
Boko Haram Insurgency and the Marketability of Tourism Sector in Northern Eastern Nigeria; Conceptual Framework

Isaac B. GALI*

Solomon A. BALAMI Ph.D.**

*National Commission for Museum and Monument Maiduguri,

** Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

isaacbatagali@gmail.com

solomonbalami@gmail.com

Abstract

Boko Haram Insurgency in North Eastern Nigerian has had serious negative influence on the marketability of tourism sector. The study proposes research frame work that examines the relationship between Boko Haram Insurgency on the marketability of Tourism Section in North Eastern Nigeria. The approach for the study is a review of qualitative literature of the influence of Boko Haram Insurgency on the marketability of Tourism Sector in North Eastern Nigeria. The study contributes to body knowledge by providing a framework to government on the relationship Boko Haram Insurgency on the marketability of tourism sector in North Eastern Nigeria. More so the study offers theoretical contribution by providing more understanding as a result of adopting Perception theory and the study found significant influence of Boko Haram Insurgency on the marketability of Tourism Sector in North Eastern Nigeria. The study recommends that government should ensure security of lives and property there by creating enabling environment for tourism to thrive

Keywords: Boko Haram Insurgency, Marketability and Tourism Sector.

1. Introduction

It has been observed around the world over the years that a marketable tourism sector has a great potential to distribute wealth and promotes regional development, creates a high multiplier effect and generates varying consumption of goods and services. Globally, tourism plays an essential role in the growth and economic expansion of any country including Nigeria. The Nigerian tourism industry has the potential to positively impact on other sectors of the economy and does not waste resources. As a key component of development in Nigeria, especially North Eastern Nigeria where there is Yankari Game Reseserve, Sambisa Game reserve and other National parks, waterfalls, game reserves, traditional festivals etc are located, the presence of these components influences the marketability of the tourism sector in North Eastern Nigeria. The marketability of tourism sector is dependent on the relative peace experienced in the region to thrive just as “many scholars in the tourism industry advocate that being safe on vacation is an expected requirement for any visitor in a tourist destination or city” Baker (2014). Thus, the slightest trace of disaster, either natural or man-made that threatens the safety and security of tourists negatively influences their perception of the destination. In view of this, the reputations of numerous tourist destinations have been marred for becoming a target for terrorist attacks. Therefore, the decision-making process of destination image is influenced by the individual’s perception of the destination which can be influenced by various factors, one of which is Boko Haram Insurgency.

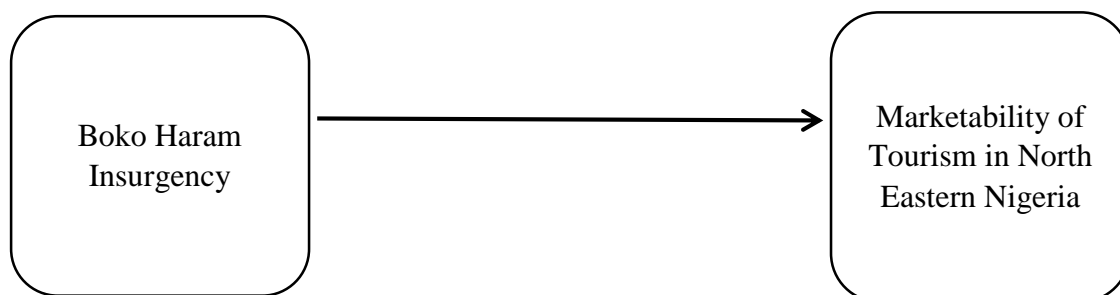
Boko Haram insurgency has marred the destination image of northern Nigeria. The activities of this group threaten the safety and security of people and more especially tourists. The safety of tourists is very important; hence, travellers assess the security situations of destinations before travel decisions are made. The activities of the sect in the Northern Eastern part of the country in recent times have affected tourism patronage by both local and international tourists. These activities characterized by bombing, suicide attacks, kidnapping, massacres and destruction of infrastructure (Eme and Ibietan, 2012; Bintube, 2015) have put fear in the hearts of tourists and this has effects on their resolve to choose the area as a tourist location cum tourist arrival. Compared to other business sectors, tourism is the most uncovered business sector vulnerable to social conflicts (Krol et al., 2000). Tribe (2010) stated that social conflicts could have an effect on tourism in terms of inadequate business approach, redundancy in employment, inadequate infrastructure and destruction of properties. In a similar manner, Butler (1980) noted that a significant number of tourists to a given tourist site may decrease as a result of social conflicts.

