

*Original Research Article*

# Success Factors for Sustainable Tourism Planning and Management in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

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This study aims to identify the success factors for sustainable tourism planning and management in Ondo State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents. Isharun cave, Ebomi Lake and Igbo Olodumare were purposively selected to represent the Central, Southern and Northern part of Ondo State. Well-structured questionnaires (150) were administered to the respondents. For the public and private stakeholders, a total of sixteen (16) respondents were purposively selected for the in-depth interviews. A descriptive analysis was used to analyze the questionnaire using SPSS Data editor while data collected on the interviews were analyzed qualitatively through thematic analysis. The empirical results indicate that this heritage site has built community pride (4.30) has the highest mean. The result on the overall assessment of respondents on the success of the sites reveals that the majority (91.3%) held the view that sites were successful while Public Government has the highest level of involvement in the management of the sites (44.4%). However, there is need to achieve maximum success if the derivable benefits from these heritage resources are to be sustained.

**Keyword:** Conservation, Ecotourism, Planning and Management, Stakeholders participation and Sustainable tourism

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long been discussed as an important vehicle to achieve conservation outcomes, but also as a potential source of negative impacts. Decades of academic research and practical experience have shown that the relationship between tourism and protected areas is complex, partly because of the often conflicting economic focus of tourism and the conservation priorities of protected areas stakeholders (Wilson *et al.*, 2009).

Specifically, conservation goals may be compromised by the negative impacts sometimes resulting from visitation and business activities (Jamal and Stronza, 2009). However, tourism and recreation have often been among the key motivators for land preservation since the establishment of the earliest national parks (Liburd,

2006). For tourism in natural areas to be a driving force and mechanism for conservation, adequate management strategies are critical. This is specifically important in the context of both local and global changes that place new management challenges onto protected area managers (Becken and Job, 2014).

Ecotourism is traveling activity that are packed professionally, skilled, and contains the elements of education, as a business venture, considering the cultural heritage, participation, and well-being of local people as well as the conservation efforts of natural resources and environment (Nugroho, 2011). Ecotourism is a subset of the tourism industry that reflects an ethos of responsible involvement with the environment and with local cultures.

Ecotourism includes, but is not limited to, nature hiking, diving, wildlife viewing, and cultural tourism, usually with some attention given to the ecosystem, biodiversity education, or sustainability (Tracy, 2016).

The practice of ecotourism stimulate additional values to geographical position, microclimatic conditions, existence of water, natural beauties, existence of natural vegetation, existence of wildlife, surface features, geomorphologic structure, local food, festivals and pageants, traditional agricultural structure, local handicrafts, regional dress culture, historical events and people, heritage appeals, architectural variety, traditional music and folk dance, artistic activities. Lee et al. (2011) opined that although the ecotourism industry has contributed to the growth and development of the economy of Taiwan, however there are indications that various species of plants and animals currently in the country may disappear if they are not properly managed. Hence these authors recommend the need for the critical success factors to achieve success in this industry in order to create an ecological landscape in Taiwan.

World Heritage Sites (WHS) are widely recognized as the world's most important protected areas. With a total coverage of 279 million hectares the natural WHS accounts for over 8% of the combined surface area covered by protected areas. They are therefore critically important for achieving global conservation goals. Our culture and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. They are our touchstones, our points of reference, our identity and contemporary tourist magnet (Oladeji, 2021). Based on the continued growth of recognition requests for heritage sites, the planning and management at UNESCO World Heritage sites as a tourism destination are critical, especially as they influence the well being of the local community (Chhabra, 2019).

