

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL EFFECTS OF MODERNIZATION ON TRADITIONAL
FESTIVALS IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE**

BY

Precious Chinenye OKWUOLISA

SSC2105964

**A RESEARCH WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND
ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

OCTOBER, 2025.

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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR OF
SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY.**

OCTOBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was done by me with the matriculation number **SSC2105964** under the supervision of **DR OMORUYI LUCKY OSAGIE** and to also certify that the work done is adequate for partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.SC) degree in the University of Benin.

DR. O.L OMORUYI
PROJECT SUPERVISOR

DATE

ASSOC. PROF. O.G IGBINOMWANHIA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the loving memory of my late Father, whose guidance, wisdom, and unwavering belief in education remain the greatest source of motivation in my life. I hope this achievement honors his legacy.

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I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the Almighty God, for the gift of life, grace, sustenance, and the strength to successfully complete this academic journey. Every step taken was only possible through Divine favor.

I am immensely grateful to my Project Supervisor, Dr Lucky Osagie Omoruyi for his professional guidance, constructive critiques, and patience throughout the duration of this research.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the socio-cultural factors influencing traditional festivals in Benin City, with particular emphasis on the Igue Festival. The Igue Festival, one of the most significant cultural heritages of the Benin people, embodies the spiritual, social, and cultural identity of the community. However, modernization, urbanization, and changing value systems have introduced new dynamics that influence the perception, practice, and sustainability of the festival. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 100 respondents through structured questionnaires. The study focused on four key objectives: to identify the socio-cultural importance of the Igue Festival; to assess how modernization and social change affect its practice; to examine the perception of different social groups towards the festival; and to explore strategies for preserving its relevance in contemporary society. Findings revealed that while the Igue Festival continues to play a vital role in cultural identity, unity, and spiritual renewal, factors such as Western influence, religious conversion, generational differences, and economic challenges have affected its observance. The study concludes that deliberate efforts are needed to balance cultural preservation with modern realities. It recommends sensitization programs, integration of cultural education into school curricula, and stronger community involvement to ensure the sustainability of the Igue Festival for future generations.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

Traditional festivals are deeply rooted in the cultural heritage and historical consciousness of many African societies. In Benin City, Nigeria, traditional festivals such as the Igue, Ugie, and Emobo festivals are not only religious and social ceremonies but also serve as vital instruments for community identity, cohesion, and the transmission of values from one generation to the next (Osaghae, 2015). These festivals are closely tied to the cultural and spiritual beliefs of the Benin people, often symbolizing historical events, honoring deities and ancestors, or marking important agricultural cycles (Ebohon, 2017). Traditional festivals are recurring communal events, typically rooted in long-established cultural, religious, or historical practices, celebrated with rituals, music, dance, food, and ceremonies. According to Falassi (1987), festivals are “a period of time set aside for feasting and celebration,” which often involve symbolic expressions of identity and cosmology. These festivals are usually passed down through generations and represent a community’s unique worldview and values.

However, the advent of modernization has introduced significant changes to the socio-cultural fabric of Nigerian society, especially in urban centers like Benin City. Modernization, characterized by increased urbanization, the spread of Western education, technological advancement, and changing lifestyles, has begun to alter the ways in which traditional festivals are perceived and celebrated (Aghalino & Ebirim, 2018). With more people adopting modern values and behaviors, traditional practices are often seen as outdated or less relevant, particularly among younger generations. Modernization and globalization are two of the most transformative processes shaping the contemporary world. While modernization refers to the transition from traditional to modern societies through industrialization, urbanization, and technological

development, globalization encompasses the growing interconnectedness of nations through economic, cultural, political, and technological exchange (Giddens, 1991). These concepts are deeply intertwined, influencing each other in ways that have profound implications for national identity, cultural values, and socioeconomic development. Globalization is the process through which national and regional economies, societies, and cultures become integrated through cross-border movement of goods, services, capital, people, information, and ideas (Held et al., 1999). It is multidimensional—encompassing economic globalization (e.g., global trade and multinational corporations), cultural globalization (e.g., spread of media, language, and fashion), political globalization (e.g., international institutions like the UN), and technological globalization (e.g., the internet and mobile communication).

Globalization accelerates change, often acting as a catalyst for modernization. The expansion of global markets and communication networks encourages innovation and modernization in developing societies by facilitating access to knowledge, investment, and new technologies (Castells, 2010). The influence of globalization and the media has also played a critical role in shaping contemporary attitudes toward cultural practices. Festivals that once served as community-wide events are now sometimes reduced to mere spectacles for tourism or entertainment, losing much of their original spiritual and communal essence (Omoriege, 2019). Furthermore, the influx of different religious ideologies, particularly Christianity and Islam, has led to a decline in the observance of some traditional rites due to conflicting beliefs and moral values (Igbafe, 2016).

Despite these challenges, traditional festivals continue to persist, albeit in modified forms. There is a growing concern among cultural custodians and scholars about the long-term sustainability of these festivals in the face of rapid modernization. It is therefore crucial to examine the extent

to which modernization has influenced the social and cultural dynamics of traditional festivals in Benin City. Understanding these effects can provide insights into how cultural heritage can be preserved while accommodating inevitable social changes.

