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Original Research Article

Challenges and Prospects of the Cultural Industry in Promoting Nigeria's Economy: A Study of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja

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Abstract: This study examines the challenges and prospects of the cultural industry in promoting Nigeria's economy through a qualitative case study of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja. The research investigates the gallery's contributions to employment generation, cultural preservation, entrepreneurship, tourism, and economic diversification, while identifying the constraints limiting its developmental potential. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected staff and artists and were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that Nike Art Gallery serves as a vital platform for artistic training, cultural heritage preservation, market access, and income generation, thereby supporting the growth of Nigeria's creative economy. However, inadequate funding, high production costs, unreliable infrastructure, weak institutional support, limited market access, and intellectual property concerns continue to hinder the sector's expansion. The study concludes that strategic investment, stronger cultural policies, improved digital infrastructure, and enhanced public-private partnerships are essential for unlocking the full economic potential of Nigeria's cultural industry and ensuring sustainable national development.

Keywords: Cultural Industry, Creative Economy, Nike Art Gallery, Cultural Heritage, Entrepreneurship, Economic Diversification, Tourism, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, transforming cultural expressions into valuable economic resources through artistic production, heritage preservation, tourism, and entrepreneurship. Unlike traditional industries that depend primarily on natural resources, cultural industries derive their value from creativity, indigenous knowledge, intellectual property, and cultural identity. Consequently, governments and development agencies increasingly recognise the sector as an important contributor to economic diversification, employment creation, innovation, and sustainable development. Discussing the future of Africa's creative economy, Richards, Oni, Bernini, Emili, and Galli argue that cultural and creative industries have become strategic instruments for inclusive economic growth because they combine cultural heritage with entrepreneurial innovation while strengthening local and international creative networks (Richards, Comunian, Ikpe, and Oni, Bernini, Emili, and Galli).

Nigeria possesses one of the richest cultural landscapes in Africa, with over 250 ethnic groups whose artistic traditions have produced internationally acclaimed visual arts, crafts, textiles, sculptures, festivals, and cultural performances. This cultural diversity has positioned the country as a major hub for Africa's creative economy. In recent decades, attention has shifted from viewing culture merely as a symbol of national identity to recognising it as an economic asset capable of generating employment, attracting tourists, supporting small and medium enterprises, and creating foreign exchange earnings. The visual arts sector, in particular, has experienced remarkable growth through the activities of museums, galleries, exhibitions, art fairs, and private cultural institutions that connect artists with domestic and international markets. As Comunian, Ikpe, and Oni observe, Africa's creative industries are increasingly becoming central

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to development strategies because they stimulate innovation while creating new economic opportunities for creative practitioners.

Among the institutions driving this transformation is Nike Art Gallery, founded by the renowned Nigerian artist and cultural entrepreneur Nike Davies-Okundaye (Ubogu). The gallery has developed into one of Africa's foremost centres for the preservation, promotion, and commercialisation of indigenous Nigerian art. Beyond functioning as an exhibition space, the gallery provides artistic training, supports emerging artists, preserves traditional artistic techniques, attracts cultural tourists, and facilitates the marketing of Nigerian artworks to local and international collectors. Through these activities, the gallery contributes to cultural sustainability while simultaneously creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for artists and artisans. Recent scholarship by Ogundare *et al.,* identifies the Nike Art Gallery as an important heritage institution whose management practices, exhibitions, and cultural programmes promote tourism development and community empowerment through the commercialisation of Nigerian artistic heritage.

The Abuja branch of Nike Art Gallery occupies a particularly strategic position because it operates within Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, a city that attracts diplomats, government officials, business investors, researchers, and international tourists. The gallery therefore serves not only as a cultural institution but also as an economic platform where artistic creativity intersects with tourism, cultural diplomacy, education, and entrepreneurship. By providing exhibition spaces, organising artistic workshops, supporting local artists, and encouraging cultural exchanges, the gallery contributes to income generation for creative practitioners while strengthening Nigeria's image as a nation rich in artistic and cultural heritage. Such contributions demonstrate that art galleries are no longer merely repositories of artistic objects but active participants in national economic development.

