Appraisal of Youths' Involvement in Social Conflicts and the Implications on Nigeria's Image and Tourism Development

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ABSTRACT
This study undertook a critical appraisal of the correlation between the intractable social conflicts like the Boko-Haram and the Niger Delta crises, where youths are the key players, on the international image of Nigeria and tourism development in the country. It is motivated by the avalanche of media reports that the country's image is being seriously battered abroad by these internal social problems. The specific objectives sought were to: ascertain the correlation between the Boko-Haram crisis and the nation's image ratings abroad; the Niger Delta crisis and the nation's image ratings abroad and their impacts on tourism development in the country. Survey design was adopted in the study, where electronic questionnaires (E-questionnaire) via the Internet were used to gather the primary data. The data so sourced were statistically presented/analyzed with Likert's 5-points scale, Spearman's correlation coefficient and Friedman chi-square. Results obtained show that both the Boko Haram crisis and the Niger Delta crisis have adverse impact on the country's international image and tourism development, consequently on youths' unemployment rate. It was then recommended that proactive public relations crisis management strategies should be used in nipping such crisis in their buds in future.
Keywords: Boko Haram crisis, Niger Delta crisis, National Image, Tourism Development.

1 Introduction
According to Etemike (2012:1), the international system is a collection of independent political units interacting with each, hence, the policies or events emanating from one affects other units. The public relations school of thought is of the opinion that the Boko-Haram and the Niger Delta conflicts and crises are causing untold damages to the international image of Nigeria (Johnson, 2011). Before the recent widely acclaimed amnesty to the Niger Delta militants by President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua, subsequent administrations in Nigeria had employed high-handedness to either suppress or dampen the will of the agitating people of the area, all to no avail. Okoro (2002:38) advised that public relations is a veritable tool for stemming youths' violence. But to achieve this, the media has a critical role to play, says Ndolo (2004:51). Effective public relations strategies rather than the use of force should therefore be an option of choice in tackling such mind-burgling social cankerworms like the Niger Delta crisis, drug trafficking, advanced fee frauds, ethnic clashes and conflicts (Odigbo, 2002:72). The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has in recent years become a hot-bed of explosive crisis and conflicts that often leave in its trail tales of woes: violence, deaths, mindless destructions of oil-companies' facilities, hostage-taking and kidnapping of oil workers, especially the expatriates (Asibor, 2001:1; Enyia, 2000:50; Onosode, 1996:24). Moreover, there have reports of human rights violations by some of the oil companies or collusion with some misguided law enforcement agencies to do so (Russell, 2002:405).

Black (1989:15) says that every conflict in life arise from either lack of communication, inadequate communication or poor communication and their solution lie in effective two-way communication between the publics or parties   involved. According to Opara (2010), a nation today can earn the highest level of respect and good image by determining its destiny through developing pride in its tourism, goods and services.

2 Statement of the Problem
There is a widely held view that Nigeria's image abroad is seriously being dented by the Boko Haram and the Niger Delta crises (BBCnews, 2011).   Another foreign media report in early 2009 rated Nigeria as the second unsafest place for a foreigner (white) to visit, only next to lraq (VOAnews, 2009). There had been news of Great Britain and the United States of America at sundry times, issuing official governmental warnings to their citizens about visit to Nigeria, an act viewed in diplomatic and international relations circle as a very serious one, and capable of stunting the country's tourism development.

Almost all the whites living in parts of Northern Nigeria considered as Boko-Haram endemic areas have since abandoned their businesses and fled to their countries or relocated to other African countries. While some white expatriates living and working in the riverine states of Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa have since parked their bags and baggage's and traveled back home, while others relocated to African countries like Ghana and South-Africa, viewed to be more socio-economically and politically safe for their investments (BBCnews, 2011). Economic analysts say that this trend apart from its negative effect on the country's image and tourism development is worsening the youths' unemployment problem in Nigeria. This problem says the public relations school of thought could have been solved in a most cordial, peaceful and friendly manner through adherence to the principles of strategic dialogue, equity, fairness, good judgment and sound two-way communication mechanisms (Arong, 2010:103). This study tried to examine the extent of the correlation between these social crises and Nigeria's image and tourism development.

