

Museums and Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism Development in Nigeria: A Case of Old Residency Museum, Calabar.

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Abstract

This article explores museums' function in sustainable Nigeria's tourism industry, with a specific focus on the Old Residency Museum, Calabar. It examines the critical function of museums in harmonizing economic gains with cultural preservation, community empowerment, and environmental sustainability. It also investigates the challenges that hinder museums from fully realizing their tourism potential, namely inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and limited public awareness. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study relies on in-depth interviews and documentary information drawn from journal articles, books, newspapers, and online sources. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven key stakeholders, namely four museum staff, one official from the tourism bureau, and two visitors. The findings revealed that Old Residency Museum houses numerous artifacts that reflect the colonial experiences of the Cross River region and beyond as well as ethnographic collections that represent the living traditions and cultures of Calabar and environs. When combined, these assets not only attract cultural tourists to the area, but also promote the economic wellbeing of the people, while preserving the heritage resources for posterity.

Keywords: Museums, Sustainable tourism, Cultural heritage, Old Residency Museum, Calabar, Nigeria.

Introduction

Cultural heritage tourism explores a destination's cultural, historical, and artistic aspects that promote cross-cultural exchange, preserve historic sites and promote economic growth, with museums playing a crucial role. Museums in Nigeria preserve cultural artifacts and historical records, fostering national unity and identity, connecting past to present, and helping societies understand ancestors' paths. Museums are vital cultural resources, preserving memories of human life and achievements, but they also need to be safeguarded as a community pride. For Okpoko (2006), the museum serves as a comprehensive record of human experience, preserving the memories, cultural aspirations, and hopes of individuals throughout history. They are collections and exhibitions connect people's past and present, preserving

cultural materials for posterity. Museums are vital tourist destinations and cultural products because they offer cultural, historical, and artistic artifacts to both locals and tourists (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2017, p. 101). A major component of the service-based economy and a major draw for tourists is culture (Porter, 1998).

Museums are nonprofit institutions that create a special link between a country's cultural history and modern society (Kirezli, 2011). Similarly, Hume & Mills (2011), noted that museums are not for profit organizations with the obligation to collect, conserve and educate the public about cultural heritage. For McLean (1995), preserving and conserving the museum-related collection under their care is one of the duties of museums. Museums are crucial tourist destinations that preserve and promote a society's culture and history (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2017, p. 102).

Archeology and museums contribute significantly to tourism in Nigeria, offering attractions across states. Museums display excavation materials, study people's culture, serve local foods, provide accommodation, and offer craft stores and boutiques for souvenirs. They also offer affordable accommodation and cultural experiences. All these helps to strengthen the tourists' motivation to visit museums. Museums are under the aegis of International Council of Museums (ICOM) (Akinade, 2005). They are crucial for cultural tourism due to their role as cultural mediators, with diverse collections, categories, and uniqueness, as well as creative potential. Museums promote identity understanding, inspire, and showcase a people's intellectual, aesthetic, cultural, and technological heritage, attracting visitors like schools and fostering enlightenment, pride, and scientific discovery (Anah, 2014, p. 545).

Unfortunately, the government at all levels in Nigeria pay lip-service to cultural issues, thereby neglecting an important aspect of our identity that can help to foster economic development through tourism ventures. One should bear in mind that knowing the past helps to manage and sustain the future. Neglecting the past is like one neglecting his identity. The study looks at museums in sustainable tourism development, using the Old Residency Museum, Calabar, as a case study. Specifically, the study examines Museums' function in sustainable cultural heritage tourism development, and the challenges that limit them from performing their tourism role efficiently, and suggests the way forward. With an emphasis on museum tourism, this paper seeks to provide insights into cultural heritage tourism in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Museum and Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism

International Council of Museum (ICOM) (2022) defined museum as non-profit institution that collects, conserves, investigates, conveys, and displays tangible proof of people and their surroundings for research, education, and pleasure. Okpoko (2006) noted that two main features emerged from the

ICOM definition. Firstly, the museum is a public institution, and secondly, its main functions are collecting, preserving, studying, interesting, and exhibiting objects of cultural and educational value. Momin & Okpoko (1990) define museums as institutions that collect, preserve, and display natural and cultural objects for entertainment, education, and research on human heritage and development. In Nigeria, its basic roles include the collection, preservation and display of natural and cultural artifacts for improving knowledge (Adeniji and Ekanem, 2013).

