her nationals warning them of not going to some destinations for tourism. For example, Australia issued a warning about inadequacy of safety in some high risk nations such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (Mopeli, 2009). Directives by international governments from various countries contribute to general concerns about personal safety and the field of risk and anxiety in the international world.

It is generally envisaged that the tourism and hospitality industry is growing at a phenomenal rate and that this developing trend is likely to continue well into the 21st century. Nevertheless, this industry faces many challenges. One of those challenges is the issue of tourist safety and security,

which is gaining growing attention on the national agenda of most host countries. Garraway (2002), contends that there is enough prove that few, if any, major tourist destinations are invulnerable to the incidences of harassment and crime against tourists. The perceived risk and its subsequent protection of safety influence the intentions to travel. When risks make a destination to be perceived as unsafe, the potential travellers can: Continue their travel plans; Change their destination choice; Modify their travel behaviour; or Acquire additional information if they decide to carry on their travel plans (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006). For example, the risk of encountering a threat of terrorism or political instability at a destination makes it to be perceived as less safe, and the less dangerous destination is likely to be preferred (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005).

In the case of prospective traveller, threats to personal safety, whether real or imagined, influence their travel decision. This perception or reality may influence negatively on the destination's image, seriously causing danger to the viability and sustainability of the sector. No tourist will visit a place if he/she feels that it is dangerous. In likewise manner, tourists are particularly concerned for their personal safety and security of their belongings. Safety is very significant and it can influence a tourists' decision making about whether or not to visit a town, city, region or country (Swarbrooke, 2002).

In the words of Jones, Openshaw and Robinson (2000), political events, military interventions, terrorism and crime always disturb international travel (p. 7). If violence of some kind sparks up at a destination where a tourist was intending to visit, he or she will most likely visit an alternative destination. Due to the Gulf War, for example, thousands of tourists, who were planning to visit

the Middle East and Africa, aborted their holidays and went to Europe instead (Openshaw & Robinson, 2000).

### **Risk perceptions about Africa**

Lepp and Gibson (2008) found that the Middle East is perceived as riskier for tourism activities while the Africa continent is generally perceived as a risky destination for tourism. This is as a result of researchers identifying a variety of risks tourists commonly associate with Africa, including political and social instability, poor governance, war, terrorism, crime, disease, unfriendly hosts, cultural and language barriers, primitive conditions, and economic concerns such as currency instability (Ankomah & Crompton, 1990; Brown, 2000; Carter, 1998; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998b). Lepp, Gibson and Lane (2011), further stresses that one contributing factor to this perception is the acceptance that important elements of modern societies are absent from Africa while elements of primitive societies are in great folds. This perception tends to be generalized across the African continent (Carter, 1998; Lawson & Thyne, 2001). Lepp, Gibson and Lane (2011) elucidate that these perceptions persist despite the fact that prospective tourists have admitted to knowing little or nothing about Africa. Unfortunately, as Keim (1999) alludes to, this inadequacy of knowledge about Africa typically leads individuals to rely on stereotypes and make generalizations. In tourism, this contributes to what Enders, Sandler and Parise (1992) termed the generalization effect, or in other words, the tendency of tourists to make broad generalizations about diverse regions. With Africa, this tendency is common. For example, participants in a study by Carter (1998) described Africa as “a single undifferentiated territory

that was dangerous” for travel (p. 350). Similarly, Lawson and Thyne (2001) found perceptions of travel-related risk were applied generally across the whole African continent with no recognition of regional variability. Lastly, Mathers (2004) found Africa is imagined in the USA as a homogenous landscape of primitive nature, poverty, disease, and violence. While this perception may attract some novelty-seeking tourists, it acts mostly as repulsion (Gartner, 1993; Lepp et al., 2011).

Among the many politically stable democracies in Africa competing for tourists, South Africa is perhaps most burdened by many of the risk factors which tourists tend to generalize across the African continent (Altbeker, 2005: . However tourist inflow to the country continues to increase and ironically, South Africa is the continent’s leading destination for international tourists and the country’s tourism industry is growing rapidly (WTO, 2009). This indicates that despite the negative perception about Africa as risky, its international tourist arrival to some destination countries continues to grow. On the contrary, as noted by Kenyan tourism researchers Akama and Kieti (2003), the “grandfather” of African tourism, Kenya, is experiencing a decline. The reason, as proffered is the increasing perception that Kenya is a risky destination (p. 79). In the case of Ghana, it is observed by Boakye (2012), that the country is by and large safe destination for tourists (p. 330). The strong desire to revisit and to recommend (Boakye, 2012) by tourists despite their little misgivings about crime issues further re-echo the fact that the country is widely perceived as a safe destination and gives Ghana a positive destination image.

## **Perceptions of health risk**

The effect of a health-related outbreak on a tourism destination can have devastating impacts on the entire destination, ranging from economic impacts to image problems and to overall destination competitiveness (Kuo, Chen, Tseng, Ju & Huang, 2008; Page, Yeoman, Munro, Connell, & Walker, 2006). As pointed by Richter (2003), due to the rapid growth in international travel and continuous globalization, public health has become an important issue for travel and tourism industry.

Depending on the travel destination, tourists may be exposed to a number of infectious diseases. Law (2006), explains that exposure to various diseases at the destination will depend on the specific infectious agents present in the area. The risk of infection can vary depending on the purpose of visit, the itinerary to be followed within the area, the accommodation standards, level of hygiene and sanitation, as well as the behaviour of the visitors themselves (Law, 2006). It was observed by Mao, Ding and Lee (2010), that during the SARS outbreak of 2003, Taiwan's tourism arrivals declined by 71.54% over the same period the year before. For destinations highly dependent on tourism, health related crises can have crippling impacts on the industry. Interestingly, unlike international tourism, domestic tourism tends to recover faster in the aftermath of a health-related crisis and, thus, can play an important role in its recovery. For example as noted by Henderson (2004), Singapore's government refocused its' efforts on the domestic tourism market following damages brought on by the SARS crisis. From an individual point of view, perceptions of risk, especially health-related risk perceptions, have been regarded as significant factors that determine travel decisions (Kozak, 2007; Law, 2006;



Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Besides general risk perceptions, it is noted that specific risk perceptions, such as health-related risk perceptions, have a greater impact on decision-making (Dolnicar, 2005). The outbreak of a health-related crisis can influence individuals' risk perceptions with regard to a destination, as well as change their destination choice (Page et al., 2006; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009; Slovic & Weber, 2002). Kozak (2007) found that the perceived risk of infectious disease was a significant factor leading to changes in travel plans. This can be complete cancellation of the trip or move to an alternative destination offering the same product. This will eventually disadvantage the destination's image and renders it uncompetitive as noted by Law (2006) that tourists were more likely to visit destinations where it was perceived that there was no risk related to infectious disease.

### **Perception of crime and terrorism**

In the words of Pizam (1999), "crime and violent acts happen at tourist destinations every minute of every day. In view of this, no single destination is insulated from criminal activities" (p. 7). Pizam and Mansfeld, (1996) explains that both domestic and international tourism are affected if an individual perceives an absence of safety and security. Crimes against tourists can be put under two main categories: crimes of opportunity such as rape, robbery, assault and harassment; and organized crimes such as terrorism (Flicker & Gardner, 2002). Terrorism does weigh on the minds of travellers with terrorist attacks occurring all over the world, the current media attention given to safety issues in tourism buttresses the seriousness with which tourists seek for their personal safety at destinations (Jitpleecheep, 2007; Mydans, 2008). For example both

the Bangkok Post and the New York Times reported the necessity to openly address safety issues after the sexual assaults and killings of foreign tourists in Thailand (Jitpleecheep, 2007; Mydans, 2008). These warnings to a larger extent can affect the volume of travellers and ultimately the economy of these destinations. Due to varying behaviour pattern expressed by tourists, they are considered to be vulnerable to victimization of crime. Carrying large amounts of money and sophisticated items, lack of familiarity with their environments, and they also tend to look different, standing out in a crowd (Brunt, Mawby, & Hambly, 2000; Pizam & Mansfeld, 1996). In support, Brunt, Mawby, and Hambly (2000), speculate that the propensity of tourists becoming victims stems from the simple fact that tourists spend more time outdoors, sightseeing, dining, and shopping. Additionally, many times, tourists engage themselves in risky behaviours that make them fall prey to criminals. It must be noted that while the consequences to the criminals may be very low, the effects on the local business community can be devastating. For those who fell victim to crime, their future travel plans may adversely be affected (Brunt, Mawby, & Hambly, 2000; Pizam, 1999). Even more disturbing is the negative publicity that will reduce the demand for the tourist destination (Bar-On, 1996).

### **Importance of safety to the destination's Image**

Regardless of its various potential negative impacts, tourism has been seen as one of the few viable economic opportunities in large parts of the developing world. Among the major obstacles for increased tourist activity in such regions are the little destination knowledge of travellers and the perceived

negative image triggered by poverty, political instability and recent tragic events and humanitarian conditions (Grosspietsch, 2006).

A destination image is the manifestation of all objective knowledge, prejudice, imaginations, impressions and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place. Destination image has influences on tourist travel decision-making, cognition and behaviour at a destination as well as fulfillment or satisfaction levels and remembrance of the experience. Tourist destination images are significant because they have influence both the decision-making behaviour of potential tourist and the level of satisfaction as regards the tourist destination. However, whether an image is a true illustration of what any given destination has offered the tourist is less significant than the existence of the image in the mind of the tourist (Jenkins, 1999).

Tourists rely heavily upon the image of a particular destination when considering various holiday destinations. Given a much broader choice and the diversity of destinations, tourists today are likely to select holidays that offer total realization of their personal desires and value for money. A destination having a good product alone is not enough to favourably compete in the market. Hence, the expectations and needs of tourists must be considered. Whether or not the image is a true illustration of what a destination has to offer the traveller or not, is of less importance. What is significant is the image that exists in the mind of the traveller (Styrdom & Nel, 2006).

According to Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002), ‘‘positive images of a destination help the policy planner to create awareness and can thus serve as the distinguishing factor among competing destinations’’ (p. 190). Consequently, it is safe to conclude that the success or failure of the tourism

industry, at many destinations around the world, greatly depends on the images held by potential tourist and the effective management of those images by the destination by managers. For many years now, the World Tourism Organization has been emphasizing the importance of positive image for tourist destinations. Awaritefe (2004) explains that the role of the destination image in the holiday selection process is well expressed by Cavlek (2002), arguing that unless a specific destination figures in the mind of a potential tourist, it has no chance of being selected. Safety and security are by and large the primary conditions for the normal tourism development of every destination, region or country and thus serves as the basic determinants of its growth (Mopeli, 2009). Without these conditions, destinations cannot compete successfully in the global market of tourism even if they present through their marketing campaigns, the most attractive and the excellent quality natural and man-made attractions. "Any threats to the personal safety of tourists may cause a decrease in or total absence of tourism activity, not only in a particular destination but also in neighbouring countries or regions as well" (Cavlek, 2002: p. 511).

### **Risk reduction strategies**

A common principle in consumer behaviour is the consumer's need to lessen the risk and uncertainty involved in patronizing a product or service. Consumers have been identified as having individual tolerance level to risk, which, if reached, can either result in desertion of the purchasing process or the consumer's adopting risk reduction strategies (Mitchell, Davies, Moutinho, & Vassos, 1999). According to Mitchell et al. (1999), "risk reduction, or better still "risk handling", is most often explained as a process by which consumers seek to reduce the uncertainty or costs of an unsatisfactory decision" (p. 170).

Mitchell et al. (1999) in their sophisticated network analysis showed that uncertainty is usually reduced by gaining additional information and by “the reputation of a name that can be trusted” (p. 170). In their work, they also referred to the concept of “risk tolerance” not only as representing magnitude of risk the consumer cannot bear, but also representing the ability of the consumer to bear the risks involved in the decision. In that sense, “risk tolerance” directly affects the risk threshold at which consumers start engaging in risk reduction strategies. The significant role of information as a means for risk reduction has been highlighted by several other scholars. For example, it has been found that consumers tend to look for information in order to reduce the risk involved in purchasing products (Byzalov & Shachar, 2004).

As noted earlier, the concept of risk and risk reduction strategies in services has been widely explored by Mitchell, Moutinho, and Lewis (2003). Risk in services is apparent or readily understood, given their intangible nature and difficulties in standardizing them.

The study conducted by Mitchell et al (1999), confirmed there is a positive relationship between perception of risk and risk reduction strategy. For example, brand loyalty was found to be the most useful risk reduction strategy for service purchases, with the exception of hotels (Mitchell & Greatorex, 1993). The least useful strategies identified were salesperson’s advice and celebrity endorsement. In addition, Mitchell (1993) identified factors that can influence the use of risk reduction strategies. He found age, socio-economic group, and education as factors with relatively consistent effects. For example, the search and processing of information decline with age. Also, higher educational levels lead to increasing levels of searching.

Mitchell and Vassos (1997) found that the two most useful risk relieving strategies were reading independent travel journals and purchasing some kind of travel insurance. In another study by Mitchell et al. (1999), on holiday makers, in examining the usefulness of perceived risk theory in comprehending how consumers reduce risks, he identified “reading independent travel reviews on the destination, purchasing travel insurance and personally visiting the tour operator or travel agent” as risk reduction strategies adopted (p. 175). According to Boshoff (2002), providers in service industries like tourism adopt several strategies to reduce risk perceptions and hence directly or indirectly enhance the purchase intentions of potential buyers. The risk strategies examined include providing prospective buyers with general information about the service, price information and providing a service guarantee before actual purchase. In the words of Tideswell and Faulkner (1999), familiarity with a destination and information search behaviour is also be linked to risk reduction. Law (2006) proposed several risk reduction strategies for curbing these aforementioned risks of pandemics, criminal and terrorist attacks. These strategies include free insurance coverage, local government guarantees of tourists’ personal safety, an increased transparency of information related to risk incidents, and the introduction of surveillance or protection measures. On the contrary, it is interesting to note that Hales and Shams (1991) found consumption behaviour of visitors rather than information search as a major means of reducing risk. Specifically, Hales et al. (1991), found that holiday travellers to Gulf States Arab indicated that consumption behaviour, rather than information search may be the major means adopted to reduce risk. Consumption behaviour is described by the concept of “cautious

incremental consumption”, which is termed as the way in which the risks and benefits of new and accustomed experiential products are traded off incrementally over time through consumption behaviours.

World Health Organization advises that general precautions greatly reduce the risk of exposure to infectious agents and should always be taken when travelling to any destination where there is substantial risk of exposure to those agents. The organization admonishes that these precautions should be taken whether any prophylactic vaccinations or medications have been administered or not (WHO, 2004).

### **Theoretical Framework for the study**

Various theories have sought to explain individuals’ perceptions of risks. Some of these theories are, Psychometric paradigm, Catastrophe theory, Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers 1975), and others. However, Cultural Theory of Risk is observed to best explain how individuals perceive risks because it touches on various social and cultural factors that influence how individuals perceive risks before and in the process of consuming a product.

### **Cultural Theory of Risk**

The field of risk research and analysis has been currently dominated by two paradigms: the psychometric approach, which is embedded in psychology and decision theory, and the cultural theory of Douglas and Wildavsky (1982). The psychometric paradigm centers primarily on cognitive factors that influence individuals’ perception of risk. Slovic (1992), established that two main cognitive factors dominate individuals’ perception of risk: the dread risk factor and the unknown risk factor. However, the psychometric perspective

ignores social and cultural influences on risk perception. This approach to a large extent cannot elucidate differences in levels of risk perception among social and ethnic sets. For example, to (Rohrmann, 1994), cognitive variables could not answer questions such as ‘Why is one technology feared in one society or social context and not in another?’

In the 1980s, however, Cultural Theory developed by anthropologists and sociologists emerged into the field (Slovic, 1992: p.54). Researchers began placing much emphasis on risk and started to analyze social and cultural influences on risk perception. Theoretically, most highly elaborated and discussed approach dealing with the impact of such influences is the cultural theory (CT) developed by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982).

