PLASU Journal of Environmental Sciences, E-ISSN 2360-9222, Vol.2, No. 2, June 2026, Published by the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Plateau State University, Bokkos. https://www.pjes.ng
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20568551

CONSERVATION OF DOGO NA HAUWA VILLAGE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE DARK TOURISM SITE IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Dark tourism, which involves visiting sites linked to death and tragedy, is becoming a prominent topic in discussions about global heritage. This study explores the potential for preserving Dogo Na Hauwa, a village in Plateau State, Nigeria, that experienced a tragic massacre in 2010, as a cultural heritage and a dark tourism destination. Honouring this location could offer various benefits, such as fostering reconciliation, preserving historical memory, and boosting economic growth through tourism. The research utilized in-depth interviews and document analysis to gather local views on dark tourism, conservation strategies, and sustainable heritage management. The findings reveal a split in community opinion: while some residents view site preservation as a means to honour victims, educate future generations, and attract visitors, others express concerns about retraumatisation, the commercialszation of tragedy, and a lack of government support. The study highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that includes inclusive stakeholder engagement, culturally sensitive interpretation, and sustainable tourism policies. It also underscores the necessity of investing in infrastructure, developing policy frameworks, and supporting community-led initiatives to ensure that dark tourism sites significantly contribute to cultural heritage conservation and socioeconomic development. Finally, preserving Dogo Na Hauwa as a dark tourism site presents a unique opportunity to balance memory, justice, and the economic advantages of tourism. If managed effectively, it can aid in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and a deeper understanding of Nigeria's historical conflicts within the broader context of global dark tourism.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Conservation, Dark tourism, Memorialisation, Tourism development

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an effective tool for global economic development, cultural exchange and social engagement (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2021). Dark tourism, which is defined as visiting sites associated with death, tragedy, and suffering, has received significant academic and practical attention (Stone, 2006; Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011; Light, 2017). Global dark tourism destinations, such as the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Poland or Ground Zero in New York, demonstrate how tragedy can entice visitors to learn about history, pay tribute to victims or confront humanity's darker past (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Heidelberg, 2015; Martinia & Buda, 2020; Panayidou, Christou, & Saveriades, 2024). However, the impact of dark tourism on host communities is still complex, raising concerns about cultural commodification, ethical tourism practices and long-term development in Africa.

The relationship between tragedy and tourism in Africa, is inextricably linked to its colonial history, political upheavals and civil wars (Simpson, 2007; Kimani, 2021; Marijnen, 2022; Kollmeyer, 2025). Destinations such as South Africa's Robben Island, Rwanda's Genocide Memorials and Ghana's Cape Coast Castle demonstrate how trauma sites can be transformed

into educational and commemorative tourism hotspots (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015; Vidal & Ingelaere, 2016). These locations frequently emphasise resilience while raising historical awareness. However, challenges such as managing community involvement, maintaining cultural integrity and dealing with the psychological effects on locals continue to exist across the continent (Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011; Ferguson & Al-Kilidar, 2016; Kollmeyer, 2025).

Furthermore, in Nigeria, dark tourism is still a relatively new phenomenon, owing to the country's turbulent history of ethnic conflicts, civil wars and colonial exploitation (Adunbi, 2015; Onu, 2018; Akinola, 2019; Akpoyomare & Olorunfemi, 2019). For example, historical sites such as the Oloibiri Oil Well and slave trade routes in Badagry demonstrate how the country's painful history has influenced its tourism landscape. Furthermore, ethno-religious conflicts, particularly in northern Nigeria, have left a trail of tragic landmarks that testify to violence and its consequences (Oluwaniyi, 2010; Ojo, 2013; Johnson, 2021a; Johnson, 2022b; Njoku & Kolapo, 2022a; Okpala & Onodugo, 2023a; Ottuh, 2025a). Despite their potential to attract tourists, researchers argue that these sites frequently elicit conflicting reactions, with some seeing them as opportunities for reconciliation and others as exploitative businesses (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Seaton, 2009; Magano, Fraiz-Brea, & Leite, 2022; Lee, 2023; Assylkhanova et al., 2024). Similarly, Plateau State, known as the "Home of Peace and Tourism" has multiple sites associated with inter-ethnic and religious violence (Best, 2007). Scholars have increasingly examined how such tragic landscapes complicate tourism narratives, especially in Nigeria (Johnson, 2021c; Johnson, 2022d; Njoku & Kolapo, 2022b; Okpala & Onodugo, 2023b; Ottuh, 2025b). Plateau State's picturesque landscapes and rich cultural diversity stand in stark contrast to its history of community violence, especially in villages such as Dyemburuk popularly known as Dogo Na Hauwa.

