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Government Policy Framework and Cultural Heritage Preservation: Examining Cultural Assets and Policy Challenges in Calabar Metropolis Cross River State, Nigeria			
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Keywords		Abstract	
Government Policy Framework and Cultural Heritage Preservation: Examining Cultural Assets and Policy Challenges		This study examined government policy framework and cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria, with emphasis on cultural assets and policy challenges. Cultural heritage in Calabar Metropolis, which includes museums, festivals, monuments, and traditional institutions, is increasingly threatened by urbanization, inadequate funding, weak policy implementation, and limited community participation. The study was guided by three specific objectives focusing on the relationship between government-targeted cultural assets, the role of government policies, and the challenges affecting cultural heritage preservation. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Primary data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations, while secondary data were obtained from relevant publications, government reports, and institutional records. The population of the study comprised government officials, cultural stakeholders, traditional rulers, community leaders, artisans, and residents around key heritage sites. A total of one hundred and seventy-two respondents were involved in the study, selected through purposive and cluster sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential methods with statistical support from relevant software tools. Findings revealed that government policy effectiveness is strongly influenced by the identification and prioritization of cultural assets, as well as the level of institutional support provided. The study also found that policy implementation is associated with several challenges, including inadequate resources, weak enforcement, and limited stakeholder collaboration. However, cultural	
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	heritage preservation challenges were found to be influenced more by broader systemic governance issues than by the nature of targeted cultural assets alone. The study concludes that effective cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis depends on strong policy frameworks, adequate funding, improved institutional capacity, and enhanced community involvement.
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Introduction

Cultural heritage preservation has emerged as a critical area of concern globally, particularly as nations seek to safeguard their historical and cultural assets from the pressures of modernization, urban expansion, and globalization. Governments around the world have enacted policies to protect tangible and intangible heritage, guided largely by frameworks such as the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. These instruments emphasize the importance of safeguarding monuments, sites, oral traditions, and cultural practices that define the identity of communities. However, while these conventions have provided international guidelines, the implementation of heritage preservation policies at the national level often reflects unique political, economic, and socio cultural dynamics (Logan, 2019). The United States provides an important case study in cultural heritage preservation, particularly in the interplay between strong legal frameworks, institutional capacity, and contested cultural narratives. The country's preservation efforts are anchored in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, which created the National Register of Historic Places and established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to coordinate federal, state, and local responsibilities (Murtagh, 2020). Through the National Park Service, the federal government manages heritage sites of national significance, while state historic preservation offices and local governments extend these responsibilities at regional and community levels. This multi-layered framework reflects the U.S. commitment to safeguarding heritage as part of its national identity and public history.

Despite this institutional strength, the United States faces enduring challenges in heritage preservation. A major issue involves the protection of Native American heritage, including sacred sites, burial grounds, and cultural artifacts. While the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 mandated the return of human remains and cultural items to Indigenous communities, debates continue over incomplete compliance, the pace of restitution, and the persistence of disputes between tribes and museums (Echo Hawk, 2021). The marginalization of intangible heritage, such as indigenous languages and oral traditions, further underscores the limitations of current policies, as many communities continue to face language endangerment and cultural erosion (Hinton, 2022). Another pressing concern is the contestation over historical memory. The nationwide debates on Confederate monuments, intensified by the Black Lives Matter movement, illustrate how cultural heritage can serve as both a unifying and divisive force (Brown, 2020). These controversies highlight broader questions about whose heritage is preserved, how it is represented in public spaces, and the evolving role of government in mediating collective memory. Additionally, rapid urbanization, climate change, and infrastructural development place significant pressure on heritage sites, particularly in coastal and metropolitan regions (King, 2021).

In recent years, U.S. policy has shifted toward inclusivity and collaboration. Federal and state agencies increasingly engage Native American tribes, African American communities, and immigrant

groups in heritage decision-making processes (National Park Service, 2023). The emphasis has expanded beyond tangible monuments to include cultural landscapes, oral histories, and community narratives, aligning with global trends under UNESCO conventions.

