

**A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF AGE GRADE SYSTEM IN UGBOKO
NIRO**

BY

ALAREZOMO OSAGUONA

ART2000507

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

JANUARY, 2025

**A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF AGE GRADE SYSTEM IN UGBOKO
NIRO**

BY

ALAREZOMO OSAGUONA

ART2000507

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A)
DEGREE IN LINGUISTICS STUDIES.**

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

JANUARY, 2025.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

- This project is based on a study undertaken by **Alarezomo Osaguona**, with matriculation number **ART2000507**, in the Department of Linguistics Studies, Faculty of Arts.-
- All ideas are the product of my personal research and where the views of others were used, they were duly acknowledged.

Alarezomo Osaguona

ART2000507

PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **ALAREZOMO OSAGUONA** with matriculation number ART2000507 declares that this work titled **A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF AGE GRADE SYSTEM IN UGBOKO NIRO** has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test and so, does not violate any copyright regulations.

Alarezomo Osaguona

Date: _____

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was written and submitted by **Alarezomo Osaguona**, with matriculation number **ART2000507** to the Department of Linguistics Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

ALAREZOMO OSAGUONA

Student

DATE

DR. (MRS) P.O. SOLOMON ETEFIA

Project supervisor

DATE

PROF. M.S. AGBO

Head of Department

DATE

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DATE

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty and my lovely parents, Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Alarezomo for their support, for all that they have had to give up in raising me, thank you.

ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

My greatest gratitude goes to God Almighty for seeing me through this research work and for being my help throughout my undergraduate programme, it was more than I deserved.

To my amazing parents Mr and Mrs E.F Alarezomo, and other family members, words are not enough to express how grateful I am for your boundless love and support in all my endeavors, I sure will make you proud.

My appreciation equally goes to my supervisor, Dr Mrs Solomon Etefia whose expertise in research enlightened me about the rudiments of research and made the work progress smoothly. Thank you ma for carefully supervising and correcting my work.

I also acknowledged those who contributed to the completion of this work in one way or the other.

Table of Contents

COVER PAGE	i
TITLE PAGE	ii
PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDEMENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACK GROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2 UGBOKO NIRO COMMUNITY	2
1.3 METHODOLOGY	3
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	4
1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY	5
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION	8
2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW Of LITERATURE	8
2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES	10
2.3 THE CONCERN OF THE PRESENT STUDY	11
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
3.0 INTRODUCTION	13
3.1 THEORITICAL FRAME WORK	14

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS	16
4.0 INTRODUCTION	16
4.2 ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS	16
4.2THE CRITERIA FOR PROMOTING IGHELE T0 EDION -UROGIEVA TO EDION STATUS BY SENIORITY	22
4.3FUNCTIONS OF WOMEN IN THE VILLAGE SETTING	23
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	28
5.1 INTRODUCTION	28
5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	28
REFERENCES	31

ABSTRACT

This study examines the intersection of culture and language, focusing on the Ugboko Niro age grade system, as a paradigmatic Example. The research investigates how cultural practices, traditions, and values embedded in the Ugboko Niro system shape language use, Linguistic patterns and communication among it's members. The findings reveal that Ugboko Niro's cultural context significantly influences language use, with distinct linguistic features, such as specialized vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and pragmatic strategies. The study also highlights the complex interplay between language, culture, and social identity, demonstrating how Ugboko Niro's age grade system reinforces social cohesion, authority, and cultural continuity. This research contributes to the understanding of the language culture interface, shedding light on the dynamics of language use in culturally specific contexts. The study's outcomes have implications for language education, cultural preservation, and community development initiatives in Benin and similar cultural settings.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Language, a fundamental aspect of human communication, is deeply Intertwined with, shaping our perception, expressions, and interactions. The intricate relationship between language and culture has long fascinated linguists, Anthropologists and scholars of cultural studies. This study delves into the dynamic, interface between language and culture, focusing on the Edo age grade system, Ugboko Niro, as a paradigmatic Example. In many traditional societies, age grade systems have played a significant role in shaping social and cultural norms. The Ugboko Niro community is no exception, with it's age grade system serving as a vital institution that regulates social relationships, cultural practices, and community development. This study seeks to conduct a social cultural analysis of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, with a focus on it's structure, functions, and impact on community life.