Dyemburuk popularly known as Dogo Na Hauwa, a small village in Plateau State, rose to prominence after a massacre in 2010 that killed over 500 people in one of Nigeria's most violent incidents of ethno-religious conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2010). While the location has profound historical and emotional value, the village's prospective for conservation as a cultural heritage dark tourism poses serious concerns. Thus, this research investigates how Dogo Na Hauwa village can be conserved as a cultural heritage dark tourism site in Plateau State, Nigeria. The objectives include an investigation of the perceptions of Dogo Na Hauwa residents regarding the transformation of their tragic history into a dark tourism destination; examine conservation strategies for dark tourism sites; and identify strategies that can ensure sustainable heritage management in Dogo Na Hauwa village. The paper first conducts a review of literature on dark tourism and presents the research methodology applied. Findings are presented in line with the research objectives in order to achieve the study's aim.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Dark Tourism: From the Lens of Villagers

The perspectives of local communities are central to understanding the viability of dark tourism. Residents often hold ambivalent views, oscillating between seeing tourism as a means of memorialisation and economic opportunity, and fearing it as a source of exploitation or retraumatisation. Aleshinloye et al. (2025) argue that cultural perceptions of dark tourism cannot be universally assumed, as they are shaped by local traditions, collective memory, and socio-political contexts. Using Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Cognitive Appraisal Theory (CAT), they demonstrate that villagers' acceptance of dark tourism depends on whether perceived benefits outweigh emotional and cultural costs.

Globally, communities living near dark tourism sites often experience ambivalence. On one hand, memorialisation offers opportunities for education, reconciliation, and economic development; on the other, it risks commodifying suffering. For example, residents around Auschwitz-

Birkenau in Poland have expressed pride in preserving memory but also discomfort with the influx of tourists who sometimes treat the site as spectacle rather than solemn space (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Light, 2017). Similarly, in New York, families of 9/11 victims initially resisted the commercialisation of Ground Zero, fearing that tourism would trivialize tragedy, before eventually embracing its role in collective remembrance (Heidelberg, 2015). These global cases highlight that villagers' perspectives are shaped by the tension between remembrance and commodification.

In Africa, villagers often view dark tourism as a double-edged sword. Communities around Rwanda's genocide memorials, for instance, embrace tourism as a tool for remembrance and education, yet remain cautious about commodification of suffering (Vidal & Ingelaere, 2016). Survivors often act as guides, ensuring authenticity, but debates persist about whether tourism risks turning trauma into spectacle (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). In South Africa, Robben Island demonstrates how communities can transform sites of oppression into spaces of resilience, though some locals argue that tourism profits have not adequately benefited surrounding communities (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Ngewu, 2022; Chiwawa & Wissink, 2023; Coetzee, 2025). Across Africa, villagers' perspectives reveal a recurring theme: dark tourism is welcomed when it promotes healing and education, but resisted when it prioritises profit over dignity.

In Nigeria, villagers near sites of violence express similar concerns. Communities around historical slave trade routes in Badagry have embraced tourism for its educational value, but tensions remain over whether the commercialisation of slavery undermines its solemnity (Onu, 2018). More recently, Nigerian communities affected by ethno-religious violence, such as those in Plateau and Kaduna States, have voiced fears about security, cultural erosion, and commercialisation (Mshelia et al., 2024). The case of Dogo Na Hauwa reflects this tension. Survivors may see memorialisation as a way to honour victims and prevent historical amnesia, while others fear that tourism could reopen wounds or trivialise tragedy. This aligns with Seaton's (2009) notion of *thanatourism*, where sites of death evoke both attraction and repulsion. The villagers' lens thus highlights the need for trauma-informed heritage practices that respect local sensitivities while enabling broader educational and reconciliation goals.

