



Application of 4Ps framework for efficient management of cemetery in Nigeria

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Abstract

It is an understatement to assert that cemeteries are not only poorly managed but as well in deplorable condition in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular contrary to what is obtainable in the developed world like UK, US and Australia among others, where cemeteries are not only well managed but as well serve as veritable source of investment. The purpose of this paper in line with the above is to propose framework of 4Ps (people, private organizations, public, partnership) derived from the stakeholder's theory for efficient management of cemeteries in Nigeria. The methodology adopted in achieving the goal of this research is basically content analysis through the review of relevant literature, descriptive analysis and case studies. The findings showed that cemeteries in Nigeria are poorly managed and are in deplorable state. Global best practices of cemetery administration appraised revealed that Nigeria is left with much to be desired in this regard. Hence, in order to rescue the current deplorable situation in Nigeria, a framework based on creating a synergy among the stakeholders involved in the administration of both public and private cemeteries is proposed. This framework if tenaciously implemented is expected to rejuvenate cemetery management in Nigeria thereby revealing the residual benefits which include environmental sustainability and investment opportunity.

Keywords: Cemetery, nigeria, partnership, people, private organisation, public

Introduction

There is no gain saying that the perception of Nigerians towards cemetery or burial ground management still leaves much to be desired. This accounts for the grossly inadequate planning, development and management of cemeteries across the country (Oyediran & Oloukoi, 2024). As a matter of fact, with a note of comparison with what operates in the developed nations in the area of cemetery administration; definitely, a recommendation for a paradigm shift would be an understatement. Hence, effort is made in this study to review the condition of cemetery administration in Nigeria with a view to recommending framework of 4Ps for a remarkable improvement.

It is indeed interesting to note that cemeteries and/or burial grounds have since been transformed from mere sleeping places where dead bodies or cremated remains are buried to an entertainment or recreation centers and a source of viable investment (Grabalov & Nordh, 2022) ^[12]. Effective management of cemeteries have actually contributed immensely to the national economy through the offer of employment opportunities and financial contribution as well especially in the developed nations like United States, United Kingdom and Australia to mention a few (Neckel *et.al*, 2021) ^[27]. The Guardian.com (2010) reported that cemeteries were becoming safe investment in London due to a shortage of space in cemeteries, private operators claimed there were healthy returns to be had by buying burial plots. Likewise in the United States, NAE research center highlighted and explored the valuable economic role and impact of cemeteries on the nation, private operators (Catholic Church) and the local community. The study further mentioned that cemeteries provide surprising range of services which bring huge return to the entrepreneur, community and the nation at large. These services as highlighted include: host to most solemn occasions, historic preservation, learning tours, public events, record keeping, land management, interment option and on-site chapels.

Cemeteries were found to be owned and operated by a variety of institutions, from cities to large publicly traded corporations like Service Corporation International, North America's largest single provider of funeral, cremation and cemetery services, to religious institutions like The Catholic Cemeteries Association, Cleveland, which manages 18 cemeteries. Most were owned by private, owned mutually or by religious or fraternal groups; many were public –owned and operated by Municipalities, Counties, States and the Federal Government. Some were for profit while majority are non-profit. The cemetery revenue sources come from the sale of graves, crypts, memorials, vaults, interment rights and other products and services are continuously invested into maintaining, improving and expanding these sacred places (Lezzi & Junior & Martins, 2024).

According to IBIWorld (2017), US total cemetery industry sales in 2007 stood at \$3,349,849,000. This included sales of graves, plots and other spaces for human remains (\$727,981,000:00), resale of funeral goods (\$629,520,000:00), cemetery maintenance services (\$125,389,000:00), and pre-burial services for human remains (\$111,908,000:00). These figures were for 5,707 establishments, which had 35,000 employees, and an annual payroll of (\$1,156,243,000:00). In 2011, according to the report, the number of businesses in the cemetery industry stood at 6,233, total industry revenue was \$3 billion and industry employment was 35,951. This is indeed a huge investment meant to boost the country's economy of which Nigeria as a nation can emulate as another avenue for economic diversification.