This study seeks to explore the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals in Benin City by examining changes in participation, perception, practices, and overall significance of these events in contemporary society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Traditional festivals have long been central to the cultural identity and social cohesion of communities in Africa, serving as important vehicles for the transmission of values, beliefs, and historical narratives. In Benin City, Nigeria, a region with a rich cultural heritage and a well-documented legacy of traditional institutions—festivals such as the Igue, Ugie, and Emobo have historically played pivotal roles in reinforcing communal bonds, celebrating ancestry, and legitimizing traditional authority (Egharevba, 1968; Omoera, 2014). These festivals are not merely ceremonial; they are deeply embedded in the worldview and cosmology of the Edo people, symbolizing their connection to the past and their collective identity.

However, in recent decades, the wave of modernization—characterized by technological advancement, urbanization, globalization, and shifts in socio-economic structures—has increasingly altered the socio-cultural landscape of Benin City. This transformation has led to significant changes in the ways traditional festivals are perceived, celebrated, and preserved. Younger generations, often influenced by Western lifestyles and values disseminated through global media, now exhibit declining interest in cultural rituals and festivals, which are often viewed as outdated or incompatible with modern life (Okonkwo, 2016; Akinwumi, 2008).

Modernization has also introduced new forms of entertainment and social interaction that compete with traditional cultural practices for attention and relevance. Events such as music concerts, fashion shows, and social media-driven trends have become more dominant in urban social life, often marginalizing indigenous festivals that require significant communal effort, time, and resources (Adeyemi & Adedeji, 2017). As a result, some traditional festivals are being simplified, shortened, or even discontinued altogether, raising concerns about cultural erosion and loss of identity.

Furthermore, the influence of religion—especially Christianity and Islam—has contributed to the declining status of traditional festivals. Some religious groups consider these festivals to be pagan or incompatible with their doctrines, thereby discouraging participation among adherents (Onwuejeogwu, 1981; Nwagwu, 2012). This religious pressure, compounded by increasing secularization and scientific rationalism, has led to a cultural shift that challenges the legitimacy and continuity of these long-standing traditions.

Additionally, governance and policy frameworks in Nigeria often fail to adequately support or protect cultural heritage. Unlike national cultural assets that receive government funding and institutional support, many community-led festivals in Benin are self-funded and operate under strained resources, making them more vulnerable to the pressures of modernization (Adejumo, 2011). This lack of institutional backing has contributed to the commercialization of some festivals, where cultural content is diluted to attract tourists or appease modern tastes—further weakening their original socio-cultural essence.

Despite these transformations, traditional festivals in Benin City remain a crucial part of the community's identity, and their decline poses serious implications for intergenerational knowledge transmission, social cohesion, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

The problem, therefore, lies in understanding how modernization is reshaping these cultural practices—whether it is leading to their evolution, distortion, or extinction—and what this means for the future of cultural identity in Benin City.

Thus, this study seeks to examine the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals in Benin City, Nigeria, with a view to identifying the specific elements being altered, the agents driving these changes, and the broader implications for cultural sustainability.

1.3 Research Questions

How does modernization influence the practice, significance, and continuity of traditional festivals like the Igue Festival in Benin City?

How do traditional festivals in Benin City balance cultural preservation with the pressures of modernization and globalization?

What is the role of traditional festivals in maintaining socio-cultural ties, unity, and identity among the Edo people in the face of modernization?

How do traditional festivals in Benin City adapt or evolve in response to modernization while retaining their cultural essence and significance?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate the Socio-Cultural Effect of Modernization on Traditional Festivals in Benin City, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

Investigate how modernization influences the practice, significance, and continuity of traditional festivals like the Igue Festival in Benin City.

Assess how traditional festivals in Benin City balance cultural preservation with the pressures of modernization and globalization.

Analyze the role of traditional festivals in maintaining socio-cultural ties, unity, and identity among the Edo people in the face of modernization.

Explore how traditional festivals in Benin City adapt or evolve in response to modernization while retaining their cultural essence and significance.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the interplay between modernization and the preservation of cultural heritage through traditional festivals in Benin City, Nigeria. By examining how modernization influences the practice, significance, and continuity of traditional festivals like the Igue Festival, the study can shed light on the dynamics of cultural preservation in the face of societal changes. This understanding is crucial for communities like those in Benin City who seek to maintain their cultural traditions while adapting to the demands and influences of a modernizing world.

Furthermore, the study's findings can inform policymakers, cultural organizations, and community leaders on effective strategies to support the preservation of cultural heritage through festivals. In a context where globalization and modernization are increasingly influencing local cultures, insights from this study can guide efforts to balance the adoption of modern practices with the preservation of traditional cultural essence. This balance is essential for maintaining the unique cultural identity of the Edo people in Benin City while ensuring that their cultural practices remain relevant and vibrant in contemporary society.

Additionally, this study contributes to the broader field of cultural studies by adding to the body of knowledge on the impact of modernization on traditional cultural practices in urban Nigerian contexts. By focusing on Benin City, the research provides a specific case study that can be compared with other contexts, thereby enriching the understanding of socio-cultural changes in diverse settings. The relevance of the study extends to the community level as well, where findings can be used to foster a deeper appreciation of cultural heritage among the Edo people and to support community efforts in preserving their traditions.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses the examination of the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals in Benin City, Nigeria. Specifically, the study focuses on understanding how modernization influences the practice, significance, and continuity of these festivals within the cultural context of the Edo people. This includes analyzing the interplay between traditional cultural practices and the adoption of modern elements in festivals like the Igue Festival, which is a significant cultural event in Benin City.