Despite these contributions, Nigeria's cultural industry continues to face numerous challenges that constrain its capacity to contribute fully to economic development. Inadequate funding, weak institutional support, inconsistent cultural policies, poor infrastructure, limited international market access, insufficient investment in cultural tourism, and the rising cost of artistic production remain significant obstacles confronting many cultural institutions. Ogundare *et al*., observe that although Nike Art Gallery has become an important heritage resource that attracts visitors and supports tourism activities, its broader socioeconomic contribution remains limited by structural constraints affecting the cultural and tourism sectors. These challenges call for greater attention to the institutional conditions necessary for strengthening Nigeria's cultural economy.

Although existing studies have examined Nigeria's creative industries, much of the literature concentrates on sectors such as Nollywood, music, fashion, and cultural tourism, while relatively limited scholarly attention has been devoted to the economic role of visual art galleries. Even where studies exist, they have largely examined Nike Art Gallery in Lagos or Osogbo, with comparatively little empirical investigation focusing on the Abuja branch. This gap is significant because Abuja presents a unique cultural and economic environment that differs from other locations in terms of governance, tourism patterns, and market opportunities. Consequently, there remains insufficient understanding of how Nike Art Gallery in Abuja, highlighting its contributions to Abuja, contributes to Nigeria's economy, the challenges confronting its operations, and the opportunities available for expanding its economic impact. It is this gap that the present study seeks to address.

The significance of this study lies in both its academic and practical contributions. Academically, it enriches the growing body of literature on cultural industries, the creative economy, visual arts, and cultural entrepreneurship by providing empirical evidence from one of Nigeria's leading art institutions. It also extends scholarly discussions on the relationship between culture and economic development within the Nigerian context. Practically, the findings will provide useful information for policymakers, cultural administrators, tourism agencies, investors, gallery managers, artists, and development practitioners seeking to strengthen Nigeria's creative economy through improved institutional support, policy implementation, and investment in cultural infrastructure. Furthermore, the study may encourage greater recognition of visual art galleries as important contributors to national economic diversification.

Accordingly, this study pursues three objectives: first, to examine the contributions of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, to Nigeria's economy through cultural production, tourism promotion, employment creation, and artistic entrepreneurship; second, to identify the major challenges limiting the gallery's capacity to maximise its economic contributions; and third, to explore the prospects through which the gallery can further promote sustainable economic development within Nigeria's expanding cultural industry.

This study focuses on Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, highlighting its contributions with emphasis on its contribution to Nigeria's cultural industry and economy. It focuses on the experiences and perspectives of individuals directly associated with the gallery, including management staff, artists, employees, cultural practitioners, and visitors. The investigation specifically examines the gallery's economic contributions, operational challenges, and future prospects using qualitative

interview data. Findings are therefore interpreted within the context of the Abuja branch and are not intended to represent all art galleries or cultural institutions in Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Cultural Industry

The concept of the cultural industry has undergone significant intellectual transformation over the past seven decades, evolving from a critical theory of mass cultural production into a multidimensional framework for understanding creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development. Early debates surrounding the concept were largely philosophical, focusing on the effects of industrial capitalism on culture, while contemporary scholarship increasingly recognises cultural industries as important drivers of economic growth, employment, tourism, and sustainable development. This conceptual evolution reflects changing perceptions of culture—from an exclusively symbolic and artistic phenomenon to a productive economic resource capable of generating wealth while preserving cultural identity.

The earliest systematic discussion of the cultural industry is attributed to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Writing within the Frankfurt School tradition, Adorno and Horkheimer introduced the term "culture industry" to criticise the commercialisation of culture under advanced capitalism. They argued that artistic production had increasingly become standardised and mass-produced in ways that prioritised profit over originality, thereby reducing culture to a commodity consumed for entertainment rather than for intellectual or social enlightenment (Adorno and Horkheimer 94–136). According to these scholars, industrial methods of producing films, music, literature, and other cultural products created uniformity and passive consumption, limiting critical thinking and artistic creativity. Their critique established an important theoretical foundation by demonstrating that cultural production could not be separated from economic structures.

