

NWOGU CHIMARAOKE UCHECHUKWU

**REGENERATIVE TOURISM AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN NIGERIA: EXPLORING GOOD PRACTICES FOR
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**



UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

2024

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

Master in
Tourism Organisations Management
Dissertation
made under the supervision of:
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FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

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Statement of authorship

The work presented in this dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledge in the text. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any university.

Candidate:

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	6
ABSTRACT.....	7
RESUMO ALARGADO	8
LIST OF FIGURES	11
LIST OF TABLES.....	11
INTRODUCTION	12
CHAPTER 2. REGENERATIVE TOURISM.....	16
2.1. What is Regenerative Tourism?.....	16
2.2. Regenerative Tourism Practice Principles and Challenges	17
2.3. Regional Development and Community Sustainability.....	26
2.3.1 <i>Critical Aspects for Regional Development</i>	26
2.3.2 <i>Community Sustainability and Regenerative Tourism</i>	27
2.3.3 <i>Triple Bottom Line and Regenerative Tourism</i>	31
2.4 Empirical Studies of Regenerative Tourism in Nigeria.....	32
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	36
3.1. Methodological Options	36
3.2. Data Collection and Analysis	39
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	42
4.1 Sample Description.....	42
4.2 Analysis of Responses	44
4.3. An Exploratory Econometric Model.....	49
CONCLUSION.....	51
APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire	67
APPENDIX 2: Descriptive statistics, demographics of participants	72

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my profound gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ, my Saviour, whose steadfast love, and companionship have been my solace and strength throughout.

I am deeply thankful to my project supervisor, Professor Hugo Pinto, for his unwavering guidance and invaluable insights throughout the research process.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the instructors of the modules, whose assistance and encouragement created a nurturing academic environment in the Faculty of Economics, University of Algarve where I could flourish.

My family deserves special mention for their unwavering support, patience, and belief in my capabilities. Their constant encouragement has been the driving force behind my endeavours, and I am grateful for their sacrifices.

I am also indebted to all those who have contributed, directly or indirectly, to this thesis. Your support has been immeasurable, shaping both my academic and personal journey, and for that, I am profoundly thankful.

ABSTRACT

The dissertation explores the evaluation of regenerative tourism and its impact on regional development in Nigeria. Its primary objective is to scrutinize the association between the effects of regenerative tourism on regional development in the perspective of key stakeholders in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative methodology utilizing a survey approach with a sample size of 100 online respondents drawn from the selected communities in Abia State. The survey targeted community members, tourists, and local businesses. The main content of survey questionnaire was divided into four sections, each containing twenty-two (22) items.

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the collected data using SPSS statistical package software. An exploratory regression was also estimated to test the research hypotheses concerning public policy and regenerative tourism. The findings, based in the perspective of key stakeholders, unveiled a significant relationship between the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and regional development, particularly concerning the social-cultural aspects. And also, the findings indicate a positive impact on regional development, suggesting that regenerative tourism practices hold potential for enhancing economic diversification, infrastructure development, and job creation in territories similar to those communities selected in Nigeria. The study reveals a link between regenerative tourism practices and community sustainability in Nigeria. It emphasizes the importance of governmental policies in promoting environmental conservation, cultural heritage preservation, and community engagement. Collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, tourism operators, and non-governmental organizations, is crucial for maximizing benefits and addressing challenges in regenerative tourism.

Promoting sustainable tourism development in Nigeria requires a concerted effort by the government, tourism stakeholders, and local communities. By aligning government policies and regulations with the principles of sustainable tourism, ensuring meaningful engagement and participation of local communities, and investing in capacity-building initiatives, Nigeria can harness the potential of tourism to drive economic growth, protect the environment, and preserve cultural heritage. Through collaborative efforts and strategic investments, Nigeria can build a tourism sector that is not only economically viable but also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. By embracing the principles of sustainable and regenerative tourism, Nigeria can position itself as a leading destination for responsible and ethical tourism practices, benefiting both present and future generations.

Keywords: Regenerative tourism, Regional development, Community sustainability, Nigeria.

RESUMO ALARGADO

As práticas turísticas convencionais conduziram frequentemente não só a benefícios económicos nos destinos, como o crescimento económico e a criação de emprego, mas também a impactos negativos, como a degradação ambiental e a tensão com as populações locais. O surgimento do turismo regenerativo oferece uma solução promissora para esta dualidade, defendendo a implementação de práticas inovadoras sustentáveis no sector do turismo, enfatizando a integração das atividades turísticas nas comunidades locais como catalisador do bem-estar e da regeneração dos aspetos económicos, sociais e ambientais.

A investigação explora o turismo regenerativo e o seu impacto no desenvolvimento regional na Nigéria, centrando-se na identificação das perspetivas de membros de comunidades sustentáveis. O seu objetivo principal é analisar a correlação entre os efeitos do turismo regenerativo no desenvolvimento regional e na sustentabilidade do sector na Nigéria. O estudo visa atingir vários objetivos específicos: primeiro, compreender a implementação de práticas de turismo regenerativo em comunidades escolhidas no Estado de Abia, na Nigéria; segundo, analisar os impactos sociais e culturais destas práticas na perspetiva dos principais intervenientes no turismo; e terceiro, examinar o papel das políticas públicas no desenvolvimento do turismo e do desenvolvimento comunitário, tal como é percebido pelos principais intervenientes no turismo.

O estudo utiliza uma abordagem dedutiva que se inspira em teorias como a Triple Bottom Line (TBL). O estudo adotou uma metodologia quantitativa, utilizando um inquérito online. O inquérito foi dirigido a membros das comunidades selecionadas, turistas e empresas locais. O conteúdo do questionário foi dividido em quatro secções, cada uma contendo vinte e dois (22) itens.

A estatística descritiva foi utilizada para analisar os dados recolhidos sobre as questões de investigação, utilizando o pacote estatístico SPSS. Foi também estimada uma regressão exploratória para testar as hipóteses de investigação relativas às políticas públicas. Os resultados da análise revelaram uma relação significativa entre a implementação de práticas de turismo regenerativo e o desenvolvimento regional, particularmente no que diz respeito aos aspetos socioculturais. Além disso, os resultados

indicam que os intervenientes consideram que existe um impacto positivo no desenvolvimento regional, sugerindo que as práticas de turismo regenerativo têm potencial para aumentar a diversificação económica, o desenvolvimento de infraestruturas e a criação de emprego em territórios semelhantes aos selecionados na Nigéria. O estudo revela uma ligação entre as práticas de turismo regenerativo e a sustentabilidade do sector na Nigéria. Salienta a importância das políticas públicas na promoção da conservação ambiental, da preservação do património cultural e do envolvimento das comunidades. A colaboração entre as partes interessadas, incluindo agências governamentais, comunidades locais, operadores turísticos e organizações não governamentais, é crucial para maximizar os benefícios e enfrentar os desafios do turismo regenerativo.

Com base nestes resultados, seria relevante o governo nigeriano alinhar as suas políticas e regulamentos com os princípios do turismo sustentável e regenerativo. Este alinhamento deve dar prioridade à conservação ambiental, à preservação cultural e à inclusão social nas iniciativas turísticas. Além disso, os intervenientes no sector do turismo devem assegurar o envolvimento e a participação das comunidades locais nos processos de tomada de decisão relacionados com o desenvolvimento do turismo. Esta abordagem inclusiva pode promover um sentimento de apropriação entre as comunidades locais e contribuir para o desenvolvimento sustentável do turismo na Nigéria.

Em conclusão, a promoção do desenvolvimento do turismo sustentável na Nigéria requer um esforço concertado do governo, dos intervenientes no turismo e das comunidades locais. Só com este esforço a Nigéria pode aproveitar todo o potencial do turismo para impulsionar o crescimento económico, proteger o ambiente e preservar o seu património cultural e posicionar-se como um destino líder em práticas de turismo responsáveis e éticas, beneficiando tanto as gerações presentes como as futuras.

Palavras-chave:

Turismo Regenerativo, Desenvolvimento Regional, Sustentabilidade Comunitária, Nigéria.

ABBREVIATION LIST

B.Sc./BA	Bachelor of Sciences/ Bachelor of Art
FSLC	First school leaving certificate.
LED	Local economic Development
M.Sc./MA	Master's in Arts
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TBL	Triple Bottom Line

LIST OF FIGURES	PAGES
Figure 1: Challenges of implementing regenerative tourism	22
Figure 2: Conceptual model for indicators of regenerative tourism.....	25
Figure 3: Fundamental functional elements of community sustainability	28
Figure 4: Study Site: Abia state.....	37
Figure 5: Key figures of respondents	43
Figure 6: Assessing the implementation of regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria.....	45
Figure 7: Social & Cultural impact of regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria.....	47
Figure 8: Role of government policy & regulation in shaping tourism & community development in selected communities in Nigeria.....	48

LIST OF TABLES	PAGES
Table 1: Planning Matrix for dissertation.....	40
Table 2: Linear Regression R-Squared.....	49
Table 3: Linear Regression coefficient analysis showing the relationship between the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and role of government politics & regulations in shaping tourism (dependent variables).....	50

INTRODUCTION

In today's global landscape, the significance of tourism cannot be overstated, particularly concerning its potential impact on regional development. Like many other regions, in Nigeria tourism plays a pivotal role for economic growth and job creation (Bryne, 2018). However, conventional tourism practices have often led to environmental degradation and exploitation of Indigenous populations (Vega, 2020). In contrast, new forms of tourism are emerging. Regenerative tourism presents a progressive approach that seeks to establish mutually beneficial relationships between tourism and host communities.

The emergence of regenerative tourism offers a promising solution to the dual challenges of environmental conservation and economic development on a global scale (Cave and Dredge, 2020). This concept advocates for the implementation of innovative practices within the tourism sector, emphasizing the integration of tourism activities into local communities to enhance the well-being of both human and non-human entities (Bellato and Cheer, 2021).

Moreover, sustainable and responsible tourism practices are imperative in contexts such as Nigeria, given its rich cultural heritage, diverse ecosystems, and unique environment (Chen et al., 2020). However, the detrimental impacts of traditional tourism have hindered the realization of Nigeria's tourism potential. Yet, prioritizing sustainable, self-sufficient communities remains a key objective for the Nigerian government. Implementing practices of regenerative tourism not only aligns with this goal but also contributes to global sustainability objectives (Cave and Dredge, 2020).

Therefore, the adoption of regenerative tourism strategies holds significant promise for enhancing the well-being of both tourist destinations and local communities, thereby has strong potential for fostering regional development and sustainability in Nigeria.

Conversely, regional development encompasses a broad concept that includes a diverse array of strategies aimed at enhancing the economic, social, and environmental conditions of a particular area (Bathelt and Storper, 2023). It acknowledges the potential for disparities in development, challenges, and opportunities to exist across different

regions, whether domestically or internationally. The goal of regional development policies is to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the region.

While tourism holds promise for stimulating economic growth, preserving cultural heritage, and conserving the environment, there are significant challenges related to unsustainable tourism practices, limited community engagement, and insufficient efforts in environmental preservation (Sharypova, 2022).

The predominant tourism practices in Nigeria, largely characterized by conventional mass tourism, often lead to environmental degradation, the erosion of cultural heritage, and minimal economic benefits for local communities (Šegota, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to address the lack of extensive scholarly research and comprehensive understanding of the practical implementation of regenerative tourism (Calero and Turner, 2019), which advocates for a holistic approach to sustainability. This understanding is essential for effectively addressing the aforementioned challenges within the Nigerian context, as this study seeks to accomplish.