2.2 Dark Tourism Sites Conservation Strategies

Conserving dark tourism sites requires balancing historical preservation, ethical responsibility, and sustainable visitor engagement. Jayarathne (2025) emphasises that conservation strategies must integrate ethical storytelling, community participation, and environmental safeguards to prevent exploitation. Similarly, Arvind (2024) stresses the importance of maintaining site dignity by reducing ecological footprints and involving communities in planning and project development.

Globally, successful conservation strategies often combine physical preservation with interpretive frameworks. For example, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Poland emphasises architectural conservation alongside educational programming, ensuring that the site remains a solemn space of remembrance rather than a commercial attraction (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Light, 2017). Similarly, Hiroshima Peace Memorial integrates architectural conservation with educational programming positioning the site as a global symbol of resilience and reconciliation, while Robben Island employs survivor-led tours to ensure authenticity (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Heidelberg, 2015; Lee, 2023; Coetzee, 2025). These strategies demonstrate that conservation is not merely about protecting structures but about safeguarding narratives and values. Conservation of dark tourism sites requires a delicate balance between preserving memory, ensuring ethical engagement, and promoting sustainable development.

In Africa, conservation strategies often grapple with limited resources, political instability, and contested narratives. Rwanda's genocide memorials provide a strong example of community-led conservation, where survivors act as guides and custodians of memory, ensuring authenticity and

dignity (Vidal & Ingelaere, 2016). However, scholars caution that such memorials risk commodifying trauma if tourism is prioritized over healing (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). South Africa's Robben Island demonstrates another model, where former prisoners narrate their experiences, transforming the site into a space of resilience and education (Strange & Kempa, 2003). Yet, critiques persist that economic benefits have not sufficiently reached surrounding communities, underscoring the need for inclusive benefit-sharing mechanisms (Ferguson & Al-Kilidar, 2016).

In Nigeria, conservation strategies remain underdeveloped, particularly for sites associated with violence and conflict. Historical landmarks such as the slave trade routes in Badagry and the Oloibiri Oil Well illustrate attempts to preserve painful histories, but challenges of underfunding, weak legal frameworks, and lack of government support persist (Onu, 2018; Akinola, 2019). Communities near sites of ethno-religious violence, such as Plateau State's Dogo Na Hauwa, express concerns about security, cultural erosion, and commercialisation (Mshelia et al., 2024). Conservation strategies here must therefore prioritise community-led memorialisation, trauma-informed heritage practices, and infrastructure development to ensure accessibility and safety. Digital heritage tools, such as GIS mapping and VR archives, could provide innovative solutions by documenting and globalising access while reducing physical strain on the community (O'Connell, 2021). Such strategies would align with Timothy & Nyaupane's (2009) call for culturally sensitive and sustainable heritage tourism in developing countries.

2.3 Sustainable heritage management (SHM): Beyond the Triad

Sustainable heritage management (SHM) has emerged as a vital framework for protecting cultural and natural heritage resources in the face of increasing pressures from urbanisation, climate change, tourism, and sociopolitical concerns (Sesana et al., 2020). The notion incorporates sustainability principles such as economic viability, environmental responsibility, and social inclusion into the preservation and use of heritage sites (De la Torre, 2013; Harrison & Sterling, 2020; Labadi, 2022). Researchers argue that heritage management has expanded beyond the preservation of physical structures to include the larger values that communities place on heritage, such as identity, memory, and social cohesion (Labadi & Logan, 2015; Logan & Wijesuriya, 2023). This broader perspective is consistent with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) 2015 recommendation on the historic urban landscape, which advocates for inclusive and integrated approaches that take into account the dynamic nature of heritage as well as the needs of local populations.

