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The Effect of Insecurity on Tourism Activities in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The tourism sector in Jos, Plateau State, which was once a key driver of economic growth and local development, has experienced a severe decline due to the persistent insecurity in the state. This study examines the effect of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos, Plateau state. The study used a descriptive, cross-sectional survey research design. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected from the total population of 1,260,200 using the Tare Yamane formula. Questionnaires were distributed to 400 randomly selected respondents across Jos North, Jos South, and Jos East LGA. Interviews were also conducted with six key informants to complement the data gathered from the questionnaires. Responses from the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages while quantitative data were analysed while outlining the key point presented by the key informant. The study revealed that insecurity in Jos has significantly affected tourism activities. Major effects include a decline in foreign investment, widespread unemployment, reduced patronage of tourist centres, and diminished state revenue. Insecurity also deters foreign investors, disrupts livelihoods in the tourism sector, and tarnishes Jos's reputation as a tourist destination. The study recommended that drones and CCTV cameras are

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examples of advanced technologies that should be used to provide real-time surveillance to identify and discourage criminal activity within the State.

Keywords: Insecurity, Tourism, Activities, Development

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity is a pervasive global issue that affects various sectors, including tourism. The tourism industry is particularly vulnerable to security concerns, as it relies on a sense of safety and stability to attract visitors. Globally, insecurity has been identified as a major threat to tourism activities and development, with destinations experiencing political instability, terrorism, and crime seeing a significant decline in tourist arrivals (Mekinc, Mawby & Trnavčevič, 2017).

The development of tourism in Africa is severely hampered by insecurity, as political instability, terrorism, and criminality are prevalent in many African nations, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, and many more. The tourism sector on the continent has been severely impacted by security worries, as many prospective travellers have chosen to travel to other, supposedly safer locations (Okoli, 2018). In Nigeria, where there are numerous instances of insecurity, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and terrorism, insecurity poses a significant obstacle to tourism and development. Many tourists have avoided the country because of security worries, which has severely hurt the industry (Oladele, 2018).

Adeyemi (2020) positioned that Jos, the capital city of Plateau State in Nigeria, has experienced a decline in tourism activities in recent years due to insecurity. The city, known for its natural attractions, cultural heritage, and rich history, has been plagued by ethnic and religious conflicts, leading to a significant decrease in tourist arrivals (Nwosu, 2019). Tourism is an essential sector in Jos, contributing significantly to the local economy and providing employment opportunities for residents. However, the prevailing insecurity has led to a decline in tourist arrivals, resulting in economic losses and a negative impact on the livelihoods of those dependent on the industry (Adeyemi, 2020).

Similarly, Ibrahim (2017) identified that insecurity in Jos is attributed to various factors, including ethnic and religious conflicts between the indigenous Berom and Hausa-Fulani communities, cattle rustling and herdsmen attacks, Kidnapping and armed robbery,

political instability and violence. Thus, these security challenges have led to a decline in tourism activities, resulting in cancellation of travel plans, reduced hotel occupancy, closure of tourist attractions and decreased revenue for tourism businesses (Nwosu, 2019). Violent conflict has a very high impact on socio-economic activities in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria. Trading/marketing activities, farming activities and educational activities suffer as a result of the endless conflict (Ameh & Geoffrey, 2024).

The effect of insecurity on tourism activities and development in Jos is a significant concern, as it affects not only the local economy but also the livelihoods of residents and the overall development of the city. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos and to find a potential solution to mitigate the challenges and promote sustainable tourism development in the city.

Literature Review

The importance of tourism is highlighted by Blessing, Chukwu, and Grace (2021), who say that it is really about people and places, the places that one group of people travel to, visit, and pass through, the other groups that enable their trip, and the people they meet along the route. To put it succinctly, tourism is the interactions and occurrences that result from people travelling for vacation or leisure and staying temporarily. The tourism business is starting to change and is making a significant contribution these days.

