



Research article

Heritage studies and challenges: implications on research results from Igboland, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Heritage studies in the Igbo area of Nigeria (Southeast Nigeria) has been faced with some challenges which have greatly affected research in the area from culture-related disciplines like archaeology, tourism, anthropology, sociology, history, and religion. This study was aimed at identifying these challenges, their implications on research results and the way forward. Amongst the identified challenges include remote location of heritage resources, traditional taboos of the people, seasonality of traditional events, attitudinal differences of heritage custodians, and dilapidated state of most heritage resources. These challenges result to poor representation of heritage resources in research results from the area. The study concluded by suggesting tolerance to traditional values and collaborative research involving researchers and relevant stakeholders from the community. The principle of triangulation was employed in the methodology, with descriptive and evaluative methods used in the analysis of findings.

1. Introduction

Research and its relevance to human development have been viewed from varying dimensions. For instance, Odiya and Omofonmwan assert that it is the '... careful examination of an object or situation for the purpose of effecting development and improvement. It is a way of acquiring dependable and useful information and data about the particular object of research as well as the analysis of the data collected in order to arrive at a valid conclusion' (Odiya and Omofonmwan, 2013, p. 258, p. 258). This definition was elaborated by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) when they assert that research does not only increase the stock of human knowledge but also contributes to the general growth and sustainability of national economics through innovations in various aspects of the economy (UNESCO, 2010). This definition sees research as a way of investigating and reinvestigating towards improving on the stock of human knowledge. However, the heritage industry has been perceived as the bedrock of African culture and tradition, hence it gave room for the conceptualization of heritage tourism in Africa. Some previous authors have argued the extent of the relevance of heritage resources to man. Their general view bordered on the fact that the nature and perceived relevance or value of heritage resources is determined by the people themselves; what their value may not be valued by some other groups, hence the extent of

perceived relevance is a prerogative of the host. They also posited that Africans give more relevance to their valued heritage resources than their neighbours (Scham and Yahya, 2003; Anyachonkeya, 2006; Ekechukwu, 2008; Nwankwo and Ukaegbu, 2011; Eze-uzomaka, 2014). More on heritage industry shall be discussed later.

Among the contributions of academic enquiries to traditional communities are the promotion and sustenance of cultural values and other tangible aspects of human culture (Bluestone, 2000; Crotts and Pan, 2007; Schultz and Lavenda, 2009). Most of these indigenous communities have unique and attractive heritage resources with potentialities to transform the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the people (Naddeau, Heslop, O'Reilly and Luke, 2008; Kennedy and Doran, 2009; Alegre and Garau, 2010). The Igbo area of Nigeria is among those regions in Nigeria where astonishing tangible and intangible heritage resources with great socio-cultural gains, abound. Unfortunately, this particular region of Nigeria has not been able to attract meaningful or sustained academic researches over the years despite the presence of amazing heritage resources in the region. This has grossly affected promotion of the people's cultural identity and indigenous values before the global village. Academic enquiries have the potentialities of transforming the fortunes of host communities for better lifestyles (Naddeau, Heslop, O'Railly and Luke, 2008).

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However, so many disciplines have interest in researching in this great industry of Africa i.e. archaeology, anthropology, history, tourism, geography, sociology, and even religion. Nwankwo and Ukaegbu (2011) were of the opinion that these academic disciplines have a central aim of preserving and promoting the rich heritage resources of Africans from their various disciplinary prejudices. Over the years, these disciplines have faced certain degrees of impediments while working in African heritage industry. For instance, Okafor (2012), writing on challenges of archaeological research in South-Eastern Nigeria, notes that archaeological researches in the area have been hindered greatly owing to logistic constraints such as lack of fund and inadequate equipments, and that few conducted field researches in the area were inconclusive owing to these constraints. Also, Okafor (2011) and Oloyede (2010), are of the

view that poor funding and non-collaborative research was amongst the banes of research in this part (Nigeria) of the world.