1.1 BACK GROUND TO THE STUDY

Benin is a territory closely bounded by neighbouring towns, villages in urhobo land, Yoruba land, and so on .

Each towns draws it's environment.it's own history, the Benin people, An ethnic group predominantly found in Edo state Nigeria, have a Rich cultural heritage, that permeates, Every aspects of their lives, including language. Edo language colloquially called” Bini “

is a language spoken in Edo state Nigeria. it is the native language of the Edo people and was primarily the language of the Benin empire and its predecessor, Igodomigodo for thousands of years.

1.2 UGBOKO NIRO COMMUNITY

The community “Ugboko Niro” is situated in Orhiomwon local government area in Edo state Nigeria. The Village is situated along Benin Abraka Road through Upper Sokponba Road, it is about thirty kilometers away from Benin City, it is an ancient town, it has the district rest house meant for the colonial masters which is still there now , it equally has a magistrate court, which is still in use till date, The village itself was made up of five quarters ,but only three (3) has been able to stand the test of time which are: Okaidin Quarter, Oriee Quarter, Izae Quarter, Okwue Quarter, Ohen Quarter.

The Okaidin and Okwue are presently out of existence due to what transpired at that time which was Ediban (bunch of palm fruits) was tied to a bunch of a tree, each time two or more seeds whichever the case may be ,falls down , that means the number of people that will die that day, because of these occurrences the villagers concerned had to run away from the village in order to survive it, after they discovered the cause.

The Ugboko people are basically farmers, they farm on yams, plantains , cassava, coconuts, so basically they farm in cash crops like rubber, cocoa .Few of the men and women were traders of food ingredients, while some of the men were traders of rubber,

they deal in buying and selling of rubber lumps and sheets and other farm crops that are still in existence, and also buying and selling of cocoa seeds .The Ugboko people are very proficient in Binin Language, They can read and write in Binin language, They had an adult education center introduced by colonial masters then, which is still there serving as a town hall for the youths and villagers. Their linguistic profile is Binin language.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This study sociocultural Analysis of age grade system in Ugboko Niro, data was collected through a combination methods, which are:

1. in depth interviews: A competent speaker of the Edo language, who is also a member of the Ugboko Niro community, was interviewed to gather data on the age grade system of Ugboko Niro. My informant who happens to be an elderly man and also from Ugboko Niro community provided me with detailed information on the structure, types, backgrounds of the Ugboko Niro age Grade system.

2. participant observation: I, the researcher participated in community events and activities, such as age grade ceremonies and meetings, to observe and gather data on the age grade system.

A focus group discussions was conducted with a group of community members, including elder, youths and women ,to gather data on their experiences and perspectives on the age grade system.

Data Analysis

Data was Analyzed using audio recordings, data interpretations, and language translations, methods. The audio recordings of the interviews and focus group discussions, were collected and transcribed verbatim. The themes were interpreted in the context of the research questions and objectives, and in relation to existing literature on age grade system. The data were collected in the Binin Language, which is the native of the Ugboko Niro Community.

I the researcher worked with competent speaker of the Binin language to translate the data to English. The translation was done in a way that ensured the cultural nuances and context of the data were preserved.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To describe the structure and organization of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro: This includes identifying the different age grades, their roles , and responsibilities, and how they to one and another.

2. To identify the challenges and opportunities facing the age grade system in Ugboko Niro: This includes investigating the strengths and weakness of the age grade system and identifying potential areas for innovation and reform.

3. To examine the relationship between culture and language: The study aim to investigate how the Ugboko Niro age grade system influences language use among it's members.

4. To identify linguistic features unique to the Ugboko Niro age grade system: This study seeks to identify the specific linguistic features, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, that are unique to the Ugboko Niro age grade system.

5.To examine the functions and significance of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro: This includes investigating how the age grade system contributes to socialization, education, community development,and cultural heritage in Ugboko Niro.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

1. Explore the role of the age grade system in promoting social cohesion, cultural heritage, and community development in Ugboko Niro.

