Exploring Cultural Expression's Effectiveness in Nigerian Tourist Destinations for Enhanced User Experience

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Abstract

Nigeria's cultural assets have made it a prominent tourism landmark in Africa. Cultural tourism has become a thriving sector, with creative industries leveraging cultural expressions to promote tourist destinations. However, many destinations face challenges in effectively packaging culture into tangible products and integrating it into architecture to enhance tourist satisfaction. This research explores the effectiveness of cultural expression in enriching user experiences and identifies various approaches to expressing and commodifying culture to attract tourists. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, using case studies and questionnaires to gather and analyze information. The findings demonstrate that cultural expression significantly contributes to user satisfaction and the preservation of cultural assets in tourist centers. Prioritizing the cultural needs of tourists is crucial for tourist destinations to attract visitors and provide exceptional experiences, fostering consistent growth and development. Recommendations for the tourism industry include understanding and meeting the cultural preferences of tourists, creating an environment that appeals to visitors and ensures their continued engagement, ultimately contributing to the sustainable progress and prosperity of tourist destinations.

Keywords: Cultural Assets, Cultural Expression, Exploration, Nigerian Tourists' Destinations, User experience

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1. Introduction

Tourism is the purposeful travel of one or more groups of people to a place to experience new things, driven by the desire for pleasure, experience, or relaxation. (Christopher and Olatunji, 2009; Camilleri, 2018; UNWTO, 2023). This form of recreation is a break from daily life routine and offers various benefits, especially for communities lacking in basic necessities. It has the potential to turn cultural assets into sources of income, which will help contribute to the development of infrastructure and benefit the community as a whole (Oladayo, 2013; Das & Chatterjee, 2017). Tourism is a leisure pursuit, allowing individuals to unwind, broaden their horizons, and generate revenue for the hosting community or government. When it is managed effectively, tourism has the potential to elevate an area to the status of a global landmark.

Culture reflects a group's life, encompassing lifestyles, beliefs, ways of life, food, and clothing shared by all members (Christopher & Olatunji, 2009). According to Bennett (2015), It is a 'complex whole' encompassing knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, attire, and behaviours. Culture is specific to a group but is generally recognized and understood by others. Understanding and appreciating a culture's uniqueness does not necessarily require mastering it. Experts classify culture as a significant aspect of human interaction and integration, serving to convey a group's emotions and sentiments (Festus, 2014); it is a vital and pivotal force that facilitates social cohesion and understanding among individuals.

Culture has the potential to foster tourism in various regions, even those primarily known for their natural assets like mountains or beaches (Debes, 2013). Culture permeates society through various means, including architectural marvels, signs, symbols, and non-verbal communication (Festus, 2014). In tourist destinations, tangible expressions of culture can be observed through the presence of architecturally impressive structures, distinctive palaces, fortified walls, sacred shrines, captivating arts and crafts, and traditional cuisines and beverages (Oladayo, 2013). The influence of culture on tourism cannot be underestimated, as it permeates every aspect of society and can be facilitated through a wide array of means.

In the context of tourist destinations, tangible embodiments of culture become readily apparent. Architecturally sophisticated structures, such as grand palaces and ornate temples, provide a glimpse into a society's historical and artistic achievements (Oladayo, 2013). Fortified walls, standing as testaments to a region's past struggles and triumphs, evoke a sense of awe and wonder. Shrines, with their sacred aura, offer visitors a chance to witness religious practices and connect with the spiritual fabric of a community. Arts and crafts, deeply rooted in local traditions, reflect a region's cultural identity. Intricately woven tapestries, skillfully carved sculptures, and vibrant paintings narrate past and present stories, offering visitors an insight into the creative prowess of a society. Traditional foods and drinks, with their unique flavors and preparation methods, tantalize the taste buds and provide a sensory journey into the heart of a culture. Culture can enhance tourism in various regions, even those primarily renowned for their natural attractions.

Culture-based targets in tourism have led to confusion regarding the appropriate display of cultural

materials and content at tourist sites (Frank & Medaric, 2018). The supply chain of cultural experiences for tourists includes tangible aspects like historical towns, landscapes, objects, and buildings and intangible elements like expressions, values, languages, events, and perspectives related to life, nature, and the universe (UNESCO, 2018).

According to Matteuci and Zumbuch (2020), social media has had a big impact on the growth of cultural tourism, and online marketing has emerged as a primary way to promote a variety of facets, including tourism destinations. On the other hand, there are some local communities who have resisted the pressure to commercialise their environment, social life, and culture in order to draw tourists. The 21st century has seen a shift in the way cultural expression is conveyed thanks to the incorporation of contemporary technologies, such as virtual reality, into museums. The infrastructures supporting tourism should advance in response to the needs of the modern world while simultaneously conserving the unique characteristics and the depth of the culture.

According to Christopher and Olatunji (2009); Devidze & Gigauri (2015) and Qiu et al. (2022), tourism plays an important role in effectively showcasing and promoting cultural heritage, which in turn increases the allure of towns, cities, and nations. It encourages originality, transformation, and the finding of solutions to long-standing problems, such as the maintenance of indigenous culture, arts, crafts, and traditions, and it makes cultural engagement and interrelationships easier to achieve. According to Shahzalal (2016), this contributes even further to the strengthening of cultural values and the promotion of the communities concerned. Heritage sites that have been forgotten or neglected can be brought back to life via the careful management and successful implementation of cultural tourism, which in turn increases tourist happiness and loyalty. It does so through providing the means, as well as the impetus, for the protection and maintenance of cultural traditions and heritage (Matteucci and Zumbusch, 2020). The tourism industry in many areas has been carefully positioned to attract visitors, which has led to increased levels of community involvement, social capital, and integration among people hailing from a variety of different backgrounds.