In line with the objective of the study, the paper consists of seven sections. Section one treats general introduction to the study while section two presents a review of literature on the assessment of the condition of Nigerian cemeteries. Section three describes the importance of peoples' participation in cemetery planning and administration, whereas section four presents the underpinning theory

(shareholder theory) and its relevance to effective cemetery management. Section five deals with methodology; Section six discusses the thrust of the 4Ps model. Section seven concludes the paper, as well as presenting the limitation of the study and further research.

Assessment of the condition of nigerian cemeteries

Essentially, there seems to be a paucity of research on this subject. Nevertheless, effort is made in this section to review the few available ones relating to the analysis of the condition of the Nigerian cemeteries with a view to expatiate on the strength and weakness of cemetery administration in Nigerian.

The research conducted by Olajide and Abiodun (2013) on the socio-economic and environmental impact of indiscriminate burials on property transactions revealed that the habit of burying corpses within the house or residential compound which was found to be very rampant among Nigerians generally and Southern Nigerians in particular was borne out of cultural beliefs as well as religious influences. Also, the study revealed notable effects of sitting burial grounds indiscriminately within the residential neighbourhood on the environmental and property transactions to include: burials within the residential areas have high tendency of reducing or completely removing economic values of such property as any house with a tomb dug or located within it is regarded as a family house and such is rarely marketable; the act, according to the study was seen to be capable of retarding physical development especially in the case of urban renewal projects where such properties are to pass through compulsory acquisition, assessment and payment of compensation had been seen to be a herculean task; domestic accident where old tombs had to suddenly sink within the compound thereby causing psychological trauma; and water borne diseases were found to be prone to areas where corpses are buried within the compound. The study however suggested some recipes with a view to ameliorating the negative effects. These included the need for public enlightenment on the side effects of burying deads within the residential neighbourhood; call to the concerned authorities (Local Government Authorities as provided by the Constitution) to take up the responsibility of playing its constitutional role of not only enacting enabling laws but also seeing that the laws are effectively implemented; call on religious organisations as well as families to embark on private cemetery development; government to provide conducive environment that will ease cemetery mass development; and a call for systematic massive renewal project especially in the core urban centers (Olajide & Ijagbemi, 2024) ^[33].

In a different but related study, Olajide, Alabi and Akinlabi (2013) ^[31, 32] advocated for the need to make adequate preparation for housing the deads as the study believes that death among other things is a possibility that must happen to every human being. This study lamented on the unconcerned attitude of the public sector of the Nigerian government in addressing this environmental malaise. The study as a matter of fact found that some State governments did not have a single public cemetery except those few ones poorly managed by religious organisations (Komolafe & Akinbogun, 2024) ^[19]. The study however suggested the adoption of public, private partnership (PPP) concept in raising the expected awareness of the need to develop and maintain a befitting cemetery.

Considering the state of public cemeteries in Nigeria, Douglas (2013) ^[6] described cemetery or 'sleeping places' as sites where bodies or cremated remains are buried and that dead bodies are essential 'wastes' and that their improper disposal in the form of burial may come with health implications particularly where unsupervised burials were carried out in homes (houses), compounds and community-based cemeteries. The study walked through survey of five functional public cemeteries in Rivers State, Nigeria, appraised in their current state and their possible health implications. The findings reveal that these cemeteries all had challenges of space, access and location as the existing cemeteries were found to be old and overstretched. This, the study observed to have manifested in the fact that used graves had been 'unknowingly' reused as bones have been dug up while digging grave burials. The study also noted that as a result of poor maintenance, encroachment by land speculators was seen as a challenge as towns had grown into the cemeteries thereby digging up human bones whilst developing plot of lands close to the cemeteries (Daya, *et. al.*, 2022) ^[5].

Furthermore, the study discovered that cemeteries were so close to residential areas that the risk of underwater contamination was considered very high keeping in mind that aside from the hazard the buried corpses pose, metals and varnishes used in making the coffins/caskets could as well pollute underwater. Other constraints pointed out in the study associated with poor cemetery management in Nigeria include poor staffing, poor maintenance and sanitary state of these cemetery, poor security for the cemeteries ineffective death record like grave labeling, date and cause of death, date of burial, and bio-data such as name, age at death, gender, occupation and address which are believed to form a pillar of vital statistics. In spite of the importance of these data, the study opined, the burial records where they existed in the evaluated cemeteries were poorly kept which undermined the forensic, research, archaeological and historical benefits accruable to the public cemeteries in Nigeria. The study also noted the need to review the enabling law guiding development and administration of cemeteries as it only recognizes local authorities to develop public cemetery and in the view of the study, there should be enabling law expressly permitting the private and organisations to participate in cemetery development and management.

