



**BANDITRY AS A MENACE TO HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN
BENUE STATE, NIGERIA: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND PANACEA**

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate effect of banditry to hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Three research questions and three hypotheses were used to guide the study. The sample for this study consisted of 180 respondents made up of 36 Staff of Benue Tourism Bureau and 144 hotel staff. The instrument for data collection was the researchers' developed questionnaire which was structured on a 4-point rating scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Data obtained were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation. t-test statistics was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study showed that the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State are: Farmers/Fulani herdsmen clashes, poverty, illiteracy, porous borders, hostility and unequipped police. The findings of the study also revealed that the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State include: looting of game reserve facilities, poaching of wildlife species, loss of money, lack of interests to travel, collapse of business activities, job loss and loss of human lives. The findings of the study also suggested the panacea to banditry the State to include: protection of game reserve facilities, protection of wildlife species, provision of community police, tighten security on the state borders, provision of loan to revive collapsed business activities, provision of jobs and adequate security in hotels and tourism centers for protection of human lives. The study recommended that the lingering issue of farmer's /Fulani herdsmen class should be addressed once and for all by the federal and state government; Government needs to erect fences in the borders calculated to be easily accessible to bandits and intensify security therein and the police should be well equipped with arms, ammunitions and modern technologies to combat the bandits.

Keywords: Banditry, hospitality, tourism, menace, wildlife, recreation.

1.0 Introduction

Hospitality is the act of kindness in welcoming and looking after the basic needs of customers. Webstaurantstore.com (2023) define hospitality industry as a broad group of businesses that provide services to customers. The industry can be broken down into three basic areas: accommodations, food and beverage, and travel and tourism. Study.com (2023) defined hospitality industry as a broad group of businesses that provide services to customers. Its focus is to provide customers with unique and satisfactory experiences for a cost. Hospitality is actually one facet of the service industry. It primarily involves addressing customer satisfaction and catering to the needs of guests. The hospitality industry is uniquely distinct since it depends on discretionary spending of customers, meaning that there need to be a demand and interest in the service being provided for customers to spend money for the industry to be successful

The Hospitality and Tourism industry is a large and complex industry and one that is of significant economic importance to Nigeria. American Hospitality Academy (AHA) (2022) defined hospitality and tourism as a massive, collective industry consisting of tourism and other hospitality-related businesses. Tourism companies are technically considered hospitality businesses because they rely on strong customer service to generate revenue. The hospitality and tourism industry is an immense sector that includes all the economic activities that directly or indirectly contribute to, or depend upon, travel and tourism. This industry sector offers countless fun and financially rewarding career opportunities, some of which include a travel agent, tour guide, hotel manager, theme park manager, event

planner, and tourism officer. This industry is also a driver of other industries such as the land and air transport, energy and communications industries. It is against this backdrop that the researcher deemed it fit to investigate banditry as a menace to hospitality and tourism industry in Cross River state, Nigeria: causes, effects and panacea.

Tourism has to do with people travelling to other locations, either domestically or internationally, for leisure, social or business purposes. Ewona (2022) defined tourism as an institution of social force that impacts the life of people and where people are directly or indirectly connected with the industry. Revifine.com (2022) refers to tourism industry as all activity related to the short-term movement of people to locations away from where they usually reside. Module (2022) define the tourism industry as multifaceted and consists of a large variety of tour operators, hotel operators, cruise ships and recreational activity providers. For tourism to be carried out in a sustainable manner, representatives of all of these industries need to be contacted and included in the planning process. Tourism industry is closely connected to the hotel industry, the hospitality industry and the transport industry, and much of it is based around keeping tourists happy, occupied and equipped with the things they need during their time away from home. Each sector covers a broad range of fields, providing a distinct variety of goods and services. These sectors overlap and work in conjunction to create one complete and comprehensive hospitality experience.

