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GENDER AS A MODERATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS AND TOURISM PATRONAGE INTENTION IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the moderating role of gender in the relationship between destination attractiveness and tourism patronage intention in Osun State, Nigeria, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a guiding framework. The research focuses on the culturally significant Osun Osogbo Festival to explore how gender dynamics influence the pathway from perceived attractiveness to tourism behavior in a developing economy context. A quantitative survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 180 purposively selected domestic tourists using structured questionnaires. Findings revealed a significant but weak negative correlation between traditional gender role beliefs and positive attitudes toward tourism ($r = –0.237$, $p = .001$), indicating that rigid gender norms may inhibit tourism receptiveness. Although destination attractiveness was rated highly ($M = 4.62$), it showed no significant correlation with patronage intention ($r = –0.015$, $p = .838$), suggesting that other barriers such as affordability, infrastructure, or safety concerns may mediate the relationship. Paired samples t-tests further confirmed a significant difference between gender role perceptions and tourism attitudes ($t(179) = –27.77$, $p < .001$), but not between destination attractiveness and intention ($t(179) = –1.33$, $p = .184$). The study contributes to the literature by contextualising the gender-tourism nexus within an African heritage setting and highlighting the limitations of existing tourism intention models in non-Western contexts. It recommends gender-sensitive tourism policies, infrastructure enhancement, and inclusive community engagement as strategies to improve tourism patronage. The findings underscore the applicability of TPB in explaining tourism behavior within culturally and gender-influenced environments in sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: *Tourism behaviour, Gender roles, Patronage intention, Destination attractiveness, Theory of Planned Behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become an essential pillar of economic growth and cultural integration in many countries, including Nigeria. It plays a multifaceted role in driving employment, generating foreign exchange, promoting heritage preservation, and stimulating regional development. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2023), Nigeria experienced a 20% increase in tourism activity in 2023 compared to the previous year, attracting over 1.2 million international visitors and recording more than 3 million domestic

trips. This surge underscores the potential of tourism as a viable tool for socioeconomic transformation and highlights the importance of identifying and analysing factors that shape tourism behaviour and decision-making, particularly tourism patronage intention**.**

Tourism patronage intention refers to an individual's conscious willingness or likelihood of visiting, revisiting, or recommending a particular destination. It is a key behavioural construct that tourism researchers and marketers use to forecast future visitation patterns and to evaluate the effectiveness of promotional strategies (Stylidis et al., 2022). This intention is shaped by a variety of factors, including past experiences, perceived value, socio-demographic characteristics, and perhaps most importantly, destination attractiveness.

Destination attractiveness encompasses the perceived value or appeal of a destination's attributes such as natural landscapes, historical monuments, cultural festivals, safety, accessibility, and hospitality infrastructure (Lee et al., 2020). When a destination is perceived as attractive, it enhances the emotional and psychological appeal to tourists, positively influencing their intention to visit. However, despite its recognized significance, destination attractiveness does not function uniformly across all demographic groups. One such moderating factor that has gained increasing scholarly attention is gender.

Gender plays a critical role in shaping tourists' perceptions, motivations, and decisions. Extensive empirical research suggests that men and women often exhibit different travel preferences, behaviours, and expectations due to socialisation processes, cultural norms, and psychological traits (Jeong & Kim, 2020). For instance, women tend to prioritise emotional satisfaction, cultural experiences, and personal safety, whereas men often express a stronger interest in recreational and adventure-oriented activities (Biswas & Sahoo, 2023). These gender-based preferences influence how destinations are perceived and the likelihood of patronage.

In many societies, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, **gender roles** are deeply embedded within the socio-cultural fabric, influencing access to resources, mobility, and exposure to leisure opportunities. In Nigeria, women's participation in tourism activities is often shaped by family obligations, religious expectations, safety concerns, and economic constraints (Adebayo & Olatunji, 2022). Consequently, understanding how gender moderate tourism behavior is essential for inclusive and equitable tourism planning.