Stakeholder participation is an important part of SHM. Scholars suggest that participatory governance, in which local people, policymakers, business sectors, and specialists collaborate on decision-making, results in more resilient and accepted heritage outcomes (Araoz, 2011; Su et al., 2020). However, in many poor countries, heritage policies frequently exclude local perspectives, resulting in management systems that are externally imposed and ultimately unsustainable (Chirikure et al., 2020). Furthermore, tourism remains a two-edged sword for heritage places. While unregulated tourism can raise funds and awareness for conservation efforts, it also has the potential to hasten site degradation and commodify heritage (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Sustainable tourism strategies, such as visitation caps, historical interpretation, and environmental monitoring, are required to reduce these effects and support long-term site viability (UNWTO, 2022).

In addition, climate change poses an increasing threat to heritage sustainability. Sea-level rise, extreme weather, and erosion all have an impact on both tangible and intangible cultural assets (Fatorić & Seekamp, 2017; Orra., Richards, & Fatorić, 2021; Zhang, Morar, & Boros, 2023). Holistic risk assessments and climate adaption methods are increasingly being stressed in literature as critical to preserving legacy for future generations (Sesana et al., 2020). Furthermore, digital technology creates new potential for sustainable management through tools such as

Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Building Information Modelling (BIM), and virtual reality. These tools facilitate documentation, risk analysis, and increased access to heritage experiences, especially during health emergencies (Fatorić & Seekamp, 2017; O'Connell, 2021).

Heritage management in Africa, particularly Nigeria, faces specific issues such as underfunding, violence, and poor legal frameworks. However, community-driven conservation and indigenous knowledge systems are increasingly being recognized as important methods for guaranteeing culturally acceptable and sustainable heritage practices (Ndoro & Wijesuriya, 2015; Ekpo & Ayodele, 2021; Ottuh, 2025b). This necessitates striking a balance between preservation and change, ensuring that heritage treasures are safeguarded not only for their inherent worth but also for their contributions to social development, education, and peacebuilding.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a qualitative research approach as the methodology to investigate the conservation of Dogo Na Hauwa village as a cultural heritage dark tourism site in Plateau State, Nigeria. Qualitative research was suitable for this study using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to collect detailed information. Dogo Na Hauwa is a village in Plateau State, Nigeria (see Figure 1), historically an agrarian settlement with farming and animal rearing as primary livelihoods. The history of Dogo Na Hauwa is marked by the 2010 ethno-religious massacre that claimed over 500 lives. The site has since gained attention as a potential dark tourism destination (Human Rights Watch, 2010), making it an ideal choice for this study.