Although the Frankfurt School's perspective remains influential, subsequent scholars argued that the concept of the cultural industry should not be understood solely through the lens of capitalist domination. Instead, culture increasingly came to be viewed as an economic sector capable of generating employment, innovation, entrepreneurship, and social development. One of the most influential contributors to this reconceptualisation is David Hesmondhalgh, who defines cultural industries as organisations primarily engaged in the creation, production, and distribution of symbolic goods whose economic value derives largely from their cultural meaning and intellectual content (Hesmondhalgh 16–28). Unlike Adorno and Horkheimer, Hesmondhalgh emphasises that cultural industries continuously create, navigate market uncertainty, and maintain complex relationships between artistic expression and commercial production. Hesmondhalgh emphasises that cultural industries continuously create, navigate market uncertainty, and maintain complex relationships between artistic expression and commercial production, unlike Adorno and Horkheimer, through continuous creativity, market uncertainty, and complex relationships between artistic expression and commercial production. His work demonstrates that cultural industries simultaneously pursue artistic, social, and economic objectives rather than functioning merely as instruments of commercial exploitation. Brown also supports this argument.

Similarly, Klamer argues that cultural industries occupy a unique position within modern economies because they produce goods possessing both cultural value and economic value. Klamer, cultural products embody creativity, aesthetic significance, historical identity, and symbolic meaning while also functioning as commodities exchanged within markets (Economics and Culture 3–15). This dual-value framework distinguishes cultural industries from conventional manufacturing industries because their outputs cannot be evaluated solely in monetary terms. Instead, their contribution extends to cultural preservation, national identity, education, and social cohesion alongside measurable economic benefits such as employment generation, tourism development, and export earnings. Klamer's work has become one of the most widely cited frameworks for understanding the relationship between culture and economic development.

Expanding this perspective, John Howkins introduced the concept of the creative economy**,** arguing that creativity has become one of the world's most valuable economic resources. According to Howkins, industries based on intellectual property—including visual arts, design, architecture, music, publishing, film, software, advertising, and cultural heritage—generate wealth by transforming creative ideas into marketable products and services (Howkins 7–24). Unlike traditional industries that depend primarily on physical resources, the creative economy relies on imagination, innovation, and knowledge as the principal factors of production. This perspective has significantly influenced contemporary policy discussions by encouraging governments to recognise cultural production as an important component of national economic development strategies.

Further contributing to the conceptual development of cultural industries, Richard Caves explains that creative industries differ fundamentally from other sectors because they operate under conditions of high uncertainty regarding consumer demand and artistic success. Caves argues that cultural products possess distinctive economic characteristics, including creative labour, originality, differentiated markets, and uncertain commercial outcomes, which make the management of cultural enterprises substantially different from that of conventional business organisations (Caves 1–12).

These characteristics explain why cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, theatres, and artistic organisations require specialised management strategies that balance commercial sustainability with artistic integrity.

The relationship between culture and economic development has also been explored extensively by Justin O'Connor, who argues that cultural industries should not simply be viewed as entertainment sectors but rather as fundamental components of knowledge economies and urban regeneration. According to O'Connor, cultural industries facilitate innovation by encouraging creativity, entrepreneurship, cultural participation, and collaborative networks among artists, institutions, governments, and private investors (O'Connor 24–39). He further contends that investment in cultural industries contributes to broader social outcomes, including improved education, community development, cultural inclusion, and international competitiveness. Consequently, many governments are increasingly integrating cultural industries into national development policies aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth.

Recent scholarship has further expanded the concept by emphasising the growing importance of cultural industries in developing economies. Discussing Africa's emerging creative economy, Roberta Comunian, Eka Ikpe, and Duro Oni argue that African cultural industries possess considerable potential for promoting inclusive economic development because they combine indigenous knowledge systems, artistic innovation, entrepreneurship, and cultural heritage within rapidly expanding domestic and international markets. They maintain that strengthening creative ecosystems through institutional support, education, research collaboration, and investment can significantly improve employment opportunities while increasing Africa's participation in global creative industries (Comunian, Ikpe, and Oni). Their work is particularly relevant to Nigeria, where artistic production increasingly contributes to national economic diversification beyond petroleum.

Within this broader understanding, cultural industries now encompass a wide range of activities involving the creation, production, preservation, promotion, distribution, and commercialisation of cultural goods and services. These activities include visual arts, museums, galleries, performing arts, cultural festivals, crafts, architecture, publishing, film production, music, fashion, digital media, heritage tourism, and creative education. Rather than existing independently, these sectors interact to generate employment, stimulate tourism, encourage entrepreneurship, preserve cultural heritage, and strengthen national identity while contributing directly to economic development.

