

Roles of Heritage Resources in Tourism Development: Expose on Patronage and Management Practices in Nike Art Gallery, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria

Olubukola Mary Ogundare¹ , Emmanuel Thomas² , Omolola Oluwakemi Ajayi³ ,
Mutiu Kolawole Ambali⁴ 

¹ Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Culture, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

² Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Culture, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

³ Department of Hospitality Management and Tourism, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

⁴ Tourism and Hospitality Management Unit, Department of Management Sciences, School of Business and Public Administration, University of the Gambia, MDI Road, Kanifing, The Gambia.

ABSTRACT

Nike Art Gallery is a legacy handcraft that comprises numerous displays of art and culture developed with the intention of establishing and nurturing an atmosphere conducive to the growth of art in Africa. Despite its presence for approximately 30 years, a paucity in empirical research has occurred on its activities. To address this concern, this study evaluates the patronage patterns and management strategies implemented by Nike Art Gallery in other to know the contribution of the gallery to tourism development. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the two directors of the Gallery with secondary data on influx and revenue. The result revealed that the Gallery receives many visitors for educational, recreational, and other purposes. Students on group excursions paid nominal fees ranging from N300 to N500 per group with average weekly and monthly earnings for the Gallery reaching N10250 and N30000, respectively. The administration of the Gallery is focused on tourism promotion, sales and marketing, and staff training. Nike Art Gallery was found to be a significant heritage treasure that promotes people empowerment and growth but with little tourism impact. Thus, efforts should be exerted to improve its tourism value and, consequently, its socioeconomic contribution to the community.

Keywords: Culture, Gallery, Art Gallery, Museum, Tourism Promotion, Tourism Value, Tourism Impact, Nike Art Gallery.

Introduction

Nigeria is home to a plethora of heritage woven via natural and/or human processes. Heritages denote the distinctive traditions and practices of a country or destination that uniquely differentiates it from another. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2003), they are the present materialization of human times of yore, which are an embodiment of past elements and are crucial components of cultural practices and traditions in a spiritual and emotional manner. Frequently, heritage resources are considered from a cultural or manmade dimension; however, it also has natural embodiments (Gunlu et al., 2013). The nature of heritage resources embodies tangible and intangible products (Tadasse, 2022). Intangible products pertain to immaterial cultural and natural attributes and norms present within a society, such as ways of life, social values, and music, while tangible products reflect actual and physical expressions such as archaeological sites, landmarks and monuments, temples, palaces, landscapes, and various traditional buildings. One of the latter is Nike Art Gallery; it is a craftsmanship that consists of various displays of art and culture founded with the objectives of creating and sustaining a conducive environment for the development of art in Africa. Heritage resources, whether tangible or intangible, are a cornerstone for tourism development and promotion given that they hold inherent value and beauty that promote patronage (Tadasse, 2022). This study aims to evaluate the management principles of this heritage gallery and promote tangible cultural heritage as a form of tourism at destinations. In turn, doing so will improve the management principles of Nike Art Gallery.

The literature has extensively reported that heritage resources are catalysts of viable impacts on the economic, environmental,

Corresponding Author: Mutiu Kolawole Ambali **E-mail:** mambali@utg.edu.gm

Submitted: 05.12.2023 • **Revision Requested:** 02.02.2024 • **Last Revision Received:** 05.03.2024 • **Accepted:** 17.03.2024



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and social aspects of a destination, which develops and promotes tourism. Although heritage resources function as a commodity employed for the fulfillment of the needs and desires of visitors; it also brings beneficial impact to the host community in terms of employment and revenue generation, enhancement of local economy, positive image and branding, and the facilitation of infrastructural development, among others (Keitumetse, 2014; Andrew-Essien 2018; Tadasse, 2022). According to Raivo (2002), resources are agents of the promotion and development of tourism, which uses the past in shaping present realities. The relationship between heritage resources and tourism is complementary (Ezenagu and Iwuagwu, 2016), in which heritage resources are crucial in the promotion of tourism, while tourism preserves and showcases heritage resources to the world. The concept of heritage tourism was also developed in this context. The capacity of heritage tourism to generate positive impacts on the host community is dependent on the patronage that it attracts and the requisite destination management practices that are deployed.