According to Akinade (Akinade, 2005), the uniqueness of museum can be seen in the specific and conventional functions it must perform, namely the collection of cultural and relevant natural objects..., documentation of these objects, their storage/preservation, and exhibition or display.... The Nigerian Museum, established by colonialists, showcases material culture symbolizing history, beliefs, achievements, values, and ideas about human dignity. To stagnate the museums in Nigeria at the level of tourist attraction is to deny them of their dynamism (Anah, 2014, p. 549).

Sustainable tourism minimizes environmental, cultural, and societal impacts while enhancing local community benefits, particularly in cultural heritage tourism, preserving historical sites for future use. Sustainable cultural heritage tourism focuses on responsible resource management, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting local community growth, ensuring cultural identity preservation and environmental well-being. The goal of sustainable development is to strike a balance between the needs of the present and the ability of future generations to meet their own (WTO, 1995).

Museums are crucial cultural attractions in the tourism industry, providing valuable knowledge for tourists during their journeys (Bauer, Sohn and De Oliveira, 2019). In Europe, for example, museums are among the most visited tourist attractions and represent one of the most substantial economic assets. It is the case of the Louvre Museum in Paris, which attracted nearly 10 million visitors in 2016 (Bauer, Sohn and De Oliveira, 2019). In 2015, Fiona Tuck in her research estimated the direct economic effects of England's museum industry. Every revenue-generating activity a museum engages in is covered by the study and factored into the computation of total revenue. According to the report, museums have the potential to positively affect the economy both directly and indirectly (Fiona, 2015). Although mass tourism helps local economies, Luigi Fusco & Peter (2009) point out that it also has negative externalities like traffic, a decline in quality of life, and a loss of local identity. The study explores the sustainability of mass tourism and local cultural resources, offering innovative strategies and case studies for upcoming cultural conservation regulations.

The role of museums and art galleries have changed and expanded their services beyond the traditional boundaries. They make significant contributions to the developing community in the world (Perera and Dinesh, 2014). Museums foster inclusive learning environments, promoting education

for all, especially in developing countries where poverty hinders access to formal education for young people and women. Museums are promoting informal education to alleviate poverty and improve community futures by educating younger generations about rare collections and preventive conservation. Museums in the electronic era are fostering community engagement to promote historical understanding and raise awareness about contemporary issues like famine, racism, HIV/AIDS, human security, democracy, and drug abuse (Perera and Dinesh, 2014). Museums significantly impact cultural economies and social integration, varying across cities and countries at local, regional, or national levels, according to studies. Museums are essential to the cultural economy, promoting cities as cultural centers and fulfilling visitor and investor expectations (Gustafsson and Ijla, 2017). A well-established innovative museum or emblematic museum in Sweden could stimulate cluster-level agglomerated cultural economies for heritage and cultural tourism (Gustafsson and Ijla, 2017). Researchers suggest that successful cultural industry upgrades begin with established cultural institutions, with museums being a crucial engine for sustainable development (Gustafsson and Ijla, 2017).

Interestingly, McKercher (2004) discovered that visitors typically engage in similar activities across five different countries when asked about cultural attractions. The most visited attractions include museums, art galleries, and monuments, as they define a destination's overall tourism product by providing unique experiences (Graburn, 1998; Tufts and Milne, 1999). Museums are integral cultural attractions in the tourism industry, making studies on tourism and museums crucial for comprehending their significant role. In order to comprehend and establish the past and present within an architectural setting, museums help visitors interact and communicate with associated facilities (Jeong and Lee, 2006). McLean (McLean, 1995) also mentioned both educational and museum-related entertainment aspects, and noted that these components are interdependent when it comes to using the museum service. In addition to drawing tourists, museums provide locals with a place to relax (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2017, p. 103). Cultural and art museums disseminate history and culture through art, paintings, and sculptures. Other types include wax, sex, toy, and science museums, catering to specific markets and offering learning opportunities.

According to Stylianou-Lambert's (2019) research, (a) visitors to art museums are not the same as those who visit other types of museums or other cultural events, and (b) cultural tourism is an extension of daily life. But much like everything else, museums are changing from real-world to virtual settings (Özdemir and Çelebi, 2017, p. 103). Tourism needs locations, and museums are premier attractions (Stylianou-Lambert, 2019). Museums' growing part of a destination's economy has prompted researchers to focus on the connection between culture and the economy, as tourism professionals view museums as part of a destination's cultural complex (MacCannell, 1999).