The study's scope involves exploring the perceptions and experiences of the community regarding the impact of modernization on their traditional festivals. It considers aspects such as changes in festival celebrations, the incorporation of modern elements, the role of festivals in maintaining socio-cultural ties and identity, and the challenges of balancing cultural preservation with modernization. By focusing on Benin City, the study provides a localized understanding of these dynamics within the Edo cultural context.

Geographically, the scope is limited to Benin City, Nigeria, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals in this specific urban setting. The study's findings are thus contextualized within the cultural, social, and economic landscape of Benin City, making them relevant to understanding similar dynamics in other culturally rich urban areas facing modernization.

In terms of content, the scope includes examining the cultural essence of traditional festivals, the impact of globalization alongside modernization, and strategies for cultural preservation. By delimiting the scope to these aspects within Benin City, the study aims to provide focused insights into the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals.

1.7 Definition of key Terms

Modernization: The process of adopting modern methods, technologies, and practices that can influence traditional ways of life and cultural expressions like festivals.

Traditions: Customs, practices, and values passed down through generations, often integral to cultural identity and festivals.

Festival: A cultural event celebrating traditions, heritage, and community bonds, often reflecting the cultural essence of a people.

Globalisation: The increasing interconnectedness of cultures and economies worldwide, potentially influencing local traditions and cultural preservation.

Cultural Essence: The core values, practices, and expressions that define a culture's identity, often manifested in traditions and festivals.

Cultural Preservation: Efforts to maintain and protect cultural heritage, traditions, and practices in the face of external influences like modernization and globalization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter conducts a thorough examination of existing research relevant to the current study. The literature review aims to integrate and synthesize existing knowledge with the study's findings, focusing on key themes and subthemes. The discussion will:

- Explore relevant concepts, theories, and models
- Identify gaps and limitations in current research
- Contextualize the study within the broader research landscape
- Develop a framework for understanding the research problem
- Inform research methodology and data analysis

The review will be structured around the research objectives, addressing specific aspects of the investigation. Relevant subthemes will be explored, and relationships between them will be clarified. By combining existing research with the current study, this chapter establishes a comprehensive foundation for understanding the research findings and implications.

2.1 Concept of Modernization and Globalization

Modernization and globalization are two of the most transformative processes shaping the contemporary world. While modernization refers to the transition from traditional to modern societies through industrialization, urbanization, and technological development, globalization encompasses the growing interconnectedness of nations through economic, cultural, political, and technological exchange (Giddens, 1991). These concepts are deeply intertwined, influencing

each other in ways that have profound implications for national identity, cultural values, and socioeconomic development.

Modernization theory emerged prominently in the mid-20th century, largely influenced by Western scholars who viewed it as a linear process of social evolution. It describes how societies transition from traditional, agrarian structures to more complex, industrial, and technologically advanced forms (Rostow, 1960). According to this perspective, development is achieved by emulating the industrialized West, embracing scientific rationality, democratic governance, and capitalist economic systems.

Critics, however, argue that modernization theory is ethnocentric, as it tends to assume that Western societies are the ideal models for development (Escobar, 1995). Despite its shortcomings, modernization remains a critical lens through which we understand technological innovation, urban expansion, and changing social values in developing nations.

Globalization is the process through which national and regional economies, societies, and cultures become integrated through cross-border movement of goods, services, capital, people, information, and ideas (Held et al., 1999). It is multidimensional—encompassing economic globalization (e.g., global trade and multinational corporations), cultural globalization (e.g., spread of media, language, and fashion), political globalization (e.g., international institutions like the UN), and technological globalization (e.g., the internet and mobile communication).

Globalization accelerates change, often acting as a catalyst for modernization. The expansion of global markets and communication networks encourages innovation and modernization in developing societies by facilitating access to knowledge, investment, and new technologies (Castells, 2010).

2.1.1 Impact of Modernization and Globalization

Economic Impact

Economically, globalization has opened up markets, increased international trade, and spurred competition and innovation. Countries like China and India have rapidly modernized their economies through integration into global trade networks, lifting millions out of poverty (Bhagwati, 2004). However, globalization also leads to job displacement and economic inequality in both developing and developed countries, as industries shift across borders seeking cheaper labor and resources.

Cultural Impact

Culturally, globalization spreads values, lifestyles, and media from dominant countries to the rest of the world. This can lead to the erosion of local cultures and languages, a phenomenon often described as "McDonaldization" (Ritzer, 2007). However, it also fosters multiculturalism and global awareness, creating a more interconnected and empathetic global society.

Political Impact

Politically, globalization encourages the spread of democratic ideals, human rights, and transnational governance systems. Institutions such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund play pivotal roles in global politics. At the same time, these processes can weaken state sovereignty, as global institutions and multinational corporations gain influence over national policy (Steger, 2017).

2.2 Concept of Traditional Festivals

Traditional festivals are vital expressions of culture, identity, and collective memory. Rooted in history, religion, and social practices, they serve not only as moments of celebration but also as platforms for reinforcing cultural values, social cohesion, and intergenerational continuity.

Traditional festivals reflect the values, beliefs, and lifestyles of the communities that celebrate them. As societies evolve under the influence of modernization and globalization, the relevance and preservation of traditional festivals become subjects of both scholarly interest and cultural concern (Falassi, 1987).

Traditional festivals are recurring communal events, typically rooted in long-established cultural, religious, or historical practices, celebrated with rituals, music, dance, food, and ceremonies. According to Falassi (1987), festivals are “a period of time set aside for feasting and celebration,” which often involve symbolic expressions of identity and cosmology. These festivals are usually passed down through generations and represent a community’s unique worldview and values.