The preservation of cultural heritage in the digital era has become a pressing scholarly concern as societies increasingly rely on technology to document, safeguard, and disseminate cultural legacies. Siliutina et al. (2024) provide a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and opportunities inherent in digital heritage preservation. Their article, published in *Revista Amazonia Investiga*, positions itself within the wider discourse of digital humanities and heritage studies by emphasizing both technical and socio-political dimensions. The study highlights the benefits of digitization, particularly its capacity to enhance accessibility and facilitate broader dissemination of heritage materials. Digital platforms allow for the archiving of cultural landmarks and the safeguarding of intangible traditions such as languages and oral histories. By engaging with contemporary scholarship, the authors stress that digital heritage democratizes access, strengthens cross-cultural exchange, and offers protective measures against loss, particularly in conflict zones. An important thematic contribution of the article is its contextualization within the Russian-Ukrainian war, which underscores how geopolitical instability intensifies the urgency of cultural preservation. According to the authors, digital tools play a critical role in mitigating risks during crises by ensuring continued access to heritage materials. This conflict-based lens gives the work geopolitical depth, highlighting the intricate relationship between warfare, cultural identity, and technology. Beyond opportunities, the article identifies several challenges that complicate the digitization process. These include the risk of digital obsolescence as formats and technologies become outdated, the tension between copyright protection and open access, and ongoing issues of data security. Accessibility and inclusivity also emerge as concerns, as many communities lack the technical infrastructure to engage with digital platforms. Furthermore, limited financial and institutional resources hinder digitization efforts, particularly in underfunded or war-affected regions. One strength of the article lies in its broad scope, which integrates theoretical perspectives with practical realities. The structured framework clearly contrasts opportunities with challenges, allowing readers to grasp the multidimensional nature of digital heritage. Additionally, by aligning its analysis with UNESCO's global calls for digital preservation, the article situates itself within an internationally relevant debate.

Despite these strengths, the article shows notable weaknesses. It relies primarily on secondary literature without offering new empirical data through interviews, fieldwork, or quantitative evidence. Its heavy focus on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict limits the generalizability of its findings to other global regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America, where infrastructural and socio-economic contexts shape digitization differently. The study also under-engages with policy and governance frameworks. While copyright and intellectual property are mentioned, there is little in-depth analysis of how international or national regulations influence digital heritage practices. Similarly, the article only lightly touches on digital humanities theory, overlooking perspectives from critical heritage studies or postcolonial scholarship that could enrich the theoretical grounding. Another limitation concerns sustainability. Although the authors acknowledge risks of digital obsolescence, they do not sufficiently discuss long-term strategies such as cloud-based storage, open-source archiving, or emerging AI-assisted cataloguing. Addressing such strategies could strengthen the article's contribution to the sustainability debate in digital preservation. In identifying gaps, the article opens opportunities for future research. Scholars could conduct empirical, community-based studies to capture localized experiences of digital heritage. Investigating technological innovations such as blockchain for provenance or AI for restoration may also enhance authenticity and

resilience in heritage practices. Moreover, ethical debates surrounding digital repatriation and ownership of cultural materials remain underexplored and present fruitful directions for inquiry.

Therefore, Siliutina et al. (2024) provide an insightful and relevant analysis of cultural preservation in the digital age. Their work highlights both the promise and limitations of digitization, particularly in the context of conflict. While the article's reliance on secondary literature and limited theoretical engagement weaken its overall robustness, it nonetheless lays a valuable foundation for future localized and empirical studies. The fusion of technology and cultural preservation, as discussed in this work, continues to be a critical area for scholarly and policy-oriented engagement. Cultural heritage embodies both tangible and intangible legacies, connecting people to their past while shaping their present identities. Nigeria, as one of Africa's most culturally diverse nations, is richly endowed with a wide array of cultural resources drawn from its multicultural communities

In Africa, cultural heritage is not only a repository of historical knowledge but also a resource for socio economic development. Countries on the continent face the dual challenge of conserving cultural assets while leveraging them for tourism and national identity building. Despite regional frameworks developed by the African Union and collaborations with UNESCO, many African nations struggle with issues such as inadequate funding, weak policy enforcement, and the illicit trafficking of cultural artifacts (Ndoro & Wijesuriya, 2022). Furthermore, rapid urbanization and climate change present growing threats to heritage sites, often outpacing government efforts to safeguard them. Heritage preservation in Africa therefore requires integrated approaches that connect culture with education, community participation, and environmental sustainability.