In the same vein, commenting on the physical state of the popular Nyanya cemetery in Abuja, the seat of Nigerian government which is expected to be used by both Christian and Muslim, Ujorha (2013) ^[43] after a survey, reported that the cemetery had become a public toilet and a rubbish dump. He viewed a poor dilapidated fence or what remains of it, run round the cemetery as being insignificant. The survey simply described the cemetery as terribly bad as pigs go to the graveyard to eat and eat anything including human. The study noted that Nyanya cemetery was so bushy that families can no longer locate the graves of their dead ones. As a result of the poor maintenance, the cemetery was found to be hidden place for robbers and kidnappers.

Assessing the state of cemetery administration in Lagos, the commercial nerve of the nation, Akinsuyi (2005) ^[1] described Atan cemetery as one of Lagos busiest and popular cemeteries. He however noted with all sincerity that the popularity was becoming undoing. The survey summarised the challenges facing the cemetery to include

overcrowding, inadequate maintenance, and activities of ritualists, among others (Anierobi, *et.al.*, 2016) ^[4].

From the foregoing, it can be summarised that the state of Nigerian cemeteries is precarious and therefore in need of urgent attention. Government is seen not to be doing enough in promoting effective management of public and private cemeteries and this indeed calls for a paradigm shift as evidence abounds of the potential contribution of good administration of cemetery to the national economy. The review also suggests a deficiency in both quality and quantity of cemetery available for both public and private within the Nigeria urban setting. Most of the few available ones were poorly laid out, poorly maintained and widely encroached. More evidence based objective studies on this subject and the provision of new (natural and environmentally friendly), better planned and maintained cemeteries is expected. The education of the public on the use of public cemeteries is strongly advocated.

Importance of people's participation in cemetery planning and administration

The importance of citizen's participation in any planning process cannot be over-emphasized. Absence of it had been attributed as one of the key reasons why many planning projects and policies end in abandonment or poor implementation. It should be a common characteristic in recognizing the importance of citizen involvement and support –a recognition that the effectiveness of a plan or project (its implementation potential) is dependent on people's participation; dependent on the mandate of the people. Hence, for a successful completion and implementation of any public project or policy, the awareness of the importance of citizen endorsement should be heightened. As a matter of fact, no plan on paper is fully effective until it becomes a citizens' plan or project which means the backbone of any policy or plan need to be the active and enthusiastic support of the citizens generally.

To demonstrate the required local commitment to proposed plans and policies, there is need to convey representatives of the local jurisdictions to discuss the whole situation –the possibility of forming an effective partnership and the possibility of creating an effective plan that will be citizens' oriented.

The mission statement of any citizens'-oriented project should be a partnership and a plan to bring together organizations engaged in community planning, so that mutual goals related to physical and comprehensiveness are achieved collaboratively.

The political vision of peoples'-oriented policy or programme should include:

- an allowance –with a unified voice- that can leverage on collective bargaining power more effectively than the efforts of individual community,
- a partnership and a plan that will ensure that local planning or project entities do not work against one another by implementing fragmented projects that hinder the effectiveness of development to themselves and their neighbours.
- a partnership and a plan that is responsive to the needs of the people living in each community

These goals and vision must be converted into a resolution to ease implementation. Indeed, the principle of people-oriented policies is based on the premise that “he who wears

the shoes knows best where they pinch”. It is indeed the people that belong and make up the larger society or community.

From the previous, it can be inferred that a tenacious application of the principles of people's participation in cemetery planning, development and administration is capable of transforming the precarious state of the development and management of cemetery in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general.

Stakeholder theory and its relevance to effective cemetery management

Background

The fundamental definition of stakeholder is “any group of individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives” (Freeman, 1984) ^[8]. The general idea of the stakeholder concept is a redefinition of the organisation. Essentially, the concept is about what the organisation should be and how it should be conceptualised. The stakeholder concept has gained extensive reputation among academics, media and manager in the area of successful completion of projects as it is acclaimed of capable of changing management practice (Friedman & Miles, 2006) ^[10].

