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THE EFFECTS OF BOKO HARAM ACTIVITIES ON TOURISM BUSINESSES IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study was carried out to measure terrorism effects on components of tourism businesses (hotels) in northeastern Nigeria using Boko Haram as a case study. Secondary data on nature, date, and the number of fatalities from the Boko Haram attack was sourced from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED). Data on tourism businesses including hotel room occupancy rate, revenue profile, and employees' profile was sourced from each state tourism development board. A total of 558 hotels were selected in a one-stage cluster sampling technique. The study adopts a longitudinal research design where inferential statistics was performed with the use of SPSS. Results revealed that Boko Haram attacks had significant effects on tourism businesses contributing to the decline in the number of hotel employees, revenue, and room occupancy rate of hotels in the region. The study, therefore, recommends intense media promotion of the areas and States not majorly affected by the crisis, rebuilding of areas and States recovered from the group, provisions of more resilient security apparatus, and general development of social, educational, and economic infrastructures to help revamp the socioeconomic life of the area.

Keywords:

Boko Haram, Tourism Businesses, North Eastern Nigeria, Terrorist Attacks

Introduction

Tourism and Hospitality industry has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, but also one of the most sensitive to crisis. Unexpected and uncalculated threats like terrorism is a major concern in this industry and can result in significant drops in tourist arrivals

and negatively impacting on the general tourism industry of any destination. Un-arguable, terrorism has been on the rise in the last decade in Nigeria, largely due to the insurgency activities of Boko-Haram, Herdsmen and Farmers clashes. Before the advent and upscale of terrorist activities mainly by Boko Haram, Morgan (2015) argued that there were terror acts in Nigeria but of lesser consequence and gravity and includes acts like communal/tribal wars, sabotage, armed robbery, stealing, kidnapping, among others. The main purpose and intention of the perpetrators of these acts was to gained material benefits with minimal loss of life.

Nigeria tourism & Hospitality sector contribute more than 7.5% to the country GDP and employed about 5.1% according to recent country performance evaluation report released by United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2017), making it one of the most important economic and development sectors for the country. However, the violent campaign by Boko Haram in the past decade may have significant effects on the tourism subsector which could contribute to diminishing international tourists' arrivals and reductions in FDI (Foreign direct investment) for the country.

Literature Review

Nigeria has long endured travel advisories by other governments due to its high-risk security situation. One of such was when in 2010, the US Department of State warned US citizens against traveling to Nigeria citing limited facilities for tourists, existence of violent crimes carried out by ordinary citizens and gangs in military uniforms, kidnappings, and dangerous public transport (USDS, 2010). By 2011, the US Mission in Nigeria advised its citizens to keep off some of the biggest hotels in Abuja including Transcorp Hilton, Sheraton and Nicon Luxury due to imminent threat of Boko Haram attacks. Similarly, the UK government has a travel advisory on Nigeria as reported by Okey (2018) which could also have negative effects on the country tourism & hospitality industry.

It has been established by many researchers (Page & Connel, 2006; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998; Baker, 2014) that terrorism activities produced one of the most skewed relationships with tourism and can therefore be judged as tourism number one enemy. United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2005) described tourism as the jewel of development for many developing worlds. This is because tourism is widely regarded as one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Since the 1980s, tourism has been one of the leading growth sectors in the global economy. Data from UNWTO (2010) revealed that from 1950 to 2010; international tourist arrivals grew from 25 million to 940 million. The sector has seen significant growth in revenue and employment as well as the development of new and fledgling markets. It contributes significantly to national GDPs and is a top employer in the economies of many nations. Tourism is labor intensive service which means it employs a lot of people in developing world where jobs are still limited. It is also a security sensitive activity which means that any hints of threat and danger to tourists can damage it (UNWTO, 2010).

Terrorism activity has been an ongoing issue mostly in the North-eastern region of Nigeria which caused extensive casualties and attracting negative national and international media. The huge media coverage given to terrorist attacks not only helps terrorists broadcast their message but also send signals to potential tourists on the risk inherent with their visit to certain places (Korstanje, 2018). The Northeast region of Nigeria has huge tourism potentials and endowment that could contribute immensely to the socioeconomic wellbeing of the region but the escalation of terrorism activities in the region in the last decade could have left serious

effects on the sector. It is therefore patterning to undertake thorough and in-depth investigation like the present one to better understand the effects Boko Haram terrorism may have on tourism subsector in the region, which could help in making informed policy decisions for the sustainable development of the subsector. This study therefore examine the trend and characteristic (number, age, rooms, class) of tourism businesses (hotels) in the study area and secondly it ascertain the changes in room occupancy rate, revenue and employment profile of hotels in the area within the study period.