Osun State in Southwestern Nigeria stands out as one of the country's most culturally significant tourism destinations. It is home to the famous Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove**,** a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and numerous traditional festivals that attract both domestic and international tourists. The state's tourism potential lies not only in its cultural richness but also in its capacity to offer unique spiritual and historical experiences. Despite these offerings, the full potential of tourism in Osun State has yet to be realised, partly due to insufficient empirical understanding of the factors driving tourism patronage, particularly through a gender sensitive lens**.**

While some studies have begun to examine demographic variables influencing tourism perceptions in Nigeria, most have generalized findings without accounting for the moderating effects of gender. For instance, Adeyemi and Balogun (2021) reported that women in Ilara-Mokin exhibited more positive attitudes toward the economic benefits of festival tourism. However, very few studies have isolated gender as a moderating factor between key

psychological constructs such as destination attractiveness and patronage intention, especially within the context of Osun State's unique tourism landscape.

This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the moderating role of gender in the relationship between destination attractiveness and tourism patronage intention**.** Specifically, it seeks to assess whether male and female tourists evaluate destination features differently and how these evaluations influence their intention to visit or recommend a destination. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights for policymakers, tourism developers, and marketers by promoting inclusive tourism strategies that cater to the diverse preferences of different gender groups.

Ultimately, by deepening our understanding of gender dynamics in tourism behaviour, this research contributes to broader goals of sustainable and equitable tourism development. In a global context where inclusivity and diversity are increasingly recognized as pillars of progress, integrating gender perspectives into tourism planning becomes not only desirable but essential.

Statement of the Problem

Tourism in Nigeria, particularly in culturally rich states like Osun, holds immense potential for socio-economic development. Osun State is renowned for its heritage attractions such as the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, the Ooni's Palace, and the annual Osun Osogbo Festival, which draw both domestic and international attention. Yet, despite the prominence of these sites, tourism patronage remains inconsistent and under-optimized.

This inconsistency may be better understood through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that an individual's behavior is shaped by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of tourism, attitude toward tourism, defined as an individual's evaluation of tourism experiences as favourable or unfavourable is a key predictor of tourism patronage intention. However, these attitudes are not uniform and are influenced by socio-demographic variables, especially gender, and contextual elements like destination attractiveness.

Practically, tourism stakeholders in Osun State have observed gender-based differences in visitation patterns, especially at grassroots and cultural events. Although women are increasingly becoming a significant segment of the global travel market, in Nigeria, they often face unique cultural, safety, and economic barriers that shape their attitudes and limit their participation. These gendered constraints may reduce perceived behavioural control and modify subjective norms, ultimately influencing their patronage intention.

Additionally, destination attractiveness, which includes factors such as cultural richness, safety, accessibility, aesthetic appeal, and supporting infrastructure acts as an external stimulus that shapes attitudes and enhances or inhibits the intention to visit. When destinations are perceived as inclusive, appealing, and safe, they can positively affect both male and female tourists' behavioral intentions. Conversely, unattractive or unsafe environments may evoke negative attitudes and reduce intention to patronize.

Empirically, few studies in Nigeria have investigated gender differences in tourism patronage intention. While global studies (e.g., Khan et al., 2020; Fidan & Baloglu, 2018) indicate that women often demonstrate higher cultural and emotional motivations to travel, Nigerian studies have rarely disaggregated data by gender in meaningful ways. A study by Okechukwu & Ekundayo (2021) in Lagos found a higher tourism participation rate among men due to perceived safety and economic power.

While earlier studies, such as Okonkwo and Ibrahim (2021), examined gender differences in tourism patronage intention across multiple states in

Southwestern Nigeria (including Lagos, Oyo, and Osun), they did not isolate Osun State as a standalone cultural tourism context. Furthermore, their model did not explicitly integrate the attitudinal and perceptual dimensions of the TPB, nor did it assess the interactive role of destination attractiveness and gender in shaping tourism attitudes and intentions.

In contrast, this study contributes a more context-specific and theory driven analysis, focusing solely on Osun State a globally recognized cultural tourism destination. It integrates TPB variables (attitude and intention) with gender and perceived destination attractiveness, applying a quantitative structural model to test their interrelationships. This provides a deeper understanding of the psychological and contextual factors influencing tourism behavior in the region.