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage places are regarded as tourism hotspots with economic, cultural, and social significance (Sunday, 2020, p. 1). One of the major economic sectors in the globe, tourism makes a significant contribution to both exports and income. The prediction of USD 2,849.2 billion by the end of 2019 is based on the direct contribution of travel and tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, which was USD 2,750.7 billion, or 3.2% of GDP (World Travel & Tourism, 2019). Tourism created 235 million jobs in 2010, accounting for 8% of global employment and 9% of GDP, supporting more jobs than the combined car and chemical manufacturing sectors (WTTC, 2018). Tourism, technology, and telecommunication are driving the global economy in the 21st century, attracting millions of people to explore different cultures and experiences (Sunday, 2020). As a type of alternative tourism, cultural and heritage tourism is one of the most important and rapidly expanding travel markets worldwide (Alzua, O'Leary and Morrison, 1998; Herbert, 2001) due to travelers' propensity to seek out novelty, including traditional customs, history, and lifestyles of a specific location (Gnanapala et al., 2012). Additionally, prior research indicates that the goal of visiting cultural and heritage sites is to improve education, develop spirituality, satiate curiosity, unwind, and escape daily routines (Gnanapala, 2015). A nation's culture and heritage are frequently regarded as the essential components supporting its identity and sovereignty (Sunday, 2020).

Heritage tourism refers to the growth of travel markets and sectors that are based on the principles and aspects of our inherited history. Physical, environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors can all be impacted by heritage tourism, both positively and negatively (Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009). Onyima (2016), in his study "Nigerian Cultural Heritage: Preservation, Challenges and Prospects," identified some of the problems, which include trafficking, environmental degradation, insufficient funding, pollution, thefts and looting of museums, vandalism, Islam, Christianity, civilization, commerce, excessive litter, erosion or soil compaction, and air pollution due to the illicit artifact trade, a lack of qualified personnel, and the sites' proximity to urban areas; the land they occupy is highly desirable for alternative investment.

By restoring lost or endangered local cultures, heritage tourism makes a substantial contribution to social and cultural well-being in less developed nations (Timothy, 2011; Sunday, 2020). According to Timothy (2011), one of the significant effects of historical tourism is on the environment's physical fabric. Scholars have expressed their opinions on the negative impact of heritage tourism on tangible or physical historic resources, as per published studies (Fyall and Garrod, 1998; Austin, 2002; Timothy and Boyd, 2003). The academic group asserts that excessive visitors or irresponsible ones pose a significant threat to historic objects and ancient structures.

Silberberg (1995, p. 361) defines cultural tourism as visits by individuals interested in a community's historical, artistic, scientific, or lifestyle offerings, including museums, galleries, festivals, architecture, heritage sites, artistic performances, food, dress, language, and religion. Traveling to locations like museums, art galleries, historical and archeological sites, festivals, architecture, artistic performances, and heritage sites is typically associated with cultural tourism (Hughes, 1996; Stebbins, 1996). Any person who travels to cultural institutions or locations, such as museums, historical and archaeological sites, operas, theaters, festivals, or architectural landmarks, is referred to as a "cultural tourist." Any person who goes to a museum or gallery, whether at home or somewhere else, is referred to as a "visitor" (Stylianoulambert, 2019).

Lord defines cultural tourism as visitors from outside a town who are interested in its historical, artistic, scientific, or lifestyle offerings (Lord, 2002). Cultural tourism offers authentic experiences, promoting conservation and heritage preservation of traditional skills. It adds diversity to regional economies and attracts higher-income, educates tourists, resulting causes lengthier stays and higher visitation costs, contributing to the overall economic growth (Lord, 2002). Clustering reinforcing activities and overlapping markets can lead to sustainable development benefits, including cost savings and revenue gains due to the complementary interaction of economic, social, and environmental pillars. Museum is a cultural hub with social grouping and cultural activities that rely on the principles of sustainable development. Museums can enhance human life awareness, fostering introspection and action in local communities, despite not being their traditional duty (Gustafsson and Ijla, 2017, p. 7). Nigeria is regarded as one of the most popular African nations for tourists interested in cultural and historical tourism.

Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore museums' function in sustainable cultural heritage tourism development in Nigeria. The topic was thoroughly researched using both primary and secondary data to ensure a comprehensive understanding. For primary data, the researcher used interview and direct observation in data collection. Respondents to the interviews were seven stakeholders, namely four museum staff, a tourism bureau official, and two visitors/tourists. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents based on their relevance to the research objectives. The tourists/visitors provided an understanding of their motivations and experiences, while cultural heritage experts gave insights into sustainable tourism and site preservation practices. Field visits were undertaken at the Old Residency Museum to observe tourist interactions, visitor flow, available infrastructure, and interpretive materials, thus providing real-time data on the museum's operations and its appeal to visitors. Secondary data was gathered from documentary sources, including journal articles, academic books,

newspapers, and credible online materials focusing on cultural heritage tourism, museum studies, and sustainable tourism in Nigeria. Data collected were analyzed using thematic approach, which enabled the identification of recurring themes related to cultural tourism, sustainability, economic impact, visitor experience, and institutional challenges. This approach provided a nuanced understanding of the museum's current function and potential, laying the groundwork for future research on similar institutions across Nigeria.

Results

Exhibitions and Cultural Assets in Old Residency Museum, Calabar

The Old Residency Museum boasts of a collection of artifacts, documents, and exhibits that highlight Nigeria's colonial and pre-colonial history. It has a museum library, Museum Kitchen, Museum and Craft shops, and a reasonably useful but infrequently utilized exhibition space. The museum features exhibit on the history of the slave trade, the pre-colonial and colonial palm oil trade, and ritual terracotta that was unearthed between 400 and 1500 AD by Professor Ekpo Eyo. Just by the lawn next to the museum is a ship bell dated as far back as 1848 (see plates 1-3).



Plate 1: Old Residency Museum Building



Plate 2: The Calabar Ship Bell



plate 3. Curator of the Old Residency Museum

Some key exhibitions include:

Colonial Artifacts: The museum houses a range of artifacts from the British colonial era, including administrative tools, military regalia, furniture, personal belongings of colonial officers, and original architectural fittings. These artifacts serve as tangible links to Nigeria's colonial past, allowing visitors to gain firsthand insights into the historical context and power dynamics of the time. Respondents indicated that such displays evoke deep reflection among visitors and stimulate interest in the preservation of Nigeria's colonial history. The presence of these artifacts not only enriches the educational experience but also enhances the museum's value as a heritage tourism destination.

Transatlantic Slave Trade Exhibits: The study revealed that the Transatlantic Slave Trade exhibits at the Old Residency Museum in Calabar are among the most impactful and educational components of the museum's collection. According to respondents, these exhibits include graphic representations,

shackles, copper rods, maps of slave trade routes, and other relics that vividly document the brutality and inhumanity of the slave trade. These displays are not only historical but also serve as tools for education and cultural awareness, especially for younger generations. Visitors are often moved by the tangible evidence of the past, which fosters a deeper understanding of Africa's involvement in global history. As articulated by one museum staff member, these relics provide an avenue for healing and reconciliation, particularly for diasporic communities tracing their heritage. These exhibits emphasize the city's role in the broader history of slavery and its impact on Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The ground floor contains materials of the slave trade and British colonization, pictorial representations and illustrations of slave trade, markets, and ships. One of the museum's exhibitions features copper rods that tell their own story about the human trafficking trade: a female slave would be paid 28 to 37 copper rods, while a male would be paid 38 to 48 copper rods. Ben Akan, a heritage worker who has spent 15 years at the National Museum in Calabar, adds, "Sometimes people weep when they get to this part." The Old Residency Museum typically showcases transatlantic slave trade, attracting emotional visitors who appreciate the dark chapter of global history. The exhibits encourage reflection on the legacy of slavery and colonialism in Nigerian society.

Ethnographic Collections: The research findings indicate that the ethnographic collections at the museum are essential to promoting cultural awareness and environmentally friendly heritage travel. These collections encompass a wide array of artifacts that reflect the customs, beliefs, and artistic traditions of the Cross River region. Items such as traditional attire, household tools, ceremonial objects, and craft materials provide visitors with authentic insights into indigenous practices and lifestyles. According to museum staff and visitors, these exhibits are among the most engaging, offering a tactile and visual connection to local heritage. In addition, the museum's displays on palm oil production, a key economic and historical activity shed light on its significance as an industrial commodity during the colonial era. Through these ethnographic elements, the museum effectively conveys Nigeria's socio-cultural evolution and preserves intangible cultural heritage for educational and tourism purposes.

