

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: INSIGHTS FROM OLD OYO NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates sustainable tourism strategies for national parks in developing countries, using Old Oyo National Park in Nigeria as a case study. It explores the critical role of government, local communities, and private stakeholders in promoting tourism development through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). The research employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data from 320 respondents in the park's surrounding communities. Findings reveal that 39% of respondents attributed the stagnation of tourism development to government negligence, while 48.4% emphasized the potential positive impact of PPP on tourism growth. The study identifies key strategies for sustainable tourism, including improved infrastructure, community engagement, and the provision of incentives to attract investment. The results highlight the importance of recognizing tourism as a viable sector for national economic growth and the need for transparent and inclusive governance structures. These insights provide a foundation for policymakers and stakeholders to develop effective frameworks that foster sustainable tourism and conservation in national parks across developing countries.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, National parks, Developing countries, Ecotourism, Stakeholders' engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a dynamic and fast-growing global industry that plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth, enhancing social well-being, and promoting environmental conservation. Sustainable tourism, in particular, has gained prominence due to its potential to balance the competing demands of economic development, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Sautter & Leisen, 1999). Within the framework of sustainable tourism, ecotourism has emerged as an important subset, focusing on responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education (Cater, 2002). This form of tourism is particularly relevant in developing countries, where the pressure to achieve economic growth often intersects with the need to preserve natural and cultural resources.

National parks have been identified as critical areas for promoting sustainable tourism and ecotourism due to their dual role in biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development (Wells, 1997). These protected areas serve not only as reservoirs of natural beauty and biodiversity but also as platforms for educating tourists and local populations about the value of environmental preservation. National parks can significantly contribute to the economic development of their surrounding communities by generating employment opportunities, improving infrastructure, and encouraging the establishment of ecotourism businesses (Goodwin & Roe, 2001). However, for national parks in developing countries

to fully realize their potential as hubs for sustainable tourism, they require strategic management, adequate infrastructure, and active participation from both local communities and governmental bodies.

Despite the growing recognition of the benefits of sustainable tourism, many national parks in developing countries struggle with underdevelopment and poor management. Nigeria, a country endowed with rich natural and cultural resources, is a case in point. Although Nigeria boasts vast and diverse landscapes, wildlife species, and historical heritage sites, the country has not effectively leveraged its tourism potential. Tourism, and especially ecotourism, remains largely underdeveloped due to a combination of factors, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of investment, and government neglect (Ben, 2004). Old Oyo National Park (OONP), located in southwest Nigeria, exemplifies this underutilization of natural resources for tourism purposes.

Old Oyo National Park, with a land area of about 2,500 square kilometers, contains a rich variety of flora and fauna, including species of birds, mammals, and plant life that are of significant ecological and cultural value. The park is also historically important, as it encompasses remnants of the old Oyo Empire, making it a site of both natural and cultural heritage. Despite its potential as a major ecotourism destination, OONP remains largely underdeveloped. Visitors to the park face challenges related to poor infrastructure, including inadequate transportation networks, insufficient accommodation facilities, and a lack of basic amenities. Moreover, the park suffers from limited government support and stakeholder

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engagement, both of which are crucial for the sustainable development of tourism (Balogun, 2020). The Nigerian government has made various efforts to promote tourism, recognizing it as a potential driver of economic diversification. However, these initiatives have not yielded the desired results, primarily due to challenges in policy implementation and poor collaboration between the public and private sectors. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have been identified as a promising strategy for overcoming these challenges and fostering sustainable tourism development in Nigeria (Goodwin & Roe, 2001). In the case of OONP, effective PPPs could lead to improved infrastructure, better management of resources, and increased community participation in tourism-related activities. Moreover, sustainable tourism development in national parks like OONP requires the active involvement of local communities. Community participation ensures that tourism benefits are equitably distributed and that local knowledge and cultural values are incorporated into tourism planning and management (Pérez-Calderón et al., 2022).