Tadasse (2022) argued that heritage resources should not only be conserved but also preserved due to their inherent nature as evidence of the past. The reason is that heritage resources are symbols of identity and an instrument of economic transformation of a given area. In this manner, this notion is connected to management practices. Moreover, the larger the patronage that the destination attracts, the more the need to pay adequate attention to managerial dimensions given their fragile and unique nature (Taiwo et al., 2018). Although Nike Art Gallery has been in existence over the years, a dearth of empirical investigation on its activities occurs. Therefore, this study appraised the patronage pattern and management practices employed in Nike Art Gallery.

Literature review

The key inspiring resource brought about by heritage is the revisitation of historical legacies and monuments, the present way of life, and the development of cultural inheritance. Heritage preservation is an essential component of heritage management. Heritage recreation and conservation can work together to enhance visitor experience. Several heritage sites use adaptive reuse to preserve the structure, create new value, and meet the dual goals of tourism and heritage preservation, which encompass urban and rural heritages. Heritage has become an essential tourism component in various countries, which provides a channel for attracting tourists, obtaining economic benefits, and safeguarding heritage monuments. A stream of research supports the idea that heritage sites hold the potential to become popular cultural destinations for tourists. Tourism helps to redefine heritage. However, heritage management upholds a broad purpose of focusing on architectural preservation. Based on the definition of heritage tourism, successful heritage sites require well-designed heritage qualities and the simultaneous engagement and involvement of tourists. Given that heritage resources comprise fragile and unique natural and manmade resources, the degree to which various community stakeholders regard them largely influences the longevity of their preservation.

Alignment with and connection to one's community are likely to result in determined and improved attitudes toward the preservation and conservation of historic resources for reasons such as individual norms tied to the values and beliefs of individuals and their community (Ko and Stewart, 2002). Moving forward, according to Bonomi Bezzo and Jeannet (2023), the level of fulfillment enjoyed by tourists in a destination holds the potential to be an essential factor of personal and group norms formed by an entire community to safeguard cultural heritage assets. In turn, this aspect is most likely an essential key for determining the degree of effort that each person and community will collectively put forth toward the conservation of heritage resources within the community. Previous research revealed that conservation behavior is motivated by a sense of responsibility (Stern, 2000). As posited by the place identity paradigm, the identification of residents with a place and the values and beliefs of a community can increase the feeling of belonging to a place, which can help individuals define themselves within a social context. This in-depth link and affiliation with a location and neighborhood may drive members of the public to take an active role in ensuring the survival of cultural heritage treasures to generate pride for the community. As a result, inhabitants with higher norm rankings may be more ready to engage in heritage obligation behavior than those with lower ones.

Culture and Heritage

The terms *cultural tourism*, *heritage tourism*, and *arts tourism* are frequently nearly interchangeably used partially due to challenges in defining the term *culture*, as noted by Williams (1983). Furthermore, as ideas of culture increase because the concept that Urry (1990) refers to as the *culturization of society* and the *culturization of tourist practices*, definitional issues are becoming increasingly prevalent.

Culture, values, norms, religion, and tradition can be maintained by introducing, utilizing, preserving, and improving the quality of tourist objects, especially tangible ones and attractions Wisnumurti & Rideng, (2017). Globalization has caused a reduction in national cultural values through a decrease in the perspective of cultural strategy. With local culture, the mythical dominance of global culture can be counterfeited (Fakih, 2003).

