

# **Tourism Policies and Performance of Nigerian Heritage Sites: A Review**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Tourism policies have a significant impact on the preservation, promotion, and overall performance of heritage sites for both domestic and international tourists. This review provides insights into the entities responsible for tourism policy formulation, the policy objective, and how the stated objectives are being realized while shedding light on their implications for sustainability, economic growth, and cultural preservation. The main objective of Nigeria's tourism policy is to protect and improve the nation's natural and cultural heritage. Many activities aimed at encouraging tourism development include planning, provision of infrastructure, taxation regime that supports tourism growth, education and training for tourism employees, marketing, legislation and regulation in order to protect and preserve tourist facilities as well as the country's natural resources, historical and cultural assets. The critical concern is the enforcement and effectiveness of regulations, specifically the probability of a policy successfully promoting sustainable and viable tourism development and management.

**Aims:** This paper therefore investigates the influence of tourism policies on the performance of heritage sites in Nigeria and the need for policy review for improved performance of Nigerian heritage sites.

**Methodology:** The research methodology emerged from a comprehensive review of tourism policy literature in Nigeria. The examination of documents and research projects focused on various aspects of tourism policy planning and governance, policy formulation, policy objectives, and their implications for sustainability, economic growth, and natural/cultural heritage preservation.

**Results:** In the data analysis, the comprehensive review were presented with an interpretative narrative. The information is organized into sub-topics based on the research publications, with an emphasis on overview of the research findings.

**Conclusion:** Despite policies and frameworks, Nigeria's tourism sector, including cultural heritage sites, has failed to reach its goals, losing the economy numerous potential benefits. In order to address the current circumstances and ensure successful heritage site design, development, and management in Nigeria, there is an urgent requirement for the country's tourism policies to be reviewed.

*Keywords:* Heritage, Nigeria, Policy, Sustainability, Tourism, Cultural preservation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a form of service industry that transform built, natural environments and a range of activities into captivating attractions. Tourism growth has led to an expansion in destinations offering historical and cultural products and the trend highlights how tourism can convert natural and cultural heritages into appealing attractions. The demand for these products led to the emergence of cultural tourism (McKercher, 2002). Nigeria possesses a wide range of tangible and intangible heritage resources that are exceptional and abundant and as stated by Light (2015), heritage, whether cultural or natural, can be considered a tourist attraction. The resources are significant because the country prioritises tourism as a key economic sector, as part of its efforts to diversify from dependence on the oil industry. Okpoko and Ezeadichie (2002) remarked that the cultural heritage of Nigeria, which is incorporated in the prehistory, present day practices, and what people anticipate for the future, can form the basis for tourism and economic development. The cost of human resources for sustainable tourism development is currently high.

There are over 250 ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, many of which have unique archaeological, historic and ethnographic heritage resources that can be harnessed for heritage tourism. Despite the existence of numerous heritage resources and heritage management institutions like the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) and legal procedures for heritage preservation, heritage management in Nigeria is at a low ebb, such that it lacks the capacity to support flourishing heritage tourism. Although legal procedures for heritage preservation exist in the country, this decline is the case leading to Nigeria having an abysmal ranking in terms of tourism. For example, in 2019, the World Economic Forum placed Nigeria as the 129th best country in the world regarding its tourist industry (Business News Report, 2019). The management and promotion of heritage assets in Nigeria for tourist development demonstrate a lackadaisical attitude, notably inadequate compared to the significant progress observed in other parts of the globe (Gbadegesin&Osaghale, 2014; Opata&Apeh, 2016). This apathetic attitude towards managing heritage assets in Nigeria and their tourism development promotion appears highly alarming. As a result, there is a pressing need in Nigeria for a fundamental revision of its heritage tourism policies, practices and procedures.

