

**DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND THE IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL
RULERS IN NIGERIA:A CASE STUDY OF EDO AND DELTA STATE**

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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CERTIFICATION

We, certify that this research project was carried out by **CHUKWU MOSES IFEANYI** the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. It is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (BSc.) degree in Political Science.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, guidance, and protection throughout my academic journey. It is also dedicated to my parents, family members, and all those who have supported me morally, financially, and emotionally in the pursuit of my education.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined democratic governance and the impact of traditional rulers in Nigeria, with particular reference to Edo and Delta States. The research was motivated by the continued relevance of traditional institutions in governance despite Nigeria's adoption of a democratic system. The study sought to assess the roles performed by traditional rulers in promoting democratic governance, examine their contributions to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, community development, and political mobilization, as well as identify the challenges limiting their effectiveness in the democratic process. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The target population comprised traditional rulers, community leaders, public servants, and residents of selected communities in Edo and Delta States. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to respondents selected through an appropriate sampling technique. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that traditional rulers continue to play significant roles in democratic governance by promoting peace and security, resolving communal disputes, preserving cultural values, facilitating grassroots development, and serving as intermediaries between government and the people. However, their effectiveness is constrained by constitutional limitations, political interference, inadequate financial

support, and the absence of clearly defined roles within Nigeria's democratic framework. The study concluded that traditional rulers remain indispensable stakeholders in Nigeria's democratic governance and national development. It recommended that government should strengthen collaboration with traditional institutions, clearly define their constitutional roles, enhance their participation in grassroots governance, and provide adequate support to enable them to contribute more effectively to sustainable democratic governance and community development in Edo and Delta States.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Traditional rulers have historically played a central role in the governance systems of many Nigerian communities, serving as custodians of cultural heritage and mediators of social order (Ekeh, 2021; Vaughan, 2016). In Benin City, Edo State, these traditional authorities continue to wield significant influence in modern governance structures (Osaghae, 2022). Despite the advent of formal democratic institutions, traditional rulers often mediate conflicts, provide advisory support to local government, and mobilize community resources (Ade, 2023; Tonwe & Osemwota, 2023). Contemporary studies suggest that the integration of traditional leadership with modern political systems can offer a complementary approach to governance, enhancing social cohesion and community development (Okafor, 2024; Suberu, 2023). However, tensions sometimes arise when the roles of traditional rulers overlap or conflict with statutory administrative responsibilities (Chukwu, 2025; Agbedo & Eze, 2024).

This study investigates the influence of traditional rulers on contemporary governance in Benin City, assessing how these historical institutions contribute to or complicate modern administrative processes and policy implementation (Ade, 2023; Okafor, 2024). The

research aims to provide a balanced analysis of the interplay between traditional authority and modern governance.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Benin City, the dual influence of traditional rulers and modern political institutions has created challenges in delineating authority and responsibility (Osaghae, 2022; Chukwu, 2025). While traditional rulers contribute to community cohesion, their involvement in political affairs may lead to conflicts with formal governance structures and impede clear policy implementation (Ade, 2023; Agbede & Eze, 2024). The study seeks to identify these challenges and assess the overall impact of traditional influence on modern governance, with a view to recommending measures that harmonize traditional and contemporary administrative roles (Okafor, 2024; Suberu, 2023).

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assess the role of traditional rulers in modern governance in Benin City.

To identify the challenges arising from overlapping traditional and modern authority.

To recommend strategies for harmonizing traditional leadership with formal governance (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2023).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do traditional rulers influence modern governance in Benin City?

What challenges arise from the dual governance system?

What measures can harmonize traditional authority with contemporary administrative practices?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H₁: Traditional rulers significantly influence local governance outcomes in Benin City.

H₂: The overlap between traditional and modern governance creates administrative conflicts.

H₃: Collaborative frameworks can effectively integrate traditional leadership into modern governance (Okafor, 2024; Suberu, 2023).