Materials and Method

Primary data including characteristic and coordinates of hotels was collected with the aid of data collection form and GPS. Secondary data for the study includes Boko Haram attacks, date of attacks, nature of attacks and number of fatalities. These data was source from ACLED (@www.acleddata.com) –an organization that published data on violent attacks across the globe. The study population comprises of all tourism businesses operating in the area. A list of registered hotels was sourced from each of the State's tourism development board, which revealed that there are a total of 1008 registered hotels spread across the six States of the study area. The six states were subdivided into three clusters of urban, semi-urban and rural areas. The urban and semi-urban areas with a total number of 558 registered hotels were selected in one stage cluster sampling. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analysed data presented in percentage table, charts and graphs

Results

Distribution of Hotels by States

The number of hotels across the study area is as represented in figure 1. This table revealed that Taraba State had 15% representation of the total hotels in the study. Bauchi State had 28% representation of the total hotels. Adamawa State had 21% of the total and Yobe State had 14% of the total hotels. While Borno and Gombe State had 12% and 9% of the total hotels in the study area respectively.

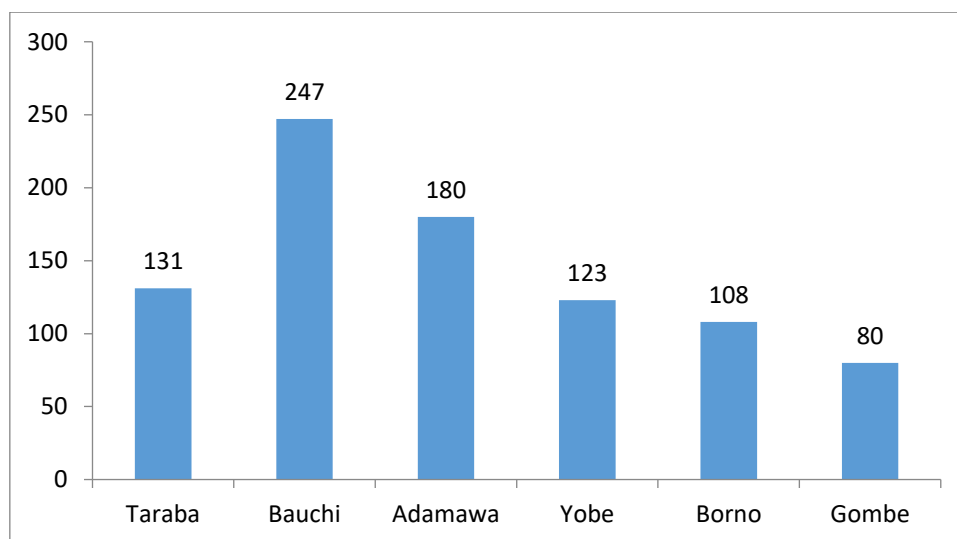


Figure 1: Distribution of Hotels by States

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Distribution of Hotels by Age

The ages of the hotels across the States were categorised into three. Each group has 20 years interval as shown in figure 2. The first group of hotels is those that fell between 10 to 20 years representing 35% of the total hotels. These hotels include those built between, 1999 - 2018 and are the most recent. The second groups are those that fell between 21 – 40 years representing 53% of the total hotels. This group includes those built between, 1978-1998. The last groups are those between the ages of 41 and above representing 12% of the total hotels. These groups were built in 1977 or earlier and are the oldest set of hotels in the study area.

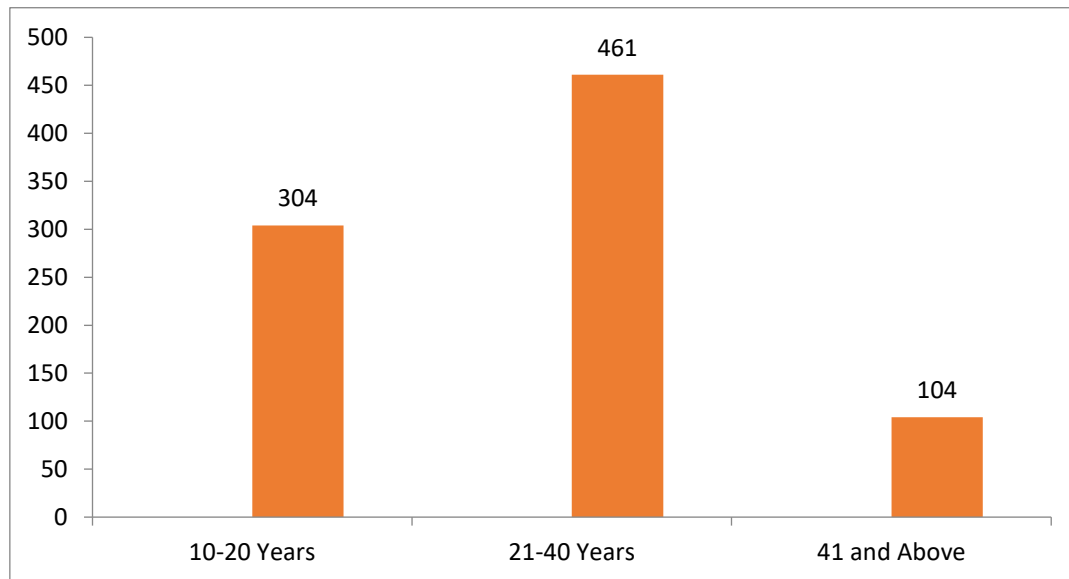


Figure 2: Distribution of Hotels by Age

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Distribution of Hotels by Standard

Hotels are classified into different stars to indicate their standard. The higher the star of the hotel the higher the standard of that hotel. Figure 3 present the class and standard distribution of the hotels. Accordingly, there was no hotel that fell under the classification of 5-star and above rated as high class. 3.6 % of the hotels fell under the classification of 4 -star rated as high/middle class. 33.3% fell under the classification of 3-star rated as middle class and 18.8% fell under the category of 2 -star rated as middle/low class. 23.8% fell under 1- star rated as low-class while, 20.4% of the hotels fell into the category of others -those with no known classification.