However, many tourism academics in the tourism industry support the idea that everyone visiting a tourist site should expect to be safe while on vacation (Blessing et al., 2021). It has been noted, nevertheless, that tourist sites that create a reputation for being risky might be replaced by others that are thought to be safer. People have to decide where they want to go on vacation, aside from the blatantly dangerous locations where governments warn against travel. One of the unique characteristics of the tourism sector has been observed to be the inability to pre-test a vacation. Additionally, travellers learn about places from brochures, advertisements, and the media, and decisions about where to travel are frequently based on generalisation and incomplete knowledge (Ukwayi, Ojong, Austin, and Emeka, 2012).

Hamarneh and Jeřábek (2018) were of the view that security issues have a big influence on travel destinations, travellers, the travel sector, local governments, and media appearances. Common effects include a drop in visitor numbers and revenue, a bad reputation for the destination, a decline in the competitiveness of tourism destinations, the demise of tourist

destinations, the withdrawal of both foreign and local investments, the loss of business profitability, the closure of transnational corporations, the reduction in the quality of life in host communities, and an increase in government involvement in tightening security measures and spending on financial assistance to deal with security incidents.

In the words of Adeyemi (2020), Nigeria's tourism and hospitality industries have been severely impacted by the exodus of foreign investment. The author also asserts that the police and other security forces' inability to adequately address these threats demonstrates a clear lack of awareness of current events. The upshot was a decline in tourism investment and patronage as hundreds of tourists who often visited these breathtaking vistas moved to other, more tranquil cities with less picturesque and serene locations.

Ayinla's (2013) study found that certain foreign investors who entered Kaduna in February 2000 were unable to participate in the agricultural sector due to the state's ethno-religious problems. Rather, security personnel quickly transported them out of the State. Due to the same difficulties, the Kaduna Trade Fair was moved one week later that year. Several overseas participants who had previously expressed interest in attending the fair quickly cancelled their attendance despite the change. Kaduna State, which was quickly developing into an industrial hub, abruptly lost its standing. In addition, several direct flights to Kaduna State and other northern states were cancelled. Both global and local visitors and investors now view Nigeria as a dangerous place to do business because of these challenges. Uncertainties stifle industrialisation and other forms of growth. This is because, according to Ayinla (2013), no entrepreneur or businessman would like to invest in an environment where their money's safety is uncertain.

Agbiboa (2013) posited that Nigeria's reputation in the international world has been damaged by persistent insecurity, such as violence between ethnic and religious groups, which has painted the nation as unable to maintain peace among its people. Foreign media, far more than local media, report on the majority of communal disturbances. As a result, the negative perception that these reports produce endures for a considerable amount of time, which frequently causes reluctance among potential international tourists and investors. At the very least, those who are currently on the ground would reconsider their participation in a nation engulfed in avoidable but enduring instability (Agbiboa, 2013).

The needless loss of human life is one of the terrible consequences of insecurity, which includes terrorism and ethno-religious crimes. When there is ethno-religious violence, for

instance, zealots typically attack members of the public, including tourists, viciously and indiscriminately. Children and women are not always spared. Similarly, when security personnel try to dislodge the extremists, they frequently shoot them with errant gunfire or subject them to police jungle justice (Okpeh, Akinwumi, and Geamma, 2016).

In addition to the loss of life, Fawole and Bello (2017) point out that people typically suffer from a variety of injuries as a result of wars, some of which are so severe and lifelong that they may never fully recover. Conflict-related physical wounds may heal, but, unfortunately, psychological effects like trauma and animosity are typically irreversible. The high level of insecurity in the nation has deterred tourists and prospective tourists who are constantly concerned about their safety.

Another adverse effect of insecurity and social unrest on tourism is in the form of material losses. Unquantifiable public and private properties are usually destroyed in the wake of violence and criminality. Some rioters and criminals deliberately target tourists' destinations and social amenities provided for public convenience, which have nothing to do with their grievances. Street and traffic lights are vandalised at will, while government and privately owned automobiles are set ablaze in some cases. Moreover, unspecified numbers of valuables have also been looted in the process by social miscreants, popularly known as Area-boys or yandaba, who, at times, camouflage as genuine demonstrators. The hooligans usually take advantage of these chaotic situations to loot tourist destinations and other private property in their vicinity (Omotola, 2018). Similarly, violence exacerbates poverty and hunger among residents of Jos Plateau state, it leads to the loss of lives and livelihoods, reduces their access to loans from commercial and microfinance banks due to forceful shutdowns, and forces them to flee their homes and shops (Ameh & Geoffrey).