Museum and Heritage

The museum should be integrated into a comprehensive master plan that incorporates the implementation of new economic initiatives while respecting the historical significance of a neighborhood to promote the heritage conservation of society. When communities create historical interpretation programs using historic buildings, they need to identify many key concerns. Museum administration must prioritize a consistent emphasis and celebration of varied populations within a community. Moreover, no biased interpretation should exist in favor of or against any group in the community.

The museum is designed to foster social economic growth in the community. The community benefits by teaching local inhabitants of their past, which promotes a space for social gatherings and attracts outside capital through tourism. Community museums can offer creative programs and exhibitions that significantly contribute to community culture (Kagan and Ron, 2002).

A museum can be dynamic; the facility can include interactive areas for children in the community such as art studios, nature trails, laboratories, and planetariums. Museums may provide rental programs for schoolteachers to borrow items, such as fossils or antiquities, for educational purposes. Discounts may be available for class visits, and guided tours may be provided to visiting school groups. A museum should offer a dedicated classroom for youngsters. Educational institutions are beneficial for communities in that they support the development of youngsters into well-rounded and knowledgeable people. Visiting exploratorium-type museums can also enhance the understanding of pupils of the physical world better than they would only from textbooks.

A museum is a non-profit organization that acquires, preserves, researches, communicates, and displays the tangible and intangible legacies of humanity and its environment for educational, research, and entertainment reasons. It is open to the public and aids in the growth of society (Babic, 2016). Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) argue that heritage can be viewed as a duality, which serves as an economic and a cultural asset. The authors suggest that legacy is considered a commodity that is marketed in several divided markets.

The authors argue that heritage is essentially a process of commodification, which involves the transformation of resources into products for consumption (Graham et al., 2000, p. 22). Heritage is frequently considered in terms of cultural and sociopolitical as well as economic aspects. Heritage is perceived as the possession of specific market-related values in both instances (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, pp. 17–22; Ashworth et al. 2007, pp. 36–45).

Many studies well documented the most common uses of heritage for economic gain (Graham et al. 2000; Howard 2003; Rypkema 2005; Timothy and Boyd 2006; Ashworth et al. 2007; Salazar 2010; Ashworth 2014). The identified elements are mainly linked to the formulation of developmental strategies, such as regeneration plans in rural or urban areas and promotional strategies in the tourism sector, in which heritage is typically the key aspect. According to various researchers, heritage significantly influences global tourism (Timothy and Boyd 2006; Long and Labadi 2010; Salazar 2010; Ashworth 2014).

Heritage Management in Urban Areas

Urban heritage areas are widely considered complex systems with various stakeholders, many of whom hold competing perspectives and interests. Furthermore, as Jamieson et al. (2018) explain, several cities have large informal sectors and various uncontrolled features, which are frequently the result of a sequence of individual activities and cannot be effectively managed by urban management plans and programs. Heritage dangers abound as do the complexities of heritage conservation. Urban heritage sites are faced with many threats; as a result, tangible and intangible cultural elements are disappearing at alarming rates. Thus, a major concern has emerged with the loss of intangible heritage, which is a crucial element of heritage sites.

Apart from the effect of prominent owners of property in urban areas, other factors that contribute to the extinction of legacy include the lack of legal and regulatory processes and a dearth in the understanding of cultural principles among teams for urban heritage management. Furthermore, although faced with such difficulties, urban heritage managers are occasionally uninformed of best techniques for protecting history such as the cautious adaptive reuse of heritage properties (instead of destroying them and erecting new buildings; ICOMOS, 1994).

The topic of heritage tourism is complex and demands attention. Heritage tourism destinations attract various participants that each possess a unique set of interests. Nationalistic stories have been historically utilized to foster patriotism in the populace (Shackel, 2011), but the nature of heritage tourism has rendered the story(s) considerably complex. Heritage tourism focuses on visitor motivation and perception instead of site characteristics. A subset of tourism known as heritage tourism involves travel for primarily historical purposes (Hausmann and Weuster, 2018.)