3 Objectives of the Study
The study sought to realize the following objectives:
i.   Ascertain the correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image.
ii.   Determine the correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image.
iii. Examine the impact of the Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises on Nigeria's tourism development.

4 Research Hypotheses
To find answers to the objectives above, the following null hypotheses were tested:
i.   There is no significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image.
ii.   The Niger Delta crisis has no strong correlation to Nigeria's international image.
iii. The Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises do not have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development.

5 Significance of the Study
This study is expected to highlight the international image position of Nigeria in the perceptions of the international community, with a view to knowing areas that need to be corrected and those that need to be consolidated upon. This would put managers of the nation's image in a better stead to do so much more properly. The need for the appropriate use of qualified communications, marketing and public relations practitioners in that onerous task is emphasized, for a better planning, packaging and implementation of the country's international image management/marketing programmes.

6   Scope of the Study
This study is restricted in scope to a survey of the opinion of some select target publics of Nigeria's international image perceptions on one hand and its management on the other hand. These include:
➢   Members of the Diplomatic community in Nigeria.
➢   Staff of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nigeria.
➢   Staff of the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in the country.
➢   Journalists and Media practitioners in Nigeria.
➢   Staff of the Ministry of Information.

7 Area of Study
The area of study included Lagos, PortHarcourt and Kano, selected in line with the three former regional structures of the country, and Abuja chosen because of its large pool of foreign diplomatic personnel in the country. Lagos and PortHarcourt also harbor a large pool of expatriate businessmen or oil-workers.

8 Review of Related Literature
8.1 Theoretical Framework
The theoretical underpinning of this work hinges on public relations transfer process model and issues/crisis management theory.
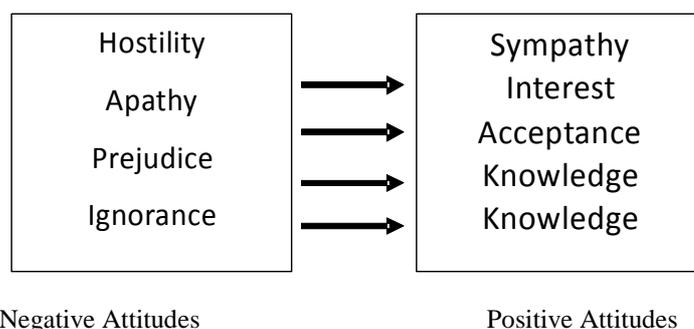

Negative Attitudes   Positive Attitudes
Fig. 1: The PR Attitudinal Transfer Process Model
Source: Jefkins, Frank (1987), *Public relations and planned press*, **London: Macmillan publishers, p.45.**

The public relations transfer process model explains and shows how public relations can be used or applied to change hostility among a given target publics to sympathy, prejudice to acceptance, apathy to interest, and ignorance to knowledge. It can be used or applied as a guide in handling specific public relations problems or projects, and can also be used as a guide or frame work for planning and executing the overall public relations programme of any organisation or corporate entity (Nwosu, 1996:112). This model could therefore be employed in effectively managing both the Boko Haram and the Niger Delta crises in Nigeria, in order to change the negative mindsets of the youths involved to the positive side for their country and its citizens. For this to be result-oriented, however, it must be managed by qualified communications' experts.

Issues and Crisis Management

Public relations issues management is the proactive identification of and management by nipping in the buds issues capable of ballooning into crises before they reach the crises points. It entails prioritizing and proactively addressing public policy and reputation issues that can affect an organization's or country's success (Instituteforpr, 2012).This involves identifying problems, issues and trends relevant to an organization or country and then developing and executing public relations program to deal with them. It involves outlining plans and policies to be used when an organization's operations become involved in an emergency affecting the public. This includes policies and procedures for the distribution of information to employees, media, government and other key publics (Mediamiser.com, 2012).