They are distinct from modern or commercial festivals because they are typically indigenous to a particular group, and their significance goes beyond entertainment to include rites of passage, spiritual worship, agricultural cycles, and historical commemorations (Nzegwu, 2001).

2.2.1 Functions and Significance of Traditional Festivals

Traditional festivals play a multifaceted role in society. Their significance can be analyzed from sociocultural, religious, economic, and psychological perspectives.

Cultural Preservation and Identity

Traditional festivals serve as repositories of cultural heritage. Through music, dance, dress, language, and rituals, these festivals help preserve a group’s history and customs. They provide a platform for transmitting indigenous knowledge and customs to younger generations (Okonkwo, 2010). In this sense, they function as a form of informal education that keeps the memory of the past alive.

Social Cohesion

Festivals bring people together across age, class, and gender lines, fostering unity and communal identity. According to Durkheim (1915), such collective rituals reinforce social bonds and shared beliefs. For example, the Yam Festival among the Igbo people of Nigeria unites communities in celebrating the end of the harvest season, strengthening communal ties (Uchendu, 1965).

Religious and Spiritual Significance

Many traditional festivals are closely tied to religious beliefs and spiritual practices. These events often involve rituals, prayers, and sacrifices to deities or ancestors. In East Asia, for example, the Obon Festival in Japan is held to honor the spirits of ancestors, reflecting the deep integration of Shinto and Buddhist traditions (Kawano, 2005).

Economic Impact

Festivals stimulate local economies through tourism, craft sales, and hospitality services. In regions where traditional festivals are promoted as cultural tourism assets, they can become sources of employment and income generation (Getz, 2008). For instance, the Rio Carnival, although evolved from religious traditions, boosts Brazil's economy through global tourist participation.

Psychological and Emotional Relief

Festivals provide moments of joy, entertainment, and catharsis. They often follow periods of hardship, like harvest festivals after planting seasons, serving as emotional outlets and reaffirmations of hope and survival (Falassi, 1987)..

2.2.2 Types of Traditional Festivals

Traditional festivals can be classified into several types based on their origin and purpose:

Religious Festivals

These are festivals dedicated to spiritual observance, such as Diwali in India (Hinduism), Eid al-Fitr in Islamic cultures, and the Yoruba Osun-Osogbo festival in Nigeria (African Traditional Religion) (Adebanwi, 2010).

Seasonal and Agricultural Festivals

Celebrations such as harvest festivals, solstice festivals, and planting festivals mark the natural cycles of agriculture. The Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival and the Ghanaian Homowo Festival are examples of such events (Yen, 2005).

Historical or Commemorative Festivals

These are observed to commemorate important events or heroes. Examples include Ethiopia's Timket (Epiphany), commemorating Jesus' baptism, and the Damba Festival in Ghana marking the birth of Prophet Muhammad (Oppong, 2013).

Rites of Passage Festivals

These include initiation, marriage, or funeral festivals. In many African cultures, such as among the Zulu or Kikuyu, initiation rites into adulthood are marked by elaborate festivals (Mbiti, 1991).

2.2.3 Symbolism in Traditional Festivals

Traditional festivals are rich in symbols—objects, actions, or expressions that convey deeper meanings. Costumes may represent ancestral spirits, dances may depict historical narratives, and food may carry ritual importance. These symbols often vary by region and community but serve a common function: to articulate identity, values, and cosmology (Turner, 1969).

For instance, in the Owu Festival in Nigeria, masks symbolize ancestral spirits, while drumming patterns communicate specific messages to initiated participants (Abiodun, 1994). In Native

American Powwows, regalia and dance styles signify tribal identity and social roles (Young, 2006).

Challenges to Traditional Festivals in the Modern Era

Despite their importance, traditional festivals face numerous threats in the modern world:

Globalization and Cultural Homogenization

The spread of global media and consumer culture has led to the decline of local traditions in favor of more global, commercial celebrations. This cultural homogenization results in the marginalization of indigenous festivals (Tomlinson, 1999).

Urbanization and Lifestyle Changes

Modern urban lifestyles, characterized by fast-paced schedules and individualism, have reduced community participation in festivals. Younger generations may view traditional customs as outdated or irrelevant (Appadurai, 1996).

Commercialization

Some festivals have lost their original meaning due to commercialization. Events like Christmas and Halloween have been transformed into profit-driven celebrations, diminishing their spiritual or communal value (Ritzer, 2007).

Political and Religious Conflicts

In regions with ethnic or religious tensions, traditional festivals may be suppressed or politicized. Governments may also regulate or ban certain rituals deemed inappropriate or nonconforming to national ideologies (Smith, 2006).

Preservation and Revitalization Efforts

Efforts to preserve traditional festivals include documentation, community-based education, and integration into national cultural policies. UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) encourages nations to protect traditional practices, including festivals. Local initiatives, such as heritage festivals and intergenerational workshops, are also crucial for passing on traditional knowledge (UNESCO, 2012).

2.3 Cultural Significance of Traditional Festivals

Traditional festivals play a central role in African societies, serving as vital expressions of cultural heritage, religious beliefs, historical memory, and social unity. Across the continent, from the vibrant Durbar festival in Nigeria to the elaborate Timkat celebration in Ethiopia, these festivals are not merely occasions for entertainment—they are powerful tools for preserving and transmitting cultural identity from one generation to the next (Afolayan, 2019).

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Traditional festivals act as living museums where customs, rituals, dress, music, dance, language, and cuisine are showcased. These elements often stem from centuries-old traditions and help communities maintain a tangible link to their ancestral past (Nketia, 2008).

