

## EXPLORING THE EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSIONS OF OFF-ROAD AND CAR DRIFTING EXTREME SPORT EVENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA.

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting extreme sport events in Ilara-Mokin, Nigeria. The study adopted an exploratory qualitative research design and gathered data from 30 respondents through key informant interviews and in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed thematically, and the findings were discussed within the theoretical framework of experiential marketing theory. The study revealed that off-road racing and car drifting events at the study area offer a unique and thrilling experience that attracts both the locals and tourists. The events also have positive impacts on the local economy and create opportunities for community involvement. However, there are concerns about the negative impacts of the events on the environment, and there is a need for sustainable tourism development strategies. The study recommends that event organizers should focus on promoting sustainability practices to mitigate the negative impact of the event on the host community.

**Keywords** - Off-road racing and Car drifting, Extreme sport events, Sustainable tourism, Marketing strategies, Community involvement.

### INTRODUCTION

Off-road racing and car drifting events are extreme sports that have gained popularity worldwide (Puchan, 2005; Datta, 2019; Brymer *et al.*, 2020; Feletti, & Mei-Dan, 2022). These events, which involve driving high-performance cars on challenging off-road terrains and drifting on specially designed tracks (Newsome, 2014), have attracted a growing number of enthusiasts and spectators (Puchan, 2005; Cater *et al.*, 2018). The experiential dimensions of these events have been explored in various contexts, revealing their potential as a tool for tourism development and promotion (Jiang *et al.*, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2021). Adventure tourism combines travel, sport and outdoor recreation with the focus on experiential engagement (Huddart & Stott, 2019). As adventure tourism continues to grow across the world, Nigeria is positioning itself as a destination for various forms of extreme sports (Elendu, 2013). Of all extreme sports events in Nigeria, off-road racing and car drifting events have been increasingly gaining popularity among Nigerians and tourists alike. As a result, adventure tourism has become one of the fastest growing travel segments (Saqib, 2019). These events provide participants with an exhilarating experience, challenging drivers to navigate through rocky and uneven paths at high speed (Newsome, 2014).

The thrill-seeking nature of these events attracts adrenaline junkies seeking a unique experience, making them excellent opportunities for tourism promotion (Kane & Tucker, 2004). Innovations in equipment and technology have contributed to the development of extreme sports such as bungee jumping, paragliding, mountaineering, rafting, rock climbing, scuba diving, storm chasing and surfing. This has also resulted in an increase of sport tourism across the globe (Hansen *et al.*, 2019). However, the emergence of extreme sports has not only created opportunities for tourism promotion but has also presented various challenges (Corneloup *et al.*, 2001; Pop *et al.*, 2016). Extreme sports events have inherent risks associated with them, including injury and loss of life (Monasterio, 2013). Therefore, regulations and safety measures must be implemented to ensure the safety of participants and spectators (Henke *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, the organization of these events requires significant planning and resources. As adventure tourism and extreme sports continue to grow globally, Nigeria can position itself as a destination for these exciting activities through effective promotion and safety measures.

Moreover, sporting activities have become a significant stimulant to travel decisions for individuals and groups alike. The experiential dimension of extreme sports events is a significant factor in attracting participants and tourists (Sato *et al.*, 2014). Tourists seek novel and unique experiences that combine performance, experience, and organizational dimensions (Karayilan & Cetin, 2016). As a result, the experiential aspect of adventure tourism and extreme sports events presents Nigeria with an opportunity to promote its unique landscapes and culture while showcasing its potential

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as an adventure tourism and extreme sports destination (Andrew & Ekpenyong, 2012). The success of extreme sports events is not only determined by the level of excitement involved but also the experiential dimension created. Therefore, Nigeria should strive to create unique and memorable experiences for participants and spectators through creative performances, improvements in equipment and technology.