Crisis management according to Wikipedia.org (2010), can be defined as a holistic management process that identifies potential impacts that threaten a country or an organization and provides a framework for building resilience, with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand, and value-creating activities- as well as effectively restoring operational capabilities. Essentially, it is the process by which an organization deals with a major event that threatens to harm the organization, its stakeholders, or the general public. Since the Boko Haram and the Niger Delta crises are already here with us, issues management could still be employed in form of public relations research to ascertain the remote and immediate underlying currents behind these crises with a view to uprooting such from their tap roots and forestalling future occurrence. A strategic crisis management master plan could then be developed for their long term management, Omole (1999: 77) advised. To do this effectively, Ajala (1993) said that they must know the community and its people very well, their needs, their problems, their interests and their attitudes. They should also have good knowledge of global environmental issues and problems (Nwosu, 2004:6) and be sensitize to the needs of their host communities (Enyia, 2000:49).

8.2 The Boko Haram Crises: A Recap

The Boko Haram which literary means "Western education is sinful" or "western education is forbidden" is said to be an Islamic jihadist militant terrorist organisation based in the northeast of Nigeria north Cameroon and Niger (Cook, 2011; Moses, 2012). The group earned this name due to its strong opposition to anything Western, which it sees as corrupting Muslims (BBCnews, 2012). According to the Wikipedia (2012), it is an Islamist movement which strongly opposes non-Sharia legal systems, and what they deem "Westernization." Founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2001, the organisation is reported to be seeking to establish sharia law in Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2012). The recent incidence of attack on Christians, bombing of churches, public structures, including the police headquarters and the United Nations building all in Abuja are said to have been master-minded by them (BBCnews, 2011).

Since its founding in 2001, the jihadist terrorists have been responsible for roughly 4,000 deaths comprising mostly innocent people (Wikipedia, 2012; Clothia, 2012). Worried by its operations, the United States Department of State offered a $7 million reward for Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's capture (Wikipedia, 2012; BBCnews, 2012). While on 8 July 2013, the British Home Office announced that Boko Haram would be banned from operating in the UK from 12 July onwards (BBCnews, 2013).

 The Niger State governor, Dr Muazu Babangida Aliyu, has criticized the group, saying, "Islam is known to be a religion of peace and does not accept violence and crime in any form" and Boko Haram doesn't represent Islam (Bavier, 2012). The Sultan of Sokoto Sa'adu Abubakar, the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims, was also reported to have called the sect "anti-Islamic" and "an embarrassment to Islam (Oladeji and Agba, 2011). The Coalition of Muslim Clerics in Nigeria (CMCN) has also called on the Boko Haram to disarm and embrace peace (Jimoh, 2011). The Islamic Circle of North America (Oladeji and Agba, 2011), the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada (IslamToday, 2012), the Muslim Council of Britain (ICNA, 2012), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OnIslam.net, 2011) and the Council on American Islamic Relations (*Times of Ummah, 2011)* have all called on the group to renounce violence and embrace the path of dialogue and peace.

8.3 Tourism Development

Ask.com (2012), says tourism development refers to all the activities associated with providing facilities for tourists in a destination. It involves activities such as skills development, job and wealth creation, and marketing. Marketing of various tourist destinations through liaison, training and advice of local tourism businesses

promotes tourism development. According to both the World Tourism Organization (WTO), and the World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) the travel and **tourism industry** is the largest industry in the world and accounts for the largest volume of employment generation in the world too**.** Wikipedia (2011) observed that mass tourism have developed in some countries with the improvements in technology, allowing for improved contributions to the national economies**.** Tourism development involves broadening the ownership base such that more people benefit from the tourism industry. Skills development, job creation and wealth creation are all parts of tourism development (Westerncape, 2013)**.**