Historical Documents and Photos: The study revealed that the Old Residency Museum houses an extensive collection of historical documents and photographs that significantly enhance its role as a center for sustainable cultural heritage tourism. These archival materials include colonial administrative records, legal documents, correspondences, and photographs depicting key moments in Nigeria's colonial and postcolonial history. According to museum staff, these materials are frequently consulted by scholars, students, and historically inclined tourists seeking authentic narratives and visual references to Nigeria's past. The presence of these original documents adds depth to the museum's exhibits, offering visitors a

comprehensive understanding of the socio-political and economic transformations that occurred during the colonial era. Respondents emphasized that these records not only preserve historical memory but also serve as educational resources that reinforce the museum's academic relevance and cultural value. For example, old photographs showing the construction of colonial buildings, portraits of early traders, or depictions of daily life in the 19th and early 20th centuries provide a window into the past for contemporary visitors. They evoke a sense of nostalgia and historical reflection, especially for older generations.



Plate 4a. Copper Rods

b. Cast Iron Cooking Pots

c. Ship Carrying Barrel of Oil



d. Cannon Gun

Museum Library: The study also revealed that the museum library at the Old Residency Museum in Calabar constitutes a valuable resource for sustainable cultural heritage tourism. The library houses rare historical documents, photographs, and archival materials related to the British colonial administration and the palm oil trade. Respondents highlighted the significance of the library's holdings, which include original legal documents, correspondences, administrative records, and upper-floor furnishings that reflect colonial tastes and governance practices. These resources are frequently consulted by scholars, researchers, and students seeking to engage with Nigeria's colonial history, thereby positioning the library as an academic and cultural hub within the museum. This scholarly function strengthens the museum's role in cultural preservation and provides a knowledge-based foundation for sustainable heritage tourism.

Museum/Craft Shop: Located at the base of the building leading to the main gallery, the museum shop is a small but vibrant space that offers a wide range of handmade local crafts and souvenirs. This shop serves both as a point of cultural exchange and a means of economic empowerment for local artisans.

Items commonly displayed include: Hand-beaded purses, locally woven mats, embroidered clothing, locally dyed cloth, wood carvings, leather sandals and bags, hand fans and traditional jewelry. Most of the products are locally sourced and handmade by artisans from Cross River State, ensuring authenticity and cultural integrity. The shop plays a key role in cultural preservation by showcasing traditional designs, motifs, and materials. According to interviews with museum staff, the sale of these crafts plays a vital role in sustaining traditional craftsmanship and encouraging community participation in cultural heritage preservation.



Plate 5: Purses with hand beading displayed in the craft shop in the Museum

Traditional Museum Kitchen: The kitchen contains a variety of traditional cooking implements such as clay pots, firewood stoves, and iron utensils that reflected the domestic lifestyle of the colonial administrators and local inhabitant's late 19th and early 20th century. Interview data revealed that the kitchen serves not only as a historical exhibit but also as an educational tool for students, tourists, and researchers interested in colonial-era domestic practices. The authentic presentation of the kitchen offers insights into food preparation methods and dietary habits during colonial times, enhancing visitors' understanding of Nigeria's cultural and culinary history. It represents a living cultural exhibit where traditional cooking techniques, local ingredients, and indigenous food practices are preserved and occasionally demonstrated for educational and tourism purposes.



Plate 6: The Researcher and Ekombi dance Troupe during the celebration of Museum Day

Discussion

The Old Residency Museum in Calabar, Nigeria, promotes sustainable cultural heritage tourism through artifact preservation, public education, and

community engagement, demonstrating the importance of cultural institutions in long-term tourism development. Its collection of artifacts, ranging from colonial-era furniture, documents, and photographs to ethnographic items and ritual terracotta pieces, helps preserve the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the region. According to respondents, the museum significantly contributes to preserving historical objects and traditional customs, making it an invaluable resource for both local and international visitors. Taiwan's National Palace Museum, ranked 13th globally and third in Asia-Pacific, attracts over 4.43 million visitors, contributing significantly to its cultural tourism success.