This study aims to investigate sustainable tourism strategies that can be employed to develop nature-based tourism in Nigeria's national parks, using Old Oyo National Park as a case study. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate the roles of government, private sector stakeholders, and local communities in promoting sustainable tourism and to identify practical measures that can be implemented to overcome the existing challenges. By addressing these key issues, the study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of sustainable tourism in promoting conservation and economic development in developing countries. Furthermore, it offers insights into how collaborative approaches, particularly through Public-Private Partnerships, can foster sustainable tourism growth in underdeveloped national parks. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable recommendations for policymakers, stakeholders, and practitioners interested in promoting sustainable tourism in Nigeria and similar contexts across the developing world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable tourism has garnered significant attention in both academic and policy circles due to its potential to balance economic growth, environmental conservation, and social well-being (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Sautter & Leisen, 1999). Developing countries, in particular, are looking toward sustainable tourism as a means of fostering economic development while preserving their unique natural and cultural resources. This literature review examines key themes relevant to sustainable tourism in national parks, including the benefits and challenges of ecotourism, the role of stakeholder engagement, and the importance of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

The Nexus between Sustainable Development and Ecotourism

Ecotourism, a subset of sustainable tourism, has been widely recognized as a strategy for promoting both conservation and economic development, particularly in regions that rely heavily on natural resources (Cater, 2002). As Vogt (1997) notes, ecotourism contributes to the dual goals of preserving biodiversity and creating alternative livelihoods for local communities. This is especially crucial in developing countries, where economic activities often threaten natural habitats. Ecotourism offers a more sustainable approach by promoting responsible travel to protected areas, minimizing environmental impact, and fostering respect for local cultures and traditions.

Nepal (1997) emphasizes that for ecotourism to be effective, it must be underpinned by environmental and economic sustainability. Ecotourism's objectives are contingent on balancing the preservation of natural resources with providing benefits to local communities. Similarly, Bansal and Kumar (2011) argue that ecotourism must ensure that natural resources receive a net benefit in terms of sustainability, otherwise, it risks becoming another form of mass tourism. These perspectives highlight the importance of carefully managing ecotourism to ensure that it does not inadvertently harm the very environments it seeks to protect.

However, the realization of ecotourism's potential is dependent on effective governance and management. A significant body of literature points to the need for collaborative approaches that involve local communities in decision-making processes (Godratollah, 2011; Tewodros, 2010). Community-based tourism initiatives have been shown to provide tangible benefits to local populations by creating jobs, reducing rural-to-urban migration, and improving local infrastructure (Wells, 1997). Nevertheless, such initiatives require government support and adequate funding, both of which are often lacking in developing countries.

Benefits and Challenges of Sustainable Tourism in National Parks

National parks are central to the concept of ecotourism, serving as key areas for the protection of biodiversity while offering opportunities for environmental education and cultural appreciation (Wells, 1997). In the context of developing countries, national parks also hold immense potential for socio-economic development, particularly through sustainable tourism (Behrens, Bednar-Friedl, & Getzner, 2009). National parks can provide a framework for strategic change by fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors, which can lead to improved infrastructure, business development, and marketing opportunities (Gilmore & Simmons, 2007).

Sustainable tourism in national parks has been associated with a range of benefits, including the promotion of environmental conservation, the creation of local jobs, and the preservation of cultural heritage (Candrea & Bouriaud, 2009). For instance, fair-trade tourism initiatives have helped improve the livelihoods of local communities by ensuring that a portion of tourism revenues is reinvested in community development (Goodwin & Roe, 2001). Additionally, Pérez-Calderón et al. (2022) argue that public-private partnerships can enhance the commercial viability of tourism operations in national parks, contributing to local economic development and a better quality of life.

Despite these benefits, the implementation of sustainable tourism policies in national parks often faces significant challenges. For instance, national parks in developing countries are frequently underfunded, poorly managed, and lack the necessary infrastructure to support large numbers of tourists (Brankov et al., 2015). Moharramnejad et al. (2013) identified several key barriers to the effective management of national parks, including insufficient public engagement, inadequate multidisciplinary collaboration, and limited budgets. These challenges hinder the ability of national parks to maximize their potential as hubs for sustainable tourism.

Moreover, while ecotourism is frequently lauded as a sustainable alternative to mass tourism, several studies highlight its potential negative consequences. Rhama et al. (2020) note that increased human activity in protected areas can lead to environmental degradation, habitat destruction, and biodiversity loss if not properly managed. Similarly, Gilmore and Simmons (2007) found that the designation of national parks alone is not enough to guarantee sustainable tourism outcomes. The success of such initiatives depends on the development of coherent policies and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement in Sustainable Tourism

The role of stakeholder engagement in promoting sustainable tourism is a critical theme in the literature. According to Sautter and Leisen (1999), sustainable tourism planning requires the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and the private sector. By involving these groups in decision-making processes, sustainable tourism initiatives can ensure that the needs and interests of all parties are taken into account.