Policies are commonly expressed in formal declarations, including laws, official documents, and statements. They are phrases for a comprehensive, high-level plan that usually consists of a set of objectives and steps to accomplish those objectives. According to Sherrif (2008), policy is further defined as the goals and techniques established by a government. These include tourism, economic development, employment, public relations, or a combination of these and other fields. The tourism policy ensures the adequate direction of the rules and functions of the public sector's involvement in tourism; the framework offers guidance for tourism development initiatives and establishes a strategic declaration of intent for the anticipated growth of tourism. This is expected since the policy ensures adequate direction of the rules and functions. In addition, tourist policy is typically seen as a sub-field of an overall nation's economic policy. By evolution, Chuck (1997) defines tourism policy as "a public policy crafted and formulated to ensure the achievement of specific objectives that are important to tourism and are established at the municipal, state, or federal level." In a broader sense, tourist policy is anticipated to reflect the overall development policy of the concerned site, which is often a country or region. This would promote the adequate integration of tourism in such a geographical location. Moreover, tourism policy is typically developed as a result of an evaluation and assessment of current developments in tourism trends and infrastructure, destinations for tourists, and the tourist market.

Dye, (1972) succinctly defined policy as 'anything governments decide or choose to do or not to do hence opining that government and its chosen representatives have the sole duty of defining policies (Meehan, 1985). Policy, according to Olssen *et al.* (2004), is any course of action. Policies generally indicate set goals and verifiable means of achieving them. They are always meant to be binding on a group of people on whose behalf they are made (Birkland, 2001). There are always political and social motivations behind every public policy most especially since the legislature will typically be required to back them up by relevant laws (Obonna, 2016). The effectiveness of public policies is not just a function of how robust the policy documents are, regardless of the political ingenuity but rather a function of the adequateness of both implementation and assessment and the evaluation processes. The launch of the tourism master plan in late 2007 in Nigeria brought attention to tourism policy, planning, and governance. This explanation provides a concise overview of the economic impact of tourism on the Nigerian economy, assuming that professionals effectively implemented tourism policy, planning, and governance. Policy implementation refers to the execution of plans and actions by established policies.

However, the inadequate implementation of policies are often attributed to various factors, including limited resource availability, bureaucratic structures, communication challenges, and negative dispositions or attitudes. Furthermore, Nigeria's inadequate implementation of tourism policies is closely linked to these aforementioned challenges, as it significantly impacts various sectors of the society. In addition, the tourism policy process is influenced by factors such as government involvement, political determination to promote tourism, the organization of tourism entities, and the current stage of tourism industry development. This paper therefore examines the influence of tourism policies on the performance of heritage sites in Nigeria.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative research paradigm described by Okpoko *et al.* (2021) was adopted for this study. The research methodology emerged from a comprehensive review of tourism policy literature in Nigeria. The examination of documents and research projects focused on various aspects of tourism policy planning and governance, policy formulation, policy objectives, and their implications for sustainability, economic growth, and natural/cultural heritage preservation. These were presented with an interpretative narrative.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Tourism Policy Implication**

According to Rasool *et al.* (2021) & Ohlan, (2017), tourism has a wide range of repercussions permeating all spheres of national life, including the economic, social, cultural, and environmental spheres. This provides an additional explanation for why governments are involved in tourism growth. There are variety of economic factors that could motivate the public sector to encourage tourism development. According to Pearce (1996), these include an improved condition regarding the balance of payments, significant opportunities for the growth and development of the region, diversification of the economy, increases in both individual and state income levels, emerging possibilities for gainful employment and encouragement of investment in areas other than tourism.

Social considerations for other important reasons are the result of which governments are involved in developing tourism to maximize cultural and social advantages such as the exchange of culture, rural development and the recovery of traditional crafts and festivals. These social considerations need to be considered to maximize the socio-cultural benefits of tourism. The protection of people's well-being may be the state's overarching duty by minimizing the negative consequences of tourism on society and culture (which include the destruction of significant archaeological and historical landmarks, social deterioration, tourist congestion, and inconvenience to residents) as postulated by (Murugadas & Badaruddin, 2014).