Friedman and Miles (2006) ^[10] stated that the organisation itself should be to manage their interest, needs and viewpoints. The stakeholder management is thought to be fulfilled by the manager of a firm. The manager should manage the corporation on one hand for the interest of its stakeholders in order to secure their rights and the support in decision making and also, the authority must act as the stockholder's agent to ensure the survival of the firm to protect the long term of each group.

The concept of stakeholder in the past few years has boomed a lot and academics had written extensively on the concept. Also, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs), regulators, media, business and policy makers find the concept of immense importance. In the work of Friedman and Miles (2006) ^[10], it was submitted that a very common way of differentiating the different kinds of stakeholders is to consider groups of people who have classifiable relationship with the organisation or project. They went further by drawing a clear relationship between definitions of what stakeholders and identification of who are the stakeholders which include client, employees, contractor, suppliers and contractors/consultant and other shareholders in accordance to the organisation or project. It can be deduced that shareholders are those needed in an organisation or project to work as a team to ensure successful completion within the set space of time.

The notion of stakeholder theory was initially developed from an academic research stream being undertaken in the US in the 1960s that defined stakeholders as those groups with high sufficient effects in an organisation that would cause that organisation to stop to exist without their (the stakeholders) support (Li *et al.*, 1994; Stoney & Winstanley, 2001) ^[41]. Later, Freeman (1984) ^[8] extended this definition and described a stakeholder in an organisation as “any group or individual who can affect or is influenced by the achievement of the organisation's objectives”. The Project Management Institute (PMI) adopted this definition and

stated that “a stakeholder is an individual, group, or organization who may affect, be influenced by, or understand itself to be influenced by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project” (Hwang & Ng 2013) ^[14]. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) noted that a project has many stakeholders whose interests may be related, or in conflict (PMI, 2013). The identification and management of such stakeholders

therefore becomes a substantial function for any organisation in crisis. It is also argued that an organisation’s advantages are essentially respondents on its ability to adequately manage stakeholders (Verbeke & Tung, 2013) ^[44]. This study believes that the theory can be of assistance where the principles are religiously followed in achieving effective cemetery management. The summary of the theory is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Summary of the underpinning theory

Name	Stakeholder Theory
Year	1983
Authors	Lan Mitroff and R. E. Freeman
Thrust of the theory	...that the principle of who or what really counts for the growth of a business concern or non-profit making organization does not only rest on the owners or shareholders but other parties as well like employees, customers, suppliers, financiers, communities, governmental bodies, political groups, trade associations, trade union and even competitors. Their status being derived from their capacity to affect the firm/organization and its stakeholders.
Application of the theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholder theory succeeds in becoming famous not only in the business ethic fields, it is used as one of the frameworks in corporate social responsibility methods ▪ In the field such as law, management, human resource, stakeholder theory succeeded in challenging the usual analysis frameworks by suggesting to put stakeholders’ needs at the beginning of any action ▪ In the field of business ethics, Weiss (2014) illustrates how stakeholder analysis can be complemented with issues relating to management approaches to examine societal, organizational, and individual dilemmas. ▪ Stakeholder theory has also seen growing upkeep in Higher education in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. ▪ From the foregoing, the relevance of stakeholder theory in the successful planning, development and management of functional cemetery in Nigeria is considered enormous. A synergy among those that matter in the process like the people, private organisations and the government body will be of great advantage.
Criticism/ Limitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Charles Blattberg (as cited in Friedman & Miles (2002) ^[9] criticized stakeholder theory for assuming that the interest of the various stakeholders can be, at best, compromised or balanced against each other as he found it as a product of its emphasis on negotiation as the chief mode of dialogue for dealing with conflicts between stakeholder interest. ▪ Mansell (2013) ^[23] pointed out that by applying the political concept of a “social contract” to the corporation, stakeholder theory undermines the principles on which a market economy is based.

Stakeholders in the Cemetery Projects Management (4Ps Model)

For the purpose of this study, the review of literature has pointed out the precarious state the administration of cemeteries in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular compared with what is obtainable in developed countries where cemetery administration contributes immensely to the Gross Domestic Product in the form of provision of employment opportunity and closely related to employment opportunity by standing as investment opportunity. The relevance of the stakeholders’ theory to improve administration of cemetery is that if the various stakeholders involved in the administration of cemetery can be identified, united and synergized to function effectively, cemetery administration in Africa (Nigeria) would take its rightful position.