Insecurity is a global issue that must be tackled to create an enabling environment for socio-economic development. It does not

only pose threats to the lives and properties of citizens, but deter the development of nations. Thus, there is a correlation between security and development. Peace and stability have been the main objectives of most nations in the world over the years. However, insecurity has continued to remain a major hindrance to achieving meaningful socio-economic development in most African countries and Nigeria is not an exception. Epron (2019) has in his work revealed that Nigeria had continued to witness tremendous setback in its socio-economic development stimulated by the continuous resurgence of different kinds of security threats particularly banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, pastoralists/farmer conflict, among others thereby posing a serious threat to the country's national security. Among these security threats in Nigeria, banditry has become more prevalence recently.

Banditry is a form of insecurity which has to do with unlawful armed group terrorizing people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous to the establishment of gang groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. In his view, Shalangwa (2013) regards banditry as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defense, especially in semi-organized groups for the purpose of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested. In another sense, Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) refer banditry to the incidences of armed robbery

or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or market raids. It involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill. Abbas (2018) defined banditry as a type of organized crime committed by outlaws typically involving the threat or use of violence. In this regard, banditry could mean a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. A person who engages in banditry is known as a bandit.

Looking at Nigeria, one can identify so many causes of banditry. Some of the causes are: porous borders, lack of synergy among security among security agencies in various states and between states, civil disobedience, religious intolerance, Government neglect, unemployment, unequipped police, poor conviction of criminals, weak local government administration among others (infoguidenigeria.com, 2023). The prevalence of under-governed spaces where the government's control is ineffective or limited is a major factor giving rise to banditry. Such areas are characterized by bad governance, weak legitimacy, protracted conflict, and poor leadership, which makes citizens vulnerable to exploitation by terrorist groups, traffickers, and other criminal elements. Such areas are not generally entirely devoid of the government's control but are governed poorly and differently from larger communities (Anka, 2017). These poorly governed territories are plagued by bandits and other criminal gangs due to their remoteness, which allows for the perpetuation of an array of illegal business activities. Another major factor that has increased the incidence of banditry is the farmers-headers clashes.

The effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry abound. According to World Trade Organization (WTO) (2005), 66% of leisure traveler said crime is an important consideration in choosing a vacation destination and 62% travelers considering over travel had safety concerned as they made their plans. As tourism grows, security becomes more important and travelers will expect safeguarding measures in transportation and accommodation. Where there is security threat to tourist, hotels are in trouble because sales will be affected. Part of the losses from banditry attacks could range from monetary, material, valuables, human resources and above all human lives. Banditry has brought about decline in the number of tourist arrivals, increase in cancelled bookings, decrease in the average length of stay of tourists and the average room occupancy. Bandits are sometimes involved in looting of game reserve facilities and poaching of wildlife species. Banditry has led to collapse of business activities and job loss in hospitality and tourism industry resulting in a decline of revenue generation.

Bandits have killed Nigerians in their thousands. They have displaced many and put millions in untold hardship. Ajayi, Ojo, Jimoh & Chinansa (2022) asserted that government can alleviate banditry by improving urban security, community-based approach to urban safety, strengthening formal criminal justice system and police enhancement, involvement of local vigilantes and community watch groups, reduction of risk factors, nonviolent dispute resolution and strengthening social capital. Infoguidenigeria.com (2023) suggest the following solutions to banditry in Nigeria: provision of community police, provision of jobs, addressing corruption and fraud,

addressing poverty, tightening security on our borders, synergy among state governors, addressing the issue of proliferation of firearms and fostering intelligence information gathering.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Hospitality and tourism industry is a tool for economic growth and stability and also for job creation. It is very important to Nigeria because, it will help to improve her gross domestic product, by increasing production and creating a good environment for foreign investors. Hospitality and tourism industry serves as a medium of culture exchange and mingling. Despite the potentials and opportunities available for hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria, it is still bogged with the problem of insecurity. The unbridled attacks by bandits in Benue State had given rise to travel advisory emanating from different parts against non-essential travels within the state and beyond. The different local government areas in the state have been witnessing unprecedented levels of banditry in recent times. Banditry has become a serious challenge confronting the hospitality and tourism industry in the state. The nature and pattern of banditry in Benue State has become so pervasive that only few tourists that travel or lodge in hotels can be free from being victims. The phenomenon could take various forms in various places which may include waylaying victims on the highways and on transit points, storming hotels and kidnapping of guests/visitors. Losses could range from monetary, material, valuables, human resources and above all human lives. Banditry in Benue State has brought about decline in the number of tourist arrivals, increase in cancelled bookings, decrease in the average length of stay of tourists and the average room occupancy. The number of tourists using the

recreational facilities of Game Reserve/Wildlife Park have also declined. Banditry in the state has led to collapse of business activities and job loss in hospitality and tourism industry. Hence, there is a decline in revenue generation. It is against this backdrop that the researcher is motivated to investigate banditry as a menace to hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State, Nigeria.