Over the past decades, tourism has become the largest industry worldwide in terms of employment and share of global gross domestic product. In 2011, the industry contributed about N1,232.2 billion (3.3 per cent) to the GDP of Nigeria. In its report, the WITC forecasted that the industry generated 897,500 jobs representing 1.4 per cent of Nigeria's total workforce in 2012 and in 2022, the amount grew by 6.5 per cent per annum to N483.4 billion (Akpan & Obang, 2022). According to the authors, during the previous three decades, the tourism business has been extremely dynamic and rapidly expanding.

All things considered, WTO (2019) posited that tourism facilities generate jobs in a variety of economic sectors, including building and transportation, which enhances the economy.

Over 600 million individuals travel abroad annually, according to established statistics. Hundreds of millions of people travel within their own countries for entertainment and employment. Consequently, the tourism sector, which encompasses hotels, resorts, airlines, travel agencies, and other enterprises serving tourists, is referred to as "the world's number one employer of labour." Jobs created by travel and tourism are distributed throughout the economy in sectors such as manufacturing, telecommunications, retail, and construction, in addition to directly inside travel and tourism businesses (WTO, 2019).

In the words of Adagba, Ugwu & Eme (2012), the widespread unemployment of young people makes it clear that the tourist and hospitality sectors face a threat of insecurity, which exacerbates the nation's already high level of insecurity. In general, it is concerning that young Nigerians are unemployed and impoverished. Youth unemployment is a significant contributor to insecurity in Nigeria, as acknowledged by several scholars (Adagba et al 2012). Subsequent administrations' inability to handle issues of poverty, unemployment, and unequal income distribution among ethnic nationalities is regrettably one of the main reasons for insecurity in the nation.

As a result of the widespread youth unemployment in Nigeria, cultism, armed robbery, theft, and kidnapping became common ways for young people to avoid poverty. The success of the tourism sector is significantly influenced by the prevention of criminal activity. Travellers create a favourable impression of a place where safety and security are upheld. The rise in criminal activity damages the tourism business by creating a negative perception of the places visited (Ukwayi, Ojong, Austin & Emeka, 2012). Ukwayi et al,. (2012) further posited that tourists are more willing to pay a premium for hotels and bungalows that are quiet and have low crime rates than they are to pay a lower price for nice and luxurious hotels that have a high risk of crime. Because of this, several hotels have Central Socket Television Cameras (CCTV) installed in their rooms and verandas, as well as other technical equipment and physical security both within and outside the hotel. These are meant to make it easier to monitor visitors and their belongings. These kinds of measures, however, may have a detrimental effect on the tourism sector because most travellers dislike being polled in their free time. To balance consumer convenience with safety and security, hotel owners must do so (Ukwayi et al ., 2012).

It is often known that political instability brought on by violent conflict or terrorism is bad for a nation's economic growth, and one way that it hurts the economy is by harming

tourism. For tourists to travel to any country, political stability and safety are essential, according to Dabak (2011). Travellers' conduct may change as a result of violent protests, social instability, civil war, terrorist attacks, alleged human rights violations, or even the fear of these events.

Theoretical framework

Chaos Theory (Order out of Disorder) by McKercher, 1999

McKercher's (1999) application of chaos theory to tourism offers a framework for comprehending the nonlinear, unpredictable character of tourism systems. It highlights how underlying patterns and order may emerge despite the seeming chaos, as demonstrated by how tourism has been able to adjust to issues like insecurity. The sensitivity to initial conditions, where minor shifts, like insecurity, cause ripple effects; nonlinear dynamics, where small changes result in significant outcomes; and self-organising systems, where tourism sectors find new markets or strategies to overcome obstacles.

