

Stakeholder Perceptions and The Role of Cultural Tourism in Achieving Sustainable Development at Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove, Nigeria

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Abstract

The Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Osun State, Nigeria, represents a significant cultural and spiritual landmark in Yoruba land. As a major site for religious worship, traditional heritage, and cultural tourism, it plays a pivotal role in the sustainable socio-economic development of the region. This study investigated stakeholders' perceptions and involvement in the cultural tourism potential and sustainable development of the Osun Osogbo Grove. Employing a descriptive survey research design, data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 359 respondents drawn from four key stakeholder groups: religious adherents, vendors, tour service providers, and government officials. Statistical analyses including descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and regression were applied to assess attitudinal dispositions and stakeholder contributions. Results revealed that while socio-demographic factors like age and education did not significantly influence attitudes toward cultural tourism, occupational type had a strong effect, suggesting the importance of stakeholder roles. Furthermore, stakeholder activities—particularly those of vendors, tour guides, cultural practitioners, and religious custodians—were found to significantly influence the development of cultural tourism attributes. Despite some challenges, such as conflicting stakeholder interests and the commercialization of cultural events, a majority of respondents confirmed the positive role stakeholders play in preserving cultural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism. The study concludes that stakeholder collaboration is essential for the sustained development of the Osun Osogbo Grove. It recommends enhanced policy support,



stakeholder training, and inclusive planning frameworks to strengthen cultural tourism, preserve indigenous identity, and replicate this model in other heritage sites across Nigeria.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Sustainable Development, Stakeholder Participation, Osun Osogbo Grove, Heritage Preservation

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Introduction

Nigeria, with its vast cultural, ethnic, and ecological diversity, is endowed with significant potential for tourism development. From mangrove swamps and rainforests in the south to semi-arid zones in the north, the country presents a range of scenic landscapes, rivers, waterfalls, and cultural landmarks that attract both domestic and international visitors (Zahed et al., 2022). Among these attractions, cultural tourism has emerged as a dynamic sector, drawing attention to the country's rich heritage through festivals, museums, sacred sites, and traditional practices.

Cultural tourism involves travel motivated by a desire to experience and understand a destination's arts, heritage, and traditions (Adesola and Akinwumi, 2025). It comprises activities such as attending festivals, visiting heritage sites, exploring ethnic practices, and interacting with local customs. In a multiethnic society like Nigeria with over 200 ethnic groups cultural tourism plays a central role in both heritage preservation and economic growth (Olonade et al., 2025). Iconic cultural events such as the Argungu Fishing Festival, the Ojude Oba Festival, and the Osun-Osogbo Festival represent significant tourist attractions that reflect deep-seated belief systems and traditions.

The Osun Osogbo Grove, located in Osun State, is one of Nigeria's most important cultural landmarks and a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site (Oyeleye and Bigon, 2025). It is revered for its historical, ecological, and spiritual significance. The grove serves as the sacred sanctuary of the Yoruba goddess Osun and hosts the annual Osun-Osogbo Festival, which draws thousands of tourists and devotees from around the world (Nourse, 2021). Its unique combination of religion, history, and biodiversity makes it a focal point for studying the intersection of cultural tourism and sustainable development.



Tourism, when well-managed, offers multifaceted benefits including economic diversification, employment generation, social integration, and environmental awareness (Bamiro et al., 2025). However, achieving sustainability within cultural tourism requires balancing environmental preservation, socio-cultural integrity, and economic viability (Han et al., 2025). The development of sustainable cultural tourism is now considered a key strategy for revitalising communities, preserving heritage, and ensuring long-term benefits for host regions (Sriwapee et al., 2025).

Despite these potentials, research suggests that the practical application of sustainability principles in tourism development—especially in heritage contexts like the Osun Osogbo Grove—remains fragmented and underexplored (Kelle, 2017; Itanyemi, 2017). Previous studies have often focused on specific stakeholder groups such as local residents or government agencies, without adopting a holistic stakeholder-inclusive approach to understanding sustainable tourism outcomes (Tijani & Orga, 2019). Yet, sustainable development requires coordinated efforts and shared values among multiple actors—government bodies, community members, tourism practitioners, religious custodians, and conservationists (Sari et al., 2025; Gaonkar and Sukthankar, 2025; Mteti et al., 2025).