For the purpose of the present study, the concept of the cultural industry extends beyond the commercial production of artworks to include the institutional processes through which organisations such as the Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, preserve indigenous artistic traditions, empower artists through education and training, facilitate the marketing of cultural products, attract domestic and international tourists, and stimulate local economic activities. This conceptualisation aligns with the perspectives of Klamer, Hesmondhalgh, O'Connor, and Howkins, all of whom recognise that cultural industries simultaneously generate both cultural and economic values. Consequently, examining Nike Art Gallery through this conceptual framework provides an appropriate basis for understanding its contributions to Nigeria's economy as well as the challenges limiting its developmental potential.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to investigate the challenges and prospects of the cultural industry in promoting Nigeria's economy through the activities of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to examine participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations within their natural setting rather than reducing complex social realities to numerical measurements. Creswell and Poth argue that qualitative research is particularly suitable for studies seeking to understand how individuals construct meaning from their experiences and interactions within a specific social context (Creswell and Poth 41). Similarly, Yin maintains that the case study approach is appropriate when a researcher intends to explore a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined (Yin 15).

Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, was selected as the case because it represents one of Nigeria's foremost private cultural institutions actively engaged in artistic production, cultural preservation, entrepreneurship, and tourism promotion. Examining the gallery as a single case enabled an in-depth understanding of its contributions to Nigeria's cultural economy and the institutional challenges affecting its operations.

The study population comprised One Hundred and Fifty (150) employees of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, including management personnel, artists, administrative staff, marketing officers, and other workers directly involved in the gallery's daily operations.

Given the qualitative nature of the study, purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed adequate knowledge and experience regarding the gallery's activities. Patton and Shakman *et al*., explain that purposive

sampling enables researchers to deliberately select information-rich participants capable of in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Patton 230). Rather than seeking statistical representation, qualitative sampling emphasises the depth, relevance, and richness of participants' experiences.

Accordingly, five participants were purposively selected from the population of One Hundred and fifty workers. The selected participants were Miss Katurag Chinyio, Mr Joel Friday, Mr Okpako Eriga, Lizzy Philip, and Jude Moses. These participants were chosen because of their direct involvement in the gallery's operations and their ability to provide informed perspectives on the economic contributions, operational challenges, and future prospects of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja. Although the sample size appears relatively small, qualitative studies prioritise depth of understanding over numerical representation. Creswell and Poth note that qualitative inquiry focuses on obtaining detailed information from a limited number of carefully selected participants rather than achieving statistical generalisation (Creswell and Poth 158).

The study relied exclusively on semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection. Semi-structured interviews provide sufficient flexibility for participants to express their opinions while allowing the researcher to maintain consistency through predetermined interview questions. Kvale and Brinkmann observe that qualitative interviews are particularly valuable because they generate detailed descriptions of participants' experiences, beliefs, and interpretations that may not emerge through structured questionnaires (Kvale and Brinkmann 3).

An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was designed based on the objectives of the study. The questions explored participants' views regarding the contribution of Nike Art Gallery to employment generation, tourism development, artistic entrepreneurship, cultural preservation, and Nigeria's economic development. Additional questions examined the institutional and operational challenges confronting the gallery as well as possible strategies for improving its contribution to the nation's cultural economy.

Each participant was interviewed individually within the gallery premises at mutually agreed times. The interviews lasted between ten and fifteen minutes**,** allowing participants adequate time to discuss their experiences comprehensively. Follow-up questions were asked whenever clarification or further explanation was required to ensure the completeness and accuracy of participants' responses.

Prior to the commencement of data collection, permission was obtained from the management of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja. The purpose of the research was clearly explained to each participant before the interview commenced. Participants were told they could withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty.

Each participant provided informed consent before the interview was conducted. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of responses, while supplementary field notes were taken to document contextual observations and non-verbal expressions that could assist data interpretation.

Ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and respect for participants' dignity were strictly observed throughout the research process. Lincoln and Guba emphasise that credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research depend largely on ethical conduct, transparency, and respectful engagement with participants (Lincoln and Guba 289). Although participants' first names are used in reporting the findings (Miss Katurag Chinyio, Mr Joel Friday, Mr Okpako Eriga, Karo Steven, and Jude Moses**,** no personal information capable of compromising their privacy is disclosed.