On the other hand, Sawyerr (2004) in his study categorizes the research capacity of Africa into two major components: the active component and environmental components. While the active components have to do with all factors relating to the researcher, the environmental factors have to do with the various factors within the environment of the research. He outlined major challenges inhibiting researches in Africa as "poor public policy and resource allocation, poor funding, poor mentorship programmes in the academics, non-collaborative research, the higher education crisis of 1980's in Nigeria, poor research supervisions, lackadaisical attitudes of senior research fellows and non-use of local researchers" Bluestone (2000) is of



Figure 1. Map of the Igbo Area of Nigeria with ethnographic locations indicated.

the opinion that amongst the major challenges to the preservation of heritage resources are the wrong misconception, interpretation and ungrounded inferences by conservators and researchers in the heritage industry. He affirms that more often than not, some researchers do not have a holistic understanding of the heritage resources they work on and as such, may devalue the cultural relevance of such heritage resources through interpretations.

Moreover, in most cases researchers in this field are afraid to work in this industry out of the fear of available and conceptualized impediments to researches. This has been denying Africans the opportunity of harnessing the potentialities of academic research to socio-economic development of rural communities and at the same time, depriving the people living in the rural communities the opportunity of harnessing the great potentialities of both their developed and undeveloped heritage resources. What then are these challenges to heritage studies in Africa and their resultant implications? This paper was aimed at addressing this question by studying various challenges to heritage studies, their implications and the way forward, with focus on the heritage industry of the Igbo area of Nigeria.

2. Method of research

Qualitative research approach was adopted owing to the nature of the research. To this regard ethnographic survey was conducted in the sampled communities in the study area with emphasis on the rural areas. Ethnographic approach is a qualitative research method where an in-depth study is conducted on a smaller population or group. It is a systematic and detailed study of peoples and cultures where the research observes a group from the point of view of the subject under investigation (Iffih, 1983; Oke, 1984; Heggenhougen and Draper, 1990; Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996; Okpoko and Eze, 2011). During the ethnographic survey, field observations and documentations, and interview of selected key informants, were carried out. Purposive and cluster sampling techniques aided in the determination of the sample size of five indigenous communities. They are Ezeagu in Enugu State, Igbo-Ukwu in Anambra State, Uburu in Ebonyi State, Arochukwu in Abia State and Arondizuogu in Imo State (see Figure 1), and fifty three (53) key informants from the sampled communities. The study area has approximately 460 rural communities where most of these heritage resources are domiciled. These communities were first clustered into five States (Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States); then purposive sampling technique enabled the researchers to sample one community from already clustered groups of five as representatives for the clusters. Also another group of key informants were selected amongst academic researchers who had researched or currently researching in the heritage industry of the region under investigation. To this end, nine lecturers with interest in heritage studies were conveniently sampled from the Departments of Archaeology and Tourism, and History and International Studies of University of Nigeria Nsukka as sample representatives for their colleagues. Another source of data collection was the documentary sources where books, articles, magazines, newspapers, unpublished project works, and journals were consulted. More interestingly, fifty Bachelor of Arts Degree projects with studies in the heritage industry of the region under study were sampled to ascertain the various challenges such studies encountered and their suggestive solutions. These students' projects were purposively sampled from the Departmental Libraries of Archaeology and Tourism, and History and International Studies of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. At the end, descriptive and evaluative methods of data analysis were employed in analyzing data collected. Moreover, clear consent of informants and other sources of data were sought for before such data were used in the study. However, University of Nigeria (our institution) does not require any formal ethical approval from any ethical committee for publications of this kind. This is because the research was purely qualitative and informants willingly granted interview sessions and also gave their consent for the publication.

3. Brief information on the study area

Igbo is the dominant ethnic group of the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This zone is comprised of Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia States (see Figure 1). Historically, "linguistic and archaeological evidences indicate that initial settlements by present inhabitants of the forest zone of Igboland exceed two millennia in age" (Onwuejeogwu, 1977, pp. 21–22; in Onwuejeogwu, 2002, p. 117). This is in contrary to the views of Jones (1976) and Afigbo (1975), who note that the history of the Igbo people is obscure in enquiry. The Igbo people have a great and interesting history which forms part of their heritage resources. Climatologically, '...the area under study is lying between latitudes $4^{\circ} 45'N$ and $7^{\circ}05'N$ and this firmly puts it within the tropics. Also, since the southern part of the region is about 530km away from the line of equator; solar radiation is always high throughout the year' (Nwankwo, 2013, p.78). Anyadike is of the opinion that 'the shorter hours of sunshine over Igboland are due to dust haze during the dry season and cloud cover in the rainy season; the lower values in July attesting to the greater efficiency of cloud cover in reducing insulation' (Anyadike, 2002, p. 73). Moreover, among the Igbos of Southeast Nigeria, 'the largest social and political unit is the Community or Town (OBODO, ALA) which can be briefly described as an agglomeration of lineage groups occupying one territorial area bound together by a belief in one common ancestor, one common *Ani* (the Earth Goddess) and all sanctions appertaining to it' (Olisa, 2002, p.218). Communal lifestyle is still paramount in the study area with community heads (Igwes and Ezes) as the custodians of culture and tradition of the people. On the impact of westernization on the socio-religious and political structure of the Igbo people, Amucheazi notes that 'the Igbo society has no doubt undergone a lot of changes following the impact of western civilization, but its major features have nonetheless persisted... changes have occurred here and there but the basic political culture will appear to have merely adapted itself to the changing times' (Amucheazi, 2002, p.242). Demographically, the 2006 National Population Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, revealed that Southeast Nigeria has a total population of sixteen million, three hundred and eighty-one thousand, seven hundred and twenty-nine (16, 381,729). This is 11.77% of the total population of Nigeria as at 2006 (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