By bridging the gap between theoretical constructs, empirical findings, and real-world tourism dynamics, the study aims to inform inclusive, gender-responsive, and perception-driven tourism policies and destination marketing strategies that can stimulate tourism patronage in Osun State.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a guiding lens, integrating its core constructs into the proposed conceptual model. Within this framework, attitude toward tourism is identified as the primary psychological factor influencing tourism patronage intention**.** Destination attractiveness functions as an external influencing variable**,** shaping tourists' attitudes by providing stimuli that evoke positive or negative evaluations of a destination. Furthermore, gender is introduced into the framework as a moderating variable**,** expected to influence the strength or direction of the relationships among destination attractiveness, attitude toward tourism, and patronage intention. This conceptual structure facilitates an understanding of how individual evaluations and demographic characteristics jointly drive tourism behavior in the context of Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and the review of relevant literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_1: Attitude toward tourism has a significant positive influence on tourism patronage intention among residents and visitors in Osun State.

H_2: Destination attractiveness significantly influences attitude toward tourism in Osun State.

H_3: Gender significantly moderates the relationship between attitude toward tourism and tourism patronage intention.

H_4: There is a significant difference in tourism patronage intention between male and female respondents in Osun State.

This framework guides the analysis of how demographic, perceptual, and psychological factors interact to shape tourism-related decision-making in Osun State's unique cultural context.

Tourism Patronage Intention

Tourism patronage intention refers to an individual's conscious willingness or plan to engage in tourism-related activities such as visiting attractions, participating in cultural events, or using hospitality services. It is a key predictor of actual tourism behavior and is influenced by various psychological, social, and environmental variables (Alrawadieh et al., 2021; Pratminingsih et al., 2020). In

contemporary tourism literature, it is often assessed using constructs such as motivation, behavioral intention, interest, and readiness to act.

In culturally rich destinations like Osun State, Nigeria, understanding what enhances or hinders the intention to patronize tourism is crucial for sustainable tourism development. Internal factors—including individual attitudes, value perceptions, and perceived behavioral control—and external factors such as affordability, accessibility, safety, and destination image can significantly impact tourism patronage intentions (Ezeuduji & Mhlongo, 2019; Setiawan et al., 2021).

Gender also plays an influential role in shaping these intentions, as men and women may face different motivators and constraints, including cultural expectations, income levels, and safety concerns (Karim et al., 2022; Khuong & Truong, 2023). Female travelers, for example, may be more responsive to emotional and cultural appeals, while also being more sensitive to risks and logistical barriers.

Analyzing tourism patronage intention not only helps tourism planners understand visitor behavior but also enables them to design inclusive, gender-sensitive marketing strategies and services that can appeal to diverse visitor segments. This makes it a pivotal concept in tourism demand forecasting and policy formulation.

Attitude Toward Tourism

Attitude toward tourism refers to an individual's overall positive or negative of tourism activities, destinations, and experiences. This concept is grounded in the **cognitive-affective-behavioural** model, where cognitive beliefs (e.g., perceptions about tourism's economic, social, or environmental impacts) influence emotional responses (affective), which in turn shape behavioral intentions (behavioral) (Luo & Lam, 2020; Pappas, 2021). Attitudes are dynamic and influenced by personal experiences, social norms, cultural exposure, and media portrayals (Yen & Croy, 2021).

In tourism research, attitude has consistently emerged as a key psychological driver of behavioral intention, shaping how likely individuals are to engage in tourism-related activities (Wang et al., 2022). Importantly, gender plays a moderating role in the formation of tourism attitudes. Studies show that women may develop more cautious or restrained attitudes toward travel due to safety concerns, economic factors, or societal expectations, while men often exhibit more risk-tolerant and autonomous attitudes (Karim et al., 2022; Khuong & Truong, 2023).

In culturally rich settings such as Osun State, Nigeria, attitudes toward tourism can be further shaped by religious doctrines, traditional values, and local perceptions of cultural tourism**.** For example, some communities may perceive tourism as a threat to cultural integrity, while others may view it as an opportunity for economic advancement and cultural promotion (Adeola & Evans, 2019).

Understanding tourists' attitudes is essential for tourism planners, marketers, and policymakers to design effective communication strategies, culturally sensitive tourism offerings, and inclusive interventions. It also assists in identifying and addressing attitudinal barriers, particularly gender-related ones that may hinder participation in tourism.

Destination Attractiveness

Destination attractiveness refers to the perceived appeal or desirability of a tourism location based on factors such as cultural value, natural beauty, historical significance, safety, accessibility, amenities, and affordability. It significantly shapes tourists' intentions to visit a destination and can differ across demographic categories, including gender (Ali et al., 2023; Suhartanto et al., 2020). A destination deemed attractive by one gender group may not hold the same appeal for another due to divergent preferences, motivations, and risk perceptions (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2022).