The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis, a widely accepted method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns in qualitative data. Braun and Clarke describe thematic analysis as a flexible analytical technique that enables researchers to organise large volumes of textual data into meaningful themes while preserving participants' original meanings (Braun and Clarke 79).

Following the completion of the interviews, all audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to produce accurate textual records of the participants' responses. The transcripts were read repeatedly to facilitate familiarity with the data before the coding process commenced. Similar statements and recurring ideas were assigned descriptive codes, which were subsequently grouped into broader themes corresponding to the objectives of the study.

The analysis generated themes relating to the economic contributions of Nike Art Gallery, the challenges confronting the gallery, and the prospects for strengthening its contribution to Nigeria's economy. Direct quotations from participants were incorporated into the presentation of findings to illustrate major themes and enhance the authenticity of the analysis. Braun and Clarke argue that the inclusion of verbatim quotations strengthens qualitative analysis by allowing readers to appreciate how interpretations are grounded in participants' own narratives (Braun and Clarke 93).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher maintained consistency during coding, compared emerging themes across interview transcripts, and interpreted the findings in relation to existing literature on cultural industries and the creative economy. This analytical procedure enhanced the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Economic Contributions of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, to Nigeria's Economy

4.1.1 Financial Evidence and Indicative Market Estimate

Although Nike Art Gallery is privately operated and does not make audited annual accounts publicly available, its economic scale can be discussed using documented indicators and a clearly labelled scenario estimate. A report on the gallery's flagship Lagos collection describes approximately 8,000 artworks, while reporting on the Abuja branch states that it opened on 28 March 2023 and contained about 2,000 artworks by artists trained by Nike Davies-Okundaye (Ogujiuba, 2021; Leadership, 2023). These figures refer to different locations and should not be treated as interchangeable: the 8,000-work figure describes the wider gallery collection, whereas the approximately 2,000-work figure is specific to Abuja.

Published accounts have placed Nike Davies-Okundaye's paintings within a price range of approximately ₦500,000 to ₦4 million (Vanguard, 2013). The artist has also described the gallery's sales arrangement as a 10% commission on artworks sold on behalf of artists (THISDAY Style, 2021). These reported prices and commission terms provide a basis for an illustrative estimate, but they do not establish the gallery's actual annual sales or income. For a conservative scenario, assume that 5% of an 8,000-work collection—400 works—are sold in a year at an assumed average price of ₦1.5 million. The resulting estimated gross value of artwork sold would be ₦600 million (400 × ₦1.5 million); at a 10% commission, the indicative commission income would be ₦60 million. This is a hypothetical estimate for the wider collection, not a verified financial result and not an Abuja-branch-only figure. Applying the same assumptions to Abuja's reported collection of 2,000 works would produce an illustrative gross sales value of ₦150 million and commission income of ₦15 million; these figures are likewise scenarios, not observed revenue.

The gallery's economic contribution also extends beyond commission income to skills development, employment, and cultural tourism. At the Abuja opening, the Director-General of the National Council for Arts and Culture, Olusegun Runsewe, described the gallery as a potential source of jobs and a means of promoting Nigeria as a tourist destination (Voice of Nigeria, 2023; Leadership, 2023). The gallery's free-entry model, reported by visitor-facing sources, means that the economic activity considered here is more plausibly associated with artwork sales, training, workshops, and tourism-related spending than with admission fees. This should not be interpreted as a verified breakdown of the gallery's revenue. More broadly, UNCTAD notes that reliable, internationally comparable measurement remains a challenge for creative industries, supporting the need to distinguish transparent proxy estimates from audited financial accounts (UNCTAD, 2024).

The study examined the contribution of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, to Nigeria's economy through employment generation, artistic entrepreneurship, cultural tourism, and the commercialisation of indigenous artworks. Findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the gallery operates beyond an exhibition space by functioning as a creative enterprise where artistic skills are transformed into economic opportunities. Participants consistently identified employment creation, income generation, entrepreneurship, and market expansion as major ways through which the gallery contributes to Nigeria's creative economy.