### **Experiential Dimensions of Off-Road Racing and Car Drifting Events**

Off-road racing and car drifting are considered to be extreme sports that have gained popularity in recent years (Brymer et al., 2020). Extreme sports tourism is characterized by a focus on risk, adventure, and excitement. Off-road racing and car drifting events can provide an opportunity for tourists to experience these elements while also exploring a unique destination (Cetin & Coşkuner, 2021). The experiential dimensions of these events have become an important aspect of understanding the motivations and behavior of extreme sports tourists. One of the key themes in the literature on extreme sports tourism is the importance of the sensory experience for tourists (Rahman & Ismail, 2017). Rahman and Ismail (2017) also argued that sensory experiences are central to understanding tourist experiences and can include a range of elements such as sights, sounds, smells, and tactile experiences. Off-road racing and car drifting events offer a variety of sensory experiences for tourists, including the roar of engines, the smell of gasoline, and the feeling of vibrations as the cars race past (Smith *et al.*, 2017).

Another important theme in the literature is the emotional experience of extreme sports tourists. As Hetland (2022) note, the emotional experience of extreme sports tourism can include a range of emotions, such as excitement, fear, joy, and adrenaline rushes. For many tourists, the thrill of these emotions is a key motivator for attending off-road racing and car drifting events (Kirkup & Sutherland, 2017). The cognitive experience of extreme sports tourism has also been explored in the literature. This includes understanding the technical aspects of the sport, learning about its history and culture, and engaging with the local community. Off-road racing and car drifting events can provide an opportunity for tourists to learn about the technicalities of the sport, such as the mechanics of the cars and the strategies used by the drivers (McGrath & Kuzic, 2009). The impact of extreme sports tourism on the local community and environment is another important theme in the literature. While extreme sports tourism can bring economic benefits to a destination, it can also have negative impacts on the environment and local culture. Therefore, it is important to understand the positive and negative impacts of off-road racing and

car drifting events on the local community and environment in Ilara-Mokin.

Finally, the literature on tourism development and marketing strategies is also relevant to this study. According to López-Sánchez and Pulido-Fernández (2016), sustainable tourism development requires a focus on the experiential aspects of tourism, including understanding the motivations and behavior of tourists. Marketing strategies that emphasize the unique sensory and emotional experiences of off-road racing and car drifting events can help to attract tourists to Ilara-Mokin (Lin *et al.*, 2022). Overall, the literature on extreme sports tourism provides important insights into the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. Understanding the sensory, emotional, and cognitive experiences of tourists, as well as the impacts on the local community and environment, is crucial for the sustainable development of this type of tourism in the region.

### **Theoretical Framework: Experiential Marketing Theory**

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on the experiential marketing theory, which posits that customers purchase products or services based on the experiences they have with them. This theory emphasizes the importance of creating a positive and memorable experience for customers, which can lead to increased customer loyalty and repeat purchase behavior (Schmitt, 1999; Pham & Huang, 2015).

In the context of extreme sport events such as off-road racing and car drifting, experiential marketing theory suggests that customers attend these events not just for the sport itself, but for the overall experience they have while attending. This includes aspects such as the atmosphere, social interaction, and sensory stimulation (Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021). The experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting events can be understood through four key elements: sense, feel, think, and act (Akyildiz et al., 2013; Tasci & Milman, 2019). The sense element refers to the sensory stimulation that attendees experience at the event, such as the sound of the engines, the smell of gasoline, and the sight of the vehicles in motion. The feel element refers to the emotions that attendees experience, such as excitement, adrenaline, and awe (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). The think element refers to the cognitive processing that attendees engage in, such as learning about the sport and understanding the technicalities. Finally, the act element refers to the behaviors that attendees engage in, such as interacting with other attendees and participating in activities outside of the racing itself (Schmitt, 1999). This framework is useful for understanding the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. By analyzing the

sense, feel, think, and act elements of attendees' experiences, we can gain insight into how to create a positive and memorable experience for attendees, which can lead to increased attendance and potential for sustainable tourism development.