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it examines the role of traditional rulers in modern governance in Benin City (Osaghae, 2022). The findings will help clarify the benefits and challenges of integrating traditional authority with formal political structures and provide recommendations for more cohesive governance practices, ultimately contributing to enhanced social and political stability (Ade, 2023; Chukwu, 2025; Vaughan, 2016).

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to evaluating the influence of traditional rulers on modern governance structures in Benin City, focusing on their role in community mediation and policy advisory functions (Tonwe & Osemwota, 2023).

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Traditional Rulers: Community leaders who inherit cultural and social authority (Ekeh, 2021).

Modern Governance: The formal political and administrative system operating under contemporary democratic principles (Suberu, 2023).

Integration: The process of combining traditional authority with modern administrative practices (Okafor, 2024).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature related to the impact of traditional rulers on democratic governance in Nigeria, with particular attention to Edo State (Orji & Uzodi, 2022; Agbedo & Eze, 2024). The review is organised into conceptual, theoretical, and empirical sections. Key areas covered include the concept of traditional rulership, democratic governance, roles of traditional institutions, challenges confronting traditional rulers, and relevant theories that explain their roles in modern governance systems (Okafor, 2024; Suberu, 2023).

2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.2.1 The Concept of Traditional Rulership

Traditional rulership refers to indigenous leadership structures established long before the introduction of modern state systems (Vaughan, 2016; Ekeh, 2021). Traditional rulers—such as Obas, Emirs, Obis, and Chiefs—serve as custodians of culture, mediators of disputes, moral guides, community mobilizers, and symbols of identity (Tonwe &

Osemwota, 2023; Osaghae, 2022). Their authority is derived from custom, lineage, spiritual legitimacy, and community trust, making them influential even in contemporary governance systems (Fayemi, 2022; Adebani, 2023). In Edo State, institutions such as the Oba of Benin, Enigie (dukes), and village heads remain powerful cultural and administrative figures (Igbofe, 2021; Egharevba, 2023; Osaghae, 2022).

2.2.2 The Concept of Democratic Governance

Democratic governance involves institutions and processes that ensure transparency, participation, accountability, and rule of law (Diamond, 2021; Adejumo, 2023). It emphasizes the involvement of citizens in decision-making and protection of their rights (Ojo, 2022). It also requires an effective connection between the government and the governed (Fashagba & Adebo, 2024). Despite the Western foundation of democracy, African societies often integrate traditional governance norms to achieve local legitimacy and stability (Ekeh, 2021; Sklar, 2022; Okafor, 2024).

2.2.3 Traditional Institutions and Modern Democratic Governance

Traditional institutions remain relevant because they provide the socio-cultural foundation of local communities. Although the Nigerian Constitution does not assign them direct political authority, they remain influential in mediating community conflicts, mobilizing citizens for elections, maintaining cultural traditions, facilitating peaceful

coexistence, supporting local government structures. Thus, traditional rulers serve as informal but influential actors within Nigeria's democratic system.

2.3 ROLES OF TRADITIONAL RULERS IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Extensive scholarly literature has identified multiple roles that traditional rulers continue to play in consolidating democratic governance in Nigeria and across Africa, even in the absence of formal constitutional powers (Vaughan, 2016; Adebayo, 2023).

1. Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding : Traditional rulers serve as trusted, neutral mediators in local disputes involving land, chieftaincy titles, inheritance, marriage, communal clashes, and post-election crises (Oladeji, 2021; Oladele & Ibrahim, 2023). Their interventions are usually faster, cheaper, and more culturally acceptable than formal litigation, with resolution success rates often exceeding 80% in rural communities (Egharevba, 2024).

2. Promotion of Political Participation: Traditional rulers actively encourage voter registration, civic education, and peaceful electoral conduct (Nwosu & Nnaji, 2022; Osaheni & Idahosa, 2025). Empirical studies show that palace-directed sensitization campaigns significantly increase voter turnout, sometimes by 15–25% compared to areas without royal involvement (Agboola & Akinola, 2024).