The current focus lies in investigating and identifying effective approaches for implementing regenerative tourism, with the overarching goal of fostering sustainable communities, advancing regional development, and safeguarding Nigeria's cultural and natural heritage (del Valle, 2014). This dissertation aims to help to scrutinize the key challenges associated with transitioning from unsustainable tourism models to regenerative practices, while also exploring strategies for actively involving local communities in the planning and management of tourism initiatives. Furthermore, it seeks to determine the effective methods for striking a balance between economic progress, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

Essentially, there is a pressing need for a conceptual shift within Nigeria's tourism sector, where regenerative methodologies should be prioritized. This transition should emphasize the cultivation of sustainability, economic viability, community empowerment, and the protection of cultural and environmental resources (Keitumetse, 2013). The objective of this study also advocates for effective strategies capable of instigating positive transformations within Nigeria's tourism industry. These transformations aim to promote sustainable development across various regions, enhance the well-being of local communities, and ensure the long-term preservation of cultural and environmental assets. To achieve this, the study is inspired by the Triple

Bottom Line theory (TBL), which suggests a significant impact of regenerative tourism on economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

This framework serves as a practical tool for examining the intricate relationship between regenerative tourism, regional development, and community sustainability, guiding efforts toward holistic and impactful tourism development strategies.

Previous research has demonstrated the positive effects of regenerative tourism on the economy, culture, and environment. Bellator and Cheer (2021) introduced a conceptual model of regenerative tourism capacity development, emphasizing the inclusion of marginalized individuals to ensure equitable benefits for all stakeholders. However, their study overlooked the specific implementation of regenerative practices and opportunities. This study could also address this gap by exploring the feasibility of applying regenerative tourism principles in the context of Nigeria, a country renowned for its cultural diversity, natural beauty, and untapped tourism potential.

In another study, Caniglia et al. (2020) underscored the comprehensive nature of regenerative practices, which encompass both theoretical concepts and practical dimensions. Additionally, Slak Valek (2017) highlighted the objectives of tourism, which include restoring local ecosystems, preserving cultural artifacts, and engaging local residents in planning and implementing activities beneficial to both tourists and residents. Much of the existing research on regenerative tourism relies on case studies, critical analysis of previous studies and reports, and insights gathered from discussions with relevant stakeholders.

To contribute to this body of knowledge, this study employs an online survey to collect primary data, utilizing quantitative research methods and descriptive statistics for data analysis with the assistance of IBM SPSS version 25. The results of this study provide insights for the Nigerian government, tourism planners, and policymakers regarding the relationship between the impact of regenerative tourism on regional development and community sustainability (Harun et al. 2018). By shedding light on these dynamics, the dissertation aims to inform decision-making processes and contribute to the advancement of sustainable tourism practices in Nigeria.

The study underscores the critical contextual aspects of the tourism industry in Nigeria, highlighting the challenges associated with conventional tourism practices and

advocating for the adoption of regenerative tourism. Moreover, the study delves into the pivotal issues at hand, with a special focus on the imperative need for regenerative approaches to address sustainability challenges, foster economic advancement, preserve cultural heritage, and safeguard the environment, emphasizing its practical relevance and potential impact on policy making and industry practices.

The dissertation is organized as follows. The next chapter critically reviews the recent literature on regenerative tourism. Then a short chapter with some key methodological options is presented. The dissertation then proceeds for the empirical studies with the main descriptive of the implemented survey in selected communities in Nigeria and an exploratory econometric exercise. The dissertation ends with a conclusion, with a summary of the main findings, policy implications and future research.

CHAPTER 2. REGENERATIVE TOURISM

2.1. What is Regenerative Tourism?

Regenerative tourism adopts a novel perspective that views the visitor economy and destination as interconnected systems intricately linked with the natural environment, also referred to as Nature (Pollock, 2019a). This approach operates in accordance with the rules and principles observed in Nature. Research by Hes and Coenen (2018) illustrates that this approach is underpinned by a comprehensive conceptual framework that integrates Indigenous perspectives, traditional knowledge, and Western scientific principles.

The concept of practice-led regenerative development extends across various disciplines, including built environments and urban planning (Mang and Haggard, 2016), regenerative agriculture (Haines, 2020), and regenerative economics (Lovins, 2020). This holistic approach emphasizes the restoration and enhancement of natural systems, fostering resilience, sustainability, and equitable prosperity across different sectors and communities.

Matunga et al. (2020) contend that regenerative tourism cultivates a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between individuals and their vacation destinations, fostering a sense of interconnectedness. Similarly, Sheller (2021) defines regenerative tourism as a model that prioritizes community-based development, non-monetary exchange, and alternative ownership structures over profit-centric practices. This concept advocates for the dismantling of colonialism, racial inequity, and exploitative corporate growth, advocating instead for community-driven initiatives.

Lukanova (2021) highlights the vital role of the tourism industry in preserving and promoting cultural heritage through the promotion of cultural tourism experiences. The exchange of ideas and perspectives among diverse cultures, safeguard customary practices, and raise awareness about the significance of cultural legacy.

Regenerative tourism adopts a holistic approach that not only considers the environmental impact of tourism but also integrates the aspirations and concerns of stakeholders and entire communities to enhance the destination's appeal and resilience (Bellato and Cheer, 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2021). This approach seeks to create a symbiotic relationship between tourism development and community

well-being, ultimately contributing to the sustainable growth and preservation of destinations.

2.2. Regenerative Tourism Practice Principles and Challenges

While there is a notable absence of universally accepted standards governing regenerative tourism practices, several scholarly articles offer guidance on its implementation (Howard et al., 2008; Pollock, 2015)

Matunga et al. (2020) introduced Ngāi Tahu principles derived from a Māori worldview for fostering regenerative tourism initiatives in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Local consultations revealed support for integrating indigenous concepts and practices into regenerative tourism to benefit both human and non-human entities. However, this support is contingent upon the respectful and proper preservation of their cultural integrity.

Similarly, Mang and Haggard (2016) and Sanford (2019) identified principles of regenerative development. Through a thorough literature review and consultations with practitioners, they formulated seven conceptual principles for regenerative tourism. These principles serve as a foundation for guiding regenerative tourism initiatives, emphasizing sustainability, community engagement, and the preservation of cultural heritage and natural resources.

Principle 1: Draw from an ecological worldview.

The ecological worldview serves as a bridge between Western and Indigenous scientific ethics, perspectives, and knowledge. As highlighted by Hes and Du Plessis (2015) and Mang and Reed (2012), while these perspectives may not be fully reconcilable, they can coexist to enhance regenerative practice and research. Regenerative tourism, heavily influenced by indigenous philosophies, emphasizes mutually beneficial interactions between humans and the broader natural world (Pollock, 2019b). Consequently, regenerative tourism projects foster dynamic, mutually respectful, collaborative,

interwoven, and inseparable connections within the boundaries of the planet (Hes and Du Plessis, 2015).

Principle 2: Use living systems thinking.

Regenerative tourism embraces the principles of living systems thinking to shape the conceptualization and execution of tourism initiatives, aiming to catalyse transformative processes. Grounded in systems theory and living systems thinking, regenerative approaches in tourism perceive tourism and its locales as living entities (Pollock, 2017). This perspective finds support from various scholars, including Bellato and Frantzeskaki (2021), Pollock (2017), and Vlaanderen (2019).

In this context, regenerative tourism strategies involve a diverse range of stakeholders who share a collective interest in the well-being and sustainability of a specific destination. Within the tourism context, these stakeholders within the living system play crucial roles in facilitating transformative processes, leading to the revitalization not only of themselves but also of the destinations and communities they engage with (Bellato and Frantzeskaki, 2021).

Principle 3: Discover the unique potential of a regenerative tourism place.

Regenerative approaches in tourism rely heavily on a deep understanding of the distinct characteristics and histories of places and communities (Sanford, 2019). According to Pollock (2019b), regenerative tourism employs place-based strategies to bolster local social-ecological systems while acknowledging their intrinsic value. Unlike conventional approaches that primarily identify problems and apply generic solutions, regenerative projects (Mang and Haggard, 2016) focus on uncovering and nurturing the potential inherent in specific locations and communities.

Stakeholders in the tourism industry play a crucial role in enhancing the capacity of interconnected social-ecological systems by investing time and effort into understanding the unique attributes of a place. By embracing place-based strategies and fostering a deep appreciation for the value of local social-ecological systems, regenerative tourism

endeavours to create meaningful and sustainable outcomes for both destinations and communities.

Principle 4: Leverage the capability of tourism living system to catalyze transformation.

Tourism and hospitality stakeholders, as highlighted by Pollock (2017), along with community members (Pollock, 2019b; Vlaanderen, 2019), have the opportunity to harness regenerative tourism as a catalyst for positive change. Regenerative tourism aims to enact systemic transformations that enhance the capacity of tourism and the underlying social and ecological systems. This objective is pursued by capitalizing on factors such as the convergence of watersheds and the provision of leisure services, leveraging these elements to promote sustainable practices and foster resilience within destinations. Through collaborative efforts and a commitment to regenerative principles, stakeholders and community members can work together to drive meaningful and lasting improvements in the tourism sector while safeguarding the well-being of local communities and ecosystems.

Principle 5: Adopt healing approaches that promote cultural revival, returning lands and privileging of the perspectives, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous and marginalized peoples.

Regenerative tourism strives to integrate Indigenous approaches, uphold Indigenous peoples' self-determination, and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. Historically, the tourism industry has been intertwined with the colonization of Indigenous peoples and lands, as well as the displacement of other marginalized groups, leading to their disenfranchisement (Grimwood et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Pollock, 2015; Zivoder et al., 2015). However, Pollock (2012) propose that regenerative tourism presents an opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous peoples to decolonize tourist development.

Regenerative tourism adopts a healing approach, aiming to reshape colonial, social, political, and economic structures through meaningful collaboration with Indigenous and marginalized communities (Pollock, 2015). By centering Indigenous knowledge

and perspectives, regenerative tourism seeks to promote cultural revitalization, empower local communities, and foster equitable and sustainable development. Through inclusive practices and partnership-building, regenerative tourism endeavours to address historical injustices and promote a more just and equitable tourism industry.

Principle 6: Create regenerative places and communities.

Regenerative tourism serves as a catalyst for the creation of net-positive outcomes and impacts on ecosystems by actively contributing to the improvement of conditions that foster the restoration and ongoing self-generation of these systems (Howard et al., 2008; Mang and Haggard, 2016). A wide array of stakeholders, including individuals, governments, and corporations, collaborate to support the interconnected systems that are influenced by tourism and, in turn, influence it (Howard et al., 2008; Pollock, 2019a). By embracing regenerative practices, tourism not only minimizes its negative impacts but also fosters net-positive outcomes, enhancing the resilience and capacity of destinations and communities to thrive in the long term. This collaborative approach enables tourism to contribute positively to environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development, ultimately promoting sustainable and inclusive growth. Through concerted efforts and collective action, regenerative tourism seeks to create a virtuous cycle of mutual benefit, ensuring the well-being of both natural ecosystems and human societies.

Principle 7: Collaborate to evolve and enact regenerative tourism approaches.

Mang and Haggard (2016) assert that collaborative engagement is paramount in regeneration endeavours, emphasizing the cultivation of harmony over rivalry. Scholars highlight the significance of fostering greater levels of psycho-spiritual awareness to facilitate meaningful engagement within the realm of regenerative tourism (Mang and Haggard, 2016; Pollock, 2019b). In regenerative tourism, stakeholders collaborate by sharing roles, responsibilities, expertise, tasks, and resources. This collaborative approach fosters synergy and mutual support, allowing for more holistic and effective regeneration efforts that benefit both the destination and its communities.