Additionally, this framework aligns with the concept of sustainable tourism development, which emphasizes the importance of creating tourism activities that are environmentally and socially responsible, as well as economically viable (UNWTO, 2017). By focusing on the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting events, we can create tourism activities that not only provide economic benefits to the local community but also align with sustainable tourism principles. Overall, the experiential marketing theory and the sense-feel-think-act framework provide a useful theoretical lens for analyzing the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. This framework can help guide recommendations for sustainable tourism development and provide insights into how to create a positive and memorable experience for attendees.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Area

Elizade Smokin Hills Golf Resort is one of the popular locations for hosting extreme sports events

such as off-road racing and car drifting in Nigeria. It is situated on the outskirts of Ilara-Mokin, near the Ondo State capital of Akure in Western Nigeria. The resort was founded in 2012 by Chief Michael Ade Ojo, a prominent figure in Nigeria's business landscape and the Chairman of Elizade Toyota Nigeria. This privately owned tourist destination offers a secure haven for visitors to revel in its stunning landscape, engage in golf activities, and experience the unique backdrop of morning smoke that permeates the air. Additionally, guests can indulge in bird watching.

The resort is meticulously crafted across 140 acres of surrounding jungle and rolling hills that emit morning smoke, it derives its name from this distinctive feature. Its founder envisioned the resort as a venue for hosting diverse international tournaments and challenges, attracting golf professionals from Africa and around the globe. The Resort is also prominently known for hosting the off-road and car drifting extreme sport in collaboration with a private extreme sport promoting firm known as "work and play Nigeria".

### Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach to explore the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting extreme sport events in Ilara-Mokin, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Biographical information of the 30 respondents**

Respondent (R)	Sex	Marital Status	Age	Occupation	Data Collection Instrument
1	Male	Married	36	Engineer/Professional Driver	Key informant Interview
2	Female	Single	23	Student	In-depth interview
3	Male	Married	45	Businessman	In-depth interview
4	Male	Single	29	Freelancer	In-depth interview
5	Female	Married	32	Teacher	In-depth interview
6	Male	Single	20	Student	In-depth interview
7	Female	Married	27	Nurse	In-depth interview
8	Male	Married	50	Farmer	In-depth interview
9	Male	Single	26	Mechanic	In-depth interview
10	Female	Married	37	Entrepreneur	In-depth interview
11	Male	Single	28	IT Specialist	In-depth interview
12	Female	Single	43	Content Creator/Organizer	Key informant Interview
13	Male	Married	37	Event Organizer	Key informant Interview
14	Female	Married	29	Tourism Consultant	In-depth interview
15	Male	Single	32	Professional driver	In-depth interview
16	Female	Married	26	Banker	In-depth interview
17	Male	Married	35	Racer/Event Organizer	In-depth interview
18	Male	Single	30	Photographer	In-depth interview
19	Female	Single	21	Student	In-depth interview
20	Male	Married	37	Local Government Official	In-depth interview
21	Female	Married	28	Event Planner	In-depth interview
22	Male	Married	40	Businessman	In-depth interview
23	Female	Married	29	Fashion Designer	In-depth interview
24	Female	Married	39	Business woman	In-depth interview
25	Male	Single	27	Writer	In-depth interview
26	Female	Single	30	Social Worker	In-depth interview
27	Male	Married	47	Contractor	In-depth interview
28	Female	Single	19	Student	In-depth interview
29	Male	Married	62	Community Leader	Key informant Interview
30	Female	Married	25	Spectator	In-depth interview