Rituals and Ceremonies: Many festivals involve rites of passage, thanksgiving, or commemorations of historical events. These are often carried out with strict adherence to traditional protocols, preserving indigenous belief systems and values (Adegbite, 2015).

Art and Symbolism: During festivals, local crafts, regalia, and symbolic artifacts are displayed, reinforcing pride in African artistry and cultural symbols (Opoku, 2007).

Reinforcement of Identity and Belonging

Festivals foster a strong sense of identity among individuals and communities. They provide opportunities for people to connect with their roots and affirm their cultural uniqueness, which is especially important in multicultural or diasporic settings (Eze, 2020).

Strengthening Communal Ties: Festivals often involve family reunions, community feasts, and collective participation, reinforcing the communal values central to African societies (Mbiti, 1991).

Ethnic Pride and Recognition: Events like the Zulu Reed Dance or Ghana's Homowo Festival celebrate the specific traditions of ethnic groups, giving members a sense of pride in their distinct cultural heritage (Gyekye, 1996).

Education and Intergenerational Transmission

Traditional festivals serve as educational platforms, especially for younger generations. Through storytelling, music, and drama, elders pass down oral histories and moral lessons embedded in cultural narratives (Okonkwo, 2014).

Prevent Cultural Erosion: In a globalized world where Western values often dominate, festivals help counter cultural dilution by keeping indigenous knowledge alive (Achebe, 2009).

Build Cultural Competency: Youth gain understanding and respect for their culture, learning the meanings behind customs and why they matter (Kwame, 2011).

Spiritual and Religious Significance

Many African festivals are deeply spiritual. They honor deities, ancestors, or natural forces, and are seen as times when the spiritual world interacts closely with the living (Mbiti, 1991).

Maintains Sacred Traditions: By observing religious customs, communities preserve their indigenous faith systems, many of which predate organized religions (Awolalu & Dopamu, 1979).

Promotes Harmony: Festivals often aim to restore balance between people, nature, and the spirit world, reinforcing respect for the environment and communal peace (Olupona, 2014).

Economic and Social Benefits

Though primarily cultural, traditional festivals also have social and economic dimensions:

Tourism and Local Economies: Many festivals attract tourists, generating income for local artisans, performers, and vendors (Teye, 2000).

Social Cohesion: These celebrations bring together diverse social groups, promoting unity, conflict resolution, and mutual understanding (Chukwu, 2018).

Traditional festivals in Africa are far more than colorful spectacles—they are the heartbeats of African cultural life. They preserve heritage, foster identity, educate the youth, sustain spiritual beliefs, and unite communities. As modernization and globalization continue to challenge cultural continuity, the role of these festivals becomes even more essential in safeguarding the continent's rich and diverse traditions for future generations (Eze, 2020).

Encouraging the celebration and documentation of traditional festivals is thus not only a cultural duty but a strategic effort in protecting Africa's intangible cultural wealth (UNESCO, 2003).

2.4 Modernization and Traditional Festivals

Modernization, characterized by technological advancement, urban development, and changing social values, has significantly transformed societies worldwide. While it brings progress and innovation, there is growing concern about its impact on cultural identity and traditional practices. Striking a balance between modernization and the preservation of traditions and cultural festivals is crucial to maintaining a society's heritage while embracing progress.

One of the primary challenges modernization poses to traditional culture is the erosion of indigenous values and practices. As societies become more globalized, there is a tendency for younger generations to adopt foreign customs and languages, sometimes at the expense of their own (Appadurai, 1996). For instance, festivals that were once celebrated with communal participation and spiritual significance are now often commercialized or simplified to cater to modern tastes (UNESCO, 2020).

However, modernization does not necessarily mean the abandonment of traditions. On the contrary, it can serve as a tool for preserving and revitalizing cultural practices. Technology, for example, enables the documentation and digital archiving of traditional knowledge, dances, music, and rituals, ensuring that they are not lost to time (Smith, 2012). Social media platforms have also become powerful tools for promoting cultural festivals, increasing awareness and participation across different generations and geographies.

In many countries, modernization has been harmonized with tradition through the adaptive transformation of cultural festivals. In Japan, for example, traditional festivals such as the Gion Matsuri have incorporated modern elements like light shows and contemporary music while retaining their historical essence (Iwabuchi, 2002). Similarly, in India, festivals such as Diwali and Holi are celebrated in urban settings with modern conveniences, yet the religious and cultural narratives remain intact (Sen, 2015).

Education plays a vital role in this balancing act. By incorporating cultural studies into school curricula, young people can develop an appreciation for their heritage while also engaging with modern ideas. Furthermore, government policies that recognize and fund cultural heritage projects can foster a sense of pride and continuity in traditional practices (UNESCO, 2020).

It is also essential for communities to take ownership of their traditions. Local participation and intergenerational dialogue can ensure that cultural festivals remain relevant and are passed on authentically, even as they adapt to modern contexts (Smith, 2012). This synergy between the old and the new can lead to innovative cultural expressions that honor the past while embracing the present.

According to Afolabi (2020), Modernization and tradition need not be opposing forces. When approached thoughtfully, modernization can enhance rather than diminish traditional and cultural practices. Through education, technology, community involvement, and policy support, societies can ensure that cultural festivals and heritage continue to thrive in an increasingly modern world.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Cultural Modernization Theory is a sociological framework that explains how economic and technological advancements lead to changes in culture, values, and social institutions. It posits that as societies modernize, traditional beliefs, customs, and practices (like festivals) may lose significance, become altered, or be reinterpreted in new forms. Daniel Lerner in his "The Passing of Traditional Society" (1958), talked about this theory elaborately.