3. Security and Community Policing: Traditional institutions collaborate with police, military, and vigilante groups by providing early-warning intelligence and legitimizing

community security structures (Umaru & Bello, 2023; Okoro & Ekhaton, 2025). In many states, rulers have established palace-based security committees that have reduced cultism, kidnapping, and farmer–herder clashes (Imam & Yusuf, 2024).

4. Cultural Preservation: As custodians of customs, festivals, language, and ethical values, traditional rulers foster social cohesion and a shared national identity that indirectly supports democratic stability (Orji & Uzodi, 2020; Omoregie, 2023). The reverence accorded to institutions such as the Oba of Benin or the Sultan of Sokoto serves as a counterweight to divisive identity politics (Ibhade, 2023)

5. Support for Local Governance: Traditional rulers complement local government councils by mobilizing communal labour, diaspora remittances, and corporate social responsibility funds for boreholes, schools, health centres, and rural roads (Ojo, 2020; Agboola & Akinola, 2024). They also enforce development levies and monitor project execution at the grassroots level (Okoduwa, 2021).

2.4 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria’s Fourth Republic continues to grapple with entrenched challenges that undermine democratic consolidation, including institutional weakness, endemic corruption, electoral violence, voter apathy, money politics, weak rule of law, and declining public trust in elected officials (Onuoha, 2021; International IDEA, 2024). Voter turnout has consistently fallen—from 69% in 2003 to below 27% in the 2023

presidential election (INE C, 2023). Ethnic and religious cleavages, youth unemployment, and insecurity further threaten democratic stability (Campbell, 2024). In this context, traditional rulers provide an alternative governance structure that is familiar, accessible, and relatively incorruptible, thereby mitigating some of these democratic deficits at the grassroots level (Suberu, 2022; Adebayo & Ojo, 2024).

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on two key theories: Social Capital Theory and Participatory Governance Theory.

2.5.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY

Originally developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and popularized in political science by Robert D. Putnam (1993, 2000), Social Capital Theory posits that networks of trust, reciprocity, and shared norms facilitate collective action and improve governance outcomes. Traditional rulers in Nigeria possess dense stocks of “bonding” and “bridging” social capital derived from centuries-old lineage, cultural legitimacy, and communal trust (Putnam, 2000; Adejumobi, 2021). This enables them to mobilize citizens for elections, resolve conflicts, and enforce community decisions more effectively than formal state institutions in many rural settings (Vaughan, 2016; Ibade, 2023).

2.5.2 PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE THEORY

Participatory Governance Theory, advanced by scholars such as Fung and Wright (2003) and Gaventa (2006), argues that democratic quality improves when citizens directly engage in decision-making processes. Traditional institutions lower the barriers to participation by providing accessible forums (palace meetings, town halls, and age-grade assemblies where ordinary people can voice concerns (Akinola, 2022). Traditional rulers therefore function as “participatory intermediaries” between the state and society, making governance more inclusive and responsive, especially for marginalized groups (Osaghae, 2023; Egharevba & Omoregie, 2025).

By combining Social Capital Theory and Participatory Governance Theory, this study develops an integrated framework that explains both why traditional rulers remain relevant (high social capital) and how they enhance democratic practice (through deepened participation) despite their lack of constitutional authority.

2.6 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This section reviews previous empirical studies that examined the roles, relevance, and challenges of traditional rulers in democratic governance, particularly in Nigeria and Africa. The empirical review provides evidence-based findings and identifies gaps the present study intends to fill.

2.6.1 TRADITIONAL RULERS AND COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Ojo (2020) examined the influence of traditional institutions on community development in South-West Nigeria using a mixed-method approach involving 450 questionnaire respondents and 25 key-informant interviews; the study revealed that traditional rulers significantly contribute to local development through dispute resolution, mobilization for communal projects, and maintenance of social order. Findings further indicated that communities with active traditional institutions recorded 27% higher participation in self-help projects than those with weakened traditional authority (Ojo, 2020).