In Osun State, Nigeria, the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, the Osun Festival, and traditional Yoruba architecture enrich the region's cultural allure. However, the attractiveness of these features depends on how well they address gender-specific concerns. For example, female tourists may prioritize personal security, sanitation, and culturally respectful hospitality, while male tourists may be more influenced by affordability, excitement, and accessibility (Adeleke & Adebayo, 2023; Bae & Chang, 2021).

Understanding destination attractiveness through a gendered perspective enables tourism planners to enhance destination features in ways that appeal to both men and women, thereby boosting visitor satisfaction, fostering inclusive tourism, and increasing return visits (Woyo, 2021).

Role of Gender

Gender plays a significant and multifaceted role in shaping tourism patronage intention. It influences how individuals perceive, engage with, and ultimately decide to participate in tourism activities (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2022). Men and women often exhibit distinct travel motivations; while men are typically driven by adventure, novelty, and competition, women are more inclined toward relaxation, cultural enrichment, wellness, and social interaction (Nguyen et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2020). These motivations directly affect the types of destinations and services each gender is likely to prefer and patronize.

Moreover, gender differences emerge clearly in the decision-making process. Women tend to take a more active role in researching and planning trips, placing higher emphasis on safety, family needs, and comfort, whereas men may be more spontaneous or goal-oriented in their travel choices (Suhartanto et al., 2020). Safety concerns, in particular, have a notable influence on women's tourism intentions, with destinations perceived as insecure or culturally restrictive often deterring female travelers (Bae & Chang, 2021).

Marketing and communication styles tailored to gender also play a critical role. Women respond more positively to campaigns that highlight emotional connections, safety, and experiential aspects, while men are more responsive to themes of adventure, exclusivity, and status (Gursoy et al., 2022). Socio-cultural norms further shape gender dynamics in tourism, especially in conservative societies where women may face limitations on mobility or autonomy, thereby affecting their ability to engage freely in tourism (Cave & Dredge, 2020).

In terms of repeat patronage, women often develop stronger emotional attachments to positive experiences, making them more likely to revisit a destination, while men may prioritize new experiences (Yang et al., 2020). Additionally, group travel dynamics are frequently influenced by gender roles, with women often leading in family travel planning and participating in gender-specific tours such

as wellness retreats or empowerment trips (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2022).

Gender also influences tourism beyond consumption. The representation and treatment of gender in tourism employment can affect how tourists perceive a destination. Destinations that promote gender inclusivity and equality are more likely to attract diverse tourist populations (Woyo, 2021).

In conclusion, gender is a key determinant of tourism patronage intention, affecting motivations, behaviors, and preferences. A gender-sensitive approach in tourism planning, policy, and marketing is essential for meeting the expectations of diverse travelers and fostering inclusive, sustainable tourism development (Ali et al., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), is highly relevant to assessing gender differences in tourism patronage intention in Osun State, Nigeria. TPB posits that individual behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions, which are influenced by three key components: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of tourism, males and females may differ in their attitudes toward tourism activities, the influence of social expectations (subjective norms), and their confidence or ability to participate in tourism (perceived behavioural control). For instance, cultural norms in Osun State may influence women's travel intentions more significantly than men's. Likewise, perceptions of safety, affordability, and social acceptance may differ by gender, affecting their likelihood to patronize tourism destinations. By applying TPB, researchers can better understand how gender shapes intentions to engage in tourism, providing insight into the psychological and social factors that guide male and female tourists' behaviour in the region. This theory supports targeted interventions to boost tourism participation across genders by addressing the specific motivators and barriers each group faces.

Empirical Review

In the study conducted in the United Kingdom, Smith and Taylor (2021) investigated "Gender Influence on Destination Preference and Travel Intention among Young Adults." Using a sample size of 470 university students, the study applied t-tests and multiple regression analysis. The researchers found that females were more attracted to wellness, cultural, and heritage tourism, while males showed stronger interest in adventure and sports tourism. The study concluded that gender significantly influenced not only destination choice but also travel frequency and satisfaction levels.