Figure 1 below, illustrates the multifaceted challenges associated with implementing regenerative tourism practices. At the forefront is the issue of local community engagement, highlighting the necessity of involving and empowering local communities in tourism decision-making processes to ensure their interests and well-being are considered. Resistance to change represents a common barrier encountered when attempting to transition from traditional tourism models to regenerative practices, emphasizing the importance of addressing perceptions and fostering buy-in from stakeholders.

Balancing economic viability underscores the challenge of ensuring that regenerative tourism initiatives are financially sustainable while also delivering benefits to local economies and communities. Regulatory and policy barriers signify the need to navigate complex legal frameworks and bureaucratic processes that may hinder the implementation of regenerative tourism initiatives. Lack of awareness reflects the challenge of educating stakeholders about the principles and benefits of regenerative tourism, emphasizing the importance of advocacy and outreach efforts. Finally, resource constraints highlight the limitations imposed by factors such as funding, infrastructure, and human capital, underscoring the need for strategic planning and resource mobilization to overcome implementation challenges and achieve sustainable tourism development.

Despite the growing attention to regenerative tourism, there is still a lack of comprehensive research on its impact on the sustainable development of communities, which has led to challenges in implementing regenerative tourism, particularly in cases as Nigeria, such as:

- Resistance to change: According to Chan (2023), it has become clear that the tourism industry, established stakeholders such as local authorities, businesses and communities, can be resistant to the adoption of regenerative tourism practices.
- Lack of awareness: A significant number of communities and individuals may be uninformed about the benefits and principles of regenerative tourism (Cardoso, 2020). It is often necessary to implement educational and awareness initiatives to build understanding and support in the region of interest.

- Resource constraints: Salem and Abdien (2017) found that implementing regenerative tourism often requires financial investment in training, technology, and infrastructure. Poor communities may face challenges in obtaining essential resources (Adekunle & Olusa, 2021).
- Regulatory and political barriers: According to Bachtiar (2022), inadequate policies and regulations can hinder the adoption of regenerative tourism practices. Therefore, it is imperative for policy makers and governments to ensure that regulatory frameworks are aligned with sustainability goals.
- Balancing economic viability: The goal of regenerative tourism is to find a way to achieve sustainable economic growth without compromising the environment (Miller et al., 2014). The delicate balancing act of achieving both short-term revenue and long-term sustainability can be difficult to achieve.
- Local community engagement: Effective community engagement is important to the success of regenerative tourism. It can be challenging to engage and empower community members while distributing benefits equitably.



Figure 1: Challenges of implementing regenerative tourism
Source: Petrovski et al. (2021)

Bronwyn (2021) conducted qualitative research on the implementation of regenerative tourism in New Zealand. The study used semi-structured interviews with eight participants identified through snowball sampling.

Interview notes and related documents were analysed thematically using methods described by other authors (O'Leary, 2017). The study found that regenerative tourism can begin at the community level and still have a significant impact. Albrecht and Raymond (2020) conducted research with nineteen (19) tourism professionals in five countries, suggesting that tourism operators should use destination pledges to initiate conversations about responsible behaviour. Chen (2021) conducted research to assess whether regenerative tourism influences sustainable travel behaviour. Chen (2021) found that regenerative tourism has marketing implications (Medel, 2020) and can target specific behaviours, such as book donations (Cotterill et al., 2013). However, no study has explicitly addressed whether regenerative tourism can influence regional development and community sustainability.

In contrast to the subjective evaluation of tourism by Albrecht and Raymond (2020), Chen (2021) undertook a survey involving 147 Canadian residents to assess the efficacy of a tourist pledge modelled after the Tiaki Promise. The findings revealed that committing to a pledge did not significantly influence tourists' intentions to travel responsibly. Nevertheless, pledges featuring specific, concise requirements demonstrated greater effectiveness compared to those with general content. However, Chen (2021) observed that pledging did reinforce self-transcendence values, such as concern for the wellbeing of others and the environment, consequently promoting responsible travel behaviours. Hence, Chen suggests that integrating the pledge with strategic marketing approaches could prove beneficial.

Kanjanakan (2021) conducted a study revealing that the expansion of tourism significantly influences the socio-cultural fabric of a region, impacting routines, beliefs, values, habits, and daily activities. Similarly, Anderson and Westcott (2020) found that communities attracting numerous visitors often undergo population growth, driven by migration from neighbouring regions.

Hye et al. (2013) uncovered that tourism is frequently perceived as a catalyst for positive transformation, attributed to its beneficial effects on socioeconomic conditions, increased recognition of previously undiscovered locales, and enhanced quality of life

for visitors. Moreover, travellers seeking regenerative experiences from abroad can contribute to enriching the cultural milieu of the destinations they visit.

A study conducted by the Barcelona Field Studies Centre (2018) in Hawaii revealed that tourism has precipitated deterioration in social, economic, and environmental conditions. According to the study's findings, 37% of respondent's attribute Hawaii's escalating crime rate to the tourism industry. While 64% believe increased tourism is linked to the surge in prostitution, vandalism (43%) and drug usage (27%) are not perceived as directly tied to tourism. Despite no apparent correlation between regenerative tourism and criminal behaviour, over two-thirds of respondents advocate for allocating more resources towards crime prevention rather than furthering tourism expansion. The consumption of drugs and alcohol by visitors can influence the behaviour of residents and disrupt their interpersonal relationships. Moreover, there's a heightened risk of an uptick in sexually transmitted infections. The influx of tourism and frequent cultural exchange pose threats to traditional values and cultural integrity. Additionally, the presence of affluent tourists may attract unwanted attention, potentially leading to an increase in crime rates and even human rights violations (Hughes, 2018).

Future studies should delve into the impact of regenerative tourism on communities, particularly from the standpoint of key tourism stakeholders, with a focus on social, cultural, and environmental dimensions (Nazneen, et al., 2019).

Research indicates that the majority of government policies have been geared towards fostering tourism-related activities, often through extensive marketing campaigns and offering investment incentives. This proactive approach has played a pivotal role in the growth of the tourism industry. Proenca and Soukiazis (2008) uncovered a positive correlation between government investment in infrastructure and the expansion of the tourism sector, leading to improved economic opportunities for local communities.

The importance of governmental regulations in promoting environmental sustainability within the tourism sector has been emphasized in numerous studies. Empirical evidence indicates that destinations implementing strict environmental regulations and adopting eco-friendly policies are more likely to attract responsible and environmentally conscious tourists.

Barretto's (2020) research conducted in coastal districts revealed a significant correlation between stricter regulations on beach and marine conservation and heightened visitor satisfaction, along with an increased likelihood of return visitation.

This underscores the pivotal role of government policies in fostering community engagement in tourism-related decision-making processes, thus contributing to more equitable development outcomes. Similarly, Bozdaglar's (2023) study highlighted the positive effects of government policies supporting community-based tourism, such as bolstering income and employment opportunities for local residents. However, existing literature lacks exploration of the impact of government policies and regulations on key tourism stakeholders in Nigeria. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of government policies and regulations on tourism and community development in Nigeria, focusing on the perspectives of key tourism stakeholders.

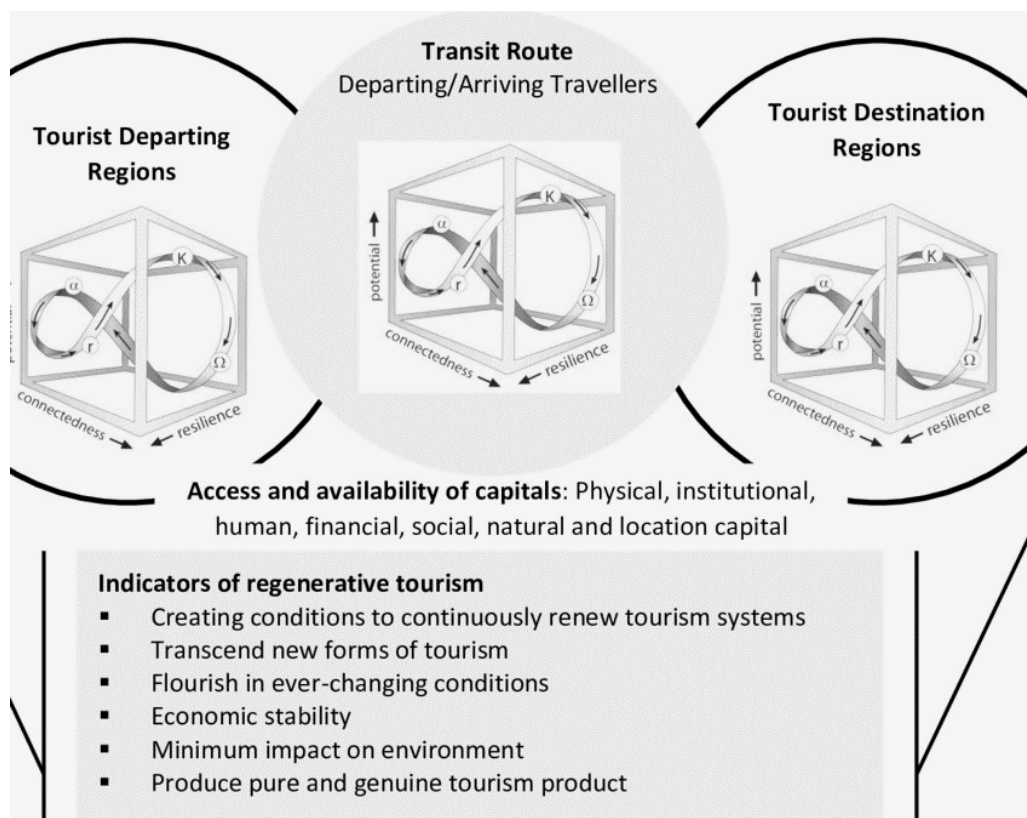


Figure 2: Conceptual model for indicators of regenerative tourism
Source: Hussain, & Haley, (2022).

Figure 2 illustrates the transformative potential of regenerative tourism, a dynamic approach that prioritizes sustainability, community empowerment, and cultural

authenticity. It demonstrates resilience, economic stability, and environmental stewardship. Regenerative tourism aims to generate sustainable livelihoods for local communities, minimize its ecological footprint, and produce authentic, quality tourism experiences. This approach contributes to local heritage and identity preservation, enhancing the well-being of both host communities and visitors.

2.3. Regional Development and Community Sustainability

2.3.1 Critical Aspects for Regional Development

Regional development is a multifaceted process that necessitates a multidisciplinary approach. Failing to comprehensively analyse successful instances of regional development may lead to inefficient allocation of time, capital, and human resources when attempting to replicate their strategies in other areas (Žitkus, 2015).

In the Nigerian context, regional development stands at a critical juncture due to various crises, encompassing financial, energy, and food-related challenges. These issues compel Nigerians to critically assess the existing economic framework. The primary objective of this review is to formulate more effective approaches to tackle the unresolved obligations that future generations currently confront, encompassing employment, societal advancement, standard of living, and ecological stewardship (Sharypova, 2022).

Tsiotas and Tselios (2023) conducted a study revealing that successful regional development strategies are transferable between regions sharing similar geographical, institutional, organizational, and cultural characteristics. Their research identified numerous factors with both direct and indirect impacts on regional growth. These factors encompass natural and human resources, technological advancement, capital availability, knowledge dissemination, institutional and legislative frameworks, as well as values, ethics, and commitment.

Similarly, Nagyházi's (2015) study underscored the primary objective of regional development, which is to enhance the progress of vulnerable regions, especially those in agricultural and industrial sectors. The study emphasized the importance of promoting employment opportunities through initiatives like retraining programs and addressing structural unemployment, while also highlighting the significance of fostering youth employment.

