Examining the Need to Incorporate Halal Tourism into Conventional Tourism in North-Eastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the need to incorporate halal tourism into conventional tourism in north eastern Nigeria. The study examines how the perception of tourism is shaped in north-eastern Nigeria and the need for halal tourism in the region. The study employed the mixed method research design. It was carried out through the survey design with questionnaire and the use of secondary data. 180 respondents were randomly sampled across Adamawa, Borno, Taraba, Bauchi, Gombe and Yobe states for quantitative data while for qualitative data secondary data was used. Findings from the study shows that the resident's clamour for halal tourisms in the region because the see some aspect of conventional tourism against their culture and religious belief. Areas that need halal tourism includes feeding, segregation of facilities from male and female and ban of drinking alcohol in tourism attractions. It is recommended that there is need to incorporate halal tourism into the components of tourism in the region. This can be done through the involvement of experts by tourism producers to ensure that the need of the people is included in the components of transportation, attraction and accommodation.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is a very large industry that is dependent on many factors and participants to make

the tourist experience a remarkable one. These participants range from suppliers to consumers of tourist product. There are a lot of people who make the tourist experience to a memorable one and these people are called stakeholders. "Stakeholders are people who affect or are affected by organizations actions" (Hall, 2000) there are stakeholders in every organization who benefit from the activities of the organization. Goldner and Ritchie (2000) identified four major stakeholders in tourism. The tourists are the consumers, the residents who are the host, business owners including suppliers (hoteliers, transporters) intermediaries (tour operators and travel agents) and the local government officials. Having the views of the host community is very important in tourism development.

Planning is very important in every organization, for without proper planning the development aim of the organization cannot be achieved. (Bryd and Guske, 2007). Hall (2000) further stated that tourism planning is the first thing that brings successful development and economic advantage to an organization. Because of the nature of tourism, it is important to include the views of various stakeholders while planning for development. Stakeholder's views should be the basis for decision making when carrying out any developmental project. But mostly it is difficult to put the views together because the stakeholders have different interest on the project. However, for tourism development to be successful, it must be planned and developed responsively. (Erick and Guske, 2007).

Halal tourism has the potential to be successful in north-eastern Nigeria because the geo-political zone is arguably dominated by Muslims and Muslims are enjoined to engage in halal activities and shun haram activities like alcoholism and sexual immorality which are allegedly in most tourist destinations. North eastern part of Nigeria consists of six states which are Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. It occupies less than one-third of Nigeria's total area and has an estimated population of almost 24,000,000 or 13.5% of the country's population. Majority of the population in the north-eastern part of Nigeria are Muslims. Muslims continue to be the world's fastest-growing religious group with approximately one in four people worldwide being those who practice Islam. By 2050, an increase to 2.8 billion or approximately one in three people worldwide practicing Islam is expected (Mastercard & Crescentrating. (2018). Muslims believe in anything Halal, which means "permissible". Halal categorizes the morality of human action in Islam (Battour, 2017). Halal tourism is a tourist activity with a thick Islamic atmosphere in the destination culture, tourists, activities and facilities that exist (Saputro, Wardi & Abror, 2018). Halal tourism can also be a form of tourism that serves holidays by customizing the holiday product according to the needs and demands of Muslim traveller. In this case, the hotel that carries the Islamic principles do not serve alcohol and has a swimming pool and spa facilities, separate for men and women (Wuryasti, 2013).

Muslim tourists are one of the fastest developing market segments globally. In 2017, there were an estimated 131 million Muslim visitor arrivals worldwide with an increase from 121 million in 2016. This arrival is forecasted to grow to 156 million visitors by 2020 representing 10 percent of the world travel segment (Mastercard & Crescentrating. (2018). Mastercard & Crescentrating (2018) further explains that the Muslim Middle class continues to rise in destinations with large Muslim populations such as the Gulf countries, Indonesia and Malaysia. Other developments such as the growing class of skilled Muslim professionals from Western Europe, North America and the increase of urban female Muslims worldwide, will lead to stronger economic impact from this large Muslim consumer base.

With Muslim population growing fast worldwide and the growth in their tourism arrivals including halal tourism, there are questions on the participation of Muslims in tourism in the north-eastern region of Nigeria and desirability of this fast-growing market. It is expected that destinations and facilities are able to empathize with the various faith-based needs and profiles of Muslim travellers and subsequently

design their service touch points for each unique Muslim travel segment to create exceptional customer service moments and lasting experiences for the Muslim markets.