This study represents the stakeholders associated with cemetery administration with 4Ps. This means the People (the citizenry); Private (Corporate organizations), Public (Government), and Partnership (defining the synergy that should exist among the first three 3Ps). Essentially, each of these stakeholders has prominent roles to play in order to have a turnaround in the management and administration of both private and public cemeteries. For instance, many policies summersault as result of not carrying people (general populace) who are supposed to be the end-users along. Government or its agencies tend to plan for people and not with the people. To ensure good result, citizens are to be involved in the planning stage. In the case of cemetery

planning, due to the socio-cultural attributes associated with it, there is need for enough enlightenment, encouragement and epiphany of the public especially in the urban and semi-urban through the district, religious and political heads. The approach needs to be gradual and civil. Various laws relating to cemetery administration need to be carefully and consistently interpreted to the generality. Regular meetings should be held by the Local government authorities or any other parastatal saddled with the responsibility of cemetery administration with public representative which should include religious leaders and village heads.

The Corporate organizations should be encouraged by the government to invest in cemetery business at least in all the state and local government headquarters. This may include creating conducive environment through easy access to service land. Banks are also to have special loan package for cemetery investment. The public which represents government or its agencies has a big role to play in the aspect of enacting enabling laws which must not be draconian but be seen to be adequately implemented in line with what is obtainable in the developed world. The public sector is also expected to embark on massive development of non-profit making cemeteries. The “partnership” which seems to be abstract is the key as it represents the management and the integration of other “Ps”. A good partnership Regular Town Hall Meetings) among the parties involved (people, private sector and public) will definitely spell boom for the cemetery administration. This is further demonstrated with Figure 1 and 2 (The 4Ps Model).