Another consideration is how to minimize the negative effects of tourism on the environment, especially pollutants and other environmental risks, and concerns with land use caused by poor planning, design and engineering of tourist destinations infrastructure (Briassoulis, 2002; Caponi, 2022). In addition to the reasons that have already been highlighted, the government might also promote the growth of tourism to expand the scope of its many political goals. This was made abundantly clear by the Franco government in Spain (Pack, 2007), which, among other things, actively promoted tourism development in an effort to foster greater political support for the rule. National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) are involved in a wide variety of activities to coordinate and stimulate tourism development (Jemirade, 2021). These activities are undertaken as a means of attaining various policy objectives. It should come as no surprise that many nations in the developing world are still in the beginning stages of the tourism industry's development. The reason for this is that the tourism industry is still in the process of transitioning in a significant way. However, industrialized nations like those in the European Union and North America have made enormous strides in expanding their tourism industries. This helps to explain why the level of involvement that the government has in the tourism industry in various nations varies greatly, as do the reasons for this involvement in the sector.

### **3.2. To achieve the objectives of tourism policy, the necessary actions include:**

**3.2.1. Planning:** According to Chucks (1997), the primary objectives of tourism planning are to reduce the amount of damage caused by the industry, satisfy the varied needs of tourism laws, and enjoy the benefits of the industry. Planning is of the utmost importance in the tourism industry due to two distinct sector aspects. (McLoughlin and Hanrahan, 2023). To begin with, the complexity of tourism enables it to spread over a wide variety of other industries and businesses, which is why it impacts a large number of other domains. On the other hand, tourism development frequently necessitates the participation of both the public and private sectors in the execution of significant capital investment projects (Udoma et al., 2013).

Some examples of these projects include the construction of hotel rooms, public works infrastructure, and transportation links. Due to the peculiarities suggested by these two peculiarities, a lack of extensive and proper planning might result in mistakes that are either exceedingly costly to remedy or difficult to rectify, both of which the host community will have to endure for several years.

**3.2.2. Regulation and Legislation:** The State is responsible for enacting legislation that establishes regulations and defines terms for tourism-related activities. Shyllon (1996) conducted the study. The fundamental legislation governing tourism encompasses the basic tourism law. Tourism law is the comprehensive framework for policy development in the tourism sector. It outlines national or regional tourism organisations' roles, structure, and financial sources. The implementation of specific regulations is imperative to safeguard and

conserve the country's tourist facilities and its natural, historical, and cultural resources (Al-Balushi et al., 2022).

The guidelines may encompass consumer protection laws and regulations mandating travel agencies to manually maintain customers' booking deposits in a trust account to secure their reservations. Fire safety regulations mandate the installation of a specific quantity of escape and emergency lighting fixtures on every hotel floor to ensure adequate safety measures during fire incidents. Catering establishments must comply with health and food safety regulations that establish minimum standards for safety and sanitation. Air regulations typically rely on bilateral agreements between countries to govern various aspects of air transportation.

Regulatory actions are typically driven by the objective of safeguarding the environmental and cultural assets of tourist destinations. Protective regulations restrict activities and access to environmentally vulnerable locations (Pourbahador&Brinkhuijsen, 2023). Another type of legislation could limit the provision of alcoholic beverages or the presentation of specific cultural exhibits to designated days, aiming to mitigate adverse effects on local traditions. Enforcement of regulations is crucial (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2007; Pearce et al., 1996). The State is responsible for enforcing regulations related to tourism and tourist services. These regulations apply to both foreign and domestic consumers. The State must ensure these regulations are followed and impose appropriate sanctions for violations. This is necessary to protect consumers. (WTTC, 1999)

**3.2.3. Tourism Development Facilitation:** When governments at the national and regional levels promote tourism to generate income for the economy, they typically allocate funds to support the provision of commercial services. This holds particular significance in emerging tourism destinations. Government support, both in terms of financial resources and political endorsement, can play a crucial role in bolstering the feasibility of marginal projects (Bull, 1997). Governments contribute to the development of tourism infrastructure. In travel and tourism, infrastructure encompasses permanent investments in passenger transport and destination services, such as power, communication, water, sewerage, hygiene, and health. Unless specifically designated for community development, most infrastructure is not exclusively dedicated to tourism. Roads, airports, and terminals commonly accommodate multiple users, providing services for residents and visitors.