The study employed a convenience sampling technique to select 30 participants who attended the events. The participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study. Data was collected through key informant interviews (KII) and in-depth interviews (IDI) and observation by the study's research team. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the participants, and they were audio-recorded with their consent. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in English, the official language of Nigeria, and lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were guided by an interview guide that covered the following areas: emotions experienced during the events, cognitive experiences, impact on the local community, impact on the environment, potential for sustainable tourism development, involvement of the local community, and improvements for sustainability. The observation was conducted during the events, and it was used to complement the data collected through interviews. The researcher observed the activities, interactions, and behaviors of the participants during the events. Field notes were taken to document the observations.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis with the aid of Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy. The transcripts were read several times to gain familiarity with the data. The data was then coded line by line and grouped into themes. The themes were reviewed and refined, and the final themes were used to interpret the data.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, several measures were taken. First, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained before the interviews were conducted. Second, the audio recordings and transcripts were kept confidential to ensure the privacy of the participants. Third, the researcher ensured that the data was triangulated through observation, which provided additional data to support the findings. Finally, the researcher employed member checking, whereby the participants were provided with the opportunity to review the transcripts and confirm the accuracy of their responses.

### **Emotional Experiences**

Emotional experiences were identified as a significant theme in the study, with the majority of respondents expressing intense emotions during the off-road racing and car drifting events. Respondent 1, a 36-year-old male who is a professional driver and engineer, described feeling a rush of adrenaline during the events, saying, "I feel alive when I'm behind the wheel, and the speed and excitement make me feel like I'm on top of the world."

Similarly, Respondent 19, a 21-year-old female student, expressed feelings of a mix of excitement and fear during the events, saying, "I love the thrill of watching the cars drift and the roar of the engines, but I also feel a bit scared when they get too close to the spectators."

The emotional experiences of the events were not limited to the spectators, as drivers also expressed intense emotions. Respondent 15, a 32-year-old male professional driver, described feeling a sense of accomplishment after successfully completing a challenging drift, saying, "It's an amazing feeling to know that you have control over the car and can make it do things that most people think are impossible."

The emotional experiences of the events were not always positive, however, as some respondents expressed frustration and disappointment. Respondent 22, a 40-year-old male businessman, expressed disappointment with the lack of adequate organization and safety measures during the events, saying, "I came to watch the races with my family, but we were not impressed with the inadequacy of safety measures, and it was a bit chaotic."

Overall, the emotional experiences of the off-road racing and car drifting events were a significant aspect of the experiential dimensions, with respondents expressing a range of intense emotions, both positive and negative.

Additionally, the emotional experiences of the events were often linked to the physical and sensory experiences, as the respondents' emotional responses were influenced by what they saw, heard, and felt during the events. Respondent 10, a 37-year-old female entrepreneur, described feeling a sense of awe and excitement when she saw the cars drifting, saying, "It's a beautiful sight to see the cars drifting in perfect synchronization with each other. The noise, the smoke, and the precision of the drivers make it a thrilling experience."

Respondent 27, a 47-year-old male contractor, also described feeling a connection between the physical and emotional experiences, saying, "The sound of the engines and the smell of burning rubber make me feel like I'm right in the middle of the action. It's a visceral experience that is hard to describe."

Overall, the emotional experiences of the off-road racing and car drifting events were influenced by a range of sensory and physical experiences, with the respondents expressing a sense of awe, excitement, and connection with the events.

It is important to note that the emotional experiences of the events were not uniform across all respondents, with some expressing a more muted

emotional response. Respondent 18, a 30-year-old male photographer, described feeling a sense of detachment during the events, saying, "I appreciate the skill and precision of the drivers, but it's not really my thing. I don't feel the same level of excitement or connection with the events as some other people do."

Overall, the emotional experiences of the off-road racing and car drifting events were a significant aspect of the experiential dimensions, with the respondents expressing a range of intense emotions that were influenced by a variety of sensory and physical experiences. The emotional experiences were not uniform across all respondents, however, with some expressing a more muted emotional response.

### **Cognitive Experiences**

The second theme that emerged from the data was cognitive experiences. This theme describes the mental processes and perceptions that the respondents had during off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. The cognitive experiences were categorized into three subthemes: event perception, risk perception, and knowledge acquisition.

Firstly, in terms of event perception, respondents highlighted the importance of the physical environment, atmosphere, and aesthetics of the events. One respondent, a 43-year-old female event organizer, noted that "the location and scenery of the events play a crucial role in the perception of the event by the attendees. The natural scenery of Ilara-Mokin adds an extra dimension to the racing experience, which makes it more memorable for the attendees."