The study of stakeholder perceptions is thus vital for crafting culturally sensitive, economically sound, and environmentally responsible tourism policies. This study is premised on the need to assess these varied perspectives and determine how cultural tourism at Osun Osogbo Grove can be leveraged for sustainable development—one that preserves heritage while promoting inclusive growth and ecological balance. This study answered the following questions:

Do socioeconomic characteristics of stakeholders (age, types of occupation and educational qualification) influence attitudinal disposition to cultural tourism potential of Osun Osogbo grove?

How do the activities of stakeholders (tour guides, food vendors, cultural artifact vendors and adherents of Osun goddess) impact the development of cultural tourism attributes of the Osun Osogbo grove?

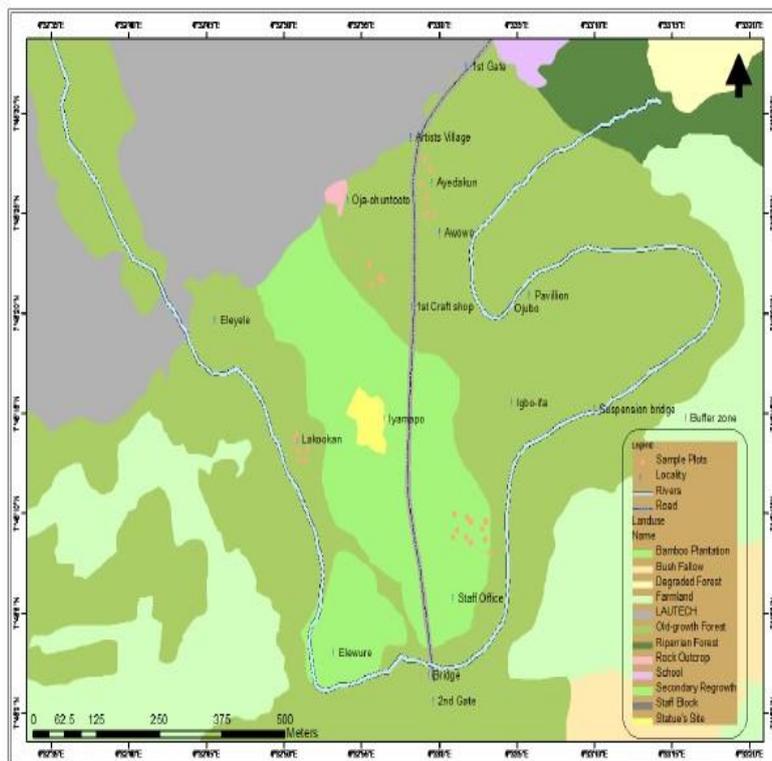
2.0 Methodology

2.1 Study Area

This study was conducted at the Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove in Osun State, Nigeria—a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its rich

cultural and spiritual significance. Located in the heart of Yoruba land (Figure 1), Osogbo has long been a cultural and commercial hub, attracting tourists with its vibrant traditions, proximity to satellite towns, and accessibility via the north-south rail line. The grove hosts the annual Osun-Osogbo Festival, drawing worshippers and tourists interested in the Yoruba heritage and the worship of the Osun goddess (Orga, 2016).

Figure 1: Map of Osun Osogbo Sacred grove and its land use types (Falade and Bada, 2017)



2.2 Research Design

This study employed a **descriptive survey design** to explore stakeholders' perceptions of the cultural tourism potential and sustainable development of the Osun Osogbo Grove. Structured questionnaires were used to gather data from key stakeholder groups.



The design facilitated analysis of socio-demographic characteristics, stakeholder roles, tourism activities, and the impact of management practices on social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Statistical tools including t-tests, ANOVA, and regression were used to test the study's hypotheses and draw generalizations. Additionally, a **case study approach** provided an in-depth exploration of Osun Grove as a cultural institution, aligning with previous related research designs (Begum et al., 2014; Luštický et al., 2016; Onuoha, 2020).

2.3 Population and Sampling Frame of the Study

The study's population consisted of stakeholders directly involved in or economically dependent on the Osun Osogbo Grove. A **reconnaissance survey** (Table 1) identified **3,489 individuals** across **four major stakeholder groups** selected using clear inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Religious groups (Priests and adherents of the Osun goddess)

Vendors (Traders in cultural artefacts, food, crafts)

Tour service providers (Hoteliers, cab drivers, tour guides)

Government officials (Staff from Osun State Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Tourism Board, etc.)