Findings from literature revealed that there are factors that can determine the success of business activity in an industry (Thompson and Strickland, 1993). Key success factors referred to some specialties, conditions, or variables and through continuous maintenance and control they can significantly affect a firm's degree of competitive success. For instance, uncontrolled development and improper town planning have been responsible for unsuccessful conservation, preservation and adaptive reuse of historical remains in the form of monuments and buildings, depicting the European, Chinese, Indian and Islamic architectural styles in Malaysia (Rashid et al., 2021). Decades of academic research and practical experience have shown that the relationship between tourism and protected areas is complex, partly because of the often conflicting economic focus of tourism and the conservation priorities of protected areas stakeholders (Wilson et al., 2009).

Tourism industry is a market with diverse stakeholders each of which has dissimilar interest in planning,

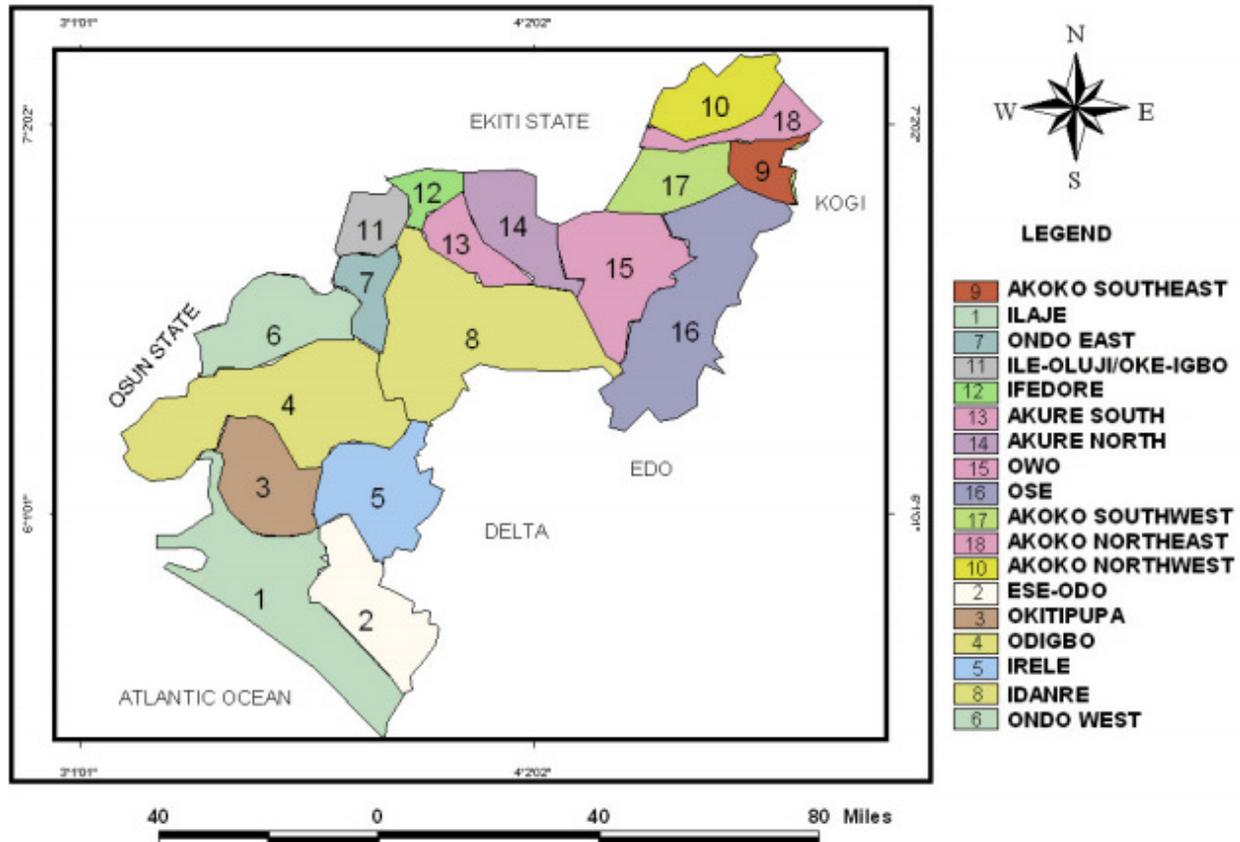
management and evaluation of the success (Sheehan et al., 2007). This forms the basis for undertaken stakeholder analysis using the instrumentality of stakeholder theory as the strategic tool for effective planning and management of sustainable tourism industry (Okech and Bob, 2009). The success of tourism industry will only materialize if the community that is indirectly involved with the industry plays a significant role in tourism development (Leigh and Blakely, 2016). The local community is the primary stakeholder in any tourism development, thus obtaining the community's support is essential (Aas et al., 2005). Nonetheless, the stages of the destination life cycle rely heavily on the support of the local community (Gursoy et al., 2010). Besides that, many studies also revealed that the local community's attitude is critical to sustainable tourism development (Sharpley, 2014). The attitudes of the local community towards tourism will directly or indirectly generate income, improve public facilities and provide employment opportunities (Hanafiah et al., 2013). When evaluating key success factors, a variety of methods have been adopted in previous research, including factor analysis, the Delphi Method, case study, hierarchical analysis, Fuzzy Delphi Method, fuzzy hierarchical analysis (Chen, 2002).