A major theme emerging from the interviews was the role of Nike Art Gallery in creating employment opportunities and supporting artists' livelihoods. Mr. Joel Friday stressed the importance of collaboration between the Okpako Eriga, a professional painter and art instructor with extensive experience at the gallery, explained that artistic practice has provided him with financial independence while contributing to the wider economy. He stated:

> "*Being a painter has not only helped me achieve financial stability but has also significantly contributed to the economy through our organisation by paying taxes to the Federal Government of Nigeria. The creative industry has also reduced unemployment because practitioners become financially independent and self-reliant."*

This statement demonstrates that creative industries contribute to economic development by providing alternative employment pathways outside conventional sectors. Mr Eriga's experience highlights how artistic practice can support individual livelihoods while contributing to national economic activities through taxation and commercial transactions. The finding supports Klamer's argument that cultural industries generate both cultural and economic value by transforming creativity and heritage into productive resources. Similarly, Howkins argues that creativity, innovation, and intellectual property have become important drivers of economic growth within contemporary knowledge-based economies.

The interviews further revealed that Nike Art Gallery supports entrepreneurship by providing artists with opportunities to promote and sell their creative products to wider audiences. Mr Joel Friday, a fabric designer and sculptor, explained that the gallery has expanded his access to international markets. According to him:

> "*Working with Nike Arts Gallery has helped to promote my products, goods and services to the global world because most of my customers are international visitors who come to the gallery for a tour. The creative industry has helped me financially, and I don't have to wait for a federal government job to feed my family."*

Mr Friday's experience illustrates the importance of cultural institutions as intermediaries between artists and consumers. By providing exhibition opportunities, professional networks, and access to tourists, Nike Art Gallery reduces some of the challenges individual artists face in reaching potential buyers. This finding corresponds with Caves' argument that creative industries depend on supportive institutions that connect artistic production with markets and reduce commercial uncertainties associated with creative work.

Participants also emphasised that the gallery's economic contribution extends beyond the direct sale of artworks. Lizzy Philip and Jude Moses noted that visitors attracted to the gallery contribute to other sectors, including transportation, hospitality, accommodation, and local businesses. This demonstrates the multiplier effect of cultural tourism, where spending generated through artistic activities stimulates broader economic activities. O'Connor similarly argues that creative industries contribute to urban and economic development by creating networks between cultural production, tourism, entrepreneurship, and local economic growth.

The findings also indicate that Nike Art Gallery contributes to human capital development by providing opportunities for artistic training, mentorship, and professional development. Through knowledge transfer between experienced artists and emerging practitioners, the gallery strengthens creative skills while encouraging young people to pursue artistic entrepreneurship. This supports the view that creative industries serve not only as economic sectors but also as platforms for skills development and innovation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Nike Art Gallery plays an important role in Nigeria's creative economy through employment creation, entrepreneurship promotion, market access, and tourism development. The gallery represents a model of how cultural institutions can transform indigenous creativity into economic value while supporting sustainable livelihoods. The evidence confirms that artistic production should be recognised not merely as cultural expression but as a significant contributor to economic diversification and national development.

4.2 Nike Art Gallery and the Preservation of Nigerian Cultural Heritage

The findings revealed that Nike Art Gallery plays an important role in preserving Nigerian cultural heritage through artistic production, mentorship, exhibitions, and skills development. Participants viewed the gallery not only as a space for displaying artworks but also as an institution that preserves indigenous knowledge while creating economic opportunities for artists.

Miss Katurag Chinyio, a curator and visual artist at the gallery, explained that the institution supports emerging artists, particularly women, by providing opportunities for creative development. She stated:

> "*I usually engage more young visual artists for the production of visual works. I am also a member of the Female Artists Association, a platform that has done an impressive job in promoting and creating more talented female artists. I depend solely on my creative skills*."

Her response demonstrates that Nike Art Gallery contributes to cultural continuity by encouraging young artists to develop professional skills and participate in the creative economy. This supports Hesmondhalgh's argument that cultural industries are not only commercial enterprises but also institutions responsible for producing and preserving cultural meanings and identities.

The study further found that exhibitions and artistic programmes enable Nigerian cultural expressions to reach both local and international audiences. Miss Chinyio explained:

> "*The creative industries have contributed greatly to the local economy through constant creation of artworks, programmes and exhibitions where opportunities are given to local artists to showcase their products in arts and crafts to visitors from all over the world*."