In the United States, Hernandez and Bailey (2022) conducted a study titled "Gender Differences in Travel Motivation and Post-COVID Tourism Intentions." The study sampled 520 domestic travellers and used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to evaluate how gender influenced the relationship between motivational factors and travel intention. Findings revealed that females showed higher intention to engage in tourism activities centred on family bonding and emotional rejuvenation, whereas males demonstrated stronger intentions toward individualistic and experience-seeking tourism. The study emphasized the need for post-pandemic tourism campaigns to consider gender-based preferences.

In India, Patel and Rao (2020) conducted a study titled "Exploring Gender-Based Preferences in Urban Tourism Consumption." The research drew on a sample of 500 urban tourists and applied MANOVA and chi-square tests. Their analysis found that female tourists gave more importance to safety, hygiene, and cultural relevance, while male tourists were primarily driven by cost-efficiency, adventure, and flexibility. The authors concluded that tourism product design and promotion in developing countries must integrate gender-responsive strategies.

In South Africa, Mkhize and Dlamini (2023) carried out a study titled "Gender and Domestic Tourism Behaviour in Post-Pandemic South Africa." Based on 360 respondents from KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape, the study used logistic regression analysis to assess gender impact on tourism intention. The findings showed that women were more likely to prioritize family-inclusive and religious tourism experiences, while men were more inclined toward solo and sports tourism. The authors emphasized the importance of using gender-disaggregated data in tourism planning for equitable growth.

In Nigeria, Okonkwo and Ibrahim (2021) explored gender variations in tourism behaviour in their study titled *"Gender Differences in Tourism Patronage Intention in Southwestern Nigeria."* Using a sample of 300 tourists across Lagos, Oyo, and Osun States, they employed ANOVA and Pearson correlation to analyse how male and female tourists differed in their preferences. Their results revealed that female respondents favoured cultural and religious tourism, particularly events like the Osun Osogbo Festival, whereas male respondents leaned toward nightlife, sports, and leisure activities. The study concluded with a recommendation for gender-inclusive policies to enhance tourism participation.

Similarly, Adeyemi and Olatunji (2023), in their study titled *"Examining Gender-Based Tourist Motivation in Selected Tourist Sites in Osun State, Nigeria,"* investigated gendered travel behaviour using a sample of 250 respondents. Their analysis via independent sample t-tests and multiple regression showed that female tourists were more influenced by cultural connection, safety, and emotional engagement, while male tourists prioritized novelty, independence, and affordability. Their findings reinforced the significance of gender in predicting tourism patronage intentions.

Despite the valuable insights from these studies, a distinct empirical gap remains**.** While both studies (Okonkwo and Ibrahim, 2021; Adeyemi and Olatunji, 2023) addressed gender and tourism behaviour, they were largely descriptive or comparative in nature, focusing on what preferences exist between genders without providing a theory-driven explanatory model of how gender interacts with other variables like destination attractiveness and attitude toward tourism to influence patronage intention.

This present study addresses that gap by anchoring its analysis on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), offering a conceptually integrated model that investigates how destination attractiveness influences tourism patronage intention through the mediating role of attitude**,** and how gender moderates these relationships**.** Unlike prior studies, this research goes beyond identifying gender differences to examine how gender alters the strength and direction of behavioural pathways, thereby providing deeper analytical insight into gender-responsive tourism strategy in Osun State.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to assess gender differences in tourism patronage intention in Osun State, Nigeria. A total of 180 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique from major tourist sites such as the Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove and Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls, ensuring equal representation of males and females. The study focused on four key dimensions: role of gender, tourism patronage intention, attitude toward tourism, and destination attractiveness.

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and evaluated for validity through expert review in tourism and social science. A pilot test with 30 respondents yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84, confirming the reliability of the

instrument. Inferential statistics including independent sample t-tests were used to examine gender-based differences across tourism patronage intention.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. The methodology offered a robust framework for analysing how gender dynamics and related factors shape tourism behaviour in Osun State.

Table 1

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male=1 Female=2	180	1.6111	.48886	.03644
Role of Gender	180	3.6444	1.52309	.11352
Tourism Patronage Intention	180	2.6944	1.47265	.10976
Attitude toward tourism	180	4.4111	.49341	.03678
Destination attractiveness	180	4.6222	.55083	.04106

Source: Field work, 2024

Interpretation of One-Sample Statistics

The descriptive statistics obtained from a sample of 180 respondents provide insight into the role of gender and other related factors in tourism patronage intention. Gender was coded as male = 1 and female = 2, with a mean value of 1.6111 and a standard deviation of 0.48886. This suggests a higher proportion of female respondents in the sample, although the distribution remains relatively balanced between the two gender categories.