3.0 Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate banditry as a menace to hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State.
2. Examine the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State.
3. Find out the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State.

5.0 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State?
2. What are the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State?
3. What is the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State?

6.0 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated guided the study, and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Cross River Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Cross River State.

4.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population for this study were staff of Benue State Tourism Bureau and hotel staff. The reason for choosing staff of Benue State Tourism Bureau and hotel staff was because they were the categories of people that can give correct information with respect to the subject matter in this study. The sample of this study was drawn from staff of Benue State Tourism Bureau and hotel staff in Benue State through a stratified random sampling technique. The state was stratified along the 18 local government areas and eight hotel staff were randomly selected from different hotels in each local government area, thus, making a total of 144 hotel staff. Hence, 144 hotel staff were selected for the study. Also, 36 staff of Benue State Tourism Bureau were selected using a simple random sampling. In all, a total of 180 respondents were selected for this study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire structured on a 4 – point rating of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (DA) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The

instrument was face validated by three experts from the Department of Tourism Management and Hospitality, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha formula. The reliability coefficient value yielded 0.89 on average which was considered adequate for the study. The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher and three research assistants. A total of 180 copies of the questionnaires were administered and collected on the spot from the respondents. Data obtained were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation. Any mean score lower than 2.50 implied disagree while equal to or higher

than 2.50 implied agree to the items. t-test statistics was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. If the t-calculated values are less than critical t-value, null hypotheses will be accepted, but if the t-calculated values are more than critical t-value, null hypotheses will be rejected.

7.0 Results

The results of the data analyses were presented based on research questions in Tables

7.1 Research Question One

What are the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State?

Table 1: Summary of t-test on the difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State
N = 180

S/N	Items	Cross River Tourism Bureau Staff		Hotel Staff		PL	t-cal	df	t-crit	rem
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂					
	Causes of banditry:									
1	Farmers/Fulani herdsman clashes	3.15	0.46	3.42	0.27	0.05	0.09	178	1.96	A
2	Poverty	3.32	0.38	3.18	0.21	0.05	0.07	178	1.96	A
3	Illiteracy	3.25	0.21	3.30	0.05	0.05	0.33	178	1.96	A
4	religious dichotomy	1.91	1.39	2.05	1.70	0.05	0.05	178	1.96	D
5	porous borders	3.13	0.15	2.85	0.14	0.05	0.16	178	1.96	A
6	unemployment	3.20	0.44	3.46	0.26	0.05	0.07	178	1.96	A
7	Hostility	3.36	0.37	3.23	0.20	0.05	0.07	178	1.96	A
8	unequipped police	3.30	0.20	3.34	0.04	0.05	0.34	178	1.96	A

\bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, PL = Probability Level, t-cal = t-calculate, df = degree of freedom, t-crit = t-critical, rem = remark, A = Agree, D = Disagree

The result in Table 1 shows that the mean ratings of the Benue State Tourism Bureau staff for item numbers 1-8 are 3.15, 3.32, 3.25, 1.92, 3.13, 3.20, 3.36 and 3.30 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.46, 0.38, 0.21, 1.39, 0.15, 0.44, 0.37 and 0.20 respectively. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the hotel staff on the above items are 3.42, 3.18, 3.30, 2.05, 2.85, 3.45, 3.23 and 3.34 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.27, 0.21, 0.05, 1.70, 0.14, 0.26, 0.20 and 0.04 respectively.

In the table above, the t-calculated value of each item was obtained; the degree of

freedom of all items was 178, while the critical t-table of 1.96 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance. From the table, it can be seen that the t-calculated values for all items were less than critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State was accepted.