Secondly, the risk perception subtheme focused on the participants' perception of the risks involved in off-road racing and car drifting events. Respondents acknowledged the high level of danger associated with the sport, but also mentioned that the risk was part of the appeal of the sport. One respondent, a 35-year-old male racer, stated that "the danger involved in off-road racing and car drifting is part of the thrill and excitement. It is what sets it apart from other sports, and it is what attracts many people to it."

Lastly, the knowledge acquisition subtheme described the educational aspect of off-road racing and car drifting events. Respondents noted that attending these events could increase their knowledge about the sport, the vehicles used, and the mechanics behind them. One respondent, a 25-year-old female spectator, stated that "attending these events is not only entertaining but also educational. I learned a lot about the technicalities of the vehicles, and it gave me a newfound appreciation for the sport."

Overall, the cognitive experiences of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin were found to be diverse and multifaceted. The respondents' perceptions of the events were influenced by their prior knowledge and experiences, as well as the physical environment and atmosphere of the events. The danger and risks associated with the sport were acknowledged, but also seen as part of the appeal. The educational aspect of the events was also noted, with many respondents stating that attending these events increased their knowledge about the sport and its technicalities.

The cognitive experiences of the respondents suggest that off-road racing and car drifting events can offer a unique and diverse range of experiences to attendees. By highlighting the importance of the physical environment, atmosphere, and educational aspect of the events, event organizers can create a more engaging and informative experience for attendees. Furthermore, acknowledging the risks associated with the sport can also add to the appeal of the events, but safety precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of participants and attendees.

### **Community Impact**

The theme of community impact was prominent among the respondents, with many discussing the positive and negative effects of off-road racing and car drifting events on the local community in Ilara-Mokin. One respondent, a 45-year-old married male and local businessman, noted that the events brought in a significant amount of revenue for local businesses, including hotels and restaurants. He stated, "During these events, we have an influx of people coming into town, and it's good for business. It helps us make some extra money."

Another respondent, a 21-year-old female and student, mentioned the negative impact the events have on the community's peace and quiet. She stated, "The noise from the cars and the crowd can be overwhelming, especially for those living near the event venues. It disrupts the peace and quiet of the community."

However, some respondents noted that the events have a positive impact on the community's morale and sense of identity. One respondent, a 62-year-old married male and community leader, mentioned that the events bring a sense of excitement and pride to the community. He stated, "The events showcase our town and bring a sense of excitement and pride to our community. It's something we can look forward to and be proud of."

Another respondent, a 30-year-old (single) female and social worker, mentioned that the events can also serve as an opportunity to promote local culture and heritage. She stated, "The events can be used as a platform to showcase our local culture and heritage,

such as traditional music and dance performances. This can help promote our town and attract more tourists interested in experiencing our unique culture."

In terms of community involvement in organizing the events, some respondents noted that there could be more opportunities for community participation. One respondent, a 37-year-old married male and local government official, mentioned that the events could benefit from more community involvement in planning and organizing. He stated, "I think it would be good to involve the community more in the planning and organization of the events. This would help us ensure that the events are more inclusive and representative of our community's interests and values."

Overall, the findings suggest that off-road racing and car drifting events have both positive and negative impacts on the local community in Ilara-Mokin. While the events bring in revenue and can boost community morale, they also disrupt the peace and quiet of the community. However, the events also have the potential to promote local culture and heritage and could benefit from more community involvement in organizing and planning.

### **Environmental Impact**

One of the themes that emerged from the study is the environmental impact of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. Most respondents noted that such events have both positive and negative environmental impacts. Some participants, particularly those involved in organizing the events, believed that they were environmentally friendly, citing measures taken to prevent soil erosion, control dust, and minimize noise pollution. One respondent, a 28-year-old event organizer, stated that, "We make sure that we use only designated tracks for the events to prevent any damage to the vegetation and soil."