The variable measuring the role of gender in tourism recorded a mean score of 3.6444 on what is likely a five-point Likert scale. This indicates that respondents moderately agree that gender plays a role in tourism behaviour and decisions. However, the standard deviation of 1.52309 suggests considerable variability in opinions, implying that while some individuals strongly acknowledge gender's influence, others may be neutral or less convinced of its significance.

In terms of tourism patronage intention, the mean score was 2.6944, which falls below the neutral midpoint. This suggests that, overall, respondents exhibit a relatively low inclination to engage in tourism activities. The high standard deviation of 1.47265 further indicates diverse levels of intention among the participants, reflecting a mix of high and low responses within the sample.

Conversely, respondents expressed highly positive sentiments toward tourism itself. The variable attitude toward tourism had a high mean of 4.4111, indicating strong approval or favourable disposition toward tourism. Similarly, destination attractiveness received an even higher mean of 4.6222, reflecting a generally strong perception of the appeal of tourism destinations. The low standard deviations for these two variables (0.49341 and 0.55083, respectively) show that these positive perceptions were consistent across the majority of the sample.

Taken together, these findings highlight a noteworthy discrepancy between the respondents' positive attitudes toward tourism and destinations and their comparatively low intention to engage in tourism. Despite recognizing the appeal of tourism offerings, actual patronage intention remains limited. This gap may suggest the presence of underlying barriers—such as financial constraints, safety concerns, or socio-cultural factors—that deter individuals from acting on their favourable perceptions. Additionally, while gender is perceived to play a moderate role in influencing tourism behaviour, it is likely interwoven with other contextual factors that collectively shape tourism participation outcomes.

Table 2

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Male=1 Female=2	44.216	179	.000	1.61111	1.5392	1.6830
Role of Gender	32.103	179	.000	3.64444	3.4204	3.8685
Tourism Patronage Intention	24.548	179	.000	2.69444	2.4778	2.9110
Attitude toward tourism	119.944	179	.000	4.41111	4.3385	4.4837
Destination attractiveness	112.582	179	.000	4.62222	4.5412	4.7032

Source: Field work, 2024

Interpretation of One-Sample t-Test Results

The one-sample t-test results reveal that all examined variables have mean values significantly greater than zero, with p-values of .000 (i.e., $p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. The high t-values across the board further reinforce that these means are not occurring by chance.

Gender (Male = 1, Female = 2):

The test yielded a t-value of 44.216 with 179 degrees of freedom (df) and a mean difference of 1.61111. The 95% confidence interval for the difference ranges from 1.5392 to 1.6830. This indicates that the average gender code (closer to 2) is statistically significantly different from 0, confirming that the sample includes a substantial representation of both genders—predominantly female.

Role of Gender in Tourism:

The mean value of 3.64444 differs significantly from 0, as shown by a t-value of 32.103. The confidence interval (3.4204 to 3.8685) excludes 0, reinforcing that respondents **agree** that gender plays a meaningful role in tourism behaviour. This statistical significance suggests strong consensus that gender is a relevant factor in tourism-related decisions.

Tourism Patronage Intention:

This variable has a mean difference of 2.69444, with a t-value of 24.548. The confidence interval (2.4778 to 2.9110) confirms that the observed mean is significantly greater than 0. While the mean is below the neutral midpoint of a typical Likert scale, the result indicates that respondents express a statistically significant positive intention, albeit modest, to engage in tourism.

Attitude Toward Tourism:

The test shows a very high t-value of 119.944, indicating extremely strong evidence that the mean value of 4.41111 is significantly above 0. The narrow confidence interval (4.3385 to 4.4837) shows that respondents hold consistently strong positive attitudes toward tourism, with little variation.

Destination Attractiveness:

With a t-value of 112.582, this result also reflects a highly significant mean of 4.62222, with a confidence interval (4.5412 to 4.7032) well above 0. This demonstrates that respondents overwhelmingly find tourism destinations attractive, reinforcing previous descriptive findings.

Overall Interpretation:

These results confirm that all the variables measured are significantly different from zero, which implies that respondents' views are not random and are strongly positive in key areas such as attitude toward tourism and destination attractiveness. Although tourism patronage intention is comparatively lower, it is still significantly positive. The acknowledgement of gender as a meaningful factor further emphasizes its relevance in tourism behaviour.