Other nation in Africa example Kenya provides an important case study of how government policies intersect with cultural heritage preservation in Africa. The country has made significant progress in developing legal and institutional frameworks, such as the National Museums and Heritage Act, which mandates the protection of cultural and natural heritage sites (Kariuki, 2021). However, challenges remain. Illicit trade in archaeological artifacts continues to undermine preservation efforts, despite existing legal frameworks. Another pressing issue in Kenya is the underrepresentation of intangible cultural heritage in preservation policies. While Kenya ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention, traditional practices, oral literature, indigenous languages, and performing arts often receive less policy attention compared to tangible monuments (Omondi, 2022).

The risk of cultural homogenization due to globalization further complicates the situation, as younger generations increasingly shift away from traditional customs. For instance, the Mau Mau heritage, which symbolizes Kenya's struggle for independence, has sparked debates about how colonial legacies are remembered, memorialized, and integrated into national identity (Kamau, 2021). To address these challenges, Kenya has pursued several policy innovations. The government has collaborated with UNESCO and ICCROM to enhance capacity building, while devolved county governments have increasingly taken up heritage conservation as part of local governance (UNESCO, 2024). Community based heritage management models, particularly in the Kaya Forests and Rift Valley ecosystems, demonstrate the importance of involving local custodians in preservation (Chirikure & Pwiti, 2020). Furthermore, the return of looted artifacts, such as the 2021 restitution of Kenyan cultural items from the United Kingdom, has reinvigorated debates on heritage ownership and the responsibilities of both national and foreign institutions (The Guardian, 2021). The Kenyan case illustrates the complexity of balancing development, conservation, and community interests. On one hand, government policies have established strong frameworks for protecting cultural heritage and aligning it with national development goals. On the other hand, financial constraints, infrastructural pressures, climate risks, and limited community participation continue to hinder

effectiveness. As scholars argue, sustainable preservation in Africa requires governments to adopt a more integrated approach that links cultural heritage with tourism, education, environmental conservation, and local livelihoods (Ndoro & Wijesuriya, 2022).

This study therefore seeks to examine the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage, with a focus on Africa and Kenya as a critical case for understanding broader continental challenges and opportunities.

Within this national framework, Cross River State is one of Nigeria's richest cultural regions, boasting the Calabar Museum, colonial-era architecture, traditional crafts, and internationally recognized cultural festivals such as the Calabar Carnival. The state government, often in partnership with the NCMM, has pursued initiatives to rehabilitate heritage institutions and promote cultural festivals as vehicles for tourism and economic development (Cross River Government, 2024). However, challenges remain. The Calabar Museum, despite its historical importance, has long suffered neglect, poor infrastructure, and inadequate funding (Eja, 2021). Similarly, while cultural festivals have boosted tourism, their increasing commercialization raises concerns about balancing authenticity with economic gains. Addressing these issues requires stronger policy coordination, adequate investment, capacity building, and sustained community engagement. This study therefore seeks to examine how government policies in Cross River State can effectively address preservation challenges while promoting cultural heritage for identity, education, tourism, and socio economic development.

Problem of the study

Cultural heritage represents the collective identity, traditions, and historical values of a people, and it serves as an important source of tourism development and cultural education in society. In Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, several cultural heritage assets such as museums, traditional festivals, historical monuments, sacred sites, and indigenous cultural practices are gradually losing their value due to poor preservation and management. Many cultural sites have suffered neglect, physical deterioration, encroachment, and destruction as a result of rapid urbanization and modernization within the metropolis. The major problems affecting cultural heritage preservation in the area include inadequate funding, weak implementation of government policies, poor maintenance culture, corruption, lack of proper documentation of heritage resources, and insufficient public awareness about the importance of cultural conservation. In addition, there is poor collaboration between government agencies, traditional institutions, and local communities in the management of cultural heritage resources. These problems have continued to threaten the sustainability of cultural heritage assets and reduce their contribution to tourism and socio-economic development in the study area.