According to respondents, the Old Residency Museum in Calabar serves as a significant driver of sustainable cultural heritage tourism by preserving historical artifacts and traditional customs. They emphasized that the museum's exhibits on the transatlantic slave trade, including graphic representations, copper rods, shackles, and maps of slave routes, document a tragic yet crucial chapter in African and Nigerian history. These displays not only educate visitors about the historical realities of slavery but also promote reflection, reconciliation, and heritage awareness. The museum's collection of slave relics highlights the significance of preserving cultural memory for future generations. As noted by the curator, visitors gain insights into Nigeria's colonial past and contribute to ongoing dialogue on cultural preservation.

Colonial artifacts and ethnographic collections at the Old Residency Museum play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable cultural heritage tourism by offering visitors authentic and contextualized historical experiences and living traditions of Cross River people. The display of administrative objects, period furnishings, and colonial memorabilia provides a visual narrative of British governance in Nigeria and facilitates a nuanced understanding of the colonial legacy. Artifacts serve as educational tools, bridging the gap between the past and present, encouraging critical thinking and historical reflection among tourists and scholars. Ethnographic assets also promote cultural transmission and identity reinforced by showcasing local customs, traditional technologies, and socio-religious artifacts. The artifacts preserve Nigeria's heritage, fostering collective memory and historical consciousness, and enhance the site's appeal as an educational and cultural tourism destination.

The availability and careful preservation of historical documents and photographs at the Old Residency Museum support its dual function as both a tourist attraction and a research institution. These materials offer invaluable insights into Nigeria's colonial governance, legal frameworks, and daily life under British administration. The visual representations captured in historical photographs provide contextual understanding and emotional resonance, making the past more accessible and relatable to modern audiences. Moreover, by maintaining these resources, the museum promotes sustainable cultural heritage tourism through education and historical continuity. The museum's

archival resources serve as a repository of collective memory, promoting scholarly engagement, cultural identity formation, and heritage conservation, ensuring tourism development aligns with cultural preservation.

Interviews with staff at the Old Residency Museum in Calabar revealed that the institution serves as a vital educational hub for students, researchers, and tourists. The museum not only exhibits art but also promotes skill development and community empowerment through business and entrepreneurship workshops held during school holidays. According to the curator, these workshops are accessible to participants through a nominal registration fee and provide training in various handmade crafts such as shoes, mats, clothing, hand fans, purses, and teddy bears. The museum is promoting cultural sustainability and capacity building by teaching vocational skills, particularly for youth, rooted in local artisanal traditions, fostering livelihood diversification and inclusivity. For the public to comprehend and learn about history, engineering, science, art, and many other subjects, museums are essential (Gustafsson and Ijla, 2017).

The inclusion of a specialized library within the Old Residency Museum enhances its capacity to support sustainable cultural heritage tourism by fostering academic inquiry and cultural literacy. The presence of original colonial documents and photographs enables visitors, particularly students and researchers to access primary sources that deepen their understanding of Nigeria's historical trajectory. As part of a broader educational strategy, the museum library promotes a reflective and evidence-based engagement with the past. This scholarly engagement contributes to the sustainability of cultural heritage tourism by creating long-term educational value and encouraging repeated academic visits. The museum's partnership with educational establishments emphasizes the significance of integrating documentary heritage into tourism, enhancing the site's academic and touristic appeal.

"We organize various programs at the museum that attract visitors, and these activities play a significant function in advancing and showcasing the work we do here," said one of the respondents".

One of the key findings from the interviews is the architectural significance of the Old Residency Museum, which functions not only as a repository of historical and cultural artifacts but also as a historical monument and attraction in its own right. Respondents emphasized that the building, now over 140 years old, has remained remarkably structurally intact, despite being exposed to harsh tropical environmental conditions and undergoing various historical and administrative transitions. Its colonial-era architectural design, characterized by wooden structures, broad verandas, and panoramic views of the Calabar River, continues to captivate both local and international visitors. The resilience and authenticity of the building reinforce its cultural value and enhance the museum's appeal as a heritage tourism site. This finding underscores the importance of preserving not only the movable artifacts within museums but also the built heritage, which embodies tangible links to

the past and serves as a symbol of Nigeria's historical narrative. The Old Residency Museum exemplifies how architectural heritage can play a central role in sustainable tourism by offering authentic, educational, and aesthetically engaging experiences.