**3.2.4. Taxation on Tourism:** In recent years, governments all over the world have gotten increasingly sophisticated in the process of developing and implementing taxation tools. This trend can be attributed to several factors. Forty years ago, international tourism was essentially exempt from taxation; nevertheless, taxes levied against the tourism industry are growing both in number and impact today. This trend in tourism taxes is partly due to the tourism boom (Adedoyin et al., 2023). Tourism has been recognised as a possible source of additional tax revenue, sometimes to pay sector expenditures and sometimes to contribute to the total revenue. Consequently, this trend in tourism taxation has been on the rise. According to the World Tourism Organisation Business Council (1998), tourism taxes are typically considered straightforward to collect because they generally affect travellers rather than the country's voters. There is a wide variety of taxation methods available. According to Bull (1997), taxes imposed on commercial tourism products are among the most significant forms of tourism-related revenue collection. Consumers who are on vacation may be subject to an additional tax known as a tourist tax.

**3.2.5. Training and Education:** It is essential for the growth and management of the tourism industry that workers in the industry receive education and training that is both relevant and comprehensive. Government tourism officials need to understand various

topics, including the design of tourism policy, marketing and planning strategies, tourism statistics and the management of tourism information systems, tourism impact studies, and tourist information services.

According to Wang and Ap (2013), tourism business workers must understand hotel and catering operations, services provided by tour and travel agencies, tour guides, and other related topics. As a direct consequence of this, governments place a significant focus on educational and occupational training. Even though educational institutions are increasingly located within the private sector or function as a public-private partnerships, governments continue to play a significant role. This can be done by establishing tourism training and education organisations or by providing incentives (such as tax exemptions) to companies that use courses and curricula supervised by the national tourism administration or the Ministry of Education (Cockernell, 1996).

**3.2.6. Publicity and Marketing:** It is essential for a nation or region's attraction to be marketed as a destination for tourists. According to Ryan (1991) and Gilbert (1990), marketing informs potential tourists about what the place offers and tries to convince them to visit. The likelihood of individual providers of domestic and inbound tourism products being able to subjugate competition to cooperative marketing initiatives is extremely low and because these suppliers have a variety of competing interests, governments are the first to get involved in marketing. Second, a government may view tourism as having the potential to bring about more excellent national economic benefits than those that private market suppliers can provide. Thirdly, a centralized marketing authority can realize operational economies of scale through its operations.

However, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) (1997) states that the roles of governments in marketing include the following:

- i. Determination of objectives for marketing Objective; these objectives are described in terms of approximate numbers of tourist arrivals with type, average length of stay, origin countries or regions, and other criteria. In established tourist destinations, marketing goals is similar to adjustments in different kinds of consumers they are targeting (for example, they may be looking for markets with a higher quality standard or unique interests).
- ii. Construct a marketing plan, which may include outlining the broad categories of promotional strategies that will be utilised, any particular problems that need to be solved, if the marketing will be targeted at particular tourist markets and be general or selective, and so forth.
- iii. Developing the Promotion Plan: The different ways that goods and services related to tourism are marketed, such as media publicity, pamphlets and different printed resources dispersed by tourism experts and information centres, Exhibits at trade and consumer shows, as well as familiarization trips for journalists, agents for travel, and tour companies
- iv. Offering Visitors Information Services: Services that provide tourists information, including general geographical, historical, and cultural overviews of the region; descriptions of attractions, facilities, and services, as well as the costs associated with them; locations of embassies, and other specialized information. It is of the

utmost importance to educate tourists on local customs, dress and behaviour rules, and safety concerns they should be aware of.

### **3.3. Tourism policy formulation principles**

Many issues and principles must be considered by governments when developing tourism policy as stipulated by William, (1999).