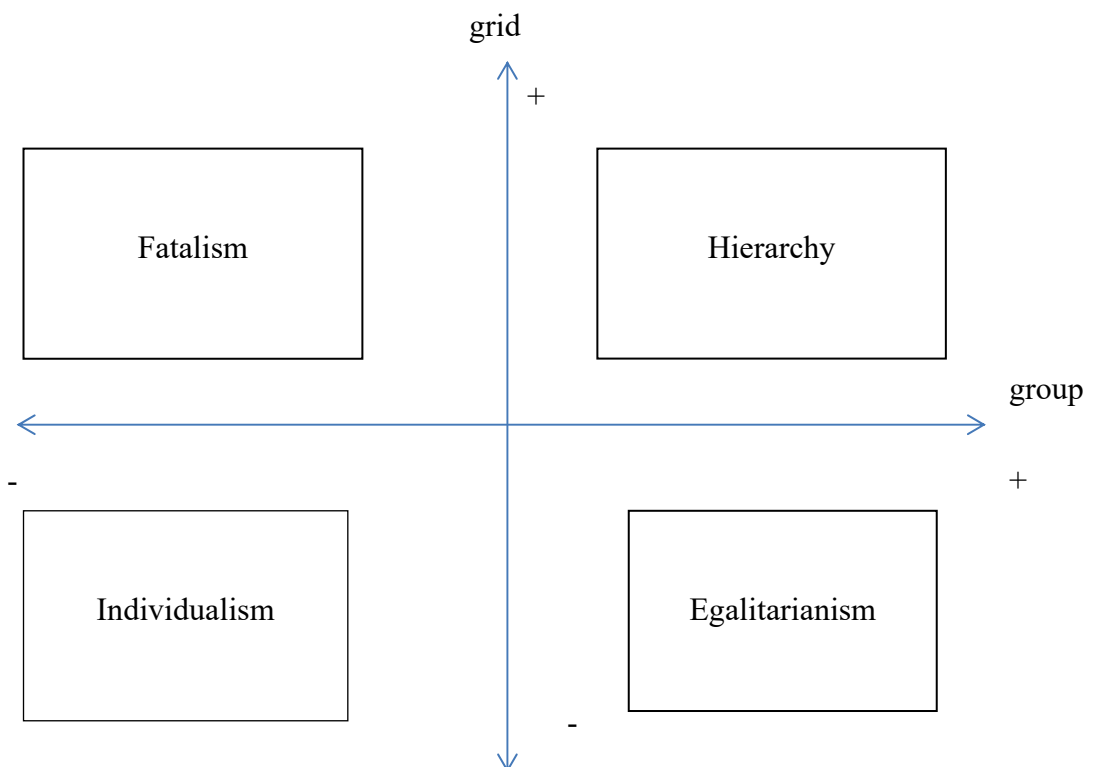
In the early 1980s Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) started a discussion about the impact of values and cultural backgrounds on the perception of risks (Dake, 1991; Stern, 1995). In their opinion, risk perception and the extent of concern about environmental or social issues are socially and culturally framed. This means that the values and worldviews of certain social or cultural contexts shape the individual’s perception and evaluation of risks. Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), explain that “individuals are rooted in a social structure and that the social background of individuals determines their values, beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews” (p. 302). In this scenario, socialized cognitive patterns work like sifters in the assessment of information about risks. According to this perspective, the most significant predictors for selecting what persons fear or do not fear are not individual reasoning processes such as the perception of threats to health or feelings of uncontrollability (as stated in psychometric research), but socially shared values and worldviews –cultural



biases that determine the individual's perceptions (Wildavsky and Dake, 1990; Dake, 1992). This can be interpreted as an indication of the relevance of socialized cognitive representations that work like a filter in evaluating information. In this sense, interpretation of information by the individual is highly influenced by values. For example, people conscious of environmental values, will appraise a given piece of information about the possibility of accidents in nuclear power plants totally differently than enthusiasts of nuclear power. Dake (1991), contended that concern (e.g., for environmental issues) is rooted in broader socio-cultural bearings and is not merely a function of information about the safety of particular technologies. Cultural theory suggests that people choose what they fear in relation to the culture they belong, that is their way of life in relation to their orientation (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982; Douglas, 1997).

Douglas and Wildavsky developed the grid/group typology to identify different types of cultures, which suggests four prototypical patterns: Each grid/group consists of a characteristic behavioural form which is social relations, accompanied by a reasonable cosmology (or cultural bias). The behavioural pattern includes concrete observable social relations and actions as well as the social structure. "Cosmology on the other hand refers to a cognitive system that comprises attitudes and values" (Gross and Rayner, 1985: p. 345) 'Grid-group analysis treats ideas and values as both reflecting and constituting the experience both of belonging to a social organization and of social differentiation within the organization'. The four prototypical cultural types using two central dimensions of sociality: control (grid) and social commitment (group) was developed by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982).

Egalitarians, for example, highly regard and identify group relations, but they dislike social relations that are shaped by social differences or hierarchic configurations. In their view, social relations are subject to negotiation. In this way, each type is a mixture of both dimensions. While neighbouring groups show similarities on one dimension but differences on the other, diagonally opposed groups show dissimilarities on both dimensions (grid and group). For example, individualists have low sympathy for group attachment and both low sympathy for hierarchic structures. Fatalists, as the neighbouring class, also have low sympathy for group affection, but a different relation to the grid dimension: they embrace externally attributed social positions and they recognize constraint by others, although they do not identify themselves with any social collective.



**Figure 1: Typology of 'ways of life' using the grid/group-dimension.**

For each of the four types identified by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), cultural theory offers clear hypotheses about modes of risk perception. To hierarchic orientated persons, risks are to be accepted as long as decisions about those risks are justified by experts or governmental authorities. They do not see the need to oppose risks in the society when explanation for the presence of those risks has been given by recognized bodies. What they fear are the risks that threaten the social order.

Egalitarians on the other hand, are seen to oppose risks that will inflict irreversible hazards on many people or on future generations. What they distrust are risks that are pushed on them by the decisions of small powerful elite of experts or governmental authorities.

Fatalists have a strong orientation toward socially assigned groupings, but don't identify with a group. They try not to border and worry about things that they believe they can't do anything about. This is so because they see it as a power beyond their capabilities.

Individualists perceive risk as opportunity. They see risks as prospects for attaining new heights in life and wholeheartedly embrace them. For example new technologies are viewed more as possibilities and less as dangers (Thompson, 1990). They fear risks that could limit their freedom.

### **Criticisms of Cultural Theory of Risk**

Cultural theory has been subjected to various forms of criticisms due to the extent it has been applied and the relevance of the theory to the study of risks. The first is that, the theory is not wholly deterministic. The typology makes no attempt to understanding the nature of individual's free will. The distinct limitations to the application of the typology are also noted by Gross

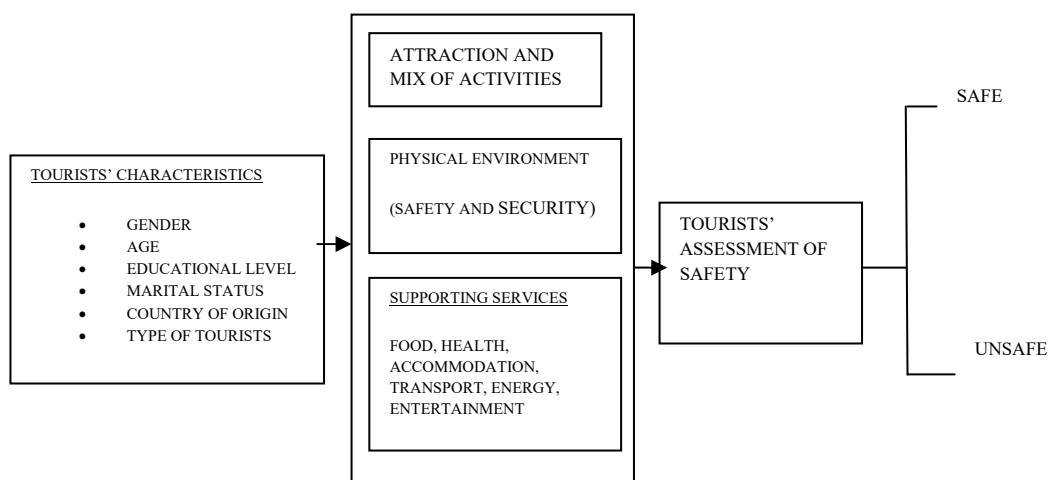
and Rayner (1985), the grid/group model does not take into account how psychological theories of how different personality types might incline towards one kind of social background or another. It does not explain how different characters of individuals push them to align themselves to any social context. To this theory, individual attributes is a non-starter. It does not tell us what economic incentives or deprivations dispose persons to change their social organization (Gross & Rayner, 1985).

Secondly, it is argued that the typology is static, and so does not offer an opportunity to illustrate the processes of change. Culture is dynamic and not static. For example what is seen to be a taboo today may not be so in the near future. This has influence on the social structure because a change in a hitherto structure can distort the social arrangements.

Thirdly, cultural theory is seen as relative rather than an absolute analytical tool, and so is primarily of heuristic value. The theory is dependent on other factors and it could be subjected to different interpretation. One cannot be assured of an expected outcome when applied in a different setting and that it can be concluded that it is experimental in nature.

Finally, Ostrander stresses that the typology should be applied to social environments rather than to societies. This is because it is technically incapable of distinguishing whole social systems. The theory can be used to examine the building blocks of nations, or spatially more diffuse regimes (Rayner, 1992).

## Conceptual Framework



**Figure 2: A model for studying tourists' assessment of safety**

Source: Adapted from Vengasayi (2000)

The original model was used to study tourist destination competitiveness and attractiveness (TDCA). It identified factors that are crucial in determining a destination's competitiveness and safety was paramount. Safety, security and crowding form the environmental and physical experience as safety influences the environmental, social and physical attractiveness of destinations. The physical experience coupled with additional services and the main tourism product and activities affect tourists' satisfaction which translates into destinations competitiveness.

Safety therefore has an effect on tourist's choice of destination as well as outdoor activities undertaken. If the physical environment is perceived safe, then more tourists would prefer that destination. Tourists assess safety before and after purchase of tourism product; their pre-assessment would reflect in choice of destination and their post-assessment would influence future travel decision. Tourist's assessments of safety are subjective and influenced by intervening variables paramount among them is the background characteristics.

These background features affect choice of destination as well as assessment of safety.

In Figure 2, socio-demographic characteristics would influence tourists' perception of destination's characteristics which would in turn impact on assessment of safety. The destination characteristics highlight services that are relevant in enhancing tourist's experience at the destination and it determines whether the destination is safe or not safe.

### **Summary**

This chapter looked at the existing literature that is relevant for the study in order to put issues in perspective. Specifically, it reviewed literature on perception of risk and tourism, risk perception and background characteristics, risk perception and role of tourists, risks and perceived risks. It also delved in pre- trip conceptions, risk perception about Africa, perception of health risks, perception of crime and terrorism, importance of safety to destination's image, risk reduction strategies adopted by inbound tourists to procure safety and repeat visit intentions. It further looked at the conceptual and theoretical frameworks backing the study. The next chapter takes a look at methodological approaches employed in the research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with description of the study area, methods to be used to collect and analyze the data for this research. The aim is to offer explanation about how data will be collected and which research instruments will be put to use. It, also, focuses on the data collection technique, interview procedures, sample selection, sample size, instrument design, data analysis and limitations of the study.

#### **Study Area**

The study area of the research is the Mole enclave of the Northern Region of Ghana. The region is located in northern part of Ghana and covers 70,384 square kilometre. It is about 29% of total land area and largest in region in Ghana and it is headed by a regional minister appointed by the President of the country. It is divided into twenty administrative districts.

The region is bordered up north by the Upper West Region and the Upper East Region. On the east and west, it is bordered by Eastern Ghana-Togo International border and Western Ghana-Ivory Coast international border. In the south, it shares boundaries with Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions.

The region has relatively dry climate, with a single rainy season that begins in May and ends in October. The amount of rainfall recorded annually

varies between 750 mm and 1050 mm. The dry season starts in November and ends in March/April with maximum temperatures occurring towards the end of the dry season (March-April) and minimum temperatures in December and January. The harmattan wind is experienced in the months of December to early February and has a considerable effect on the temperatures in the region. It could be devastating and may vary between 14°C at night and 40°C during the day. Humidity, however, which is very low, mitigates the effect of the daytime heat. This harsh climatic condition makes the Cerebrospinal Meningitis thrive in almost endemic proportions. The region also falls in the Onchocerciasis zone.

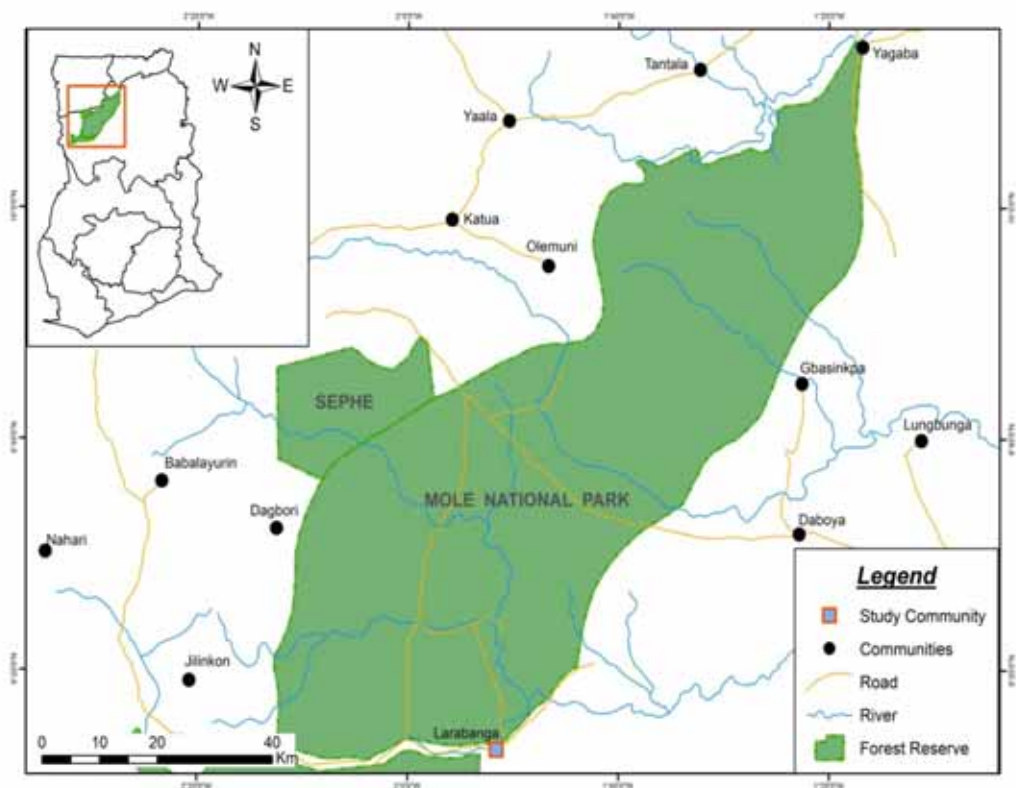
People in the region derive water from the rain, springs, rivers and streams. These are the common sources of drinking water in the region. Hand dugouts are used for the collection of rainwater. However, there are few standpipes in the region that support the communities especially, during the dry seasons. This has implications for water borne diseases for the region.

Like Upper East and West Regions of Ghana, motor bikes and bicycles are the main means of transport to the local people in the region. It is such dominant in the region that it makes it easy to access transport service in the region.

The region is a home to several attractions that are worth visiting. Notable among them are the Mole National Park; Ghana's biggest and perhaps, best-stocked national park located at Damongo, Larabanga Mosque (one of the oldest in Ghana) and the Mystery Stone, also at Larabanga. However, there are other minor unpopular attractions like the Salaga Slave Market, Daboya Crocodile Pond, Konkore Cave, Nalerigu Defense Wall and Lake Kpiri. The



Northern Region is also a home to Damba Festival which is celebrated by the people of Dagbon, Mamprugu, Gonja. Mamprugui and Nanumba to commemorate the birth of the Holy Prophet Mohammed; the Holy Prophet of Islam. There is also the Bugum Chugu (fire) Festival that marks the search for lost the son of an ancient king by Dagombas, Nanumbas and Mamprusis. Kpini Chugu (Guinea Fowl) and Gobandawu (Yam Festival) are also present in the region.



**Figure 3: Map of the study area**

Source: Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast.

### **Research Philosophy**

Social science research rests on two main research philosophies. These are the Positivist and Interpretivist philosophies. The positivists believe that

reality exists out there and can be observed, measured and described from an objective point without deducing from evidence and reasoning with the phenomenon being studied whereas the interpretivists believe that reality is subjective in people's minds and it is interpreted differently by people (Sarantakos, 2005). Consequently, this study was grounded in the positivist paradigm of research.