However, other participants pointed out that off-road racing and car drifting events have negative environmental impacts. One of the concerns raised was that such events often result in the destruction of vegetation and soil erosion, which can have long-lasting effects on the environment. A 35-year-old male respondent noted that, "I have seen a lot of trees being cut down to create space for the event. This is not good for the environment."

Another concern raised was the impact of noise pollution on the environment and wildlife. Some participants noted that the loud noises from the events can scare away animals and disrupt their habitats. A 27-year-old female respondent said, "The loud noises from the cars can cause a lot of disturbance to the animals in the area. This is not good for the environment."

Overall, the findings suggest that off-road racing and car drifting events have both positive and negative environmental impacts in Ilara-Mokin. While efforts have been made to minimize these impacts, there is still room for improvement. Future research could explore ways of making such events more environmentally sustainable, for example by using renewable energy sources or exploring alternative event locations that minimize damage to the environment.

Thus, the findings suggest that off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin have a significant impact on the local community and environment. While these events have the potential to attract tourists and generate revenue, there are concerns about their impact on the environment and the need to involve the local community in their organization.

### **Tourism Development**

The theme of tourism development emerged from the interviews as a key area of interest for the participants. In discussing this theme, respondents highlighted various aspects that they believed could contribute to the development of tourism in Ilara-Mokin through off-road racing and car drifting events.

Several respondents believed that such events could be marketed to attract tourists to the area, with some suggesting that the events could be packaged as part of a wider tourism experience. For example, one respondent (R13, male, age 37, event organizer) stated:

"We can work with local hotels and tour operators to create packages that include attending the off-road racing and car drifting events as part of a wider tourism experience. This could include visits to neighboring local attractions, such as waterfalls and historical sites, and cultural experiences, such as traditional dance and music performances."

Respondents also discussed the need for infrastructure to support tourism development in the area. Some participants suggested that more hotels and guesthouses could be built to accommodate visitors, while others emphasized the importance of improving the road network to make the area more accessible. For example, one respondent (R14, female, age 29, tourism consultant) stated:

"We need to invest in infrastructure to make the area more attractive to tourists. This could include building more hotels and guesthouses, improving the road network and transportation links, and providing other amenities, such as restaurants and shops."

Participants also highlighted the potential economic benefits that off-road racing and car drifting events could bring to the local community. Some

respondents suggested that the events could create jobs and stimulate economic growth, particularly in the hospitality and service industries. For example, one respondent (R3, male, age 45, businessman) stated:

"The events could provide a boost to the local economy by creating jobs and generating revenue for local businesses. This could be particularly important in the off-season, when tourism tends to be slower."

However, some respondents also expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts of tourism development, particularly with regard to the environment and the local community. For example, one respondent (R9, male, age 26, mechanic) stated: "We need to be careful about how we develop tourism in the area. We don't want to create a situation where the local community and the environment are negatively impacted by increased tourism."

Overall, the findings suggest that off-road racing and car drifting events have the potential to contribute to tourism development in Ilara-Mokin. However, this must be done in a responsible and sustainable manner, taking into account the potential impacts on the environment and the local community.

### **Community Involvement**

The theme of community involvement was identified as an important aspect of the off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. Respondents expressed their views on the extent to which the local community is involved in organizing and participating in the events. The following findings emerged from the data analysis.

Firstly, the majority of the respondents (23 out of 30) reported that the local community is actively involved in the organization of the events. Respondent 13, a male event organizer, noted that "we always try to involve the community in the planning and organization of the events. We have community leaders on our organizing committee and we also engage local businesses to provide services and products for the events." Respondent 10, a female entrepreneur and community member, also highlighted the importance of community involvement, stating that "these events bring a lot of economic benefits to our community, so it's important that we are involved in the planning and execution of the events."

Secondly, respondents pointed out that community involvement goes beyond just the organization of the events. Respondent 20, a male, local government official and event participant, stated that "the community also participates in the events. We have local drivers who compete and many community members come out to watch and support them."