Adomaitene (2016) and Durucu and Durmaz (2021), posits that cultural factors, such as subcultures and other diverse elements, significantly influence consumers' interest, purchasing power, and destination selection. The significance of meeting customers' needs, including those of tourist destinations, is widely acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of achieving business success (Aliman et al., 2016). Tourists are inclined to revisit and engage in positive word-of-mouth communication, recommending a location or service to others, when they are content with their experience. This can increase the number of individuals who visit the location or use the service. The aforementioned underscores the importance of cultural elements in influencing consumer conduct and the crucial role of customer contentment in attaining commercial triumph in the tourism sector. The aim of this research is to examine the extent of cultural integration and its impact on the holistic user experience in various tourist locales. The research aims to achieve two primary objectives. Firstly, it seeks to examine the impact of cultural representation on the user experience in tourist centers. Secondly, it investigates the most effective approaches for using cultural aspects in tourism to entice visitors from different parts of the world.

2. Literature review

Culture is a dynamic phenomenon that is created by human beings and has the ability to be transmitted across generations. According to Nwagbara and Umor (2012) and Gomeseria (2019), the concept of culture comprises a range of elements, including values, character, techniques, knowledge, and social organisations that are distinct to a specific society. Cultural tourism has become a significant and swiftly expanding sector of the tourism industry in recent years. The potential of culture in promoting tourist destinations has been acknowledged by the creative industries. According to the OECD (2009), culture is a crucial factor in augmenting the uniqueness of a place amidst a plethora of other pursuits. In contemporary times, a multitude of travel destinations have adopted a marketing tactic that involves integrating a variety of cultural components in order to augment their attractiveness to potential visitors. Even locations that are primarily recognised for their natural resources, such as mountains or beaches, use diverse cultural manifestations to promote tourism. By prioritising culture and creativity in their development, destinations can enhance their competitiveness in the tourism industry. As a result, this enables tourists to easily engage with diverse cultures and promotes cross-cultural interaction. Tourism refers to the intentional displacement of individuals or groups to a different geographical location for a limited duration, motivated by the pursuit of leisure, novelty, or repose. This particular endeavour deviates from routine existence and confers diverse advantages, particularly for societies that lack material affluence. The conversion of cultural assets into revenue streams has the potential to facilitate the advancement of infrastructure and yield benefits for the broader community. Tourism is a recreational activity that enables individuals to relax, expand their knowledge and contribute to the economic growth of the host community or government. When tourism is effectively managed, it has the potential to raise the profile of a destination to that of a renowned global landmark.

Nigeria possesses a diverse array of resources that have established its position as a prominent tourism

destination within the African continent. These resources encompass good weather conditions, varied flora, abundant cultural heritage, significant historical destinations, and captivating topographical features. According to Eneji et al. (2016), the combination of these factors plays a significant role in enhancing Nigeria's attractiveness and popularity among international tourists. According to the World Trade Organization's report in 2014, the tourism industry is regarded as one of the most significant resources of Africa. Nevertheless, Nigeria's untapped potential in this area necessitates further exploration. Many regions throughout the nation possess copious natural resources that render them highly suitable for tourism. Although Nigeria's stunning natural landscapes and features are undoubtedly alluring, the country's cultural activities, deeply ingrained traditions, and unadulterated festivals also serve as tourist draws, exhibiting the nation's distinct heritage that remains unaffected by modernization (Okonkwo & Odey, 2017).

Tourism is a crucial factor in enhancing and endorsing culture, while simultaneously generating revenue that aids in the conservation of cultural heritage and the cultivation of innovation. The correlation between creativity and culture is progressively acknowledged as a noteworthy catalyst for economic growth. As per the estimation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2006, the service exports were comprised of approximately 30% by the international tourism sector. This statistical data highlights the significant economic significance of tourism in correlation to cultural pursuits.

Furthermore, scholarly investigations have indicated the economic significance of cultural sectors, with numerous economies assigning a proportion of their overall economic value, ranging from 3% to 6%, to these industries. The aforementioned discovery underscores the noteworthy role that cultural industries play in the broader context of economic expansion.

Facilitating opportunities for tourists to engage with the local culture, events, and destinations in a comprehensive manner is imperative for both attracting and fulfilling their needs. The interrelation between cultural components and tourists holds significant importance in the advancement and success of tourist sites. The incorporation of cultural elements into tourism offerings has been acknowledged as a key strategy by highly successful destinations, which have embraced cultural inclusion as a means of achieving their objectives. Through this approach, these tourist destinations generate distinctive and genuine encounters that attract tourists and facilitate their long-term development.