2. Examine the historical and cultural context of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro

3. Investigate the impact of modernization and globalization on the age grade system in Ugboko Niro

4. This study aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. Contribution to linguistic knowledge: This study will contribute to our understanding of the complex relationship between culture and language, specifically in the context of the Ugboko Niro age grade system.

2. Cultural preservation: by documenting and analyzing the language use of Ugboko Niro age grade system,. This study will help preserve the cultural heritage of the Benin people.

3. Language education: The findings of this study can inform language education policies and practices, particularly in multicultural and multilingual contexts.

4. Community development: The findings of this study can bring about community development initiatives, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and social welfare.

5. Academic contributions: This study contributes the existing body of knowledge on age grade system, social organization change.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

1. Cultural significance: The age grade system is a vital part of Ugboko Niro culture and identity, understanding it's sociocultural significance can provide valuable insights into the community's values, norms, and practices.

2. Practical Applications: The findings of this study can have practical applications in areas such as community development, education, and cultural heritage preservation.

3. Cross- cultural comparisons: This study can provide a basis for cross- cultural comparisons, with other societies that have similar age grade systems, thereby, contributing to a broader understanding of human social organization and cultural diversity.

4. Knowledge Gap: There is a significant knowledge gap on the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, particularly regarding it's structure, functions, and significance in contemporary Ugboko Niro society.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Benin age grade system, Ugboko Niro, is a traditional social organization in Benin culture. It is a system based groups that play a significant role in the social, cultural, and economic lives of the Benin people. Despite its importance, there is a dearth of research on the Ugboko Niro age grade system. This review aims to examine the existing literature on the Ugboko Niro age grade system, highlighting its significance, structure, and functions. Research has shown that the Ugboko Niro age grade system is deeply rooted in Benin culture and plays a vital role in the socialization of young people. The system is also responsible for maintaining social order and promoting community cohesion.

Research has highlighted several functions of the Ugboko Niro age grade system including socialization, education, and community service. The system also plays a significant role in conflict resolution and dispute settlement.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The age grade system is a traditional social institution found in many African cultures, including the Ugboko Niro cultures, it is a system that divides the community into different age based groups, each with its own specific roles, responsibilities, and privileges.

Research has shown that the age grade system in Ugboko Niro is divided into several age groups, each with its own specific responsibilities e.g. (Enwinrobaevbo, Iroghae, Ighele, Edion etc). The age groups typically organized into three main categories: junior, senior, and elder.

Studies have shown several functions of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, including socialization and community services e.g. (clearing of bushes leading to shrines, rivers, farms, etc.).The system also plays a significant role in conflict resolution and dispute settlement.

Studies have highlighted several theoretical perspectives have been used to explain the Ugboko Niro age grade system, including functionalism, post structuralism, functionalism views the Ugboko Niro age grade system as a functional unit that maintains social order and promotes community cohesion. Structuralism examines the underlying structures of the Ugboko Niro age grade system, including its age based groups and roles . Despite the existing research on the Ugboko Niro age grade system, there are still several gaps in the literature for example, there is a need for more research on the impact of modernization and globalization on the Ugboko Niro age grade system. Additionally, there is a need for more studies on the experiences of women and marginalized groups within the Ugboko Niro age grade system.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

1. Ekeh, P.P (1975). Social structure and social change in Ugboko Niro culture.

This study examined the social structure of Ugboko Niro culture, including the age grade system. The study found that the age grade system played a significant role in socializing young people and promoting community cohesion.

2. Ebohon, O. (1991). The age grade system in Ugboko Niro culture.

This study investigated the functions and significance of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro culture. The study found that the age grade played a crucial role in promoting social order, resolving conflicts, and providing social services.

3. Erhagbe, E.O (2016).The impact of Age grade system on youth development in Ugboko Niro culture.

This study examined the impact of the age grade system on youth development in Ugboko Niro culture. The study found that the age grade system carried out a significant role in promoting youth development, including socialization, education , and community service.

4. Omosule, S.O. (2014). The impact of Age grade system on community development.

This study examined the impact of the age grade system on community development in Ugboko Niro community. The study found that the age grade system played a crucial role in promoting community development, including infrastructure development, healthcare, and education.