The inclusion criteria prioritised relevance, influence, economic contribution, and accessibility, while exclusion was based on minimal involvement, role overlap, or unwillingness to participate. This strategic sampling ensured a balanced and representative view of the grove's cultural, economic, and administrative .

Table 1: Population Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Name of Stakeholders	Types of Groups Represented	Categories of Groups	Number Registered	Total
1	Priest and Adherent of Osun Worshippers	Religious Groups	Babalawo Ifa Priest Iyalawo Olorisha Priestesses of Osun Shrine Keepers Diviners	25 30 15 32 04 30 251 587 169	

			(Awo) Worshippers (Adherents) Cultural Practitioners Community Leaders Healers Initiates	15 29 102	1338
2	Traders in Cultural Artifacts (Cloth, Beads, Foods, Drinks, Art Works etc)	Vendors	Artisan Traders Wood Carvers Bead Makers Metal Workers Textile Artist (Tie and Dye) Ceramic Artist Painters and Muralist Cultural Souvenir Vendors General Souvenir Clothing and Textile Vendors Spiritual/ Ritual item Traders Offering Vendors Religious Artifact sellers Catering Food Sellers Others	39 73 75 199 30 32 120 30 15 47 123 215	998

3	Hoteliers, Cab Operators and Tour Guide	Tour service Providers	Accommodation Hoteliers (registered hotels) Tour Service Providers Cab Operators Local Taxi Service Ride Hailing Service Private car Rentals Tour Guide Cultural tour guide Nature tour guide Festival tour guide Community tour guide	268 126 307 59 33 25 37 63 59	977
4	Public sector staff	Government officials	Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Osun State Tourism Board of Osun State National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM) Osogbo National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) Center for Black Culture and	71 55 19 16 15	176

			International Understanding		
	TOTAL				3489

Source: Osun State Tourism Board (2023)

2.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

A two-stage sampling technique was employed in this study. In the first stage, inclusion criteria were used to select four key stakeholder groups from a larger pool of nine (Sørensen & Grindsted, 2021), resulting in a sampling frame of 3,489 individuals (Table 2). In the second stage, 10% of each group was systematically sampled from their official registration records maintained by the Osun State Tourism Board, which ensures the legitimacy and accountability of festival participants. This process produced a final sample size of 359 respondents, deemed representative of the population. The groups and their sample contributions are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size

S/N	Stakeholder Group	Type	Population	Sample Size (10%)
1	Priests and Adherents of Osun worshippers	Religious Group	1,338	137
2	Traders in cultural artefacts (clothes, beads, food)	Vendors	998	102
3	Hoteliers, Cab Operators, Tour Guides	Tour Service Providers	977	101
4	Public Sector Staff (Govt. & Security Agencies)	Government Officials	176	19
	Total		3,489	359



These respondents were selected based on their **direct involvement in tourism activities, custodianship of cultural heritage, and economic dependence on the grove**. Their input is vital for understanding how cultural tourism influences the **sustainable development** of the Osun Osogbo Grove.

2.5 Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected using a survey method, focusing on stakeholders' demographic details, attitudinal dispositions, cultural tourism activities, and sustainable management of the Osun Osogbo Grove. The method captured relationships between variables such as tourism impact, socio-cultural resources, and government oversight. Respondents completed structured questionnaires addressing these dimensions, allowing analysis of patterns and opinions.

2.6 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the research tool covering demographic data, attitudinal dispositions, cultural tourism activities, stakeholder roles, environmental sustainability, and economic effects. A 5-point Likert scale was adopted for measuring perceptions. A total of 359 copies were distributed to systematically selected stakeholders to comprehensively capture all study variables.

2.7 Methods of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation) to explore respondent characteristics and core variables, and inferential statistics (Chi-square test) to test hypotheses. Hypotheses 1–6 were tested at a 5% significance level to assess associations and predictive relationships.

2.8 Reliability and Validity Test of Research Instrument

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha via SPSS. Table 3 shows the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Research Variables.

All variables recorded values ≥ 0.70 , indicating strong internal consistency. Three types of validity were applied:

Construct Validity – Ensured questionnaire items aligned with research objectives.

Content Validity – Questions focused on relevant constructs using close-ended formats.

Internal Validity – Supervisor reviewed and validated the instrument to eliminate bias.

