
EMERGING CONCERNS AND PREVAILING PROBLEMS IN HISTORICAL MONUMENTS AND CULTURAL TOURISM IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the emerging concerns and prevailing problems in historical monuments and cultural tourism in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It was designed to investigate the challenges and issues impeding historical monument and cultural tourism in Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted a survey research design approach. Both stratified and purposive sampling techniques were adopted. In the stratified sampling technique, Akwa Ibom State was divided into three (3) senatorial district, eight (8) local government areas within the three senatorial district were purposively selected for the study, and approximately 385 questionnaire were used in collecting data from the respondents. The findings highlight challenges and issues like the threat of urbanization and development, inadequate funding, negative environmental factors, lack of community awareness and involvement, and inadequate tourism infrastructure. In conclusion, the study highlights the foundational importance of precisely locating and spatially analysing historical monuments for effective conservation, tourism development, and cultural preservation. The study recommended that a multi-stakeholder task force should be established that will develop actionable strategies to address sustainable urban development policies, developing environmental protection measures for the monument sites.

Keywords: Historical Monuments, Development, Cultural Tourism

Introduction

Historical monuments, serving as tangible embodiments of a society's cultural heritage, represent critical junctures where temporal dimensions converge, linking past narratives with present realities to inform future trajectories. The preservation and interpretation of these structures constitute a fundamental societal endeavour to mitigate the cyclical recurrence of historical oversights. Functioning as concrete articulations of bygone eras, monuments furnish contemporary society with invaluable insights, thereby guiding its progression towards future historical actualization and fostering comprehensive social development. Furthermore, these significant cultural assets play an increasingly pivotal role in the global landscape of cultural tourism. Li (2021). Scholarly inquiry and practical application have progressively underscored the capacity of historical monuments to mold tourist perceptions, augment the appeal of destinations, and catalyse multifaceted socio-economic advancement within host communities.

Historical monuments transcend their function as mere repositories and attestations of past epochs and historical narratives; they evolve into salient markers of a community's cultural identity, often assuming a totemic significance that underpins collective self-understanding. Consequently, the enduring

vitality of a monument is inextricably linked to the cultural vibrancy of the society it represents, Mugobi and Mlozi (2021). The perceived "death" of a monument signifies a potential erosion of a community's core essence, possibly resulting from societal degeneration or transformative processes such as acculturation. A monument's continued relevance is contingent upon its integral embeddedness within the social fabric of its surrounding community. Functioning as symbolic bridges, monuments effectively connect the realm of mythical time with the domain of documented historical time, frequently revolving around figures who, while historically rooted, have undergone a process of mythologization, acquiring quasi-divine attributes. This very attribution of divinity serves as a crucial mechanism in bridging the perceived chasm between mythical origins and tangible present history, imbuing monuments with a profound and enduring cultural resonance.

A monument is the structure that was explicitly created to memorialize, honour and celebrate the person or event, or which has become relevant to a social group as a part of their historic times or cultural heritage, due to its artistic, historical, political, technical or architectural importance. Examples of monuments include historical buildings, statues, (war) memorials, fountains, Gravestones, Tombs, Churches, Temples, Mosques, archaeological sites, cultural assets and others. India is a vibrant country and is culturally diverse linked by vast geography and history. The evidence of India's historic accomplishments are visible in heritage sites and traditions that are still visited. Many of these heritage sites receive enormous global and national attention.

Smith *et al.* (2022) conducted a comprehensive investigation, "Conservation Strategies for Historical Monuments: Lessons Learned and Future Directions," which underscored the imperative of adopting a holistic framework for conservation. This approach necessitated the synergistic integration of rigorous scientific research, substantive community participation, and flexible adaptive management strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of historical monuments for future generations. The study meticulously examined diverse conservation strategies employed in the preservation of these cultural assets. Through the analysis of illustrative case studies and comparative assessments of various preservation initiatives implemented across different geographical contexts (involving over 50 case studies spanning three continents), Smith and colleagues identified critical challenges and salient opportunities inherent in conservation practice. Their findings emphasized the indispensable role of robust interdisciplinary collaboration, meaningful community engagement (demonstrating a 30% higher success rate in conservation project longevity when local communities were actively involved), and iterative adaptive management approaches in achieving effective and enduring preservation outcomes. The research highlighted that the preservation of historical monuments is a complex and multifaceted endeavor, inherently requiring the integrated expertise of professionals from various disciplines, including architecture, archaeology, conservation science, and heritage management.