Quantitative research is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect. An advantage provided by quantitative method is its ability to give precise and concise answers to problem statements using numerical values or percentages.

According to Babbie (2001), "an obvious advantage of quantitative research is that it gathers information from a large number of respondents which ensures statistically representative data" (p. 57). The work is made value-free and unbiased because in quantitative research, the researcher is independent of what is being researched. Also, the issue of representativeness (based on probability technique to make the units more typical of the population from which they have been selected) is clearly adhered to in this study. Consequently, issues pertaining to inbound tourists' background characteristics, pre-trip perception of safety, perception at the destination, perceived risks inbound tourists are exposed to at the destination and risk reduction strategies employed by inbound tourists were quantitatively measured and analyzed.

## **Research Design**

The research design that this study is embedded in is the descriptive design. This does not allow for any manipulation of the key variables but describes and interprets what exist. According to Creswell (2009), ‘‘a descriptive study design is concerned with conditions or interrelationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident and trends that are developing’’ (p. 141). It concerns itself with conditions or relations that exist, such as practices, attitudes and opinions that are held.

Descriptive research design was suitable for this research because the objectives of the study were to assess inbound tourists’ pre- trip conception of safety at the destination, examine tourists’ perception of safety at the destination, examine risks tourists are exposed to at the destination and finally, to analyse strategies adopted by tourists to procure safety at the destination.

## **Sources of data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data were collected for the research. Primary data was collected from inbound tourists to the destination in the region. Also data on inflows of inbound tourists to the destination was sourced from Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission. This information aided the researcher in calculating the sample size of the study.

Again, secondary information was sourced from books, existing journals and the internet. These sources, also, provided to the researcher appropriate information on pre-trip perception of safety of inbound tourists,

risks perception, importance of safety to the destination and risk reduction strategies employed by inbound tourists.

### **Target Population and Sample Size for the Study**

The target population for the study was inbound tourists. These were international tourists who visited the Northern Region from December 2013 to January 2014.

Secondary information obtained from the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission in Mole National Park indicates that international arrivals to the park stood at 1,551 between October and December, 2012. From the office of the GTA in Tamale, there is non-existence of data on inbound tourists' arrivals to the region. Based on that, data on inbound tourists to Mole National Park was used as a proxy to calculate the sample size for the study. This decision to use figures from Mole National Park is justified because it serves as the main attraction at the destination and Northern Region as a whole and an assumption is made that every inbound tourist to the region makes a stop at Mole National Park.

By using the Raosoft online calculator at 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level, a sample size of 128 inbound tourists was arrived at. An extra 13 forming 10% of the original sample size (128) was added to cater for non-responses and errors that occurred in instrument administration and responding.

### **Sampling Procedures/Techniques**

Accidental sampling technique under non-probability sampling method was used in the study. Even though this sampling method defeats the positivist ideology of research, it was deemed fit for the research due to lack of proper

data on inbound tourists to construct a sampling frame. The number of elements in the population (tourists) was largely unknown and could not be identified individually.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

In consonance with the positivist ideology, questionnaires were used in soliciting data from inbound tourists on their views on safety at the destination. It contained a series of open and closed ended questions. This instrument was appropriate because inbound tourists to Ghana to some extent express themselves in English language. Also, it helps ensure the independence and anonymity of respondents in the study.

The instrument consisted of ten modules. Module one solicited respondents' views on transport safety at the Mole enclave in the region. It included questions on the means and mode of transport at the destination, views on public transport and road signs as well as their general perception of transport in the destination. The second module looked at perceived food risks. It sought to ask where inbound tourists take their meals, whether they have ever fallen sick after eating, whether they fear patronizing the destinations' food and their general assessment of food at the destination.

Modules three and four covered perceived accommodation and attraction risks at the destination. It sought respondents' views on measures put in place at these facilities to ensure visitors' safety and whether or not they felt safe at those facilities with a simple "Yes" or "No" answer. The fifth module

focused on perceived crime and terrorism. It asked respondents if they had ever fallen prey to crime upon visiting the destination, listed type of crime exposed to and a “Yes” or “No” answers to whether or not the destination was safe from terrorism or crime. The sixth module touched on perceived health hazards at the destination. It asked respondents to list some diseases that they contracted or feared contracting at the destination, some pre-emptive measures they took before their visit and whether or not the destination was safe from health hazards.

Module seven looked at the risk reduction strategies employed by inbound tourists before visiting and while at the destination. It asked respondents to list the strategies used to procure safety at the destination. The eighth and the ninth modules touched on the pre-trip perception of safety of inbound tourists and their overall assessment of safety at the Mole Enclave.

The final module centered on the background information of respondents. It sought for information on their background characteristics like gender, age, highest level of education, marital status, religion and country of origin.

### **Recruitment of Field Assistant and Pilot Survey**

A field assistant was recruited and trained on the procedures of instrument administration and on field work ethics. It looked at how to approach the tourists, how to introduce himself and how to explain the purpose of the research to them. He was then taken through the prepared questionnaires, explaining into detail the purpose of the study.

The pilot study which was aimed at pre-testing the instrument was conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2013. It targeted inbound tourists to Cape Coast. The questionnaires were administered to twenty (20) inbound tourists who had visited the Cape Coast Castle. This exercise was imperative because it helped the researcher to test the feasibility of the instrument constructed. Wrongly worded and ambiguous questions in the instrument were identified and it afforded the opportunity to effect necessary corrections. Again, it afforded the researcher the opportunity to come face to face with some of the challenges that were likely to be encountered during the actual field work.

### **Fieldwork and Challenges**

The actual data collection took place between 26<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014. It lasted for 19 days. It started each day at 6: 15am when inbound tourists were getting ready for first safari tour to 5: 30pm when the last tour for the day had ended. Inbound tourists were mostly spotted at the reception or briefing point of the park and the main restaurant of the Mole National Park.

Like any other data collection, this study was confronted with some challenges. Some challenges were confronted in the course of the data collection and the researcher crafted some solutions to deal with those within his capabilities. Firstly, some respondents declined to participate in the study even before the researcher made the attempt to introduce himself because they had the presumption that the researcher had approached them to beg for money from them. This is because it is the usual practice done by the local people

whenever a tourist visits the community. Upon seeing the researcher with the questionnaire, they assumed it to “scholarship cards” and in some instances waved their hands indicating their disinterest in whatever that it was about to be mentioned.

Secondly, the inability of some respondents to properly read and understand the English language was a challenge. Some tourists from non-English speaking countries found it difficult to understand some of the words in the instrument and it resulted in some of the questionnaires being partially answered. This compelled the researcher to do away with those partially filled questionnaires.

Again, some respondents who decided to take away the questionnaires and fill them in their hotel rooms never returned them. Tracing the questionnaires through the house-keeping staff, very few of those questionnaires were retrieved and even that, most of them were partially filled with the rest having some of their pages torn off. The researcher was, therefore, compelled to reprint more questionnaires to make up for the lost ones.

### **Ethical Issues**

The study adhered to ethical issues in social science research such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Informed consent according to Kumar (2005) ‘implies making the subjects adequately aware of the type of information you want from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study and how it directly or indirectly affects them’ (p. 56). Informed consent was first sought from the management of Mole National Park for permission of entry



into the park. This is because inbound tourists could easily be spotted at their visitor information centre and at their restaurant. The purpose of the study was made known to management giving them the assurance that the study was not to undertake appraisal of their work and upon that a copy of the instrument was requested and examined by management before permission was given. On the part of the respondents, the purpose of the study was made known to them and in some cases, questions about possible benefits to them were asked. Respondents who willingly agreed to participate in the study were served with questionnaires. Under no circumstances were any respondents coerced to be part of the study.

Again, ethic of anonymity was observed during data collection. This ethic, according to Sarantakos (2005), implies that the data collected by the researcher should not be related to names or other forms of identification. This was arrived at by not writing the respondents' names and other forms of identifications on the questionnaires.

Lastly, the researcher observed ethic of confidentiality. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of any information that was given. Assurance was given to them that information given was going to be used by the researcher only and only for the purpose of the study and that it was not going to be made available to other persons for any purpose and reason.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The data was analysed with the use of Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS), version sixteen (16). The data from the field was thoroughly edited to do away with partially filled questionnaires which could affect the

validity of the results. The data was then coded and entered into the SPSS software for analysis.

Descriptive statistical presentations which included pie charts, bar charts, cross-tabulations and frequencies were run to represent various background characteristics of respondents, their pre-trip perception of safety among others. Inferential statistical measures like Chi Square Test of Independence was used to test for relationships between background characteristics of inbound tourists and their pre-trip perception of safety at the destination, perceived exposure to risk and overall perceptions of safety. Chi Square test was, also, carried on background characteristics and risk reduction strategies adopted by inbound tourists.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed the methodology used in the study. The chapter described the study area. The study was rooted in the positivist philosophy of research and the quantitative method of data collection and analysis were employed. Again, the chapter discussed the target population, sample size, sources of data and sampling procedure, instruments for data collection as well as how the data was analysed and presented. Lastly, the pre-test, the entire fieldwork and the challenges encountered as well as ethical issues were considered. The next chapter looks at the presentation of data, analysis and discussion of findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the data analysis and presentation of findings. It looks at the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, travel characteristics of respondents, various risks tourists are exposed to at the destination, pre-trip perception of safety at the destination, risk reduction strategies before and during visit and tourists' perception of safety of the destination. Chi Square Tests of Independence analysis of socio demographic characteristics and perception of safety have also been presented.

#### **Background characteristics of inbound tourists**

Though the study is not about the personal attributes of respondents, it is imperative to bring to the fore personal factors of the individual respondents that have the potential to influence their perception of safety at a destination. Table 1 indicates the various socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who took part in the survey. It comprises respondents' gender, level of education, marital status, age, religion and the continent of origin.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics (N=128)**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	59	46.1
Female	69	53.9
<i>Level of Education</i>		
High school	35	27.4
University/college	71	55.5
Post graduate	22	17.2
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	90	70.3
Married	38	29.7
<i>Age</i>		
18-35	85	66.4
36-50	28	21.9
51+	15	11.7
<i>Religion</i>		
Christian	81	63.3
Atheist	34	26.6
Agnostic	10	7.8
Hindu	3	2.4
<i>Continent of origin</i>		
Europe	74	57.8
America	36	28.1
Asia	16	12.5
Africa	2	1.6

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

Gender has been noted as one variable that influences needs and aspirations in addition to the perceptions and attitude to events and issues

(Mason and Cheyne, 2000). This indicates that the gender of an individual greatly influences his or her perception about any given phenomenon. The overall sample consisted of 53.9 percent females and 46.1 percent males. This is an indication that there were more females in the study. This finding is in consonance with Mensah and Mensah (2013).

The educational level of respondents is equally one important attribute that influences inbound tourists perception of safety (Soñmez & Graefe, 1998a). Respondents with university or college education were more in the study with 55.5 percent while postgraduate degree holders also made up of 17.2 percent. These figures indicate that the respondents were highly educated.

Marital status is another element that influences the perception of tourists about a destination. The majority (70.3%) of the respondents were unmarried while 29.7 percent were married. The unmarried being more in the study could be attributed to the availability of time at their disposal and also, the fact that this group has less domestic responsibilities as compared to the married.

Age is one of the influential determinants of individual needs, aspirations, perception and attitudes towards issues (Amuquandoh, 2006). With specific reference to perception of safety at a destination, age is found to be a major factor that influences an individual's perception as alluded by Floyd and Pennington-Gray (2004) (p. 1053). The sample was mostly youthful with a greater percentage (66.4%) falling within 18-35 years. The least percentage was 11.7 percent representing age 51 and above.

With regard to religion, respondents who profess Christian faith dominated the sample with 81 respondents representing 63.3 percent. Atheist

and Agnostic constituted 26.6 percent and 7.8 percent respectively while Hindu had the least percentage of 2.4 percent.

The bulk of the respondents (57.8%) were from Europe with Africa contributing the least number of respondents (1.6%). This sample is in consonance with findings of Boakye (2012) (p. 330). These statistics are also in conformity with the pattern of annual inbound flows into the country put out by Ghana Tourism Authority. The African continent representing the least figure on the flow affirms the assertion made by Hoff and Overgaard (1974) and Sindinga (1999) that Africans rarely travel for tourism-related purposes.

### **Travel characteristics of inbound tourists**

In addition to the background characteristics of respondents, it is also imperative to bring to bear some travel characteristics of inbound tourists to the destination. The study identified characteristics like purpose of visiting the destination, travel experience of the tourists, sources of knowledge about the destination, length of stay, type of accommodation used and the mode of transport patronized. These travel characteristics are captured in Table 2.

At the Mole enclave, it was found out that tourists moved to the area for diverse reasons or purposes. Out of the 128 respondents, 97 representing 75.8 percent visited the destination for the purpose of having a vacation. This finding is in conformity with the pattern of annual inbound flows into the country put out by Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) that leisure visitors dominate amongst the purpose of visit category. With this high percentage representing vacation, the destination is enormously portrayed by the inbound tourists as a safe zone for having relaxation and staying away from “boring,

monotonous” work environment coupled with rush hour city life that leaves individuals under constant pressure and stress.

**Table 2: Travel characteristics of respondents (N=128)**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Purpose of Visit</i>		
Business	1	0.8
Education	8	6.2
Vacation	97	75.8
Visit F&F	10	7.8
Volunteer	12	9.4
<i>Travel Experience</i>		
First timers	103	80.5
Repeat visitors	25	19.5
<i>Source of knowledge about the destination</i>		
Recommendation by F&F	88	49.7
Travel/Tour agent	34	19.2
Internet	29	16.4
Guide books	26	14.7
<i>Length of Stay</i>		
< 1week	110	85.9
1 week- 2 weeks	11	8.6
2 weeks- 4 weeks	3	2.3
> 4 weeks	4	3.1
<i>Type of Accommodation</i>		
Guest house	29	20.2
Home stay	22	15.3
Hostel	10	6.9
Hotels	83	57.6
<i>Transport mode</i>		
Bus	38	25.0
Motor Bike	16	10.5
Trotro	40	26.3
Bicycle	3	2.0
Taxi	28	18.4
Private car	27	17.8

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

\*F&F- Families and Friends

Another purpose for visiting the destination was for volunteer work. This number represented 9.4 percent of the respondents. It came at second position after vacation. This phenomenon is not surprising because of the fact that the destination being part of the Northern Region of Ghana is perceived to be bedeviled with many challenges in health and education issues. These volunteers are sent to those areas to offer assistance by helping the residents to alleviate some of the problems confronting the development of the region. It can be argued that these volunteers are tourists because even though they are working, it must, however, be noted that their activities are not remunerated.

Visiting families and friends as well as educational purpose were other reasons for patronizing the destination. They constituted 7.8 percent and 6.2 percent respectively. It is interesting to note that visiting the destination for business purposes accounted for only 0.8 percent. The reason is not farfetched. It is as a result of the absence of firms, corporate bodies and industries that will attract this category of tourists who spend more money at the destination.

Again, it is seen from the profile of the respondents that 103 respondents representing 80.5 percent were first time visitors to the destination. The rest of the respondents (19.5%) were repeat visitors.

From the respondents, it was established that the destination was known to them through the traditional means (recommendation by friends and family, internet, guide books, travel and tour organisations). Chief among them was recommendation from friend and relations. This contributed almost fifty percent (49.7%) of the sources of knowledge of the destination. Internet search, guide books and travel and tour agents contributed 16.4 percent, 14.7 percent and 19.2 percent respectively.



For the length of stay at the destination, it is seen that the majority (85.9%) of the respondents spent less than one week at the destination. Just 3.1 percent of inbound tourists spent more than a month at the destination. The mean day of stay at the destination by inbound tourists is 7 days with 1 day being the minimum and 120 days as maximum.