Table 3: Cronbach Alpha's Coefficient of Research Variables

S/N	Variables	Cronbach Alpha
1	Attitudinal disposition to cultural tourism.	0.78
2	Perception on cultural tourism activities	0.81
3	Development of cultural tourism attributes of Osun Osogbo grove.	0.71
4	Sustainable tourism of Osun Osogbo grove	0.72
5	Management oversight functions in Osun Osogbo grove	0.85
6	Sustainable use of the social-cultural resources in Osun Osogbo grove.	0.70
7	Sustainable development of the environmental resources in Osun Osogbo grove.	0.75
8	Sustainable usage of the economic resources in Osun Osogbo grove	0.76

2.9 Ethical Considerations

Participants gave informed consent and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. No identifying details were required. Respondents were made aware of the purpose and potential public benefit of the study. The study avoided harm and adhered to ethical standards, ensuring a safe and respectful research environment.

3.0 Results And Discussion

3.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study had a high response rate of 97%, with 347 valid questionnaires analyzed. The gender distribution shows a slight female majority (52.2%). Most respondents were between ages 25–34 years (31.1%) and 35–44 years (25.4%), indicating a predominantly youthful group. A large proportion (65.7%) were married. In terms of education, 51.3% held a first degree, followed by 16.7% with a Master's degree, reflecting a well-educated population. Regarding family size, the majority (63.7%) had 1–3 family members, suggesting small household sizes. The occupational breakdown revealed that religious priests

(37.5%) and vendors (30.2%) were the most represented stakeholder groups, followed by tour guides (24.8%) and government officials (7.5%). This mix reflects direct and relevant stakeholders involved in the cultural and economic operations of the Osun Osogbo Grove.

3.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Osun Osogbo Grove

Findings from Table 4 indicate that respondents demonstrated strong awareness and engagement with both sustainable development and cultural preservation at the Osun Osogbo Grove. A large majority were familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (84.1%) and agreed that the grove promotes cultural tourism (93.4%). Most respondents (89%) affirmed the presence of protective measures for cultural artefacts, while 69.7% expressed concern over threats from foreign cultural influences. Additionally, 82.7% reported familiarity with circular economy principles, reflecting environmental consciousness. Overall, the results suggest that stakeholders are well-informed, culturally aware, and actively involved in the sustainable management of the grove.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Charateristics	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	166	47.8
	Female	181	52.2
	Total	347	100.0
Age	24 Years and below	47	13.5
	25 - 34 years	108	31.1
	35 – 44 years	88	25.4
	45 – 54 years	75	21.6
	55 – 64 years	22	6.3
	65 years and above	7	2.0
	Total	347	100.0
Marital Status	Single	90	25.9
	Married	228	65.7
	Separated	10	2.9
	Divorced	12	3.5
	Widowed	7	2.0
	Total	347	100.0
Educational	SSCE	31	8.9

Qualification	ND	43	12.4
	First Degree	178	51.3
	Master's Degree	58	16.7
	PhD	37	10.7
	Total	347	100.0
Family Size	1 – 3	221	63.7
	4 – 6	105	30.3
	7 – 9	12	3.5
	10 – 13	8	2.2
	14 – 16	1	3.0
	Total	347	100.0
Occupational Type	Vendor	105	30.2
	Government Officials	26	7.5
	Religious Priest	130	37.5
	Tour Guides	86	24.8
	Total	347	100.0

3.3. Descriptive Analysis of the Osun Osogbo Grove

The analysis in Table 4.2 provides insights into respondents' knowledge and perceptions regarding sustainability and cultural preservation at the Osun Osogbo Grove. A majority (84.1%) reported being adequately informed about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a low standard deviation ($SD = 0.366$) and mean of 1.16, indicating a uniform understanding among respondents. Even more significantly, 93.4% agreed that the grove's organisation supports the development of cultural tourism (Mean = 1.07; $SD = 0.249$), suggesting a strong consensus.