While some studies have been conducted from a developed country tourism context, few have been carried out from a developing world perspective on halal tourism. Although some of the studies cited above have identified the contributions of halal tourism in Asia and Europe, little is being done on halal tourism in Nigeria despite having a potential market for this type of tourism. No tourism destination in Nigeria is offering the halal tourism package to attract the lucrative market. As it is the basis for any tourism development to incorporate the views and interest of stakeholders in development when policies that aim at developing the tourism industry of such societies are still being conceived, incorporating the needs and interests of stakeholders right from the beginning of planning and development will go a long way in enhancing the effective introduction of halal tourism.

The value of the global Muslim travel market was $140 billion in 2013 and it was projected to increase to $238 billion in 2019. This shows that there are great economic potentials in the Muslim tourism market which Nigeria could tap into given our huge Muslim population. This means that halal tourism could lead to the creation of more jobs through private investments thus alleviating the pressure for job creation on the government.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The tourism industry consists of different special interest tourism with different activities involving interaction with different types of people. As a result of this, sections of the Islamic community and some Christian groups largely perceive the tourism industry as an avenue for the participation in immorality. To this end, many of them do not want to be seen close to hotels and other tourist destinations. This gave the need to seek stakeholder's perspective on incorporating halal tourism into conventional tourism.

Halal tourism is an untapped aspect of the Nigerian tourism sector in Nigeria; this is because of the industry's inability to take advantage of the market which is desirable by mostly Muslims who constitute a significant portion of the Nigerian population and majority of the population of north-eastern Nigeria. Furthermore, there is low awareness on potentials of halal tourism in the country. Also, there seems to be a poor understanding of the needs and preferences of the market. Consequently, there is a lack of tourism facilities meeting the needs of the Muslim population.

Aim of the Study

The study aims at examining the need to incorporate halal tourism into conventional tourism in north eastern Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal tourism and the need to integrate it with cultural tourism as a spiritual experience of modern society are in the increase. Although this includes contemporary shariah tourism forms as a modern phenomenon, then the secular society of the tourists seems seeks to meet some spiritual needs (Jaelani, 2016). He further states that the context of halal tourism would be different if it is associated with the field of tourism as part of an industrial or business activity that can provide economic benefits and projected in the government's policy to increase people's income (Jaelani, 2016b). In the end, halal tourism includes not only the existence of pilgrimage and religious sites but also include the availability of support facilities, such as restaurants and hotels that provide halal food and prayer, as well as other requirements. Tourism has also been linked with increase in the cost of living in destination areas thus

negatively affecting the quality of life of the residents (Al-Saad et al., 2018, p. 239). These negative effects could reduce the predisposition of stakeholders to participate in tourism programmes and activities. On the other hand, the positive effects could increase their support for tourism (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012, p. 340).

Religion occupies a central position in the development of tourism. People of different faiths embark on religious tourism or pilgrimage to holy sites in their various religions. Religion is a major determinant of "how people spend their spare time" (Jaelani, 2017, p. 25). Islam could be leveraged upon to promote halal tourism in north-eastern Nigeria. As noted earlier, it is the dominant religion in the geo-political zone. Halal tourism is likely to be widely accepted in the zone especially if the populace are carried along and sensitised on it (Al-Saad et al., 2018, p. 239). Policy makers in the north-east geo-political zone must disseminate information about the economic and socio-cultural benefits of halal tourism, as well as the best environmental practices.

The tourism industry is a very large industry that is dependent on many factors and participants to make the tourist experience a remarkable one. These participants range from suppliers to consumers of tourist product. There are a lot of people who make the tourist experience to a memorable one and these people are called stakeholders. "Stakeholders are people who affect or are affected by organizations actions" (Hall, 2000) there are stakeholders in every organization who benefit from the activities of the organization. Goldner and Ritchie (2000) identified four major stakeholders in tourism. The tourists are the consumers, the residents who are the host, business owners including suppliers. (Hoteliers, transporters) intermediaries (tour operators and travel agents) and the local government officials.

Planning is very important in every organization, for without proper planning the development aim of the organization cannot be achieved. (Bryd and Guske, 2007). Hall (2000) further stated that tourism planning is the first thing that brings successful development and economic advantage to an organization. Because of the nature of tourism, it is important to include the views of various stakeholders while planning for development. Responsibilities should be assigned in planning for tourism development (Jamal and Stronza, 2009) these responsibilities should be based on different interest of the stakeholders in tourism development. The interest of the stakeholders should be considered. (Edens, Jacobson, Stein, Confer, Gape, Steeting, 2009) Heitman 2010). This is necessary as it reduces the possibility of conflict in future.