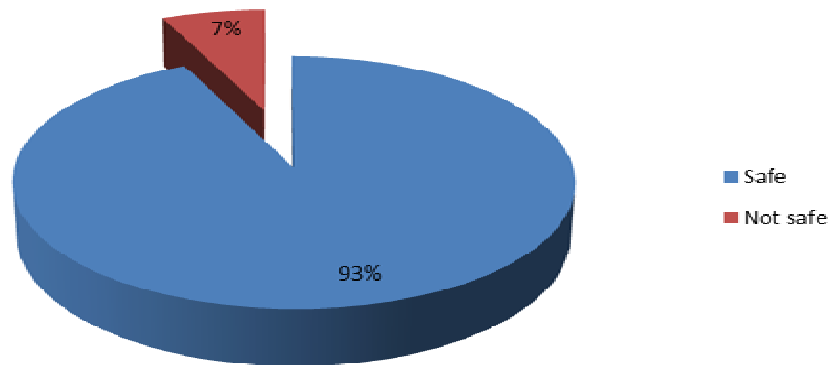
It is clear from Table 2 that inbound tourists patronized the destination's accommodation facilities. Hotels received the highest patronage (57.6%) of inbound tourists to the destination. The reason could be that, the only hotel (Mole Motel) close to the attraction is situated right in the National Park which is the main attraction at the destination. Guest houses and hostels at the destination had 20.2 percent and 6.9 percent patronage respectively from inbound tourists. Home stay constituted 15.3 percent. It could be attributed to the presence of student volunteers in the community who for integration into the local community adopt this form of accommodation.

With transportation, different transport modes were used by inbound tourists at the destination. Patrons of trotro services constituted 26.3 percent and were closely followed by bus services (25%). Taxi patrons constituted 18.4 percent while motor bike and bicycle which are the main transport mode of the local people constituted 10.5 percent and 2 percent respectively.

### **Inbound tourists' pre-trip perception of safety**

When risks make a destination to be perceived as less safe, the potential travellers can pursue their travel plans, change their destination choice, modify their travel plans or acquire additional information if they decide to continue their travel plans (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006). Any of these decisions is arrived

at after the potential tourist has sought for information about the destination through various means. Inbound tourists' pre-trip perception of safety about the destination is formed after the information search.



**Figure 4: Pre-trip perception of safety**

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

It is observed from Figure 4 that, an overwhelming majority (93%) felt the destination was safe before visiting. It was found that their pre-trip perception of the destination being safe stems from the fact that Ghana as a whole is generally perceived to be a safe destination.

Inferences could be made to the fact that, this percentage (93%) of the respondents are risk averse individuals, as propounded by Sonmez and Graefe (1998b), since they are likely to choose destinations that are safe and will highly avoid unsafe destinations. They mentioned that, information from embassies (consulates), guide books, the Ministry of Tourism (Ghana), internet search, word- of- mouth adverts from friends and relatives informed them that the destination is safe. About 19.5 percent of the respondents being repeat

visitors shows that they had an idea of the destination's safety levels before revisiting and it is a strong indication that the destination is perceived to be safe. It, again, appears the country's stable democracy for the past two decades is also yielding great benefits to the tourism sector in the area of its inflows because Ghana is perceived to be politically stable and peaceful in the eyes of the international community and this enhances the image of Ghana as a safe destination. "Even though Africa has been classified as a single unit and perceived as risky" (Lepp & Gibson, 2008: p. 747) as a result of variety of negative attributes, this finding go a long way to indicate that this assertion is not wholly true and that, there are individual destinations or countries that are perceived by potential tourists as safe and thus refutes the "generalization effect".

Patterns of pre-trip perception of safety by socio-demographic attributes of the inbound tourists that were part of the survey have been presented in Table 3. Their pre-trip perception is based on the information acquired before visiting the destination.

**Table 3: Inbound tourists' background characteristics by Pre-trip perception of safety**

Socio-demographics	N	Safe %	Not safe %	X <sup>2</sup> (df)	P- Value (P>0.05)
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	59	91.5	8.5	0.06 (df=1)	0.807
Female	69	94.2	5.8		
<i>Age</i>					
18-35	85	92.9	7.1	0.004 (df=2)	0.998
36-50	28	92.9	7.1		
51+	15	93.3	6.7		
<i>Level of education</i>					
High school	35	97.1	2.9	2.00 (df=2)	0.366
University/college	71	90.1	9.9		
Post graduate	22	95/5	4.5		
<i>Marital status</i>					
Single	90	94.4	5.6	0.393 (df=1)	0.531
Married	38	89.5	10.5		

<i>Continent of origin</i>					
America	36	91.7	8.3	0.268 (df=3)	0.966
Asia	16	93.8	6.2		
Europe	74	93.2	6.8		
Africa	2	100	0		

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

Socio-demographic characteristics are important in analyzing tourists' perception about a destination before the trip was made. This is as a result of the fact that tourists are not homogenous and perceive issues differently because of different attributes and beliefs. Inbound tourists' pre-trip perception of safety by the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents has been captured in Table 3. It is observed in Table 3 that, all the variables (gender, age, level of education, marital status, origin of tourists) considered in the Chi-Square analysis were found to have no significant relationship with pre-trip perception of safety by inbound tourists.

With gender, at *p-value* of 0.807, it is observed that there is no significant relationship with pre-trip perception safety of inbound tourists. However, on the whole, 91.5 percent of total male respondents perceived the destination to be safe before making the trip. This perception is not different from the female counterparts as an overwhelming 94.2 percent perceived the destination to be safe.

Educational level is one of the important variables that influence the perception of potential tourists about the safety of a destination (Soñmez & Graefe, 1998a) because this can influence their level of information search. Educational level equally did not produce significant relationship with pre-trip perception of safety at *p-value* of 0.366. It worth noting from Table 3 that, respondents from all the educational levels overwhelmingly responded they

perceived the Mole enclave to be safe before making the decision to visit. Respondents with high school educational level constituted 97.1 percent, university or college level had 90.1 percent while post graduate level had 95.5 percent.

Marital status is another element that influences the perception of tourists about a destination (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). This is as a result of whether or not couples will travel with their families and or the activities that inbound tourists are likely to indulge in at the destination. Marital status equally did not produce any significant relationship with pre-trip perception of safety of inbound tourists at a *p-value* of 0.531. It is explicit from Table 3 that, the majority of unmarried (94.4%) perceived the destination to be safe before visiting. In similar sense, high percentage (89.5%) of married respondents also shared this sentiment.

One single most important variable that influences perception of safety at a destination is age (Floyd & Pennington-Gray, 2004: p. 1050). This is partly as a result of their extent of information assimilation and past experiences. There was no significant relationship with pre- trip perception of safety of inbound tourists to the destination at *p-value* of 0.998. Otherwise, it is observed from table 3 that, 92.9 percent of the youthful age group (18-35) perceived the destination to be safe before visiting. In a similar instance, the adult age group (36-50) highly shared similar feeling also forming 92.9 percent. Again, more than 90 percent (93.3%) of the age category 51 and above also perceived the destination as safe before making the trip.

The continents of origin of inbound tourists and their pre- trip perception of safety of the destination returned no significant relationship at *p-*

*value* of 0.966. It is, however, worth noting that high percentages of respondents from the American, Asian and European countries had the perception that the destination was safe prior to their visit. Respondents from the Americas made up of 91.7 percent, those from Asia forming 93.8 percent and the Europeans, forming 93.2 percent. All the (100%) respondents from the African continent perceived the destination to be safe. This could highly be attributed to similar social and economic settings of African inbound tourists' home country and that of the destination and Ghana as a whole.

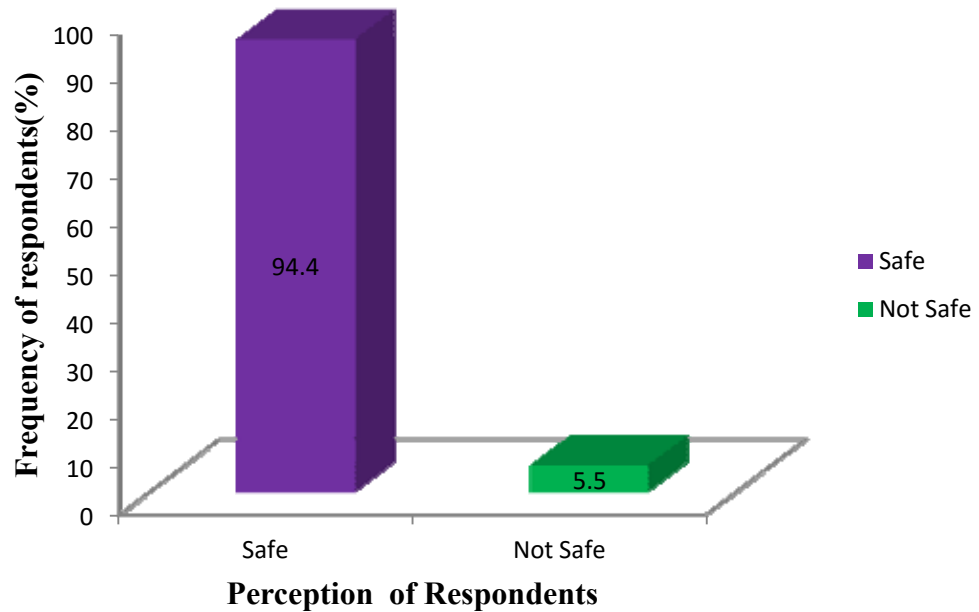
Though statistically there is no significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and pre-trip perception of safety of inbound tourists, findings conform to a study by Lepp and Gibson (2003) who made similar observation in their study of tourists' roles, perception and risks of international tourists.

### **Inbound tourists' overall perception of safety**

'Due to differences in social, cultural or economic settings of origin of inbound tourists and the destination, there is bound to be a feeling of uncertainty in the new environment in which the tourists find themselves'' (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005: p. 224). There are likely to be differences in the food available, transport, accommodation facilities, sanitation levels and others. Tourists at their own level and in an attempt to be responsible for their own safety, adopt measures to reduce chances of falling victims to such circumstances.

Figure 4 indicates the overall perception by safety of inbound tourists about the destination. This shows how inbound tourists perceived the

destination in total after assessing the various safety attributes of the destination.



**Figure 5: Inbound tourist's overall perception of safety**

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

The figures depict that inbound tourists perceived the Mole enclave in the Northern Region to be safe. An overwhelming majority (94.5%) perceived the destination to be safe. This perception confirmed their pre-trip perception of safety about the destination (safe). This, again, confirms Boakye (2012) that Ghana (destinations in Ghana) is by and large perceived by inbound tourists as a safe destination. It can be argued that the destination is only but a small section of Ghana and that it is not generally appropriate to make conclusions drawing inferences to the entire nation. But it must be noted that the various destinations and their offerings come together to form the general perception of the country as a destination. This perception to a large extent raises the image

of the destination in particular and Ghana as a whole. It affirms the positive final outcome (safe) of the conceptual framework underpinning this work, “tourists’ assessment of safety model”.

This overwhelming and welcoming declaration about the destination has been arrived at despite the fact that the destination being part of the Northern Region of Ghana for many years has been bedeviled with countless issues of ethnic violence and has been classified as one of the worst regions in this regard in the history of the Ghana (DISCAP, 2002). In a similar instance, it is one of the regions in Ghana that records high incidence of Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) case (Ghana Health Services, 2006) which could be a disincentive to the destinations’ image as alluded by Kuo, Chen, Tseng, Ju, and Huang (2008) as the effect of a health-related outbreak on a tourism destination can have devastating impacts on the entire destination, ranging from image problems and to an overall destination competitiveness. Because tourists’ pre-trip conception of safety is a major determinant in travellers’ decision to visit a destination as posited by Beirman (2003), such information influences tourists’ behaviour to avoid or cancel planned trip to such a destination (Anderson, 1993). In general sense, this perception about the destination as being safe is arrived at, coming from the background that Africa and for that matter the destination is characterized by primitive conditions, war, terrorism, crime, fatal road accidents, crime, political and social instability as elucidated by Lepp, Gibson and Lane (2011).

It must be noted that the desire for tourists to revisit (54.7%) as shown in Figure 10 and recommend the destination to family and friends (93.8%) re-echo the fact that the destination is safe and give positive image to the



destination and can compete favourably as expressed by Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002), that positive image of a destination helps the decision maker to form awareness and can serve as a differentiating factor among competing destinations. The media reportage about the region alluding to the fact that it is notoriously bedeviled with security issues as a result of numerous ethnic conflicts is blown out of proportion and based on this perception, it has little or no negative effect on tourism at the destination. Planners and policy implementers of the destination can take advantage of that phenomenon to promote and raise the destination's image.

The Chi Square Test of Independence of the socio- demographic characteristics of the sample and the perception of safety at the destination has been presented in Table 4. It looks at gender, level of education, marital status, age, religion and the continent of origin of inbound tourists.

By the background characteristics with the overall perception of safety by inbound tourists, it is observed that there is no significant relationship between them. However, some patterns were observed.

With gender, it must be noted that a high percentage (94.9%) of males felt the destination was safe to visit. Similarly, high percentage (91.3%) of their female counterparts also perceived the destination to be safe for tourism.

Regarding educational attainment, all (100%) respondents with high school qualification perceived the destination was safe for tourism. About 88.7 percent of respondents with university or college qualification also perceived the destination to be safe while those with postgraduate qualification constituted 95.5 percent.

**Table 4: Inbound tourists' background characteristics by perception of safety**

Characteristics	Overall perceived safety of the destination				X <sup>2</sup> (df)	P-Value (P>0.05)
	Safe		Not safe			
	N	%	N	%		
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	56	94.9	3	5.1	0.202(df=1)	0.653
Female	63	91.3	6	8.7		
<i>Level of education</i>						
High school	36	100	0	0	4.804(df=2)	0.091
University/college	63	88.7	8	11.3		
Post graduate	21	95.5	1	4.5		
<i>Marital status</i>						
Single	85	94.4	5	5.6	0.393(df=1)	0.531
Married	34	89.5	4	10.5		
<i>Age</i>						
18-35	79	92.9	6	7.1	1.716(df=2)	0.424
36-50	25	89.3	3	10.7		
50+	15	100	0	0		
<i>Religion</i>						
Christian	76	93.8	5	6.2	0.620(df=3)	0.892
Atheist	31	91.2	3	8.8		
Agnostic	9	90.0	1	10.0		
Hindu	3	100	0	0		
<i>Continent of Origin</i>						
America	30	83.3	6	16.7	7.400(df=3)	0.060
Asia	15	93.8	1	6.2		
Africa	2	100	0	0		
Europe	72	97.3	2	2.7		

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

With regard to marital status and perception of safety at the destination, it was found that more than a third (94.4%) of unmarried respondents perceived the destination as safe for visiting while about 89.5 percent of the married respondents also shared this view.

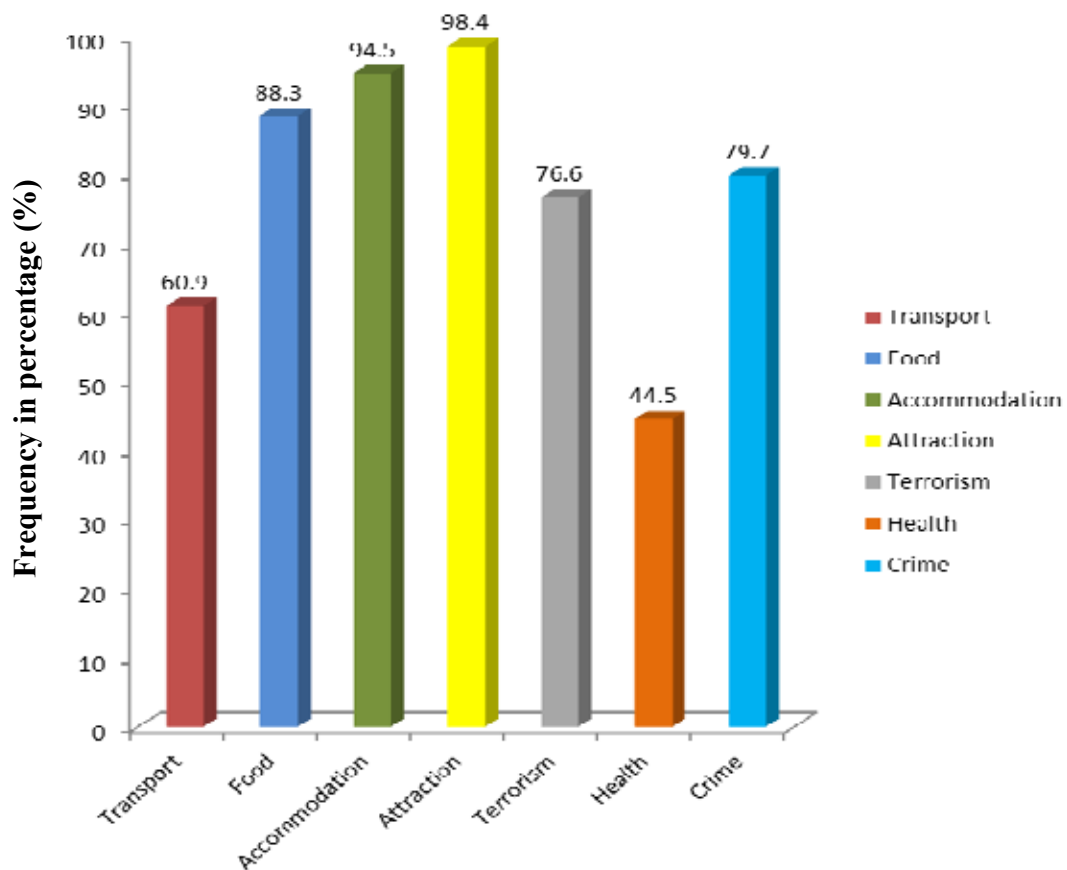
With regard to age, it is evident that, a high percentage (92.9%) of respondents who fall within age group 18- 35 perceived the destination as safe. In a similar instance, about 89.3 percent of sample from age group 36-50 also viewed the destination to be safe. All respondents within age group 51 and above perceived the destination as safe for tourism.