Another significant finding is that the existence of the Old Residency Museum yields tangible socio-economic benefits for the local community where it is located. The museum attracts both local and international visitors, thereby contributing directly to the local economy and to the state. Of example is Louvre Museum, which is a significant cultural factor in attracting tourists and boosting the city's economic development in Paris (SER, 2020). In the United States, museums directly employ 372,100 people, more than twice as many as the professional sports sector, support 726,000 employment, and bring in over USD12 billion in tax income for the federal, state, and local governments annually (American Alliance of Museums., 2018). The museum attracts visitors to purchase crafts and souvenirs from the museum's craft shop, situated at the base of the building leading to the gallery.

An essential aspect of the museum's contribution to sustainable cultural heritage tourism lies in its promotion of local crafts through its in-house shop. By providing a platform for artisans to display and sell handmade items, such as beaded purses, hand fans, mats, and traditional clothing, the museum supports the preservation of indigenous skills and fosters economic empowerment within the community. As visitors purchase these culturally significant items, they engage directly with the local heritage, thus enhancing their overall tourist experience. This initiative exemplifies how cultural institutions can integrate heritage conservation with economic development. It also reflects broader efforts to align museum operations with the principles of sustainability by encouraging community-based tourism and promoting traditional artistic expression.

Essien Udoh, a tour guide at the Old Residency Museum, emphasizes the importance of souvenirs at the Old Residency Museum, by his statement, "Your welcome will not be warm enough if in return, you do not have something to show for your visit," highlighting their cultural significance and the value of offering authentic and memorable experiences. These handmade purses in Plate 5 represent a connection to the place and its people, fostering sustainable cultural heritage tourism. As Udoh points out, souvenirs purchased at museums' craft shops enhance tourist experiences by providing tangible memories, supporting local traditions and artisans who rely on sales for income. The museum shop showcases and sells a wide variety of handmade crafts and cultural items, reflecting the rich artistic heritage of the Cross River region and surrounding communities. This symbiotic relationship preserves traditional art forms and generates a sustainable revenue stream for the museum's development and maintenance. Moreover, it is through cultural exchange, where visitors not only learn about the heritage of the area but also take home a piece of that heritage that the Old Residency Museum enhances

the cultural tourism experience. This exchange reinforces the importance of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism and how local artisans can act as ambassadors of their own culture.

The Museum Kitchen at the Old Residency Museum, Calabar, plays a subtle but significant role in promoting sustainable cultural heritage tourism. While it may not be the most prominent exhibit in the museum, it represents a tangible link to the everyday life, food culture, and culinary heritage of the people of Cross River State, particularly the Efik ethnic group known for their rich gastronomic traditions. During special museum events like International Museum Day, the kitchen becomes an active educational space where traditional dishes are prepared live. This offers tourists, especially international visitors and younger generations, the opportunity to experience the local foods from Calabar. The presence of the museum kitchen complements other tourism assets such as the craft shop, gallery, and outdoor exhibitions. Together, they create a holistic cultural experience that appeals to heritage tourists who seek immersive, educational, and authentic experiences. For example, Ekpang Nkukwo (a grated cocoyam and vegetable dish wrapped in leaves) is prepared using authentic traditional pots. Afang soup, a staple Efik-Ibibio dish made with afang leaves and periwinkle, is cooked using a firewood stove in the museum compound. These dishes are often sampled by tourists, providing a sensory cultural experience, sight, smell, taste, which enhances the visitor's emotional connection to the culture.

Interviews with staff indicated that the majority of museum employees, including cleaners, maintenance personnel, and other support staff are indigenes of Cross River State. This local employment underscores the museum's role not only as a cultural preservation site but also as a source of economic empowerment. The museum attracts infrastructure development and creates employment opportunities. Tourists and visitors enter the museum with an affordable entrance fee of N100.00, which ensures accessibility for visitors, promoting inclusive and community engagement. The museum's local workforce boosts economic resilience in the Cross River region, benefiting small businesses and promoting further investment in tourism infrastructure. Additionally, the active involvement of human resource staff in guiding visitors enhances the quality of the visitor experience and reflects the museum's commitment to hospitality and education. These efforts collectively advance sustainable cultural heritage tourism by integrating economic benefits with cultural awareness and community participation. For Gustafsson & Ijla (2017), Sweden's abundance of cultural resources, including museums, galleries, and its remarkable heritage, attract a lot of tourists. Research shows a significant relationship between museums, local companies, and place-based revitalization projects, indicating that reducing the number of these facilities could decrease visitation and income (Lambert and Boukas, 2014). The museum's human resource staff guide visitors, providing comprehensive understanding of its themes and exhibits.