Insecurity, such as ethno-religious disputes, can seriously impair tourism in Jos; isolated occurrences can lead to widespread cancellations and enduringly unfavourable opinions. In contrast, tourist systems may eventually self-organise, concentrating on safer attractions or niche markets, which would be consistent with the theory's "order out of disorder" tenet. Tourism's reaction to shocks can be realistically explained by Chaos Theory, but it has drawbacks. Predicting precise results or converting abstract ideas into workable insecurity management techniques are difficult tasks. Nevertheless, it provides insightful information about the adaptability and robustness of tourism systems.

METHODS

The study used a descriptive, cross-sectional survey research design. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected from the total population of 1,260,200 using the Tare Yamane formula. Questionnaires were distributed to 400 respondents who were randomly selected across Jos North, Jos South, and Jos East LGA. Interviews were also conducted with six key informants to complement the data gathered from the questionnaires. Responses from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, Qualitative data were analyzed while outlining the key point presented by the key informant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study discusses the findings generated from the study using the data obtained from the questionnaire. The findings are logically discussed as follows:

Table 1 Respondents' rating of the impact of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos N=384

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Low	42	10.9
Average	122	31.8
High	220	57.3

Source: Field Survey, 2024

In Table 4.3, respondents rated the impact of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos. The majority of respondents (57.3%) perceived the impact of insecurity as high, indicating that insecurity significantly affects tourism activities in the area. A substantial proportion (31.8%) rated the impact as average, suggesting moderate effects of insecurity. A smaller group (10.9%) viewed the impact as low, indicating that only a minority believe that insecurity has a limited effect on tourism. These results reveal that insecurity is widely seen as a major challenge to tourism activities in Jos. The high percentage of respondents perceiving a significant impact underscores the urgent need for effective measures to address security concerns and mitigate their effects on the tourism sector.

Table 2 Respondents' Rating of the effect of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos Plateau state. N-384

Reaction	S	A	D	SD	Mean	STD
Loss of foreign investment	171	172	19	22	3.28	.804
Loss of lives and properties	143	202	19	20	3.22	.764
Increase unemployment	167	175	22	20	3.27	.792
Low patronage of tourist centres	165	168	20	31	3.22	.872
Promote the bad reputation of tourist centres	161	167	31	25	3.21	.848
Reduced the state's internally generated revenue	163	165	22	34	3.19	.895

Source: Field Survey, 2024

In Table 1, respondents rated the effects of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos, Plateau State, using a 4-point Likert scale. All listed effects had mean scores above the midpoint (2.0), indicating that insecurity significantly affects tourism in the state. Loss of foreign investment ranked as the most significant effect (Mean = 3.28, Std = 0.804), with high agreement among respondents. This was closely followed by an increase in unemployment (Mean = 3.27, Std = 0.792), which also demonstrated low variability, indicating strong consensus. Loss of lives and properties (Mean = 3.22, Std = 0.764) and low patronage of tourist centres (Mean = 3.22, Std = 0.872) were equally rated as significant effects, with slightly more diverse responses in the latter due to its higher standard deviation. Promotion of a bad reputation for tourist centres (Mean = 3.21, Std = 0.848) and reduction in the state's internally generated revenue (Mean = 3.19, Std = 0.895) were also seen as major effects, with moderate variability in responses.

Findings from the key informant interview added flare to the effect of insecurity on tourism activities in Jos Plateau state. One of the interviewees, who is 46 years old, expressed that:

> *Foreign investors have been considerably discouraged from investing in tourism-related ventures in Jos due to the ongoing instability in the area. These investors frequently place a great value on security and stability, and the high level of risk in Jos has compelled many to pull out of projects or refrain from starting them at all. The construction of vital tourism infrastructure, including contemporary resorts, transit systems, and recreational amenities, has been hindered by this migration. These developments are necessary to make Jos a competitive travel destination. A significant economic setback for the state is the lack of foreign investment, which restricts direct financial inflows as well as technology transfer, job creation, and chances for local enterprises to prosper through alliances with foreign companies. (KII/9/11/2024/ Jos East).*

Another interviewee who is 42 years old expressed that:

> *Jos's insecurity has caused a sharp drop in tourism, which has left many people unemployed. The tourism industry has left those who rely on it, including tour guides, hotel employees, transportation companies, and regional craftspeople, without steady earnings. Food vendors, souvenir makers, and entertainers are among the linked industries that have been negatively impacted by employment losses because their operations depend on the influx of tourists. Also, since taxes and levies from tourism-related activities have decreased, the state's internally generated revenue has sharply declined. The decline of tourism, which was formerly a major driver of the Plateau State economy,*

has had an impact on financing for development and public services (KII/8/11/2024/ Jos South).