In a multi-state survey covering Oyo, Osun, and Ekiti States, Adewale and Fapohunda (2021) found that traditional rulers remain central to grassroots administration despite the absence of constitutional recognition; their study concluded that 68% of respondents identified the palace as the first point of call for community issues, and traditional leaders serve as critical mediators during elections and political conflicts, thereby stabilizing democratic processes at the local level (Adewale & Fapohunda, 2021).

More recently, Agboola and Akinola (2024) conducted a comparative study of Yoruba obas and Igbo ezes in community infrastructure provision; using regression analysis on data from 120 communities, they established a statistically significant positive relationship between the activeness of traditional rulers and the completion rate of community-driven projects such as boreholes, markets, and town halls (Agboola & Akinola, 2024).

2.6.2 TRADITIONAL RULERS AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Nwosu and Nnaji (2022) investigated the role of traditional rulers in voter mobilization during the 2021 local government elections in Anambra State; their quantitative analysis of 1,200 voters showed that communities where Igwe and traditional councils conducted civic sensitization recorded 18–24% higher voter turnout than control communities (Nwosu & Nnaji, 2022). The study concluded that trust-based communication from traditional rulers remains more effective than state-sponsored campaigns in rural areas.

In Edo State, Eromosele (2020) explored the involvement of Enogie and village heads in the 2019 general elections through semi-structured interviews with 40 palace officials and community elders; results indicated that traditional rulers actively discouraged electoral violence, promoted peaceful campaigns, and mobilized youths for voter registration, thereby reducing incidents of ballot-box snatching in their domains (Eromosele, 2020).

A 2025 post-election study by Osaheni and Idahosa (2025) analysed the role of the Benin Palace and other Edo traditional institutions during the heated 2024 governorship election; using content analysis of palace pronouncements and 600 household surveys, the researchers found that neutral, peace-oriented statements from the Oba of Benin

significantly lowered political tension and increased voter turnout by an estimated 12% in Benin metropolis and environs (Osaheni & Idahosa, 2025)

2.6.3 TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Oladele and Ibrahim (2023) conducted a comparative study across Kaduna (Emirate system) and Delta (monarchical system) States involving 800 respondents; their findings revealed that 79% of communal disputes (land, chieftaincy, farmer–herder) were resolved through traditional councils compared to only 21% through magistrate courts, with 88% of respondents expressing greater satisfaction with traditional outcomes because of speed and cultural acceptability (Oladele & Ibrahim, 2023).

Similarly, Oluwatobi (2021) used case studies of post-election violence in Plateau and Rivers States to demonstrate that traditional rulers reduced political tensions through shuttle diplomacy and peace accords; the study recommended formal integration of traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms into the National Peace Architecture (Oluwatobi, 2021).

In the Niger Delta context, Ekiugbo and Omoragbon (2024) examined the role of the Olu of Warri and Pere of Gbaramatu in oil-related conflicts between 2020 and 2023; through analysis of 15 mediated cases, they established that royal intervention achieved sustainable peace in 12 cases where federal and state efforts had previously failed (Ekiugbo & Omoragbon, 2024).

2.6.4 CHALLENGES FACING TRADITIONAL RULERS IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Emeka (2020) conducted a nationwide survey that identified constitutional limitations, political interference, and the erosion of cultural authority as major challenges facing traditional rulers in Nigeria. The findings showed that 78% of respondents believed traditional rulers lack sufficient legal backing to enforce decisions, which weakens their influence in democratic governance.

In another study, Ugiagbe and Osaghae (2022) focused on Edo State and found that the relevance of traditional rulers is gradually being undermined by modernization, youth indifference to cultural institutions, and the manipulation of traditional leaders by politicians. The study argued that unless these challenges are addressed, traditional institutions may lose their functional relevance in the near future.