Table 3

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Role of Gender & Attitude toward tourism	180	-.237	.001
Pair 2	Destination Attractiveness & Tourism Patronage Intention	180	-.015	.838

Source: Field work, 2024

A paired samples correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among key tourism-related variables. A weak but statistically significant negative correlation was found between the role of gender and attitude toward tourism, r (178) = −.237, p = .001, suggesting that changes in gender role perceptions are modestly associated with changes in tourism attitudes. However, no significant correlation was found between destination attractiveness and tourism patronage intention, r (178) = −.015, p = .838, indicating no linear association between these variables.

Table 4

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Role of Gender	1.6111	180	.48886	.03644
	Attitude toward tourism	4.2667	180	1.07589	.08019
Pair 2	Destination Attractiveness	3.5722	180	1.06247	.07919
	Tourism Patronage Intention	3.7333	180	1.20798	.09004

Source: Field work, 2024

Descriptive statistics for the paired samples revealed that participants reported a low average score for role of gender (M = 1.61, SD = 0.49) and a relatively high average attitude toward tourism (M = 4.27, SD = 1.08). Similarly, mean scores for destination attractiveness (M = 3.57, SD = 1.06) and tourism patronage intention (M = 3.73, SD = 1.21) were both moderately high and closely aligned, indicating generally favorable perceptions and intentions among respondents.

Table 5

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Role of Gender - Attitude toward tourism	-2.65556	1.28299	.09563	-2.84426	-2.46685	-27.770	179	.000
Pair 2	Destination Attractiveness - Tourism Patronage Intention	-.16111	1.62097	.12082	-.39953	.07730	-1.333	179	.184

Source: Field work, 2024

A paired samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between participants' perceptions of gender roles and their attitudes toward tourism, t (179) = -27.77, $p < .001$. Attitudes toward tourism (M = 4.27) were significantly higher than gender-role scores (M = 1.61), with a mean difference of -2.66 (95% CI [-2.84, -2.47]). In contrast, there was no significant difference between ratings of destination attractiveness and tourism patronage intention, t (179) = -1.33, p = .184, suggesting that perceived attractiveness and intention to visit were closely aligned.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study both corroborate and contrast with recent research in tourism behavior, particularly when considering gender as a moderating influence in culturally embedded contexts like the Osun Osogbo festival in Nigeria.

Respondents exhibited a robustly positive attitude toward tourism ($M = 4.41$; $t = 119.944$; $p < .001$), mirroring observations by Teng, Li, Yuan, Zhao, and Wang (2024), who found that residents in Lhasa and Nyingchi expressed strong support for tourism largely driven by socio-cultural perceived benefits. This alignment suggests that cultural resonance plays a crucial role in shaping favorable dispositions toward tourism in both Tibet and Osun State.

In line with the study's core focus, gender emerged as a significant moderating variable. Participants scored an average of $M = 3.64$ on gender-related measures ($t = 32.103$), and beliefs around traditional gender roles were negatively correlated with tourism attitudes ($r = –0.237$, $p = .001$). This resonates with the work of Albert N. Kimbu, Michael Z. Ngoasong, and Anna de Jong (2024), who documented how enduring gender norms influence tourism motivations and participation in African contexts. Their studies emphasize that gender continues to mediate tourism engagement, reinforcing the relevance of examining gender as a moderator in our model.

However, results diverged from much of the extant literature in the relationship between destination attractiveness and patronage intention. Although participants perceived the Osun Osogbo festival as highly attractive ($M = 4.62$; $t = 112.582$), the correlation with intention to visit was not significant ($r = –0.015$, $p = .838$). This unexpected finding contradicts prevailing studies such as the 2023 research that framed destination attractiveness as a strong predictor of revisit intention highlighting the need to consider additional barriers such as cost, infrastructure, and cultural constraints.

Finally, while the mean intention to patronize tourism was moderately positive ($M = 3.73$), a paired-samples t-test revealed no significant difference compared with destination attractiveness ($t = –1.33$, $p = .184$). In other words, although people recognize the festival's appeal, this recognition does not translate into definitive intention. This divergence underscores the presence of contextual moderators that impede the translation of perceived attractiveness into actual behavioral intention.