Echoing these findings, Devillé (2014) emphasized the crucial role of regional development in fostering the sustainable development of communities. The overarching aim of regional development initiatives is to alleviate underdevelopment by targeting disadvantaged and underdeveloped areas lacking sufficient governmental resources for progress and revitalization.

Contrarily, Hiwaki (2012) argues that blindly applying successful regional development cases to other regions without thorough evaluation may lead to inefficient utilization of time, capital, and human resources. Instead, regional development entails identifying and prioritizing development goals, along with devising appropriate strategies and methodologies to achieve them effectively.

2.3.2 Community Sustainability and Regenerative Tourism

Community sustainability plays a pivotal role in regional development as it seeks to achieve a harmonious balance between environmental considerations and development objectives, while also fostering local social connections (Bridger and Luloff, 2019). The Institute for Community Sustainability (2012) similarly defines community sustainability as encompassing economic, environmental, and social well-being and resilience. The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (2006) outlines six main functional elements, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The sustainability of communities hinges on the efficient management of their financial, human, and environmental resources. Nathaniel et al. (2021) conducted a study on this subject, emphasizing the importance of meeting present needs while ensuring adequate resources are available for future generations. Wang (2020) describes 'community sustainability' as the intentional planning, construction, or modification of communities to foster sustainable lifestyles. Sustainable communities typically prioritize various aspects, including environmental and economic sustainability, urban infrastructure, social equity, and municipal governance.

In Agarwal (2022) the extensive range of contexts encompassed by the term sustainable communities is highlighted. Political scientist Kent Portney emphasizes that sustainable communities can span various spatial scales, including neighbourhoods, watersheds, cities, and even multi-state regions. It is crucial to acknowledge that these efforts also

involve active participation from community members, academics, as well as the establishment of partnerships and coalitions.

While different communities have unique needs, stakeholders typically evaluate sustainability indicators in terms of system performance, policy effectiveness, and timely feedback to either maintain or modify their sustainability initiatives. Sustainability in Nigerian communities is a comprehensive, multidimensional concept that revolves around the health and resilience of local communities.

Arroyo (2020) asserts that the primary objective of sustainable communities is to establish thriving economic, social, environmental, and cultural entities capable of self-sufficiency.

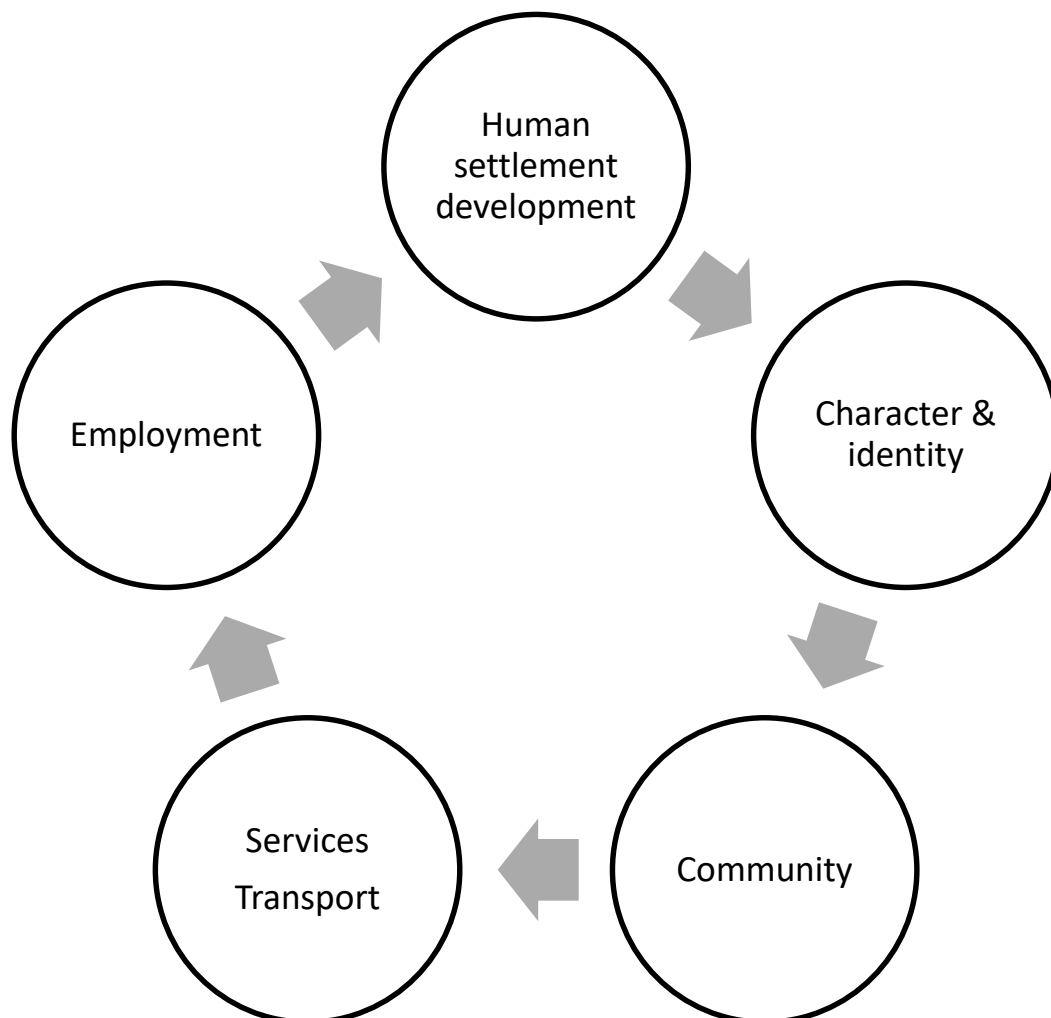


Figure 3: Fundamental functional elements of community sustainability
Source: Nelson (2006)

Human settlement development

The quality and type of housing in urban areas play a crucial role in determining their attractiveness as places to live. Homeownership not only fulfils a fundamental need but also offers families stability in their daily lives, while also serving as a visual representation of their ideals and aspirations.

The Department of Human Settlements' Breaking New Ground Plan (2015), influenced by the UN HABITAT report, advocates for a departure from product standardization to a more responsive approach to demand.

They propose moving away from the traditional model of building single houses on individual plots in distant locations. Instead, they argue in favour of diverse housing options that promote economic, cultural, and racial harmony within communities.

Transport

Transportation systems encompass various modes of transportation for both individual and public use, as well as the movement of cargo. According to CSIR (2015), it is crucial for the different modes of transportation within a transport system to maintain a harmonious relationship and be interconnected within a comprehensive framework.

To promote sustainability within communities, it is essential to have a comprehensive transportation infrastructure that prioritizes pedestrians, bicycles, and public transport. The spatial layout of a community is influenced by its transportation infrastructure, and the availability of transportation services plays a crucial role in achieving integration and sustainability (Selman, 2016).

Employment

According to Dewar and Todeschini (2019), the predominant approach to land settlement in South Africa is primarily quantitative, focusing on establishing a harmonious relationship between the size of land parcels and the various demands placed upon them. However, this strategy poses inherent challenges, including the

creation of an environment characterized by inefficiency and a lack of potential for generating income.

To promote sustainability within communities, it is crucial to support local economic development (LED) in both geographical and functional dimensions. Enhancing economic and social integration and sustainability is facilitated by opportunities that encourage local employment, trade, revenue generation, and currency circulation. Revenue acquisition through employment is considered the primary avenue for achieving economic sustainability.

Services

A community's standard of living can be assessed by examining the breadth, accessibility, and quality of the services it provides (Sarswat et al., 2021). Certain services are essential for the well-being of any community. Closing service gaps facilitates the integration of people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Consolidating resources and centralizing services in one location not only reduces costs but also minimizes travel time for community members.

Community

The concept of community encompasses the way individuals coexist, engage in social interactions, and collaborate with one another (Wendling & Katie Brooks, 2020). The establishment of a sustainable community relies on factors such as community development, positive social interaction, and local organization. Sustainable communities are characterized by a shared ethos and a collective sense of solidarity, which contribute to their ongoing advancement. When individuals feel secure, included, and part of a cohesive community, they develop an attachment to the locality and actively engage in its progress over time. According to Nelson (2006), community organizations and local institutions, both formal and informal, offer residents the opportunity to collectively address issues, solve problems, and work towards solutions.

Character and identity

The character and identity of a community are profoundly influenced by the culture and lifestyle of its members. The quality of both built and natural surroundings plays a significant role in shaping the nature of a community, its social identity, and its sustainability (Dougherty, 2016). The functionality and aesthetic design of townscapes and adjacent areas are crucial in fostering positive and responsible attitudes among residents.

2.3.3 Triple Bottom Line and Regenerative Tourism

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) theory has been extensively utilized in research literature to elucidate the concept of regenerative tourism (Kim and Son, 2021). The TBL approach considers sustainability from three perspectives: economic, environment, and society.

In this context, TBL serves as a foundation for regenerative tourism, promoting sustainability and efficient resource utilization (Arslan & Kisacik, 2017).

According to Dibrell et al. (2015), applying this theory can lead to the development and dissemination of sustainable innovation within organizations, fostering economic growth, and supporting environmental and social responsiveness to achieve long-term well-being and resilience. These goals are central to regenerative tourism within the context of sustainable communities.

Hatem et al. (2020) conducted a study on the application of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) in government buildings in Iraq. They administered a questionnaire to seventy-five (75) professional engineers to identify influential factors in applying the TBL and its impact on the environment. The study concluded that TBL can effectively measure the environmental, economic, and social performance of a group of individuals in a particular region, aiming to enhance their standard of living and promote the tourism industry in that area.

It is unsurprising that economic, social-cultural, and environmental impacts stemming from tourism have been utilized as predictor variables of regenerative tourism. However, different studies have yielded contradictory results regarding the impact of

regenerative tourism on regional development, particularly concerning environmental impact (García et al., 2015). This inconsistency may stem from the unique destination characteristics examined in each study.

As proposed by Woo et al. (2015), regenerative tourism is shifting towards embracing more abstract values. Studying this value within the context of enhancing regional development and community sustainability is crucial. Consequently, it has been selected as the variable for the framework setting based on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) theory.

2.4 Empirical Studies of Regenerative Tourism in Nigeria

There is limited empirical evidence of regenerative tourism in Nigeria, and the challenges and opportunities related to implementing and applying overarching principles in a regenerative program in Nigeria remain unresolved and lack empirical evidence (Chidinma and Omoyeni 2019). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the international conversation about responsible tourism by shedding light on Nigeria's experiences. The study explores the obstacles and successes of implementing regenerative tourism practices in Nigeria, providing insights for other regions and countries seeking to promote sustainable and responsible tourism.

The recent study by Ukaegbu et al. (2019), revealed that regenerative tourism in Nigeria adopts a systems-based approach that aligns with cultural and environmental patterns. This approach promotes local development and implements tourist practices across diverse communities. However, there is a lack of thorough consideration regarding the potential cultural and social effects of regenerative tourism on local communities in Nigeria. Some individuals question whether these practices contribute to preserving culture, enhancing living conditions, or strengthening communities.

Fileta and Kydros (2022) conducted a quantitative study to examine the existing literature and concluded that strategic guidelines are crucial for regional development. These guidelines enable organizations and governments to implement practical, innovative, and communicative tools that support the adoption of regenerative practices among prospective travellers and create awareness of regenerative tourism activities.

Pratama (2020) discovered that the implementation of regenerative tourism in Nigeria has the potential to significantly impact regional development. It can facilitate economic growth, preserve cultural heritage, promote environmental stewardship, and empower local communities. Additionally, Haboub (2022) conducted a study revealing how regenerative tourism can promote economic diversification by encouraging eco-tourism ventures, local crafts, cultural experiences, and other tourism-related enterprises. This diversification can help reduce the region's dependence on a single economic sector and enhance economic resilience.