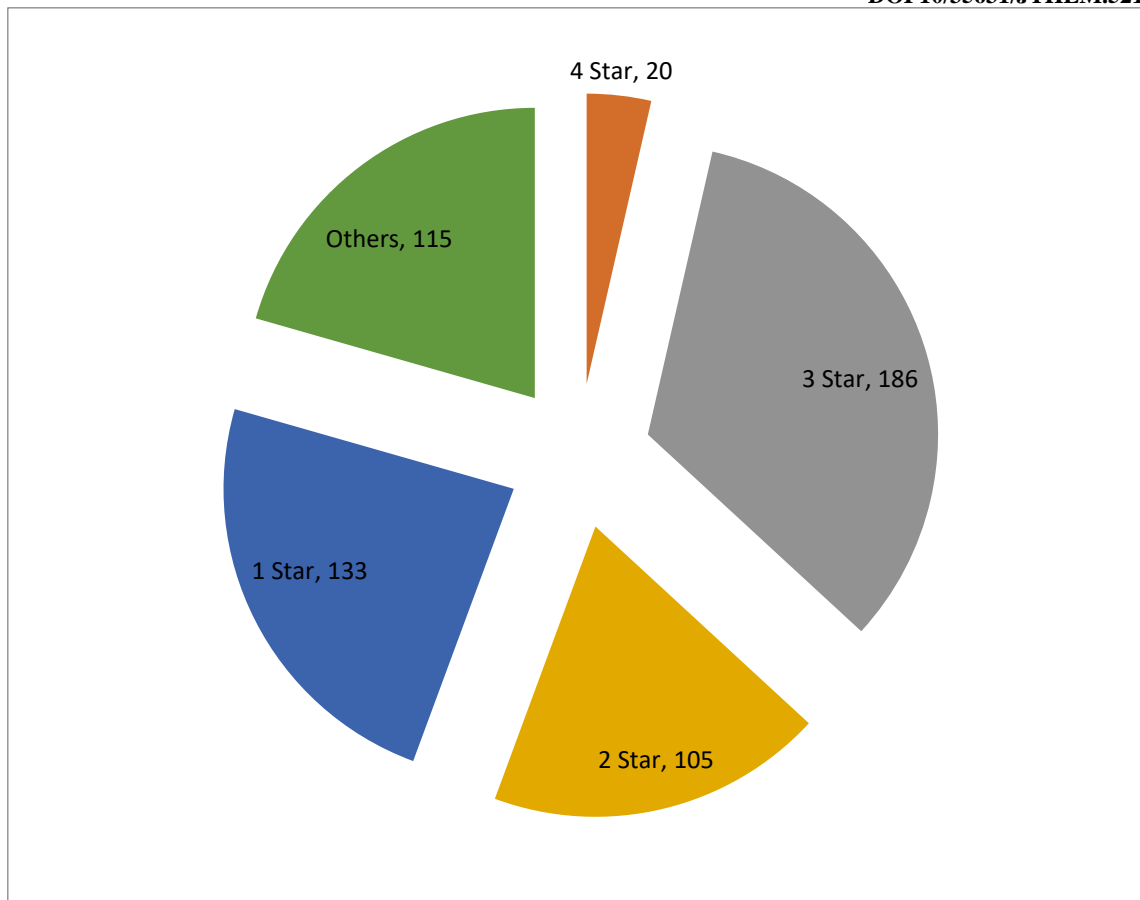


Figure 3: Distribution of Hotels by Standard

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Distribution of Hotel Size by Employees

The sizes of hotel employee's across each of the States in the study area are presented in Figure 4. The data revealed that Taraba State represent 14% of the total hotels by employees across the States. Adamawa State had 20% representation of the total hotels size by employee's. Bauchi had 33% representation of the total hotels by employee's. While, Yobe and Gombe had 14% and 7% representation of the total hotels by employees size across the States respectively. Borno had 12% representation of the total hotel by employee's size across the States.