8.4 The Niger Delta Crises and Youths Militancy

The Niger Delta crisis was internationalized with the formation of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1992. Spearheaded by Ogoni playwright and author, Ken Saro-Wiwa, MOSOP became the major campaigning organization representing the Ogoni people in their struggle for ethnic and environmental rights (Essentialaction, 2007). The ethnic unrest and conflicts of the late 1990s (such as those between the Ijaw and Itsekiri), coupled with attendant increase in the availability of small arms and other weapons, led increasingly to the militarization of the Delta. By this time, local and state officials had become involved by offering financial support to those paramilitary groups they believed would attempt to enforce their own political agenda (Asari-Dokubo, 2005:22; Human Rights Watch, 2005). Thus emerged many militant groups.

9 Methodology

Survey design was adopted in this study. The primary data were gathered through electronic questionnaire (E-questionnaire) via the Internet. With an estimated population size of 116,000 a sample size of 400 was statistically determined through Taro Yamane's formula. Proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate it to the 4 cluster area of study.   The data sourced were statistically analyzed with Likert's 5-points scale and Spearman's Correlation Coefficient, and also presented in pictorial charts for ease of understanding. Only 380 of the E-questionnaire representing 95% were filled and returned to us, and were thus used for the analysis.

10 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1:   Respondents' Demographic Data

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Sex:		
Male:	212	55.79%
Female	168	44.21%
Age:		
21 – 30 years	96	25.26%
31-40 years	107	28.16%
41 – 50 years	113	29.74%
51 years Or Above	64	16.84%
Occupation:		
Diplomatic Corps	31	8.16%
Expatriates	47	12.37%
Civil Servants	220	57.89%
Media Practitioners	82	21.58%
TOTAL	**380**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Data displayed on table 2 above indicate that 55.79% of the respondents were male, while 44.21% were female; 25.26% were in the age bracket of 21 to 30 years, 28.16% in the age range of 31 to 40 years; 29.74% in the age bracket of 41 to 50 years, while the remaining 16.84% were 51 years or above. 8.16% were members of the diplomatic corps, 12.37% were expatriates working in Nigeria, 57.89% were civil servants working in the relevant Ministries, while the remaining 21.58% were journalists/media practitioners. Figure 2 below gives us a pictorial view of the respondents' occupational distribution.
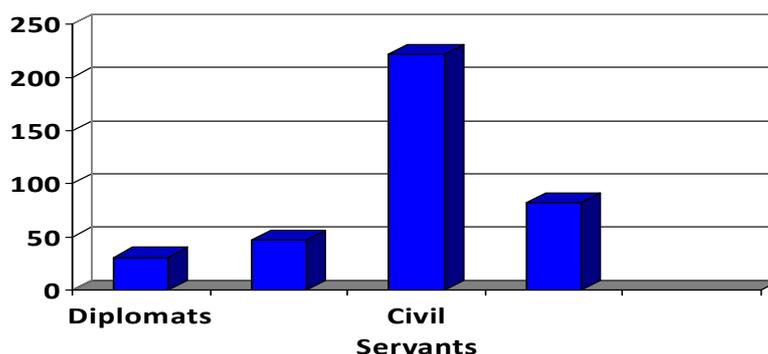
Fig. 2: The respondents' occupational distribution.

Table 2: Respondents' views on whether there is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image.

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	130	34.21%
Agree	184	48.42%
Undecided	25	6.58%
Disagree	21	5.53%
Strongly Disagree	20	5.26%
Total	380	100%

Source: Field survey, 2013.