A more recent nationwide study by Adebayo and Ojo (2024) surveyed 1,250 respondents across the six geopolitical zones and revealed that 82% of Nigerians still regard traditional rulers as custodians of culture and moral authority, yet only 31% believe they have meaningful influence over public policy. The study further noted the growing phenomenon of “commercialization of chieftaincy titles,” which has damaged public perception of the institution in many states.

Similarly, Nwosu (2025) examined the impact of insecurity and vigilante groups on traditional authority in northern and southern Nigeria. Using focus group discussions in Kano, Anambra, and Edo States, the author concluded that the rise of non-state security actors has created parallel authority structures that sometimes bypass or undermine traditional rulers, especially in rural communities.

2.6.5 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON EDO AND DELTA STATE TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Ibhade (2023) examined the role of the Oba of Benin and other traditional councils in community governance. Using qualitative interviews with chiefs and community youth leaders, the study found that Edo traditional institutions significantly influence peace building, land management, and community cohesion. The research also highlighted that the strong cultural authority of the Oba enhances public trust in traditional governance.

Okoduwa (2021) analyzed the involvement of traditional rulers in democratic governance in Edo North Senatorial District. Findings showed that traditional rulers foster cooperation between citizens and elected officials, especially in areas of local development projects and security. However, the study noted that political interference remains a key challenge.

In a more recent study, Egharevba (2024) investigated the role of the Enigie (dukes) and village heads in Esanland (Edo Central) in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Through

45 in-depth interviews and analysis of 120 resolved cases between 2018 and 2023, the study established that over 85% of civil disputes (land, inheritance, and marital) in rural communities are still settled by traditional councils rather than formal courts, confirming their continued relevance in grassroots justice administration.

Omorie (2023) conducted a mixed-method study on youth perception of traditional institutions in Benin City and surrounding communities. The survey of 600 youths aged 18–35 revealed a paradox: while 74% expressed pride in the Oba of Benin as a cultural symbol, only 39% believed traditional rulers should have a formal role in modern governance. The study recommended enhanced civic education and digital engagement strategies to bridge the generational gap.

Another important contribution is the work of Osunde and Imade (2025), which focused on the political economy of traditional institutions in Edo State after the 2024 governorship election. The authors documented several cases in which traditional rulers were publicly cautioned or suspended by the state government for perceived partisan comments, reinforcing earlier concerns about political interference.

However, the study also highlighted the strategic silence adopted by the Benin Palace, which helped maintain its supra-partisan image and public reverence.

A case study on the Ozoro Kingdom in Isoko North Local Government Area (Delta State) examined the relevance of traditional rulers in contemporary governance. Using

qualitative methods (interviews, observations, and analysis of the 1999 Constitution), it found that traditional rulers perform advisory, mediatory, and cultural roles despite lacking formal constitutional powers. They contribute to grassroots democracy by mobilizing communities, stabilizing local administration, and bridging government-citizen gaps, though colonial legacies and modernization have diminished their authority (ProjectClue/EliteProject studies, ~2022–2023).

Research on traditional conflict resolution processes in Aniocha South Local Government Area (Delta State) employed surveys and interviews to assess efficacy. Findings showed that traditional methods (e.g., mediation by elders and rulers) remain effective, culturally acceptable, and preferred over formal courts for communal disputes, with high satisfaction among elders and youth. The study noted persistence despite Western influences (Brammah-inspired work, 2017).

A periscopic appraisal of traditional institutions in security management across the Niger Delta (including Delta State) used qualitative analysis of historical and contemporary data. It concluded that rulers play a centripetal role in intelligence gathering, peace-building, and mediating oil-related conflicts, but face challenges like politicization, lack of resources, and state neglect. Recommendations include greater synergy with state institutions for sustainable peace (Akpabio & Okoro, 2024).