In summary, this study offers culturally grounded empirical evidence that enriches tourism theory by emphasizing gender as a key moderator and by revealing weaknesses in the predictive power of destination attractiveness in a developing context. These insights call for more nuanced, locally informed models of tourism behavior particularly in developing regions where cultural and infrastructural realities shape intentions as much as perceptions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the moderating role of gender in the relationship between destination attractiveness and tourism patronage intention, using the culturally rich context of the Osun Osogbo festival in Osun State, Nigeria. The results revealed that respondents generally exhibited positive attitudes toward tourism and perceived the destination as attractive. However, while gender emerged as a statistically significant factor influencing tourism attitudes albeit with a weak negative

correlation destination attractiveness did not significantly predict tourism patronage intention.

The application of paired samples t-tests further indicated that participants rated tourism more favorably than gender role beliefs would suggest, pointing to a potential evolution in societal norms or a weakening linkage between traditional gender expectations and modern tourism behavior. Conversely, the absence of a significant relationship between perceived destination attractiveness and patronage intention suggests the presence of intervening factors such as cost barriers, infrastructure limitations, or security concerns that may inhibit intention despite favorable perceptions.

Overall, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on tourism behavior by demonstrating the importance of contextual variables especially gender and culture in shaping tourism intentions. These findings highlight the need for tourism research and practice in developing contexts to move beyond universalist models and adopt frameworks that account for sociocultural nuances and demographic moderating effects such as gender.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement Gender-Responsive Tourism Strategies
   Given the moderating role of gender in shaping tourism attitudes, policymakers and tourism stakeholders in Osun State should design and implement gender-responsive strategies that promote equitable participation. Initiatives should include awareness campaigns that challenge restrictive gender norms, encourage inclusive tourism education, and provide leadership opportunities for both men and women in tourism planning and management. This will not only improve attitudes toward tourism but also foster inclusive and sustainable development.
2. **Enhance Enabling Conditions for Tourism Patronage**
   The absence of a significant relationship between destination attractiveness and patronage intention points to structural barriers preventing intention from translating into action. Authorities should prioritize improvements in accessibility, affordability, and security around tourism sites. Tailored incentives such as transport subsidies, improved signage, and safety assurances—particularly targeting gender-based concerns can increase actual visitation rates, especially among underrepresented groups.
3. **Promote Community Participation through Culturally Sensitive Engagement**
   To strengthen the connection between perceived attractiveness and tourism patronage, community engagement should be central to tourism development. Educational programs and participatory planning processes that recognize cultural values and gender dynamics can enhance local buy-in. This approach helps reframe community perceptions, mitigate resistance rooted in traditional gender norms, and foster a shared sense of ownership in tourism outcomes.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study advances the scholarly discourse on tourism behaviour by empirically examining the moderating role of gender in the relationship between destination attractiveness and

tourism patronage intention within a developing economy context. By focusing on the Osun Osogbo festival, a culturally and spiritually significant destination in Nigeria, this research expands the literature beyond the predominantly Western-centric narratives, offering insights grounded in African cultural realities.

Firstly, the study enriches the understanding of how gender moderates tourism-related attitudes and intentions. The identification of gender-specific patterns in the perception of destination attractiveness and subsequent patronage intention underscores the importance of sociocultural dynamics in shaping tourism behaviour. This contextualised evidence contributes to a more nuanced global conversation on gender and tourism by demonstrating that gender roles influence tourism decision-making differently in culturally embedded settings.

Secondly, the findings challenge conventional assumptions in extant tourism models that posit a direct and positive relationship between destination attractiveness and patronage intention. Contrary to expectations drawn from studies in developed contexts, this research found no statistically significant direct relationship, suggesting that other intervening variables such as socioeconomic conditions, cultural affiliations, or infrastructural limitations may moderate or mediate this linkage. This finding invites a re-examination of universal tourism behavior models and supports the call for context-specific theoretical adaptations.

Thirdly, the study provides updated empirical data using robust statistical methods (e.g., paired sample t-tests and correlation analysis) integrated with culturally salient constructs. This methodological integration enhances the relevance of the findings for policy-makers, tourism planners, and marketers in sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the research offers actionable insights for developing gender-responsive tourism strategies that align with local cultural values and behavioural tendencies, thereby fostering more inclusive and effective tourism development.

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