5. Aigbokhaevbo, P.A (2012). Conflict resolution and dispute settlement in Age grade system. This study examined the role of the age grade system in conflict resolution and dispute settlement in Ugboko Niro culture. The study found that the age grade system carried out a significant role in promoting conflict resolution and dispute settlement, including mediation, arbitrary, Sand reconciliation.

2.3 THE CONCERN OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the age grade system in Ugboko Niro by providing a nuanced and contextualized understanding of the systems sociocultural significance. while previous studies have examined the age grade system in Ugboko Niro from various perspectives, and multidimensional analysis of the systems structure, functions, and impact on community life.

One of the significant contributions of this study is it's use of a qualitative research design, which enabled the research to gather rich and contextualized data on the age grade system in Ugboko Niro. The study's use of participant observation in- depth interviews, and focus group discussions provided a detailed and nuanced understanding of the systems sociocultural significance.

Another contribution of the study is it's examination of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro within the broader context of sociocultural change and development. The study's analysis of the systems impact on community life, Including it's role in promoting

social services, provides valuable insights into the systems significance in contemporary Ugboko Niro society.

In terms of how this research fits into the scheme of things, it contributes to the broader field of sociocultural change, and community development. The study's findings also have implications for policy makers and community leaders interested in promoting cultural heritage and community development in Ugboko Niro.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is set to talk about the stage and theories of investigations on the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, highlighting the significance of the study, and outlining the research objectives. The remainder the study will provide a detailed analysis of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, drawing on empirical data and theoretical insights from sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. In many traditional societies age grade systems have played a vital role in shaping social organization, cultural practices, and community development. These systems, which categorize individuals into different age groups with distinct roles and responsibilities, have been instrumental in promoting social cohesion, cultural heritage and community integration. Ugboko Niro, a rural community in Nigeria, is one such society where the age grade system remains a significant aspect of their social and cultural fabric. The age grade system in Ugboko Niro is a complex and multifaceted institution that has evolved over time, influenced by various social, cultural, and economic factors.

3.1 THEORITICAL FRAME WORK

This study will employ a sociocultural theoritical frame work to analyze the age grade system in Ugboko Niro. The framework will draw on theories from sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies to understand the social and cultural dynamics of the age grade system.

THEORIES

1. **Social Constructivist Theory:** This Theory posits that social reality is constructed through social interactions and shared meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).in the context of this study, social constructivist Theory will be used to analyze how the age grade system is constructed and maintained through social interactions and shared meanings among members of Ugboko Niro.

2. **Symbolic Interactionist Theory:** This Theory emphasizes the role of symbols and language in shaping social interactions and relationships (Blumer 1969).in this study, symbolic interactionist theory will be used to examine how symbols, rituals, and language are used to construct and maintain the age grade system in Ugboko Niro.

3. **Cultural Capital Theory:** This Theory developed by Pierre Bourdier (1986), posits that cultural capital (e.g knowledge, skills, and cultural practices). Is a key factor in shaping social relationships and power dynamics. In this study, cultural capital Theory will be used

to analyze how the age grade system in Ugboko Niro reflects and reinforces social relationships and power dynamics.

4. **Social Identity Theory:** This Theory, developed by Henry Tajfel and John Turner (1979), posits that individuals derive a sense of identity and belonging from their membership in social groups in this study, social identity theory will be used to examine how the age grade system in Ugboko Niro shapes social identity and belonging among its members. This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, highlighting its social and cultural dynamics, and social identity among its members.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents analysis and discussion of findings, drawing on the theoretical frame work outlined earlier. The analysis will examine the ways in which the age grade system in Ugboko Niro is constructed and maintained, the role of symbols, rituals, and language in shaping the system, and the ways in which the system reflects and reinforces social relationships and dynamics. The discussion will also explore the implications of the findings for our understanding of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, and the ways in which the system shapes social identity and belonging among it's members. The discussion will examine the challenges and opportunities facing the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, and provide recommendations for preserving and promoting this vital institution

4.2 ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

There are (4) Age Groups or Grades in “Ugboko Niro” community which consists of the following:

1. Ighele

Enwinrobaevbo

3. Ighele

4. Edion

The Ighele is being recruited from Iroghae, then they are being elevated to Iroghae to Ighele, the Ighele is of 3 groups, Urogienne, Urogieha, Urogieva, they are upgraded from Urogieha, then Urogieva, then Urogienne, which consists of youth between the Ages of 20 to 30 years, the Ighele is superior to the 3 groups. The Urogienne is the militant groups they are very many .