In this study, a case study method as reported by Chen, 2002 modified by Lee et al. (2011) was adopted. Case study survey of stakeholders in the ecotourism industry in Ondo State is used to integrate their perceptions rather than relying on the view of the researchers. This modified case study is adopted because the ecotourism industry is a market with diverse stakeholders each of which has dissimilar interest and thus each should be given equal opportunity for expression in the aspect of planning, management and evaluation to facilitate collaboration and involvement (Sheehan et al., 2007). This forms the basis for undertaken stakeholder analysis using the instrumentality of stakeholder theory as the strategic tool for effective planning and management of sustainable tourism industry in Ondo State. Okeche and Bob (2009) opined that in order to sustain the ecotourism industry, it is necessary to understand the effects of the growing ecotourism sector on the natural and social environment. The assessment and monitoring of protected areas should be based on the visitors' perceptions of observed and potential impacts, and the perception of the tour operators in terms of their contributions to education and management

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Areas

The study was conducted in Ondo State, Nigeria, which lies between longitudes 4<sup>0</sup>30<sup>1</sup> and 6<sup>0</sup>00<sup>1</sup> east of the



**Figure 1.** Map of Ondo state showing the local government areas  
**Source:** (Fatusin, 2015)

Greenwich Meridian and latitudes  $5^{\circ}45'$  and  $8^{\circ}15'$  North of the Equator. It has an area of land of about 20,959 square kilometers. It is bounded in the North by Kwara and Kogi States, in the east by Edo and Delta States; in the West by Ogun, Oyo and Ogun States; in the South by the Atlantic Ocean. The entire study area is situated within the tropics of Cancer. The people of the study area comprise mainly the Yorubas who belong to a major tribe in Nigeria. The Yoruba people include those inhabiting Ekiti, Akure, Akoko and Ondo towns. The minority are the Ilaje and Ijaw who are found in the coastal area of these states. These people, as common to other Yorubas, have history, traditions and religion that are manifested in the presence of tourist sites dotted around the area. The latest census of 2006 in Nigeria put the population of the area at 5,825, 236. Physically, the Ondo State is composed of low lands and rugged hills with granite outcrops in some places. Generally, the land rises from the coastal part of Ilaje and Ese-Odo areas in the south to the rugged hills towards the northern part, these include Idanre hills and Akoko hills. The rivers which traverse the study area include Ogbese, Osse, Owena, Oluwa, Oni and Ala to mention just a few (Omisore and Akande, 2009). There are three distinct ecological zones

within the state. These are the mangrove forest to the south, the rainforest to the middle belt and the derived savannah to the North. The state has an annual rainfall ranging from 2,000mm in the Southern parts to 1200mm in the northern areas with the raining season running between March and October (Muhammad-Lawal *et al.*, 2009). Figure 1

## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select sample respondents. In the first stage, Ondo State was divided into Ondo central, south and North. In the second stage, Isharun cave, Ebomi Lake and Igbo Olodumare were purposively selected to represent the central, southern and northern part of Ondo state. Tourism stakeholders can be broadly classified into three types, namely, the public sector (governments and public authorities), the private sector (tourism operators, tourism agencies, tourism industries, private enterprises, and businesses), and the third sector (other actors such as non-governmental organizations and communities) (De Brito *et al.*, 2011). The statistical population of this

research work are the state government staff, tourism service providers and local community of the heritage sites representing the three broad sectors of tourism stakeholders.

### Sample size and sampling technique

Purposive sampling technique was used to administer questionnaires on local residents such as community leaders and the concerned family in charge of the heritage sites in each of the three study locations making a total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents. For the public and private stakeholders, a total of sixteen (16) respondents were purposively selected for the in-depth interviews so as to elicit information for the actualization of the set research objectives.

Nine staff of Ondo State Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the following order were purposively selected 2 Tourism Officer, 2 Senior Tourism Officer, 1 Chief Tourism Officer, 1 Chief Catering Officer, 1 Chief Executive Tourism Officer, 1 Deputy Director and 1 Director of Tourism. Seven of the tour operators/travel agencies /intermediaries were purposively selected in this order 3 Travel agents, 1 Managing Director, 1 Chief Executive Officer of Tour operator and 1 Tour Guide.

### In-depth Interview

In-depth Interview was conducted on the public and private stakeholders involved in the planning and management of the study areas in order to ascertain their level of success in the management of the heritage sites. Two categories of key informants that were encountered included the staff of Ondo State Ministry of Culture and Tourism and private tour operators especially on cultural heritage sites in Akure metropolis.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse this study through SPSS 21 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Descriptive Statistics such as, tables (frequencies and percentages) and weighted mean were used to present the results.

Weighted mean (WM) =  $f_{SDX1}, f_{SDX2}, f_{UX3}, f_{AX2}, f_{SAX1}$  = Weighted Frequencies (WF)

Sum of Weighted frequencies/Sum of Initial Frequencies = Weighted Mean (WM)

Weighted average index

Weighted Average Index (WAI) was used to examine the opinions of the local community people on their involvement in the planning and management of cultural heritage sites.

WAI was computed as

Given that,

$$WAI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (f_i * W_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^n f_i}$$

$$WAI = \frac{f_4 W_4 + f_3 W_3 + f_2 W_2 + f_1 W_1}{f_4 + f_3 + f_2 + f_1}$$

### Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis was tested using One-Way ANOVA.

### RESULTS

The perception of respondents with respect to the success of the heritage sites reveals that respondents on the average had good (positive) perception on the subject matter. This is so in view of the fact that they agreed that "The heritage sites have built community pride, "It has promoted intercultural/international understanding", "It has encouraged revival or maintenance of traditional crafts", "The site has enhanced external support for minority groups and preservation of culture", "The site has generated funds for management and preservation of the facilities in it", "The site has enhanced local, external appreciation and support for cultural heritage", and "The site has provided employment and revenue opportunities" considering the weighted mean response score of 4.3, 4.1, 4.0, 4.0, 3.8, 4.1 and 3.7 respectively (Table 1).

When asked to rate their success as participating in the planning and management of the sites, the results show that only 34.7% believed to be highly successful. (Table 2).

The result of the overall assessment of respondents on the success of the sites reveals that the majority (91.3%) held the view that sites were successful while only 8.7% indicated not successful. (Table 3)

The result on the level of involvement among stakeholder in the planning and management of the heritage sites reveals that the Public Government has high involvement (44.4%) while the Private tour operators has a medium rating involvement (57.14%). (Table 4)

The rating of the stakeholders with respect to the success achieved in their participation in the planning and management of the heritage sites reveal the level of success recorded is low among the three stakeholders that participated in the study. This is so in view of the fact that only 44.4% and 33.33% from the public, private stakeholders respectively held the opinions that they were highly successful in their participation. (Table 5)

Result of the interviewee conducted for the public and private tourism intermediaries' revealed information on the contributions of heritage sites to the development of tourism in Ondo State (Table 6).