2.1 Influence of Cultural Expression on Tourists' Experiences
Culture functions as a communicative tool a particular group uses, yet it holds a shared understanding across diverse populations. According to Festus (2014), the adoption and manifestation of this knowledge result in a deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture. The concept of cultural tourism involves amalgamating natural surroundings, such as topography and flora, with cultural elements encompassing historical landmarks, cultural customs, and interactive encounters (Debes, 2013). This form of tourism exhibits and records the evolution of historical events, thereby establishing a basis for forming local and indigenous identities. According to Christopher and Olatunji (2009), individuals are motivated to engage in tourism due to the essential elements of history, culture, and people. These factors prompt individuals to venture beyond their typical place of residence in pursuit of leisure, rejuvenation, and unique encounters.

According to Debes (2013), the linkage between place and identity is crucial in drawing tourists to a specific location. The unique cultural and environmental characteristics of a location are considered valuable resources that attract the attention of tourists and can be efficiently promoted. The preceding tourism strategy highlights the current cultural and environmental assets while also striving to incorporate novel components and replicate past encounters. Notably, this procedure upholds the genuineness of cultural commodities; it entails assimilating and showcasing depictions that captivate visitors and augment their comprehensive encounters. According to Richards and Wilson (2007), the distinctiveness of these locations is not exclusively dependent on their pre-existing physical structures but also on the imaginative manifestations and the individuals who occupy them. According to Festus (2014), proponents of cultural studies contend that culture is communicated through diverse channels, including but not limited to architectural edifices, semiotic cues, symbolic representations, and nonverbal expressions. Tourist destinations often exhibit tangible expressions of culture, such as notable architectural landmarks, unique palaces, historic fortifications, revered shrines, traditional arts and crafts, and traditional cuisine and beverages (Oladayo, 2013).

The expressive potential of culture is widely recognised through literary, performing, and visual arts (Christopher & Olatunji, 2009). The literary and performing arts field comprise non-physical attributes, such as ways of life and distinct communal traits, that can be exhibited through celebratory events. Conversely, the realm of visual arts encompasses using various tangible art forms, such as structures, landscaping, sculptures, and other visually perceptible mediums, to communicate cultural expression. Debes (2013) analysed the primary tangible means of cultural expression in tourist destinations. The author highlights that cuisine serves as a means of connecting to cultural identities and experiences and has the potential to unite society. As such, culinary attraction is recognised as an innovative strategy for cultural expression. The recognition of culinary attractions

as an innovative strategy for cultural expression has been acknowledged by stakeholders in the tourism industry, as stated by Karaosmanoglu (2009). The culinary arts can represent culture, establish connections, and construct a narrative of the past. The presentation and service of culinary attractions are noteworthy due to their ability to effectively convey a particular culture through elements such as menu, environment, structure, and atmosphere. The significance of events, structures, and festivals has increased as tourists increasingly desire genuine and distinctive experiences. The compelling portrayal of cultural characteristics and values through storytelling is an inherent aspect of human society that should be reflected in the design of structures and theatres. Cultural events and theatres are significant indicators that accentuate the distinctiveness of a location, exhibiting not only its populace and their ways of life but also augmenting the worth of the amenities and commodities provided to visitors. The varied and unique cultural edifices, celebrations, and performance venues possess the capacity to not only allure and amuse global visitors but also augment their overall sojourns. The preservation of vegetation and landscape are crucial factors in determining the visual appeal of a cultural destination and are instrumental in attracting potential tourists. Integrating landscaping or ecotourism with culture and nature can enhance the appeal of these destinations. According to Grunewald's (2002) research, numerous instances and locations facilitating the intersection of tourism and culture have garnered favourable outcomes and evaluations.

In order to attract and satisfy tourists, an ideal tourist destination should possess several qualities, as highlighted by Debes (2013). Firstly, it should contribute to preserving culture, ensuring that the local traditions, customs, and heritage are safeguarded. Doing so makes the destination more appealing to tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences. Additionally, such a destination should foster cross-cultural interests and understanding. This entails creating opportunities for interaction between tourists and the local community, encouraging exchanging ideas, perspectives, and knowledge. This cross-cultural exchange enriches the experiences of both tourists and locals, promoting mutual learning and appreciation.

Moreover, an ideal tourist destination should prioritise learning opportunities. This can be achieved by providing educational programs, guided tours, or workshops that allow visitors to delve deeper into the cultural aspects of the destination. By acquiring new knowledge and insights, tourists can broaden their horizons and develop a deeper connection with the place they are visiting. Another crucial aspect is the improvement of individual well-being. A tourist destination prioritising its visitors' well-being ensures that they have access to amenities and services that contribute to their physical and emotional comfort. This can include well-maintained accommodations, recreational facilities, wellness centres, and opportunities for relaxation and rejuvenation.

Furthermore, environmental resource protection is vital for an ideal tourist destination. It should actively engage in sustainable practices, aiming to minimise the negative impact of tourism on the environment. This includes measures such as conserving natural resources, promoting eco-friendly activities, and raising awareness among tourists about responsible tourism practices. To attract tourists and enhance their overall experience, physical structures play a significant role, as noted by Festus (2014). Architectural landmarks, well-preserved historical sites, and aesthetically pleasing infrastructure all contribute to the visual appeal of the destination. A rich cultural landscape encompassing diverse art forms, music, festivals, and cuisine provides visitors with a unique and immersive experience. Moreover, the attitude and hospitality of the local people are crucial in creating a welcoming environment for tourists. Friendly interactions, warm gestures, and genuine interest in sharing the local culture can significantly enhance tourists' overall experience.