4. The heritage industry of the Igbos of Nigeria

Heritage resources have been conceptualized from varying dimensions bordering on professional interest or prejudice. This is applicable to heritage sites, and heritage industry. For instance Global Heritage Fund (2009, p.7) notes that '... heritage sites are precious reminders of some of the world's most socially, politically, practically and technologically advanced ancient civilization'. International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) affirms that heritage sites '... refers to a place, locality, national landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archaeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance' (ICOMOS, 2008, p.2). It is imperative at this juncture to give a clear distinction between these concepts (i.e. heritage sites, heritage resources, heritage tourism and heritage industry) that are bordered in the heritage studies. Heritage resources are those inherited gifts of a people in the form of identity, habit, values, architectural built, unique landscapes and water bodies. They are those heritages of a people which could either be cultural, natural or built (Nwankwo and Agboeze, 2014). Natural heritage sites are the physical locations of tangible heritage resources where people can go and touch or see them. Cultural tourism (cultural heritage resources) on the other hand can be seen as the 'movement of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages' (Gunlu, 2019; p 3). All tourism activities that are motivated by heritage resources of a place are referred to as heritage tourism. Also natural

Table 1. Challenges and causes as noted by nine Professional Researchers (PR) in the study area.

PR	Challenges	Causes
PR-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of documentation • Illiterate informants • Previous inconclusive researches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative attitudes of the government • Improper preservation and conservation • Improper documentation
PR-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfriendly taboos associated with some heritage resources • Refusal to divulge information by heritage custodians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor orientation and information for heritage custodians • Unnecessary and selfish requests from heritage custodians to researchers.
PR-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of detailed information from heritage custodians. • Taboos associated with some heritage resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ill attitudes of heritage custodians • Tenacious adherence to age long culture and tradition of the people.
PR-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong attitudes of host communities • High cost and unavailability of research grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of desecrating the site • Reluctance to disclose information to outsiders by the host community
PR-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor understanding of the research on the Part of the people • Inability of the researcher to interpret the past in the light of the present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignorance on the part of researchers. • Influence of Christianity • Loss of original information to memory
PR-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor appreciation of values of these heritage resources by the general public • Weak and poor implementation of heritage laws. • Inadequacy of professionals in the heritage industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public loss of value system • Lack of interest on the heritage industry by modern legislators • Poor enrolment in the study of heritage studies at higher institutions
PR-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor funding for researches in the industry • Inadequate and less knowledgeable professionals in the industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong attitude of the government to researchers in the industry • Wrong attitudes of academics to heritage studies
PR-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor funding • Remote location of heritage sites • Illiteracy of most traditional custodians • Language barrier • Dilapidated state of heritage resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonchalant attitude of the government • The nature of rural areas • Poor level of enlightenment at indigenous communities • Use of different dialects • Abandonment and destruction of heritage resources
PR-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funds for researches • Inaccessibility to available limited research grants for heritage studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonchalant attitude of the government • Poor cooperation from stakeholders in the industry.