Key Concepts of the Theory include

Traditional societies are often communal, ritualistic, and deeply rooted in heritage.

Modernization brings about urbanization, individualism, rational thinking, and globalization.

Cultural change is inevitable, but it may be uneven — some traditions adapt, others decline.

Application of Cultural Modernization Theory to the Study.

1. Shift in Values and Priorities:

In Benin City, modernization has introduced new values — especially among the youth — that may lead to reduced interest in traditional festivals. While older generations see festivals as sacred and culturally binding, younger generations may prioritize entertainment, social media trends, or global events over local traditions.

2. Urbanization and Time Constraints:

As people move to urban areas and adopt fast-paced lifestyles, participation in elaborate traditional festivals — which may require days of rituals and community involvement — declines. Modern jobs and schooling may also limit availability.

3. Media and Global Culture:

Exposure to Western entertainment and digital platforms can dilute the uniqueness of Benin's festivals. For example, traditional masquerades or dances may be viewed as outdated or “less fun” compared to modern forms of recreation.

4. Adaptation and Hybridization:

Some festivals in Benin may adapt to survive — incorporating modern music, fashion, and digital promotion (e.g., live-streaming events or creating social media pages). This represents a hybrid form, where tradition is modified to suit modern tastes.

5. Cultural Preservation vs. Cultural Erosion:

Cultural Modernization Theory helps you explore both sides: how modernization threatens certain cultural elements but also creates opportunities for reinvention and wider exposure of festivals to global audiences.

Cultural Modernization Theory provides a powerful lens to examine how modern forces (technology, globalization, urbanization) are reshaping the social and cultural fabric of

traditional festivals in Benin City. It doesn't just explain cultural loss — it helps you explore how traditions evolve, resist, or adapt in a rapidly modernizing society.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The cross-sectional descriptive survey design will be employed. It is a type of descriptive research that produces snapshot of a population at one or more points in time and concerns itself with the present status of a phenomenon. Cross-sectional design will be used because it is comparatively quick and cheap to conduct and administer (Creswell, 2000).

3.2 Area of the Study

Benin City is the capital and largest city of Edo State, southern Nigeria. It is the fourth-largest city in Nigeria according to the 2006 census, after Lagos, Kano, and Ibadan. It is situated approximately 40 kilometers (25 mi) north of the Benin River and 320 kilometers (200 mi) by road east of Lagos. Benin City is the centre of Nigeria's rubber industry, and oil production is also a significant industry. The current population of Benin is 13,864,749 as of Friday, December 1, 2023, based on World meter elaboration of the latest United Nations data. Benin City is made of four local governments namely Egor, Ikpoba-Okha, Ovia North-East and Oredo. Benin is under the administration of the traditional ruler, the *Ọbá* of Benin kingdom, Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo Oba Ewuare II.

3.3 Population of the Study.

The population of this study will comprise of households within the four local governments that make up Benin City. The total population of Benin residents as at National census in 2006 was

1542069. The population comprise of Egor LGA 1, 206, 150, Oredo LGA, 374, 048 and Ikpoba Ohka LGA, 961, 871 respectively (NPC, 2006).

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size for this study will be 100 persons which will be selected from households across selected parts from the local governments in Benin. The researcher considers this large enough for the study. The choice of the sample size is also informed by factors such as cost, representativeness and sampling error which cannot be tolerated. The sample size will be gotten using the Taro Yamane formula.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The researcher will employ the convenient and purposive sampling techniques which are under the non-probabilistic method. This is to ensure that respondents are evenly selected across the City.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

To get a sample size of 100 from the population of 1542069, the Taro Yamane formula will be employed in the sampling.

To get a proportion from Egor LGA:

$$\frac{Y}{100} \times \frac{1542069}{1} = 206150 \text{ (cross multiply)}$$

$$1542069y = 206150 \times 100$$

$$1542069y = 20615000 \text{ (make y the subject of the formula)}$$

$$y = \frac{20615000}{1542069} = 13.3684031$$

For Oredo LGA:

$$\frac{y}{100} \times \frac{1542069}{1} = 374048 \text{ (cross multiply)}$$

$$1542069y = 374048 \times 100$$

$$1542069y = 37404800 \text{ (make y the subject of the formula)}$$

$$y = \frac{37404800}{1542069}$$

$$1542069 = 24.2562427$$

For Ikpoba Ohka LGA:

$$\frac{y}{100} \times \frac{1542069}{1} \text{ (cross multiply)}$$

$$100 \cdot \frac{y}{100} \times \frac{1542069}{1}$$

$$1542069y = 961871 \times 100$$

$$1542069y = 96187100 \text{ (make y the subject of the formula)}$$

$$y = \frac{96187100}{1542069}$$

$$1542069 = 62.3753542$$

Therefore: 13.3684031(Egor) +24.2562427 (Oredo) +62.3753542 (Ikpoba Ohka) = 100

Formula for sample size:

n

$$(1+N(e)^2)$$

Where n= sample size

N= Population of the study

e= level of significance

3.7 Instrument For Data Collection

A self-developed questionnaire will be the instrument for data collection for this study. The questionnaire contains four sections, the first section seeks to ascertain the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents while the other sections will seek to get information on the knowledge and perception on the topic. For this study, the researcher will make use of the semi structured type of questionnaire in order to obtain valid, consistent and quantifiable information.