The impacts of heritage tourism include alterations that occur over time in a certain state as a result of external stimuli (environmental, economic, or social; Hall, 2009). Art exhibitions are viewed as a framework that encourages communication

among network users and enables the social production of significance through trust, education, and adaptation (Edvardsson et al., 2011, drawing on Ballantyne and Varey, 2006).

Importance of the Osun Osogbo festival on the Nike Art Gallery

Although little or no actual empirical evidence exists on the impact of the Osun Osogbo festival on the Nike Art Gallery; the ripple effect of locational advantages is undoubtedly evident to other destinations in the state (Tabitha and Ngozi, 2016; Mejabi, 2021). The Osun Osogbo festival has contributed to the enhancement of the destination image and increased awareness of the Nike Art Gallery. This aspect can also be connected to the fact that the founder of the Gallery was one of the adopted children of Susan Wenger, the monarch who assiduously worked in restoring the cultural heritage that is now celebrated as the Osun Osogbo Festival every year. The provision of avenue for revenue generation underlies this historical connection. Tijani and Ogundele (2012) reported that tourists patronize the display stand of the Gallery and other outlets to admire and purchase the handcrafts during the festival. However, the critical issues reported, which were unrelated to the Gallery, are perceived low quality of product by tourists, poor design, and high price, which translated to low patronage. Thus, this study infers that although the festival enhances the awareness of visitors of the Gallery, its capacity to enhance product patronage is limited.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a survey research design, which is defined as “the gathering of information from a sample of people through their responses to questions” (Check and Schutt, 2012). This type of research enables the use of various methods for recruiting participants, collecting data, and employing various instrumentation techniques. The survey research can use the quantitative (e.g., numerically rated questionnaires) or qualitative (e.g., open-ended questions) method or both (Crowe et al., 2011). In this case, the study used the qualitative method.

Description of the Study Area

Nike Davies Okundaye, a fashion designer and artist, founded the Nike Art Gallery in Osogbo in 1983 with the objectives of creating and sustaining a conducive environment for the development of art in Africa. The Gallery came after the first of its kind was established in Lagos in 2009. The center admits and trains many Nigerians in various forms of art for free. It is well-known for its textile artworks in indigo, adire, and batik. Although the founder does not originate from Osogbo, she values the influence of the community, especially that of Susan Wenger, which has greatly contributed to the success of her craftsmanship (Osogbo.com, 2017).

Population of the Study

Given the qualitative design of the study, the population included the two directors of Nike Art Gallery, Osogbo.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study used total sampling due to the small sample. This method is a type of purposive sampling in which an entire population is examined for a specific set of characteristics (Leard, 2022). The study selected both directors to represent the study sample.

Data Collection

Information was gathered from primary and secondary sources. Oral interviews were conducted for primary data collection. The researchers formulated an interview guide that contains subject-related questions. Secondary data on tourist influx and revenue were collected from the records of the Gallery. The ethics committee approval of this study was obtained from Osun State University (Date:02.11.2023). Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The study performed thematic analysis on the qualitative data, which were transcribed into Microsoft Word format from the audio recordings and were analyzed and segmented into themes, which were used and organized to identify the participants according to their perspectives. Pictures were arranged according to the context in which they were understood. According to [Dawadi \(2020\)](#), it entails identifying, analyzing, and reporting on recurring patterns or themes from the qualitative data. The themes are considered to capture the various typologies of responses. Moreover, thematic analysis is widely recognized as the most popular tool for qualitative data analysis. This aspect is useful, because it ensures that not only a descriptive analysis of the accounts of the participants is recorded but also one that has been subjected to critical thinking and inductive reasoning ([Braun & Clarke, 2006](#)). The study employed simple descriptive statistics to analyze the quantitative secondary data.

Results and Discussion

Demographics and Understanding of Tourism

Both interviewees were men with extensive experience in gallery management (15 and 27 years) and were labeled as interviewees/respondents A and B, respectively. Two themes emerged from their understanding of tourism: tourism as a *tour* and as an *economic contribution*. Examples of typical responses include “Tourism is derived from the word tour, it can mean vacation and exploration” and “Tourism boosts a location’s economic prosperity.”