For religion and the perception of safety, it is noted that high percentage (93.8%) of Christians perceived the destination to be safe. This is not different from Atheist and Agnostic respondents as high percentages, (91.2%) and (90%) respectively also viewed the destination as safe. With Hindu followers, all the (100%) respondents perceived the destination to be safe.

Lastly, it is observed that more than a third (83.3%) of the respondents from America viewed the destination to be safe. It is also evident that all (100%) respondents from the African continent perceived the destination to be safe. This finding is not particularly strange because it could be as a result of the fact that they are in a destination that has similar socio-economic and socio cultural characteristics to their home countries.

### **Inbound tourists' perception of safety attributes**

This section of the thesis looks at the assessment of the various risk instances at the destination by the respondents. It looks at the perception of inbound tourists on transport, food, accommodation, attraction, crime, terrorism and health. This has been captured in Figure 6. It further shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents as against the various safety attributes.



**Figure 6: Perception of safety of some destination attributes**

Source; Fieldwork, January 2014

### **Attraction safety**

Attractions at every destination are the primary reason why tourists visit those destinations. They are the main pull factors that draw tourists from far and near to the destination. The Mole enclave has three main attractions that pull tourists to it. These are the Mole National Park, Larabanga Mosque and the Mystery Stone. Moving in and around the park are the main activities undertaken by tourists who visited the destination. The presence or absence of safety measures at these attractions shaped the perception of inbound tourists (respondents).

On the whole, the responses suggested that, the attractions at the destinations were perceived as safe for the tourists. About 126 respondents representing 98.4 percent perceived the attractions as safe. This overwhelming percentage of the respondents that perceived the attractions as safe attributed it to the measures put in place by attraction managers to ensure their safety. Reasons such as the “presence of knowledgeable and well organized tour guides”, “presence of warning signs”, “well trained armed guards” and “experience drivers on the safari tour” were mentioned.

It must, however, be pointed out that the remaining 1.6 percent who felt unsafe at the attractions attributed it to the abusive nature of the local people at Larabanga Mosque. According to the inbound tourists, their actions were a nuisance and harassing. This is not surprising given the fact that tourism at this site is not properly regulated and that everybody wants to cash in on anybody who steps the foot there especially, when one is seen as a stranger in their midst.

The dynamics of perceived attraction safety are explained as follows. It was observed that a high percentage (96.6%) of males constituting more than three quarters of the total male respondents perceived the destinations’ attractions to be safe. All the (100%) female respondents perceived the attractions at the destination to be safe.

It is observed that all the (100%) high school and postgraduate leavers perceived the attractions at the destination to be safe. This is not totally different from respondents with university degrees as high percentages (97.2%) shared the same sentiments.

With regard to marital status, it is observed that about (97.8%) of singles perceived the attractions at the destination to be safe. On the contrary, all the (100%) married respondents shared similar sentiments.

About 97.6 percent of respondents forming age group 18-35 perceived the destination's attractions to be safe. It is, again, worth noting that all (100%) respondents that form age gaps 36-50 and 51 and above perceived the attractions at the destination to be safe. This indicates that age is not associated respondents perception of the attraction.

With regard to religion, more than a third (94.1%) of atheist respondents felt the destination's attractions were safe. All the (100%) respondents professing Christianity, agnostic and Hindu beliefs perceived the destinations' attractions to be safe.

With continent of origin, it is observed that more than a third (94.4%) of Americans perceived attractions at the destination to be safe. It is, again, interesting to note that, all the respondents (100%) from the African, European and Asian continents perceived the attractions at the destination to be safe.

### **Accommodation safety**

All tourists require a form of accommodation facility to make their stay enjoyable and thereby, enhance their experience. Tourists to this destination patronized the various form of accommodation facilities available. It ranged from hotels, guest houses, hostels and home stay facilities. Depending on the required experience, accessibility, price, quality and other factors, tourists chose one ahead of the other. The availability or unavailability of adequate security measures in the accommodation facilities had a bearing on the perception formed by the inbound tourists about the safety of accommodation.

It is seen from Figure 6 that, the majority of the respondents (94.5%) perceived the accommodation facilities at the destinations were safe. This, according to them, is as a result of adequate safety measures put in place at these accommodation facilities to safeguard visitors' safety. They enumerated measures such as adequate security guards, proper lighting systems, availability of fire extinguishers, proper door locks, and isolation of the facilities from the local. The rest of the percentage (5.5%) who perceived the destination's accommodation facilities as not safe were mostly those inbound tourists who selected the home stay system. According to them, the doors to their rooms did not have proper security door locks and so make them stand the chance of getting robbed almost every day.

It is observed that a high percentage (84.7%) of males constituting more than three quarters of total male respondents perceived the destinations' accommodation facilities to be safe. It is, however, interesting to note that all the (100%) female respondents perceived accommodation facilities to be safe.

With level of education, it is observed that all (100%) of high school and postgraduates leavers perceived accommodation at the destination to be safe. This is not totally different from respondents with university degrees as high percentages (91.5%) shared same sentiments.

It is observed that more than 90 percent of singles perceived accommodation facilities at the destination to be safe. It is to be noted that this sentiment is similar to those shared by those who were married who constituted 94.7 percent.

About 95.2 percent of respondents forming age group 18-35 perceived the destination's accommodation facilities to be safe. In a similar instance,

about (92.9%) of respondents of age 36-50 also perceived the destinations' accommodation as safe. On the part of age 51 and above, all the respondents (100%) perceived accommodation facilities at the destination to be safe.

With regard to religion, 95.1 percent of Christian respondents felt the destination's accommodation facilities were safe while respondents with Atheist beliefs sharing similar sentiments constituted 94.1 percent. All the (100%) respondents professing Agnostic and Hindu beliefs perceived the destinations' accommodation facilities to be safe.

It is observed that 91.4% of Americans perceived accommodation at the destination to be safe. Similarly, high percentages of respondents from Europe (95.5%) also shared this sentiment. Interestingly, all respondents (100%) from the African and Asian continents perceived accommodation at the destination to be safe.

### **Food safety**

Tourists at a destination require food in order to be able to survive for the number of days they intend spending at the destination. This is because food is a necessity and an indispensable item in the life of tourists. It is evident that inbound tourists patronized the various food outlets at the destination like the restaurants, local food ventures (chop bars) and even from their own rations. Their perceptions about food at the destination were formed after patronizing food from these outlets.

As depicted in Figure 6, high a percentage of respondents (88.3%) perceived the destination's food to be safe. Several reasons were cited to back this claim. Notable among them were: "food was well cooked", "not fallen sick



yet after eating any food”, “being selective in what to eat”. It is interesting to note that a reason like “no risk no fun” was given to the fact that he or she is not afraid of patronizing food at the destination.

However, a total of 15 out of 128 respondents representing 11.7 percent perceived the destination’s food as unsafe. This assessment was arrived at because of some inbound tourists fell sick after patronizing food at the destination. Some sicknesses mentioned were diarrhoea, indigestion, stomach pain, gastrointestinal problems. Again, they perceived food to be prepared under unhygienic conditions. This, according to the inbound tourists, was a contributing factor to their sickness.

The majority of respondents perceiving the destination’s food to be safe could be attributed to the fact that tourists to this destination highly patronize restaurant and hotel food services rather than local food vendors. This is because the conditions under which these restaurants operate could be up to the required standard as compared the local food vendors.

The patterns of perceived food safety are illustrated as follows. A high percentage (84.7%) of male respondents perceived food at the destination to be safe. This was not different from their female counterparts as 91.3 percent also felt the same. It indicates that generally, more females felt safe patronizing the destination’s food than the male counterparts. This contradicts findings found by Lepp and Gibson (2003) that females perceive a greater degree of risk regarding food at a destination.

With regard to educational level, it is observed that all the (100%) of high school graduates perceived food at the destination to be safe. This is not

different from respondents with university and postgraduate degree as high percentages (83.1%) and (86.4%) respectively shared same sentiments.

It is observed that more than three quarters (84.4%) of singles perceived food at the destination to be safe. It is interesting to note that this sentiment is similar to the married as these respondents constituted 97.4 percent.

About 88.2 percent of respondents who fall within age group 18-35 perceived the destination's food to be safe. A little over 90 percent (92.9%) also perceived the destinations' food as safe. Similarly, a high percentage (80%) of respondents of age 51 and above also perceived food at the destination as safe.

With regard to religion, 88.9 percent of Christian respondents felt the destination's food was safe while respondents with Atheist beliefs constituted 94.1 percent. All the respondents professing Agnostic and Hindu beliefs perceived the destinations' food to be safe.

On the issue of origin of inbound tourists, it is observed that 86.1% of Americans perceived food at the destination to be safe. Similarly, high percentages of respondents from Asia (93.8%) and Europe (87.8%) also shared this sentiment. All the respondents (100%) from the African continent perceived food at the destination to be safe.

### **Transport safety**

As shown in Figure 6, 60.9 percent responded that the destination's transport system was safe. Some of the reasons assigned to this assertion were that they had not been victims of any road crash which has been identified by World Health Organization (WHO) as the number one killer of tourists.

However, it cannot be downplayed that respondents that perceived the destination's transportation system as not safe are not substantial and must be ignored. 50 respondents representing 39.1% constituted this group. In the respondents assessment, their reasons for the perception of the destination's transport as unsafe included "reckless driving", "bad nature of the destination's roads", "overloading", "poor vehicle condition", "disregard for road signs" and "unavailability of crash helmet for motor bikes". The reasons suggested are in line with that of White (2011), of Foundation for the Automobile and Society (FIA). In his report on international tourism and road deaths in the developing world, he made mention of unsafe road infrastructure, vehicles and dangerous driving as conditions contributing to road traffic injuries in lower and middle income countries and therefore, making these destinations unsafe for travellers.

It emerged from the study that respondents had used one transport mode or the other ranging from taxis, buses, trotro, motor bicycles, private cars and even bicycles at different frequencies. This is an indication that the tourist mix to this part of the country is predominantly non-institutionalized, as propounded by Cohen (1972), who are ready to patronize unstructured facilities. A high percentage of the respondents (77%) had used the public transport at the destination. The experiences gotten from the use of the destination's means and mode of transport generally informed them of the safety levels in terms of transport.

The high percentage of males (76.3%) constituting more than half of male respondents as against 47.8 percent of female respondents felt the destinations transport was safe. It indicates that generally, males felt safe patronizing the destination's transport than their female counterparts.

With regard to educational level, it is observed that, a little below 50 percent (48.6%) of high school graduates perceived transport to be safe at the destination. Respondents with university degree constituted 60.6 percent while those with postgraduate degrees also made up of 81.9 percent. These results show that one's perception of transport at the destination as "safe" increases as the educational level increases.

More than half (57.8%) of the unmarried respondents felt the destinations transport was safe. This is not different from the married respondents (68.4%) who also perceived transport to be safe.

A little over half (52.9%) of the respondents from 18-35 age category felt the destinations' transport was safe. Respondents from 36-50 category constituted 75 percent while age 51 and above constituted 80 percent.

With regard to religion, 56.8 percent of respondents that professed Christianity felt the destination's transport was safe. The results from Atheists and Agnostic followers were not different as a majority (64.7%) and (70%) respectively perceived transport at the destination to be safe. All the respondents (100%) of Hindu followers shared similar sentiments.

Again, it is observed that 72.2 percent of Americans perceived transportation at the destination to be safe. On the part of Asians, 62.5 percent felt transport at the destination was safe. On the part of Europeans, 54.1 percent shared this perception. It is to be noted that all the (100%) of the African respondents perceived transport at the destination to be safe. The reason being that the nature of vehicles and roads in their home countries are similar to that of the destination.

## **Summary**

The study examined four (4) safety attributes. These were attraction, accommodation, food and transport safety. It emerged that considerable percentages; attraction (98.4 %), accommodation (94.5%), food (88.3%), transport (60.9%) of respondents perceived these attributes to be safe at the destination.

## **Crime status**

In the words of Pizam and Mansfield (1996), ‘crime is perpetrated at tourists throughout the world everyday’ (p. 23). This indicates that no single destination is immune from incidences of crime against tourists (Garraway, 2002: p. 56). It is a ‘‘traditional’’ risk associated with almost all tourism destinations around the world.

It is evident from figure 6 that majority of the respondents (79.7%) responded they were not exposed to crime at the destination and that, they perceived the destination to be safe from criminal activities. One possible reason for this assertion is that, the main hotel accommodation (Mole Motel) that houses the majority of the tourists at the destination is situated right in the center of the park which is about six kilometres from the nearest town (Larabanga). This makes it difficult for locals to get regular or frequent encounter with the tourists. This has the tendency to insulate the inbound tourists from being victims of criminal acts.

It must also be pointed out that there is almost no ‘‘night life’’ and shopping centers at the destination that will put tourists to high risk of crime as speculated by Brunt, Mawby and Hambly (2000) that tourists become victims

of crime as a result of simple fact that they spend more time outdoors, sightseeing, dining and shopping.

It must again be noted that, inbound tourists to the destination resolved to be responsible for their own safety against criminal acts and therefore, took up personal measures. Some of these measures mentioned were: “I don’t move alone at night”, “I don’t move to crowded spaces”, “I don’t show off valuables” and “I don’t get on empty trotro and taxi”. These and many other behaviour patterns adhered to by tourists made them feel safe from criminal activities, confirming Mansfield and Pizam’s (2006) study that certain tourist behaviour patterns make them easy prey for criminal victimization.

The patterns of perceived crime status of inbound tourists are presented as follows. It is observed that, about 81.4 percent of the male respondents perceived that the destination was safe from crime. About 78.3 percent of their female counterparts also shared this sentiment.

It is again observed that about 82.9 percent of respondents with high school qualification perceived the destination to be safe from crime while 77.5 percent of university or college graduates also shared this perception. On the part of the postgraduate degree holders, the majority (81.8%) also perceived the destination to be safe from criminal activities.

About 78.9 percent of the unmarried respondents did not link crime with the destination. Similarly, 81.6 percent of married respondents also did not link crime with the destination.

With regard to age, about 77.6 percent of respondents from age group 18-35 responded the destination was safe from criminal activities. The respondents of age group 36-50 that perceived the destination to be safe from

crime constituted 82.1 percent while that of age group 51 and above constituted 86.7 percent.

It is observed that, 79 percent of Christians felt the destination was safe from crime. Atheist and Agnostic followers had 85.3 percent and 60 percent respectively. All respondents (100%) who professed Hinduism did not liken the destination to criminal activities.

With continent of origin, it is observed that 80.6 percent of Americans perceived the destination to be safe from crime. About 93.8 percent and 75.7 percent of Asians and Europeans respectively also perceived the destination to be safe from crime as well. All the (100%) respondents from the African continent perceived the destination to be safe from crime.

### **Terrorism status**

Ghana as a destination has no history of terrorist attack. The destination is, however, bedeviled with numerous ethnic conflicts (DISCAP, 2002). History of these incidents, tourists mentioned, had influence on the choice of the destination as to whether or not to visit.