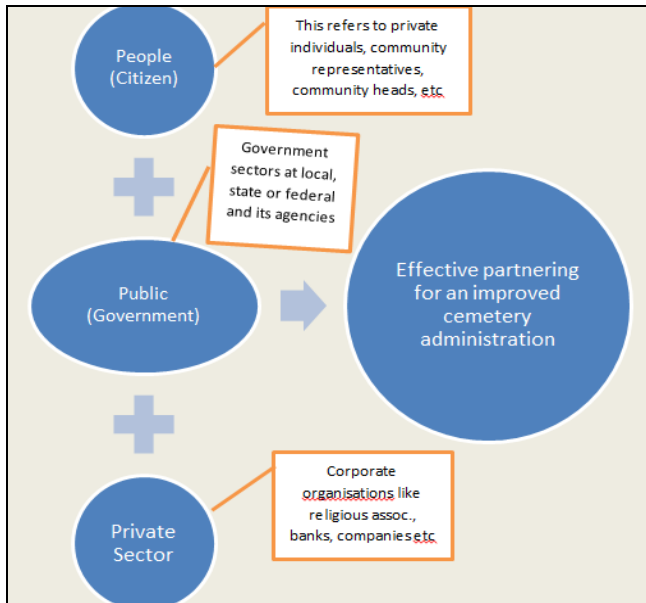


Fig 1: Effective partnering of the 4Ps for an improved cemetery administration

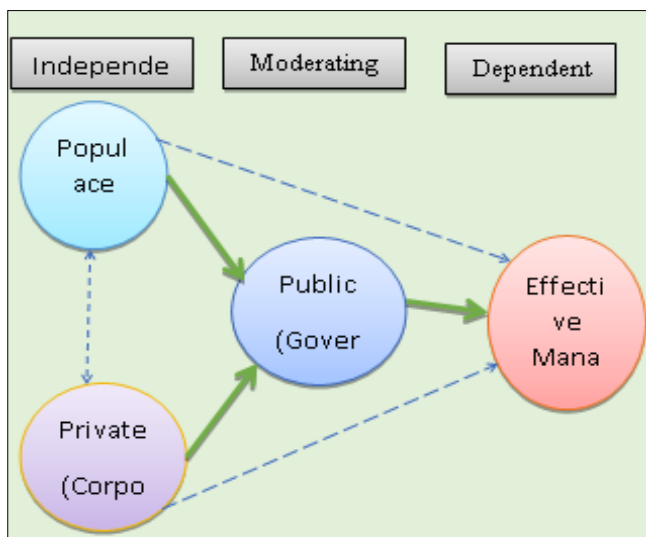


Fig 2: The 4Ps Model towards effective cemetery administration

The implication of this model is to determine the role each stakeholder is (can play) playing towards effective cemetery administration. Also, the model is positioning Private and Populace as independent variable while Public sector is to play the role of a moderating variable. The interpretation of this is to test the hypothesis that Government has an indispensable role to play in the effective and efficient management of the urban cemeteries. In other words, the model portrays the notion that both the private sector and the populace efforts to improve cemetery administration will always be influenced by the public sector. Also, the model intends to find out if there is any relationship (correlation) between the roles of the private sector and the people. However, the testing of these hypotheses is meant for future research.

Methodology

This study focuses on examining the impact of people, private, and public partnerships on effective cemetery planning, development, and administration in Nigeria. A comprehensive approach combining qualitative and

quantitative methods was adopted to achieve the research objective. The study employed purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive Sampling method was used to target professionals within the built environment with relevant expertise and experience. These professionals were drawn from four prominent higher institutions in Ekiti State—Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology (BOUESTI), Federal Polytechnic Ado (FPA), Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE), and Ekiti State University (EKSU). Professional bodies related to the built environment were selected to include architects, urban planners, and civil engineers. Snowball Sampling approach was used to identify additional participants through referrals from initial respondents. This strategy helped expand the sample to include a wide range of individuals with direct involvement in or knowledge of cemetery planning and management.

Research approach

The study relied on content analysis through a review of relevant literature and case studies. This approach provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the 4Ps framework—People, Private, Public, and Partnership. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to respondents in the targeted institutions and professional bodies. The questionnaire focused on key aspects of the 4Ps framework, including the roles of various stakeholders, challenges, and perceived benefits of collaboration in cemetery management. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, books, policy documents, and reports related to cemetery management and urban planning.

Method of data analysis

Relative Importance Index (RII) method was used to rank the importance of various factors influencing cemetery planning, development, and administration. RII allowed for a systematic evaluation of the responses, ensuring that the most critical factors were identified.

Method of Data Analysis: Relative Importance Index and descriptive analysis

$$RII = \frac{\sum W}{A \times N}$$

Where:

W is the weight assigned to each variable by respondents (ranging from 1 to 5),

A is the highest possible weight (i.e., 5),

N is the total number of respondents.

The RII values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater perceived importance.

Results and discussion

The results presented in Table 2 shows the critical role of collaborative efforts among citizens, corporate organizations, and government agencies in ensuring effective cemetery planning, development, and administration in Nigeria. Numerous studies in Nigeria identified inadequate management as a challenge in Nigerian cemeteries (Olajide *et al.*, 2013 [31, 32]; Ogungbemi *et al.*, 2020 [30]; Komolafe and Akinbogun, 2024) [19]. Respondents in this study affirmed the precarious state of cemeteries (RII = 0.810) and stressed the need for a unified

approach involving all stakeholders (RII = 0.804). Poor cemetery management have led to environmental degradation, overcrowding, and undignified burial practices, thereby undermining cultural values and societal norms. Addressing these challenges necessitates a structured and participatory management framework.

The role of corporate organizations

With the highest RII value of 0.810, the respondents emphasized the critical role of corporate organizations in cemetery management. Freeman’s (1984) [8] Stakeholder Theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding this role, arguing that corporate entities have a duty to contribute to societal welfare beyond mere profit-making. The role of corporate organizations in cemetery management as evidenced in many developed nations involves funding, innovative planning, and infrastructural development (Rae, 2021) [38]. Empirical evidence supports this assertion. According to Amoah *et al.* (2024) [3], the legislative and policy frameworks governing cemetery management in Kumasi embraced partnership with corporate organizations to transformed municipal cemeteries by addressing funding deficits, improving maintenance, and enhancing service delivery. Similarly, in India, private organizations developed eco-friendly cremation technologies and modernized burial sites to balance cultural sensitivities with technological advancements (Prajapati and Bhaduri, 2019) [37].