Stanford and Guiver (2016) argue that the success of sustainable tourism projects in national parks hinges on the effective communication of environmental benefits to stakeholders. Public awareness campaigns and educational programs can encourage pro-environmental behaviors among tourists and local communities alike. Moreover, local community participation is essential for ensuring that tourism

development is both socially and economically sustainable. Community-based tourism initiatives that involve local residents in the planning and management of tourism activities have been shown to enhance the resilience of rural communities, reduce poverty, and foster a sense of ownership over natural resources (Nayak et al., 2019).

However, the literature also highlights the challenges associated with stakeholder engagement. In many developing countries, there is a lack of trust between local communities and government agencies, often stemming from previous instances of corruption or mismanagement (Brankov et al., 2015). Ensuring transparency and accountability in the allocation of tourism revenues is therefore critical to building trust and fostering meaningful collaboration among stakeholders.

Public-Private Partnerships in Sustainable Tourism

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have been identified as an effective strategy for addressing some of the challenges faced by national parks in developing countries. PPPs involve collaboration between government agencies and private sector actors to develop tourism infrastructure, provide funding, and manage protected areas (Goodwin & Roe, 2001). In many cases, private sector involvement can provide the financial and technical resources needed to improve the management of national parks, while government agencies retain regulatory control.

Pérez-Calderón et al. (2022) argue that PPPs can create a win-win situation for both conservation and economic development by enhancing the commercial viability of nature-based tourism in national parks. These partnerships can also lead to improved infrastructure, increased marketing, and the creation of sustainable business models that benefit local communities. However, successful PPPs require clear policies and guidelines that ensure accountability and equitable sharing of benefits (Oleniewicz et al., 2020).

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of sustainable tourism in promoting economic development and environmental conservation, particularly in the context of national parks in developing countries. Ecotourism presents significant opportunities for both local communities and conservation efforts, but its success is contingent on effective governance, stakeholder engagement, and public-private partnerships. While national parks hold immense potential as drivers of sustainable tourism, their development is often hampered by poor management, limited funding, and inadequate infrastructure. By addressing these challenges and fostering collaboration between government agencies, private sector actors, and local communities, sustainable tourism initiatives can play a critical role in preserving biodiversity and promoting socio-economic development.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach to explore sustainable tourism strategies at Old Oyo National Park (OONP), Nigeria. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to gather comprehensive data from diverse stakeholders, including local community members, government officials, and private sector participants. The aim was to understand the roles of these stakeholders in promoting sustainable tourism and to identify both the challenges and opportunities for tourism development in the park. The case study design was adopted due to the need for an in-depth investigation of OONP, which serves as a valuable model for national parks in developing countries.

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods design, integrating exploratory and explanatory approaches. This allowed for the triangulation of data from interviews, observations, and surveys, providing a more robust understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Qualitative data was gathered to capture stakeholder perceptions, while quantitative data provided statistical insights into community participation and attitudes toward tourism development.

Study Area

Old Oyo National Park (OONP) covers 2,500 square kilometers in southwest Nigeria. The park contains diverse flora and fauna, along with significant cultural heritage, including relics of the old Oyo Empire. Despite its potential as a major ecotourism destination, the park faces underdevelopment due to inadequate infrastructure and limited government investment. This makes OONP a relevant case for studying sustainable tourism in developing countries.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. This method enabled the selection of key informants—such as park officials, local leaders, and tourism operators—based on their involvement in tourism development (Palinkas et al., 2015). For the quantitative component, 320 residents from the buffer zone around OONP were surveyed, with an 85% response rate. The sample size was calculated using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, focusing on their perceptions of sustainable tourism and stakeholder roles. Field observations were also conducted to assess infrastructure and tourism facilities. In the second phase, a structured questionnaire was administered to residents in the

buffer zone. The questionnaire included sections on demographic characteristics, perceptions of tourism, and community participation.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes, particularly regarding stakeholder roles and challenges in sustainable tourism (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, to explore relationships between variables such as community involvement and tourism perceptions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained, and all participants gave informed consent. Confidentiality was ensured, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage.