3.8 Method Of Data Collection

This will be two time process and a face to face basis. The researcher will share the questionnaires in the selected households personally and collect it a day later to enable the respondents fill the questionnaires at their convenience to avoid any mistakes or false information.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

For each question contained in the questionnaire interview schedule, this comprises of both open ended and close ended questions, SPSS version 22.0 will be used for the analysis, the question will be analyzed, using frequency and simple percentage. These will be presented in tables and charts.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of findings in line with the research questions and hypotheses. It is discussed under the sections of Questionnaire response rate, analysis of demographic characteristics of the respondents, answering of research questions and discussion of findings.

4.1 Socio Demographic Analysis

Table 4.1: Age distribution of

Response	Frequency	Percentage
18-23	28	28.0
24-29	20	20.0
30-35	32	32.0
36 and above	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

Source, field work 2025.

From the information in the table above 28% of the entire population fall within 18 to 23 years, 20% for within 24 to 29 years, 32% for within 30 to 35 years why 20% four within 36 years and above. It shows that majority of the population are within the ages of 35 and 30.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	74	74.0
Female	26	26.0
Total	100	100.0

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 4.2: Reveals the gender distribution of the respondents. Majority of the respondents in this study were male (74) and represented 74% of the total respondents, while 26 were female respondent with 26% of the total respondents. This implies that majority of the respondents were males.

Table 4.3: Educational level Distribution of respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	15	15%
SSCE	45	45%
Graduate	40	40%
Total	100	100.0

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 4.3 shows the Educational distribution of the respondents. As shown in the table, 40% of the respondents attained Tertiary educational level, this is followed by those with Secondary educational level 45% while primary school holders were represented by 15%> This implies that the majority of the respondents are SSCE holders.

Table 4.4: Occupation Distribution of respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	26	26%
Self employed	54	54%
Employed	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 4.4 Reveals occupation distribution of the respondents. Majority of the respondents in this study were self employed (54) and represented 54.0% of the total respondents, this is followed by the unemployed (26) representing 26.0% while 20 belongs to the Others category and represent 20.0% of the total respondents. This implies that majority of the respondents were in self employed.

Table 4.5: Religion Distribution of respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	96	96.0
Islam	2	2.0
Traditional religion	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 4.5 Reveals religion distribution of the respondents. Majority of the respondents in this study were Christians (96) and represented 96.0% of the total respondents, while Muslim (2) and

Traditionalist (2) were equally represented with 2.0% and 2.0%. This implies that majority of the respondents were Christian.

Table 4.6: Marital Status Distribution of respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Single	20	20%
Married	65	65%
Widowed	15	15%
Total	100	100.0

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 4.6 shows the marital status distribution of the respondents. As shown in the table, majority of the respondents or married this is represented has 65% of the respondent are married while 20% of the respondents are single and finally 15% of the respondents are widowed.

Table 4.7: Ethnicity

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Benin	75	75%
Esan	25	25%
Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2024.

The information in the table above captured the ethnicity of the respondents. It shows that 75% of the respondents are Benin while 25% of the respondents are Esan. The ethnicity of the respondents is streamline to fit the topic.

4.2 Analysis Of Data In Accordance to the Objectives

This section presents the analysis of the four research questions raised for this study.

Research Objective One: Investigate how modernization influences the practice, significance, and continuity of traditional festivals like the Igue Festival in Benin City.

Items that relate to research objective one on the questionnaire we're analyzed as follows:

Table 4.8

How has modernization affected the way the Igue Festival is celebrated in Benin City?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Positively	45	45%
	Negatively	55	55%
	Total	100%	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

From the table above, the information shows 45% of the entire respondents agreed that modernization has affected the Igue festival in Benin city positively while 55% stated that it affected it in a negative way.

Table 4.9

Do you think modernization has changed the significance of the Igue Festival among the Edo people?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	95	95%
	No	5	5%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

The information in the table above represents the different opinions of the respondents as regards to the significance of the Igue festival amongst the Edo people. Maturity of the respondent and green dot modernization has changed significance of the festival amongst the Edo people. This is evident as 95% of the population agreed that it has indeed changed how significant the Igue festival used to be for the people of Benin and Edo state. However only 5% stated that modernization has not had any influence on the significance of the festival.

Table 4.10

How do you perceive the balance between modern influences and traditional practices in the Igue Festival?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	No balance	75	75%
	Little balance	25	25%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

From the data above, majority of the respondents stated that there is no balance between modern influence and traditional practices. They believe that modernization has eroded traditional practices like the Igue festival and others.. This is represented by 75% of the entire respondents. However, 25% stated that there is a little balance between modernization and traditional practices.

Research Objective Two: To Assess how traditional festivals in Benin City balance cultural preservation with the pressures of modernization and globalization.

Items on the questionnaire that relate to Objective two were analyzed as follows:

Table 4.11

How important is it to preserve traditional cultural practices in festivals like the Igue Festival amidst modernization?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Not important	85	85%
	Somewhat important	15	15%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 11 captured the respondents perception on how important it is to preserve traditional practices like the Igue festival. 85% of the entire population stated that is not important to preserve traditional practices while only 15% stated that it is somewhat important. This goes on to show how sees modernization and its influence has eroded our traditional practices.

Table 4.12

Do you think	Response	Frequency	Percentage
globalization has influenced the cultural preservation efforts in traditional festivals in Benin City?	Yes	70	70%
	No	15	15%
	Unsure	15	15%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

From the information above, 70% of the entire respondents globalization has influenced the cultural preservation efforts in the state while 15% stated that it has not influenced it in any way.