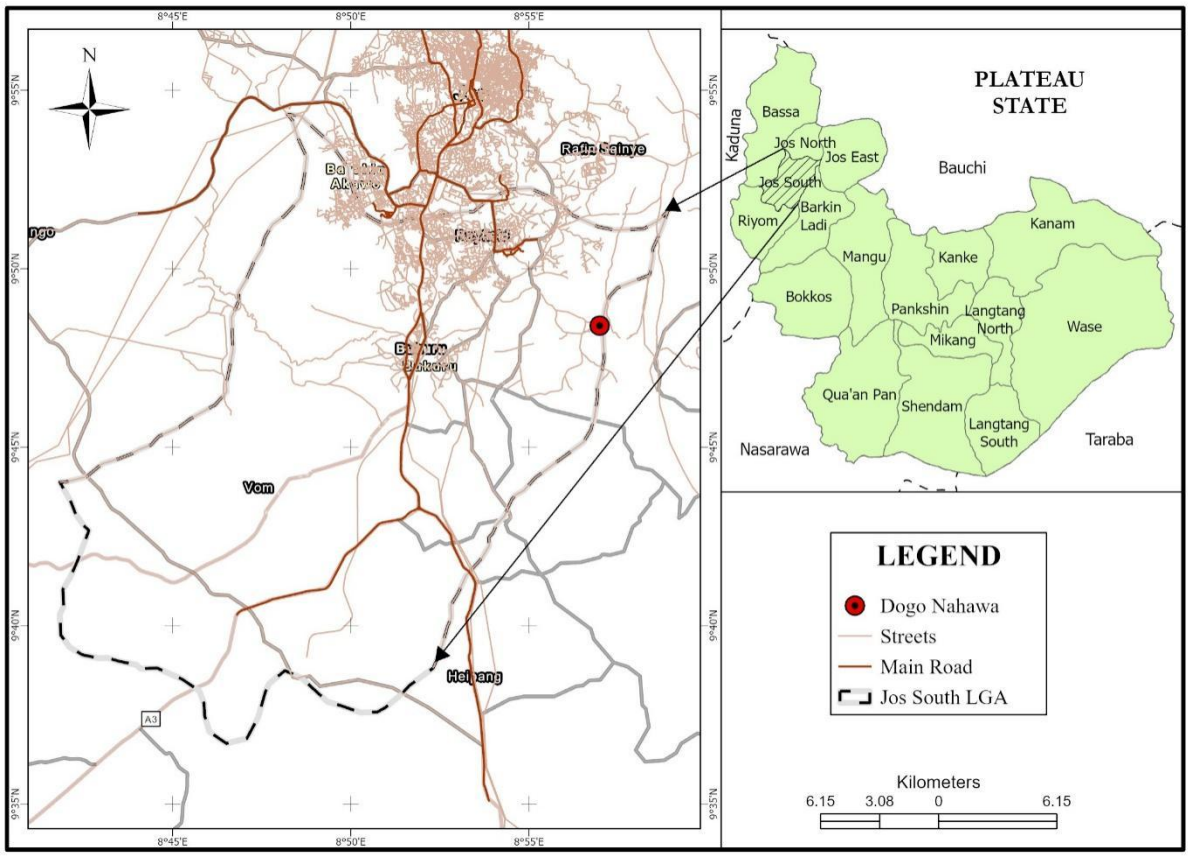

Figure 1: Dogo Na Hauwa, Plateau State, Nigeria
Source: Laka (2026)

Four field assistants were trained on data collection procedures. Together with the researchers, they conducted interviews using purposive sampling to select participants who had been directly or indirectly affected by the tragedy. Interviews were conducted with 20 residents, including

community leaders, local business owners, youths and massacre survivors. These participants were chosen to provide a variety of perspectives on the subject. Four local stakeholders, including tourism experts and government representatives, were also included to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conservation of Dogo Na Hauwa village as a cultural heritage dark tourism site in Plateau State. The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility while ensuring that key themes were addressed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yin, 2017).
The interviews were conducted in English and the local language (Hausa), with the assistance of an interpreter when necessary. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. In addition to interviews, participant observation was carried out at community meetings and public events to document the lived experiences and community dynamics surrounding the tourism discourse. Document analysis was also used, including a review of relevant local policy documents and tourism planning materials, as well as media coverage of the community's tragic past and discussions about dark tourism.

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, which focused on recurring patterns, themes, and narratives from the interviews and observations. The data was coded inductively, and key themes from the interviews included perceptions of Dogo Na Hauwa residents regarding the transformation of their tragic history into a dark tourism destination; conservation strategies for dark tourism sites; and strategies that can ensure sustainable heritage management. NVivo 15.0 software was used to help organise and categorise the data for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; QSR International, 2023). The study followed ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent and maintaining participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Given the sensitive nature of the subject, the study also took precautions to reduce potential psychological harm by offering participants counselling services if necessary.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Dark tourism: From the lens of villagers

The ambivalence among Dogo Na Hauwa residents reflects a broader paradox in dark tourism: the tension between memory as healing and memory as trauma. Survivors who support memorialisation see the site as a "living classroom" where future generations can learn about the dangers of ethno-religious violence. This resonates with the concept of thanatourism (Seaton, 2009), where sites of death become spaces of moral reflection. Yet, opposition from some villagers highlights the risk of secondary victimisation, the re-opening of wounds through repeated exposure. This introduces an innovative angle: dark tourism in post-conflict African communities must be understood not only as heritage but also as psychosocial intervention. Unlike Auschwitz or Ground Zero, where temporal distance allows for collective reflection, Dogo Na Hauwa's tragedy is personal. Thus, the community's lived trauma complicates the tourism narrative, requiring trauma-informed heritage management (Ferguson & Al-Kilidar, 2016).