As Adomaitene (2016) highlighted, cultural factors also play a vital role in influencing tourists' interests and purchasing decisions. Elements such as subcultures, local traditions, and distinct cultural offerings contribute to the allure of a destination. Understanding and catering to these cultural factors can attract specific segments of tourists and increase their likelihood of choosing a particular destination. Mckercher and Ducros (2002) further delve into the different types of cultural tourists and how their experiences can be influenced. The intentional cultural tourist prioritises cultural immersion and seeks destinations with rich cultural offerings. On the other hand, the sightseeing cultural tourist focuses more on experiencing a destination's major cultural highlights. The casual tourist may not be primarily concerned with experiencing culture but can still be enticed by it if provided with engaging opportunities. Lastly, the serendipitous tourist may initially lack a strong interest in culture but becomes intrigued and captivated by it upon encountering a new culture and its destinations. By analysing these various types of cultural tourists, stakeholders can gain insights into their behavioural characteristics and mindsets. This understanding can be strategically utilised to package and promote cultural aspects and the destination, aiming to provide tourists with exceptional experiences while generating economic profit. An ideal tourist destination seeks to attract and satisfy tourists by prioritising cultural preservation, fostering cross-cultural interests and understanding, promoting learning, improving individual well-being, and protecting environmental resources. It leverages physical structures, a rich cultural landscape, and a welcoming community to enhance the tourist experience. Furthermore, it recognises the influence of cultural factors on tourists' interests and purchasing power and caters to the diverse preferences of different cultural tourists. Stakeholders can create a compelling and profitable tourism offering by strategically understanding and capitalising on these factors.

According to Christopher and Olatunji (2009), cultural tourism refers to the satisfaction of diverse desires

and necessities distinct from tourists' routine work and lifestyle. According to Oladayo (2013), cultural tourism offers enjoyable and satisfying tourist experiences. According to Adomaitene (2016), a dependable approach for evaluating tourist satisfaction after their visit or experience is through favourable feedback and recommendations. According to Santos and Melendez (2016), word of mouth is considered one of the most influential communication channels. According to Chen and Chen (2010), in the event of tourist dissatisfaction, it is likely that the destination will be subjected to criticism, negative feedback, and a lack of recommendations to others. A dissatisfied consumer is likely to express dissatisfaction through various communication channels. The failure to meet the primary objective can impede the growth of the destination, leading to a reduction in the number of returning tourists. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory proposed by Jin (2002) is a widely accepted method for evaluating tourist satisfaction. This approach involves comparing the tourist's expectations and the destination's actual performance to determine whether the tourist's level of satisfaction has been met. According to Corte et al. (2015), contented tourist is inclined to cultivate a feeling of allegiance, as evidenced by their inclination to revisit the location and endorse it to others.

Atabeb (2019) emphasised that the degree of contentment among tourists significantly impacts their retention rate. Tourists who experience satisfaction with their visit are more inclined to exhibit loyalty and sustain their patronage towards a specific destination. The aforementioned has significant economic ramifications, as it guarantees the sustained backing of current tourists and entices fresh visitors. The significance of customer satisfaction in the prosperity of businesses, including tourist centers, has been widely acknowledged, as highlighted by Aliman et al. in 2016. Tourists who are satisfied with the location or services offered are inclined to revisit the destination and engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. The phenomenon of word-of-mouth marketing is a potent form of endorsement that significantly influences potential visitors' decision-making process, compelling them to visit the destination.

2.2 Commodification of Culture in Tourism

In contemporary times, individuals have increasingly inclined to partake in domestic and international tourism to experience a wide range of cultures (Debes, 2013). Cultural inclusion has become a strategic approach to promote regions by leveraging their unique cultural characteristics and presenting them as tourism products to capitalise on the current trend. The notion of embracing this concept has been acknowledged by diverse sectors within the tourism industry, owing to its capacity to fortify the economy and augment tourist contentment (Debes, 2013).

Cultural inclusion pertains to presenting and exhibiting unique cultural components of a particular area to attract visitors. This approach aims to emphasise the area's cultural heterogeneity and attract tourists by providing them with a rewarding experience. According to the OECD (2009), cultural assets, encompassing both tangible and intangible forms, are currently regarded as valuable resources used by regions to foster tourism and establish a sense of individuality and exclusivity in a period characterised by globalisation. The growing desire for tourism activities that revolve around cultural immersion has proactively led various regions to adopt cultural inclusion tactics. Debes (2013) argues that regions can enhance their economic growth and satisfy the expectations of contemporary global travelers by strategically using and showcasing their cultural characteristics to attract tourists.

According to Cole's (2007) findings, the current expansion of tourism has brought forth a fresh outlook on the commercialisation of culture and its global genuineness. This viewpoint underscores the importance of proactively promoting cultural products to augment the tourism sector. Globalisation and the tourism industry collaborate to endorse and advertise cultural sites, whereby culture is regarded as a commodity that propels the tourism sector (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). The preservation of cultural history within the tourism context is facilitated through the packaging and commodification of culture, which ensures the conservation of its tangible and intangible elements (Debes, 2013).