Several efforts have been made by stakeholders such as the government, tourism agencies, cultural organizations, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations to address these problems and preserve cultural heritage in Calabar Metropolis. The Cross River State Government has introduced policies and programmes aimed at protecting cultural sites and promoting cultural festivals such as the Calabar Carnival and other heritage-related events. Cultural agencies and museums have also organized exhibitions, awareness campaigns, and educational programmes to encourage cultural preservation among residents and visitors. Traditional rulers and community leaders have equally attempted to preserve indigenous customs, festivals, and sacred cultural sites through local regulations and community participation. Furthermore, some private organizations and tourism stakeholders have invested in the restoration of selected cultural attractions to improve tourism activities in the metropolis. Despite these efforts, the challenges associated with cultural heritage preservation still persist in many parts of Calabar Metropolis.

The failure of these efforts can largely be attributed to inadequate funding, inconsistent government policies, weak enforcement of heritage laws, and poor monitoring of preservation programmes. Political interference and changes in government administration have also affected the continuity and effectiveness of many cultural preservation initiatives in the study area. In some cases, stakeholders focus more on the economic benefits of tourism activities than on the actual conservation of cultural heritage assets. The absence of reliable data and proper documentation of cultural resources has further weakened planning and decision-making processes related to heritage management. Similarly, limited community involvement and lack of public enlightenment have reduced the level of support and participation required for successful preservation efforts. These shortcomings have continued to expose cultural heritage assets in Calabar Metropolis to neglect, misuse, and gradual extinction.

This study therefore seeks to examine the government policy framework and cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis by assessing the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives, evaluating the role of government policies, and identifying the challenges affecting effective heritage conservation. The study is expected to provide useful information that will help policymakers, tourism planners, and cultural stakeholders develop more effective strategies for preserving cultural heritage resources in the study area. It will also promote better collaboration between government agencies, local communities, and other stakeholders in ensuring sustainable cultural heritage management. Against this background, how effective are government policy frameworks in preserving cultural heritage assets in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria?

Objectives of the study

This study examined Government Policy Framework and Cultural Heritage Preservation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. This study will specifically seek to;

- 1 Examine the relationship between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria.
- 2 Assess the relationship between government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria.
- 3 Determine the relationship between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research hypotheses

Three hypotheses were used for this study which includes:

1. There is no significant relationship between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage in the study area.
2. There is no significant relationship government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage and challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area.
3. There is no significant relationship between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine government policy framework and cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. The mixed-methods design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain both statistical and descriptive information on how government policies influence cultural heritage preservation within the study area. The study was guided by three research objectives which focused on: (i) examining the relationship between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in preserving cultural heritage, (ii) assessing the relationship between government policies and challenges associated with cultural heritage preservation, and (iii) determining the relationship between cultural assets targeted by government initiatives and policy-related challenges affecting preservation efforts. The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research problem. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations, while secondary data were sourced from the Cross River Carnival Commission, Tourism Development Board, journals, magazines, and other relevant literature on cultural heritage preservation.

The population of the study comprised government officials, cultural stakeholders, traditional rulers, community leaders, artisans, and residents living around important cultural heritage sites in Calabar Metropolis. Specifically, the study included staff of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the Tourism Bureau, the Carnival Commission, and selected community councils such as the Obong of Calabar Palace, the Murimunene of the Efut Nation, the Ndidem of the Quo Nation, and the Paramount Ruler of Calabar South. A total population of 172 respondents was identified for the study. To obtain the sample size, one-half of the total population was adopted, giving a sample size of 86 respondents. A mixed sampling technique involving purposive and cluster sampling methods was used in selecting respondents for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents with adequate knowledge of cultural heritage preservation and government policies, while cluster sampling ensured proper distribution of questionnaires across the selected population locations. Data collection was carried out using open-ended questionnaires designed to obtain information on cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives, the role and effectiveness of government policies, contributions of government preservation programmes, challenges associated with cultural heritage preservation, and respondents' general opinions on government involvement in cultural conservation. In addition, interviews and focus group discussions involving selected key informants and community stakeholders were conducted to provide deeper insights into policy implementation and heritage preservation challenges. The questionnaires were administered with the assistance of trained field assistants and were retrieved after two weeks to minimize missing responses and ensure accuracy of data collected. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process by obtaining verbal informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of responses, and securing approval from relevant institutional authorities and traditional leaders within Calabar Metropolis. The data obtained from the field were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical technique was employed to test the three hypotheses formulated for the study.