Urogieha: The Urogieha are not more than 7 in number, this consists of youth between the Ages of 27 to 37. The Urogieha are elevated or recruited from the Urogienne, their duty are to be carrying out serious assignment in the community like the cases of witchcraft for example, they take the alleged witches or wizards to an oracle to find out if the accusations are true or false, if they happen to be true ,that is if the alleged witch or wizard is guilty of the offence they administer an oath to the person and if the need of banishment arises the alleged would definitely be banished, and then they report back their findings to their seniors the Edions. And also anyone who happens to be accused of poisoning the husbands or wives or anyone at all, that person also would be made to swear an oath by the Urogienne groups, if there is a suicide case in the community, that person would not be buried, the corpse of the deceased would be taken to the evil forests to be thrown away, and this is been done by the Urogieha groups.

Urogieva: This consists of youth between the Ages of 37 to 47,they are many in numbers up to 20 to 30 person's depending on the village settings, this sets of people are upgraded

from Urogienne, they are the senior Ighele, they run they run their administration with the okaighele who is choosen from the Urogienne, this senior people help the okaighele who is very junior to them to run their tenure, The okaighele remain in the urogienne until his age groups are being elevated to the urogieva , before leaving the leadership of the okaighele. The urogieva protects the edions, the edion give them assignment that is what should be done in the village, this urogieva shares the workload to various groups for example from the urogieva, and then to the urogieha, and finally to the urogiene.in time of building mud houses, the urogieva shares themselves into various numbers to build mud houses while the Urogienne suppliers the muds used for the building, the urogieva upgrades people to the status of the Edion, of which the odionwere crowns the person to the status of the Edion and gives that person rules and regulations that governs the Edion status ,if there is a major dispute in the community they report the matter to the Edion who will now find a way to resolve them.

The villagers who happens to be dealers of rubber and traders of foods stuffs ,they deal in buying and selling of rubber lumps and sheets and other farm crops that are still in existence, and also buying and selling of cocoa seeds. The villagers worship a deity called ohunwonde when worshipping it ,the villagers contribute tubers of yams used during the celebration of igue festival, everyone contributes and participate to this celebration, then during igue festival the chief priest first of all observe the celebration at the shrine before any other person.

Then after the igue festival at night, the next morning Iroghae and Urogiene comes together to use coconut branch to swear or lay curses around the village at anyone spoiling or defiling the village and then later end up at the outskirts of the village to throw away or dispose items used in laying curses ,then when coming back they pluck leaves known as” Ewere” in dancing back to their village and then the villagers in turn celebrate and support them by gifting them money and other items. After which they return to their various homes to freshing up and rest for a while after which they put on their best clothes and attire and dance from the house of the “odionwere”.

The story behind Ewere Leaf

Ewere means peace and tranquility. There was a chief who had two daughters named Ewere and Ubi. They were born of the same parents, considering what was happening in the palace between Chief Ogiehan and the Oba of Benin Kingdom, Chief Ogiehan had issues with the Oba of Benin, he decided to give out one of his daughters hand in marriage, by the name Ubi in order to appease the Oba of Benin Kingdom. Ubi would help to gear their relationship, indeed when Ubi got to the palace as Oba’s wife, she started misbehaving, doing all things to antagonize the palace, not cooperating with the palace, not even with the Oba, her husband, even when the Oba called her for some romantic session, she would snub the Oba, the Oba of Benin became fed up and had to return her. They called on her father, Chief Ogiehan to receive the return of his daughter from the Benin Kingdom. Chief Ogiehan felt Ubi can not be an impediment between himself and the Benin Kingdom and indeed the Oba of Benin Kingdom had now asked if the Benin’s would accept