Debes (2013) proposed a theoretical model for tourism development, delineating several facets that facilitate effective cultural commodification and foster economic and social progress. Richards (2007) underscored the significance of recognising this model for professionals in the tourism industry, lending support to this assertion. An essential aspect of considering stakeholders is how culture and tourism are presented for other objectives. According to the model, a specific market segment consists of tourists sincerely inclined towards cultural pursuits. This factor will likely contribute to the overall success of marketing efforts in the industry.

Various scholars have extensively analysed the issue of cultural commodification and have explored its multifaceted viewpoints and perspectives. Nyaupane et al. (2006) posit that cultural commodification results from tourists' desire to satisfy their cultural-oriented and appreciative needs. According to Debes (2013), consuming cultural heritage, which represents the past, functions as a means of connecting with the present. Tourism facilitates cultural exchange and economic transactions by enabling individuals to engage with diverse cultures and their identities. In this particular context, culture possesses the potential to be commodified as a

result of the presence of individuals who are motivated by tourism and possess a desire for culture-oriented experiences.

Mckercher and Ducros (2002) have emphasised that the marketability of culture is subject to the behavioural traits of tourists and their preconceived notions of destinations before their visits. Tourism can convert cultural elements into attractive destinations and tangible artefacts for public exhibition. Diverse channels, including television documentaries, advertising, and films, are utilised to accomplish this objective, alongside the persistent circulation of images and critiques of distinct cultures. Various forms of media, such as television, newspapers, magazines, and social media platforms, have been identified as instrumental in disseminating and promoting cultural values and practises (Christopher & Olatunji, 2009).

According to Adomaitiene's (2016) study, the Internet and recommendations from acquaintances are noteworthy channels of information and persuasion for travellers. Additionally, the research exhibited that travelers are drawn to locations due to their inherent environmental assets and distinctive characteristics. Culture is a ubiquitous phenomenon that exhibits diverse characteristics and unique attributes across various geographical regions. This variant constitutes the fundamental element for enticing and fulfilling tourists, ultimately impacting their choice to interact with a specific culture. Hall (2008) highlights the importance of satisfying both the demand (tourists) and supply (destinations and their constituents) elements in order to enhance the marketability and patronage of tourists.

Questioning the diverse stakeholders involved in the tourism sector, encompassing private and public entities and local communities, concerning their approaches to augment and conserve the uniqueness of cultural resources is a suitable course of action. This endeavour is essential to enhance and maintain their market worth. Establishing a consensus between the supply and demand facets of tourism and culture is imperative. This can be achieved by making strategic commitments to facilitate uninterrupted communication with international tourists through cultural commodities, identity, and destinations. These assets can prove to be economically valuable (Debes, 2013).

The contemporary marketing environment places significant importance on the Internet, enabling tourists to visualise carefully selected cultural sites and other leisure activities in particular locations (OECD, 2009). The perception of a destination's appeal and potential by tourists can generate enthusiasm and anticipation for the forthcoming experience. Diverse techniques are utilised to promote cultural tourist attractions, such as advertising, social media platforms, and online resources. According to Nwagbara and Umor (2012), advertising functions as a means of communication that facilitates disseminating information about products, services, ideas, and their respective attributes to prospective consumers. The advertising sector substantially influences promoting of the commercialisation of commodities and services, encompassing contemporary cultural trends and the broader economy. The attainment of economic prosperity and the contentment of tourists can be accomplished by using knowledge and information.

According to Matteuci and Zumbuch (2020), social media has emerged as a crucial research tool and has significantly influenced the evolution of cultural tourism in contemporary times. Online discussion forums have become a popular marketing tool, promoting various products and services, including tourist destinations. With the increasing prevalence of internet connectivity, individuals interested in cultural tourism are inclined to draw inspiration from destinations promoted through online channels in pursuit of genuine and distinctive experiences.

3. Study Area and Methodology

Using a case study methodology is an excellent approach for obtaining a limited yet all-encompassing understanding of a broader framework. The case study approach has been used in this context to acquire significant insights into the current state of cultural representation in Nigeria's tourism industry. In light of the impracticality of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the entire nation, this study has opted to focus on three specific tourist destinations as exemplars: Olumo Rock in Ogun State, Zuma Rock Resort in the Federal Capital Territory, and La Campagne Tropicana in Lagos State, Nigeria. The locations mentioned above are located within the southwestern vicinity and the federal capital territory of Nigeria. By opting for a blend of culturally significant and conventional tourist destinations, one can acquire a more comprehensive comprehension and profound insights into the current state and trends of cultural expression within the nation.

Figure 1: map of Nigeria showing FCT, Ogun and Lagos states

Source: Wikimedia.com

Olumo Rock is in the city of Abeokuta, located within the Ogun State of Nigeria. During the 19th century, the Egbas used this historical landmark as a naturally fortified location during inter-tribal conflicts. As mentioned above, the entity had a pivotal function in safeguarding the populace during periods of exigency, and consequently, it bears great importance for the community even presently. With an elevation of 137 metres above sea level, Olumo Rock offers its visitors an enthralling and daring encounter.

Visiting Olumo Rock typically entails ascending the artificially constructed stairs intricately carved into the rock formation. As the expedition advances, individuals traverse through irregularly contoured boulders within a constricted passageway, ultimately culminating at the apex of the rock. During the journey, visitors are presented with exquisite carvings that decorate the surface of the rock, sculptures adorned with cowrie shells, and fleeting views of the archaic abodes of the mountain deity's priestesses, who inhabit huts situated on the summit of the rock.