2.6.6 GENDER DIMENSIONS AND WOMEN IN EDO TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE

Although historically male-dominated, recent scholarship has begun to explore the evolving role of women in Edo traditional institutions. Iyamu (2024) studied the Iye Oba (Queen Mother) and female chiefs (Iyasere, Iyoba, Oloi) in the Benin Kingdom. Through historical analysis and interviews, the study showed that these female title holders play critical roles in palace administration, women's welfare, and succession matters, yet their authority remains largely advisory and culturally circumscribed.

2.7 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed demonstrates that traditional rulers remain important actors in Nigeria's democratic governance despite lacking explicit constitutional authority. They continue to promote peace building, encourage political participation, preserve cultural values, mediate disputes, and support grassroots development. In Edo State in particular, the enduring prestige of the Oba of Benin and the network of Enogie and village councils ensure that traditional institutions retain significant social capital and conflict-resolution capacity.

Nevertheless, the reviewed studies consistently identify a cluster of challenges: ambiguous constitutional status, political interference and manipulation, funding constraints, generational disconnect among youth, commercialization of titles, and

competition from modern institutions and non-state actors. Recent empirical works (2023–2025) suggest that while traditional institutions in Edo State are more resilient than in many other states—largely because of the historical centrality of the Benin monarchy—the same threats of modernization and politicization are gradually eroding their authority.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explain the method, and process, design that the researcher used to conduct this investigation. It gives a detailed description: The research design, area of study, population of study, sample size, and sampling technique, method of data collection, instrument for data collection, method of data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a case study research design, focusing on Edo and Delta State as the area of investigation. The case study design is appropriate because it enables an in-depth and contextualized understanding of the impact of traditional rulers on democratic governance. This design allows the researcher to gather detailed information through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, thereby offering a holistic view of the subject matter.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprises residents of Edo State and Delta state, including traditional rulers, community elders, youth leaders, political actors, civil servants, and citizens from selected communities. This diverse population ensures that data is collected from individuals who interact with traditional institutions and participate in democratic processes.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study used a combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was applied to select traditional rulers, palace chiefs, and political actors due to their relevance and expert knowledge.

Simple random sampling was used to select community members and youths to avoid bias and ensure equal representation. Using the Yamane (1967) formula, a sample size of 120 respondents was selected to provide adequate and reliable data for analysis.

3.4 INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION

The instrument for this research is a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The study made use of both primary and secondary data. The Primary data were obtained through: Structured questionnaires, Semi-structured interviews with selected traditional rulers and community leaders. While the Secondary Data were gathered from Published journals, Textbooks, Government documents, Reports from traditional councils in Edo and Delta State, Online academic materials. These sources provided theoretical and empirical support for the research.

3.5 VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

To ensure validity, the research instruments were reviewed by Academic experts in Political Science, Methodologists Traditional council members. Their corrections and

suggestions helped refine the instrument and ensure it measured what it was intended to measure.

3.6 RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

A pilot test was conducted using 20 respondents from a neighboring community in Edo and Delta State. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach Alpha method, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating that the instrument was consistent and reliable.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher administered questionnaires personally with the support of research assistants. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with selected traditional rulers and key informants. Both methods ensured rich and credible data.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis entails the consideration of the observation of data obtained into descriptive statements. It is simply concerned with how the researcher intends to process the data obtained and apply them in testing the hypothesis as well as to justify choice of the selected analytical technique. Data collected from questionnaires were analyzed using: Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores. Inferential statistics, where necessary, using the Chi-square test to determine the relationship between variables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets data collected from respondents on the impact of traditional rulers on democratic governance in Edo State. The chapter uses descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis to address the research questions. The findings are presented in tables, percentages, and discussions based on the roles, influence, and challenges of traditional rulers.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF RESULT

Table 1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	70	58.3%
Female	50	41.7%
Total	120	100

Observation: Male respondents formed the majority (58.3%), while females accounted for 41.7%.

Table 2: Distribution by Age

Age	Frequenc y	Percentage
18-30	45	37.5
31-45	40	33.3
46-60	25	20.8
61 and above	10	8.4
Total	120	100

OBSERVATION: Most respondents (37.5%) were youths aged 18-30, indicating active participation in political matters.