Aynalem et al. (2016) conducted research on the impact of regenerative tourism on job creation in various sectors, including hospitality, local guiding, artisanal production, and small-scale agriculture.

The findings suggest that the adoption of regenerative tourism practices has the potential to alleviate unemployment and enhance the quality of life in local communities in Nigeria.

Simonovic and Peck (2013) discovered that regenerative tourism often integrates resilience and adaptability concepts to address environmental and societal stresses such as climate change, natural disasters, and economic volatility. It is essential for regional development that communities are prepared to withstand shocks and adjust to changing conditions.

Sauvage (2023) conducted a study emphasizing the significant role of regenerative tourism in preserving and protecting cultural assets and traditions, including Indigenous arts, festivals, and activities. This preservation of cultural identity provides economic opportunities for cultural producers. Regenerative tourism is a type of tourism that attracts both domestic and international travellers who seek authentic experiences and immersion in local cultures.

According to Omali et al. (2023) even among the majority of stakeholders, the extent to which regenerative tourism practices positively or negatively affect sustainable community development in Nigeria is poorly understood. In the Nigerian context, empirical evidence, and comprehensive analysis regarding the impacts of these practices on key stakeholders, social well-being, cultural preservation, policies, and regulation are scarce (Schmitz and Herrero-Jáuregui 2021).

According to Williamson and Hassanli (2020), this phenomenon not only yields economic advantages but also promotes the development of cross-cultural comprehension and admiration. Although the significance of integrating the pillars of sustainable community development at the regional level is indisputable, this concept has proven difficult to implement in practice. As stated by Gnangnon (2021), regions possess the capacity to leverage their existing local resources and potentialities to advertise their distinctive and one-of-a-kind products on the international market. The close physical proximity of local business proprietors and the extensive participation of community members are crucial factors that foster cross-networking and, consequently, promote regional development (Babaei et al., 2023).

To sum up, the concept of regenerative tourism in Nigeria is deeply connected with the advancement of regional development and the promotion of community sustainability.

Responsible tourism practises play a significant role in enhancing economic success by enhancing income and job prospects for local communities, promoting regional growth, and enhancing the overall well-being of community members. Consequently, there is a resultant allocation of resources towards critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, so enhancing the overall standard of living.

To summarize, the concept of regenerative tourism in Nigeria is intricately linked with advancing regional development and promoting community sustainability. Responsible tourism practices play a significant role in enhancing economic success by improving income and job prospects for local communities, fostering regional growth, and enhancing the overall well-being of community members. Consequently, resources are allocated to critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, thereby improving the overall standard of living.

Regenerative tourism places considerable emphasis on environmental stewardship, including responsible management of natural resources and ecosystems to ensure their preservation for future generations. These efforts are crucial for sustaining local livelihoods and preserving cultural identities within the community.

Cultural preservation is a vital aspect of tourism, as communities engaging in tourism activities often take steps to conserve their cultural assets. This not only enhances the quality of tourist experiences but also makes places more appealing to visitors.

Community empowerment is a crucial aspect of regenerative tourism, involving the active participation of the local community in decision-making processes, the enhancement of their skills and capabilities, and the fair distribution of benefits. The importance of this mutually beneficial partnership underscores the need to implement ethical and fair approaches to tourism that consider the interests of both geographic areas and community members, thus promoting sustainable economic growth.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodological Options

This study aims to provide insights into the application of regenerative practices in achieving sustainable communities, economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation in Nigeria (Pereira Roders and Van Oers, 2015). By examining this specific regional context, the study contributes to the expanding body of knowledge on regenerative tourism as a pathway towards holistic and sustainable development (Ukaegbu et al. 2019).

Therefore, the study aims to investigate the relationship between the impacts of regenerative tourism on regional development and community sustainability in Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

1. Determining the understanding of the degree of implementation of regenerative practices in selected communities.
2. Ascertaining the social and cultural impacts of regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria.
3. Analysing the role of government policies and regulations in shaping tourism and community development from the perspective of key tourism stakeholders.

This study adopts deductive approaches based on existing theories or bodies of knowledge, as suggested by Nieves and Lindgren (2013). Different paradigms lead to varying approaches to data collection, whether qualitative or quantitative, as highlighted by Shah et al., (2013).

In this chapter, the various methodological approaches used in this dissertation are outlined. The aim of this dissertation research is to examine the implementation of regenerative tourism in the perspective of key stakeholders in selected communities in Nigeria, analyse the social and cultural impacts of regenerative tourism practices, and examine the role of government policies and regulations in shaping tourism and community development. To achieve these aims, this study adopted a quantitative research approach to gain in-depth insights.

3.1.1 Study Site

The study is centred in Abia, a state situated in east-central Nigeria, established as an administrative entity in 1991 by dividing the eastern portion of the old Imo state (Obinna Godfrey et al., 2015). The region shares borders with Enugu and Ebonyi states to the north, Akwa Ibom to the east and southeast, Rivers to the south and southwest, and Imo and Anambra to the west.

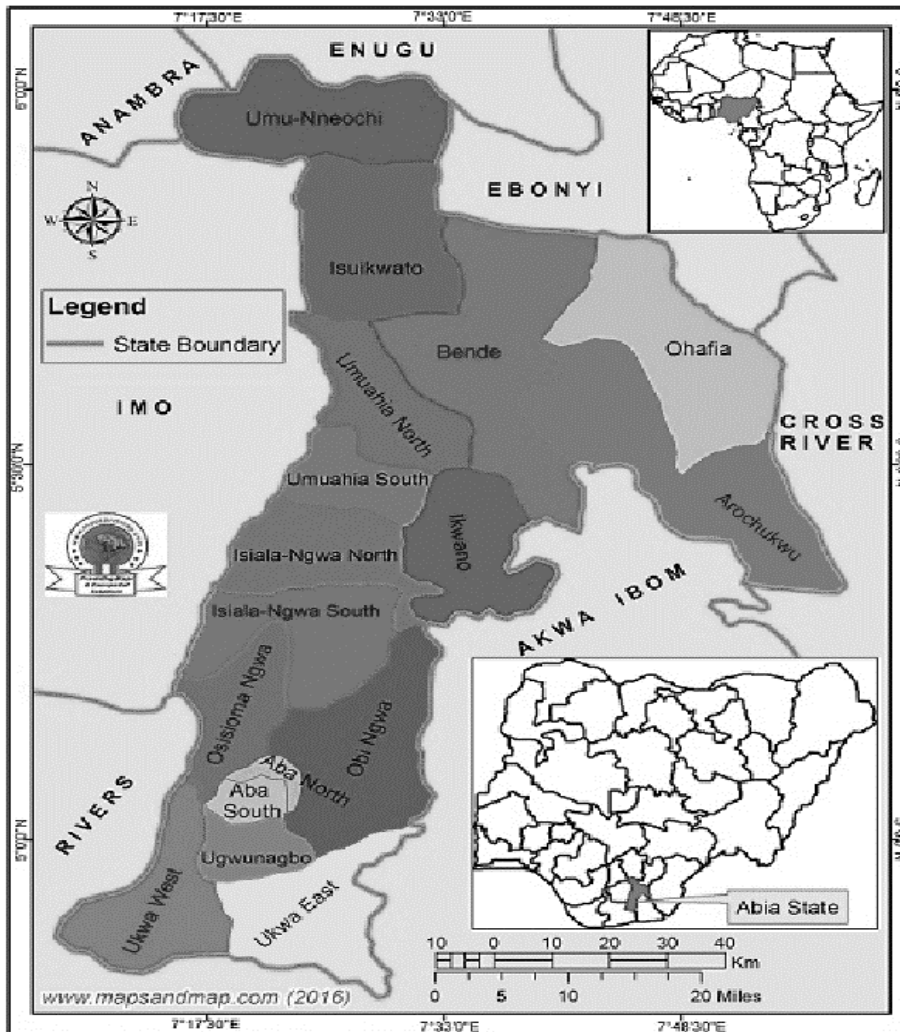


Figure 4: Study site

Source: Extracted from <https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Abia-state-showing-Obingwa-local-government-area-case-study-area-338356912>

Abia features regions of oil-palm vegetation and tropical rainforest in its southern section, while its mountainous northern half consists of woodland savannah.

The majority of the population is engaged in agricultural activities, primarily cultivating staple crops such as yams, taro, corn (maize), rice, and cassava. Oil palm is

the principal crop grown for commercial purposes, and the state's mineral resources include lead and zinc (Ahmed and El-Karamity, 2020).

Aba, situated on the railway north of Port Harcourt, serves as the primary industrial hub of the state. It specializes in the production of textiles, medicines, soap, plastics, cement, footwear, and cosmetics. Umuahia, the state capital, hosts a palm oil processing facility and numerous breweries.

Abia state is predominantly inhabited by the Igbo (Ibo) ethnic group and is characterized by high population density, making it one of the most densely populated regions in Nigeria. Umuahia and Aba are connected by the primary highway system. The population in 2006 was 2,833,999, originating from the eastern portion of the old Imo state. The region is next to Enugu and Ebonyi states in the north, Akwa Ibom in the east and southeast, Rivers in the south and southwest, and Imo and Anambra in the west (Mbonu *et al.* 2021). Abia has regions of oil-palm vegetation and tropical rainforest in its southern section, while its mountainous north is characterized by woodland savanna. The majority of the population is involved in agricultural activities, mostly cultivating basic crops such as yams, taro, corn (maize), rice, and cassava. Additionally, the primary source of income is derived from the cultivation of oil palm. The mineral resources include lead and zinc, (GUAN YI 2019).

Research approach.

The deductive approach begins with a theory or existing body of knowledge and formulates specific hypotheses or research questions to be tested against empirical data (Mallik *et al.*, 2023). Conversely, the inductive approach generates theories or explanations based on the empirical data collected during the research process (Tiryakiol *et al.*, 2018).

For this research, a deductive approach is adopted, focusing on the empirical data collected from various tourism centres in Abia State, Nigeria. The analytical dimensions were formulated based on literature analysis.

Saunders *et al.* (2012) presented a range of potential options for subsequent layers of analysis. The research strategy was selected based on its practicality and alignment with

the preceding methodological approaches of positivism and deductive reasoning. The exclusion of action, ethnography, and grounded theory in this study is justified as these methodologies are more aligned with the philosophy of interpretivism and an inductive approach, which is not the focus of this particular research.

Different paradigms generally result in different approaches to data collection: qualitative or quantitative (Munk et al., 2017). Quantitative research focuses on objective measurement, quantification, and statistical analysis to generalize findings, while qualitative research emphasizes subjective interpretation, understanding context, and capturing participants' perspectives and experiences.

For this study, a quantitative research approach is adopted, utilizing descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to analyse the collected data.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

To gather data for the dissertation, an online survey questionnaire was administered using Google Forms. The survey targeted community members, tourists, and local businesses involved in regenerative tourism. It aimed to collect economic, social, and cultural data necessary for addressing the research questions. The data collection was supported by community leaders, that facilitated the distribution of the survey by the different types of stakeholders. Participants met specific eligibility criteria, including being over 18 years old and being in a stakeholder position, such as roles in local government, tourism practice, or community membership. The selected sample size comprised 206 target respondents located in various communities in Abia state, Nigeria, out of which 100 respondents completed the survey. The research adopted a simple random sampling method to ensure all participants had an equal opportunity for selection, thereby minimizing potential biases (Etikan, 2017).