From table 3 data we could gather that 34.21% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image. 48.42% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 6.58% were not quite sure; 5.53% somehow disagreed, while the remaining 5.26% totally disagreed with the point. See figure 3 below for a graphic picture of this result.
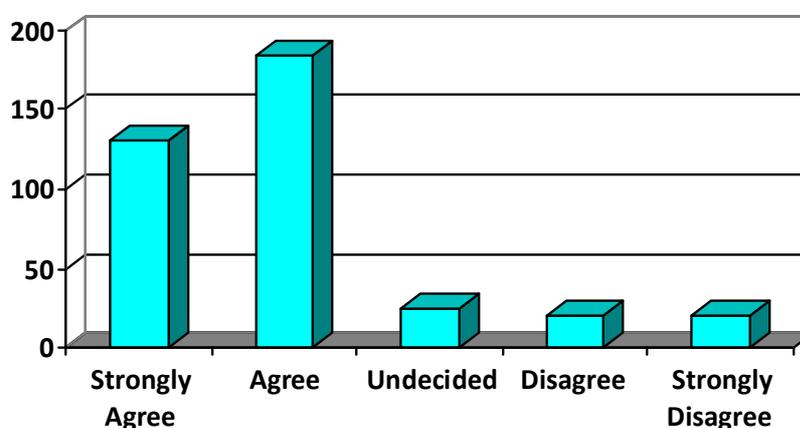

Fig. 3: A test of the correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image. Source: Field survey, 2013.

Table 3: Respondents' views on whether there is significant correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image.

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	101	26.58%
Agree	162	42.63%
Undecided	27	7.10%
Disagree	41	10.79%
Strongly Disagree	49	12.89%
Total	380	100%

Source: Field survey, 2013.

Data displayed on table 4 show that 26.58% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is significant correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image. 42.63% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 7.10% were not quite sure; 10.79% somehow disagreed, while the remaining 12.89% totally disagreed with the point. See figure 4 below for a graphic picture of this result.
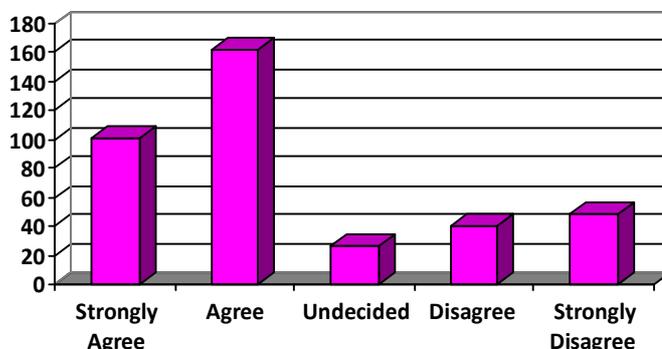

Fig. 4: A test of the correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image. Source: Field survey, 2013.

Table 4: Respondents' views on whether the Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	118	31.05%
Agree	172	45.26%
Undecided	37	9.74%
Disagree	20	5.26%
Strongly Disagree	33	8.68%
Total	380	100%

Source: Field survey, 2013.

Data displayed on table 4 show that 31.05% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is significant correlation between both the Boko Haram and the Niger Delta crisis on Nigeria's tourism development. 45.26% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 9.74% were not quite sure; 5.26% somehow disagreed, while the remaining 8.68% totally disagreed with the point. See figure 5 below for a pictorial view of this result.
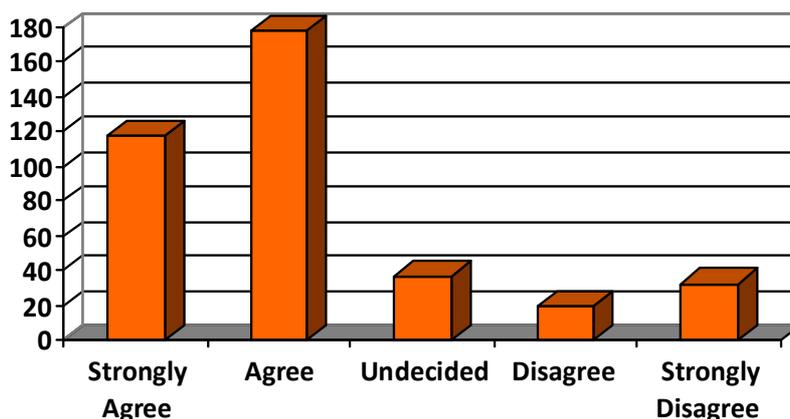

Fig. 5: A test of whether the Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development. Source: Field survey, 2013.