Interviews revealed a divided perception among residents of Dogo Na Hauwa. Survivors and community leaders (see Figure 2) emphasised the importance of memorialisation, arguing that preserving the site would honour victims and serve as a historical reminder for future generations. One respondent stated, "*If we forget, the tragedy may repeat itself; the site must stand as a warning and a place of learning*." This aligns with global practices where sites such as Rwanda's Kigali Genocide Memorial foster remembrance and education (Vidal & Ingelaere, 2016).

Figure 2: Interview with survivors and community leaders at Dogo Na Hauwa
Source: Author's field work, 2026

However, other residents expressed concerns about retraumatisation and commercialisation of tragedy. Some feared that tourism could exploit their pain rather than promote healing. This tension reflects debates in dark tourism literature, where scholars warn against commodifying suffering (Seaton, 2009; Biran, Poria, & Oren, 2011).

4.2 Dark tourism conservation strategies

Findings suggest that conservation strategies must balance cultural sensitivity with tourism development. Community-led initiatives were highlighted as crucial, ensuring that locals retain agency in how their history is presented. Respondents consistently emphasised that ownership of the narrative was essential to avoid exploitation. One survivor explained: *"If outsiders tell our story, they may not understand our pain. It must be us, the survivors, who guide the visitors."* Several interviewees recommended building a memorial centre as a focal point for remembrance. A community leader stated, *"A memorial will remind our children of what happened here, so they never forget. It will also show visitors that peace is possible after tragedy."* Survivors also suggested guided tours led by those directly affected, echoing successful models in South Africa's Robben Island. One youth respondent noted: *"When survivors speak, it is not just history, it is living memory. That makes the experience real and respectful."* In 2025, to honour and preserve the mass burial site, the Kukah Centre, in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, built a commemorative wall engraved with the names of all 501 victims, ensuring their memory lives on (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Commemorative wall of victims and the mass grave at Dogo Na Hauwa

Source: Authors' field work, 2026, with permission from the community leaders

Educational programmes for schools were another recurring theme. A local teacher remarked: *"If students visit the site, they will learn about the dangers of hatred and violence. It will be a classroom without walls, teaching peace."* These strategies transform dark tourism into a

platform for restorative justice, where storytelling becomes a form of healing and empowerment. However, infrastructure challenges reveal the fragility of heritage development in conflict-prone regions. Respondents pointed out the lack of visitor facilities, and insecurity as major barriers. A local business owner lamented: *"Tourists cannot come if there is no security and no facilities. Without government support, the site will remain forgotten."* This resonates with Timothy & Nyaupane's (2009) argument that heritage tourism requires strong institutional support to thrive sustainably. The interviews also underscored the need for hybrid governance models involving partnerships between government, NGOs, and local communities. One government representative admitted: *"We cannot do this alone. Collaboration with NGOs and the diaspora is necessary to sustain the project."* Innovative financing mechanisms were proposed, such as community tourism cooperatives or diaspora heritage funds, which could provide resilience against state neglect. A youth leader suggested: *"Our brothers and sisters abroad can help us build this memorial. It will connect them back to their roots and honour those we lost."*

4.3 Sustainable heritage management (SHM): Beyond the Triad

The findings highlight that sustainable heritage management (SHM) in Dogo Na Hauwa must go beyond the traditional triad of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. While these dimensions remain essential, they do not fully capture the lived realities of communities whose heritage is rooted in trauma. An innovative addition is psychological sustainability, which ensures that heritage practices do not retraumatise survivors but instead foster resilience, healing, and empowerment. This concept expands Sesana et al.'s (2020) framework by integrating mental health into heritage discourse, recognising that heritage sites of violence are not neutral spaces but emotionally charged landscapes where memory and pain coexist. Interview responses strongly reinforced this need. A survivor explained: *"Tourism must not be about numbers. It must be about healing. If visitors come, they should help us remember with dignity, not reopen our wounds."* Another respondent added: *"We need counsellors and safe spaces. Without that, the site will only bring back pain."* These voices highlight that psychological sustainability is not optional but foundational in contexts where trauma is fresh and personal.