The survey was divided into four sections each containing 22 items or statements, inspired by the literature review in particular, the Three Bottom Line approach (cf. Appendix 1). After obtaining participants' consent, they proceed to the main content of the survey, divided in the following four sections:

- Part A: Participants were asked to provide general information about the sample, including details such as age, gender, educational background,

stakeholder position (local government official or tourism practitioner and members of the communities), duration of residence (long-term resident or newcomer), and selected communities.

- 2. Part B: This section assesses the implementation of regenerative tourism practices in communities in Nigeria. The questionnaire consists of questions that utilize a 7-point Likert scale for responses.
- 3. Part C: This section analyses the social and cultural impacts of Regenerative Tourism Practices in Nigeria. The questionnaire also employs a 7-point Likert scale for responses.
- 4. Part D: This section examines the role of government policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in Nigeria, using a 7-point Likert scale for responses. Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using SPSS statistical software. In addition to a traditional descriptive statistical approach, the dissertation employed an exploratory regression analysis to test hypotheses and determine significant relationships.

Additionally, a planning matrix (Table 1) has been developed to provide detailed insights into the dissertation's research questions. This matrix clarifies the importance of each question, the conceptual framework underlying it, the anticipated information and data to be collected, and the proposed research method.

The study expects to provide insights into the impact of regenerative tourism, social and cultural impacts of regenerative tourism practices in Nigeria, and the role of government policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in Nigeria, taking into consideration the perspective of various stakeholders.

Table 1: Planning Matrix for dissertation

What we want to know – Research questions	Why you want to know - Objectives	What is necessary to collect - Data	What empirical approaches to implement? Methods
The extent of knowledge about the implementation of regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria?	To comprehend the perspective of key stakeholders about the implementation of regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria.	Primary data from Selected communities in Abia state, Nigeria through online survey data. Survey data.	Descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, using SPSS software version 20. Descriptive Analysis and inferential analysis, using SPSS software version 20. Econometric estimation.
The extent of social and cultural impacts of regenerative tourism in selected communities in Nigeria?	To comprehend the perspective of key stakeholders about the social and cultural impacts of regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria.		
What is the role of public policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in selected communities in Nigeria?	To comprehend the perspective of key stakeholders about the role of government policies and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in selected communities in Nigeria.		

Source: Inspired in Maxwell (2013)

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

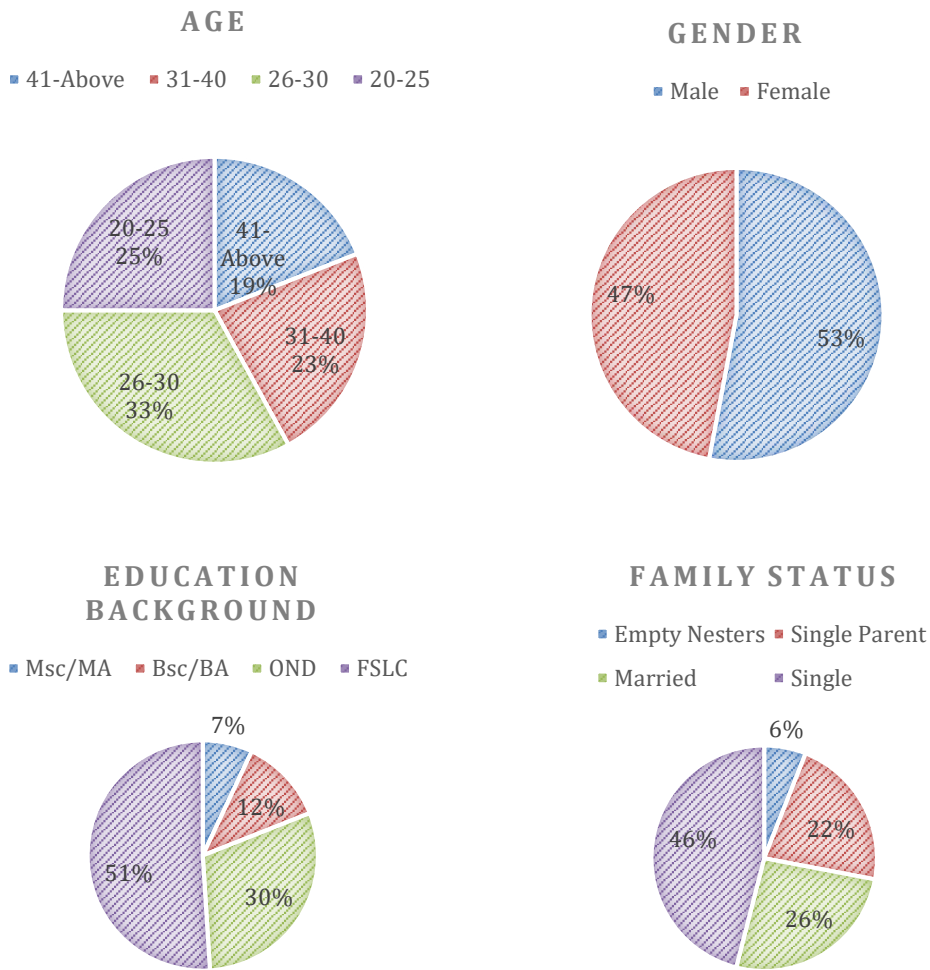
4.1 Sample Description

The demographic characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, educational background, marital status, key stakeholders, duration of residence, and selected communities, are summarized in Figure 5. The sample consists of 19.0% of respondents aged 41 years and above, while 23.0% are aged 31-40 years. A quarter of the respondents fall between the ages of 26-30 years, accounting for 33.0%, while 25.0% are aged 20-25 years.

Regarding gender distribution, 53.0% of the respondents are male, with a slight majority, and 47.0% are female. In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents hold FSLC (First School Leaving Certificate), accounting for 51.0%, followed by OND (Ordinary National Diploma) at 30.0%, BSc/BA (Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts) at 12.0%, and MSc/MA (Master of Science/Master of Arts) at 7.0%.

From the Figure 5 below, it is evident that 46.0% of respondents are single, followed by married individuals at 26.0%, while single parents and empty nesters account for 22.0% and 6.0%, respectively. Among the key stakeholders participating in the study, tourism practitioners constitute the highest proportion at 56.0%, followed by local government officers at 31.0%, and community members at 13.0%.

Considering the duration of residence, 62.0% of respondents are long-term residents, while 38.0% are newcomers. Regarding the communities selected for the study, 39.0% of respondents are from Isiala-Ngwa North, while Arochukwu has 19.0% respondents. Aba-South and Aba-North have 20.0% and 22.0% of respondents, respectively.



COMMUNITIES

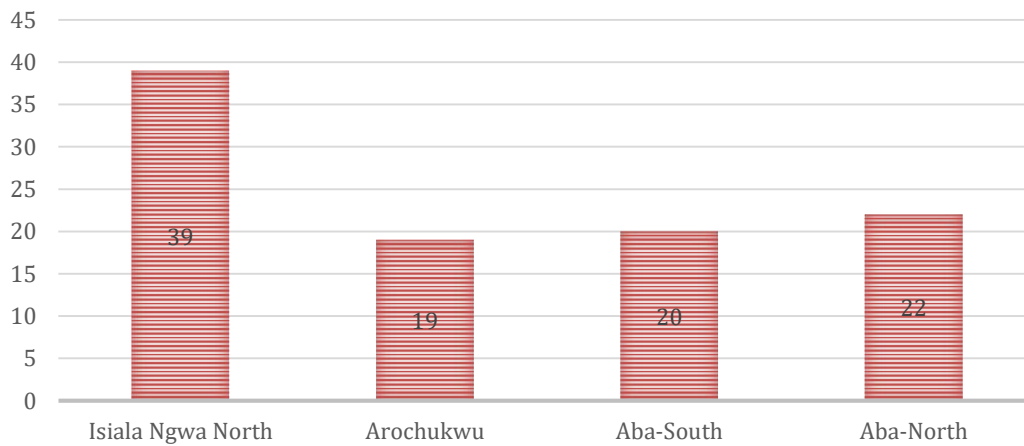


Figure 5: Key Figures of Respondents (%from Total)
 Source: Own elaboration

4.2 Analysis of Responses

Figure 6 illustrates that 37.0% of the respondents strongly agree that the implementation of Regenerative Tourism practices has led to effective waste management practices, while 30.0% agree. Additionally, 11.0% remain neutral, 3.0% somewhat agree, and 4.0% disagree. Furthermore, 6.0% strongly disagree, and 9.0% somewhat disagree. The results presented depict the impacts of implementing regenerative tourism practices in the selected communities. One significant factor identified is the establishment of effective waste management facilities, with 37.0% of respondents strongly agreeing. This finding is consistent with Gangolells et al. (2014) study, emphasizing the importance of effective waste management in enhancing cleanliness and orderliness, essential for community and organizational priorities.

Another impactful aspect is community initiative, with 22.0% of respondents strongly agreeing, while 41.0% strongly agree that their community has partnered with the private sector due to regenerative tourism implementation. As noted by Snyman (2014), collaboration between communities and the private sector can stimulate economic growth, attracting investments, creating job opportunities, and fostering entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, 41.0% of respondents strongly agree that there is sufficient awareness and education regarding regenerative tourism implementation. Additionally, 31.0% strongly agree that prioritizing local businesses is one-way regenerative tourism impacts the community, aligning with Pultz and Teasdale's (2017) findings, which suggest that prioritizing local businesses can create more job opportunities, reduce unemployment rates, and enhance residents' economic well-being.

The results also reveal that 35.0% of respondents strongly agree that the community actively ensures the preservation of cultural heritage, while 26.0% agree. Lastly, 17.0% of respondents perceive the sustainable use of natural resources as a priority resulting from the implementation of regenerative tourism in their communities, with 28.0% agreeing. These findings align with Henheik (2022) research, which underscores how natural resources contribute to protecting endangered species, conserving valuable ecosystems like forests and wetlands, and maintaining clean air and water.