Similarly, 89% confirmed that there are adequate measures in place to protect the grove's cultural artefacts (Mean = 1.11; $SD = 0.313$), reinforcing the grove's commitment to heritage preservation. However, 69.7% of respondents believed the grove's cultural artefacts are under threat from foreign cultural influence (Mean = 1.30; $SD = 0.460$), indicating concern for cultural erosion. Additionally, 82.7% demonstrated familiarity with circular economy practices like reuse, reduce, and recycle (Mean = 1.17; $SD = 0.379$), highlighting environmental consciousness. These statistics confirm that the surveyed participants are not only aware of cultural and



environmental practices but are actively engaged stakeholders in the grove's sustainable management.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on the Osun Osogbo Grove

Variables	Frequency (Percent)			Mean	Std. Deviation
	Yes	No	Total		
Are you adequately informed about the principles of any of the sustainable development goals?	292 (84.1%)	55 (15.9%)	347 (100%)	1.16	0.366
Do you believe that the organisation and running of the grove encourages the development of cultural tourism?	324 (93.4%)	23 (6.6%)	347 (100%)	1.07	0.249
Are there adequate measures in place to secure the cultural artefacts in the grove?	309 (89%)	38 (11%)	347 (100%)	1.11	0.313
Do you agree that the cultural artefacts of the Idanre Hill are under threat to be lost to foreign culture?	242 (69.7%)	105 (30.3%)	347 (100%)	1.30	0.460
Are you familiar with the principles of circular economy (reuse, reduce, recycle)?	287 (82.7%)	60 (17.3%)	347 (100%)	1.17	0.379

3.4 Influence of Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Attitudinal Disposition of Respondents to Cultural Tourism

Table 4.3.1 presents descriptive statistics on the attitudinal disposition of respondents toward cultural tourism at Osun Osogbo Grove. Most items recorded mean values close to 4.0 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating that respondents fairly often demonstrate cultural tourism-friendly attitudes. For instance, high mean scores were recorded for statements such as belief in the Osun deity (Mean = 4.03), recognition of the grove as a source of livelihood (Mean = 3.95), and support for local involvement in tourism (Mean = 4.07). The highest agreement was with the view that Osun Grove helps preserve local traditions (Mean = 4.47). Meanwhile, lower mean scores appeared for attitudes suggesting dissent or concern, such as dissatisfaction with outdated traditional laws (Mean = 2.63) and reactions to disrespect from tourists (Mean = 3.26), indicating less frequent endorsement of these views. The standard deviations (ranging from 0.992 to 1.449) indicate moderate variability in responses across all attitudinal items as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Attitudinal Disposition of Respondents to Cultural Tourism Potential

Items	Statements	Frequency	Mean Response	Std. Deviation
B1	The environment around the grove inspires positive cultural values in me	347	3.88	1.177
B2	I gladly identify with the cultural values that Osun grove represents.	347	3.82	1.141
B3	I speak the Yoruba language to both locals and strangers at the grove in order to promote the cultural identity of the grove	347	3.62	1.099
B4	I believe that the Osun deity is real and it worship should be preserved	347	4.03	1.279
B5	In the last month, how often have you gone to other worshipping places apart from Osun grove?	347	3.10	1.011

B6	I deliberately dress in Yoruba attire in order to promote the culture attributes of Osun grove	347	3.69	1.035
B7	I believe that Yoruba meals are important part of the Osun worship and should be the only type sold in and around the port	347	3.67	1.152
B8	I prefer wearing Yoruba locally made beads than foreign jewelries	347	3.47	1.003
B9	You get unhappy when tourists refused to accord what you feel is the right respect to the grove and its environment	347	3.26	1.182
B10	You feel that some of the traditional laws governing the running of the grove are outdated and they are not allowing tourists to be freer at the grove	347	2.63	1.449
B11	The grove personally represents to me a means of livelihood	347	3.95	1.126
B12	I believe sustainable tourism in Osun grove can be improved by getting the locals involved in tourism related activities	347	4.07	1.091
B13	Osun grove helps preserve local tradition	347	4.47	0.992

Table 7 further examines how socio-demographic characteristics (age, occupation, and educational qualification) influence these attitudes using Chi-square analysis. Results show that occupation has a significant effect on attitudinal disposition ($\chi^2 = 36.54$, $df = 12$, $p = 0.021$), suggesting that roles such as vendors, government officials, religious priests, and tour guides meaningfully influence how individuals engage with cultural tourism. In contrast, age ($\chi^2 = 28.971$,

df = 20, $p = 0.142$) and educational qualification ($\chi^2 = 19.46$, df = 16, $p = 0.322$) did not show statistically significant influence on attitudes, indicating these factors do not independently shape stakeholders' views toward cultural tourism in the grove. The findings from both tables confirm that respondents generally hold positive attitudes toward the cultural values and tourism potential of the Osun Osogbo Grove. However, occupation is the only socio-demographic variable with a statistically significant influence, affirming the importance of stakeholder roles in shaping cultural attitudes and engagement. This supports the need for targeted interventions focused on occupation-specific dynamics to strengthen cultural tourism participation.