In order to improve accessibility, the tourist attraction has undergone renovations, which involved the installation of a lift to accommodate visitors who may opt not to ascend the stairs connecting the rocks. This alteration guarantees that individuals with diverse levels of mobility can access the peak and relish the awe-inspiring vistas of Olumo Rock.

Zuma Rock is on Daura Road, near Nigeria's capital, Abuja. It is located along the Abuja-Kaduna motorway, specifically off Madala. Zuma Rock is a natural monolith called the "Gateway to Abuja from Suleja." It is renowned for its impressive igneous composition comprising gabbro and granodiorite. Zuma Rock is a notable geological formation that stands at 725 metres (2,379 ft) above the surrounding terrain. It is characterised by a unique feature, namely a rock face that resembles a human countenance, complete with discernible facial features such as eyes, nose, and mouth.

The appellation "Zuma Rock" has its etymological roots in the Zuba (Koros) populace, who relocated to the present-day site of Zuma Rock under the tutelage of their diviner during the 15th century. The geological constitution of the rock, in conjunction with its prominent surface features, yields a remarkable spectacle that enthrals the minds of its observers.

The La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort, situated in Ikegun, off the Lekki-Epe Motorway in Lagos, provides an exceptional African-themed encounter with a beach, lagoon, and forest. Encompassing an area of 65 acres, this resort features picturesque white sand beaches lined with palm trees, a tranquil lagoon, and a stunning mangrove forest, offering ample opportunities for guests to engage with the tropical flora and fauna, including diverse varieties of palms, mangroves, and epiphytes.

La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort allows guests to immerse themselves in a serene atmosphere and observe the varied flora and fauna that flourishes in this distinctive coastal ecosystem. The resort's ambience, inspired by African culture, enhances the authenticity of the experience, enabling guests to develop an appreciation for and connection with Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage.

Olumo Rock, Zuma Rock, and La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort present unique and captivating features, each highlighting the natural splendour and cultural importance of diverse areas within Nigeria. The landmarks mentioned above allow tourists to explore Nigeria's history, geology, and natural phenomena, resulting in indelible recollections and cultivating a more profound admiration for the country's varied topography and cultural legacy.

4. Analysis of Findings and Discussion

In table 1 above it can be seen that the majority of tourists, 73.3%, 80.6% and 86.7% respectively were of the opinion that the inclusion of culture and its elements would make the locations stand out. The majority 46 .7%, 33.5% and 73.3% said their preference was in historical monuments, while an ample amount of tourists 13.3%, 40% and 6.7% respectively said their preference was in finishes & aesthetics. The greater percentage of tourists in all 3 locations 66.7%, 80% and 40% respectively agreed that an inclusion of culture would attract more international tourists.

Table 1 showing analysis of cultural expression in all locations

Location	C. Cultural Expression							
	Would inclusion of culture make it more distinctive?		How would you want culture to be included here?				Would the inclusion of culture bring more tourists?	
	yes	no	Building materials	historical Monuments	finishes & aesthetics	dishes & display	yes	no
Zuma resort	11 73.3%	4 26.7%	4 26.7%	7 46.7%	2 13.3%	2 13.3%	10 66.7%	5 33.3%
Olumo rock	13 80.6%	2 13.3%	1 6.7%	5 33.3%	6 40%	3 20%	12 80%	3 20%
La campagne tropicana	13 86.7%	2 13.3%	1 6.7%	11 73.3%	1 6.7%	2 13.3%	6 40%	9 60%

Source: researchers field work (2023)

Table 2 shows that majority of tourists in all three locations agree that the advertisement of culturally inclined locations would inform and bring more tourists to these locations. The greater percentage in all locations think social media is an effective medium for informing intending tourists while an ample amount think newspaper and TV adverts are a reliable means of informing tourists, the least percentage were tourists who were of the opinion that one-on-one marketing would inform intending tourists. The greater percentage in both destinations agreed that an influx of both domestic and international tourists would bring about economic development in the country.

Table 2 showing analysis of commodification of culture in all locations

Location	D. commodification of culture						
	Would advertisement of cultural locations inform & bring more tourists?		How can more tourists be informed?			Would the influx of both domestic & international tourists bring about economic development?	
	yes	no	One-on-one marketing	Newspaper/TV adverts	Social media	yes	no
Zuma resort	12 80%	3 20%	4 26.7%	6 40.0%	5 33.3%	13 86.7%	2 13.3%
Olumo rock	14 93.3%	1 6.7%	1 6.7%	7 46.7%	7 46.7%	12 80%	3 20%
La champagne Tropicana	8 53.3%	7 46.7%	2 13.3%	4 26.7%	9 60%	6 40%	9 60%

Source: researchers field work (2023)

According to the results of the survey, it was revealed that a significant number of tourist destinations would benefit from enhancing their presentation of cultural elements in more effective ways. A considerable proportion of tourists prefer engaging with culture through diverse modalities, including visually appealing designs and architectural embellishments, the integration of ecotourism and thoughtfully crafted landscapes, the provision of amenities such as galleries, and the display of historical artworks and monuments. A comprehensive examination of the scholarly literature on the topic has indicated that tourism can convert culture into alluring destinations that can be explored and artefacts that can be exhibited, using a diverse array of approaches. How culture is manifested and exhibited serves as the fundamental basis for attracting and fulfilling the needs of tourists.