Test of Hypothesis One:
Ho: There is no significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image.
Hi: There is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image.
Test Statistics = Spearman Correlation Coefficient (^{r}s)

Table 5: Statistical Test of Hypothesis 1

Options	Data 1	Data 2	Rank 1	Rank 2	D	d^2
Strongly Agree	130	118	4	4	0	0
Agree	184	178	5	5	0	0
Undecided	25	37	3	3	0	0
Disagree	21	20	2	1	1	1
Strongly Disagree	20	33	1	2	-1	1

Adapted from tables 3 and 5. Source: Field Survey, 2013.

$\sum d^2 = 0 + 0 + 0 + 1 + 1 = 2$

So $^r s = 1 - \dfrac{2 \times \sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)}$
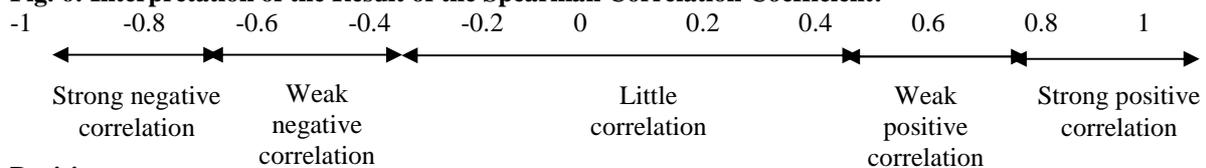
$^r s = 1 - \dfrac{(2 \times 2)}{n(n^2-1)}$

$^r s = 1 - \dfrac{2 \times 2}{5(5^2 - 1)}$

$^r s = 1 - \dfrac{4}{120}$

$^r s = 1 - 0.033$

$^r s = 0.967$

Fig. 6: Interpretation of the Result of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient:

-1	-0.8	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	1

Strong negative correlation | Weak negative correlation | Little correlation | Weak positive correlation | Strong positive correlation

Decision

Since the result of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient ($^r s = 0.967$) shows astrong positive correlation, we hereby reject the Ho and accept the Hi which says that "there is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image."

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no significant correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image.
Hi: There is significant correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image.
Test Statistics = Spearman Correlation Coefficient ($^r s$)

Table 6: Statistical Test of Hypothesis 2

Options	Data 1	Data 2	Rank 1	Rank 2	D	d^2
Strongly Agree	101	118	4	4	0	0
Agree	162	178	5	5	0	0
Undecided	27	37	1	3	-2	4
Disagree	41	20	2	1	1	1
Strongly Disagree	49	33	3	2	1	1

Adapted from tables 4 and 5. Source: Field Survey, 2013.

$\sum d^2 = 0 + 0 + 4 + 1 + 1 = 6$

So $^r s = 1 - \dfrac{6 \times \sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)}$

$^r s = 1 - \dfrac{(6 \times 6)}{n(n^2-1)}$

$^r s = 1 - \dfrac{6 \times 6}{5(5^2 - 1)}$

^{r}s =1- $\frac{36}{120}$

^{r}s =1- 0.30

^{r}s = 0.70

Decision

Since the result of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient (^{r}s = 0.70) shows a weak positive correlation, we hereby reject the Ho and accept the Hi which says that "there is significant correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image."

Test of Hypothesis Three

Ho: The Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises do not have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development.

Hi: The Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development.