- i. The effectiveness principle: The question of effectiveness refers to the likelihood that a policy NTA implements would satisfy the goals of developing the tourism industry. There are several relevant factors to consider, including the fact that the policy can be relied on to achieve its goals in a relatively short time, that it is adaptable to different scenarios, and so on.
- ii. An analysis of each potential course of action's impact on the economy. This requires determining the costs associated with each alternative that is as effective in accomplishing the goals of the policy.
- iii. Consider if a policy offers an ongoing incentive for tourism enterprises, visitors, and host communities to improve the sustainable behaviours they already engage in.
- iv. It is of the utmost importance to make sure that the policy that has been specified is acceptable on all fronts, including politically, socially, and operationally. Respect for cultural diversity, endorsement of the selected policy by the relevant authorities, and the possibility of administratively implementing such a policy are three requirements that must be met.

### **4.0. Nigeria's tourism policy and its objectives**

Davis and Althaus (1998) identify the following steps in the cycle of a robust and functional policy development: "Identification of issues, policy assessment, development of policy instruments, consultation throughout the entire process, coordination, decision, implementation, and evaluation". Arguably, tourism development in Nigeria attempted following this pattern when the first effort was made to harness the potentials of tourism in 1959 perhaps in an attempt to further strengthen and diversify the economy from the newly discovered crude oil in 1956 and the already established agricultural sector. This led to the foundation of the Nigerian Tourist Association in 1962, which later became a member of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), previously known as the International Union of Official Travel Organisations (IUOTO). As a result, the Nigeria Tourist Board was established in the year 1979. After the tourism board was transformed into the Ministry of Trade and Tourism in 1989, state and local governments established similar departments to boost national tourism development. Finally, in 1992, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) was established (Jemirade, 2021).

According to Esuola (2009), the national tourism policy document was created prior to the establishment of the NTDC with the goal of "raising national and international awareness of Nigeria's tourism potentials, generating foreign exchange, encouraging even development, promoting tourism-based rural enterprises, creating jobs, and accelerating rural-urban integration and cultural exchange." Cultural tourism, which highlights local culture, traditions, and customs; ecological tourism (ecotourism), which highlights unaltered natural sites like

caves, beaches, and waterfalls; and religious tourism, which highlights places of worship and ritual offerings are the three primary focus areas of the policy.

The primary goals of the national tourism policy include, among other things, the following: protecting and promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage as an asset for indigenous socioeconomic development; encouraging community and public-private partnerships in the development of tourism; generating foreign exchange, improving the distribution of wealth, alleviating poverty, and creating jobs; promoting Nigeria as an appealing vacation spot within the larger context of Africa's cultural landscape; and promoting Nigeria as an appealing vacation spot within the larger context of Africa's cultural landscape and promoting geopolitics (Meehan, 1985; Hudson et al., 2019).

Evaluation of the effectiveness of Nigeria's tourism policy needs to be based on the objectives established by the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC). These objectives include generating foreign exchange, supporting tourist-based rural entrepreneurs, creating jobs, accelerating rural-urban integration and cultural exchange, and promoting even development across the country. Literature has consistently indicated that lack of relevant mechanisms to measure overall levels of compliance has largely compromised the policy's ability to achieve its goals optimally and unfortunately, corrupt tendencies of government officials has not helped in mitigating this either (Osinubi et al, 2021).

Other reasons why the policy has not achieved as much as it set out to achieve because of over dependence on petroleum resources, poor planning which is arguably the biggest problem facing the Nigeria's tourism sector; observable deficiencies in the participation of relevant stakeholders in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. Similar to this also is the unfortunate situation where members of communities housing tourist destinations are not appropriately incorporated into the process. According to Munzali (2011), the tourism industry in Nigeria needs to be developed due to the presence of untapped resources and the need for regulatory measures to compete with other rapidly growing tourism destinations effectively. The government made significant efforts to promote the tourism industry at the national level, but it has not yet achieved the desired recognition level. The industry has significant potential for both ecotourism and commercial tourism. However, it needs help in planning, legislation, and political will. These constraints hinder the industry's alignment with national tourism policies and the United Nations Framework for sustainable tourism development.