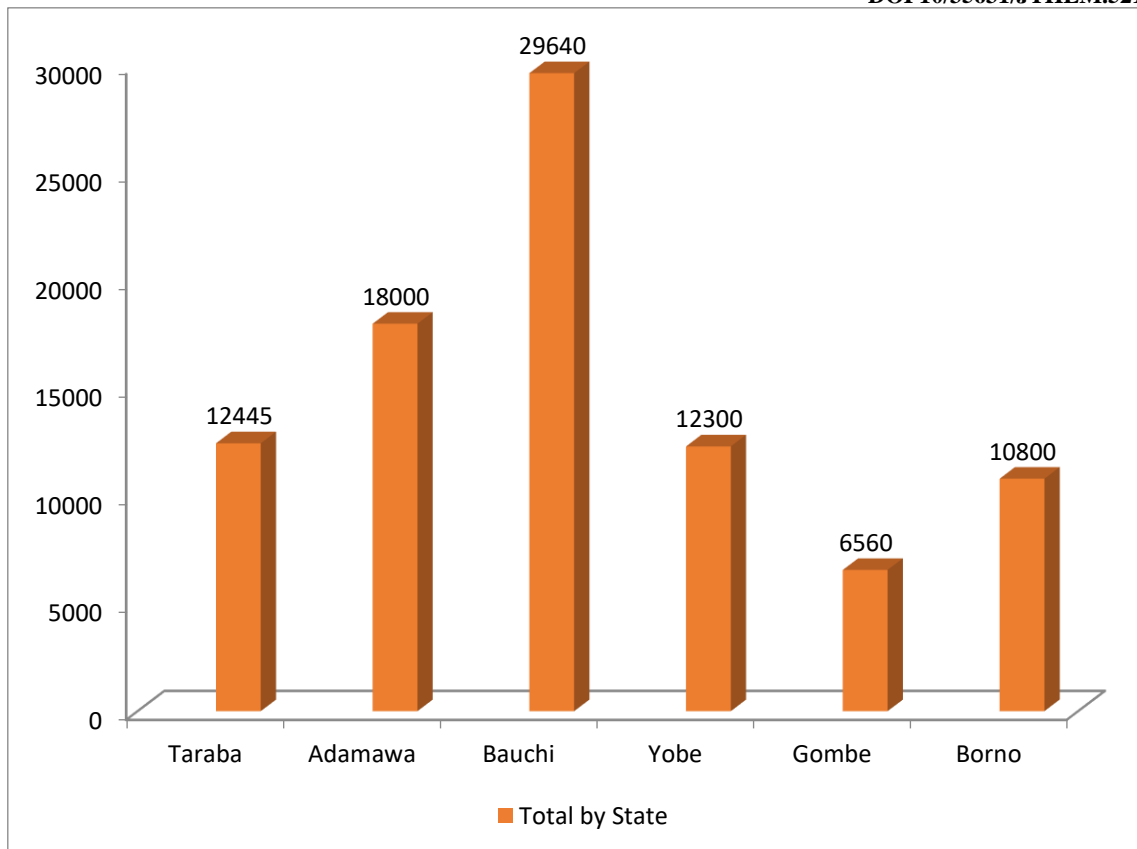


Figure 4: Distribution of Hotels size by Employees

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Distribution of Hotel by Room Count

The numbers of rooms per hotel in the States across the study area is presented in figure 5. The data revealed that Taraba State had a 15% representation of the total hotel rooms in the States. Adamawa had 24% representation of the total hotel rooms. Bauchi had 33% representation of the total hotel rooms. While, Yobe and Borno had 10% representation of the total hotel rooms respectively, and Gombe had 7% representation of the total hotel rooms in the States.

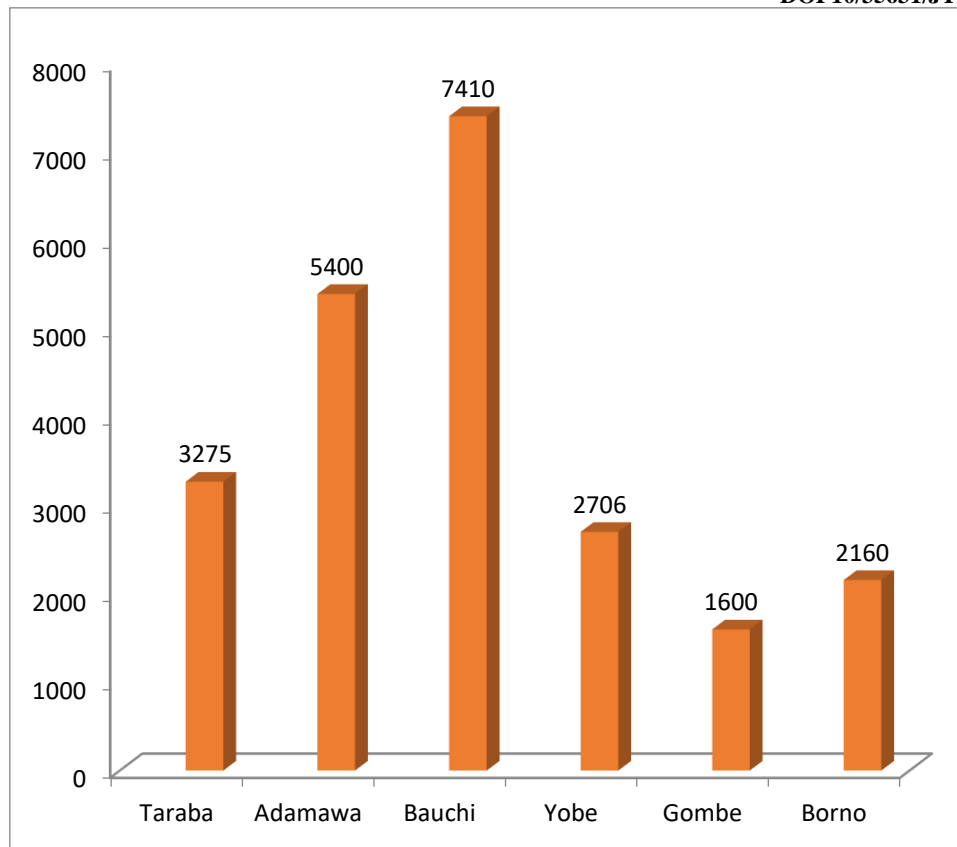


Figure 5: Distribution of Hotels by Room Count

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Annual Trend of Boko Haram Attacks and Fatalities