Government’s role in cemetery management

The role of the government in regulating, funding, and overseeing cemetery operations is underscored by an RII of 0.787. As a key stakeholder, the government is saddled with the responsibility of establishing policies that encourage private-sector participation while ensuring equitable access to burial services (Jiboye, 2011) [16]. Respondents' emphasis on the need for government involvement in the planning, development and administration of cemetery aligns with empirical studies showing that public-sector leadership is critical for the success of the 4p’s in infrastructure management (Shi *et al.*, 2016; Kang *et al.*, 2019) [17]. Governments in countries like Singapore implemented cemetery land reclamation and digital management systems to address space constraints and enhance operational efficiency (Kempton *et al.*, 2022) [18].

Synergy among people, private entities, and public agencies

Emphasizes were made on the necessity of synergy among citizens, corporate bodies, and government agencies, as evidenced by RIIs ranging from 0.803 to 0.798 in question 2, 3, 4 and 6. Collaborative frameworks improve resource allocation, efficiency, and equity in service delivery. PPP models in the UK have successfully incorporated sustainable practices like green burials and renewable energy integration into cemetery operations (Hodge and Greve, 2017) [13]. These models demonstrate the potential of

partnership-driven approaches to address challenges such as funding constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and operational inefficiencies.

Multifunctionality and economic contributions of cemeteries

The respondents of the survey revealed the potential of well-managed cemeteries to contribute positively to Nigeria's national economy (RII = 0.792). Cemeteries have evolved beyond their traditional role as burial sites to become multifaceted spaces that serve as venues for memorial services, leisure activities, and tourism, as well as archaeological research hubs (Ocón and Young, 2024) [29]. This multifunctionality highlights their significant economic, cultural, and social value. Empirical evidence from various parts of the world reinforces the economic potential of cemeteries. Cemeteries like Père Lachaise in Paris and Highgate Cemetery in London attract millions of tourists annually, drawn by their historical significance, architectural beauty, and famous interments (Paraskevopoulou, 2016) [35]. Père Lachaise alone receives more than 3.5 million visitors annually, contributing substantially to Paris's tourism revenue (Ocón & Young, 2024) [29]. Similarly, Highgate Cemetery's guided tours, which showcase Victorian funerary architecture and notable figures buried there, generate revenue that supports its maintenance and creates local employment opportunities (Lemke, 2014 [20]; Noble, 2018) [28].

The archaeological significance of cemeteries has economic implications. Cemeteries that serve as repositories of ancient history attract archaeologists, researchers, and tourists, contributing to the country's cultural tourism sector. Studies by Komolafe & Akinbogun, (2024) [19] revealed that such cemeteries generate revenue through site access fees and support ancillary industries such as transportation, lodging, and retail.

Cultural and ethical dimensions of cemetery management

The RII of 0.795 highlights the sacrosanct need for dignified burial practices and adequate housing for the dead. Gade (2015) [11] posit that cemeteries are reflections of societal values and respect for the deceased. Therefore, their management must preserve cultural heritage while accommodating modern needs. This justifies the call for a comprehensive framework that integrates stakeholders to enhance cemetery functionality, sustainability, and dignity. A study by Al-Akl, *et al.* (2018) [2] on the evolution of cemeteries in urban spaces emphasized their role as cultural landscapes with historical and social narratives. In USA, the Day of the Dead celebrations often held in cemeteries, illustrate the role of burial spaces as cultural hubs (Rumbold *et al.*, 2021 [39]; Marchi, 2022) [24]. Studies by Rumbold *et al.* (2021) [39] highlighted how well-maintained cemeteries contribute to the vibrancy of these events, attracting tourism and fostering cultural pride.

Table 2: Impact of people; private and public partnership on effective cemetery planning, development and administration in Nigeria.