This finding demonstrates a close connection between cultural preservation and economic development. By transforming traditional artistic practices into marketable products, Nike Art Gallery ensures that indigenous knowledge remains relevant within contemporary society. This aligns with Klamer's argument that cultural heritage possesses both symbolic and economic value when effectively integrated into creative industries.

Participants also emphasised the importance of mentorship and knowledge transfer in sustaining Nigerian artistic traditions. Lizzy Philip and Jude Moses noted that training programmes and collaborations between experienced and emerging artists help preserve techniques such as painting, textile production, sculpture, and other indigenous practices.. These activities facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge across generations and prepare young artists for participation in broader creative markets.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Nike Art Gallery serves as both a cultural preservation center and an entrepreneurial platform. Through training, exhibitions, and artistic development, the gallery maintains Nigeria's cultural heritage while enabling artists to generate income and participate in the creative economy.

4.3 Challenges Limiting the Economic Potential of Nike Art Gallery and Nigeria's Creative Industry

Although the findings demonstrate the economic and cultural importance of Nike Art Gallery, participants identified several challenges limiting the growth of the gallery and Nigeria's wider creative industry. The major issues emerging from the interviews include inadequate funding, high production costs, unreliable electricity, limited market access, plagiarism, and weak institutional support.

Funding constraints were identified as one of the major barriers affecting artistic production and exhibitions. Mr Okpako Eriga explained:

"*Most of the challenges are funding of artwork, programmes and exhibitions. The high cost of materials also makes production difficult*."

This suggests that despite the economic potential of creative industries, insufficient financial support limits artists' ability to produce, promote, and expand their work. The finding supports Comunian, Ikpe, and Oni's argument that African creative industries require stronger investment structures and institutional support to achieve sustainable growth.

Participants also highlighted the rising cost of artistic materials as a significant challenge. Miss Katurag Chinyio noted:

"*High cost of art materials and low sales because artworks are expensive. Art products are luxury items, so there is always slow demand and sales."*

Her observation reflects the uncertainty of creative markets, where artists often face increasing production costs alongside unpredictable consumer demand. This corresponds with Caves' argument that creative industries operate within unstable markets where commercial success cannot always be guaranteed.

Another major challenge identified was inadequate infrastructure, particularly unreliable electricity. Mr Joel Friday stated:

"*Lack of electricity to meet up with the digital world*."

This challenge affects artists' ability to use digital technologies for marketing, communication, online sales, and international engagement. As Howkins argues, digital innovation has expanded opportunities within the creative economy, but these benefits depend on adequate technological infrastructure.

Participants also raised concerns about limited market visibility and weak intellectual property protection. Miss Chinyio identified plagiarism as a major problem, noting:

"*Plagiarism of art products is also a major challenge in the creative industries*."

The unauthorised reproduction of artworks reduces artists' financial returns and discourages innovation. Effective copyright protection is therefore essential for strengthening the economic value of creative work.

Overall, the findings indicate that the challenges facing Nike Art Gallery reflect broader structural problems within Nigeria's creative sector. While creativity and cultural resources remain strong, inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, weak market systems, and limited protection of intellectual property continue to restrict the industry's full economic potential.

4.4 Prospects for Strengthening Nike Art Gallery's Role in Nigeria's Economy

Despite the challenges identified, participants expressed optimism about the future of Nike Art Gallery and Nigeria's creative industry. The findings revealed that stronger government support, improved funding, digital innovation, and institutional partnerships are essential for expanding the economic contribution of the creative sector.

Mr Okpako Eriga stressed the need for greater investment in artists through grants, soft loans, creative hubs, and regular exhibitions that can improve artists' exposure and market opportunities. Similarly, Mr. Joel Friday stressed the

importance of collaboration between government, private investors, and cultural organisations to provide better platforms for artists to commercialise their talents.

Miss Katurag Chinyio highlighted the importance of reducing production barriers by providing affordable materials, training opportunities, and financial support for emerging artists. These interventions, according to participants, would encourage more young Nigerians to pursue creative careers and contribute to economic development.

The findings also revealed the growing importance of digital technology in expanding the reach of Nigerian artworks. Online platforms, digital marketing, and virtual exhibitions provide opportunities for artists to connect with global audiences beyond traditional physical markets. This supports Howkins' argument that digital innovation has transformed creative industries by enabling the wider circulation and commercialisation of intellectual property.