Ewere as an exchange for Ubi, which the Benin's gladly accepted. Within the period, Ubi was in the palace, there was always problems, sadness in the palace and as Ewere came to the palace, there became the opposite which is love, progress, tranquility in the palace, hence the Benin's traditional activities by the ending of the year commemorate the activities of Ewere to herald in the progress, happiness, of the state Edo Kingdom of Ewere, hence every festive period in Benin or Edo kingdom involving the Igue festival after the rituals of the Igue festival, at dawn, Ubi would be taken far away from the domain to be an outcast, it is assumed that Ubi is a misfortune because she never brought in happiness, love, joy, progress, prosperity and brought in Ewere that brings in happiness, joy, prospect, and all positivity of life that comes in with Ewere and all the negativities that goes in with Ubi.

Then second elder, and then third elder and finally the Fourth elder before returning to the shrine, and even the young girls of the village, then by 4 pm in the evening the chief priest does is own igue celebration and then by 8pm they do some sacrifice for the 4 elders who happens to be next to the odionwere, before sharing themselves into various quarters that needs to be led in observing their own sacrifice, by 8am the next morning they gather to eat and drink.

And then 5 to 7 days later they dance ekpo dance to signify the end of the festive celebration then afterwards they start their usual life styles by returning to farms, streams and then markets places.

The first group, Enwinrobaevbo are the little children which Ages Falls within the age brackets of 0-12 years .

The second Group Iroghae which has the leader who is called Okairoghae, These sets of Groups Are The people sent on minor works like, market square, village square, and general maintenance of the village and even clearing of the paths Leading to the farm, streams, and also around various shrines. When mud houses where in vogue the Iroghae are the ones being used in those days, They Are also meant to fetch water for the building of mud houses as well supporting the expert. They supply almost all the materials being used for building. They are also in charge of pounding yams used to entertain the people of the community, in general whether, in time of ceremony or festival activities they are at the beck and call of the Okairoghae for their assignment. The role of the Iroghae group is maintenance of the community, and Anyone who defaults would be penalized by bringing or being made to submit a fine of a fowl (chicken) to the Iroghae the body of Iroghae to be slaughtered. This singular act is to serve as a deterrent to other defaulters, failure to submit their chicken, They will be submitted mandatory killing of any seen or found chicken in his care.

Ighele: the duty of the these sets of Groups is to fight anyone that wages war against the community, they are warriors of the community, and anyone that defaults would be penalized by executing a chicken in the person's care.

4.2 THE CRITERIA FOR PROMOTING IGHELE TO EDION -UROGIEVA TO EDION STATUS BY SENIORITY

1. Anyone that has excel from his group for example a great wrestler can be promoted or elevated to Edion status.
2. Anyone that is able to give a befitting burial to his father has won the heart of the elders and as such will be elevated to the Edion status.
3. The woman that is the most senior in the village will be elevated by Odionwere to be the head of the women.
4. Any woman that gives birth and decides to take the child to the market place for celebration afterwards she will continue to go to the farm and do all other things she has been doing before child birth (This involves the killing o a large animal by the youth either deer, pig or an antelope,)

Aranmwe Okhuan, anyone youth or person that kills it once or twice in a year could be elevated to Edion status. After Igue festival 5 - 7 days after, depends on the Masquerade priest (Ohen Ekpo) they will dance throughout the community after which it will mark the end of the festival. They can now start living their normal life.

When a prominent person dies Ekpo could still be brought to dance and commemorate the deceased. One of the major function of the women in the village, when there is rampant stealing and rampant death or negative traits of disaster happening in the

community, the women led by the most senior woman in the community, all of them will go naked at night to place a curse on whosoever may be responsible for such acts in the community.