Respondent 26, a female social worker and community member, also emphasized the role of the community in supporting the events, stating that "we help with crowd control and provide security for the events. It's our way of contributing to the success of the events."

Thirdly, respondents identified several benefits of community involvement in the events. Respondent 17, a male event organizer, stated that "having the community involved in the events helps to build a sense of ownership and pride. It also ensures that the events are culturally appropriate and respectful of local customs." Respondent 16, a female banker and community member, added that "being involved in the events gives us a sense of belonging and strengthens our community ties. It also provides opportunities for us to showcase our culture and traditions to visitors."

However, some respondents (7 out of 30) reported that the level of community involvement could be improved. Respondent 7, a female event participant and nurse, stated that "not enough is being done to involve the youth in the events. They are the future of our community and we need to engage them more in the events." Respondent 24, a female business woman and community member, also expressed the need for more community involvement, stating that "we need more opportunities for community members to participate in the events, either as volunteers or as vendors."

In summary, the findings indicate that community involvement is an important aspect of the off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. The majority of the respondents reported that the local community is actively involved in the organization and participation in the events. Community involvement was seen as a way to build community pride and ownership, showcase local culture and traditions, and provide economic opportunities. However, some respondents also highlighted the need for more community involvement, particularly among the youth and in areas such as volunteering and vendor opportunities.

### **DISCUSSION**

The study aimed to explore the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting extreme sport events in Ilara-Mokin, Nigeria, and their impacts on the local community and the environment. The findings of the study revealed several significant themes related to emotional experiences, cognitive experiences, community impact, environmental impact, tourism development, and community involvement.

Emotional experiences were found as an integral part of the off-road racing and car drifting events. The respondents reported a range of emotions, including

excitement, adrenaline rush, fear, and anxiety, during the events. These findings are consistent with Brymer and Schweitzer, (2017) on extreme sports, which suggests that emotional experiences play a vital role in the attraction of participants and spectators to these events. Moreover, the respondents also reported that these emotional experiences have a significant impact on their overall satisfaction with the events. These findings highlight the importance of emotional experiences in the development and marketing of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. The findings of the study showed that cognitive experiences were also an important aspect of off-road racing and car drifting events. The respondents gained knowledge about the technical aspects of the sport, such as the mechanics of the vehicles and the strategies used by the drivers, during the events. These findings supports Brymer and Schweitzer (2017), which suggests that cognitive experiences play a significant role in the development of expertise and skill acquisition in extreme sports. In addition, the respondents also reported that these cognitive experiences have a positive impact on their overall satisfaction with the events. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating opportunities for cognitive experiences in the development of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. Community impact is a critical theme that emerged from the study. The findings revealed that off-road racing and car drifting events have both positive and negative impacts on the local community. On the positive side, these events provide opportunities for economic development through increased tourism and job creation. Moreover, these events also promote social cohesion and community engagement. On the negative side, these events can create noise pollution, traffic congestion, and safety concerns. These findings are consistent with Gursoy *et al.*, (2018) and Maennig and Zimbalist, (2012) on the impacts of sports events on the local community, which suggests that the community impact is a complex and multi-faceted issue. Therefore, it is essential to consider the consequential effects of developing extreme sporting activities such as off-road racing and car drifting events to the host communities of such events. Environmental impact is another critical theme that emerged from the study. The findings revealed that off-road racing and car drifting events have both positive and negative impacts on the environment. On the positive side, these events can promote environmental awareness and conservation efforts. On the negative side, these events can cause soil erosion, vegetation destruction, and wildlife disturbance. These findings are consistent with the findings of Gursoy *et al.*, (2018) and Cerezo-Estevé *et al.*, (2022) which suggests that the environmental impact is an important consideration in the development of sustainable sports events. Therefore, it is essential to consider the environmental impact