For a better understanding of the data presented thus far, a summary chart was constructed to explain the annual trend of Boko Haram attacks and fatalities as presented in figure 6. The data presented in the figure revealed that 2009 recorded 1% of the total attacks carried out by the group within the ten years period under review with no fatality. In 2010, there were a total of 4% of the total attacks and 0.4% of the total fatalities. 2011 had 11% of the total attacks and 7% of total fatalities. Furthermore, 2012 had 16% of the total attacks and 8% of the total fatalities. 2013 had 14% of the total attacks and 17% of total fatalities. 2014 had 13% of the total attacks and 28% of total fatalities. Furthermore, 2015 had 15% of the total attacks and 24% of the total fatalities. While 2016 had 5% of the total attacks and 5% of total fatalities. 2017 and 2018 represent 10% and 9% of the total attacks and 7% and 4% of total fatalities respectively.

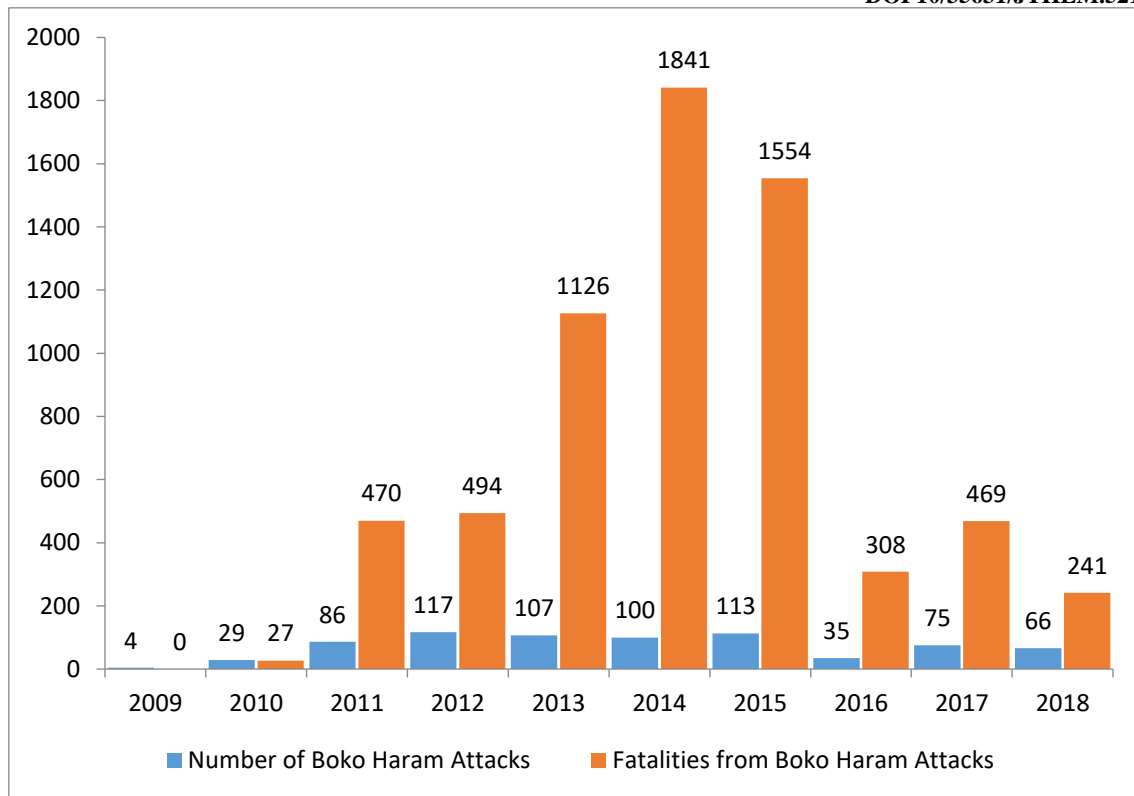


Figure 6: Annual Trend of Boko Haram Attacks and Fatalities

Source: Based on data from ACLED, 2019

States Summary of Boko Haram Attacks and Fatalities

In figure 7, state by state summary of Boko Haram attacks and antecedent fatalities are presented. As expected, Borno recorded the highest percentage of attacks (72%) and fatalities (68%) within the ten years period of review. Adamawa and Yobe State both had the second highest percentage of attacks (10%) but different percentage of fatalities. While Adamawa recorded 17%, Yobe had a lower 12% of fatalities within the period under review. Bauchi had the third highest percentage of attacks (4%) and fatalities (2%). The remaining two States of Taraba and Gombe both recorded 2% each of the total attacks with 1% and 0.2% fatalities respectively for the years under review.