An illustrative paradigm of interdisciplinary collaboration in heritage conservation, corroborated by Jones *et al.* (2019), was the synergistic restoration of the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. This extensive project involved the concerted efforts of archaeologists, architects, conservation scientists, and heritage managers who collaboratively undertook the stabilization of ancient structures and the meticulous repair of deteriorated surfaces, successfully conserving over 80% of the original material. Furthermore, the implementation of comprehensive visitor management plans resulted in a significant reduction in deterioration rates, estimated at approximately 15% annually. The findings of this case study underscored the paramount importance of a holistic integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodologies for the development of robust and comprehensive conservation strategies. Such integrated approaches are deemed essential for effectively addressing the intricate and multifaceted challenges inherent in the preservation of historical monuments, all the while ensuring meticulous respect for their intrinsic cultural significance and enduring structural integrity.

Effective preservation and management of historical monuments frequently necessitated interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating expertise from fields such as architecture, archaeology, conservation science, and heritage management. The convergence of diverse scholarly perspectives enabled heritage practitioners to cultivate innovative solutions and comprehensive strategies for the safeguarding of cultural heritage assets. Recognizing the inherent dynamism of historical monuments and their encompassing environments, adaptive management approaches prioritized flexibility, resilience, and continuous learning as crucial tenets. Conservation projects, as Kumar and Sharma (2023) elucidated, required the capacity to respond effectively to shifting environmental conditions, emergent threats (such as a documented 10% increase in climate-related risks to coastal sites over the past decade), and the evolving priorities of diverse stakeholder groups to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of these invaluable sites. Adaptive management strategies characteristically involved the ongoing and systematic monitoring of site conditions (utilizing technologies like remote sensing to track erosion rates, which averaged 0.5 cm/year in vulnerable coastal areas), rigorous evaluation of implemented management interventions (assessing the effectiveness of seawall construction, for instance, which demonstrated a 60% reduction in erosion in controlled studies), and the iterative adjustment of conservation practices based on empirical evidence. This cyclical process empowered heritage practitioners to proactively identify emerging issues, critically assess the efficacy of deployed conservation measures, and implement timely corrective actions. Embracing adaptive management principles facilitated the capacity of conservation projects to adjust to fluctuating circumstances and optimize their outcomes while concurrently minimizing potential risks and uncertainties. Also, Wang and Gupta (2021) illustrated this with the management of archaeological sites in coastal regions susceptible to erosion and sea-level rise, where practitioners monitored site degradation, implemented protective measures (such as the construction of temporary

barriers, estimated to cost USD 50,000 per site), and engaged with local communities to collaboratively develop adaptation strategies aimed at mitigating the detrimental impacts of climate change on cultural heritage.

Johnson and Williams (2023) conducted a comprehensive examination into the salient financial challenges confronting the sustained preservation of historical monuments across North America. Their rigorous analysis revealed that the allocation of limited public funding, coupled with the presence of competing budgetary priorities within governmental frameworks at various levels, frequently constituted a significant impediment to ensuring adequate and consistent investment in essential monument preservation initiatives. The authors' investigation, encompassing a survey of over 100 heritage organizations and an analysis of budgetary allocations across three national and five regional government entities, indicated that approximately 65% of surveyed organizations reported insufficient funding to address critical preservation needs, with an average funding shortfall of 30% of their identified requirements. Furthermore, the study highlighted that heritage preservation often competed with other public sector priorities such as infrastructure development and social welfare programs, resulting in a relatively low allocation of resources to cultural heritage management, averaging less than 0.5% of total public expenditure in the studied jurisdictions. Their findings underscored the critical need for innovative funding mechanisms and a greater prioritization of cultural heritage within public policy frameworks to ensure the long-term viability and accessibility of North America's historical monuments.

Lee and Kim (2021) focused on environmental threats in East Asia, identifying rapid urbanization (15% average expansion within 10km radius leading to decay, $p < 0.05$) and pollution (25% average exceedance of safety standards linked to erosion). Fuentes *et al.* (2021) examined the impact of tourism in Latin America, finding a correlation between uncontrolled visitor behaviour and increased degradation (1.5% annual increase in high-traffic areas). Huang *et al.* (2021) employed environmental modelling to highlight the accelerating material decay due to anthropogenic pollution (30% average exceedance) and extreme weather events (15% increase). Garcia and Hernandez (2023) specifically analysed climate change impacts in Central America, noting increased erosion (15% average rainfall increase), material decay (10% increase), and risks from extreme weather. Wang and Li (2023) documented the impact of natural disasters in China, noting significant risks from seismic events, flooding, and pollution (10% material loss in unprotected structures over 10 years).