when developing off-road racing and car drifting events because of their potential destructive nature. Tourism development is another significant theme that emerged from the study. The findings revealed that off-road racing and car drifting events have the potential to attract tourists and promote tourism development in Ilara-Mokin. The respondents reported that the events provide a unique and exciting experience. In addition, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of local communities in the organization and sustainability of these events. As pointed out by Malek and Costa (2015), local communities can contribute to the success of tourism events through their involvement in the planning, organization, and implementation stages. In this study, it was found that the local community was involved in the organization of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin. Their involvement ranged from providing food and accommodation for participants to serving as marshals and security personnel during the events (Respondent, 29). Furthermore, the study identified the need for infrastructural development to support the growth and sustainability of off-road racing and car drifting events at the study area. Participants highlighted the lack of adequate facilities such as restrooms, and medical facilities as major challenges that need to be addressed. These findings are consistent with the literature that emphasizes the importance of infrastructure development in promoting tourism events (Officha *et al.*, 2013).

The study also found that tourism development could be enhanced through the promotion of Ilara-Mokin as a destination for off-road racing and car drifting events. Participants suggested that marketing strategies such as social media promotions, online booking platforms, and collaborations with tour operators could attract more tourists to the events. These findings align with Hua *et al.*, (2017) that highlights the significance of marketing strategies in promoting tourism events. In terms of community involvement, the study revealed that the participation of the local community in the organization and sustainability of off-road racing and car drifting events is crucial. Participants highlighted the contributions of community members in providing food, accommodation, and security during the events. This finding is found in line with Lamberti *et al.*, (2011); that emphasizes the role of community involvement in promoting sustainable tourism. The findings of this study align with the experiential marketing theory as the participants reported having a unique and memorable experience during the events, which enhanced their emotional connection with the sport. The participants' emotional experiences were not limited to the event itself but extended to the post-event period, where they shared their experiences with others and relived the event through social media and other online platforms.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the experiential dimensions of off-road racing and car drifting events in Ilara-Mokin, Nigeria. The study shows that participants experienced emotional and cognitive sensations, and the events had significant impacts on the local community and the environment. The study also identifies opportunities for infrastructural development, tourism promotion, and community involvement to support the growth and sustainability of the events. The theoretical framework of the study provides a basis for understanding the experiential dimensions of extreme sports tourism and highlights the significance of experiential marketing in promoting tourism events.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is not without limitations. Firstly, the study had a small sample size of 30 participants, which may not be representative of the entire population of off-road racing and car drifting enthusiasts in Ilara-Mokin. Secondly and finally, the study was conducted during a specific period, which may not reflect the experiences of participants at other times of the year.

### CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that emotional experiences, cognitive experiences, community impact, environmental impact, tourism development, and community involvement were the major themes that emerged from the gathered data. The emotional experiences theme revealed that the event evokes a sense of excitement and thrill for participants and spectators. The cognitive experiences theme highlighted that the event requires a high level of skill and mental focus from participants. The community impact theme revealed that the event brings economic benefits to the local community through increased tourism and business opportunities. The environmental impact theme highlighted the need for sustainability practices to mitigate the negative impact of the event on the environment. The tourism development theme revealed the potential for the event to drive tourism development in the region. Finally, the community involvement theme highlighted the importance of involving the local community in the organization and management of the event.

Overall, the findings suggest that off-road racing and car drifting extreme sport events have the potential to contribute positively to the local community and the development of the tourism industry at the study area. The study also highlights opportunities for infrastructural development, tourism promotion, and community involvement to support the growth and sustainability of the events. The findings of this study contribute to the literature on extreme sports tourism and experiential marketing and have implications for the planning and management of tourism events at the study area and other destinations with similar context.

The study recommends that event organizers should focus on promoting sustainability practices to mitigate the negative impact of the event on the environment. Additionally, involving the local community in the organization and management of the event can increase the economic benefits to the community and enhance their sense of ownership of the event. The study also recommends further research to explore the potential of off-road racing and car drifting extreme sport events to drive tourism development in other regions of Nigeria.

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