The Nigerian government implemented measures to promote tourism and the travel industry as part of its efforts to diversify the economy. The steps taken to establish a comprehensive tourism framework in Nigeria include creating the Presidential Council on Tourism, the Federal Ministry of Tourism and its associated departments and agencies, and state-level initiatives such as Local Tourism Committees. These actions align with the National Tourism Policy (NTP) of 2005, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) Act of 1992, and the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan of 2006. The implementation of the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan and the establishment of the National Tourism Council aim to effectively utilize and expand tourism resources to enhance its competitiveness compared to other vital economic sectors, considering its impact on socioeconomic and cultural aspects. The NTDC has implemented various initiatives to enhance the management and promotion of heritage sites in Nigeria (NTDC, 2016).

According to Murtala & Aly (2014), the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan 2006 emphasizes tourism diversification tactics, and its interests span all tourist development and policy matters. The three-volume publication covered the vast majority of topics related to

sustainable tourism development in conformity with international standards. In addition, the master plan recommended that future tourism development be focused on one of five distinct clusters. These clusters are Sahara Gateway, Tropical Rainforest, Atlantic Gateway, Conference Capital, and Scenic Nature. Flagship projects should be developed within each tourism cluster produced to serve as symbols of tourism alongside being an impetus for all future tourism growth.

The following are some of the projected flagship projects:

- a. Sahara Gateway (Ancient City of Kano)
- b. Tropical Rainforest (Tinapa Business, Leisure, and Conference Resort is located in the Cross River Tropical Rainforest.)
- c. Atlantic Gateway (Olokola Cultural Resort)
- d. Conference Capital (Farin Ruwa Ecotourism Project)
- e. Scenic Nature (Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture)

The master plan went on to identify policy, legislation, and governance issues as presented below:

- i. The existing legislation needs more strength and effectiveness. It is advisable to delay the implementation of the proposed tourism legislation and classification until the completion of the master plan.
- ii. The Presidential Tourism Council and Tourism Steering Committee are crucial in promoting and enhancing tourism growth.
- iii. The Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism necessitates additional professional personnel and support.
- iv. The NTDC must address issues such as overstaffing, resource deficiencies, and a lack of targets and action plans, resulting in ineffectiveness.
- v. The business community needs a cohesive and influential voice.
- vi. The relationship between the private and public sectors must be strengthened.
- vii. The travel and tourism industry need a conducive private sector participation and investment environment.
- viii. Nigeria's current marketing efforts need to be improved.

#### **4.1. Ministries and Agencies responsible for implementing tourism policies in Nigeria**

Under the NTDC Act, Decree 81 of 1992 which was also reviewed in the tourism policy of 2005, it provides for the followings to also make inputs and regulate the industry accordingly. Though each has spelt out duties and responsibility to perform.

1. The highest decision-making bodies in Nigeria's tourism industry are the Presidential Council on Tourism, led by the President, and the Minister's Tourism Steering Committee.

2. The Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism is crucial in obtaining federal funding, establishing objectives, and overseeing progress. This involves the involvement of economists, planners, and personnel with expertise in industry statistics.
3. The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation. The country's highest governance body is represented by the acronym NTDC.
4. State Ministries of Tourism and Culture securing necessary state investment, planning etc in the states.
5. State Tourism Boards assists NTDC in implementing the act
6. Local Government Tourism Committees whose responsibility is controlled by the STB's and NTDC

The Tourism Policy of 2005 did not take into cognizance the possibility of states having full control of the tourism resources found within their territorial boundaries and establishment of laws to guide their operations. It also shows that the enforcement and coordination of these establishments is quite cumbersome because of the intersecting responsibilities that has been in existence with regards to the industry or sector in presence of many governmental ministries, departments and agencies whose responsibilities are conflicting both at state and federal levels.

However, the Master plan has given areas of comparative advantage for tourism to be developed fully. It has not also addressed fully how such policies and legislations can be addressed leaving a gap where states and the federal government need to sit and harness as well as arrive at an amicable understanding of the roles of each component unit within the federation. In addition, The National Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) Act, which is currently in effect, is not complicated. The bill's original wording does not include several elements essential to the growth of a sustainable tourism industry and guarantees that ongoing efforts will be maintained.

The following suggestions were emphasized in the report by Murtala & Aly (2014).