7.2 Research Question Two

What are the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State?

Table 2: Summary of t-test on difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Cross River State
N = 180

S/N	Items	Cross River Tourism Bureau Staff		Hotel Staff		PL	t-cal	df	t-crit	rem
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂					
9	looting of game reserve facilities	3.10	0.65	3.45	0.12	0.05	0.02	178	1.96	A
10	poaching of wildlife species	3.25	0.59	3.23	0.06	0.05	0.06	178	1.96	A
11	loss of money	3.18	0.08	2.91	0.10	0.05	0.13	178	1.96	A
12	lack of interests to travel	3.40	0.10	3.30	0.06	0.05	0.17	178	1.96	A
13	cancellation of many events	2.27	0.17	2.16	0.41	0.05	0.06	178	1.96	D
14	collapse of business activities	3.26	0.58	3.24	0.06	0.05	0.03	178	1.96	A
15	job loss	3.26	0.06	3.01	0.07	0.05	0.12	178	1.96	A

16	loss of human lives	3.4 9	0.0 8	3.4 0	0.0 3	0.0 5	0.1 6	17 8	1.9 6	A
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\bar{X} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, PL = Probability Level, t-cal = t-calculate, df = degree of freedom, t-crit = t-critical, rem = remark, A = Agree, D = Disagree

The result in Table 2 shows that the mean ratings of the Benue State Tourism Bureau staff for item numbers 9-16 are 3.10, 3.25, 3.18, 3.40, 2.27, 3.26, 3.22 and 3.45 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.65, 0.59, 0.08, 0.10, 0.17, 0.58, 0.07 and 0.09 respectively. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the hotel Staff on the above items are 3.45, 3.23, 2.91, 3.30, 2.16, 3.24, 3.01 and 3.40 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.12, 0.06, 0.10, 0.06, 0.41, 0.06, 0.08 and 0.04 respectively.

In the table above, the t-calculated value of each item was obtained; the degree of

freedom of all items was 178, while the critical t-table of 1.96 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance. From the table, it can be seen that the t-calculated values for all items were less than critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Cross River State was accepted.

7.3 Research Question Three

What is the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State?

Table 3: Summary of t-test on the significant difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State
N = 180

S/N	Items	Cross River Tourism Bureau Staff		Hotel Staff		PL	t-cal	df	t-crit	rem
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂					
17	protection of game reserve facilities	3.2 5	0.1 0	2.9 3	0.9 9	0.0 5	0.0 5	17 8	1.9 6	A
18	protection of wildlife species	3.1 4	0.8 4	2.8 5	0.9 8	0.0 5	0.0 5	17 8	1.9 6	A
19	adoption of cashless policy	2.1 5	1.0 0	2.0 0	1.0 6	0.0 5	0.1 3	17 8	1.9 6	D
20	provision of community police	2.9 5	0.1 2	3.1 9	0.0 3	0.0 5	0.0 6	17 8	1.9 6	A
21	tighten security on the state borders	3.4 4	0.1 4	3.1 2	0.3 0	0.0 5	0.0 8	17 8	1.9 6	A
22	provision of loan to revive collapsed business activities	3.1 9	0.8 2	2.9 0	0.9 6	0.0 5	0.0 4	17 8	1.9 6	A

23	provision of jobs	3.0 4	0.1 0	3.3 8	0.0 1	0.0 5	0.0 5	17 8	1.9 6	A
24	adequate security in hotels and tourism centres for protection of human lives	3.5 4	0.1 4	3.1 2	0.3 0	0.0 5	0.0 7	17 8	1.9 6	A

X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, PL = Probability Level, t-cal = t-calculate, df = degree of freedom, t-crit = t-critical, rem = remark, A = Agree, D = Disagree

The result in Table 3 shows that the mean ratings of the Benue State Tourism Bureau staff for item numbers 17-24 are 3.25, 3.14, 2.15, 2.95, 3.44, 3.19, 3.05 and 3.54 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.10, 0.84, 1.00, 0.12, 0.14, 0.82, 0.10 and 0.14 respectively. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the hotel staff on the above items are 2.93, 2.85, 2.00, 3.19, 3.13, 2.90, 3.38 and 3.12 with the corresponding standard deviation of 0.99, 0.98, 1.06, 0.02, 0.30, 0.96, 0.01 and 0.30 respectively.