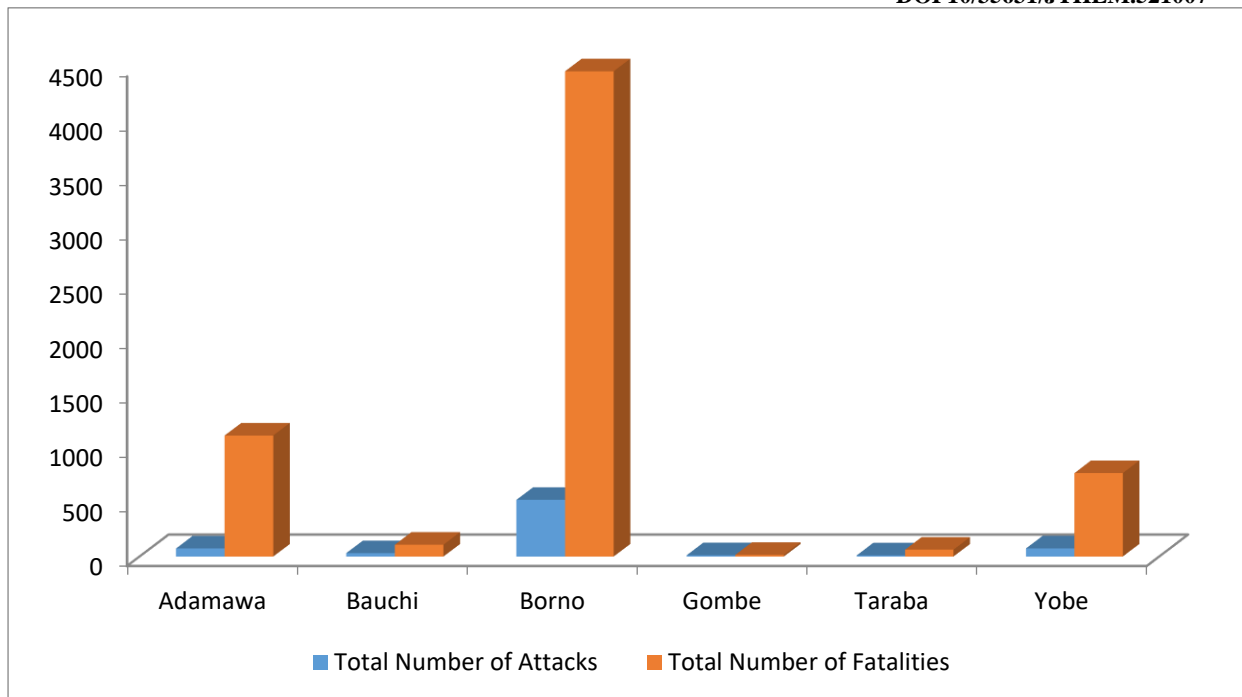


Figure 7: Summary of Boko Haram Attacks and Fatalities

Source: Based on data from ACLED, 2019

Hotel Room Occupancy Rate

Hotel occupancy rate as presented in Figure 8 revealed that all the States in the study area witnessed an increase in room occupancy between the years of 2007, 2008 and 2010 when Boko Haram operation has not started or was very minimal. Then, there was a general decrease in room occupancy across the States between 2010 -2016 before picking up again in 2017 and 2018; a sign of recovery after the group recorded some of the lower frequencies of attacks and fatalities in the years.

The decrease was almost uniform (an average of 2%) across the States and years showing a general reflection of the impact of the group operation in the region

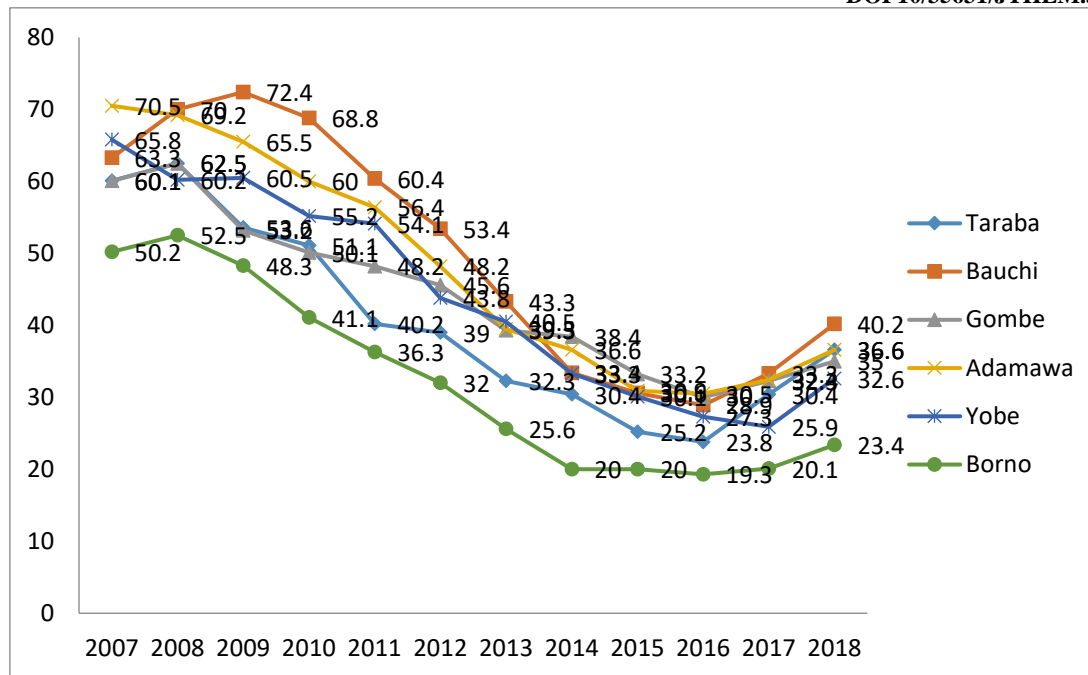


Figure 8: Hotel Room Occupancy Rate

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Employment Trend Across Hotels