**Table 1.** Respondents' Perception of Success of the Selected Heritage Sites

S/N	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Weighted Sum	Weighted mean	Decision
1	This heritage site has built community pride	5	6	6	300	325	642	4.3	Significant
2	It has promoted intercultural /international understanding	7	12	36	248	315	618	4.1	Significant
3	It has encouraged revival or maintenance of traditional crafts	5	20	54	256	265	600	4.0	Significant
4	The site has enhanced external support for minority groups and preservation of culture	6	22	39	248	290	605	4.0	Significant
5	The site has generated funds for management and preservation of the facilities in it	8	28	78	192	270	576	3.8	Significant
6	The site has enhanced local, external appreciation and support for cultural heritage	4	16	57	240	295	612	4.1	Significant
7	The site has provided employment and revenue opportunities	13	30	75	200	235	553	3.7	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**Table 2.** Opinions of Community People on Level of Success Achieved in Participating in the Planning and Management of Heritage Sites

Rating of Level of Success Achieved	Frequency	Percentage
Highly successful	52	34.7
Moderately successful	43	28.7
Somewhat successful	32	21.3
Unsuccessful	23	15.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**Table 3.** Overall Opinion of Community People on the Success of the Sites

Overall Opinion on the Success of the Sites	Frequency	Percentage
Successful	137	91.3
Not successful	13	8.7
Total	150	100.0

**Table 4.** Level of Involvement of each of the Stakeholders in the Planning and Management of the Heritage Sites

Rating	Public (Government)	Private (Travel operators, Tour guides and others)
Low	2 (22.22)	0 (0.0)
Medium	3 (33.3)	4 (57.14)
High	4(44.4)	3 (42.85)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**Table 5.** Stakeholders' Opinions regarding their Success in Participating in the Planning and Management of Heritage sites

Level of Success in participation	Public (Government)	Private (Travel operators and others)
Moderately successful	5 (55.55)	4 (57.14)
Highly successful	4 (44.4)	3 (42.86)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**Table 6.** Derivable benefits from heritage Sites towards development of tourism in Ondo State

Variables	Response
(a) Community recognition and development	70% of interviewees indicated that heritage sites improved community recognition and contribute to the development of tourism while 24% did not agree to this view and 6% did not respond to this assertion.
(b) Employment generation	86% of the interviewees held that they serve as medium of employment generation unlike 24% of them that felt that the site has not generated much needed employment.
(c) Promotion of cultural values	Sixty one percent of the interviewees believe that promotion of the cultural values are part of the derivable benefits while 39% expressed otherwise
(d) Source of revenue to the government	All the government officials indicated that heritage sites have been a source of revenue to the government while all the tourism intermediaries conceded to this assertion. Sixty seven percent of the tourism intermediaries indicated that the income realized through promoting tourism in these locations is marginal .
(e) Foreign exchange	87 % of the respondents expressed that these heritage sites did not attract foreign tourists while 13% indicated that they have been able to attract generate

Source: Field Survey, 2021

**Table 7.** The Results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA					
Success of Heritage sites	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	547.960	2	273.980	8.267	.000
Within Groups	4871.800	147	33.141		
Total	5419.760	149			

**Table 8.** The Post-hoc Test (Duncan Multiple Range Test)

Success of Heritage sites			
Duncan <sup>a</sup>			
Site	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Ebomi lake	50	25.3400	
Igbo olodunmare	50		29.2800
Isharun ash Cave	50		29.5000
Sig.		1.000	.849

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 50.000.