Stakeholder's views should be the basis for decision making when carrying out any developmental project. But mostly it is difficult to put the views together because the stakeholders have different interest on the project. However, for tourism development to be successful, it must be planned and developed responsively. (Erick and Guske, 2007). Stakeholder's attitudes are crucial for successful and sustainable tourism development because an understanding of stakeholders' perceptions and how these perceptions are formed regarding tourism development would be valuable knowledge for decision makers. Stakeholders are the most important party, since it is they who will be most affected either positively or negatively by tourism planning and development.

The factors which influence residents' perceptions and attitudes, as well as the nature and the extent of the impact are likely to be different in each community. Social structure of a local community has a major bearing on its ability to absorb positively the different norms and values brought by tourists (Mansfeld, 1992 p 379). Nzama (2008) has stated that there is a strong positive relationship between the extent of the community in tourism development and their perceptions towards an increase in tourism development. Harrill (2004) highlights Residents with the most economic gain are the most supportive of the tourism industry. Because tourism development usually involves a tradeoff between economic

benefits and environmental or cultural costs, residents cope by downplaying the negative impacts based and emphasizing the economic gains to maintain satisfaction with their community (Dyer et al., 2007; Cavus and Tanrisevdi, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

This study is a mixed method approach; it is the combination of qualitative and quantitative. Using a mixed method approach gives a better understanding of the survey responses by explaining contradictory survey answers (Robinson, 2002; Saunders et al, 2010). This was done by explaining the needs and prospects of incorporating halal tourism. However, using mixed methods can be time consuming (Driscoll, Yeboah, Salib & Ruper 2007). Research instrument is the tool or technique used in research to collect data and is considered as very fundamental in research process (Saunders et al, 2012). 180 Survey questionnaires were self-administered to the different stakeholders of tourism in the region. This consists of tourists, policy makers, professionals, residents and producers. The interviewer questionnaire was administered to people who cannot read or write. This is because of the low literacy level in this region, it is expected that some of the tourists and residents cannot read, write or understand English. Veal (2006) explained that leisure and tourism involve different activities with a range of characteristics such as frequency, duration, type of participation, expenditure, location and level of enjoyment. He further mentions that questionnaires are good means of ensuring that a complete picture of a person's pattern of participation in the destination is obtained. Questions for the questionnaire was adopted from Buba & Onifade (2021). The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' on a scale of five. This part employed Likert scale as it measures the direction and intensity of the response via retrieval and integration of information from memory rather than a simple evaluation, and is also easier to administer and respond to (Albaum, 1997). Responses from interview were used from Buba & Onifade (2021). Interview was conducted to 14 stakeholders from the same group of stakeholders listed above. Both Christians and Muslims were interviewed (Buba & Onifade, 2021). The population of the study includes host communities among who are government officials, intermediaries, media, producers, scholars and general public. Sample is the segment of a population that is selected in research; it is the subset of the population (Saunders et al, 2012; Bryman, 2009). The method of selection may be based on probability or non-probability sampling (Bryman, 2009). In terms of sampling size Saunders et al, (2012) argues that there is no specific sampling in qualitative research, nevertheless Travers (2001) states that there must be enough data to determine the document into variety of themes. The non-probability sampling was used for the study because the required information for a probabilistic technique is not possible. Saunders, et al. (2012) explained that probability sampling allows the researcher to select samples randomly by setting few selection criteria. This was done through stratified random sampling by categorising the stakeholders into different groups (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton, 2000). Data collection was done via the survey method, which is a method of data collection that involves distributing questionnaires to stakeholders (Veal, 2006). The questionnaires were self-administered which according to Saunders, et al. (2012) involves the respondents answering the questions individually. A combination of both self-administered and interviewer-administered questionnaires were administered. The self-administered questionnaires were handed to participants who can read and write. Those that have difficulty in reading and writing were administered by a specialised person in form of questionnaire interviewer. Secondary data from Buba & Onifade (2021) was used too. Statistical analysis for the questionnaire was through the use of SPSS.