4.3 FUNCTIONS OF WOMEN IN THE VILLAGE SETTING

The women organize themselves into one formidable group to be headed by the most senior, whom has been acknowledge by the Odionwere. However, these women help to broker peace (make peace within the community with their activities in the village and amongst the villagers. For instance when there are tribulations such as, Incessant death, rampant stealing in the village and amongst the villagers. The woman leader will organize and instruct them to be naked all together at midnight by the market square and place a curse on whosoever is perpetuating evil in the community and whosoever may be responsible for such an abominable act. The activities of some of the youth, in respect cooperative activities some like mind youth ranging from 5 – 10 even 12 in numbers come together to make farm cooperatively and individually that is to say these 12 persons would have their plot of lands allocated to them. All the members of the cooperative would visit their member's plot of land to do their daily bits on that plot of land in rotational level, i.e all of them visiting an individual plot at a time while the host provide the food to feed for that day and any member that defaults would have to pay a fine that would be accepted by all the members, for renerging for their promise or plans. In other words anybody that defaults would be punished by implication asking the defaulters to pay a fine will serve as

the punishment for not abiding by the rules of the cooperative, enables the individual youth members to have a large expanse of farm land, be it plantain farm, cassava farm, or yam farm e.t.c depending on the rules and regulations of the body these youth that have so cooperated will be economically more viable compared to their mates that decides to do it alone, they can equally, during harvest season they can equally adapt the same method of cooperation going from one farm to another as a body or in unison.

The age grade system in Ugboko Niro, a community in Edo state Nigeria, is a social structure that organizes individuals into groups based on their age . This system has significant implications for power dynamics within the community.

1. Power dynamics

1. Authority and Respect: Older age grade hold more authority and are accorded greater respect . This is reflected in their decision making roles and positions of leadership.

2. Social Hierarchy: The age grade system creates a social hierarchy with older age grades at the top and younger ones at the bottom.This hierarchy influences social interactions, with younger individuals showing deference to their elders.

3. Access to Resources: Older age grade often have greater access to resources, such as land, wealth, and knowledge. This can lead to economic and social disparities between age groups.

4. Decision making: Older age grades typically dominate decision making upprocesses, with younger individuals having limited input. This can result n intergenerational conflicts and feelings of disenfranchisement among younger community members.

5. Cultural preservation: Older age grades are often responsible for preserving and passing down cultural traditions, values and knowledge to younger generations.This reinforces their authority and influence within the community.

2. Social structure

1. Age Grade: The community is divided into different age grades,each spanning a specific age range (e. g 0-12, 20-30, 27-37,37-47).

2. Age sets : Age sets often perform specific roles and responsibilities within the community.

3. Hierarchial organization: The age grade system is hierarchical with older age grades having more authority and respect.

4. Social roles: membership in an age grade determines an individual's social roles and responsibilities, such as leadership positions, economic activities or cultural practices.

Norms

1. Respect for Elders : Older age grades are accorded great respect and deference, reflecting the community' values of traditions and authority.
2. Age Based Roles: membership in an age grades determines an individual's social roles and responsibilities, such as leadership positions and cultural practices.
3. Community service: Age Often perform community services services such as cleaning public spaces , infrastructure,or providing support for vulnerable members.
4. Cultural preservation: Older age grades are preservation for preserving and passing down cultural traditions, values, and knowledge to younger generations.

Hierarchy

1. Senior Age Grade (Edion): Individuals aged 40-47 and above who have acquired significant experience and wisdom.They assist the odionwere in decision making and play vital roles in community leadership.
 2. Middle Age Grade (Ighele): Individuals aged 27- 37, who are established in their careers and have acquired some level of authority.They participate in decision making and take on responsibilities such as community services.
- Youth Age Grade (Iroghae): Individuals aged 20-30 ,who are transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.They are expected to learn from their elders, participate in community services, and begin to take on leadership roles.

4. Children Age Grade (Enwinrobaevbo): Infants aged 0-12, who are in the process of socialization and learning. They participate in age grade activities, learn from their elders, and begin to develop their skills and knowledge.

Symbols and meanings

1. Age Grade colours : Different age grades have distinct colours, which symbolizes their status, role and responsibilities within the community.

2. Ceremonial regalia: Ceremonial regalia, such as traditional clothing, adornment, or masks, are worn during age grade ceremonies symbolizing the community, cultural identity, values, and traditions.

3. Symbolic objects: Symbolic objects, such as Ewere leaf, calabash, animals are used during age grade rituals and ceremonies, representing the community's history, mythology, and cultural values

4. Age Grade Emblems: Each age grade has its own emblem, such as a staff, or bead, which represents their authority, wisdom, and cultural heritage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This summary presents a summary of the findings and conclusions of the sociocultural analysis of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro.