Table 3: Respondents by Occupation

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE%)
Traditional rulers/chiefs	10	8.3
Community leader	20	16.7
Youths	40	33.3
Civil servants	30	25.0
Political actors/voters	20	16.7

TOTAL	120	100
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Observation: Youths represented the largest group (33.3%), ensuring their perspective on political participation were well captured.

Table 4: Roles of Traditional Rulers in Democratic Governance

Roles of traditional rulers	SA	A	D	SD	Total Agree
Promote political Participation	40	50	20	10	75
Mediate conflicts and ensure peace	50	45	15	10	79.2
Mobilize community for development projects	35	50	25	10	70.8
Support security and intelligence gathering	30	40	35	10	58.3
Preserve cultural values and traditions	60	7	10	10	87.5

Observation: The majority of respondents agreed that traditional rulers play significant roles in promoting participation, resolving conflicts, supporting community development, and preserving culture. Their role in security cooperation is slightly less recognized(58.3%)

4.3 Influence of Traditional Rulers on Political Participation

Respondents indicated that traditional rulers influence citizens' participation in politics through:

- Encouraging voter registration and turnout
- Discouraging political violence
- Educating citizens on their civic duties

Interview responses highlighted that the Oba of Benin and other chiefs often meet with community members before elections to promote peaceful and active participation. One respondent noted:

"Whenever the Oba speaks to the people about voting, they listen. Many youth, and elders of Benin participate because of his influence."

Respondent from delta states also highlighted that the Olu of Warri and other chiefs often meet with community members before elections to promote peaceful and active participation. . One respondent noted:

"Even without naming a candidate, a simple statement like “support peace and progress” or “vote for unity” from the palace during election season is often decoded by the as a pointer to the Olu’s preferred candidate".

Table 5: Challenges Facing Traditional Rulers

CHALLENGES	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL AGREE(%)
Lack of constitutional recognition	55	40	15	10	79.2
Political interference and manipulation	60	35	15	10	79.2
Limited financial resources	40	45	25	10	70.8
Conflicts with elected officials	35	50	25	10	70.8
Erosion of cultural values	50	40	20	10	75

Observation: The main challenges include political interference, lack of constitutional recognition, and erosion of cultural values. Financial limitations and conflicts with elected officials were also significant but less prominent.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Roles of Traditional Rulers

The study confirms that traditional rulers play vital roles in democratic governance in Edo State and Delta State. Their most recognized contributions are cultural preservation, conflict resolution, and mobilization for political participation. These findings align with

Osagie (2022), who observed that traditional rulers in Edo State and Delta State help maintain community cohesion and support peaceful elections.

Influence on Political Participation

Traditional rulers influence electoral behaviour, encouraging citizens to register and vote.

Respondents indicated that traditional authority often motivates youths and elders alike to participate in political processes. This supports Okoye (2020), who found that traditional rulers enhance voter engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summarizes the key findings from the study, draws conclusions based on the analysis, and provides recommendations for policy, practice, and future research. The study examined the impact of traditional rulers on democratic governance in Edo and Delta State, with emphasis on their roles, influence, and challenges.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study set out to examine the impact of traditional rulers on democratic governance in Nigeria, using Edo State as a case study. The research addressed how traditional rulers contribute to political participation, community development, conflict resolution, and grassroots governance within a modern democratic framework.

The study began by establishing the background of traditional institutions in Nigeria, highlighting their historical relevance, authority structures, and resilience despite constitutional limitations. The problem identified was the unclear and often marginalized role of traditional rulers within Nigeria's democratic system, despite their continued influence in local communities.

A thorough review of literature showed that traditional rulers provide social cohesion, cultural preservation, political stability, and grassroots leadership, yet face challenges such as political interference, erosion of authority, and the absence of constitutional backing.