The other 15% stated that they're unsure if it has influenced it or not.

Research Objective Three: To Analyze the role of traditional festivals in maintaining socio-cultural ties, unity, and identity among the Edo people in the face of modernization.

Items on the questionnaire that relate to Objective three were analyzed as follows:

Table 4.13

Do you think	Response	Frequency	Percentage
traditional festivals like the Igue Festival play a role in promoting unity among the Edo people?	No	85	85%
	Yes	15	15%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

The table above shows the 85% of the entire respondents stated that traditional practices like the Igue festival do not play a role on promoting unity in the state. However a number of the respondents, represented by 15% stated that it does promote a sense of unity, especially amongst the traditionalists in the state.

Table 4.14

How important are traditional festivals in fostering a sense of community and belonging among the Edo people in Benin City?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Not important	85	80%
	Somewhat important	15	15%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 14 above shows how respondents perceive traditional to be important. From the information as seen above, 85% of the respondents believe that festivals like the Igue festival is not important in fostering a sense of community amongst Benin people. Only 15% of the respondents believe that it is actually somewhat important in fostering community spirit in the state.

Research Objective Four: To Explore how traditional festivals in Benin City adapt or evolve in response to modernization while retaining their cultural essence and significance.

Items on the questionnaire that relate to Objective four were analyzed as follows:

Table 4.16

In what ways can traditional festivals in Benin City evolve to stay relevant in a modernizing society while preserving their cultural heritage?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Incorporate modern elements into traditional practices	30	30%
	Adapt festival activities to appeal to younger generations	40	40%
	Balance tradition with modern societal needs	30	30%
	Total	100	100%

Source, fieldwork 2025.

Table 16 above shows the suggestions by the respondents as to how traditional practices can evolve to blend in with the current modernization trends and patterns. 30% of the population suggested the Incorporation of modern elements into traditional practices, 40% of the population suggested the adaptation of festival activities to appeal to younger generations while 30% suggested the balancing of tradition with modern societal needs

Table 4.17

Have you observed	Response	Frequency	Percentage
any changes in how	Yes	75	75%
the Igue Festival is	No	25	25%
celebrated due to	Total	100	100%
modernization?			

Source, fieldwork 2025.

The table above shows that there is a significant change in the way traditional festivals are celebrated now in regards to the influence of modernization. 75% of the study population reiterated after their questionnaire response that there are lots of changes as how these festivals are celebrated now. This is because modernization and Christianity has taken over everything. However 25% of the respondents stated otherwise.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

It is important to have an overview of the five chapters this project work is consisted of. The first chapter of the work is the introductory part which also includes the objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study and the significance of the study. The second chapter reviewed some existing literatures that are relevant to the subject matter and also discussed some theories related to the topic. The third chapter stated the "science of how" which is the methodology, consists of the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling method, it guided the researcher on how the research was to be conducted. Chapter four of the research is analysis and data presentation, the researcher analyzed the data collected from the respondents with SPSS version 22.0 and presented the data in tables, frequencies and percentages.

The study was carried out to critically investigate the Socio -Cultural effect of modernization on traditional festivals in Benin city, Edo State. The study used a sample of 100 respondents. It made use of four objectives. A 100% response rate was obtained from the questionnaires that were administered in the field.

5.2 Conclusion

This study investigated the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals in Benin City, Edo State, using a sample size of 100 respondents and four research objectives guided by structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that while modernization has introduced positive changes—such as improved organization, enhanced publicity through digital

media, and increased participation from younger generations—it has also contributed to the dilution of cultural authenticity, commercialization of sacred practices, and declining respect for certain traditional values.

The study further established that urbanization, Western influence, and changing lifestyles are reshaping the way festivals are celebrated, with modern entertainment and technology increasingly integrated into cultural events. Although these transformations have made festivals more attractive to outsiders and contributed to tourism and economic growth, they also pose a threat to the preservation of indigenous traditions and meanings originally embedded in the festivals. For Benin City to safeguard its rich cultural heritage, there is a need for a balance between embracing modern innovations and preserving the authenticity of traditional festivals. This can be achieved through cultural education, government and community support, and active involvement of custodians of tradition in festival planning and execution.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on the socio-cultural effects of modernization on traditional festivals in Benin City, Edo State, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Cultural Preservation Programs:** The government of Edo State, in collaboration with traditional institutions, should establish cultural preservation initiatives to document, protect, and transmit the original essence of festivals to younger generations.
2. **Integration of Tradition and Modernity:** Festival organizers should adopt a balanced approach by incorporating modern innovations (such as digital promotion and improved logistics) without neglecting the cultural and spiritual values that define the festivals.

3. Cultural Education: Schools and higher institutions should include aspects of Benin cultural history and festivals in their curricula, ensuring that young people appreciate the significance of these traditions in shaping identity and values.
4. Community Participation: Local communities should be more actively involved in festival planning and execution to reduce excessive commercialization and ensure that cultural practices remain authentic and reflective of communal heritage.
5. Tourism Development: The government should promote traditional festivals as cultural tourism assets while safeguarding their indigenous meanings, thereby generating economic benefits without undermining their authenticity.
6. Support from Custodians of Tradition: Traditional rulers, chiefs, and cultural custodians should play a leading role in maintaining the originality of festivals and guiding modernization in ways that respect cultural norms and values.

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