Results

Table 1 Host Community's perception on Incorporating Halal Tourism					
Perception on Halal tourism	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean
Separation of men from women during tourism activities	180	1.00	5.00	522.00	3.1085
We don't have problem with tourist drinking alcohol	180	1.00	5.00	458.00	1.9577
Halal and haram meals can be prepared in the same environment	180	1.00	5.00	427.00	1.7394
There should be gender segregation while sitting in vehicles	180	1.00	5.00	537.00	3.1141
Praying mats should be provided in hotels	180	1.00	5.00	632.00	4.2831
Copies of Quran should be available in lodges	180	1.00	5.00	524.00	1.4225
Praying facilities should be available in tourism facilities	180	1.00	5.00	652.00	4.4239
Female gymnasium should be separated from men	180	1.00	5.00	621.00	4.2056
Female swimming pool should be separated from male	180	1.00	5.00	633.00	4.2901
There should be provision for only family members to access facilities	180	1.00	5.00	648.00	4.6634
Valid N (listwise)	180				

Source: Field studies (2023)

The table above is on the stakeholder's perspective on halal tourism. The response on residents not having problem with tourists drinking alcohol has mean of 1.9577 which translates to disagree, this means respondents have problem with tourists drinking alcohol. The response does not agree with halal and haram meals can be prepared in the same environment with mean score of 1.7394 There should be gender segregation while sitting in vehicles has mean of 3.1141which is undecided. The response on praying mats should be provided in hotels have mean score of 4.2831which is agreed. Copies of Quran should be available in lodges is undecided with mean of 3.1225. On the responses for praying facilities should be available in tourism facilities, the mean score is 4.4239 showing agreement with the opinion. Respondents agree for Female gymnasium should be separated from men with a mean score of 4.2056. Same response was recorded for female swimming pool should be separated from male with a mean score of 4.2901. The response for there should be provision for only family members to access facilities at the same time has mean of 4.6634 showing agreement.

Table 2. Emergent Themes based on interview responses on why there is need for Halal tourism

Theme and Sub-themes	Example of interview response
Is there need for halal tourism Need to practice religion with purity 1. Majority of the people in the region practice Islam	"Yes" "Majority of the populace of the north east are Muslims and halal tourism is according to the teaching of Islam, the region needs this type of tourism".
2. Christians and Muslims need halal tourism	"It will be a surprise to know that Christianity teaches halal. I attend Hausa church and that word is always used.

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	It means pure. Both Christians and Muslims need this type of tourism being the majority in the region".
3. Need for segregation during tourism activities	"There is a need is because most of the populace are Muslims Many are willing to travel for tourism but cannot because the place is not segregated".
	"Many destinations sell alcohols which is not acceptable in Islam, there is need for that to stop".
4. Need to stop selling haram beverages Available potentials 5. Availability of potential tourists 6. Availability of potential attraction 7. Huge population	"You know we have a huge population in the north east with some having disposable income, there are varieties of potential tourists' resources so there is a need".
Women desire for freedom during tourism 8. The need for women to be free during tourism activities	"As a woman, I will like to participate in tourism activity but because there are other men who are not related to me, I will not be free to do that. We desire to find a free environment". "Like I told you earlier that we at the north east are reserved. We want more options for tourism, we don't want to go and watch children in attractions which isn't bad. But we want options of participating too".
9. There is desire to have different options of tourism Need for family recreation	"Many want to go out for recreation with their families but can't because many will start looking at your wife as a prostitute. With halal tourism one can go out to recreate with his family"

Source: Buba & Onifade (2021)

The major findings from the interview as presented on the table show that all respondents agreed that there is need for the introduction of halal tourism. On why they feel there is need, findings show the reasons to be the need for both Christians and Muslims to practice their religion with purity. Majority of respondents also identified the availability of potentials as reason they feel there is a need. The desire for women to be free at tourism destinations and during tourism activities is a major reason the respondents gave for the introduction of halal tourism.

Discussion

Residents seem to have problem with tourists drinking alcohol in their community; this may be because of the religious belief of most of the residents who are mostly Muslims and orthodox Christians. The holier than thou attitude in the region when it comes to issues of religion may have prompted that opinion. On halal and haram meals being prepared in the same environment the stakeholders do not want that. Haram meals are meals that is forbidden, the holy books have specifically mentioned such meals. Preparing them with meals permissible may have the tendency of the halal meals being tainted in the process of preparation if not handled very well. There may be possibility of equipment being shared

without it being properly cleaned or some ingredients being used for the other meal. Halal tourism or travel within Islam focused on issues such as the involvement of (Muslim), point (goal of Islam), the product (the area of housing, food, and drinks), dimensions (economic, cultural, religious, etc.), and management of processes services (marketing and ethical issues). Motivations and intentions are very important in Islam because they are related to attitudes and intentions (Al-Hamarneh, 2011; Hassan, 2007; Henderson, 2010). The respondents were undecided on gender segregation while sitting in vehicles. This may be because the response does not specify whether it involves family members or spouses. Some people may love to sit together with their spouse or kids that are of the opposite sex.