Employment trend of hotels across the area as presented in Figure 9 revealed a similar scenario like the room occupancy rate discussed earlier. Accordingly, the two years preceding 2009 when Boko Haram was not yet very lethal, there was increased in the number of employments recorded by the hotels, but a uniform decreased was recorded across the States in 2010 when the group became much more lethal. This downward trend continues through to 2016 and started picking in 2017 and 2018, showing a sign of recovery in reflection to reduced frequencies of attacks and fatalities from the group. As in occupancy, the average percentage of increase and decrease was evenly spread across the States (2%) except Borno, which did not show any sign of recovery throughout the period.

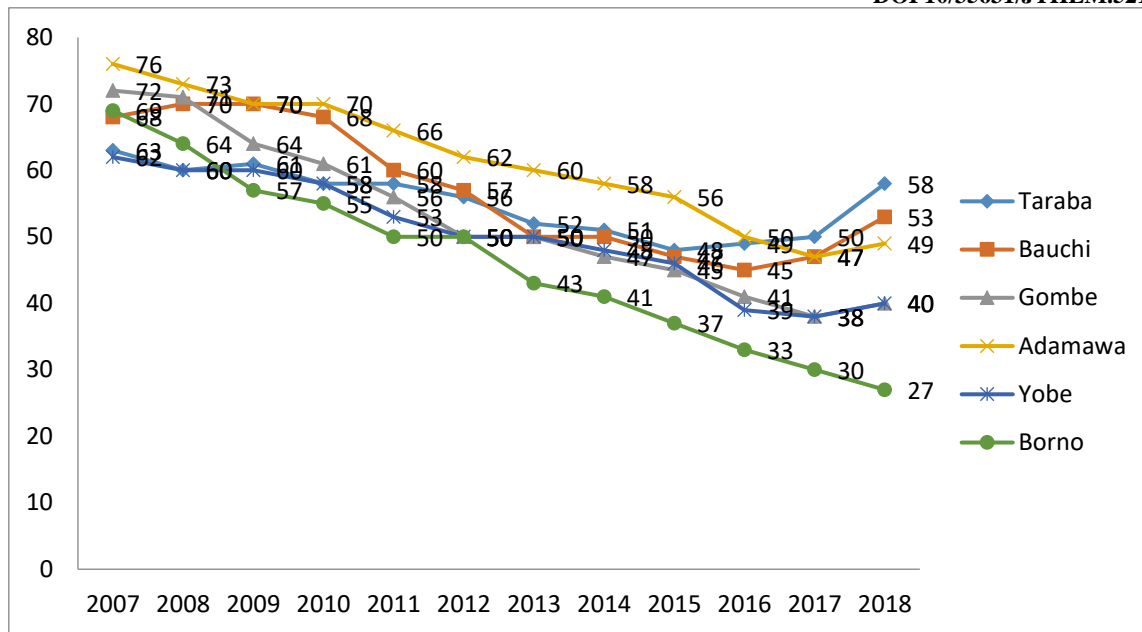


Figure 9: Employment Trend across Hotels

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Revenue Trend Across Hotels

Just like occupancy and employment trend, the revenue trend of hotels across the study area as presented in figure 10 revealed a similar trend where revenue appreciated between the years (2007, 2008) preceding 2009 when the group operation became fatal. Then starting a general decreased in 2010 through 2016, when again there was an increased in the last two years of 2017 and 2018 demonstrating a sign of recovery across the States in the study area.