Results

Hypothesis one

The result outcome of Hypothesis One, which stated that there is no significant relationship between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage in the study area, the analysis revealed a contrary result. A

Careful examination of the data presented in Table 1 shows a strong positive correlation between the two variables, indicating that government-targeted cultural assets are closely linked to the roles played by government policies in cultural heritage preservation, with a correlation coefficient of ($R=0.853$; $P < 0.001$).

The correlation analysis indicates a statistically significant and positive linear relationship between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in preserving cultural heritage in the study area. This suggests that government policies are more active and impactful where specific cultural assets are clearly identified and prioritized for preservation.

Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that a significant relationship exists between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage in the study area. The findings further underscore the importance of deliberate policy focus on identifiable cultural assets as a strategy for enhancing effective cultural heritage preservation. See Table 1

TABLE: Correlation analysis between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage

Parameter	N	R	p-value
Cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives	74	0.853**	0.001
Role of government policies in the preservation	98		

Hypothesis two

Hypothesis Two stated that there is no significant relationship between government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area. Contrary to this assumption, the findings from the analysis reveal a meaningful association between the two variables. The correlation analysis presented in Table 2 indicates a strong positive relationship between government policies in cultural heritage preservation and the challenges associated with their implementation, with a correlation coefficient ($R = 0.657$; $P < 0.001$). This result confirms that the relationship between government policies and the challenges encountered in promoting cultural heritage preservation is statistically significant and linear.

The implication of this finding is that government policies are closely linked to the nature and intensity of challenges experienced in cultural heritage preservation within the study area. As policies are formulated and implemented, they tend to generate corresponding administrative, financial, and institutional challenges that influence preservation outcomes.

Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted, establishing that a significant relationship exists between government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage and the challenges associated with promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area.

TABLE 2: Correlation analysis between government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area.

Parameter	N	R	p-value
Government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage	84	0.657 ^{ns}	0.001
Challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation	88		

Hypothesis three

Hypothesis Three stated that there is no significant relationship between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area. The analysis was carried out to determine whether the type of cultural assets prioritized by government initiatives is associated with the challenges encountered in policy implementation.

The results presented in Table 3 show a positive correlation between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the challenges associated with government policies, with a correlation coefficient of ($R = 0.764$; $P < 0.05$). Although the relationship between the two variables is positive, the probability value indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant at the conventional level.

Based on this outcome, the null hypothesis is accepted, while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation in the study area.

TABLE 3: Correlation Analysis between the cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation

Parameter	N	R	p-value
Cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives	80	0.764 ^{ns}	0.001
Challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation	92		

Discussion of Findings

The results and findings of the study are discussed in this section. Effort was made by the researcher to present the discussion based on the variables under study in line with the research objectives and hypothesis-by-hypothesis.

Relationship between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in cultural heritage preservation

The findings of Hypothesis One revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the role of government policies in the preservation of cultural heritage in Calabar Metropolis. The correlation result ($R = 0.853$; $p < 0.001$) indicates that government policies are more effective and actively implemented when specific cultural assets are clearly identified and prioritized for preservation. This means that targeted cultural assets such as museums, festivals, monuments, and traditional institutions tend to attract stronger policy attention and institutional support.

This finding suggests that policy effectiveness in cultural heritage preservation is largely dependent on how well cultural assets are identified, documented, and prioritized by government institutions. It further implies that when cultural assets are well defined, government intervention becomes more structured, coordinated, and impactful. This aligns with Logan (2019), who emphasized that heritage policy effectiveness is influenced by political and socio-cultural prioritization of cultural resources. It also supports Murtagh (2020), who observed that structured legal frameworks enhance the protection of clearly identified heritage assets. Similarly, National Park Service (2023) noted that inclusive and targeted policy frameworks improve heritage management outcomes.