It can be seen that 98.5% of the sample perceived the destination as safe from any potential terrorist attack. The reasons being that, the destination has no record of terrorist attack coupled with the fact that Ghana as a whole is peaceful and has no trace of terrorist attack. This indicates that, the tourists had a preconceived idea of the destination being safe from terrorist activities before selecting. It confirms the assertion made by Floyd (2003), Pizam and Fleischer (2002) that potential tourist will only select a destination that they felt was not a likely target of terrorist attack.

The main reason cited by the 1.5% of the respondents was that, terrorism is possible everywhere and that it could happen at the destination. This means that these respondents left this issue to chance because there was nothing they could do to stop it from happening.

The dynamics of perceived terrorism status at the destination are presented as follows. It is observed that, a little over a third (76.3%) of the male respondents perceived that the destination was safe from terrorism. About 76.8 percent of their female counterparts also shared this sentiment.

It is clear that about 62.9 percent of respondents with high school qualification perceived the destination to be safe from terrorism while 85.9 percent of university or college graduates also shared this perception. On the part of postgraduate holders, the majority (68.2%) also perceived the destination to be safe from terrorist activities.

About 73.3 percent of the unmarried respondents did not link terrorism with the destination. In a similar instance, 84.2 percent of married respondents also did not link terrorism with the destination.

With age, about 76.5 percent of respondents from age group 18-35 responded the destination was safe from terrorist activities. Respondents of age group 36-50 that perceived the destination to be safe from terrorism constituted 82.1 percent while that of age group 51 and above constituted 66.7 percent.

With regard to religion, 75.3 percent of Christians felt the destination was safe from terrorism. Atheist and Agnostic followers had 79.4 percent and 80 percent respectively of respondents who did not link the destination with terrorism. On the part of Hindu followers, more than half (66.7%) of the sample perceived the destination was safe from terrorist activities.



With continent of origin, it is observed that 72.2 percent of Americans perceived the destination to be safe from terrorism. About 81.2 percent and 78.4 percent of Asians and Europeans respondents respectively also perceived the destination to be safe from terrorism as well. Exactly half (50%) of the respondents from the African continent perceived the destination to be safe from terrorist activities.

### **Health status**

As put forward by Kozak (2007), health related risk perceptions have been regarded as significant factors that determine travel decision. At the destination, an outbreak of any form of disease greatly affects the perception of inbound tourists. It was revealed from the survey that some percentage (20.6%) of the sample had been affected by some ailments like Diarrhoea, Cold, Malaria and stomach pains upon visiting the destination. A little over half (52.3%) of the sample expressed concern that they had fear of contracting diseases at the destination due to the nature of the environment especially, because of the harsh weather condition that was prevalent at the destination.

It is viewed from Figure 6 that, 44.5 percent of the respondents perceived the destination as safe from health hazards. This indicates that more than half (55.5%) of the respondents perceived the destination as unsafe. The perception of the destination as not safe from health hazard is attributed to that fact that some of the respondents might have been affected by some diseases such as Cold, Diarrhoea, Malaria, gastrointestinal infections as enumerated by inbound tourists confirming findings by Breda and Costa (2006), that people

are normally susceptible to health hazards while travelling and can range from minor upsets to infections.

In a similar instance, it could be said that the tourists had prior knowledge about the destination's history of outbreak of some diseases like, Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM), Cholera, Guinea Worm, Onchocerciasis, Yellow Fever, coupled with its absence of better health facilities through their personal research conducted before visiting. In view of this, the respondents mentioned that they took measures to safeguard their health before visiting the destination.

It is observed that, a little over a half (56.9%) of male respondents perceived that the destination was safe from health hazards. With the female respondents, a little over a quarter (35.3%) also shared this sentiment.

With regard to level of education, it is observed that about 48.6 percent of respondents with high school qualification perceived the destination to be safe from health risks while 46.4 percent of university or college graduates also shared this perception. On the part of postgraduate holders, 36.4 percent also perceived the destination to be safe from health risks.

About 39.8 percent of the unmarried respondents did not link health risks with the destination. In similar instance, 57.9 percent of married respondents also didn't link terrorism with the destination.

About 45.8 percent of respondents from age group 18-35 responded that the destination was safe from health risks. Respondents of age group 36-50 that perceived the destination to be safe from health risks constituted 46.4 percent while that of age group 51 and above constituted 40 percent.

With regard to religion, 48.1 percent of Christians felt the destination was safe from health risks. Hindu and Agnostic followers had 66.7 percent and 60 percent respectively of respondents who did not link the destination with health risks. On the part of Atheist followers, a little over quarter (31.2%) of the sample perceived the destination was safe from health risks.

On origin of inbound tourists, it is seen that 36.1 percent of Americans perceived the destination to be safe from health hazards. About 68.8 percent and 43.1 percent of Asians and Europeans respondents respectively also perceived the destination to be safe from health hazards as well. All the (100%) respondents from the African continent perceived the destination to be safe from health risks.

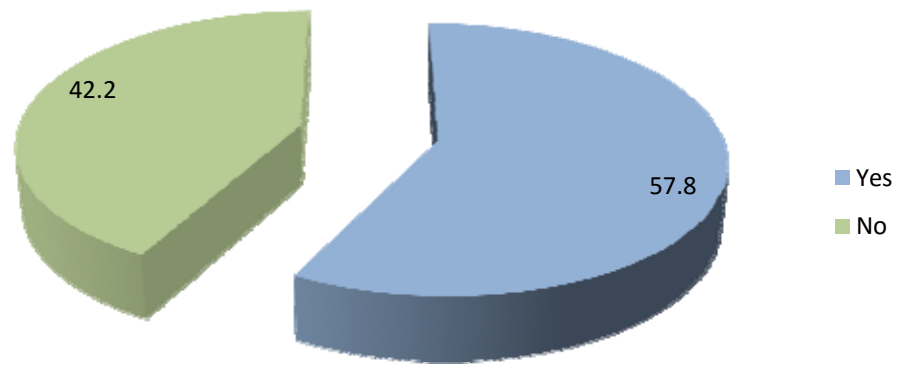
### **Summary**

The study examined three (3) security issues. These were crime, terrorism and health. It emerged that, for each of terrorism and crime, more than half of the respondents perceived the destination to be safe from these issues. However, less than 50 percent of the respondents perceived health situation at the destination to be in good standing

### **Risk perceptions**

Tourists form impressions about a destination's safety before they embark on the trip to the destination (Swarbrooke, 2002). Based on this information, the destination could either be perceived as safe or unsafe. However, depending on what the tourist seeks for, the trip could still be made. At the destination, after the tourist has gone through some activities or has

patronized some services and has seen the reality on the ground, the tourist's initial assessment could be made as to whether or not he or she is exposed to some risks or not.



**Figure 7: Perceived exposure to risk**

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

It can be seen from Figure 7 that, 57.8 percent of the respondents indicated that they were exposed to risks at the destination. With this, it could be real or perceived risk. Meaning, an incident had happened to them at the destination or still holds the views as expressed by Garraway (2002) that few destinations, if any, are immune from harassment and crime. So even if it is a perceived risk, they still hold on to the fact that it is inevitable and they can be victims of such circumstances. Again, it can be said that, their idea of being exposed to risk at the destination might have been informed by their pre-conception about the destination that was gained from the various information sources as noted by Tasci and Gartner (2007) that media (source of

information) is particularly influential-altering people's perception of a destination.

The remaining 42.2 percent who thought they were not exposed to any risk at the destination can be likened to risk neutral tourists (Roehl and Fesenmaier, 1992). Such persons do not consider any risk associated with travel or their destination. This group tends to seek more excitement and adventure in their travel or vacation experiences. They could also be likened to Drifters and Cohen (1972) who are described as risk seekers who do not care about whether conditions at the destination are favorable or not. This category of persons mingle a lot with the locals and also tend to ignore caution even if there are obvious risks. Relating it to Cultural Theory of Risk, this percentage of the respondents match with the "individualists group" who perceive risk as an opportunity. They see risks as prospects for attaining new heights in life and will wholeheartedly embrace them even at the expense of their lives. As explained by Lepp and Gibson (2003), these groups could be novelty seekers because they tolerate high levels of risk at the destination and may pretend not to see even if those risks are persistent at the destination.

Background characteristics with perceived exposure to risk of inbound tourists revealed no significant relationship between them. Despite these findings, some patterns were observed. With gender, it was seen that 61% of the male sample felt they were exposed to one risk or the other at the destination and 55.1% of the female counterparts also expressed the same sentiments. This finding indicates that more male respondents were risk averse compared to the female respondents.

With level of education, it is observed that more than half (60%) of respondents with high school education expressed they were exposed to risks at the destination while less than half (40.8%) of sample with university or college educational level felt same. Exactly 50 percent of the sample with postgraduate education also perceived that they were exposed to risks at the destination.

**Table 5: Inbound tourists' background characteristics by perceived exposure to risk**

Socio-demographics	N	Percentages		X <sup>2</sup> (df)	P-Values (P>0.05)
		Yes %	No %		
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	59	61	39	0.249(df=1)	0.618
Female	69	55.1	44.9		
<i>Age</i>					
18-35	85	58.8	41.2	0.896 (df=2)	0.639
36-50	28	60.7	39.3		
51+	15	46.7	53.3		
<i>Level of education</i>					
High school	35	60	40	0.672 (df=2)	0.715
University/college	71	40.8	59.2		
Post graduate	22	50	50		
<i>Marital status</i>					
Single	90	58.9	41.1	0.034 (df=1)	0.854
Married	38	55.3	44.7		
<i>Religion</i>					
Christian	81	55.6	44.4	7.457 (df=3)	0.59
Atheist	34	50	50		
Agnostic	10	90	10		
Hindu	3	100	0		
<i>Continent of origin</i>					
America	36	44.4	55.6	11.243 (df=3)	0.30
Asia	16	87.5	12.5		
Europe	74	59.5	40.5		
Africa	2	0	100		

Source: Fieldwork, January, 2014

With regard to marital status, it is evident from table 5 that 58.9 percent of the respondents who were singles felt they were exposed to risks at the

destination as against 55.3 percent of the married sample who also expressed similar sentiments. It could be attributed to the that a higher percentage of singles feeling exposed to risks at the destination is as a result of some activities at the destination they could indulge in because they are without companies or wards which may be risky.

A little over half (58.8%) of the respondents within age bracket 18-35 felt they were exposed to risks at the destination whereas 60.7 percent of age group 36-50 expressed similar feelings. Less than half (46.7%) of age category 51 and above perceived to be exposed to risks at the destination. It was seen that over 50 percent of respondents within age bracket 18-35 forming the youthful group expressed they were exposed to risks at the destination. This percentage exhibited could be attributed to the fact that this group is adventurous and may fall prey to many negative incidents. On the contrary, the percentage (46.7%) exhibited by the adult group could be as a result of experience gathered over time and it is in agreement with Mazursky(1989).

It is clear from Table 5 that, more than half (55.6%) of the respondents who professed Christianity felt they were exposed to risks at the destination while exactly half (50%) of Atheist believers felt the same. However, overwhelming percentages (90% and 100%) of samples with Agnostic and Hindu beliefs respectively, also felt they were exposed to one risk or the other at the destination.

Pertaining to the origin of respondents, it is observed from the findings in Table 5, that less than half (44.4%) of respondents from America felt they were exposed to risks at the destination while 59.5 percent of respondents from Europe expressed the same sentiments. More than half (59.5%) of the

respondents from Europe also felt they were exposed to risks at the destination. It is, however, interesting to note that there were no respondents from the African continent that felt they were exposed to any risk at the destination. It could be attributed to the fact that the destination and for that matter Ghana has socio-cultural and socio-economic structures similar to that of their origin and therefore, relieve them of any fear.

This finding of no significant relationship between background characteristics and perceived exposure to risks at the destination is in conformity with findings by Sonmez and Graefe (1998b) in their study on future travel behaviour from past travel experience and perceptions of risk and safety in the United States.

### **Risk reduction strategies**

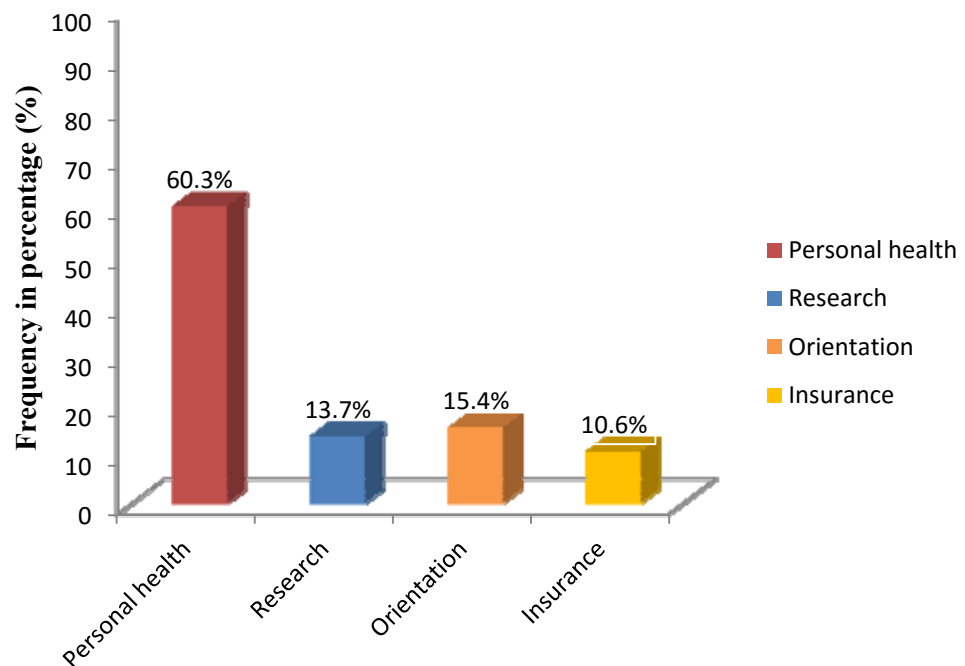
#### **Pre – trip risk reduction strategies**

According to Mitchell et al. (1999), risk reduction or better still “risk handling” is most often explained as a process by which consumers seek to reduce the uncertainty or costs of an unsatisfactory decision. For the fear of the unknown and avoidance of possible exposure to risks at the destination, potential tourists make the attempt at adopting several risk reduction strategies within the reach of the individual who is embarking on the trip. In other instances such measures are pre-requisite before one could be allowed entry into a destination.

The various risk reduction strategies adopted by the respondents of the survey before making trip to the destination are presented in Figure 8. These were personal health security, research, orientation and securing personal



insurance. It is seen that these risk reduction strategies put in broad headings were adopted notwithstanding the fact that their pre-trip perception of safety about the destination was positive. This is because they deemed it fit to always insulate themselves against the unknown. As suggested by Law (2006), several risk reduction strategies for dealing with pandemics, terrorists, are adopted by tourists to be safe.



**Figure 8: Pre-trip risk reduction strategies**

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

It is seen from Figure 5 that a section of the inbound tourists (60%) took action to safeguard their health before visiting the destination. These were prophylaxis taken to prevent various diseases as suggested by World Health Organization (2004). The key among them that were mentioned were Yellow and Dengue Fever Vaccination, Hepatitis A and B vaccination, Anti-Malaria Prophylaxis, Vitamin Supplement and Tapeworm Medications. It is as a result

of the negative perception these groups have about Africa as a continent bedeviled with many diseases (Lepp, Gibson & Lane, 2011) and therefore, the need to take preemptive measures to safeguard themselves. This, according to them, is to insulate themselves against some common diseases that are found at the destination and Ghana as a whole. Medical examinations were also mentioned as health measure to be sure that inbound tourists' immune system will be strong to face the weather condition that is found in Ghana and particularly, the Northern Region.

Another risk reduction strategy that is worth mentioning is "research" undertaken by the tourist to be sure that the destination is safe before making a decision to visit. This constituted 13.7 percent of the pre-trip risk reduction strategies. From the findings, it is observed that inbound tourists wanted to know much about the destination's risks levels before visiting. Some specific research activities mentioned by inbound tourists included reading guide books, independent travel reviews and conducting internet searches. These confirm the findings by Mitchell et al, (1999).

Purchasing insurance was another strategy that was adopted by a section of the tourists that visited the destination. This constituted 10.5 percent of various risk reduction strategies. This confirms finding by Mitchell et al (1999) as this is done to ensure that in case there is any loss at the destination visited, they could be compensated when they are back in their home region because tourists generally are not likely to return to the destination to press criminal charges against their perpetrators.