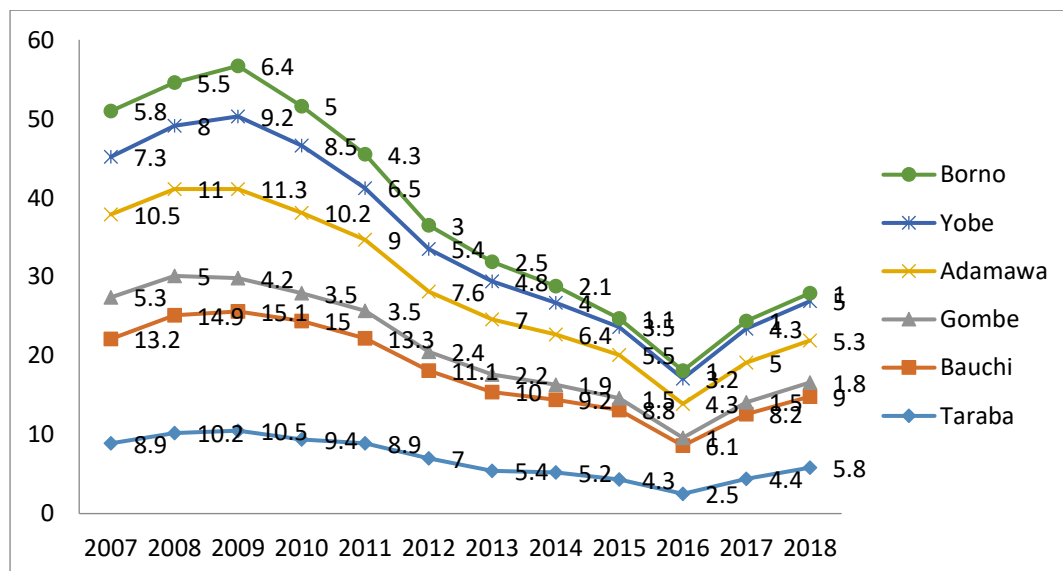


Figure 10: Revenue Trend (In Millions Of Naira) Across Hotels

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Discussions

The study found that majority of the hotels (53%) were built over 20 – 40 years ago and that Bauchi State has the largest representation of hotels (28%) followed by Adamawa State (21%). It was also found that majority of the hotels were 2-Star (23.8%) and 1-star (20.4%) class of hotels. Again, it was found that Bauchi State had the highest number of hotels by employees size (33%) followed by Adamawa (20%) as well as highest number of hotel by room count (33% and 24%) respectively. Again, it was found that all the States were affected interns of room occupancy rate, recording a strong occupancy rate in the two base years (2007 and 2008) before the group became fatal. But started a steady fall from 2009 – 2016, and then there was another indication of recovery in 2017 and 2018. These changes seem to reflect the group pattern of attacks, increasing when attacks seem to reduce and decreasing when attacks increases.

Accordingly, in terms of hotel employment trend, the study found that a similar condition as occupancy rate, where there was increase in number of employees before the group started becoming fatal in 2009. And after which the employment number started decreasing with increase in number of attacks and fatalities. Though an interesting observation from this finding was that while every other States seem to be recovered in terms of employment in the last two years of the study (2017 and 2018), Borno State did not show any sign of recovery. There was still decreased in the number of employees throughout the ten years study period.

This could be as a result of the severity of attacks in the State being the group epicenter of attacks, which might have led to decrease in tourism businesses thereby resulting in low employment in the sector.

On revenue trend of tourism businesses, the study found a similar trend as occupancy rate and employment rate. The two base years, there was some increase in revenues of tourism businesses across the States. But a sharp decrease in revenues was recorded between 2009 – 2016 across the businesses with some recovery gains in the last two years of the study (2017 and 2018), when the attacks and fatalities was low.

As before, this finding on tourism attributes (room occupancy, employment and revenues) shows a reflection with the group pattern of attacks, decreasing when number of attacks increases and increasing when attacks reduced.

These findings are in confirmation with many other works as reported in the literature. For example, Belau (2003) found that after the 9/11 Al-Qaeda attacks in the USA, the world tourism suffered a severe downturn of over 10% and a higher percentage in specific countries like Egypt, Canada, Germany and others. This downtown according to Belau resulted in over 6 million jobs loss or 8.6%, in the tourism industry worldwide. Furthermore, Misrahi (2016) found in a study that the total cost in term of revenue from the 2013 Boston bombing was \$438 million U S dollars and €2 billion British pounds for the 2015 attacks in France.

Also, in their work, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2010) found that it takes an average of 4.7 years to 9.6 years for tourism businesses to recover fully from terrorist attacks. This is in confirmation with this research finding where tourism business attribute has started showing sign of recovery with decrease in number of attacks and fatalities form the terrorist group.

Conclusions

From the data analysed and findings made in the study, the following conclusions are drawn; That Boko Haram terrorist operation though may have limited direct physical damage on tourism businesses has left damaging indirect effects on the socio- economic fabrics which include decline in number of employees, revenues and number of hotels room occupied by visitors.

Recommendations

Based on the above submission, this study recommends the following crisis management strategies which are modified to suit the peculiar challenge of the study area:

1. There should be intense promotion of the areas/states that are still safe for visitors to go. For example, apart from Borno, findings from this study revealed that other states in the north east are sparingly hit by Boko Haram. These states can be promoted as safe for tourist.
2. Those tourists who are risk takers or adventure tourist can be targeted in a promotional advert which will showcase core areas affected by Boko Haram crisis which have now been recaptured by the security forces as firsthand experience of the Boko Haram war. This concept is known as war tourism (*Driver, Carol, 2014*).
3. Generally, government should counter terrorism with development including building social, educational and economic infrastructures in these states and areas that have been liberated from the crisis instead of given excuses of waiting until the whole crisis come to an end before development can commence. The United State (US) did not wait until the Al- Qaeda group were totally defeated before rebuilding the 9/11 attack site. Governments show strength by rebuilding areas captured from insurgency and providing stronger security.
4. Finally, the internally displaced persons camps built and managed by Nigerian government and International NGOs can be promoted to those interested in humanitarian tourism

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