heritage resources have to do with all aspects of natural make-up of a place. They include caves, water bodies, wildlife parks, rock shelters, mountains, hills, among others. They form part of the heritage industry. However, the conglomeration of various categories of heritage resources, and heritage sites, makes up the heritage industry of a place. It is also not out of place at this juncture to note that we also have the intangible heritage resources in our study area as could be deciphered from their folklores, myths, legends, norms, customs, taboos, laws etc. The Igbo people of south-eastern Nigeria understood heritage resources as natural gifts from God (*Chukwu*) which have been transferred through generations. They understood most of the natural heritage resources as the bedrocks and foundations of their communities hence, most of these natural tangible heritage resources like caves, lakes, waterfalls, streams, rock shelters and mountains, are surrounded by historic and interesting myths. A recently conducted interview in the study area revealed that the people have no idea nor believe in the science explanations on the origin of most of these natural heritage resources. This explains why they accord much respect to their ancestors whom they believe to have direct access to God. They see their ancestors as the main conservators of their heritage resources hence they tend to appease them (ancestors) whenever they felt they have defiled any of these heritage resources. The people preserved them with some traditional methods like sanctions, palm fronts, organized traditional groups (like age grades, *Umuadas* [married daughters], youths and special committees) (*Amucheazi, 2002*), organized communal labour, masquerade cults, charms and the

use of peculiar festivals and ritual practices. The people from the study area have unique cultural and natural resources that are peculiar to them.

5. Results and discussions

This section is segmented into three broad categories of challenges/causes, implications and the way forward. The results are presented and discussed accordingly to reflect the three main sources of data for the study (*Figure 2*).

5.1. What are these challenges and their causes?

Nine professional researchers who have researched and still researching on the heritage industry of the area under investigation gave some of the major challenges they encountered in the field during studies and their possible causes. The summary of their responses are displayed in *Table 1* below:

The next *Table (Table 2)* is a tabular representation of findings from fifty Degree projects of past final year students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, who conducted their researches on the heritage industry.

These were various challenges encountered by these fifty young researchers as they noted in their works. The third and fifth column refers to the number of student researchers who affirmed that the corresponding challenges and causes were possible in the industry. For

Key
PR= Professional Researchers
SR= Student Researchers
ES= Ethnographic Sources
H.I = Heritage Industry

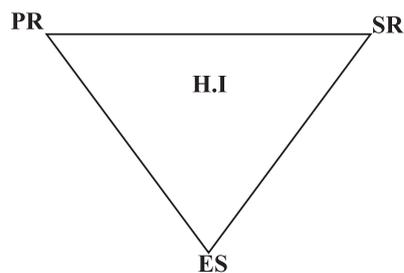


Figure 2. Triangulation Research Method used for the study. While PR refers to Professional Researchers like lecturers and their likes who research in the industry in the study area, SR refers to Student Researchers who undertook their various degree researches in the industry in the study area; ES refers to Ethnographic Sources where emphasis was on in-depth interviews and field observations in the study area. Finally HI refers to Heritage Industry which is the main focus of the study.

Table 2. Challenges and causes as noted by 50 Student Researchers (SR) in the study area.

S/N	Challenges	No of SR	Causes	No of SR
1	None accessibility of research funds	45	Government attitudes	49
2	Distance of the study areas	29	Geographical location of UNN	36
3	Language barrier	19	Much local dialects	31
4	Hostilities from the host community	22	Intolerance from host communities.	38
5	Indigenous taboos	26	Respect for traditional norms and belief system	41
6	Harmful and non-friendly heritage resources	31	Evil spirits and dubious custodians	22
7	Remote location of heritage resources	42	Location of rural areas at the hinterland	33
8	Concealing of vital information by heritage custodians	38	Fear of divulging information to visitors	46
9	Seasonality of some heritage resources	28	Some festivals and traditional ceremonies are seasonally celebrated	30
10	Inadequate time frame for the research	41	Limited time of the university calendar	44
11	Disregard of indigenous value system of the host by researchers.	27	Intolerant attitude of researchers on the values of the host community	28
12	Totemic beliefs	20	Respect for indigenous value system	18