S/N	Question	RII	Importance Level
1	Corporate organizations have a prominent role to play in the planning, development and administration of cemetery	0.810	High (H)
2	The precarious state of the cemetery in Nigeria requires a concerted effort of the citizens, corporate bodies and government	0.804	High (H)

3	Planning, development and administration of urban cemetery can be boosted when there is synergy among citizen, private and the public sectors	0.803	High (H)
4	Little or nothing is achievable in ensuring efficient planning, development and management of cemetery until the stakeholders concerned work in unity	0.802	High (H)
5	People (Citizens) have a prominent role to play in the planning, development and administration of cemetery	0.799	High-Medium (H-M)
6	A synergy among people, private and public will go a long way in enhancing efficient planning, development and management of cemetery in Nigeria	0.798	High-Medium (H-M)
7	The need for adequate housing of the dead is sacrosanct	0.795	High-Medium (H-M)
8	Good planning, development and administration of cemetery is capable of contributing positively to national economy	0.792	High-Medium (H-M)
9	Government at different levels have a prominent role to play in the planning, development and administration of cemetery	0.787	High-Medium (H-M)
10	Stakeholders' Theory can work in the planning development and administration of urban cemetery	0.787	High-Medium (H-M)

Source: Researchers' findings, 2024

Conclusion

So far so good, this study has dwelt on the premise that the poor state of planning, development and management of the Nigerian cemeteries (both private and public) can be improved tremendously with the application of the 4Ps model. That is, an effective integration of the people, private corporation and public partnering together. Over the years, most of the public projects have been poorly conceptualized and managed due to the fact that they were planned “for the people” and not “with the people”. This study therefore is of the view that in order to have better administration of cemetery in Nigeria, the populace (citizens) need to be carried along. Apart from the need for peoples’ involvement, the private sector which includes the banks, companies and religious bodies should be made to participate in a pleasant business environment. Finally, the various Tiers of government especially the local government should be given the statutory power to function in its capacity as the organ recognized by law to manage cemeteries in Nigeria. This paper believes that a strong synergy (partnership) among the concerned stakeholders will go a long way to improving cemetery administration. This concept was derived or supported by the stakeholder theory which is premised on the fact that any business, policy or organization designed to thrive must identify and allow all parties that matter to the vision and mission of the organization to perform with unity of purpose. This theory is considered relevant in this regard in that if all concerned stakeholders in cemetery planning, development and management –people, private corporations and the public are allowed to function as entities and collaborators, in the form of partnership, it is believed this will enhance effectiveness. Literatures abound globally that support the fact that a boost in cemetery administration is very likely to contribute to the buoyancy of the national economy apart from the assurance of environmental sustainability and healthy living guaranteed which are visibly remain untapped. More evidence based objective studies on this subject and the provision of new (natural and environmentally friendly), better planned and maintained cemeteries is expected. The education of the public on the use of public cemeteries is strongly advocated. The limitation associated with this study is that it is purely a review as it is considered that a survey research would have been more appropriate. However, this is treated as an opportunity for future research.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for the efficient management of cemeteries in Nigeria through the adoption of the 4Ps framework (People, Private, Public, Partnership):

Strengthening stakeholder synergy

To address the precarious state of cemeteries in Nigeria, a robust partnership among citizens, private entities, and government agencies must be fostered. This synergy should leverage the unique strengths of each stakeholder group, with private organizations providing funding and innovative solutions, the government ensuring regulatory oversight and policy direction, and citizens actively participating in community-driven initiatives for cemetery maintenance.

Integrating cultural and heritage conservation

Cemeteries should be managed as spaces of cultural, historical, and archaeological significance. Policies must be developed to protect and preserve these sites as national heritage assets. This could include designating certain cemeteries as heritage sites, establishing tourist-friendly features, and promoting guided tours.

Developing a comprehensive management framework

A unified and inclusive management framework that incorporates the 4Ps should be developed and implemented at the national level. This framework should include clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders to enhance coordination, transparency, and efficiency in cemetery management.

Legislative and policy support

Legislative reforms are necessary to provide the legal backing for implementing the 4Ps framework. Policies should emphasize the importance of sustainable cemetery management and create incentives for private sector participation, such as tax reliefs or public recognition for companies involved in cemetery projects.

Capacity building and awareness creation

Regular training and capacity-building programs should be organized for cemetery management staff and other stakeholders to ensure adherence to best practices. Public awareness campaigns should also be conducted to educate citizens on their roles in maintaining cemeteries and preserving their cultural and environmental significance.

Monitoring and evaluation

A system for continuous monitoring and evaluation should be established to assess the effectiveness of the implemented framework. Regular assessments will ensure that the objectives of efficient, sustainable, and dignified cemetery management are consistently met.

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