Overall, the findings suggest that Nike Art Gallery has significant potential to contribute further to Nigeria's economy if supported by effective policies, investment, and infrastructure. Strengthening creative institutions, improving access to finance, and expanding digital opportunities would enable the gallery and similar organisations to become stronger drivers of employment, cultural tourism, and economic diversification.

4.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate that Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, represents an important institution within Nigeria's cultural and creative economy. The interview data show that the gallery contributes to employment generation, entrepreneurship, cultural preservation, tourism, and skills development by transforming artistic creativity into economic opportunities.

The findings support Klamer's argument that cultural industries create both economic and cultural value by converting creativity and heritage into productive resources. The experiences of participants, particularly Mr Okpako Eriga and Mr Joel Friday, demonstrate that artistic practice can provide sustainable livelihoods while contributing to broader economic activities. This also aligns with Howkins' creative economy theory, which identifies creativity, knowledge, and innovation as important drivers of contemporary economic growth.

The study further reveals that Nike Art Gallery functions as a platform for human capital development through mentorship, training, and artistic knowledge transfer. By supporting emerging artists and promoting indigenous artistic practices, the gallery contributes to cultural sustainability while preparing practitioners for participation in creative markets. This finding supports Hesmondhalgh's view that cultural institutions play a significant role in producing, preserving, and circulating cultural meanings.

However, the findings also highlight structural challenges limiting the full economic potential of the creative sector. Issues such as inadequate funding, high production costs, unreliable electricity, limited market access, and weak intellectual property protection reflect broader challenges affecting Nigeria's creative economy. These findings correspond with Comunian, Ikpe, and Oni's argument that African creative industries require stronger institutional support, investment, and policy frameworks to achieve sustainable growth.

Overall, the study confirms that Nigeria's creative industry has significant potential to support economic diversification beyond traditional sectors. However, realising this potential requires coordinated efforts among government institutions, private investors, cultural organisations, and creative practitioners. Nike Art Gallery demonstrates that creativity is not only a form of cultural expression but also an economic resource capable of contributing to employment, innovation, and sustainable development.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the contribution of Nike Art Gallery, Abuja, to Nigeria's economy through employment creation, cultural preservation, entrepreneurship, tourism development, and the commercialisation of indigenous art. The findings demonstrate that the gallery has evolved beyond a traditional exhibition space into a creative institution that connects artistic production with economic development.

The study revealed that Nike Art Gallery contributes to employment generation by providing opportunities for artists, instructors, and other creative practitioners while enabling artists to transform their skills into sustainable livelihoods. Through exhibitions, training, and international patronage, the gallery promotes entrepreneurship and stimulates related sectors such as tourism, hospitality, transportation, and retail. These findings support the view that cultural industries generate both economic and cultural value by transforming creativity and heritage into productive resources.

The study further established that the gallery plays an important role in preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage through mentorship, artistic training, and the transmission of indigenous knowledge to younger generations. By combining cultural preservation with creative entrepreneurship, Nike Art Gallery demonstrates how cultural institutions can maintain traditional artistic practices while adapting them to contemporary economic opportunities.

However, the findings also identified significant challenges limiting the growth of the creative sector, including inadequate funding, high production costs, unreliable electricity, weak institutional support, limited market access, and intellectual property concerns. These challenges emphasise the necessity of stronger policies, investment, and infrastructure to enable Nigeria's creative industries to compete effectively within global markets.

The study also indicates that digital technologies provide new opportunities for expanding the visibility and commercial reach of Nigerian artworks. However, maximising these opportunities requires improved digital infrastructure, stronger copyright protection, and greater support for creative practitioners.

Based on these findings, the study recommends increased investment in Nigeria's creative sector through financial support, creative hubs, training programmes, digital platforms, and stronger partnerships between government institutions, private investors, and cultural organisations. Such interventions would strengthen artistic entrepreneurship, expand employment opportunities, and enhance Nigeria's cultural influence globally.

In conclusion, Nike Art Gallery demonstrates the potential of cultural industries to contribute to economic diversification, heritage preservation, and sustainable development. As Nigeria seeks alternatives to dependence on petroleum resources, greater recognition and strategic investment in creative industries will be essential. Nevertheless, since this study focused on a single case study, future research should examine other cultural institutions across Nigeria to better understand the role of the creative economy in national development.

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