RESULTS

The Role of Government and other Stakeholders

As indicated in Table 1, the respondents agreed that government and other stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring tourism development in OONP (30.1%/ 48). 39 percent believe that the negligence of government contributes to stagnation of tourism development at the park, while, 41.8 percent (68) affirmed this opinion. Also, 48.4% (77) of respondents agreed that partnership of government and other stakeholder in the form Public Private Partnership (PPP) will have positive impact on tourism development at the park. 44.6 percent (71) of the respondents believe that government need to provide incentives such as tax rebates and ease of access to land for tourism investors to enhance tourism growth in the state.

Table 1

Statements	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Government has a major role to play to ensure tourism development in OONP	To a large extent	48	30.1
	To some extent	50	31.5
	Moderately	51	32.1
	Not at all	10	6.3
	Total	159	100.0
The negligence on the part of Government contributes to stagnation of tourism in OONP	To a large extent	62	39
	To some extent	68	42.8
	Moderately	23	14.5
	Not at all	7	4.4
	Total	159	100.0
Partnership of Government and other stakeholders can have positive impact on tourism development in OONP	To a large extent	77	48.4
	To some extent	43	27
	Moderately	29	18.3
	Not at all	10	6.3
	Total	159	100.0
There's need for Government to provide incentives such as tax rebates and ease of access to land for tourism investors in OONP	To a large extent	71	44.6
	To some extent	60	37.7
	Moderately	23	14.5
	Not at all	5	3.2
	Total	159	100.0

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

The qualitative analysis of the interviews and open-ended questions revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that government and other stakeholders play a vital role in the development of tourism in OONP. However, some respondents expressed concern over the negligence of the government in promoting tourism in the park. Many respondents believed that Public Private Partnership (PPP) could be an effective strategy to enhance tourism development in the park. Additionally, the respondents suggested that the government needs to provide incentives such as tax rebates and easy access to land for tourism investors to promote tourism growth in the state. Additionally, the analysis of open-ended questions revealed that some respondents expressed a lack of trust in the government and other stakeholders due to corruption and mismanagement in previous tourism development projects. Many also expressed the need for transparency and accountability in the allocation and use of funds for tourism development.

The key themes that emerged from the analysis of these findings include the role of government and stakeholders in tourism development, the impact of government negligence on tourism growth, the importance of PPPs in tourism development, and the need for incentives and accountability. Regarding the role of government and other stakeholders in tourism development and the strategies for sustainable tourism development in OONP; the first theme is the recognition of the importance of government and other stakeholders in tourism development. The majority of the respondents (30.1%) agree that government and other stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring tourism development in OONP. This indicates a general consensus that the government and other stakeholders are expected to contribute to the growth of tourism in the park. The second theme relates to the perceived negligence of the government in contributing to the stagnation of tourism development at the park. Almost 40% of respondents believe that the negligence of the government is a contributing factor to the slow growth of tourism in OONP, while over 40% of respondents affirmed this opinion. This highlights a concern that the government needs to do more to support the growth of tourism in the park.

The third theme relates to the perceived benefits of public-private partnership (PPP) in enhancing tourism development at the park. Almost half of the respondents (48.4%) agreed that a partnership between the government and other stakeholders in the form of PPP would have a positive impact on tourism development in the park. This indicates a recognition that collaboration between the government and private sector can contribute to the growth of tourism in OONP. The fourth theme relates to the need for government to provide incentives to enhance tourism growth in the state. Over 44% of the respondents believe that the government needs to provide incentives such as tax

rebates and ease of access to land for tourism investors to enhance tourism growth in the state. This indicates a belief that government support is necessary to stimulate investment in the tourism sector.

Overall, these themes suggest that there is a recognition of the importance of government and other stakeholders in tourism development and a need for the government to do more to support the growth of tourism in OONP. Additionally, the findings suggest that effective collaboration between the government and other stakeholders, transparent allocation and use of funds, and the provision of incentives can aid in the sustainable development of tourism in the OONP and Nigeria as a whole.

Strategies for sustainable development of tourism in Nigeria

Table 2. below shows that the respondents find most of the strategies very significant. Provision of adequate security to ensure protection of life and properties of tourists at OONP and PPP (Public-Private Partnership) received the highest attention as 70 (44%) of the respondents feel they are very significant. The respondents also find setting up of implementation and monitoring committee and community participation and involvement in tourism development programmes are very significant at 69 (43.4) level of importance. The table also shows that provision of basic amenities such as recreation facilities and social amenities such as good roads among others are very significant (42.8% and 42.1%) respectively. Remapping of existing and potential tourist attractions in the state which was deemed to be very significant by the respondents at 37.7% representing 60 of the 159 respondents. Equally, the need for recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth is significant with 93 (58.5) respondents asserting it. Responsible tourism practice and formulation of workable policies are also significant at 69 (43.4%) and 74 (46.5%). Although, a mere 13 (8.2%) of the respondents do not believe that workable tourism policy can aid sustainable tourism development.