1. A comprehensive assessment of the tourism policy from 2005 as well as the NTDC Act in order to account for this deficit
2. The National Council on Tourists should consider holding its meetings every quarter rather than on an annual basis to build a unified front regarding tourist policies and laws while also taking into account the specific characteristics of each state.
3. The Nigerian government and the tourism industry face significant problems in the form of critical obstacles, including the implementation of the Tourism Development Master Plan and the improvement of Nigeria's image on the international stage. Strong coordination between the public sector and the commercial sector will be required in order to improve the quality of both the product and the facilities, as well as to implement a training programme that is both comprehensive and in-depth.
4. The success of Nigeria's future tourist industry will depend on how well both possibilities and challenges are capitalised on and addressed. Essential opportunities may be found thanks to the many cultural attractions, the hospitable nature of the locals, the revamped

National Tourism Organisation, the Human Resources Development, and the newly established Convention Bureau.

#### **4.2. Heritage resources: A strong asset and powerful tourism driver**

Heritage resources are significant factors that can grow and promote tourism. In order to satisfy the requirements of its patrons and increase the number of tourists that visit the locations, several tourist hotspots advertise their cultural assets as if they were commodities. In the context of tourism, heritage has developed into a product designed for fulfilling the requirements aspired by the modern travellers (Chhabra, 2010). Its consumption as a commodity can take the shape of an identity link, the performance of ritual practises, religious practise, or traditional practises, to name just a few examples (Keitumetse, 2014). Tourism is a sort of travel in which items, most notably cultural lifestyles and activities are consumed. Tourism is one of the processes of consumption and this kind of vacation exposes the traveller to one-of-a-kind tangible heritage and immerses them in the intangible heritage practices that make up that legacy, such as traditional ceremonies, celebrations, and the like. Without tourists, these activities would not have taken place.

Therefore, the process through which heritage materials are consumed by tourists and positively utilized by the community that is hosting the tourists is known as tourism. According to Raivo (2002), heritage is beneficial to tourism since it entails engaging the past in the present through the creation and utilization of items from the past. Under this ideology, tourism and the conservation of historical resources complement one another. According to Ezenagu & Iwuagwu (2016), heritage resources encourage the growth of tourism, while tourism, on the other hand, displays and helps to maintain a people's heritage. Comer (2012) noted, in light of this information that both economic and social advantages can accrue to local populations at heritage sites and chances for cultural integration where visitors opportune to study past and current cultures.

As a direct consequence, the term "heritage" refers to the living edifices of human life that are kept to maintain cultural continuity. Based on this principle, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is interested in protecting and conserving heritages for both contemporary and future usage. The idea of preserving the past led to the creation of World Heritage Sites, designated areas of significant cultural or physical significance located worldwide. It is impossible to overestimate the potential economic, social and political benefits from such an exercise for a country. We cannot deny the significance roles of heritage resources in the lives of any nation and as such, they should be preserved and conserved. However, the scenario is somehow different in Nigeria because heritage resources are viewed as products of African traditional religions, a religion of pagans, idols, and heathens. As a result, anything associated with African traditional religions are not generally acceptable to all religion inclination including cultural institutions, lifestyles, and events, and are sometimes at risk of destruction. This includes anything that originates from African culture.

Although heritage is a proof and evidence of past activities that can be used to identify and preserve the present as was mentioned earlier, these historical resources have the potential to be developed into tourist attractions that not only highlight their one-of-a-kind qualities but also serve as a representation of a location's identity and an agent of economic rehabilitation for that location. The country's tourism assets, particularly its heritage resources, are an essential reservoir for its heritage. To this day, several intangible and tangible heritage sites have been gazetted in the National Register. However, the Sukur Cultural Landscape and the Osun Osogbo Grove are the two that have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Nigeria while many other sites are on the tentative list.