In the table above, the t-calculated value of each item was obtained; the degree of freedom of all items was 178, while the critical t-table of 1.96 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance. From the table, it can be seen that the t-calculated values for all items were less than critical t-value. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean ratings of Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff on the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State was accepted.

8.0 Discussion of Findings

The findings with respect to research question one shows that Benue State Tourism Bureau staff and hotel staff have same view on the causes of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State. They agreed that the causes are: Farmers/Fulani herdsmen clashes, poverty, illiteracy, porous borders, hostility and unequipped police. These findings are in line with the statement credited to

infoguidenigeria.com (2023) that some of the causes of banditry in Nigeria are: porous borders, state governors lack synergy, the inability of state governors to direct operations, broken down rule of law, religious dichotomy, Governments neglect, unemployment, unequipped police, unpunished crimes weak local government leadership among others.

The findings with respect to research question two shows that staff of Benue State Tourism Bureau and hotel staff have same view on the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State. They agreed that the effects of banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State include: looting of game reserve facilities, poaching of wildlife species, loss of money,

lack of interests to travel, collapse of business activities, job loss and loss of human lives. These findings are in consonance with the statement credited to World Trade Organization (WTO) (2004) that 66% of leisure traveler said crime is an important consideration in choosing a vacation destination and 62% travelers considering over travel had safety concerned as they made their plans. Where there is security threat to tourist, hotels are in trouble because sales will be affected. Losses from banditry attacks could range from monetary, material, valuables, human resources and above all human lives.

The findings with respect to research question three shows that the respondents have the same view on the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State. They agreed that the panacea to banditry in hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State are: protection of game reserve facilities, protection of wildlife species, provision of community police, tighten security on the state borders, provision of loan to revive collapsed business activities, provision of jobs and adequate security in hotels and tourism centers for protection of human lives. These findings are in concord with the assertion made by Ajayi, Ojo, Jimoh & Chinansa (2022) that government can alleviate banditry by improving urban security, community-based approach to urban safety, strengthening formal criminal justice system and police enhancement, involvement of local vigilantes and community watch groups, reduction of risk factors, nonviolent dispute resolution and strengthening social capital.

9.0 Conclusion

Hospitality and tourism industry is an important aspect of economic development of many countries in the world. Nigeria is among the countries in Africa with vast hospitality and tourism potentials, which are considered as central to the nation's development. The potentialities of the country in this regard have made different administrations to design and adopt policies that focused on in improving the sector as part of strategies of economic diversification in the country. However, the upsurge of banditry in Nigeria has become a menace to hospitality and tourism industry in the country. The government is to step up actions in checking the situation as operators in the sector are being forced to shut down

their businesses. A situation where inter-city travels are currently suffering as people are afraid to travel for fear of being kidnapped or killed by bandits is unacceptable. The situation has become frightening, alarming, needing urgent measures to tackle it by the government. Hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State is struggling to develop and has been seriously affected by the pandemic. Now with the current incidences of banditry in the state, it has become extremely difficult to conduct tourism business as no one, both domestic and international tourists, would like to travel under unsafe condition. In the light of this, the government should do everything possible to eradicate this monster called "banditry" that is ravaging the hospitality and tourism industry in Benue State and Nigeria at large.

10.0 Recommendation

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made in this paper:

The lingering issue of farmer's/Fulani herdsmen class should be addressed once and for all by the federal and state government.

Poverty alleviation programmes should be set-up by the federal and state government.

There should be free and compulsory education in Nigeria.

Government need to erect fences in the borders calculated to be easily accessible to bandits and intensify security therein.

Government should provide employment opportunities for the jobless people.

Nigerians should be given an orientation on how-to live-in peace, unity and

understanding among visitors and host communities.

The police should be well equipped with arms, ammunitions and modern technologies for optimal performance.

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