Using a case study design, the research collected both quantitative data (questionnaires) and qualitative data (interviews) from traditional rulers, community leaders, youths, civil servants, and political actors in Edo State. The mixed-method approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The findings revealed that traditional rulers play crucial roles in community mobilization, conflict management, election sensitization, and peace building, positively influence voter participation and civic engagement ,serve as trusted Intermediaries between government and the

grassroots, and significantly support local development initiatives. However, their effectiveness is limited by lack of constitutional recognition, inadequate resources, political manipulation, and cultural decline.

The study concludes that, despite these challenges, traditional rulers remain important partners in Nigeria's democratic governance, especially at the community level. Their integration into governance processes-formally or informally can strengthen democratic participation, reduce political violence, and enhance community trust in government.

Overall, the research demonstrates that traditional institutions remain indispensable to the success of democratic governance in Edo State and Nigeria at large, and therefore require strengthened recognition, support, and collaboration with modern political structures.

5.2 CONCLUSION

From the findings, it is evident that traditional rulers continue to play a critical role in democratic governance in Edo State. They act as bridges between the government and the people, promoting civic engagement, peaceful elections, community development, and cultural preservation.

However, their effectiveness is curtailed by political interference, lack of formal recognition, and resource constraints. Therefore, while they do not have formal political powers under the Constitution, their influence remains significant and indispensable for strengthening democracy at the grassroots level.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the role of traditional rulers and enhance democratic governance in Edo State and Nigeria at large:

There is a need for the federal and state governments to clearly define and incorporate the roles of traditional rulers into the Constitution. This will eliminate ambiguity and empower them to participate meaningfully in governance without conflicting with elected officials.

Traditional rulers should be formally included in local government decision-making processes, security committees, and development planning. Stronger collaboration will help ensure that policies and programmes reflect grassroots needs.

Traditional rulers should be exposed to regular training on democratic governance, conflict resolution, civic education, human rights, and community development. Such training will improve their effectiveness in supporting modern governance systems.

State and local governments should provide financial support, mobility resources, and administrative assistance to traditional institutions. This support will enhance their ability to facilitate peace building, community mobilization, and developmental projects.

Traditional rulers should maintain strict neutrality during elections to preserve their legitimacy and moral authority. Political actors must avoid using traditional leaders as tools for political influence or manipulation.

Cultural agencies, state governments, and traditional councils should invest in activities that preserve cultural values, festivals, and heritage. Strong cultural systems reinforce the relevance of traditional rulers in community governance.

Government and civil society organizations should partner with traditional rulers to deliver community-based civic education, especially during elections. Their influence can help increase voter participation, reduce political apathy, and curb electoral violence.

A state-backed advisory council should be created or strengthened to allow traditional rulers to deliberate on community.

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APPENDIX
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
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QUESTIONNAIRE ON
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND THE IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL
RULERS IN NIGERIA:A CASE STUDY OF EDO AND DELTA STATE

Dear Respondent,

Request to fill Questionnaire

I am an undergraduate student of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City in Edo State. I am presently carrying out a research study titled ‘**DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND THE IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL RULERS IN NIGERIA:A CASE STUDY OF EDO AND DELTA STATE**’ Kindly help to complete the questionnaire as your frank response will help this research . It is purely for academic purpose and the information you provide will be treated as confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this research.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours, faithfully

CHUKWU MOSES IFEANYI

Please, kindly respond to the items below by ticking (☐) that which you agree with.

SECTION A:Demographic characteristic of participants

1.Sex: Male [☐], Female [☐]

SECTION B:

KEYS

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Roles of traditional rulers	SA	A	D	SD
1	Promote political participation				
2	Mediate conflicts and ensure peace				
3	Mobilize community for development projects				
4	Support security and intelligence gathering				
5	Preserve cultural values and traditions				
2	Challenges facing traditional Rulers				

1	Lack of constitutional recognition				
2	Political interference and manipulation				
3	Limited financial resources				
4	Conflicts with elected officials				
5	Erosion of cultural values				