## Hypothesis testing

There is no significant difference in the overall success of the heritage sites.

The ANOVA results show that there is significant difference in the success of heritage sites as indicated by the  $F(2) = 8.267$  and  $p = 0.000$ . (Table 7)

The Post-hoc test reveals that Isharunash Cave and Igbo Olodunmare were ranked successfully higher than Ebomilake based on stakeholders' opinion. (Table 8)

## DISCUSSION

Heritage by its uniqueness, fragility and irreplaceably require sensitive use and management to make it the basis of tourism enterprises in a sustainable way (Asfaw, 2016). Findings from this case study revealed that these heritage sites enhanced external support for minority groups and preservation of culture and generate funds for management of these facilities. This explains the reason why majority the local community views that participating

in the planning and management of these heritage sites is highly successful. However, the level of involvement of each of the other stakeholders in the planning and management of the heritages sites differ. While the level of involvement of government public officers is high being the custodian of these sites, that of the tourism intermediaries (travel agents, tour operators and tour guide) is medium. There is therefore a need for these stakeholders to synergies in the quest to achieve sustainable planning and management of these heritage resources. Andriotis, (2005) opined that the process of planning for sustainable tourism development or rejuvenation relies on major collaborations between a variety of stakeholders for successful implementation and subsequent management of cultural heritage sites of ecotourism attraction. A as et al. (2005) stressed that the basic objective of effective collaboration is to involve all those that are affected tourism development in the planning process. Although the various manner of participation in the management and planning of the heritage sites are not specified but this may be largely due to problems being encountered by the community in the developing world. Ladkin and Benjamin, (2002) explained that community participation and involvement was a very new concept to the government in the developing world unlike in the developed world where the concept has been embraced. This has led to emergence of several initiatives on various levels of stakeholder partnership and conservation philanthropy with international corporations, agencies and financial institutions, government and other actors from developing countries (Raufflet *et al.*, 2008). This is one of the ways that derivable benefits from heritage sites towards development of tourism in Ondo State. Arnould and Mohr (2005) expatiate on the community recognition and development, partnership, collaboration and clustering are effective strategies that must be embedded within the conventional business model.

Promotion of cultural values is very important for the local community to be aware of the economic impacts of heritage sites and other derivable benefits.

Despite the project not meeting its objectives, communication between tourism and heritage has been initiated. It has made people in the community at least to some degree aware of the impacts of tourism and thus the need for planning. The idea of formally discussing development issues across different groups has been established and may raise the knowledge and understanding of each other's views and challenges, which in turn may lead to a wider collaboration and formulation of alliances in the future. This is essential if the relationship between heritage conservation and tourism is to develop in a way that is beneficial for all the stakeholders concerned

This case study also revealed that these heritage sites have sources of revenue to the government while the greater percentage of the tourism intermediaries that

were interviewed affirmed income generated through promoting these heritage sites is marginal. Tosun (2000) reported that the centralization of authority provides an operational limitation to participation and affects the local community, including the stakeholders, who consequently lose motivation and interest while waiting for a decision to be made. There is a need for the government to work hand in hand with these tourism intermediaries to address the imbalance in income generated. The government should start as the regulatory body and should provide rooms for the tourism intermediaries to operate so that they can make much profit. This forms part of the observations as echoed in the previous research that examined collaborative tourism planning in Peru (Ladkin and Bertramini, 2002).

## CONCLUSION

For maximum success to be achieved in the area of planning and management of the selected heritage sites for conservation and sustainable development there is need for synergy, collaboration and partnership between all the relevant stakeholders in Ondo State. This will lead to increase revenue generation, employment creation and preservation of the rich heritage resources.

## RECOMMENDATION

I recommend inclusive and multi-stakeholders' approaches for sustainable management of heritage sites. Further studies should be conducted in other heritage sites in Nigeria so as to develop appropriate conservation plans for effective management of these resources.

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