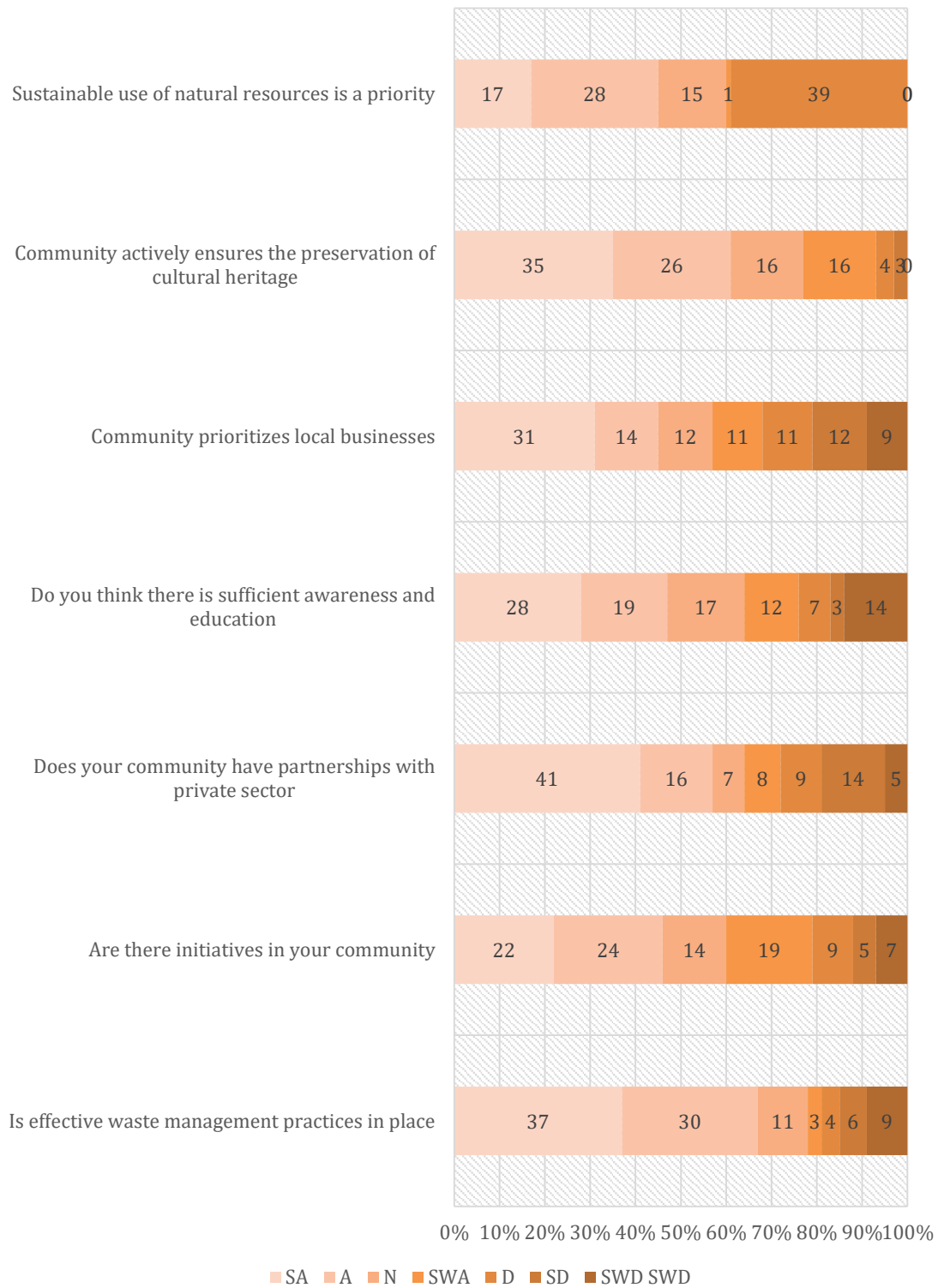


Figure 6: Assessing the implementation of Regenerative Tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria. (Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa North), (% from Total)

NB: Strongly Agree= 7point, Agree=6point, Neutral=5point, Somewhat Agree=4point, Disagree =3point, Strongly Disagree=2point, Somewhat Disagree=1point

Source: Own elaboration based in survey data.

From Figure 7, it is evident that 33.0% of respondents perceive the social and cultural aspects of their community at a neutral level, while 19.0% strongly agree and 7.0% strongly disagree. Additionally, 21.0% strongly agree that tourism practices have shown respect for and preserved their cultural heritage, a finding consistent with Bleibleh and Awad (2020), who suggest that respecting and preserving cultural heritage fosters a sense of identity and pride among individuals and communities. This reinforcement of unique cultural identity, traditions, customs, language, and values provides a strong foundation for self-identity and belonging.

Moreover, 34.0% of respondents claim that their cultural heritage is extensively promoted as one of the impacts of regenerative tourism practices in their communities, with an additional 26.0% believing that cultural heritage is highly promoted. This finding aligns with Boukas and Ioannou (2020), who note that cultural heritage tourism stimulates economic development by attracting visitors, generating revenue, and creating job opportunities. Heritage sites, museums, festivals, and cultural events contribute to the local economy and promote sustainable tourism practices.

Furthermore, the figure reveals that 22.0% of respondents strongly agree that local communities empower decision-making, while 16.6% agree. This finding is consistent with Agarwal's (2022) research, which suggests that empowering local communities promotes social cohesion and inclusivity by ensuring diverse voices and perspectives are represented in decision-making processes. It strengthens social bonds, builds trust among community members, and reduces inequalities by giving marginalized groups a voice.

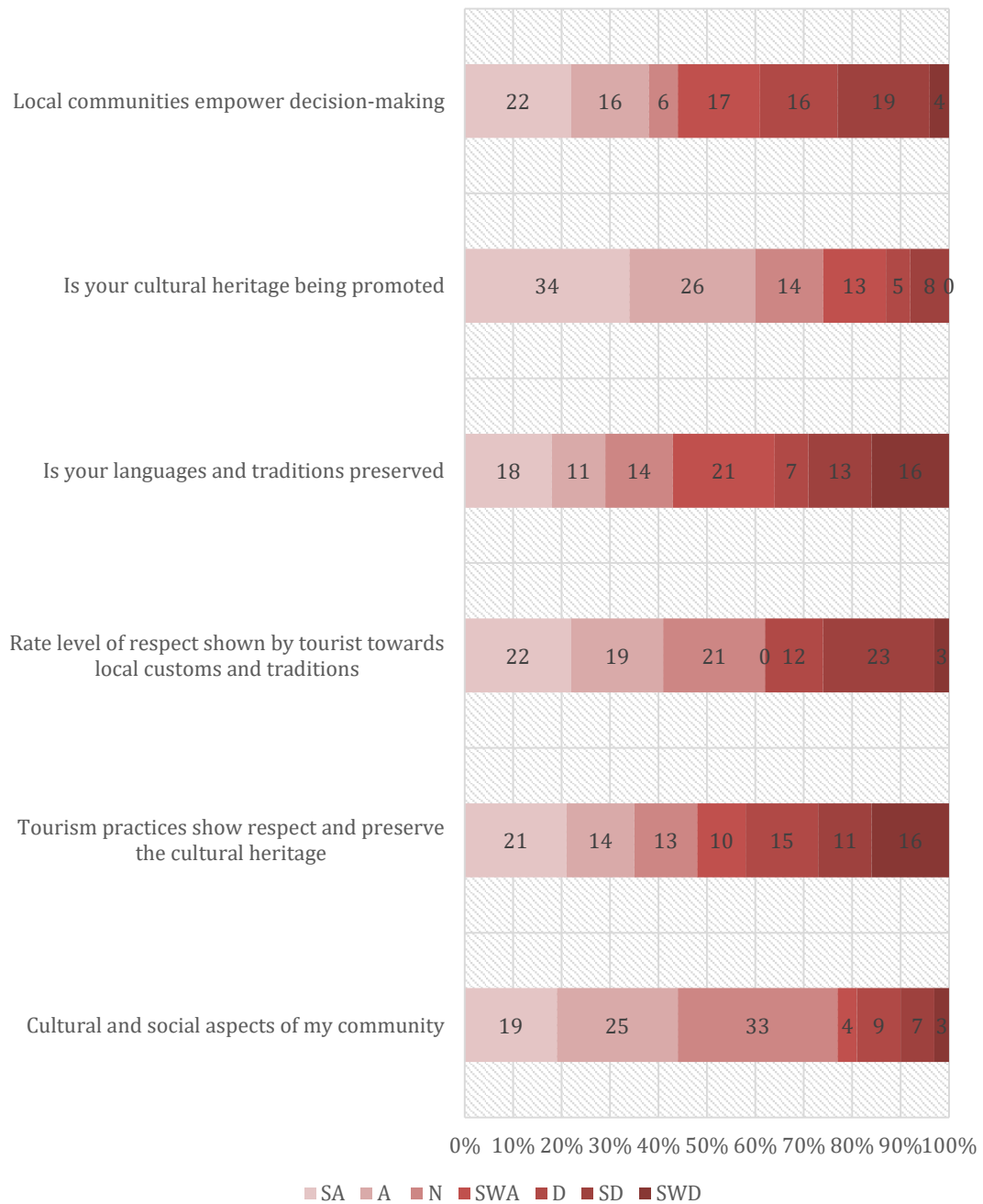


Figure 7: Social and Cultural Impact of Regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria. (Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa North), (% from Total)

NB: Strongly Agree= 7point, agree=6point, Neutral=5point, Somewhat Agree=4point, Disagree =3point, Strongly Disagree=2point, Somewhat Disagree=1point

Source: Own elaboration based in survey data.

What is the role of government policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in selected communities in Nigeria?

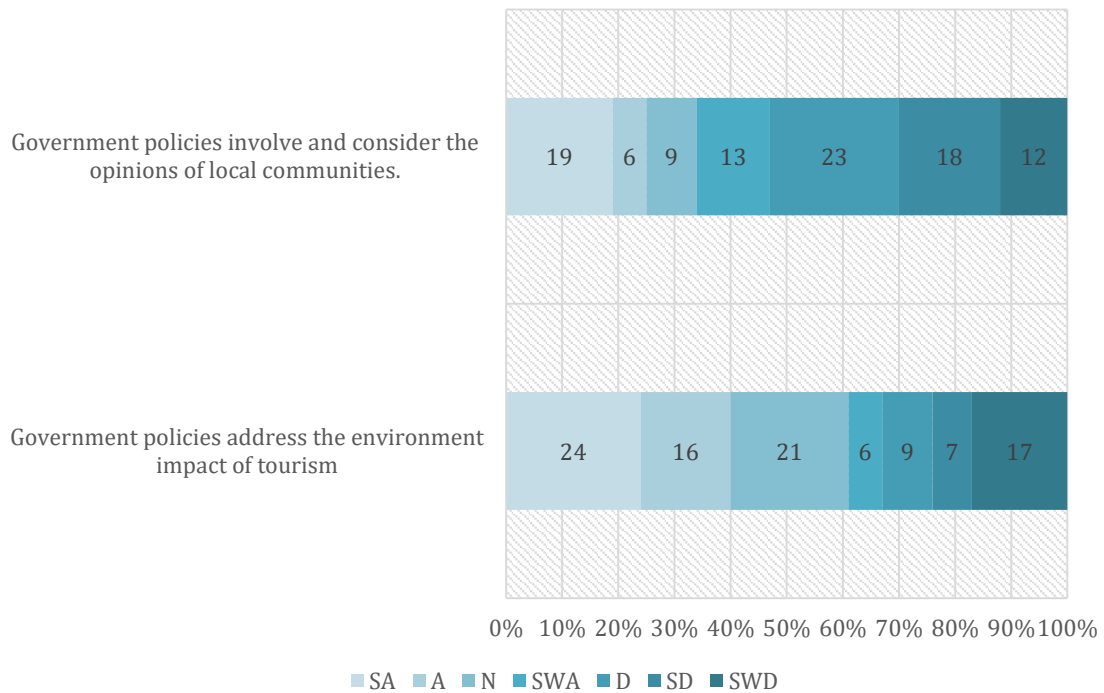


Figure 8: Role of government policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in selected communities in Nigeria. (Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa North), (% from Total)

NB: Strongly Agree= 7point, agree=6point, Neutral=5point, Somewhat Agree=4point, Disagree =3point, Strongly Disagree=2point, Somewhat Disagree=1point

Source: Own elaboration based in survey data.

Figure 8 indicates that 24.0% of respondents strongly agree that there have been government policies addressing the environmental impact of tourism in their community, while 16.0% agree. Additionally, 21.0% of respondents claim that such policies are neutral in their community, and 7.0% strongly agree. According to Kubickova (2017), policies prioritizing environmental sustainability in tourism development promote the long-term viability of the industry.

These policies encourage sustainable practices such as responsible resource management, waste reduction, and biodiversity conservation, minimizing negative impacts on natural ecosystems and cultural heritage sites.

Moreover, the study reveals that 19.0% of respondents strongly agree that government policies involve and consider the opinions of local communities. Dorasamy (2017) found that involving local communities in policy-making processes strengthens democratic governance by ensuring decisions reflect their needs, priorities, and

aspirations. It promotes citizen participation, transparency, and accountability, fostering trust in government institutions and promoting social cohesion. Conversely, 23.0% of respondents disagree, and 18.0% strongly disagree. This aligns with the findings of D'Exelle and Riedel (2008), who suggest that inclusive policy processes may inadvertently favour more privileged or powerful members of local communities, leading to elite capture and exclusion of marginalized groups.