instance forty-five out of the fifty research students in their projects affirmed that poor funding was amongst the major challenges to researches in the industry. This particular challenge was equally affirmed by the first group of sources of information (The PRs) and most reviewed documentary sources as well. Most of the researches in the heritage industry of the study area were individually funded by various researchers without meaningful intervention from the government or other cooperate bodies in most cases. Many research donors are yet to understand the indispensable contribution of heritage resources to identity management and socio-economic and sustainable development of a place, more especially, the rural areas where the majority of these heritage resources are domiciled. Another major challenge is the various indigenous taboos as was asserted by PRs and SRs and confirmed by detailed ethnography. For instance women and other non-members of the masquerade cults are not given access to information about the cult. This poses great challenges when a female or male researcher who is not initiated into the masquerade cult is working on these masquerade cults that are found in most communities in the study area. Also access to shrine and other sacred places are highly limited during field studies owing to this particular challenge. It is expected that researchers should get acquainted to the taboos of their various study areas and respect such taboos in the course of their studies in the area to avoid such embarrassments or possible hostilities from members of the host community. The belief system of the people should be held in high esteem by researchers if a successful research is expected. For instance, traditionalists and other chief priests would not tolerate any act of disrespect and abuse on their personal shrines as was noted during key informant interviews and field observations. They held tenaciously the traditional values of the land hence the belief that they are meant to give account of their stewardship in that regard to their ancestors.

Moreover, another major challenge is that most of the heritage resources are located in remote locations; much far away from the settlement areas of members of the host community. This is most of the time peculiar to the natural heritage resources like caves, waterfalls, lakes, rock overhangs, and rock shelters. For instance, during field observations it was gathered that the waterfall, lake and cave at the Ezeagu Tourist Complex in the study area are located about three kilometres away from the settlement area of the host community. The Ezeagu Tourist Complex is a conglomeration of heritage resources (i.e. cave, waterfall and lake) in Ezeagu Local Government area of Enugu State. This site has been earmarked by the Enugu State Government to be developed and enlisted amongst heritage tourism sites in the state. One of the delays to this proposal was traced to the remote nature of the site as noted by one of the informants from Obinofia Community (where the cave is located) in Ezeagu Local Government Area. The same is applicable to Ogbunike cave, Ajalli cave, Owere-Ezukala cave, Obimo cave, and Opi cave, in the study area. In most cases, such, locations are in the middle of thick forests thereby exposing the researcher to the dangers of wild animal attacks,

and armed robbery attacks. It is expected that researchers are accompanied to such areas by a member or members of the community to reduce the possibility of crime and wild animal attack. Also another major challenge is the attitude of some heritage custodians and other knowledgeable elders in the study area who conceal information owing to the fear of espionage activities. This is mostly the case during ethnographies. One of the key informants in this study affirmed during an in-depth interview that giving out information about their heritage is exposing their community and their weaknesses to their enemies or those with unreasonable economic motifs. Sometimes, they refuse researchers access to some sites. Such attitudes limit studies and even discourage the researcher. It is highly advised that such attitudes can be discouraged through enlightenment and orientation of these informants on the process. This would bridge the gap between them and the research activities. A typical example was what happened at Ugwuelle-Uturu (in Abia State) in the study area where the community youths came out in mass to stop student archaeologists from conducting their field reconnaissance in the area in May 2014. Such was equally experienced at Obimo in Nsukka area of Enugu State in April 2015 when angry youths interrupted students archaeologists during the excavation of an old iron smelting site in the area. Serious consultations and enlightenments can reduce such challenges to the barest minimum.

Myriads of researchers in the field of heritage tourism have always lamented the seasonality of festivals and other cultural events in the area which may not fall within the period of the research. For instance, the famous "Ikeji" Festival is celebrated for only four days in a year within the month of March., Also, the newly reinvigorated Nsukka Cultural Festival is celebrated only few days within the second half of the month of December, and the popular New Yam Festival (*Ifejioku/Fijioku*) is a day event at those communities where such events are practiced. Although researchers working in a period out of the calendar of the targeted cultural resource, may need to get all the information through ethnography, they may still be deprived of field observations, taking of on-the-spot photographs, and confirming information from ethnographic sources. Such researchers are advised to work with the calendar of events of targeted cultural heritage resources and schedule field visitations within such periods to make room for detailed studies and adequate photographic documentations. There is also issue of dilapidated or pitiable state of some heritage resources owing to wanton abandonment, defacement and destruction by the community and other persons or groups. Some heritage resources are in this state and most of the time nobody may accept to supply useful information about the heritage resource. A researcher may arrive to a study area from a far location only to discover that what he or she has come to study has been destroyed or left to be in dilapidated state with nobody ready to offer useful information. This is mostly peculiar to shrines, sacred groves, traditional community/village squares, and some cultural practices like ritual practices and sacrifices. The wave of Christianity and modernity may

Table 3. Various Implications of the Impediments and Solutions as noted by PRs.