The study explored the significance of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro, examining its role in shaping social relationships, cultural practices, and community development. The findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro and its implications for social and cultural development.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro.

In conclusion, The sociocultural analysis of the age grade system in Ugboko Niro has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of this complex institution. The study's findings and conclusions have implications for our understanding of social and cultural organization in Ugboko Niro and beyond.

The study revealed that the age grade system in Ugboko Niro is a complex one that plays a crucial role in shaping the social and cultural fabric of community. The system is based

on a hierarchical structure, with different age grades having distinct roles and responsibilities. The study also found that the age grade system is closely tied to the community's cultural practices, traditions, and values.

Based on the findings the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The age grade system in Ugboko Niro is a significant aspect of the community's social and cultural organization.
2. The system plays a vital role in promoting social cohesion, cultural heritage, and community development.
3. The age grade system is closely tied to the community's cultural practices, traditions, and values.
4. The system is dynamic and has undergone changes over time, influenced by various social, cultural, and economic factors.

The study confirmed that the age grade system in Ugboko Niro is an effective mechanism for promoting social cohesion and cultural heritage.

The findings of the study are consistent with the above confirmation that the age grade system plays a vital role in cultural heritage and community development.

The study had some limitations, including the reliance on qualitative data collection methods and the focus on a single case study. Future studies should seek to address these limitations by using mixed methods approaches and conducting comparative studies.

REFERENCES

- Adewale, O. (2021). Age Grade system and community security: A case study of Uzairue. *Journal of community security studies* 14 (2) 78-94.
- Aigbokhaevbo, P.A (2012). Conflict resolution and dispute settlement in Age grade system. *Journal of conflict resolution*, (16), 1-15.
- Anderson, R. (2019), Empowering vulnerable communities: Economic initiatives by age grade systems. *International journal of social entrepreneurship and innovation*, 18 (5), 478-495.
- Davis, M.J. (2019). Training strategies for Age-Grade members. *Journal of conflict Resolution skills*, 18 (4).91.
- Ebohon, I.J. (2018). Embracing Innovation: Modernizing Age-Grade institutions in Uzairue Clan. *African journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 10 (7), 89-95.
- Ebohon, O. (1991). The age grade system in Ugboko Niro culture: A study of it's functions and significance. *Journal of African studies* 12(1), 1-18.
- Eghafona, K. and Abumere, S. (2019) .Traditional institutions and conflict management in Nigeria: A study of Age-Grades in Edo State. *Journal of Asian and African studies*, 54 (5). 712-726.

- Ekeh, P.P (1975). Social structure and social change in Ugboko Niro culture. *Journal of social structure* 1(1), 1-20.
- Ekhaguere, G. (2019). Age-Grades and the traditional system of governance in Edo state, Nigeria. *International journal of development and sustainability*, 8(5), 311-324.
- Epstein,J. (1998), *Youth Culture identity in a postmodern word*. Oxford University Press.
- Erhagbe, E. (2012). The Dynamics of inter Group relations in pre-colonial Nigeria: Nupe Activities in Etsako Land C. 1860-1897. *Canadian social science*, 8 (2), 209.
- Erhagbe, E.O. (2016).The impact of Age grade system on youth development in Ugboko Niro culture. *Journal of youth development*, 11(1), 1-12.
- Garcia, M. (2016). Conflict resolution and Age-Grade systems: A comparative study in Uzairue. *Journal of conflict management*, 28 (3), 245-260.
- Green. A.G. (2018). Modernization and Adaptation in Age-Grade Systems. *Security innovations today*. 12 (3).56.
- Odufuwe, E. (2017). Age-Grade societies and their influence on political participation among the Bini people of Nigeria. *International journal of political science and development* 5 (7). 226-237.
- Ofemili, J. (2015). The Enduring significance of age-grade systems in enhancing community safety. *Security and development journal*, 18 (2), 152-160.

Onovo, A. (2012). The socio- cultural significance of Age-Grade association among the Esan people of Edo State, Nigeria, *International Journal of research in Arts and Social Sciences*, 9(2), 189-200.

Smith, A. (2004) *Native American Age-Grade Systems*. Routledge.