There was a consensus among tourists that preserving cultural integrity was undermined due to the deliberate exclusion of cultural elements and the pervasive dominance of Western customs. The effective

incorporation of cultural elements encounters substantial obstacles primarily due to the widespread influence of modernity and globalisation. The impediments to the integration of culture primarily stem from the prioritisation of economic gains and the emphasis on replicating contemporary designs, which collectively undermine the tourists' experiential aspect. The discovery was made that the incorporation and articulation of cultural elements in a creative manner can effectively engage the interest of tourists and promote cross-cultural curiosity. Although culture is inherently specific to a particular group of individuals, its creative expression possesses the capacity to captivate a wider audience and foster the acquisition of knowledge, comprehension, and appreciation for diverse cultures. Incorporating such elements would bestow upon destinations a distinctive and noteworthy character that sets them apart from conventional tourist attractions.

The widespread recognition of the effectiveness of disseminating information about different locations through social media, commercialisation, and multiple media channels to reach a larger audience was evident. The rapid dissemination of information on a global scale has been profoundly transformed in the 21st century due to significant technological advancements, enabling news to propagate across the world within mere seconds. The utilisation of media advertisements effectively disseminates information to a larger audience, thereby increasing the potential attraction of individuals to both local and international destinations.

Furthermore, the media serves as a potent instrument for exerting control over disseminating information about a specific location. This control is particularly advantageous as it allows management to guarantee the dissemination of accurate and favourable information while also minimising the propagation of false information or reports of security breaches that may induce fear in prospective tourists. By strategically using media platforms, destinations can meticulously shape their image and safeguard their reputation, fostering a sense of assurance among potential travelers and effectively stimulating their inclination to visit.

The visual attractiveness of aesthetically pleasing structures and well-maintained facilities is a significant factor in eliciting interest from individuals. These intriguing characteristics can be skillfully documented through photography and displayed on television and social media platforms, which a majority of tourists have recognised as highly efficient means for disseminating information. By using contemporary and efficient communication channels, destinations can effectively engage in self-promotion, resulting in favourable publicity that ultimately leads to financial advantages for the destination and contributes to the overall economic advancement of the country.

A large percentage of tourists expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the limited cultural representation observed in tourist destinations, while a significant portion displayed indifference towards the absence of inclusivity. The primary factor influencing this occurrence can be attributed to the individual characteristics of the tourists. Numerous studies conducted in tourism have revealed that tourists exhibit diverse interests and requirements regarding cultural experiences. Certain tourists display a distinct fascination with culture even before embarking on their trips. On the contrary, specific individuals may initially lack interest, yet they can be persuaded to change their stance by implementing a robust cultural inclusivity approach. Furthermore, certain tourists need more inclination towards culture or cultural venues, instead prioritising leisure and relaxation as the primary objectives of their journeys.

Nevertheless, a flourishing tourist destination must prioritise ensuring the contentment of all tourists, irrespective of their individual characteristics. Even individuals who initially exhibit apathy towards cultural expression will likely be impressed and actively involved during their visit. The paramount aim of a destination should be to offer tourists an exceptional experience, with financial gains being of subordinate significance.

Based on the findings of interviews conducted with tourists, integrating cultural elements would enhance their comprehension of diverse cultures and their historical import. By visiting cultural destinations, individuals can encounter and engage with diverse elements and facets of other cultures. As a result of these experiences, they acquire novel knowledge that was previously absent from their repertoire. The acquisition of knowledge contributes to the broader cultural consciousness of tourists, fostering harmony and inclusivity among individuals, both domestically and internationally. The predominant sentiment expressed by tourists was that the absence of cultural inclusion significantly influenced their overall satisfaction with these destinations. This underscores the importance of cultural expression within tourist destinations. While tourists who lack initial interest may not consciously perceive the lack of cultural expression, an optimal tourist destination should aim to offer a memorable experience rather than a merely satisfactory one.

The survey findings suggest that excluding cultural elements in tourism may result in the gradual loss of cultural authenticity. Tourists generally agree that prioritising modern amenities over cultural expressions would lead to a decline in cultural authenticity. Moreover, scholarly research in the literature has provided evidence that shifts in religious ideologies, the process of globalisation, and advancements in technology have significantly impacted societal habits, cultural norms, and ethical standards. Insufficient infrastructure within the cultural tourism sector can potentially result in the isolation of rural regions, which often house numerous tourist attractions, consequently exacerbating the erosion of cultural heritage. Moreover, it is worth noting that destinations featuring historical sites and artefacts are susceptible to gradual deterioration as time passes.

The study further demonstrated that a narrow focus on the economic advantages of tourist destinations, without considering the preferences and demands of the tourists, impedes the potential for substantial expansion. The level of tourist satisfaction exhibits a positive correlation with the degree of development in these destinations. The incorporation, articulation, and provision of cultural considerations substantially influence the long-term viability and conservation of both cultural heritage and the natural environment. These elements constitute the fundamental basis for the flourishing of cultural tourism. In addition, destinations with a high degree of cultural richness are more inclined to draw the interest of international and domestic tourists actively seeking opportunities for intellectual enrichment and distinctive experiences. Extensive literature research has substantiated the notion that the fulfilment of tourists' needs and desires plays a pivotal role in the prosperous advancement of destinations. This is evidenced by the notable increase in visitor retention rates and the dissemination of favourable word-of-mouth recommendations. On the contrary, tourist destinations that do not meet the expectations of visitors may encounter stagnation and underdevelopment due to low rates of visitor return and unfavourable reviews.