PRs	Implications	Possible solutions
PR-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconclusive research report • Loss of interest in carrying out the research • Abuse of values of heritage resources in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper documentation • More effective researches • Involvement of local communities • Employment of good heritage managers
PR-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of heritage information • Extinction of vital heritage resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper orientation for communities • Formulation and regulation of code of conducts in the industry
PR-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of heritage resources to human abuse • Break in generational transfer of information on heritage resources and value system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlightenment of heritage custodians on the need to preserve heritage resources
PR-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-baked research work in the heritage industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers to submit to the demand of the host community • Making research funds available
PR-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of reality of the research in the field • Poorly represented information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for purposeful researches in the industry • Adoption of participant observation as a method.
PR-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of relevant information on heritage resources of the people • Destruction of undocumented heritage resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation and implementation of relevant legislation. • Encouraging youths to undertake heritage studies
PR-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extinction of heritage resources • Discouragement of heritage forum in the study area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlightenment of the host communities on the need to preserve heritage resources in their areas. • Appreciation of heritage studies by the government of the day.
PR-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of relevant data on heritage resources • Mass neglect of heritage resources and their contribution to national development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to tighten existing relevant laws and policies. • Provision of grants by governments and other relevant bodies. • Encouragement of researchers to publish their findings.
PR-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incapacitated researches • Limited data from the field • Loss of interest on research in the industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass enlightenment of the general public on heritage resources in their areas. • Collaborative research with members of the host community.

have affected the existence of some of these heritage resources. There is also the issue of language barrier as confirmed by the three major sources of information including some reviewed literatures. Although Igbo is the dominant language in the area, there are many of its dialects. Most of these heritage resources are located at the rural areas where the use of local dialects is at its peak. Sometimes, researchers from other parts of Igbo area like Owerri and Abakaliki may not be able to understand the dialect of people in another area like Nsukka cultural zone.

In addition, attitude of researchers by way of their intolerance, disregard, or hatred for indigenous values of the host coupled with their research incompetence, were also identified as a challenge. This can be as a result of difference in cultural background and anticipated hostility from the host. A researcher who is conducting ethnographic studies might feel disgusted at the sight of diet, dress, religious and attitudinal patterns of the host. Sometimes, health hazards like mosquito bites and unclean water may also contribute to a researcher's negative perception of the study area. In such cases, prior information is very necessary to guide against such avoidable health hazards. It is always advised that researchers should be able to undertake a pilot study in the chosen study area prior to the main study in the area to ascertain some factors that may possibly work against the proposed study in the area. Cultural diversity is another major factor to this particular challenge. A researcher coming from a totally different cultural background may find it difficult to intermingle with the 'rigid' culture of the host. For instance, a researcher noted that his individual dislike for the indigenous cultures of the host like widowhood practices, regard for earth goddess, dietary habit and political institution has been delaying the completion of his research at such community since he found it very difficult to intrinsically accept the cultural life of the host. In this case, he allowed his personal interest and cultural background to override his academic or research interest. The researcher should be able to understand that this is the people's lifestyle and he (the researcher) cannot change it overnight. He may need to have a free mind towards his hosts. For instance, people from some parts of the study area like Abakaliki and Ohozara in Ebonyi State, Nsukka and Ezeagu in Enugu State, Ohafia and Abiriba in Abia State, Mbaise and Mbanjo in Imo State, and Onitsha and Okija in Anambra State, has unique cultural attribute that is slightly different from that of the central Igbo cultural attribute. A researcher working in these communities needs intrinsic acceptance, understanding, patience and tolerance to work

freely, effectively and gainfully in those areas. This is why [Okpoko and Eze \(2011\)](#) assert that "researchers should as much as possible be objective in the research, appreciate and tolerate the host community in the interest of the research". The researcher is expected to immerse himself in the life style of the host community, greet people on the way, exchange pleasantries with those in the farmlands and others engaging in some other traditional activities in the community, while in that community.

5.2. Implications on the research result

There are many implications emanating from those challenges on the research results. [Table 3](#) below displays the summary of various implications of these challenges in the study area as noted by the PRs.