Opinions on the provision of praying mats in hotels have a positive response. Part of the requirements for halal tourism is for each accommodation to provide praying mats for Muslims to perform their daily prayers even when in rooms. However, opinions on copies of Quran to be available in lodges are undecided. The Quran is a holy book of the Muslims which must be handled with care. There is this notion of the copy of the holy book written in Arabic not permitted by anyone without wudu (purification) to handle it. Some people feel offended when non-Muslims handle it for the fear of the holy book being manhandled. However, copies of the holy Bible are placed in some hotels in this part of the country with no report of it being manhandled. The stakeholders are of the opinion of having praying facility available in tourism facilities. These facilities can be mosque or specific areas for prayers. Respondents agree for female gymnasia to be separated from that of the male. All gymnasia do not have separate place for women, and because of the religion practice of most of the people in the region, they find it difficult to visit the gym. The responses show desire by the stakeholders for women to use the gymnasia away from men. Same response was recorded for female swimming pools; swimming wears are tight and revealing. It is important to stress that Christianity and Islam, which are the dominant religions in Nigeria, both preach against exposing the body. This explains stakeholders' desire for separate pools for women. For instance, the Wikki spring which is the most patronised natural swimming pool in the region attracts different gender of people. But observation there reveals that most married women do not join their kids in having fun in the warn spring. The stakeholders have strong opinion on family members having access to facilities at the same time in tourist's attractions. This will give them the privacy they require and increase family recreation in the region.

All those interviewed said there is need for the introduction of halal tourism in north east Nigeria. They gave the reason to practice religion with purity as why they feel there is need. Majority of people from the north-east of Nigeria practice Islam, incorporating Islamic practices in tourism activities can bring out positive results for the industry. Halal is not only for Muslims as some of the Christian stakeholders explained that Christianity teaches most of the aspect of what is halal and some Hausa churches use the word halal when teaching on purity or emphasising on something legitimate. Since the major religions in the region teach living in holiness, bringing halal tourism will clear the views of people that think tourism is against the teachings of religions. These findings are in accordance with Nurdiansyah (2018, p. 26) which states that it is important to note that halal products are not only exclusive to the Islamic faith. There are Christian groups who share the halal doctrine. Also, the increase in the number of Muslim tourists has inspired many tourism services providers to seek halal certification. One of the non-Muslim countries where this is common is Japan. Other reasons given for the need for halal tourism is the desire to segregate male and female while using public means of transportation and during tourism activities. This will include offering different facilities for women or organising family activities. Alcohol is haram; the stakeholders were of the view that introducing halal tourism will stop selling haram beverages.

Availability of potentials is another reason why there is need for halal tourism. The region has a huge population which can serve as a tourist's market. However, tourism depends on the ability of one having disposable income which is a minus for the north-east being the poorest region in the country. However, planners can attract those that have the desire for tourism and spending power. More tourists can be attracted from other parts of the country too. Another potential in the north east is tourism resources. The region has natural resources ranging from game reserves, bird sanctuaries, sceneries, plateaus with good climatic conditions. It is the region with the highest number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. Each ethnic group has its unique culture which is celebrated in form of festivals. These are tourist's attractions that can meet the need of tourists with the motivation for cultural tourism. Potential tourists from the Muslim population and the conservative northern Nigeria are another reason to desire for halal tourism too.

Women desire for freedom during tourism is another need the introduction of halal tourism can meet. With women becoming educated with more exposure, there is motivation to participate in tourism but are hindered because of the nature of participation. Women want their own tourism facilities where they can be free to participate in the activities instead of watching their kids and husbands have fun. They want to be free with their fellow women or with their families while on tourism trips. With the freedom, women can have many options to choose many tourism activities because there will be provision for them. There will be increase in family recreation too because many will be free to travel with their families without them having fear of them seeing haram.

CONCLUSION

The community are the host to the tourists, interact and also desire to participate in activities that tourists do. Their cultural and religious believe is dear to them as such they will not tolerate activities that are against their believe or culture. The need to incorporate halal tourism into conventional tourism is to accommodate all the concerns of the host community about their perception of tourism. Areas that need incorporation are facilities for recreation, activities, accommodation and transportation. From the findings of this study, if such is done there will be patronage from the northern Nigeria and also international tourist.

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Aknowledgement