Trauma-informed approaches to heritage management were repeatedly emphasised. Respondents suggested embedding counselling services into tourism planning, designing memorial spaces that encourage reflection and healing, and training guides in trauma-sensitive storytelling. A youth leader remarked: *"Guides must be trained to speak with respect. We don't want our story told like entertainment, it is our pain, our lesson."* In this way, heritage conservation becomes not only about preserving physical structures or narratives but also about safeguarding the emotional wellbeing of those most affected. In addition, digital heritage tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), virtual reality (VR), and online archives offer opportunities for virtual dark tourism, enabling global audiences to engage with the site without overwhelming the local community. A government representative noted: *"Technology can help us share our story with the world without bringing too much pressure on the village."* Survivors also saw value in this dual model: *"Let the world see our pain through digital archives, but let us heal here in peace."*

This innovation introduces a dual heritage model: physical memorialisation for locals and virtual engagement for outsiders. For residents and survivors, tangible memorials, community-led tours, and peace education programmes provide spaces for reconciliation and intergenerational learning. For international audiences, immersive VR experiences and digital archives allow engagement with the site's history while reducing physical and emotional strain on the community. This dual model could pioneer a new African approach to dark tourism that balances accessibility with sensitivity. It ensures that global recognition of tragedy does not come at the expense of local healing, while also positioning African heritage management as a leader in trauma-sensitive innovation. By combining psychological sustainability with digital engagement, Dogo Na

Hauwa can serve as a prototype for post-conflict heritage conservation in Africa, offering lessons for other communities grappling with the preservation of painful histories.

5. CONCLUSION

Dogo Na Hauwa's case demonstrates that dark tourism in Africa cannot simply replicate Western models. Its uniqueness lies in the immediacy of trauma and the urgent need for psychosocial sensitivity. Unlike sites such as Auschwitz or Hiroshima, where decades have allowed wounds to scar over time, Dogo Na Hauwa's tragedy remains raw, etched into the daily lives of survivors. As one elder poignantly expressed: *"We still hear the cries in our hearts. To preserve this place is not just history, it is our healing."* By integrating psychological sustainability, participatory memorialisation, and hybrid governance, the site can become a prototype for African dark tourism, one that honours memory, fosters reconciliation, and generates economic opportunities without commodifying suffering. Survivors emphasized that memorialisation must be rooted in dignity. A youth leader explained: *"Tourism should not be about selling pain. It should be about teaching peace."* This sentiment underscores the delicate balance between remembrance and resilience.

If managed effectively, Dogo Na Hauwa could evolve into a site of peacebuilding and historical reflection, contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's broader heritage landscape. It would stand alongside global dark tourism destinations not as a spectacle of tragedy, but as a living testimony of resilience and the human cost of conflict. A local teacher captured this vision: *"If our children learn here, they will carry peace in their hearts. That is the true heritage we want to give them."* Ultimately, the conservation of Dogo Na Hauwa is more than a tourism project, it is a moral responsibility. It is about ensuring that the voices of victims are never silenced, that survivors find strength in remembrance, and that future generations inherit lessons of peace rather than cycles of violence. In this way, Dogo Na Hauwa can become not only a dark tourism site but also a beacon of hope, reminding the world that even in the aftermath of unimaginable loss, communities can rise, heal, and teach humanity the value of compassion and coexistence.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings suggest that trauma-informed heritage policies should embed counselling and psychosocial support into tourism planning, while survivor-led narratives can empower victims by training them as heritage interpreters thereby guaranteeing authenticity and empowerment in storytelling. Nigerian diaspora communities could be mobilized to fund memorial projects, and virtual dark tourism platforms such as VR tours and digital archives should be developed to globalise access while protecting locals. In addition, peace education integration would allow the site to serve as a hub for conflict resolution workshops and interfaith dialogue, and resilience-based tourism metrics should be adopted to evaluate success not only by visitor numbers but also by indicators of community healing and cohesion, and empowerment, thereby ensuring that tourism contributes meaningfully to both memory preservation and social development. To ensure that the conservation of Dogo Na Hauwa as a cultural heritage dark tourism site is both sustainable and sensitive, heritage policies must be trauma-informed, embedding counselling and psychosocial support into tourism planning so that survivors are protected from retraumatisation.

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