The operations of Boko Haram in the northeastern region have had a spillover effect on tourism activities in the region. This is because the waves of violence, carnage and destruction of infrastructure have dissuaded tourists from choosing the Yankari Game Reserve as their destination. The patronage level of the game reserve is seriously affected because no tourist will visit a destination that is unsecured and characterized by suicide attacks, bombings and kidnappings. The reduction in the number of tourists visiting the game reserve as a result of the happenings in the northeast has negatively impacted on the revenue of this tourist site. This is so because tourists are forced to cancel their bookings and appointments including room reservations as a result of the threats of Boko Haram (Suleiman, 2011).

Today, the northern region of Nigeria, is reeling from the recent continuous attacks of the Boko Haram sect and this has created a negative impression of the area as an unsafe destination. As a result of this insurgency certain northern destinations of the country were declared unsafe by the Nigerian government. With official declaration of certain states in Nigeria as unsafe tourism destinations, many foreign nations have placed debilitating travelling bans on the country in order to prevent their citizens from visiting and endangering their lives. Despite the fact that tourism is an economic pillar of many nations it cannot thrive in an atmosphere of insurgency such as that created by the Boko Haram terrorist sect. In other words, Boko Haram's wanton destruction of lives and property poses a huge threat to northern Nigeria as a tourism destination and has drastically reduced tourist patronage in the region, witting it down to almost nothing. Albu (2016) citing Sofroni (2010), asserts that such events lead to a fall in tourist numbers in a given touristic destination or even lead to the complete avoidance of that destination for a very long period of time, until the tourists' confidence might be restored. Many tourism scholars across the globe agree that terrorist attacks do indeed tarnish a tourism destinations image especially after the 9/11 experience.

In the northern region of Nigeria, Oketola (2015) has observed that in spite of Nigeria's robust cultural assets and rich natural beauty, Boko Haram insurgency is driving local and foreign visitors away from the country's tourist destinations. He stated that because of the level of insecurity in the country, tourists are shunning the northern region tourist destinations. Nmodu, et al. (2015) reported that most of the Nigeria National Parks in the northern regions have ceased to be tourist destinations and are now 'dens' for militants. In other words, numerous national parks were abandoned by tourists. Notably Gumti Park, Kamuku National Park, Lake National Park, Chad Basin National Park Borno State, Yankari National Park and Sambisa Game Reserve which were previously attractive destinations for tourists but now situated in a very unsafe destinations of the country.

The main objective of the study is to propose a research framework that examine the relationship between Boko Haram Insurgency and the Marketability of the Tourism Sector in North Eastern Nigeria.



2. Literature Review

The early members of Boko Haram were people such as Aminu Tashen Ilimi, who integrally involved in the founding of the early evolution of Boko Haram (Gusau, 2009). However, there are differences in opinion over the precise date and conditions under which the group that became known as Boko Haram was first established, but a senior Nigerian military officer has suggested that the group has existed in some form or another since 1995 (Onuoha, 2010). While others have written that it was founded in 2003 or 2004. A Nigerian reporter Isioma Madike contends that the group began in 1995 as Sahaba under the leadership of the conservative Islamist cleric Lawan Abubakar, who later left for the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia for further studies (Madike, 2011). Isa Umar Gusau suggests that the origins of the group can be traced to a group of Muslim students who dropped out of the University of Maiduguri around 2002 (Gusau, 2009) Despite the existence of various conflicting accounts, it is agreed by most observers that in 2002, a Muslim cleric by name Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, established a religious complex with a mosque and an Islamic boarding school in Maiduguri in Borno state, along with a prayer group which he called “Jama’atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda’wati wal Jihad” loosely translated from Arabic as “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teachings and jihad (Chothia, 2011). In this study Boko Haram insurgency is conceptualize as a group of mislead radicalized individuals with a mission to achieve certain religious belief of propagating Islam.

Tourism is a multidimensional, multi-faceted activity which touches many lives and business activities. It comprises a conglomeration of services offered by inter alia restaurants, hotels, motels, travel agencies, transport (Ezenagu and Olatunji, 2016) to tourists in any destination. Visits to a destination are not without purpose and Ezenagu and Umarrh (2017) asserted that tourism is a purposeful temporary journey to different destinations for different reasons. Amongst the numerous reasons is the attraction of a region which many scholars take to be the *raison de entrée* for tourism activity. Subsequently, tourists seek destinations with more interesting and exciting features worthy of their time and income which calls for visits to sites with a variety of attractions (Ezenagu and Olatunji, 2016). Attractions are central to visitors’ overall enjoyment and experience within any given destination. In many respects, they are the lifeblood of a destination because they are part of the appeal, ambience and overall experience that visitors seek to consume in areas they visit. Despite the importance of attractions to tourist visitation numerous factors hinder the choice of destination. In Nigeria, the northern part of the country is endowed with unique and appealing attractions of both cultural and natural origin but the continue menace of Boko Haram insurgency stands as a huge threat to their patronage. Therefore, that attractions are unique does not guarantee patronage rather tourist perception of the destination. In other words, destination image is one of the