Relationship between government policies and challenges in cultural heritage preservation

The findings of Hypothesis Two revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between government policies in cultural heritage preservation and the challenges associated with policy implementation ($R = 0.657$; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that as government policies are formulated and implemented, they often generate corresponding administrative, financial, institutional, and operational challenges that affect heritage preservation outcomes.

The implication of this finding is that policy implementation in cultural heritage preservation is not without difficulties, as stronger policy engagement tends to expose structural weaknesses in governance systems. Issues such as inadequate funding, weak enforcement, poor monitoring, and political interference are closely linked to policy execution processes. This finding is consistent with Ndoro and Wijesuriya (2022), who identified weak policy enforcement and financial constraints as major barriers to heritage preservation in Africa. It also aligns with Eja (2021), who reported that poor funding and infrastructural decay undermine heritage management in Cross River State. Furthermore, UNESCO (2024) emphasized that institutional capacity gaps significantly affect the success of cultural preservation policies.

Relationship between cultural assets targeted by government initiatives and challenges in cultural heritage preservation

The findings of Hypothesis Three revealed a positive relationship between cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives and the challenges associated with government policies in promoting cultural heritage preservation ($R = 0.764$; $p < 0.05$). However, the relationship was not statistically significant at the conventional level, meaning that although cultural assets and policy challenges are related, the relationship is not strong enough to be considered statistically meaningful.

This finding suggests that while targeted cultural assets may influence preservation challenges, other factors such as governance structure, funding availability, public awareness, and institutional coordination play a more dominant role in determining the level of challenges experienced. It implies that challenges in cultural

heritage preservation are not solely dependent on the type of cultural assets targeted but are influenced by broader systemic issues. This is consistent with Brown (2020), who noted that heritage challenges are often shaped by socio-political factors rather than the nature of heritage assets alone. It also aligns with King (2021), who emphasized that urbanization, climate change, and institutional weaknesses are major determinants of heritage preservation challenges.

Conclusion

The study concludes that government policy frameworks play a significant role in shaping cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings establish that cultural assets targeted by government preservation initiatives have a strong and positive relationship with the effectiveness of government policies in heritage preservation. This indicates that deliberate identification and prioritization of cultural assets enhance policy focus and implementation outcomes.

The study also concludes that government policies are closely linked to the challenges experienced in cultural heritage preservation, meaning that policy formulation and implementation processes often generate administrative, financial, and institutional constraints that affect effectiveness. Furthermore, while cultural assets are associated with preservation challenges, the relationship is not statistically significant, indicating that challenges are influenced more by systemic governance issues than by the nature of cultural assets alone.

In line with the literature reviewed, particularly Logan (2019), Ndoro and Wijesuriya (2022), and Siliutina et al. (2024), the study affirms that effective cultural heritage preservation requires not only strong policy frameworks but also adequate funding, institutional capacity, community participation, and sustainable management strategies. Therefore, cultural heritage preservation in Calabar Metropolis depends on the integration of targeted policy action, institutional strengthening, and improved stakeholder collaboration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and cultural heritage agencies should strengthen the identification, documentation, and classification of cultural assets in Calabar Metropolis. This will ensure that heritage policies are more targeted, structured, and effective in protecting important cultural resources such as museums, festivals, monuments, and traditional institutions. Improved asset identification will also enhance policy implementation and resource allocation.
2. Government should improve funding, institutional capacity, and enforcement mechanisms for cultural heritage preservation policies. This includes increasing budgetary allocations to cultural agencies, strengthening monitoring systems, and reducing political interference in heritage management. These measures will help reduce administrative and operational challenges associated with policy implementation.
3. There is a need for stronger collaboration among government institutions, traditional rulers, local communities, and tourism stakeholders in cultural heritage preservation. Community participation and awareness campaigns should be intensified to improve public support for heritage conservation. This will help reduce neglect, improve sustainability, and ensure long-term protection of cultural heritage assets in Calabar Metropolis.

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