Influx of Tourists in Nike Art Gallery

Nike Art Gallery was founded as an *empowerment center* and serves as a tourism center. Notably, the cultural enlightenment of the people is the major priority of its activities: “We enlighten people culturally.” (Interviewee A) The gallery “not only deals with adire, but also with anything related to art.” According to the participants, tourists visited the gallery “almost every week” and “at least twice a week.” “I can’t count them, they’re quite many” (Interviewee B). In terms of the reasons for visits, the study identified various reasons, including educational and recreational purposes. Furthermore, the influx of tourists from within and outside the country was reported to be consistent: “The visit is constant in and outside the country.” (Interviewee A and B) White tourists from the Osun Osogbo Festival and international students from Ghana were among those who recently visited the Gallery. Other tourism activities of destinations, such as the Osun Osogbo Festival, can be considered to boost this influx. According to the current findings, Nike Art Gallery is, first and foremost, an empowerment center; thus, its activities are guided by this concept instead of tourism. Conversely, it serves as a tourism hub and attracts visitors from far and wide to its cultural attractions. Notably, the cultural enlightenment of people was the major priority in the activities. The Gallery is also said to have several attractions worth visiting, which ranges from adire to art works. Tourists with a mix of domestic and international visitors visit the Gallery on a weekly basis based primarily on influx. This aspect essentially demonstrates that the destination receives many tourists. [Agbabiaka et al. \(2019\)](#) also observed a similar result. In terms of motivation to visit, the study pinpointed to various reasons, including educational and recreational purposes. Education remains the primary reason for visiting museums and galleries. People want to learn about their histories, cultural norms, and values, including those of other people. Apart from education, the leisure motive came into play, as tourists also seek education in an entertaining context. An intriguing factor that emerged was the manner in which tourism activities in other destinations, such as the Osun Osogbo Festival, can boost the influx. It has been said that when there more than one destinations in a city or town which are within the tourism context, people tend to tour all or more than one destination to obtain a full picture of the area. According to secondary data, the number of weekly visitors ranged from 5 to 20, while the number of monthly visitors ranged from 15 to 50 with at least two tourists per day. This statistic is equal to 2 tourists per day, 13 tourists per week, and 33 tourists per month on average.

Revenue Generation in Nike Art Gallery

The findings revealed that tourists were free to visit the Gallery, because its main objective was to empower people. The interviewees unequivocally stated that “entry is free” and “We are not collecting a dime, it is free, totally free.” Moreover, they cited that the Gallery did not incur many expenses, because workshops are freely leased for the use of the establishment, and employees work for free: “it is not entirely an establishment to generate money . . . it is an empowerment center . . . not to generate any personal income.” Based on secondary evidence, the weekly income ranged from N500 to N20,000, while the monthly income ranged from N20,000 to N40,000. This represents means of weekly and monthly incomes of N10250 and N30000, respectively.

The charges for group visitation are as follows:

- Tertiary students: N500
- Secondary school students: N400
- Primary school students: N300

The revenue generation of Nike Art Gallery appear less buoyant. The primary factor, as revealed by the results, is the fact that entry is typically free, which is related to the fact that its main objective was to empower people. Furthermore, the respondents pointed out that the gallery did not normally incur many expenses, because the workshop was freely leased out for the use of the establishment, and employees worked for free. However, artifacts are being sold. Furthermore, they receive funding from the German government.

Management of Nike Art Gallery

The management of the gallery focuses on daily operations.