Table 7: Socio-demographic Factors on Attitudinal Dispositions

Socio-demographic	Categories	Scale for Attitude Dispositions					Frequency	Chi-square statistics		
		Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often		χ^2	df	p-value
Age	24 Years and below	3	3	14	7	20	47	28.971	20	0.142
	25 - 34 years	8	8	35	22	36	108			
	35 - 44 years	6	6	28	18	29	88			
	45 - 54 years	6	6	22	14	27	75			
	55 - 64 years	2	2	7	4	7	22			
	65 years and above	1	1	2	2	2	7			
Occupation	Vendor	7	9	28	23	39	105	36.54	12	0.021
	Government Officials	2	1	10	5	8	26			
	Religious Priest	9	12	37	26	46	130			
	Tour Guides	7	4	33	14	28	86			
Educational Qualification	SSCE	2	1	9	6	12	31	19.46	16	0.322
	ND	3	4	13	8	16	43			
	First Degree	14	13	56	36	59	178			
	Master's Degree	4	4	18	11	21	58			
	PhD	2	4	12	6	13	37			

The findings indicate that while age and educational qualification did not significantly influence stakeholders' attitudinal disposition toward cultural tourism at Osun Osogbo Grove, occupational type did show a significant effect. This suggests that individuals' professional roles shape their cultural engagement more than their age or education level. The lack of influence from age and education may be due to factors like cultural disconnection, elitism, or time constraints, as noted by Tijani and Orga (2019). These results align with Rodriguez et al. (2020), who observed that attitudes toward circular practices in tourism vary with socio-economic characteristics, highlighting the need for targeted awareness campaigns across demographic lines.

3.5 Influence of Stakeholder's Activities (tour guides, food vendors, cultural artifact vendors and adherents of Osun goddess) on the Development of Cultural Tourism Attributes of Osun Osogbo Grove

The Analysis

presented in Tables 8 highlights the significant influence of stakeholder activities—such as those of tour guides, food vendors, cultural artifact sellers, and adherents of the Osun goddess—on the development of cultural tourism attributes at the Osun Osogbo Grove. A substantial proportion of respondents agreed that vendors and other stakeholders frequently promote cultural values by dressing in native attire, maintaining vibrant unions, and participating in policy and promotional efforts. Although some respondents noted challenges such as conflicting interests among stakeholders and the commercialization of the festival diluting its spiritual significance, the majority view indicated that these groups contribute meaningfully to sustaining the grove's cultural identity. The frequent affirmation of stakeholder engagement across the response categories underscores their relevance in shaping the grove's cultural tourism outlook.

Table 8: Role of Stakeholders in the Development of Cultural Tourism Attributes of Osun Osogbo Grove

Questions	Response						Total
	N	AN	S	FO	VO		
The activities of vendors operating around the grove promote its cultural tourism potential	F	23	29	71	143	81	347
	%	6.6	8.4	20.5	41.2	23.3	100.0
Vendors are encouraged to dress in Yoruba native attire in order to promote the sociocultural tourism potential of the grove	F	14	19	102	53	159	347
	%	4.0	5.5	29.4	15.3	45.8	100.0
The vendors have a vibrant association/union which promote cultural tourism potentials of the grove	F	34	23	74	153	63	347
	%	9.8	6.6	21.3	44.1	18.2	100.0
The government agencies do not have any policy in place to promote cultural tourism potential of the grove	F	59	26	114	121	27	347
	%	17.0	7.5	32.9	34.9	7.8	100.0
There are consistent	F	35	22	86	77	127	347

visible promotion of cultural tourism potentials of the grove by the concerned agencies	%	10.1	6.3	24.8	22.2	36.6	100.0
The management of the grove should be left in the custody of the adherents of Osun goddess because they are the custodian of the tradition and can preserve the cultural values better	F	35	32	153	47	80	347
	%	10.1	9.2	44.1	13.5	23.1	100.0
I believe that the 'business angle' of the festival is damaging the spiritual component of the Osun worship	F	144	21	89	47	46	347
	%	41.5	6.1	25.6	13.5	13.3	100.0
I feel that the various stakeholders (vendors, priests, community members, government agencies, tour guides) are all working at cross purposes on the development of the grove potential	F	32	19	68	59	169	347
	%	9.2	5.5	19.6	17.0	48.7	100.0
I perceive the eroding away of key cultural values of the grove on yearly basis in recent times	F	54	34	194	51	14	347
	%	15.6	9.8	55.9	14.7	4.0	100.0
Sustainable tourism development requires informed participation of all relevant stakeholders	F	17	26	82	149	73	347
	%	4.9	7.5	23.6	42.9	21.0	100.0