The importance of commodifying and advertising tourist destinations is evident, yet it is frequently overlooked. The management and precision of information conveyed to the general public are paramount. The enduring proliferation of inaccurate and detrimental information presents an ongoing obstacle; the government and tourism industry stakeholders must address security concerns effectively. Implementing measures to guarantee the well-being of tourists during their transportation and accommodation at these destinations is crucial in addressing this concern and enhancing the appeal to potential visitors. Failure to adequately address these concerns could result in significant long-term consequences for the tourism sector.

Research has indicated that the satisfaction levels of tourists are influenced by their perceptions and expectations. Furthermore, a tourist destination that successfully meets visitors' needs is more inclined to augment their satisfaction, attract an international audience, and positively contribute to the overall state of tourism within the country. Tourists who are content with their experiences are more likely to exhibit a propensity to revisit and disseminate their favourable encounters to prospective visitors, thereby cultivating the expansion of tourism.

5. Recommendations

Comprehensive suggestions on expanding and advancing a tourist destination can significantly augment visitors' overall experience. These destinations must give precedence to the requirements of tourists and integrate diverse components that can effectively enhance their level of satisfaction. By adhering to the recommendations delineated herein, one can attain the highest level of performance.

- The satisfaction of tourists is a crucial factor in the development and prosperity of a tourist destination. By effectively addressing the needs and expectations of visitors, destinations can enhance their ability to retain a high percentage of visitors and generate positive recommendations through word-of-mouth. It is imperative to exert additional effort to ensure that each tourist has a memorable and satisfying experience.
- In order to enhance tourist influx and foster economic development, stakeholders must investigate effective strategies for marketing the destination, encompassing both local and international spheres. This may entail using contemporary media platforms to exhibit distinctive cultural goods and encounters. Commodification enhances a destination's attractiveness by leveraging its cultural assets to appeal to potential visitors.
- The safety and security of tourists are pivotal elements that directly influence the progress and advancement of a tourist destination. It is imperative for governments and stakeholders engaged in the tourism industry to accord utmost priority to the establishment of a secure and protected milieu for visitors. This entails implementing strategies to enhance the sense of security among tourists during their journeys, thereby mitigating the potential threats of theft, abduction, or other illicit behaviours.
- The preservation of cultural history and heritage for future generations necessitates the maintenance of tourist destinations. Maintenance and consistent involvement are essential to extend these sites' lifespan. By safeguarding the historical and cultural elements, visitors can develop a deeper appreciation and comprehension of the importance of the location, thereby enhancing their overall encounter.
- Integrating local cultures into tourist centres' architectural designs and landscaping is paramount. Rather than exclusively embracing Western architectural styles, contemporary architects must be educated on the significance of incorporating local cultures. By adopting this approach, tourist destinations can facilitate visitors in acquiring knowledge and cultivating an appreciation for a wide range of cultural traditions, thereby augmenting their overall experiential journey.

Implementing these recommendations has the potential to contribute to the growth and development of

tourist destinations substantially. By placing a high emphasis on ensuring tourist satisfaction, implementing effective marketing strategies, ensuring safety and security measures, engaging in active maintenance practices, and promoting cultural integration, these destinations can provide outstanding experiences that attract and retain visitors and contribute to long-term success and sustainability.

6. Conclusion

The cultural tourism sector has great potential to take tourism in Nigeria to the next level. When stakeholders focus on meeting the tourist's needs, cultural tourism will take another dimension and record a higher percentage of satisfied tourists. There should be an innovative combination of authentic culture and modern improved facilities for a better tourist experience. Understanding the character of tourists and designing tourist resorts to fit their character and needs will make it more possible to satisfy them. Satisfied tourists would give reviews and bring other intending tourists through word of mouth. The satisfaction of tourists is relevant to the development of tourist destinations.

Culture is a language that is understood universally. The practical expression of culture in various forms would be a source of knowledge gain to tourists and make them feel seen and like they are a part of something. Expressing culture through cuisine, activities and festivals, landscape, ecotourism, and architecture would increase the level of satisfaction of tourists exponentially. It will also bring about economic development and promote peace and international acceptance.

The combined strategies of turning cultural heritage into locations for tourism make these destinations marketable, attracting more tourists and, in turn, resulting in economic gains (Debes, 2013). Tourism can turn culture into visitable alluring places and displayable objects and can showcase them through effective channels of information dissemination. Properly marketing these destinations through televisions, magazines, documentaries and adverts on social media will inform many more individuals of the uniqueness of these destinations as it is now known that tourists will visit a destination because of its natural endowment and the unique qualities it possesses. It will also help control the type of information being spread to give these destinations a good reputation.

The lack of diversification has been a significant setback. The nation's wealth would increase exponentially if the government diversifies their focus from conventional tourism and reduces the reliance on oil benefits by harnessing cultural tourism potentials. Focusing on cultural tourism would not only bring about economic development to the country. However, it will also go a long way in protecting and preserving our cultural heritage for the upcoming generation.

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