This approach supports sustainable cultural heritage tourism, fostering educational value, repeat visits, and positive word-of-mouth, contributing to its educational mission and tourism appeal.

The Old Residency Museum's events clearly demonstrate the need of community involvement in cultural heritage tourism. One notable example is the Museum Day celebration, where local cultural groups are invited to perform traditional dances and theatrical displays. These events not only attract tourists but also empower local communities to take active roles as cultural ambassadors. The Ekombi dance troupe, featured in Plate 6 alongside the researcher, exemplifies this engagement. Their performance of traditional Cross River dances provides visitors with an immersive experience while reinforcing cultural identity and continuity. This form of participatory tourism fosters sustainability by encouraging reciprocal relationships between the museum, the local community, and visitors.

Challenges Faced by the Old Residency Museum in Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism Development

Despite its contributions to cultural preservation and tourism, the Old Residency Museum in Calabar faces a number of pressing challenges that hinder its ability to fully realize its potential within Nigeria's sustainable cultural heritage tourism framework.

1. **Inadequate Funding:** A critical challenge repeatedly highlighted during interviews is the insufficient and irregular funding allocated to the museum. Financial constraint affects every aspect of the museum's operations, including the maintenance of historical structures, preservation of artifacts, training of personnel, and implementation of educational and tourism programs. Without sustained financial investment, the museum struggles to modernize its infrastructure or introduce technological innovations such as digital archiving and interactive exhibits that could enhance visitor experience and global accessibility.
2. **Poor Infrastructure and Maintenance:** The historic building that houses the museum, though structurally remarkable, requires continuous maintenance to prevent deterioration. Respondents noted the visible signs of wear and tear in parts of the facility, including leaking roofs, outdated exhibition panels, and insufficient lighting. These infrastructural issues compromise the preservation of artifacts and detract from the overall visitor experience, limiting the museum's ability to meet international heritage tourism standards.
3. **Lack of Awareness and Marketing:** Another significant barrier is the limited awareness of the museum both locally and internationally. Many potential visitors are unaware of the museum's existence or the richness of its collections. The museum lacks a strong online presence

and digital marketing strategy that could help attract a wider audience. As a result, the museum remains under-visited, especially by international tourists who are often unaware of Nigeria's cultural tourism assets.

4. **Limited Staff Capacity and Professional Development:** While the museum staff are dedicated, there is a lack of continuous professional development opportunities for curators, tour guides, and administrative personnel. This limits their ability to effectively interpret exhibitions, apply modern museological practices, or engage diverse visitor groups. The shortage of specialized professionals such as conservators, archivists, and digital media experts further hampers efforts at sustainable development.
5. **Policy and Institutional Challenges:** The broader institutional framework governing museums in Nigeria also poses challenges. Fragmented policies, overlapping responsibilities between cultural and tourism agencies, and bureaucratic bottlenecks limit effective governance and strategic planning for heritage institutions. The absence of comprehensive policies tailored to the unique needs of cultural heritage tourism impedes the museum's integration into national and regional tourism development plans.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Old Residency Museum is a key player in Nigeria's cultural heritage tourism, preserving historical artifacts, promoting local culture, and offering educational programs for both local and global audiences. Sustainable practices in museum management, including digital transformation, eco-friendly operations, and community involvement, minimize environmental impact, enhance visitor experience, and foster cultural revitalization through public-private partnerships and government support. Nigerian museums can enhance cultural heritage tourism, drive economic benefits, and promote global awareness of their unique cultural legacy by leveraging emerging trends and international collaborations. Collaboration between government agencies, private sector partners, and local communities is crucial for funding, infrastructure, and resources for museums, focusing on digital technology, sustainable practices, and educational programs. Increased awareness and advocacy are needed to highlight museums' value in cultural tourism, and stakeholders should collaborate on policies and initiatives for their growth and sustainability. The Old Residency Museum in Nigeria has the potential to revolutionize cultural tourism through digital innovations, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, while preserving Nigeria's rich cultural heritage.

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