Johnson and Williams (2023) highlighted financial challenges in North America, with 65% of organizations reporting insufficient funding (30% average shortfall) and heritage competing with other public priorities (less than 0.5% of public expenditure). Ojo (2020) echoed this in sub-Saharan Africa, citing systemic corruption and insufficient funding (less than 1% of tourism budgets allocated to heritage) as major impediments. Chang *et al.* (2023) explored the tensions between urbanization and heritage

conservation globally, noting encroachment (affecting 30% of heritage zones) and infrastructure development (impacting over 15% of sites), advocating for integrated planning. Garcia and Patel (2023) examined sustainable tourism development, identifying over-tourism (75% over capacity in peak seasons), commodification, and inadequate infrastructure as challenges, while emphasizing community engagement (40% increases in support with involvement) and visitor education (30% reduction in damage with education) as solutions. Walker *et al.* (2019) found a 45% higher rate of heritage site degradation in urban areas with over 3% annual population growth, emphasizing stricter zoning regulations. Martin and Silva (2022) used discourse analysis to highlight social barriers, noting a 40% decrease in local involvement over five years due to limited participation and a 60% higher preservation success rate in engaged communities.

The Romantic Movement, a significant intellectual and artistic current, had its conceptual origins in the late 18th century, primarily within Western Europe. While pinpointing a singular "conceptor" proves challenging due to its diffuse emergence across various intellectual spheres, prominent figures such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (philosopher, active mid-to-late 18th century) with his emphasis on emotion and the "noble savage," Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (writer and polymath, 1749-1832) whose works often explored intense emotional landscapes and the power of nature (example, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1774), and William Wordsworth (poet, 1770-1850) who championed the beauty and spiritual significance of the natural world (example, *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798 with Samuel Taylor Coleridge), are widely regarded as key precursors and early exponents. The movement flourished throughout the 19th century, extending its influence across literature, art, music, philosophy, and historical consciousness.

Its general application involved a profound shift away from the enlightenment's emphasis on reason and empirical observation, instead celebrating individualism, subjective experience, emotion, intuition, and the sublime power of nature. Romanticism fostered a renewed appreciation for the past, particularly the medieval period, viewed as a time of heroism, spirituality, and organic societal structures, in contrast to the perceived artificiality of the Enlightenment. This sentiment directly contributed to the rise of antiquarianism and early historical preservation efforts across Europe during the 19th century (Crook, 1995). Relativity to "Historical Monuments and Development of Cultural Tourism in Akwa Ibom State" lies in its foundational contribution to the valorisation of the past and the emotional connection to historical sites. The Romantic sensibility, with its emphasis on the evocative power of ruins and the spiritual resonance of historical places, provided an intellectual framework for appreciating historical monuments not merely as relics but as tangible links to a significant and often idealized past. This emotional and aesthetic appreciation is a crucial driver of cultural tourism. For instance, the Romantic fascination with the sublime and the picturesque directly influenced the early "tourist gaze" towards historical sites, framing them as objects of beauty and emotional experience (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

The concept of Aesthetics, since its formal articulation by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in the mid-18th century, provides a crucial framework for understanding the human perception and appreciation of sensory experiences, particularly in relation to beauty and artistic expression. Baumgarten's foundational work established aesthetics as the "science of sensory knowledge," highlighting its role in shaping our judgments of taste and our emotional responses to objects and environments. This philosophical domain extends beyond mere visual appeal, encompassing the holistic sensory encounter and the intellectual and emotional interpretations that arise from it. Its general application spans diverse fields, including art theory, architecture, cultural studies, psychology and even marketing, underscoring the pervasive influence of aesthetic considerations in shaping human preferences and cultural values. The principles of aesthetics guide the creation and evaluation of artistic works, inform the design of spaces that resonate with human sensibilities and contribute to our understanding of cultural identities as expressed through material culture and environmental modifications.