Promotion of tourism

Tourism promotion at the Nike Art Gallery is centered on adire and arts and crafts: “Adire itself is unique, it is one of the most popular cultural attires” (Respondent A). The Gallery promotes tourism through adire due to its popularity, especially among celebrities in recent times, who were seen putting them on, which promotes it. The results also demonstrated that “even international artists wear it.” The Gallery essentially promotes tourism by utilizing adire, the apparent breadth of the Gallery, notably due to its popularity particularly among celebrities in recent times, who were seen wearing and, thus, promoting it. The activities of Osogbo Center have a distinct front, which is the typical Yoruba attire worn by people in southwest Nigeria, particularly in the Ogun and Osun States. This aspect is consistent with Osogbo (2017).



Plate 1. Adire attire spread to dry after processing.

Source: Field survey, 2023

Mode of Sales and Marketing

The Gallery has adopted technology with social media platforms for marketing artworks. In addition, adire is displayed at cultural events, markets, and art exhibition programs.

Recently, we trade on the Internet, you don't have to go to the market to sell these days . . . you have customers on Instagram, there are also a lot of market shops online Whenever there is exhibition, art exhibition, any cultural exhibition, you go there to market. (Respondent B)

The effectiveness of the marketing and promotion of a destination directly influences the number of tourists who visit it (Boniface et al., 2016). Promotion is widely recognized as an important strategy for increasing awareness of a location and highlighting its allure to attract more visitors and increase tourism revenues (Song et al., 2010).



Plate 2. Artworks displayed at Nike Art Gallery.

Source: Field survey, 2023

Training of Staff

Interviewee B said that the training of staff at the Gallery was easy, which is a stepwise process. It begins with visual learning followed by paperwork in which the major types of works are simplified. During this process, workers learn to convert their mistakes into a design, because every mistake in art is a design. Basically, the respondents described training as involving visual and practical training in developing the expertise of the people.



Plate 3. Staff of Nike Art Gallery at work.

Source: Field work, 2023

Conclusion and Recommendation

Nike Art Gallery is an important heritage resource that fosters empowerment and growth; however, it exerts minimal touristic influence. Patronage and revenue generation are considerably low. The management of Nike Art Gallery is focused on daily operations and is heavily reliant on the staff and trainees to function. The management of the Gallery emphasizes three key areas, namely, tourism promotion, sales and marketing, and staff training. First, with regard to tourism promotion, the Gallery promotes tourism using adire mainly due to its popularity. Its marketing of offerings mainly occurs on social media platforms, during cultural events, and at adire markets in different states. Staff training involves visual and practical training in developing the expertise of the people. Safety and security, especially in cases in which the staff is working with chemicals, include personal protective equipment. The study recommends that the Gallery should introduce the payment of entrance fees to leverage the high tourist influx. Although its concern on first remaining an empowerment and enlightenment center is understandable, leveraging the revenue that may be accrued for its further expansion and the empowerment of the people, cannot be overemphasized. Such revenue can serve in the maintenance of facilities, the creation of facilities for visitors, and remuneration for the staff.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Contributions: Conception/Design of study: O.O.M., T.E.; Data Acquisition: T.E., A.M.K.; Data Analysis/Interpretation: A.O.O., O.O.M., T.E.; Drafting Manuscript: O.O.M., A.M.K., A.O.O.; Critical Revision of Manuscript: O.O.M., A.M.K., T.E.; Final Approval and Accountability: O.O.M., T.E., A.O.O., A.M.K.

Ethical Approval: The ethics committee approval of this study was obtained from aydin Osun State University (Date: 02.11.2023).

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before the study.

ORCID ID of the author

Olubukola Mary Ogundare	0000-0002-4141-1012
Emmanuel Thomas	0009-0008-4294-0355
Omolola Oluwakemi Ajayi	0000-0002-7129-0565
Mutiu Kolawole Ambali	0000-0002-9565-6509

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How to cite this article

Ogundare O. M., Thomas E., Ajayi O. O. & Ambali M. K. (2024). Roles of heritage resources in tourism development: exposé of patronage and management practices in Nike Art Gallery, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. *Journal of Tourismology*, 10(1), 41-50. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jot.2024.10.1.1386263>