4.3. An Exploratory Econometric Model

We conducted an exploratory analysis to investigate the relationship between the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and the role of government policies and regulations in shaping tourism in selected communities.

The model estimated a relation between the independent variable (average score in question about the government policies addressing the environmental impact of tourism) and a dependent variable (average score of all the questions measuring regenerative tourism practices, cf. questions in Figure 6).

Table 2: Linear Regression R-Squared

Model	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared
Predictors: (Constant), Government policies address the environmental impact of tourism	0.288	0.073	0.049

dependent Variable: Regenerative tourism practices

Source: Own elaboration based in survey data.

Table 2 presents the R-Squared of the regression for the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and the role of government policies and regulation in shaping tourism in selected communities in Abia State.

The R-Squared suggests that this dependent variable, alone, has a small explanatory capacity of the dependent variable relating to the implementation of regenerative tourism. A more complete model for this econometric exploration would need to include several other variables to be acceptable.

Table 3: Linear Regression coefficients analysis showing on the relationship between the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and role of government policies and regulation in shaping tourism.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	30.211	2.731		11.063	0.000
Government policies address the environmental impact of tourism	6306.5967	0.385	0.189	2.853	0.006

Dependent Variable: Regenerative tourism practices

Source: Own elaboration based in survey data.

Nevertheless, if our interest is just to test the association of the two variables, policies and practices, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and the role of government policies and regulation in shaping tourism in the selected communities. This is evident by a positive sign of a statistically significant coefficient (t-test higher than $|2|$, and p-value, which rejects the null hypotheses of the coefficient being null). This significant relationship implies that government policies and regulations play a crucial role in influencing the implementation of regenerative tourism practices. Policymakers have the potential to enact policies that promote sustainability and encourage businesses and communities to adopt regenerative practices. According to Bishwokarma et al. (2023), government intervention can contribute to sustainable development in tourism destinations.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the linkages between regenerative tourism, regional development and community sustainability in Nigeria. This was achieved by utilizing theories that were underrepresented in the existing literature. The research questions were addressed through the collection of online survey data from selected communities in Abia state, Nigeria, spanning one month (January 5th – February 5th, 2024). A total of 100 eligible responses were obtained for analysis from various communities, with participants aged 19 and above, predominantly male, diverse educational backgrounds, stakeholder positions, and residency durations.

Some key aspects can be underlined. Firstly, results indicate a positive impact on regional development, suggesting that regenerative tourism practices hold potential for enhancing economic diversification, infrastructure development, and job creation in Nigeria. Secondly, the study reveals a correlation between regenerative tourism practices and community sustainability, highlighting how sustainable tourism initiatives can foster social inclusivity, preserve cultural heritage, and promote environmental stewardship within Nigerian communities. These results emphasize the pivotal role of governmental policies and regulations in shaping the effects of regenerative tourism on both regional development and community sustainability. Findings indicate a significant relationship due to the fact that there has been an effective waste management, community initiatives, community partnership with private sector, community actively ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage, sufficient awareness and education and sustainable use of natural resources which has enhanced the implementation of regenerative tourism practices in the selected communities. According to Chan (2023), argue that implementation of regenerative tourism practices enhances the capacity building of local stakeholders including community members, tourism operators and government officials. This implies that capacity building initiatives are effective in equipping stakeholders with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to implement sustainable tourism practices in Nigerian communities.

Secondly, results show how social and cultural factors impact on regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria. The findings revealed that cultural and social aspects were influenced by regenerative tourism practices in the selected

communities' areas like preservation of cultural heritage, empowerment of local communities in decision making and respect for local customs and traditions.

This aligns with existing research, such as Zayachka, (2023) who emphasizes how regenerative tourism practices priorities the preservation of cultural heritage contributes to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural assets, including historic sites, monuments, artefacts, traditions, languages, and rituals. This finding implies that promotion of conservation, restoration and interpretation of cultural heritage ensures the continuity and authenticity of cultural identity for present and future generations. Another study by Mechiat and Dekoumi (2023) found that regenerative tourism practices recognize cultural heritage as a valuable economic asset that can contribute to community development, poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods.

Thirdly, results emphasize the role of government policies and regulations in shaping tourism and community development in selected communities in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the respondents have experienced government policies that address the environmental impact of tourism in their community. The study by Yakubova (2023) revealed that government policies are aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of tourism activities, which has a positive impact on the environment.

These findings suggest that government policies and regulations promote measures that protect natural habitats; the reduction of pollution, the conservation of water resources and the preservation of these resources will lead to improved environmental quality and ecosystem health in the community. According to Luiz (2014), emphasized those environmental conscious tourists, investors and partners will support the economic growth and development of the community in the long term.

Finally, the econometric exploration suggests a relationship between the implementation of regenerative tourism practices and role of government policies in shaping tourism in selected communities. This is aligned with Guo *et al.* (2023) that emphasize that government intervention can contribute to sustainable development in tourism destinations.

Effective policy frameworks prioritizing environmental conservation, cultural heritage preservation, and community engagement are crucial for ensuring that tourism

development aligns with sustainable development objectives and benefits local populations.

Effective collaboration among stakeholders is imperative for maximizing the benefits of regenerative tourism and addressing associated challenges. This entails engagement from government agencies, local communities, tourism operators, and non-governmental organizations. Multi-stakeholder partnerships, participatory decision-making processes, and knowledge sharing mechanisms emerge as vital tools for fostering sustainable tourism development in Nigeria, as emphasized by the study's findings.

Proposed policy recommendations based on these findings include:

- Alignment of government policies and regulations with sustainable tourism principles, prioritizing environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and social inclusion.
- Ensuring meaningful engagement and participation of local communities in decision-making processes related to tourism development.
- Investment in capacity-building initiatives to enhance the skills, knowledge, and resources of local communities and tourism stakeholders.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations, such as its focus on selected communities in Abia state, Nigeria, which limits the generalizability of findings. Additionally, data collection via online surveys using Google Forms may introduce response bias, and the cross-sectional approach restricts the establishment of cause-and-effect relationships.

To advance the research, future studies could:

- Explore the impact of regenerative tourism across different sectors and regions using longitudinal research designs to enhance generalizability.
- Supplement quantitative findings with qualitative research to gain deeper insights into how regenerative tourism practices influence organizational culture.

The study enriches theoretical understanding by assessing the economic, environmental, and social impacts of regenerative tourism practices, aligning with the triple bottom line and institutional theory benefits. It underscores regenerative tourism's relevance beyond

selected communities and its significant impact on social and cultural aspects. Furthermore, it contextualizes regenerative tourism practices within emerging economies like Nigeria.

The study's practical insights can be valuable for business owners and stakeholders by stressing the importance of developing local communities' abilities in sustainable agriculture, eco-friendly infrastructure, waste management, and cultural preservation. Additionally, it underlines the need to foster collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders engaged in tourism development. Promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues, shared planning, and cooperative projects can lead to joint decision-making and collective efforts toward sustainable tourism objectives. Recognizing the connection between regenerative tourism impacts and regional growth helps organizations devise strategies that encourage regenerative tourism among stakeholders.

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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE MASTER IN TOURISM ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Regenerative tourism and regional development in Nigeria: exploring good practices for Sustainable communities.

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is strictly for academic purpose and all information will be treated strictly and confidential. Please select option that best reflect your opinion on each statement.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

Please tick (✓) in the column in the following information.

1. Age: 20-25 (), 26-30 (), 31-40 (), 41 and above ()
2. Gender: Male (), Female ()
3. Educational Background: FSLC () OND (), Bsc/BA (), MSc/MA ()
4. Family status: Single (), Married (), Single Parent (), Empty Nesters ()
5. Key stakeholders: Local Government Official (), Tourism Practitioner (), Community members ()
6. Duration of Residence: Long-term Resident (), Newcomer ()
7. Selected Communities: Aba North (), Aba South (), Arochukwu (), Isiala Ngwa North ()

SECTION B: Assessing the implementation of Regenerative Tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria. (Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa North)

Instruction: Kindly indicate by ticking (✓) in the column the extent to which the statement identify the implementation of Regenerative tourism practices in the selected communities in Nigeria.

- *Strongly Agree= 7point, Agree=6point, Neutral=5point, Somewhat Agree=4point, Disagree =3point, Strongly Disagree=2point, Somewhat Disagree=1point*

8. Is effective waste management practices in place?

- *Strongly Agree*
- *Agree*
- *Neutral*
- *Somewhat Agree*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly Disagree*
- *Somewhat Disagree*

9. Are there initiatives in your community?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

10. Does your community have partnerships with private sector entities (e.g., businesses, NGOs)?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

11. Do you think there is sufficient awareness and education?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

12. Community prioritize local businesses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

13. Community actively ensure the preservation of cultural heritage?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

14. Sustainable use of natural resources is a priority.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree.

SECTION C: Social and Cultural Impact of Regenerative tourism practices in selected communities in Nigeria. (Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa North)

Instruction: Kindly indicate by ticking (√) in the column the extent to which the statement that describes the Social and Cultural impact of Regenerative tourism practices in the selected communities in Nigeria.

Strongly Agree= 7point, Agree=6point, Neutral=5point, Somewhat Agree=4point, Disagree =3point, Strongly Disagree=2point, Somewhat Disagree=1point

15. I closely do identify with the cultural and social aspects of my community?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

16. Tourism practices show respect and preserve the cultural heritage of your community?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

17. Rate the level of respect shown by tourists towards local customs and traditions?

- Very Respectful
- Respectful
- Neutral
- Respectful
- Disrespectful
- Very Disrespectful
- Disrespectful: Very

18. Is your languages and traditions preserved?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

19. Is your cultural heritage being promoted?

- Not at all
- Slightly promoted
- Moderately promoted
- Somewhat promoted
- Prominently promoted
- Highly promoted
- Extensively promoted

20. Local communities empower decision-making.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

SECTION D: Examine the role of government policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in selected communities in Nigeria. (Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa North)

Instruction: Kindly indicate by ticking (✓) in the column the extent to which the statement examine the role of government policy and regulation in shaping tourism and community development in the selected communities in Nigeria.

Strongly Agree= 5point, Agree=4point, Neutral=3point, Disagree =2point, Strongly Disagree=1point

21. Government policies address the environmental impact of tourism?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

22. Government policies involve and consider the opinions of local communities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

APPENDIX 2: Descriptive statistics, demographics of participants

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<i>Age</i>	
<i>41-Above</i>	19.0
<i>31-40</i>	23.0
<i>26-30</i>	33.0
<i>20-25</i>	25.0
<i>Gender</i>	
<i>Male</i>	53.0
<i>Female</i>	47.0
<i>Education Background</i>	
<i>MSC/MA</i>	7.0
<i>B.sc/BA</i>	12.0
<i>OND</i>	30.0
<i>FSLC</i>	51.0
<i>Family Status</i>	
<i>Empty Nesters</i>	6.0
<i>Single Parent</i>	22.0
<i>Married</i>	26.0
<i>Single</i>	46.0
<i>Key Stakeholders</i>	
<i>Community Members</i>	13.0
<i>Tourism Practitioner</i>	56.0
<i>Local Government Officer</i>	31.0
<i>Duration of Residence</i>	
<i>Long-term Resident</i>	62.0
<i>Newcomer</i>	38.0
<i>Selected Communities</i>	
<i>Isiala Ngwa North</i>	39.0
<i>Arochukwu</i>	19.0
<i>Aba-South</i>	20.0
<i>Aba-North</i>	22.0

(Source: Own elaboration)