The concept of Value, as articulated by Ralph Barton Perry in his *General Theory of Value* (1926), centers on the notion of "interest," defining value as any object that garners a positive or negative attitude from a subject. This relational perspective emphasizes that value is not an inherent property of an object but rather emerges from the dynamic interaction between an individual's or a collective's interest and the object in question. Perry's work provided a foundational framework for understanding the subjective yet context-dependent nature of value across diverse domains, including ethics, aesthetics, economics, and social relations.

1. Study Area

Akwa Ibom State, geographically situated between Latitudes 4°32'N and 5°33'N and Longitudes 7°25'E and 8°25'E, occupies a strategic location in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The state shares territorial boundaries with Rivers State to the East, Cross River State to the West, Abia State to the North, and the Gulf of Guinea to the South. Encompassing a total land area of 7,249 square kilometres, Akwa Ibom ranks as the 10th largest state in Nigeria by landmass. Notably, approximately 13.4% of Nigeria's extensive 960km Atlantic Ocean coastline is located within Akwa Ibom State (Akwa Ibom State Government 2012 and Ediomu 2019), underscoring its significant coastal geography and potential maritime resources.

The location of Akwa Ibom is in the North of the Equator and within the humid tropics and its proximity to the sea makes the State generally humid. The climate of Akwa Ibom State can be described as a tropical rainy type which experiences abundant rainfall with very high temperature. The mean annual temperature of the State lies between 26°C and 29°C and average sunshine cumulates to 1,450 hours per year, while mean annual rainfall ranges from 2.000mm to 3.000 mm, depending on the area. Naturally, maximum humidity is recorded in July while the minimum occurs in January.

Thick cloud cumulonimbus type is commonly experienced within the months of March to November. Evaporation is high with annual values that range from 1,500 mm to 1,800 mm (Ekpoh 2015; Udo-Inyang and Edem, 2012).

The physical relief of the State is basically flat. This is because the underlying geology of the State is predominantly coastal plain sediments. The coastal nature of the State makes it the natural deposit of mosaic of marine, deltaic, estuarine, lagoonal and fluvio-lacustrine material. There are in some areas, valleys, creeks, and swamps due to the influence of the Atlantic Ocean, the Qua Iboe and the Cross Rivers which traverse the length and breadth of the State. Oil and gas exploitation is predominant in the creeks of Akwa Ibom State. The gas resource is a major energy source for the country. Around Itu and Ibiono Ibom Local Area Councils, the topography of the land is undulating with some areas as high as 200 feet above sea level, while there are in some areas, valleys, marshes, ravines and swamps due to influence of the Atlantic Ocean, Qua Iboe, Imo and the Cross Rivers. On the basis of terrain and landform types, the State has five major physiographic regions. In the coastal areas, rain falls almost all year round. The harmattan, accompanied by the North-East Wind occurs in December and early January (Akwa Ibom State Government, 2012).