Orientation (15.4%) was another risk reduction strategy adopted by inbound tourists to reduce chances of becoming victims of any risks at the

destination. This was mostly mentioned by young student volunteer visitors who visited the destination for volunteering purposes and make their length of stay at the destination quite longer than the average tourist. This group is mostly integrated into the local society and has close contact with local people. Therefore, they are taken through this exercise to educate them on expectations in the local community in order to integrate them well into the society to avoid being at risk to many dangers.

**Table 6: Background Characteristics by Pre-trip risk reduction strategies**

Socio-Demographic	Personal health		Research Orientation		Orientation		Purchased Insurance		X <sup>2</sup> (P-Value)
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<i>Purpose of Visit</i>									
Business	2	1.6	0	0	0	0	1	0.8	106.505
Education	5	3.9	1	0.8	12	9.4	1	0.8	(0.000*)
Vacation	114	89.1	28	21.9	8	6.2	21	16.4	
Visit Family and Friends	16	12.5	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	
Volunteer	8	6.2	3	2.3	16	12.5	0	0	
<i>Gender</i>									
Male	67	52.3	21	16.4	21	16.4	11	8.6	8.052
Female	78	60.9	12	9.4	16	12.5	13	10.2	(0.90)
<i>Level of Education</i>									
High School	41	32.1	6	4.7	15	11.7	2	1.6	12.810
University/College	80	62.5	19	14.8	18	14.1	13	10.2	(0.119)
Post Graduate	24	18.8	8	6.2	4	3.1	9	7.0	
<i>Age</i>									
18-35	97	75.8	19	14.8	31	24.2	5	3.9	36.136
36-50	31	24.2	10	7.8	5	3.9	8	6.2	(0.000*)
50+	17	13.3	4	3.1	1	0.8	11	8.6	
<i>Continent Of Origin</i>									
America	38	29.7	9	7.0	8	6.2	9	7.0	13.173
Asia	18	14.1	4	3.1	1	0.8	7	5.5	(0.357)
Europe	87	68.0	20	15.6	28	21.9	8	6.2	
Africa	2	1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

\*The percentages do not total 100% because respondents chose more than one option source.

By the background characteristics with pre-trip risk reduction strategies adopted by inbound tourists, it was observed that apart from the “purpose of visit” and “age” that produced significant relationship, the rest of the socio-demographics (gender, continent of origin and level of education) returned no significant relationship.

From Table 6, it was found that 89.1 percent of respondents who took personal health preventive measures were vacation visitors. It contributed the highest value amongst the purpose of visits category. This could be attributed to the fact that vacationers engage in numerous activities at the destination which could be detrimental to their health and therefore there was the need to protect themselves in that regard in order not to contract any diseases. It is observed that education and volunteer visitors made up 3.9 percent and 6.2 percent respectively. To them, it was found that such measures are deemed compulsory for such category of visitors who visit Africa to prevent them from contracting diseases.

It is, again, seen from Table 6 that, 62.5 percent of respondents who adopted the use of this strategy were university or college graduates. It could be that they fell within the group who had come for educational and volunteering purposes and may stay a bit long at the destination and therefore needed such measures to insulate themselves. The European group was made up of 68.0 percent followed by the Americans with 29.7 percent. Tourists from Africa also took this measure to protect themselves.

With regard to research, it is seen that more males (16.4%) undertook research than their female counterparts (9.4%). Many university (14.8%) and postgraduate (6.2%) scholars undertook research before visiting the

destination. This indicates that research increases as one educational level increases. The 18-35 age category which is the youth bracket contributed 14.8 percent and was the highest in the category. This could be as a result that the youth are abreast of technology and may be students who conduct much research. The respondents from Africa did not conduct any research about the destination before visiting. It may be because they perceived similar socio-cultural background to their home country(s) and therefore, needed no research.

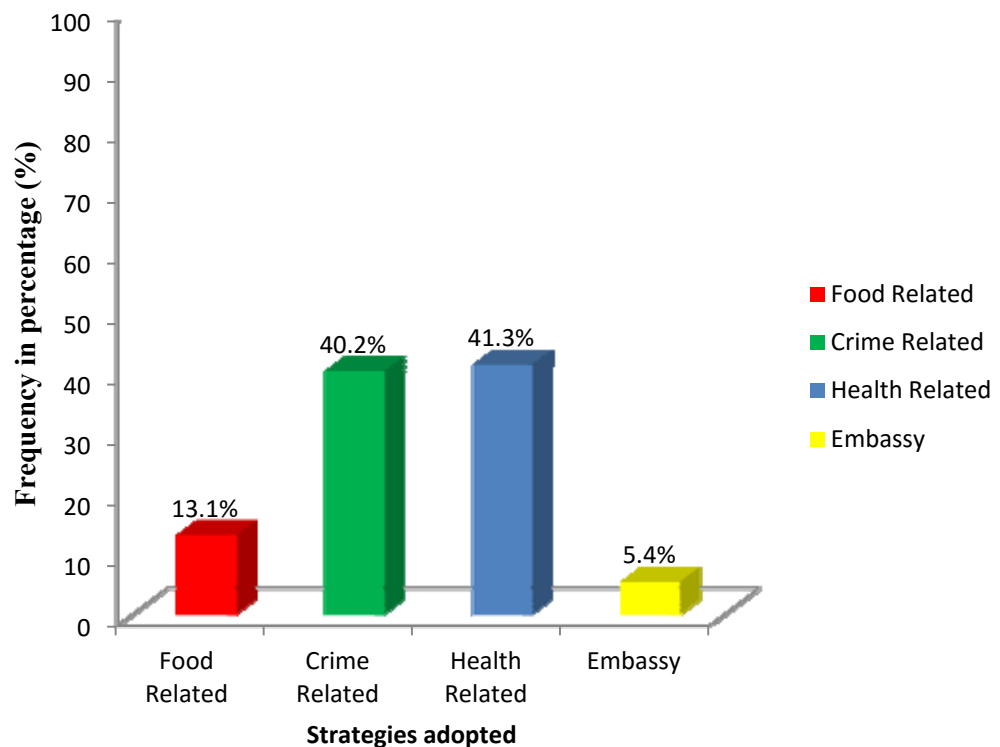
It is seen from Table 6 that vacation visitors constituted 16.4% of this category. Per the reason of their travel, they are likely to fall prey to many negative circumstances and therefore, take this measure in order to regain any lost item back. It was however, absent in the volunteer and just 0.8% in educational visitors because these are mostly students who may not afford the cost of purchasing insurance. More females (10.2%) insured themselves than males (8.6%). From the age category, greater percentage (8.6%) of age 51 and above visitors purchased travel insurance. It may be a result of the fact that this group of people had the means and can afford this and more cautious in their dealings.

With respect to orientation, it is seen from Table 6 that educational and volunteer visitors contributed greater percentages (9.4%, 12.5%). High school and university graduates also constituted 11.7 percent and 14.1 percent respectively. Age group within 18-35 also constituted 24.2 percent, the highest in the category. It could be deduced that all these categories are students and volunteers who are taken through some level of training or workshop to equip them with the necessary information to keep them from falling into any risky

situation at the destination. America and Europe constituted 6.2 percent and 21.9 percent respectively to the sample. These are student volunteers from these origins.

### **Risk reduction strategies at the destination**

Strategies adopted by the respondents to reduce risks while at the destination have been captured in Figure 9. These are the actions taken by individual tourists to prevent themselves from potential risky situations that could compromise on their safety and thereby distorting their expected satisfaction. From figure 6, it is observed that those measures border on health, food and crime avoidance strategies.



**Figure 9: Risk reduction strategies at the destination**

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

Figure 9 shows explicitly risk reduction strategies adopted by the inbound tourists while at the destination. It is observed that a section (13.1%) of these strategies bordered on food related strategies. These were individual actions taken to insulate themselves from potential food related risks. Some of the strategies mentioned to reduce food related risks were that, some tourists stayed away from foods from local food vendors. This is because they perceived food from the local vendors as not properly prepared under hygienic conditions and to inbound tourists, it is dangerous to eat from them. They only patronized the restaurants and the hotels as they perceived them to guarantee some level of safety. Others were the avoidance of eating cold foods and salad preparations.

Inbound tourists again adopted risk related strategies (40.2%) to reduce the propensity of being victims to crime at the destination. Some of these strategies included: keeping valuables under lock, avoiding walking alone at night, staying away from crowded areas and using less sophisticated gadget, especially mobile phone. This is in consonance with findings by Brunt, Mawby and Hambly (2000). It can be reported that these actions were taken to prevent potential robbery or thievery from happening to them as it is seen as factors that make tourists fall prey to criminal activities at a destination.

Another interesting crime related risk reduction strategy mentioned by inbound tourists was that, some tourists said they behaved as though they were Ghanaians. Tourists try to imitate the behaviour of the locals in order to be seen as one of them and thereby exempting them from some attacks from criminals. This was mentioned by the only two Africans that formed part of this survey. Per their complexion, potential offenders may not find it easy to

identify them as non-Ghanaians. However, if they were whites, this risk reduction strategy could be said not to be feasible under this circumstance because of the difference in complexion.

It is, again, noted that some respondents adopted movement with local friends as a risk reduction strategy at the destination. This is a phenomenon whereby tourists are seen moving mostly with local boys who are at many times found loitering around at the attractions. As noted by Boakye (2010), this could be as a result of the fact that these local friends provide them a sense of immunity from being victimized.

Another strategy that was employed bordered on health related strategies (41.3%). It can be found that respondents mentioned strategies such as the use of mosquito repellent cream or spray and sleeping under mosquito treated nets as risk reduction strategies because it is to immune them from mosquito carrying diseases like Malaria, Yellow and Dengue Fever which are classified as tropical diseases and can be considered as a common disease at the destination. Mention was also made of the use of hand sanitizers and sun block or sunscreen to prevent excessive burning of the sun.

Lastly, consultation with the embassy (5.4%) was another risk reduction strategy that was adopted by inbound tourists at this destination. This, according to them, is to facilitate prompt action from the embassy in case they needed assistance. To them, the Ambassadors or the High Commissioners are there to ensure their safety because they are under their care while here in Ghana.



**Table 7: Background Characteristics by Risk Reduction Strategies at the Destination**

Socio-demographics	Food Related Strategy		Crime related strategy		Health related strategy		Embassy consultation		X <sup>2</sup> (P-Value)
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	<i>Purpose of Visit</i>								
Business	0	0	1	0.8	2	1.6	0	0	90.263
Education	1	0.8	6	4.7	8	6.3	7	5.5	(0.000*)
Vacation	35	24.6	95	74.8	90	70.9	1	0.8	
Visit Family and Friends	2	1.6	2	1.6	12	9.4	0	0	
Volunteer	1	0.8	1	0.8	11	8.7	2	1.6	
<i>Gender</i>									
Male	13	10.2	65	51.2	56	44.1	6	4.7	10.081
Female	26	20.5	59	46.5	67	52.8	4	3.1	(0.039*)
<i>Level of Education</i>									
High School	8	6.3	34	26.8	35	27.6	2	1.6	5.995
University/ College	24	18.9	67	52.8	69	54.3	7	5.5	(0.648)
Postgraduate	7	5.5	23	18.1	19	15.0	1	0.8	
<i>Age</i>									
18-35	24	18.9	79	62.2	83	65.4	7	5.5	6.202
36-50	8	6.3	33	26.0	24	18.9	3	2.4	(0.625)
50+	7	5.5	12	9.4	16	12.6	0	0	
<i>Continent Of Origin</i>									
America	12	9.4	36	28.3	35	27.6	4	3.1	9.298
Asia	8	6.3	15	11.8	12	9.4	0	0	(0.677)
Europe	18	14.2	71	55.9	75	59.1	36	4.7	
Africa	1	0.8	2	1.6	1	0.8	0	0	

Source; Fieldwork, 2014

\*The percentages do not total 100% because respondents chose more than one option source.

With background characteristics and pre-trip risk reduction strategies adopted by inbound tourists, it is observed that apart from ‘purpose of visit’ that produced significant relationship, the rest of the socio-demographics (gender, continent of origin and level of education) returned no significant relationship.

It can be seen that many of the respondents who adopted much food related risk reduction strategies were vacationers (27.6%). However, it appeared that education and volunteer visitors adopted less food related risk reduction strategies. It could be that they have familiarized themselves with the new environment. More females (20.5%) adopted food reduction risk strategies than the male counterparts (10.2%). This is in support of the findings by Lepp and Gibson (2003) that females perceive greater risks regarding food at a destination.

University or college graduates adopted much food related risk reduction strategies constituting 18.9 percent as well as age bracket 18-35 which also constituted 18.9 percent. This shows that respondents with higher education and were singles were cautious of contracting food related disease at the destination. Europeans adopted much of these risk reduction strategies (14.2%) than tourists from other continents.

With crime related risks, vacationers to the destination adopted many of the risk reduction strategies. It constituted 74.8 percent. This is because they were mostly there for leisure activities and may very often come close to the local people. By the behaviour patterns, they may be susceptible to many potential offenders and that they adopted these measures to prevent themselves.

Males (51.2%) to the destination adopted much crime related strategies than females (46.5%). It could be that more males are outgoing than the females and therefore, required that they adopted these measures from potential crime. Under educational levels, university or college graduates adopted more of the risk reduction strategy (52.8%) and it confirms the age bracket 18-35 score (62.2%) who are youthful and explore the environment in which they

find themselves in and may be prone to many crime at the destination. Americans and Europeans adopted much of these strategies than the other nationals.

On health related risk reduction strategies, it was found out from Table 7 that more respondents (70.9%) visiting the destination for vacation purposes adopted these strategies. More females (52.8%) to the destination adopted these strategies than males (44.1%). This confirms Lepp and Gibson (2003) that females are much particularly concerned about their health issues than males. Many Europeans also adopted much of these strategies (59.1%) than the other nationals who visited the destination.

Patterns from purpose of visit indicate that education and volunteer visitors had higher collaboration with the embassies (7.1%). This is mostly due to the fact that the activities they undertake in the country are sanctioned by these outfits. It is further seen that university or college graduates and 18-35 age category contributed the highest percentages (5.5%) each to their respective groups. These people may fall under the visitors who were at the destination for education and volunteering purposes. America and Europe contributed 3.1 percent and 4.7 percent respectively. The reason is not farfetched because they undertake most volunteer service in Ghana.

### **Summary**

Generally, inbound tourists perceived the destination to be safe before visiting. This was confirmed by inbound tourists' assessment of the destinations' safety attributes as "safe". Chi Square analysis on both pre-trip perception of safety and overall perception of safety of inbound tourists by the

socio-demographics revealed no significant relationship between them. With regard to risk reduction strategies, inbound tourists identified in broad terms four (4) pre-trip risk reduction strategies. These are personal health related, research, orientation and insurance. At the destination, inbound tourists adopted food related, crime related, health related and Embassy consultation risk reduction strategies. The overall perception that the destination is a safe zone to visit affirms the final outcome of the conceptual framework. This is because this perception enhances inbound tourists required satisfaction and to a larger extent gives a positive image to the destination leading to high levels of willingness to revisit and to recommend the destination to others. The next chapter touches on summary, conclusions and recommendations from the findings

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter highlights the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It presents the summary and conclusions of major findings based on the objectives of the study. It further makes recommendations to improve on the safety of inbound tourists who visit the Mole National Park and other attractions that surround it in the northern region of Ghana.

#### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to assess inbound tourists' views on safety at Mole Enclave in the Northern Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study aimed at:

- 1 Assessing inbound tourists' pre-trip conception of safety at Mole Enclave.
- 2 Assessing inbound tourists' views on safety at Mole Enclave.
- 3 Evaluating perceived risks inbound tourists are exposed to at Mole Enclave.
- 4 Analyzing strategies adopted by inbound tourists to procure safety Mole Enclave.

The study was guided by Cultural Theory of Risk by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982). The framework was used to bring to bear the levels at which different people perceive risks. It explains that the values and worldviews of certain social-cultural contexts shape the individual's perception and evaluation of risks. The theory talks about how different groups of people perceive risks differently. These groups are the Hierarchists, Egalitarians, Fatalists and Individualists.

In furtherance, the study adopted a conceptual framework for studying tourists' assessment of safety model by Vengesayi (2003). It highlights four (4) main constructs. These are background characteristics of respondents, destination characteristics of which safety is embedded, tourists' assessment of safety and the outcome of the assessment of the destination safety levels.