paramount factors that influence tourist choice of a destination. At this juncture, it is worthy to note that the image a destination presents determines its patronage. This is because an important aspect in tourist industry is tourist intention to return to a specific area/region/city/country. That is why we should take into account the fact that a tourist destination image may positively influence tourist's behavioural intentions, especially their desire to return to that particular area (Lertputtarak, 2012: 111). The image is an essential component within the process of choosing a holiday destination. In other words, Corniglon and Turnois (2011) consider the image of a destination as an influencing factor not only on the actual situation of the destination, but also on the tourist's behaviour, in general. This implies that the tourist perception of destination image determines their behaviour. Therefore, destination entails the totality of information and impression accumulated by tourists over time of a particular place in respect to many factors. Specifically, Assael (1984) asserted that destination image is "the overall perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time". This perception or image of the destination is formed by a number of agents in the society as Abd El Jalil, (2010) pointed out that in the image creation process, brochures, tour operators, and travel agencies also play significant roles. In addition to image creation process are uncertain unforeseeable factors that arise in the destination not limited to social conflict, political uprising and /or terrorist attacks. As Albu (2016) stated that tourism destinations make no exception from being strongly affected by terrorist acts. Markatability of tourism in this paper is conceptualized as the tendency of tourist to patronize certain tourist location for the purpose of recreation.

Ukah, Adeniyi and Okonkwo (2023) examined the temporal pattern of tourists' patronage at Yankari Game Reserve before and after the emergence of Boko Haram between 2000 and 2019. Data for this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were gotten through the administration of structured questionnaire. The result indicated that 90.0% of the tourists alleged that bombings and suicide attack carried out respectively by the Boko Haram sect made them not to visit the reserve in about five years. In addition, 72.5.0% affirmed that stories and news feeds of massacre orchestrated by Boko Haram have reduced their rate of patronage of the tourist site. T-test was employed to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that there is a significant difference ($t = 6.010$, $p < 0.05$) in the temporal pattern of tourist patronage before and after the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency. The study has shown that Boko Haram activities have affected tourist patronage of Yankari Game Reserve. It is recommended that the Nigerian government should strategize on how to put an end to the Boko Haram crisis in the northeastern part of the country which could lead to increases in tourist patronage of Yankari Game Reserve.

A study by Ngozi and Emmanuella (2017) on the importance of destination image in influencing tourist choice of destination for visitation cannot be overemphasized. This is because tourism destination image covers a whole range of factors considered imperative for the satisfaction of tourist thirst for a memorable experience. It includes inter alia, safety and security issues which stand as huge threat to tourist enjoyment of any destination. The issue of security in Nigeria is presently threatened by the activities of Boko Haram insurgency. Therefore, despite Nigeria's rich cultural and natural attractions in all regions of the country, the activities of Boko Haram menace especially the northern regions and obstruct tourist patronage of the many attractions in that area. In the light of the above, this study aims to examine the perception of the public towards Plateau and Kaduna states as tourist destinations and seeks to evaluate the level of patronage of attractions therein. In order to achieve the aim of this study, a survey based on the perception of 103 respondents in four tourist attractions drawn from the two states were conducted. Frequencies and percentage statistical tools were used to analyze and determine how Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria affects tourist flow in that region. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that safety and security

are major factors to consider in selecting a destination. However, the study concluded that fortifying the security of the study area will go a long way in overcoming the projected negative image of the destination.

2.1 Theoretical framework

For this study, the theoretical framework employed was the perception theory. This was selected since the decision on choice of destination is most times influenced by the tourist perception of a destination. As Philemon (2015) rightly observed, the tourism industry is very greatly affected by the perception the tourists carry with them concerning a destination. When international tourists carry positive perceptions about a destination, they will be encouraged to visit and then possibly even revisit that destination. Otherwise, they may be deterred from visiting at all and discourage others from visiting. Therefore, perception is a multifaceted concept that has many important determinants, depending on the disposition of the individual towards the given issue. Folarin (2002) states that opinion perception depends on a complex mix of variables such as psychological disposition, past experiences, cultural expectations and social relationships. This implies that tourist perceptions of northern destinations of Nigeria is influenced by the destination image amongst the many factors. This image has recently been marred by Boko Haram insurgency. This invariably affects their psychological disposition towards the destination. In order not fall victim to such terrorists' activities, tourists instinctively select a safer and more secured destination as a matter of course. From the foregoing, it is clear that perception is an important factor in tourism promotion simply because tourist behaviour is based on their perceptions of a destination. In this study, efforts were made to elicit tourist perceptions on the activities of Boko Haram in the northern tourism destinations of the country.