Currently, the NCMM has bestowed the status of a national monument upon sixty-five different heritage sites all around the country (NCMM, 2004). These cultural treasures have been recognized for the intrinsic value they possess as well as the unique relevance they possess outside the communities and states in which they are located. The NCMM has designated the following heritage resources as national monuments: Mbari Art of Imo state, Masquerade (mmonwu) festival of Anambra state, Dye Pits of Kano state, Sukur kingdom, Osun Osogbo sacred grove, Nok culture of Kaduna state, Argungu fishing festival of Kebbi state, Esie stone sculptures, the Great Kano Wall, Kano state, and others. The historical and cultural legacies are of the utmost importance to the nation. Even though we have just two of these recognized as World Heritage Sites, others maintain iconic traditions, mainly by celebrating cultural events.

#### **4.3. Sustainable cultural heritage tourism**

According to Khan (2005), sustainability in terms of legacy resources denotes the preservation of natural, cultural, and other tourism resources for future use while also benefiting the current society. When discussing cultural heritage, the idea of sustainable development are understood in two distinct ways: first, it can be understood as an issue of concern for the preservation of the heritage as an end in itself. Secondly, as a component of cultural and the environmental resources that ought to be preserved and conserved for future generations in order to ensure their sustainable development. In this way, sustainable tourism management can contribute to protecting the authenticity and structure of Nigeria's cultural heritage treasures because natural and cultural heritage assets in Nigeria are so crucial to the country's appeal as a tourist destination. The sites' long-term viability is contingent on the country and its visitors continuity for using them. Hence, sustainable tourism is defined as emphasizing the conservation and preservation of heritage resources of a country.

Additionally, sustainable tourism is tourism that seeks to strike a balance between economic, environmental and cultural diversity. Consequently, cultural tourism is produced through the collaboration of sustainable tourism, tourism, and the cultural sector. As a result of the combination of tourism and culture, each cultural attraction is wealth in its own right, and none of them is more valuable than the others (Emekli& Baykal, 2011). Not only does the combination of tourism and culture contribute to the conservation and preservation of cultural resources but cultural tourism on its own is a means of propaganda and advertisement. Vita *et al.* (2005) provided an explanation of the value of cultural and historical assets in the process of promoting and developing tourism. They discovered that cultural heritage, an essential component of human life, is a significant factor in attracting tourists and advancing the tourism movement.

According to Gunluet *al.* (2013), one of the most critical aspects of cultural tourism is its ability to boost revenue for heritage sites, the local community, and the nation home to them. As a direct consequence of this, cultural heritage of a nation has always played a constructive part in maintaining its cultural values and developing patriotic and national pride in its citizens. In addition to this, it possesses the ability to advance and contribute to the nation's socioeconomic growth. Because how these policies are formed and put into action can affect the longevity, preservation, and overall success of heritage tourism, they have the potential to substantially impact the performance of cultural heritage sites

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

There are varieties of complicated and interconnected consequences that tourism policies have on Nigeria's cultural heritage sites. These policies can result in considerable economic,

cultural, and social advantages when developed thoughtfully and implemented. However, there are also possible dangers that need to be addressed to preserve these valuable sites' legitimacy and long-term stability. Heritage sites in Nigeria have the potential to flourish as economic drivers and symbols of the nation's cultural identity if stakeholders are encouraged to work together, sustainable practices are implemented and cultural preservation is given the highest priority. In addition, it is practical to acknowledge that the specific effects of tourism regulations on heritage sites vary depending on the context, the level of enforcement, and the level of collaboration amongst the various parties involved. This is because these factors all affect how the policies are implemented.

Effective policies should balance encouraging tourism and protecting the integrity of heritage sites, ensuring the sites' continued sustainability and worth in the long run. It will be easier for Nigeria to reframe the expansion of tourism so that gains are more evenly distributed, imbalances are addressed and the economy is made more resilient if the country moves towards more consistent and comprehensive approaches to tourist policymaking. In promoting tourism growth that is both inclusive and sustainable, it is essential to implement policies and strategies with a long-term focus on fostering high-quality employment and job creation, acquiring skills, innovation, entrepreneurship, efficient investment, and seamless regional development. The planned growth of tourism should consider the present and future socioeconomic and environmental consequences, as well as the changing demands of tourists, tourism investments, the environment, and the affected communities. In order to address the current circumstances and ensure successful heritage site design, development, and management in Nigeria, there is an urgent requirement for the country's policies to be reviewed.

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