The survey adopted the descriptive research design and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. In order to achieve the stated objectives of the study, data was collected from 128 inbound tourists to the Mole enclave. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The respondents were reached through the accidental sampling procedure. Data from the field was coded and analysed using SPSS version 16. Simple descriptive statistical presentations like frequency tables, bar charts, pie charts and cross tabulations were adopted to analyze the data. Again, Chi-Square Test for significant relationships in the background characteristics and pre-trip perception of safety, perceive exposure to risks and overall perceived safety of the destination were done.

## Summary of findings

The study examined inbound tourists' pre-trip perception of the destination's safety. It was observed that a clear majority (93%) of the respondents perceived the destination to be safe before deciding and making the trip. It was found that this perception held by inbound tourists stemmed out of the fact that Ghana as a whole is safe for tourism and that the Northern Region was no exception. It was again found that there was no significant relationship between pre-trip perception of safety of inbound tourists and their background characteristics.

In line with Mansfeld and Pizam (2006), the study examined seven main types of safety attributes that could characterize a destination. These were transport, food, accommodation, attraction, crime, terrorism and health. With regard to perceived transport safety, a majority (60.9%) of inbound tourists assessed it to be safe. This was mainly as a result of the fact that inbound tourists had not encountered any road accident upon visiting the destination. However, the (39.1%) who expressed otherwise, cited reckless driving, bad vehicle conditions, disregard for road signs and bad nature of roads as reasons why they perceive the destination's transport system as unsafe.

Another attribute that was examined was food. It came clear that 88.3 percent of the inbound tourists perceived food at the destination to be safe, citing the fact that food is well cooked. About 11.7 percent perceived food at the destination as not safe because inbound tourists had contracted or developed some sickness like Diarrhoea, Stomach Pain and Gastrointestinal problems for patronizing the destination's food.

With regard to accommodation, a clear majority (94.5%) of the total respondents perceived the accommodation facilities at the destination to be safe. This was as a result of safety and security measures put in place by the operators of these facilities like adequate security guards, proper lighting systems, availability of fire extinguishers, proper door locks etc. About 5.5 percent also perceived the destination accommodation facilities to be unsafe. These were mostly inbound tourists that adopted home stay accommodation facilities citing the main reason as improper door locks.

Another attribute examined was perceived attraction safety. It was evident that 98.4 percent as against 1.6 percent perceived the destination's attractions to be safe. This was as a result of safety measures put in place by attraction managers to ensure visitors' safety. For them, there were knowledgeable and well organized tour guides, presence of warning signs, well trained armed guards and experienced drivers on the safari tour. About 1.6 percent of respondents who felt unsafe at the attractions attributed it to the nuisance and harassing nature of local people at Larabanga.

With crime at the destination, the majority (79.7%) perceived the destination to be safe from crime issues. Inbound tourists resolved to be responsible for their own safety and took measures to protect themselves. They cited measures like "I don't move alone at night", "I don't move into crowded areas", "I don't show off valuables", "I don't get on empty trotro and taxi".

On the issue of terrorism, about 98.5 percent perceived the destination to be safe from terrorism. Specific reason assigned was that the destination has no record of terrorists attack coupled with the fact that Ghana as a whole is peaceful and has no trace of terrorist attack. The rest of the percentage (1.5%)



perceived the destination as not safe from terrorist attack. The reason assigned to this fact was that, terrorism is possible everywhere and could be perpetrated at any destination.

The last safety attribute examined was perceived health safety at the destination. It came clear that less than half (44.5%) of the respondents perceived the Mole enclave to be safe from health hazards. The rest of the percentage (55.5%) perceived otherwise. They cited that there is the contraction of diseases like Diarrhoea, Malaria, and Gastrointestinal infections upon visiting the destination.

On overall assessment of perceived safety at the destination by inbound tourists, it was evident that 94.5 percent perceived the Mole enclave to be safe for tourism activities. This was after respondents had assessed various safety attributes and security issues and arriving at this perception. The Chi-Square Test of Independence did not produce any significant relationship between perception of safety and the background characteristics of inbound tourists.

Finally, the study analysed risk reduction strategies employed by inbound tourists to ensure some level of safety. These strategies were put into two categories: pre-trip risk reduction strategies and at the destination risk reduction strategies. On pre-trip risk reduction strategies, it was found that a percentage (60.3%) of inbound tourists took measures to safeguard their personal health. These were mostly the prophylactic measures adopted like vaccinations against Yellow, Dengue, Malaria and Typhoid Fevers, Hepatitis A and B and Vitamin Supplement. About 15.4 percent, also, opted for orientation to be abreast of the structures at the destination as way of mitigating risks. Research as a strategy constituted 13.7 percent. This measure bordered on

internet search, reading guide books, information from friends and family and reviewing independent travel reviews. The last strategy was purchasing of personal insurance policy (10.6%). Apart from the purpose of visit and age of respondents, the rest of the socio-demographics produced no significant relation with pre-trip risk reduction strategies.

At the destination, it was, also, found out that respondents mostly adopted health related (41.3%) measures to stay safe. Some of these were: the use of mosquito nets in the bed room, use of mosquito repellent cream as well as the use of hand sanitizers. Another strategy was on crime related strategies constituted 40.2 percent. It was found that respondents resolved to keep valuables under lock, avoid walking alone at night, stay away from crowded areas, use of less sophisticated gadgets. Food related strategies constituted 13.1 percent. Measures such as avoiding food from local food vendors, avoiding salad preparations and cold foods were mentioned. The last strategy was on consultation with the Embassy constituting 5.4 percent. Apart from the purpose of visit and gender of respondents, the rest of the socio-demographics produced no significant relation with risk reduction strategies at the destination.

## **Conclusions**

Upon the findings arrived at, the following conclusions are drawn. Inbound tourists to the Northern Region of Ghana perceived the destination to be safe before making their trip to the destination. By and large, it could be concluded that inbound tourists bought into the general perception that Ghana is relatively a safe zone for tourism activities before choosing and making the trip. There was no evidence to conclude that there existed significant

relationship between background characteristics of inbound tourists and their pre-trip perceptions of safety about the destination.

Another conclusion that could be drawn was that, generally, the majority of inbound tourists perceived the destination to be safe. The result from chi-square test of independence produced no significant relationship between background characteristics of inbound tourists and their overall perception of safety as each of the background characteristics produced a value which was less than the significant level set (0.05).

Again, it was also concluded that it was only on perceived health hazard out of the seven safety attributes examined, that less than half (44.5%) of respondents responded as safe. It is an indication that inbound tourists had much concern about health status at the destination. Their main concern was being vulnerable to some diseases that are labeled as tropical diseases like Malaria Fever, Yellow Fever, and Dengue Fever. However, in each of the other safety attributes assessed, more than 50 percent of respondents perceived them to be safe.

Though the majority of inbound tourists perceived the Northern Region to be safe before embarking on the trip, they adopted some measure to insulate themselves even before embarking on the trip. Four broad categories were identified. These were personal health measures, research, orientation and insurance. It was clear that inbound tourists took measures to insulate themselves from contracting diseases from the destination. These were Yellow Fever vaccination, Hepatitis A and B prophylaxis, Anti Malaria drugs, Tape Worm medication and vitamin supplement. On the issue of research, it could be concluded that inbound tourists relied very much on guide books,

independent travel reviews, internet and information from family and friends. Again, mostly the volunteer respondents in the survey underwent some form of orientation programme before making their way to the destination for their volunteering activities. It can also be concluded that a section of the inbound tourists purchased some form of insurance in case any mishap happens to them, they can make claims when they go back to their home countries.

At the destination, inbound tourists adopted several risk reduction strategies to safeguard themselves from becoming victims of circumstances. There is enough evidence to conclude that they undertook food related strategies like avoiding food from local food vendors, avoiding cold foods and salad preparations. On crime related strategies, inbound tourists avoided walking alone at night, avoided crowded areas, kept valuables under lock and used less sophisticated gadgets.

With regard to health related strategy, there is evidence to conclude that inbound tourists adopted the use of mosquito repellent cream and spray, slept under mosquito nets, use of hand sanitizers and sun block or sunscreen. Inbound tourists, also, adopted the strategy of prompt consultation of the embassies for assistance when they were in need.

### **Recommendations**

After examining carefully the findings of this thesis and its implications, the following measures are recommended to improve the safety of inbound tourists who visit the Mole enclave in the Northern Region. The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to undertake exercise to eradicate conditions that potentially breed pathogens that

cause tropical disease like Yellow Fever, Malaria, Dengue Fever from the destination. The government in an attempt to improve health situation should, also, establish a modern health facility with state-of-the-art equipment that will cater for the health needs of people who visit the destination for tourism purposes.

Secondly, the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) should step in and implement policies and regulations that will streamline tourism activities at Larabanga. This is in view of the fact that management of tourism at Larabanga is left solely in the hands of the local people without proper monitoring and regulations. This has resulted in the situation where the locals try to benefit from every tourist that visits the site, making tourists feel cheated and harassed. Proper education should be carried out by GTA to enlighten the local people on the need to avoid harassing tourists which makes them uncomfortable at the destination.

The GTA should institute or implement measures to improve the quality of food service rendered by local food vendors to the tourist in particular and the general population, at large at the destination. This comes from the backdrop of the fact that inbound tourists entertained some level of fear patronizing food from local food vendors for the fear of getting sick because food from them are perceived as not prepared under good hygienic conditions. They should be equipped with proper skills of preparing and handling food in order to conform to the required standard expected of them.

It is also recommended that the MOT in collaboration with the Ministry of Roads and Highways works to improve upon the road networks at the destination to reduce the possible chances of involving in road accidents. The

major road that links the destination to the main Tamale-Techiman highway requires an absolute attention to put it in good shape to prevent frequent breakdown of visitors' vehicles when en route to the destination. Adequate and proper road signs or markings, are, also required to put the destination's roads in good shape for the use of motorists. The Motor Traffic and Transport Union (MTTU) should also enforce their laws that prohibit drivers from over speeding and over loading as inbound tourist had a major concern about this issue as capable of causing vehicular accidents.

### **Suggestions for further study**

Future research at the destination could focus on researching into detail any of the safety attributes that were assessed in this research. Detailing any of them will bring to bear some aspects of any of these attributes that could not be assessed by this study because of space and time constraints.

Again, future studies at the destination could concentrate on a segment of inbound tourists like the perception of backpackers rather than focusing on mainstream inbound tourists. Comparisons could be made between this segment and the mainstream tourists to further contribute to the literature.

Lastly, future studies at the destination can focus its attention on different classification of safety attributes other than that of Pizam and Mansfeld (1996) which looked at transport, food, accommodation, attraction, crime, terrorism and health (p. 5). Future studies at the destination can focus on the classification given by Tsaor, Tseng and Wang (1997) which classified risks as functional, physical, financial, and social risks (p. 804).

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## APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Dear sir/madam,

This study is being undertaken in connection with a Master of Philosophy thesis on Tourists views on safety at Mole enclave in Northern Region, as part of the requirements for an award of a post graduate degree.

I will be most grateful if you can take part in the study by providing responses to the questions below. This is a purely academic exercise and I can assure you of your anonymity and confidentiality. The results of this study can be provided to you upon request. I thank you for your co-operation.

Owusu Kontor Fofie

### General Information

Please tick only one (1)

1. Purpose of visit?

- |                                |        |              |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| 1. Business                    | [    ] | 2. Education | [    ] |
| 3. Vacation                    | [    ] | 4. Visit F&F | [    ] |
| 5. Others; please specify..... |        |              |        |

2. Is this your first time of visiting the region?

- |        |        |       |        |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| 1. Yes | [    ] | 2. No | [    ] |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|

3. How long have you been in the region?.....days

4. How did you get to know this destination?

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| 1. Recommendation by friends/ relative | [    ] |
| 2. Travel/ Tour Agent                  | [    ] |



3 Internet [ ]

4. Others, specify.....

5. Do you think you are exposed to any risk at this destination?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

**Module 1: Transport**

6. Have you used/joined any transport mode at this destination?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

7. If YES, what did you use? .....

.....

8. Do you feel safe when you walk by the roadside at the Mole Enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

9. Are the road signs adequate to ensure your safety at the Mole Enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

10. Do you feel safe on public transport at the Mole Enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

11. Have you come close involving in accident(s) at the destination?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

12. How do you assess transport at the Mole Enclave?

1. Safe [ ] 2. No safe [ ]

**Module 2: Food safety**

13. Have you taken any food at this destination?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

14. Where do you often take your meals?

- 1. Hotels [ ]
- 2. Restaurant [ ]
- 3. Local food vendors [ ]
- 4. Own ration [ ]
- 5. Others, specify.....

15. Have you ever fallen sick after eating any meal at this destination?

- 1. Yes [ ]
- 2. No [ ]

16. If 'Yes', what did you suffer from? .....

17. Do you fear eating food at this enclave?

- 1. Yes [ ]
- 2. No [ ]

If 'Yes', why? .....

.....

If 'No', why? .....

.....

18. How do you assess food at this enclave?

- 1. Safe [ ]
- 2. Not safe [ ]

**Module 3: Accommodation Safety**

19. Which form of accommodation facility(ies) have you been using at this enclave?

.....

20. Are there safety measures at the accommodation?

- 1. Yes [ ]
- 2. No [ ]

21. If 'Yes', indicate those measures.....

.....

22. Did you feel safe at the accommodation?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

23. If 'Yes' why? .....

.....

24. If 'No' why?.....

.....

**Module 4: Attraction Safety**

25. Which attraction(s) have you visited at the Mole Enclave?

1. Mole National Park [ ]

2. Larabanga Mosque [ ]

3. Mystery Stone [ ]

4. Others, specify.....

26. What do you find unsafe at the attraction(s) visited?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What do you find safe at the attraction(s) visited at this enclave?.....

.....

.....

27. Do you feel safe at the attraction(s) in this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

**Module 5: Crime and Terrorism**

28. Have you been a victim of any crime incident at this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

29. If 'Yes', what sort of crime happened to you?

.....

30. Do you think you are exposed to any crime at this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

31. If yes, what crime(s) do you think you are exposed to?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

32. Do you fear of any terrorist attack at this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

If 'Yes', why? .....

If 'No', why? .....

33. Do you fear of ethnic conflict at this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

34. Do you think this destination is safe from terrorist attacks?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

**Module 6: Health Safety**

35. Have you been affected by any disease(s) at this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

36. If yes, what disease(s) affected you?

.....  
.....  
.....

37. Do you fear of contracting any disease(s) at this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

38. If 'Yes', indicate the disease(s) you are afraid contracting?

.....  
.....  
.....

42. Did you take any preemptive measure to safeguard your health before visiting this enclave?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

43. If 'Yes', what did you do? .....

.....  
.....

44. Do you think this enclave is safe from health hazards?

1. Yes [ ] 2. No [ ]

**Module 7: Risk Reduction Strategy**

45. What strategies did you employ to reduce risk before visiting this enclave?

.....  
.....  
.....

46. What strategies do you employ to protect yourself while here in the enclave?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Module 8: Pre-trip perception of safety**

47. What was your perception of safety before visiting this enclave?

1. Safe [ ]                      2. Not safe [ ]

48. Has your perception been met?

1. Yes [ ]                      2. No [ ]

49. If Yes, how? .....

50. If No, how? .....

.....

**Module 9: Overall perception of safety**

51. Overall, how do you see safety in this enclave?

1. Safe [ ]                      2. Not safe [ ]

52. Will you return to this enclave?

1. Yes [ ]                      2. No [ ]

53. If Yes, why?.....

54. If No, why? .....

55. Will you recommend this enclave to other people?

1. Yes [ ]                      2. No [ ]

56. What do you think could be done to improve safety at Mole Enclave?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Module 10: Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

**Thick appropriately where necessary**

57. Gender ?

1. Male [ ]      2. Female [ ]

58. Level of education?

1. Primary/Basic [ ]      2. High School [ ]  
3. University/college [ ]      4. Post graduate [ ]  
5. Others: please specify.....

59. Marital status?

1. Single [ ]      2. Married [ ]  
3. Divorced [ ]      4. Widow(er) [ ]

60. Age?.....

61. Religion?

1. Christian [ ]      2. Islam [ ]  
3. Atheist [ ]  
4. Others specify.....

62. Country of origin?.....