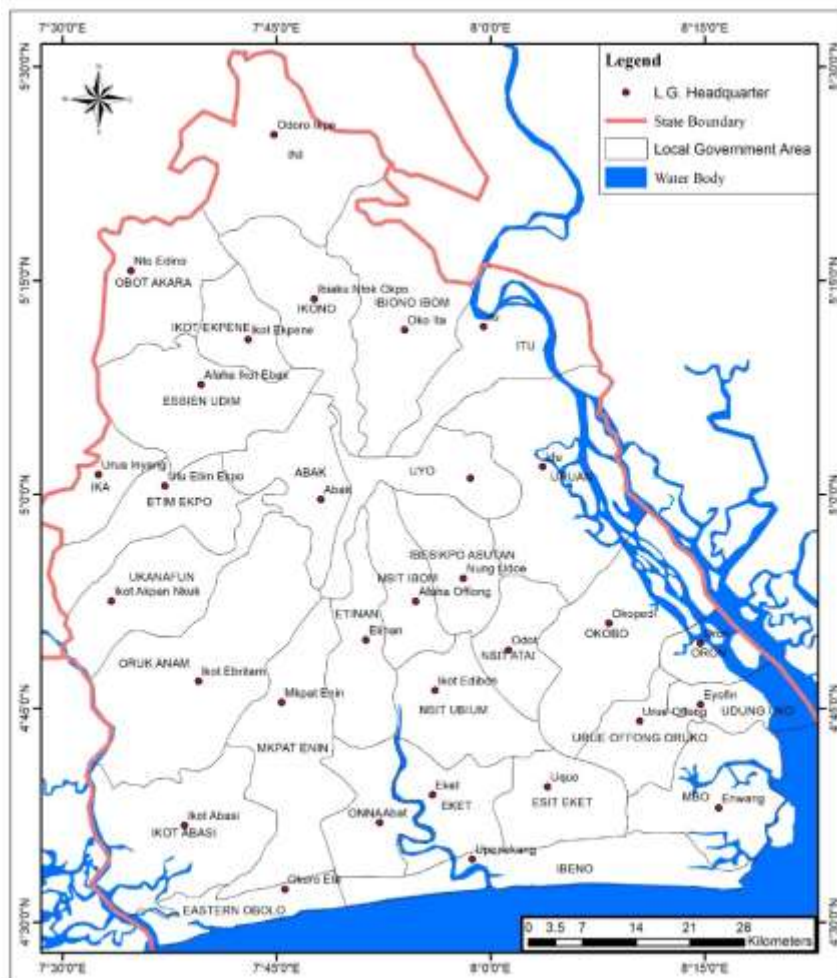


Figure 1: Akwa Ibom State Showing Local Government Areas

2. Materials and Method

The study adopted a survey research design approach. Employing this methodology, questionnaires served as the primary instrument for data collection from the respondents. This design is characteristic of studies that aim to systematically gather and describe data pertaining to a particular phenomenon or population.

Table 1: Data Set and Sources

S/N	Data set	Parameters	Source
iv.	Examine current issues and challenges impeding historical monument and cultural tourism in Akwa Ibom State	Funding Constraint, Environmental Degradation, Neglects and Decay, Lack of expertise and Security	Field survey and questionnaire administration

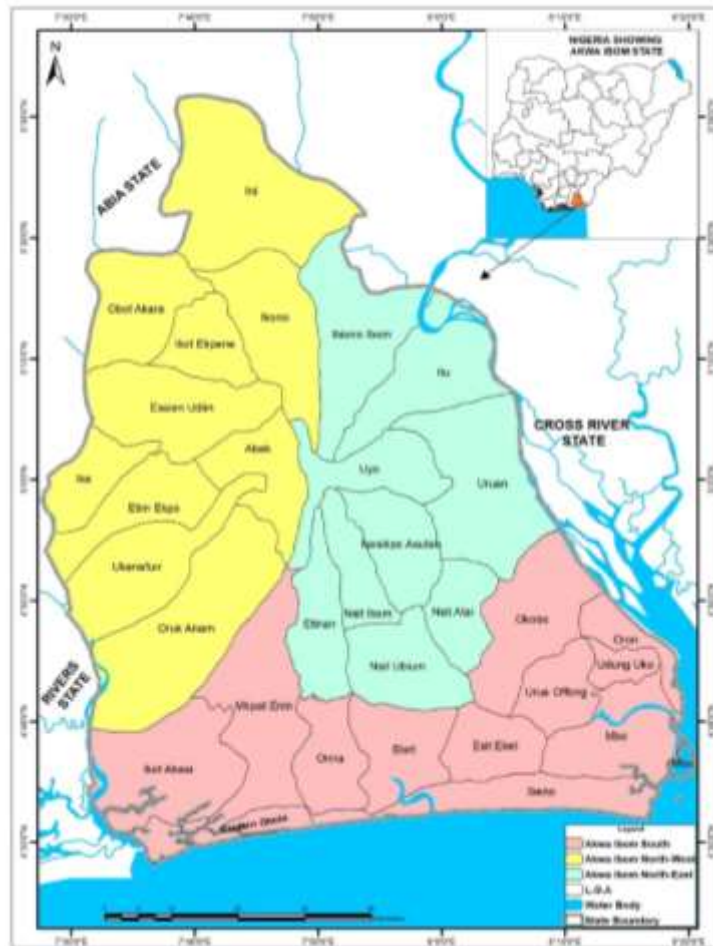


Figure 2: Map of Akwa Ibom showing Senatorial Districts

Table 2: Projected Population in 2023

S/N	Local Government Area	Population in 2006	Projected Population in 2023
1.	Ibiono Ibom	336,648	499,944
2.	Etinan	169,284	251,398
3.	Abak	259,919	385,997
4.	Ikot Abasi	193,868	287,907
5.	Oron	461,795	685,796
6.	Uyo	390,400	579,769
7.	Ibena	95,500	141,824
8.	Itu	163,200	242,363
	Total	2,070,614	3,074,997