The respondents in the study found that several strategies are very significant for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. The provision of adequate security to ensure the safety of tourists at OONP and PPP (Public-Private Partnership) were identified as the highest priority, with 44% of the respondents feeling that they are very significant. The establishment of an implementation and monitoring committee and community participation and involvement in tourism development programmes were also identified as very significant at 43.4%. The provision of basic amenities such as recreation facilities and good roads was also seen as very significant, with 42.8% and 42.1% respectively. Remapping of existing and potential tourist attractions in the state was also identified as

Table 2: Strategies for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Nigeria

S.No.	Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development	Very Significant	Significant	Fairly Significant	Not at all	Total
1.	Provision of basic social amenities such recreation facilities is essential for tourism development in OONP.	68	71	16	4	159
		42.8%	44.6%	10.1%	2.5%	100%
2.	Adequate infrastructural development such as good roads, telecommunication system can ensure rapid tourism development.	67	77	12	3	159
		42.1%	48.2%	7.5%	1.9%	100%
3.	Provision of adequate security ensures protection of life and properties of tourists at OONP.	70	81	7	1	159
		44%	51%	4.4%	0.6%	100%
4.	Community participation and involvement is essential for tourism development in OONP.	69	70	16	4	159
		43.4%	44%	10.1%	2.5%	100%
5.	Responsible tourism practices such as conservation and protection of natural features is essential for sustainable tourism development.	47	69	34	9	159
		29.6%	43.4%	21.4%	5.7%	100%
6.	Sustainable tourism development hinges on provision of workable tourism policy.	43	74	29	13	159
		27%	46.5%	12.3%	8.2%	100%
7.	There is need for the state tourism board to conduct the remapping of tourist attractions in the OONP.	60	72	22	5	159
		37.7%	45.3%	13.8%	3.1%	100%
8.	It's crucial to set up implementation and monitoring committee for tourist sites.	69	47	33	10	159
		43.4%	29.6%	20.6%	6.3%	100%
9.	Public-Private partnership can be key to sustainable tourism development in OONP.	70	69	16	4	159
		44%	43.4%	10.1%	2.5%	100%
10.	There's need for recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth by all stakeholders.	54	93	11	1	159
		34%	58.5%	6.9%	0.6%	100%

Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2018

significant by 37.7% of the respondents. The need for recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth was asserted by 58.5% of the respondents. Responsible tourism practices and formulation of workable policies were also significant at 43.4% and 46.5% respectively, although only 8.2% of the respondents did not believe that workable tourism policy could aid sustainable tourism development.

The study found that the respondents consider the provision of adequate security and the adoption of PPP to be crucial for sustainable tourism development in the OONP. The establishment of an implementation and monitoring committee, community participation and involvement in tourism development, provision of basic amenities such as recreation facilities, and social amenities such as good roads are also considered vital for the sustainable development of tourism in Nigeria. The remapping of existing and potential tourist attractions, recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth, responsible tourism practice, and formulation of workable policies are also significant for sustainable tourism development. The study reveals that the respondents believe that a multifaceted approach is necessary for the sustainable development of tourism in Nigeria, with government and other stakeholders playing a critical role in promoting and supporting tourism initiatives in the OONP. The findings suggest that there is a need for government and other stakeholders to prioritize tourism development and implement

policies and programs that support the growth of the tourism industry.

The key themes that emerged from the analysis of the data include the importance of the government and other stakeholders in ensuring tourism development in OONP, the need for the government to provide incentives such as tax rebates and ease of access to land for tourism investors, and the importance of strategies for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. In terms of strategies for sustainable tourism development, the respondents identified several factors as significant. These include the provision of adequate security to ensure the safety of tourists and the formation of public-private partnerships. The respondents also emphasized the need for the setting up of implementation and monitoring committees and community participation and involvement in tourism development programs. The provision of basic amenities such as recreation facilities and social amenities such as good roads was also seen as significant. The remapping of existing and potential tourist attractions in the state and the need for recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth were also emphasized. The respondents also emphasized the need for responsible tourism practice and the formulation of workable policies, although a few respondents expressed skepticism about the ability of policies alone to aid sustainable tourism development.