3. Methodology

The approach for this study is a qualitative review of existing literature on the relationship between Boko Haram Insurgency and the Marketability of the Tourism Sector in North Eastern Nigeria. The paper used exploratory research design from theoretical and empirical findings the subject matter.

4. Findings

It has been observed in this review that there is a significant influence of the activities of Boko Haram Sect on the marketability of tourism sector in North Eastern Nigeria which has drastically influence income generation as well as direct and direct jobs, as a result contributing negatively to the overall economic growth of the region This observation is in line with the findings of Ukah, Adeniyi and Okonkwo (2023) that examined the temporal pattern of tourists' patronage at Yankari Game Reserve before and after the emergence of Boko Haram. The result indicated that 90.0% of the tourists alleged that bombings and suicide attack carried out respectively by the Boko Haram sect made them not to visit the reserve in about five years. In addition, 72.5.0% affirmed that stories and news feeds of massacre orchestrated by Boko Haram have reduced their rate of patronage of the tourist site. T-test was employed to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that there is a significant difference ($t = 6.010, p < 0.05$) in the temporal pattern of tourist patronage before and after the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency. The study has shown that Boko Haram activities have affected tourist patronage of Yankari Game Reserve.

The observation in this review also collaborates with the findings of Ngozi and Emmanuella (2017) on the importance of destination image in influencing tourist choice of destination for visitation cannot be overemphasized. This is because tourism destination image covers a whole range of factors considered imperative for the satisfaction of tourist thirst for a memorable experience. It includes inter alia, safety and security issues which stand as huge threat to tourist enjoyment of any destination.

5. Conclusion

The observation in this paper will contribute to the existing body of literature as there is paucity of scholarly contribution on Boko Haram Insurgency in relation to the marketability of Tourism Sector in North Eastern Nigeria. It will also be of great significance to practitioners in the tourism industry as well as academicians on the relationship between Boko Haram Insurgency and marketability of tourism sector in the region. The study concludes that government should create enabling environment that influences tourist perception of North Eastern Nigeria. The study recommends that government improve security situation that attracts tourist there by resulting in improvement of direct and indirect employment opportunities.

References

- Albu, C.E. (2016) Tourism and Terrorism: A Worldwide perspective, *CES Working Papers*, 8 (1), 1-19. Available at www.ceswp.uaic.ro/articles/CESWP2016_VIII1_ALB.pdf,
- Assael, H. (1984) *Consumer behaviour and marketing action*, Boston: Kent Publishing
- Baker, D. (2014) The Effects of Terrorism on the Travel and Tourism Industry. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 2(1), 58-67.
- Chothia, F. (2012). Who are Nigerians Boko Haram Islamists? Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13809501>
- Corniglion, S. & Turnois, N. (2011). Simulation tourists' behaviour using multi-agent modeling, *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, available at: <http://mpira.ub.unimuenchen.de/33526/>[Date accessed 05/04/2017].
- Eme, OI. and Ibietan, J. 2012. The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2 (2): 10 – 32.
- Ezenagu, N. & Umarr, R. (2017). The Confluence Beach Hotel Lokoja as a tourism tool for economic empowerment, *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol. 6 (1).
- Krol, J., Anderson, J., Boudoin, P. and Pouchanic. S. (2000). International tourism report. University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth.
- Lertputtarak, S. (2012). The relationship between destination image, food image, and revisiting Pattaya, Thailand, *International Journal of Business and Management*, 7 (5), 111-122.
- Ngozi E., & Emmanuella E. (2017) Public perception of book haaram destination image and tourist flow in Northern Nigeria, *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Volume 6 (4) - (2017) ISSN: 2223-814X
- Oketola, D. (2015). "North-East: A tourist haven turned terrorists' den", *Punch*, December, 26, <http://punchng.com/north-east-tourist-haven-turned-terrorists-den/>[Date accessed 20/02/2017].
- Oketola, D. (2015). "North-East: A tourist haven turned terrorists' den", *Punch*, December, 26, <http://punchng.com/north-east-tourist-haven-turned-terrorists-den/>[Date accessed 20/02/2017].
- Olatunji, T.T. & Ezenagu, N. (2016). An Evaluation of Selected attractions in Osun state for tourism promotion, *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports*, Vol.15, 7-15.\
- Suleiman, I. (2011). Kaduna State Government attributes insecurity to poor tourism patronage. Daily Trust Newspaper, Saturday, December 31,