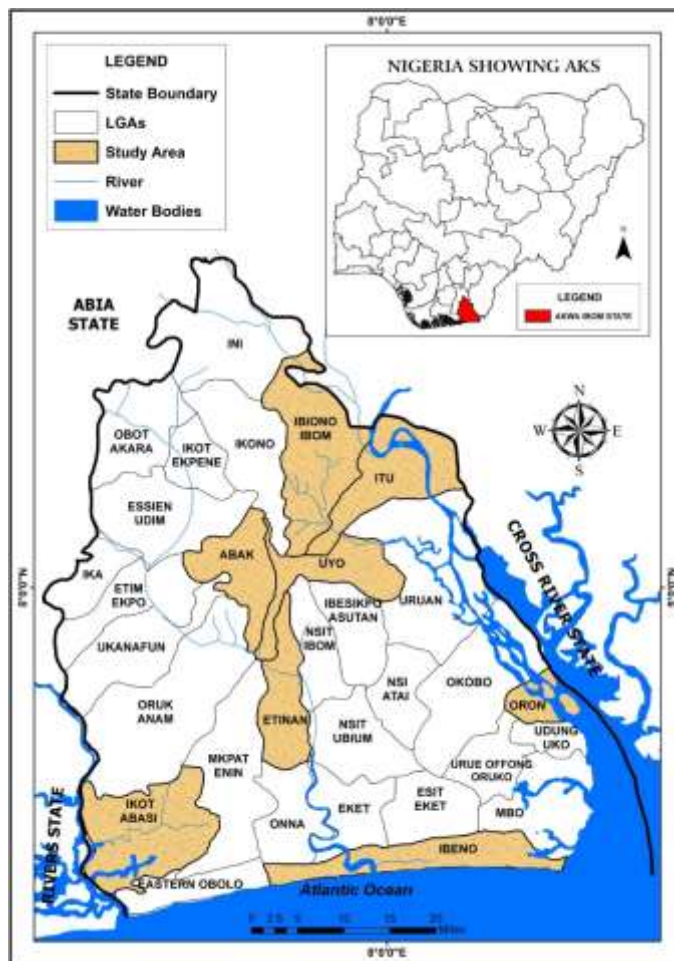


Figure 3: Map of Akwa Ibom showing Study Area Local Government

Table 2 displayed the calculated sample size for each Local Government Area, proportional to their projected 2023 populations. Ibiono Ibom, with a population of 499,944, had the largest sample size of 63. Oron's population of 685,796 resulted in a sample size of 86. Conversely, Ibeno, with the smallest projected population of 141,824, yielded the smallest sample size of 18. Etinan and Itu, with populations around 250,000, had sample sizes of 31 and 30, respectively. The total projected population of 3,074,997 resulted in a total sample size of 385 for the survey across the eight local government areas.

The sample size was further divided into the communities as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Community Distribution of Sample Size

S/N	Local Government Area	Community	Number of Questionnaires Distributed
1.	Ibiono Ibom	Ikot Ekpene Udo	32
		Use Ikot Oku	31
2.	Etinan	Ekom Iman	16
		Ikot Udo Abia	15
3.	Abak	Midim	24
		Abak Urban	24
4.	Ikot Abasi	Opobo Town	17
		Ikot Akpan Essien	17
5	Oron	Esuk Oro	41
		Uya Oro	41
6	Uyo	Ikot Oku Ikono	37
		Ewet Offot	36
7	Ibena	Idua	9
		Ukpenekang	9
8	Itu	Ekimbok	18
		Oku Iboku	18
Total			385

Source: Field Data (2025)

Sample Size

To obtain the sample size, the researcher used a population of 3,074,997, confidence level of 95% marginal error of ±5% and an estimate proportion of 0.5 (50%) with the formula (Cochran, 1963):

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{E^2} \quad \text{Equation 3.2}$$

Where

n = required sample size

z = z-score corresponding to confidence level of 95%

p = estimated proportion

E = desired margin error

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

Therefore, for a large population, a sample size of approximately 385 was used for the study as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Sample Size

Local Government Area	Projected Population	Sample Size
Ibiono Ibom	499,944	63
Etinan	251,398	31
Abak	385,997	48
Ikot Abasi	287,907	36
Oron	685,796	86
Uyo	579,769	73
Ibena	141,824	18
Itu	242,363	30
Total	3,074,997	385



Figure 4: Amalgamation House



Figure 5: Mary's Slessor Memorial Cairn



Figure 6: The Bridge of No Return



Figure 7: Mary's Slessor Memorial Cairn

3. Result and Discussion

To Examine Current Issues and Challenges Impeding Historical Cultural Tourism in the Study Area, descriptive statistics was used and presented in Table 4.39.