Overall, the analysis of the data suggests that a collaborative approach involving the government, other stakeholders, and the community is necessary

for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. The provision of basic amenities and adequate security, as well as the formation of public-private partnerships, are seen as critical factors for achieving sustainable tourism development.

DISCUSSION

Sustainable tourism is a critical aspect of the tourism industry as it ensures the preservation and conservation of the natural and cultural resources in the destinations where tourism occurs (Balogun & Ajagunna, 2023). This study focuses on sustainable tourism strategies for national parks in developing countries, using the case of Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria. The study identifies the role of government and other stakeholders in ensuring sustainable tourism development, and the strategies necessary for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. The study's findings suggest that the provision of basic amenities, recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth, and the formulation of workable policies are significant factors in ensuring sustainable tourism development. Numerous studies have shown the benefits of sustainable tourism in national parks. Candrea and Bouriaud (2009) assert that sustainable tourism can promote economic growth, provide local employment opportunities, and improve the living standards of host communities. Goodwin and Roe (2001) highlight that sustainable tourism can provide opportunities for fair-trade tourism in and around national parks, thus promoting environmental conservation, and reducing poverty. Behrens, Bednar-Friedl, and Getzner (2009) posit that sustainable tourism can promote the preservation of natural and cultural resources, enhance the quality of visitor experience, and contribute to the overall sustainability of the park.

Sustainable tourism is often synonymous with ecotourism, a form of tourism that promotes the conservation and preservation of natural and cultural resources. Nepal (1997) notes that ecotourism can provide revenue for conservation efforts, promote local economic development, and provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of a destination. Han and Yoon (2015) argue that ecotourism can promote environmentally responsible behaviour among hotel customers, which can contribute to the overall sustainability of the tourism industry. The findings of the study suggest that government and other stakeholders have a crucial role to play in ensuring sustainable tourism development. The provision of basic amenities, setting up of implementation and monitoring committees, and community participation and involvement in tourism development programs are significant factors in promoting sustainable tourism development. The study shows that partnership between government and other stakeholders, in the form of public-private partnership, will have a positive impact on tourism development in the park. Government needs to

provide incentives such as tax rebates and ease of access to land for tourism investors to enhance tourism growth in the state.

Based on the findings of the study on sustainable tourism strategies for Old Oyo National Park (OONP) in Nigeria, it is clear that there is a need for concerted efforts by the government and other stakeholders to promote sustainable tourism development in the park. The study shows that the majority of the respondents believe that government and other stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring tourism development in OONP, and that the partnership of government and other stakeholders in the form of Public Private Partnership (PPP) will have a positive impact on tourism development at the park. Moreover, the study identifies a range of strategies for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria, including provision of adequate security, setting up of implementation and monitoring committee, community participation and involvement in tourism development programs, provision of basic amenities, remapping of existing and potential tourist attractions, recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth, responsible tourism practice, and formulation of workable policies.

To promote sustainable tourism in Old Oyo National Park and other national parks in developing countries, it is recommended that the government and other stakeholders take an integrated and collaborative approach to tourism planning and management. This should involve the identification and development of a sustainable tourism strategy that is based on the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The strategy should include measures to ensure the protection of the park's natural and cultural resources, as well as the provision of basic amenities for tourists. Furthermore, it is recommended that the government and other stakeholders engage with local communities and indigenous peoples to ensure their participation and involvement in tourism development programs. This will help to promote community-based tourism, which has been shown to have significant benefits for local communities, including the creation of job opportunities, the preservation of local culture and traditions, and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable tourism is a critical aspect of the tourism industry, and national parks are critical destinations for sustainable tourism. The study findings highlight the significant role of government and other stakeholders in ensuring sustainable tourism development. Strategies for sustainable tourism development in Nigeria include the provision of basic amenities, recognition and acceptance of tourism as a viable alternative sector for national economic growth, and the formulation of workable policies. The study provides insights into the critical

factors necessary for the sustainable tourism development of national parks in developing countries. In conclusion, sustainable tourism development is crucial for the conservation and management of national parks in developing countries, including Old Oyo National Park in Nigeria. The government and other stakeholders have a vital role to play in promoting sustainable tourism development, and they should take an integrated and collaborative approach to tourism planning and management. By doing so, they can ensure the long-term sustainability of national parks and the benefits they provide to both tourists and local communities.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There is no conflict of interest whatsoever.

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