Another interviewee who is 51 years old expressed that:

Tourist arrivals have drastically decreased as a result of Jos's instability, which has reduced the number of people visiting once-popular locations. Sites that were once teeming with both domestic and foreign visitors are now mostly empty. Local companies that depend significantly on tourism-related expenditures, such as restaurants, lodging facilities, and craft markets, have suffered greatly as a result of this lack of activity. Furthermore, media reports and firsthand stories of insecurity have damaged the state's image as a tranquil and culturally diverse travel destination. This unfavourable impression has made it difficult to win back the trust of prospective travellers over the long run, which further reduces Jos's appeal as a travel destination (KII/8/11/2024/ Jos North).

Another interviewee who is 61 years old expressed that:

Apart from the negative effects on the economy and reputation, Jos's insecurity has hindered cultural interchange and community development, two important advantages of a flourishing tourism sector. By bringing individuals from different backgrounds together, the tourism industry contributes significantly to the advancement of social cohesion, local pride, and cultural understanding. However, there are now fewer opportunities for these connections due to the reduction in tourism. Local communities that used to profit from cultural tourism such as yearly celebrations and trips to historical sites now have fewer opportunities to display their customs and cultural preservation initiatives. This loss not only affects the cultural fabric of the region but also hinders the state's ability to generate diverse forms of income that could have supported sustainable growth and development in the long term (KII/8/11/2024/ Jos East).

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that insecurity in Jos, Plateau State, has significantly affected tourism activities. Major effects include a decline in foreign investment, widespread unemployment, reduced patronage of tourist centres, and diminished state revenue. Key informants highlighted how insecurity deters foreign investors, disrupts livelihoods in the tourism sector, and tarnishes Jos's reputation as a tourist destination. The loss of cultural preservation opportunities and community development initiatives was also noted. These

challenges have ripple effects across related industries, further emphasizing the critical need for effective security measures to restore and sustain tourism in the region. Insecurity has emerged as a primary challenge undermining the potential of Jos as a thriving tourist destination. Its far-reaching consequences include economic setbacks, reputational damage, and social disruptions. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach to restoring security, rebuilding trust, and fostering a sustainable tourism environment.

Recommendations

Having considered the findings from the study, the following measures are recommended:

1. Enhancing security infrastructure in and around popular tourist destinations is essential to addressing the negative effects of insecurity on tourism in Jos, Plateau State. Drones and CCTV cameras are examples of advanced technologies that should be used to provide real-time surveillance to identify and discourage criminal activity. Furthermore, putting more qualified security guards in high-risk areas will reassure tourists and make the area safer for both inhabitants and visitors. The perception of safety would be greatly enhanced by such actions, which is essential for regaining the trust of tourists.
2. For the tourism industry to recover, financial assistance and incentives must be used to revitalise it. For enterprises and tourism operators impacted by insecurity, the government and private sectors should work together to offer tax exemptions, low-interest loans, and subsidies. Businesses would be able to expand their services, invest in marketing, and restore infrastructure with the help of such financial relief. To draw more tourists, promoting the growth of public-private partnerships can also encourage investment in tourism infrastructure, such as highways, resorts, and recreational areas.
3. Lastly, the state must enhance its marketing strategies to rebuild Jos's image as a safe and desirable destination. This could include promotional campaigns highlighting the unique cultural and natural attractions of the area while emphasizing ongoing security improvements. Special focus should be given to safer regions and cultural events to attract domestic tourists, who are often more resilient to negative perceptions than international visitors. Engaging influencers, travel agencies, and media outlets to share positive stories about Jos could help counteract the negative publicity and restore confidence in the destination.

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