Test Statistics = Chi-Square (X^2)

$X^2 = \sum \dfrac{O - E}{E}$

Expected Frequency = $\dfrac{\sum \text{Observed Frequency}}{\text{Number of Observations}}$

$= \dfrac{118 + 178 + 37 + 20 + 33}{5} = 76$

Degree of Freedom = 4. Hence, Critical Chi-Square at 5% Margin of Error = 9.49

$X^2 = \dfrac{(118\text{-}76)^2}{76} + \dfrac{(178\text{-}76)^2}{76} + \dfrac{(37\text{-}76)^2}{76} + \dfrac{(20\text{-}76)^2}{76} + \dfrac{(33\text{-}76)^2}{76}$

$= 23.21 + 134 + 20 + 41 + 24.33$

$= 242.54$

Decision

Since the calculated chi-square ($X^2_{calculated}$ = 242.54, $p < 0.05$) is greater than the critical chi-square (9.49), we hereby reject the Ho and accept the Hi which says that "the Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development."

11 Summary of Result

A summary of the results of this study show that:

i.   There is significant correlation between the Boko Haram crisis and Nigeria's international image.

ii.   There is significant correlation between the Niger Delta crisis and Nigeria's international image.

iii. Finally, both the Boko Haram and Niger Delta crises have significant negative impact on Nigeria's tourism development.

12 Discussion

No nation can rise in greatness above its image and reputation in our globalized world of today. This is why countries guard their national images very jealously and also commit enormous resources in image laundering abroad. The position of a nation's international image rubs-off either positively or negatively on its economy, business, political and social relationship with other nations.

The Boko Haram and the Niger Delta crises have hoisted negative images of untold proportion on Nigeria. Though our result number one and two show that the Boko Haram crisis has a more damaging image correlation effect of 0.97 or 97% damaging effect on Nigeria's international image, while the Niger Delta crisis has a damaging image correlation effect of 0.70 or 70% damaging effect on Nigeria's international image respectively, as the time of this study. Because of the Boko Haram bombings and killings of innocent souls, citizens of other countries are relocating out of Nigeria with their businesses, while their brothers/sisters who wished to visit the country are changing their minds. The resultant effect is a grueling suffocation of the nation's tourism development efforts.

On the other hand, at the height of the Niger Delta crisis, oil flow stations were shut down, thus, reducing the nations production capacity. This was followed by vandalisation of oil pipelines and other facilities, hostage taking of oil workers especially the expatriates, sometimes leading to loss of lives. All these bring economic loss of unquantifiable proportion to the nation, while its youth and graduate unemployment situation is being worsened every year. We all ought to have a rethink, if the nation must grow.

13 Conclusion

No country is an island. Every country in one way or the other depends on other countries for its sustenance and development, through political, diplomatic, economic, technological, trade and social relationships, and via universally agreed treaties and conventions. For such ties to be smooth and result-oriented, however, the nation and its people must possess positive image and reputation, adorable by other nations. Foreign investment is a major boost to the economy of every nation. This is why everything must be done to quell both the Boko Haram and the Niger Delta crises in Nigeria.

14 Recommendations

Mindful of the outcome of this study, we hereby recommend as follows:

i.   The current amnesty programme of the Federal Government to the Niger Delta ex-militants by ex-President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua, which relatively returned peace to the area should be optimally exploited and sustained.

ii.   The government of Nigeria should not relent in its efforts towards finding a lasting solution to the Boko Haram crisis too.

iii. Public relations research should be employed to ascertain the remote causes of this intractable Boko Haram crisis, the underlying grievances of its disciples and the best way to assuage that, so that peace will reign supreme all over the country.

iv.   International security organisations and the advanced nations of the world should come to the aid of Nigeria in its quest to stamp out terrorism from its soil.

v.   Finally, perpetrators of social crises in Nigeria are appealed to through this media to down their weapons of warfare and embrace peace, knowing fully well that they are killing the nation's tourism development and worsening youths' unemployment in the country.

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