Source: Outputs from SPSS (2025)

Furthermore, the chi-square test result ($\chi^2 = 46.588$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$) confirms that stakeholder activities significantly influence cultural tourism development at the grove (Table 9). This finding emphasizes

the essential roles played by local actors in preserving cultural heritage, promoting sustainable tourism, and enhancing visitor experiences. It also underscores the potential of inclusive and cooperative efforts in cultural tourism planning. Notably, this study's findings contradict previous research by Oluwatuyi and Omotoba (2016), which reported low community involvement due to limited incentives, and Udiji et al. (2018), who observed minimal youth participation in cultural tourism within the Niger Delta owing to their exclusion from formal agreements. This contrast points to the unique and active involvement of stakeholders in Osun Osogbo, suggesting a model worth emulating in similar cultural heritage sites.

Table 9: Chi-square Statistics for Hypothesis Two

Questions	Response						Total
	N	AN	S	FO	VO		
Observed	F	42	38	103	77	87	347
Averaged	%	12.1	11.0	29.7	22.1	25.1	100.0
Frequencies	X ²	46.588					
Chi Square	df	4					
	P	< 0.05					

The findings from the analysis of stakeholder involvement in the development of cultural tourism attributes at the Osun Osogbo Grove show that key groups—including vendors, tour guides, cultural artifact vendors, community members, government agencies, and adherents of the Osun goddess—play significant and active roles. The data reveal that many stakeholders contribute positively by promoting indigenous dressing, engaging in associations that support cultural values, and participating in collaborative efforts to sustain the grove's cultural identity. This shared involvement helps preserve heritage, boost the local economy, encourage cultural pride, and enhance sustainable tourism. Notably, the majority of respondents agreed that stakeholders influence cultural tourism development either "sometimes," "fairly often," or "very often," with a statistically significant chi-square result ($X^2 = 46.588$, $p < 0.05$), affirming the importance of their roles.

These findings contradict the conclusions of Oluwatuyi and Omotoba (2016), who reported limited community engagement in cultural tourism due to inadequate incentives. Similarly, the present study disagrees with Udiji et al. (2018), whose research showed that rural youth in the Niger Delta were largely excluded from cultural tourism activities due to their omission from General Memorandums of

Understanding (GMOUs). Unlike those studies, the Osun Osogbo Grove reflects a more inclusive model, where stakeholders acknowledge their shared responsibility in maintaining cultural authenticity and tourism value. This emphasizes the grove as an example of effective stakeholder collaboration in heritage tourism development.

4.0 Conclusion

This study concludes that the Osun Osogbo Grove serves as a vital hub for cultural preservation, sustainable tourism, and community engagement. The findings confirm that while socio-demographic factors such as age and education do not significantly influence stakeholders' attitudes toward cultural tourism, occupational roles play a critical role. Vendors, priests, tour guides, and government officials each bring unique contributions that shape the grove's cultural identity and tourist appeal. Furthermore, stakeholder activities significantly impact the development of cultural tourism attributes, as evidenced by high levels of participation in cultural promotion, traditional practices, and cooperative efforts. These insights validate the grove's current model of inclusive stakeholder engagement as an effective approach to cultural heritage management and sustainable development.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the institutionalization of stakeholder collaboration frameworks to enhance synergy among the various groups—especially in aligning economic, cultural, and spiritual objectives. Government agencies should strengthen policy support and increase incentives for active community participation in cultural tourism. Awareness campaigns and training programs targeting different occupational groups can further deepen cultural appreciation and sustainable practices. Additionally, measures should be taken to prevent cultural erosion and ensure that commercialization does not compromise spiritual and cultural integrity. Lastly, the Osun Osogbo Grove's stakeholder-inclusive model should be replicated in other heritage sites to promote effective tourism governance, cultural sustainability, and socioeconomic development.

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