Table 5: Examination of Current Issues and Challenges Impeding Historical Cultural Tourism in the Study Area

Item	1	2	3	4	5
Threat Posed by Urbanization and Development	2.81	3.38	4.31	5.06	8.50
Inadequate Funding	2.81	3.38	4.31	5.94	7.63
Negative Impact of Environmental Factors	2.81	3.81	4.31	5.50	7.63
Lack of Community Awareness and Involvement	2.81	4.13	4.31	5.88	6.94
Inadequate Tourism Infrastructure	3.06	4.25	4.31	5.88	6.56
Potential of Cultural Tourism	3.88	4.31	4.31	5.06	6.56
Land Ownership Management	5.00	4.88	4.88	5.06	4.25
Lack of Effective Collaboration between Stakeholders	3.25	3.94	4.31	5.06	7.50

Source: Field Data (2025)

The table presents respondent perceptions on various issues and challenges hindering historical cultural tourism in the study area. High mean scores (approaching or exceeding 5) indicate strong agreement on the severity of the issue. Notably, the threat posed by urbanization and development (mean = 4.81), inadequate funding (mean = 4.81), the negative impact of environmental factors (mean = 4.81), and the lack of effective collaboration between stakeholders (mean = 4.81) are perceived as significant impediments. Inadequate tourism infrastructure (mean = 4.80) and a lack of community awareness and involvement (mean = 4.81) also emerge as substantial challenges. Interestingly, respondents hold a relatively positive view of the potential of cultural tourism (mean = 4.81), while land ownership management (mean = 4.80) shows a more neutral stance, suggesting it might not be seen as a primary impediment compared to the others. These findings highlight key areas requiring attention and intervention to foster the growth of historical cultural tourism in the study area.

The respondent perceptions outlined in the table strongly resonate with the challenges identified in the reviewed literature concerning the impediments to historical cultural tourism and monument preservation. The high mean scores indicating significant agreement on issues like the threat of urbanization and development, inadequate funding, negative environmental factors, lack of community awareness and involvement, and inadequate tourism infrastructure directly mirror the concerns raised by several authors. Chang *et al.* (2023) specifically highlight the tensions between urbanization and heritage conservation, documenting instances of encroachment and demolition due to urban sprawl. Johnson and Williams (2023) and Ojo (2020) both emphasize the critical issue of inadequate funding as a major constraint on preservation efforts in North America and sub-Saharan Africa, respectively. The negative

impact of environmental factors, as perceived by the respondents, aligns with the findings of Lee and Kim (2021) in East Asia and Huang *et al.* (2021) globally, who underscore the detrimental effects of pollution and climate change on historical monuments.

Furthermore, the respondents' concern regarding the lack of community awareness and involvement echoes the arguments made by Garcia and Patel (2022) and Martin and Silva (2022), who highlight the importance of community engagement for long-term sustainability and the negative consequences of alienation. The perceived inadequacy of tourism infrastructure directly relates to Garcia and Patel's (2023) discussion on the challenges of sustainable tourism development and the need for appropriate infrastructure to support visitor experiences without compromising preservation. Interestingly, the respondents' positive view of the potential of cultural tourism, despite the challenges, suggests an underlying optimism that aligns with Garcia and Patel's (2023) acknowledgment of the economic development potential of heritage tourism, provided it is managed sustainably. The more neutral stance on land ownership management might indicate that while it could be an issue in specific contexts, it is not perceived as a widespread primary impediment compared to the more systemic challenges identified.

4. Conclusion

Based on the strongly agreed-upon impediments (urbanization, inadequate funding, environmental factors, lack of collaboration, insufficient infrastructure, and limited community awareness), a multi-stakeholder task force should be established. This task force should develop actionable strategies to address these issues, including advocating for increased funding, implementing sustainable urban development policies, developing environmental protection measures for the sites, fostering collaboration between tourism operators and local communities, and investing in necessary tourism infrastructure.

5. Recommendations

The study recommends that a multi-stakeholder task force should be established. This task force should develop actionable strategies to address these issues, including advocating for increased funding, implementing sustainable urban development policies, developing environmental protection measures for the sites, fostering collaboration between tourism operators and local communities, and investing in necessary tourism infrastructure.

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