It is imperative to note that researches are better not conducted than conducted with erroneous results which is a deceit and can destroy the public trust on the relevance of academics to human development. For instance, one of the major implications is the inconclusiveness of a particular research report. In the study area, some researches could not be completed owing to some of these challenges. Such research results may not be able to address current yearnings of the human society whenever it is published. This incidence may equally make the researcher to lose interest in carrying out the research. For example, the archaeological survey of Obimo in Nsukka area of Enugu State was abandoned and many of the participating archaeologists lost interest on the research after a while owing to some of the challenges discussed above. No matter the size or level of significance, valid academic research results are meant to add value to the human society. The relevance of these heritage resources are attached to their values which aid in preserving and promoting them. Loss of values of heritage resources in the study area can lead to wanton abandonment and destruction of these irreplaceable resources, and possibly lead to permanent loss of information on heritage resources and extinction of vital heritage resources as was noted by an informant. For instance, wrong attitudes of people have led to the destruction of many shrines and their objects of worships at the Enugu-Ezike area of Nsukka in Enugu State likewise in some other parts of the study area. Destruction leads to permanent extinction and permanent loss of information on such heritage resources. It should be further noted here that every archaeological excavation is destruction

and hence, any half-hazard excavation without the publication of the result is a total loss to human knowledge and posterity.

Another implication is that those challenges as discussed in the previous section can lead to a significant discontinuity of transfer of heritage information. History has shown that oral tradition has been the major medium for the transfer of information on some heritage resources in the area through generations. But when these heritage custodians have decided to conceal information on heritage resources in their custody, they may die with such information without proper documentation and transfer. Information lost to memories on heritage resources may never be completely regained. For instance, there are some Iron Smelting Sites in Nsukka where the extant inhabitants in the area could not give any useful information on the presence of aggregate and cylindrical slags in the area. Archaeologists who worked at such sites could not get much valid information during the ethnographic studies. They based their results and arguments from findings from excavations, inferences and cross-cultural dating. In most cases research results are not the true representation of the situation in the field due to numerous challenges (like those mentioned earlier). The Geertz's principle of 'Thick Description' can be of help in understanding the context than only the response. This principle is of the view that ethnographic researchers should go beyond documenting responses from their informants to the understanding of the context of their responses. This would enable the researcher in understanding why a particular response was given by a particular informant and at the end be able to make an objective representation of information from the field in the research result (Geertz, 1973).

5.3. What then can be done?

The third column of Table 3 states various solutions as suggested by PRs in the heritage industry of the study area. For instance owing to the position of members of the host communities, they have proven to be useful tool to the success of researches. They need to be involved in the researches. Their involvement in the research would bridge the gap between them and the research and makes them to build the needed trust on the ongoing researches in their area (Eze-uzomaka, 2006; Ekechukwu, 2008; Nwankwo, 2012; Nwankwo, 2013). Also another solution could be the proper orientation of members of these heritage custodians and other members of the host community where necessary. For example two elders allowed excavations on an iron smelting site in the heart of their compound at Ugwuogwu in Uturu area of Abia State owing to proper orientation and information given to them by professional archaeologists and their students prior to the field trip. Enlightenment programs would inform these people on the need to preserve their heritage resources which constitute their traditional values and relevance. Through the same platform also, they will be informed about the research and its objectives in the area. This will aid these heritage custodians and other members of the host community in appreciating positive implications of researches in the heritage industry to socio-economic development of their communities. Eze-uzomaka (2014), explores on the indispensable role of preserving heritage resources through meaningful and functional legislations. There is need for the establishment of State laws and policies to augment the existing ones from the Federal Government on the preservation and sustenance of these heritage resources. The new policy and laws will equally establish ethics of research in the heritage industry, and on the role of researchers and the rights of the owners of heritage resources. Such laws coming from the State Government is believed, will go a long way in trickling down to the least valued heritage resources at the rural areas.

Moreover, some researchers may not have helped matters by not publishing results of previous studies in the heritage industry. This is one of the reasons why some of the unenlightened heritage custodians in the rural areas have the misconception that they do not benefit from the research being carried out in their areas. Researchers should ensure that at the end, research results were not only published but copies of

published results sent to these communities. That would likely make these heritage custodians to relax some irrelevant restrictions whenever future researches are to be conducted on heritage resources in their communities. It is advised in most cases, that such research papers are advised to be published in the local journals, magazines, newspapers or newsletters. Some researchers would always prefer publishing such research results abroad thereby depriving the members of the host community access to research results from their area. Authorities of tertiary institutions also have a role to play by motivating academic staff to always publish their research results. Oloyede (2010, p.19) noted that '... Directors of Academic planning have a huge task in articulating and driving the research efforts of their universities'. Moreover, researches in the heritage industry stand a chance of being successful when there is collaboration. Researchers in the industry need collaborative efforts to guide them in overcoming some challenges. This will encourage articulation of ideas, moral boost, elimination of frustrations and viable suggestions for a way out when confronted with hitches in the field. An individual researcher may not be able to achieve much or guarantee research success in the heritage industry of the study area, for instance, due to the size and complication of the industry.

In addition, the government still has a lot to do in contributing to successful researches in the heritage industry. This could be in the form of meaningful appreciation of heritage resources, promulgation and implementation of relevant laws and policies, funding of researches in the industry, making available grants for researches in the industry and ensuring the security of heritage resources and safety of researchers in the heritage industry. This can only be achieved when the governments is enlightened on the relevance and contributions of heritage resources to the nation's socio-economic development. Nwankwo and Ukaegbu (2011) assert that this can be done through the organization of enlightenment programmes on heritage resources for different organs and units of the government by the research professionals in the heritage industry. This can also be improved upon through mass enlightenment programmes in both print and electronic media at both urban and rural areas (Nwankwo and Ukaegbu, 2011; Nwankwo and Okafor, 2014). Such enlightenment programs will not only publicize the values and socio-economic relevance of heritage resources but, will equally encourage youths from the study area to take up courses in the heritage studies like Archaeology, History, Anthropology, Religion, Sociology and Heritage Tourism. This is expected to facilitate positive change of attitudes of the government towards heritage resources on the Igbo people of Southeast Nigeria. Also, adoption of participant observation as a research method in the heritage industry of the study area was suggested by one of the key informants. This approach is defined by Okpoko and Eze (2011) as a kind of research approach whereby the researcher participates in the activities of his subject. This can be without the knowledge of the research subject (complete participation) or with the knowledge of the subjects on the research motives of the research (participant-as-an-observe) (Okpoko and Eze, 2011).

6. Conclusion

The anthropological Principle of Reflexivity which was first thought of by William Thomas as 'Thomas Theorem' is gradually taking over the principle of objectivity in enquiry which was earlier used. While the later implies that the information should be completely objective from the opinion and prejudice of the researcher without any imposition to the opinions of the subjects under investigation, the former insisted that the research information can be influenced by the proximity of the researcher to his subjects, personal ideologies, ethical opinions, and belief system of the researcher (Bourgeois, 1995; Schultz and Lavenda, 2009). The premise of the Principle of Reflexivity cannot be undermined in the ethnographic method of research where the researcher needs to mix up with the research population. Such affinities have tendency to contribute to the reflexivity of the research information. Notwithstanding, issues have been raised over the dynamism of the principle of

reflexivity in the dynamics of rural communities in the study area. This study presupposes that the dynamic nature of rural communities in the study area would not jettison completely the principle of objectivism in enquiry; hence the nature of research environment would suggest effective use of either or both of the conflicting anthropological principles. This is true since heritage resources are much valuable and inseparable from the average member of the host communities who can go extra mile in frustrating or helping researchers in the heritage industry of the study area. Also researchers (mostly ethnographers) undertaking heritage studies need to imbibe the anthropological principle of Thick Description as postulated by Geertz in 1973 in ensuring the validity of responses from informants since contextual factors may distort responses from informants. This will go a long way in ameliorating some of these challenges of studies in the heritage industry as discussed earlier.

Finally, this study has worked on various impediments to researches in the heritage industry. Without solutions to these impediments as discussed in the study, meaningful results and publications may not have been achieved from the heritage industry. It is expedient to reduce or eradicate those identified challenges. Some of the suggestions like collaborative research involving members of the host community, enlightenment of heritages custodians and other members of the host community, governments involvement through establishment of functional laws and policies, grants for studies in the heritage industry and ensuring security of heritage resources and safety of researchers in the heritage industry, public awareness campaigns, cultural and identity tolerance, and positive attitudinal change towards heritage resources by both the hosts and visitors, have a way of ensuring successful conduct of researches in the heritage industry and subsequent publication of research results. Various stakeholders in the heritage industry like heritage custodians, members of the host communities, researchers, the government and the media, need collaborative efforts in harnessing the socio-economic potentialities of heritage resources in Igbo land of Nigeria. This collaborative effort can equally be extended to attract external fund donors for researches in the heritage industry.

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Author contribution statement

Elochukwu Nwankwo, Edmund Itanyi: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

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