

Investigating the Degree of Participation in Festivals and Carnivals in Benue State, Nigeria

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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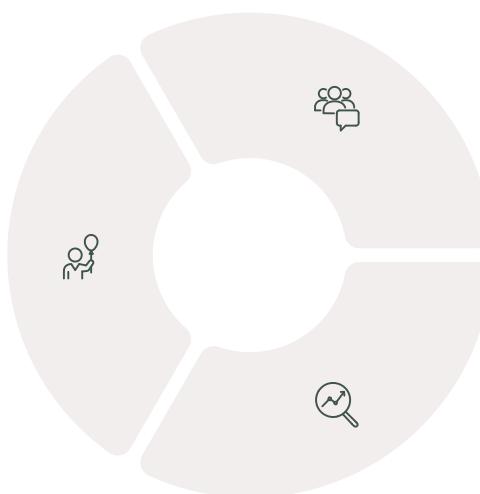
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the degree of participation in festivals and carnivals celebrated in Benue State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 380 respondents through surveys and participant observation. The results reveal varying levels of engagement across different communities, with cultural identity, socioeconomic factors, and logistical challenges influencing participation. Key findings indicate that festivals such as the Igede Agba Festival and Och'Idoma Festival exhibit very high participation rates, while others, such as the Ujo Festival, show low engagement. The study underscores the importance of festivals as platforms for cultural expression, community cohesion, and environmental and economic development. Recommendations include addressing logistical challenges, leveraging digital innovations, and fostering inclusivity to enhance participation.



Cultural Expression

Festivals preserve traditions and foster communal bonds

Community Cohesion

Events strengthen social ties and collective identity

Economic Development

Tourism and local business stimulation through festivals

Methodology

Mixed-methods approach using surveys and participant observation with 380 respondents

Key Variables

Cultural identity, socio-economic factors, and logistical challenges in Benue State

Main Finding

Varying participation levels with high engagement in major festivals and low in others

Keywords: festivals, carnivals, tourism, cultural identity, Benue State

INTRODUCTION

Festivals and carnivals are deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Benue State, Nigeria, serving as vital conduits for preserving traditions, fostering communal bonds (Edem, 2022), and promoting tourism (Ejikeme, 2024). Festivals are organised public events that are typically held annually to celebrate cultural, religious, historical, or seasonal occasions, while carnivals represent a specific type of festival characterised by lively parades, costumes, music, dance, and street performances. These events are not merely occasions for celebration; they are dynamic platforms that encapsulate the essence of cultural heritage, offering opportunities for communities to reconnect with their roots while projecting their identity to the wider world. In a rapidly globalising society, where modernisation often threatens traditional practices, festivals and carnivals act as living archives of cultural knowledge and continuity. They provide spaces for storytelling, ritual performances, artistic expression, and intergenerational learning, ensuring that age-old customs are passed down through generations (Agbor et al., 2025).

Beyond their cultural significance, these events also play a pivotal role in economic development by attracting tourists, creating jobs, and stimulating demand across various sectors such as hospitality, retail, transportation, and entertainment (Baloch et al., 2022). Understanding their popularity also contributes to cultural preservation efforts and tourism business viability (Olabosinde, 2025). However, despite their importance, the level of participation in these celebrations varies significantly among communities within Benue State. While some festivals, such as the Igbede Agba Festival and Och'Idoma Festival, enjoy widespread engagement, others, such as the Ujo Festival or smaller community-based celebrations, struggle to attract participants. This disparity raises critical questions about the factors influencing participation and the sustainability of these cultural events. Understanding why certain festivals thrive while others falter is essential for ensuring that these celebrations remain vibrant and relevant in contemporary society. Moreover, addressing these disparities can help unlock the full potential of festivals and carnivals as tools for sustainable development, fostering both cultural preservation and socioeconomic growth (Egbonyi et al., 2023).

01

Cultural Preservation Era

Traditional festivals emerged as vital mechanisms for preserving indigenous customs, languages, and practices within Benue State communities.

02

Tourism Development Phase

Festivals gained recognition as economic drivers, attracting visitors and generating revenue for local communities and businesses.

03

Modern Adaptation Challenges

Contemporary festivals face sustainability issues, varying participation levels, and the need for digital integration and inclusive practices.

This paper seeks to investigate the degree of participation in festivals and carnivals celebrated in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, it focuses on key events such as the Igede Agba Festival, Och'Idoma Festival, Akata Fishing Festival, Swange Dance Festival, and Ingyough Festival due to their prominence and accessibility. Moreover, these festivals hold unique cultural significance, reflecting the diverse ethnic groups and traditions that define Benue State's rich heritage. The Igede Agba Festival, for instance, is a cornerstone of the Igede people's cultural calendar, celebrating agricultural abundance and ancestral reverence (Adiele, 2021). Similarly, the Och'Idoma Festival highlights the Idoma people's commitment to unity, progress, and cultural preservation. Meanwhile, the Akata Fishing Festival showcases the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, emphasising sustainable resource management practices both economically and environmentally (Essien et al., 2025). The Swange Dance Festival, renowned for its energetic performances, reflects the Tiv people's artistic ingenuity, while the Ingyough Festival underscores the resilience and communal spirit of the Etulo people.

Understanding the patterns of participation in these festivals provides valuable insights into their cultural significance and their potential contributions to sustainable development. High levels of engagement indicate strong cultural attachment and community cohesion, while low participation may signal challenges such as logistical barriers, inadequate funding, or waning interest among younger generations. By examining these dynamics, this study aims to shed light on how festivals can be revitalised and sustained in ways that honour tradition while embracing innovation. Furthermore, understanding participation patterns can inform strategies for integrating festivals into broader development agendas, leveraging their economic, social, and environmental benefits (Gössling et al., 2015).

OBJECTIVES

The study is guided by several research questions aimed at exploring the multifaceted dimensions of festival participation. Central among these is the question: *What is the degree of participation in festivals and carnivals celebrated in Benue State, Nigeria?* To address this, the paper delves into the factors influencing participation, including cultural identity, socioeconomic status, and logistical barriers. Cultural identity plays a crucial role, as individuals who feel a strong connection to their heritage are more likely to participate in festivals that celebrate their traditions. Socioeconomic factors, such as income levels and educational attainment, also influence participation, as they determine an individual's ability to attend and engage in festival activities (Lareau, 2003). Additionally, logistical barriers—such as poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation, and security concerns—can deter participation, particularly in rural areas where access to resources may be limited (Ezeah & Ogwueleka, 2023).

Core Challenges

- Varying participation levels across communities
- Logistical barriers and inadequate funding
- Waning interest amongst younger generations
- Infrastructure and transportation limitations

Research Opportunities

- Understanding cultural attachment patterns
- Examining socioeconomic influences
- Assessing digital innovation potential
- Evaluating sustainable development impacts

In addition to examining participation patterns, this study explores the broader implications of festivals and carnivals for sustainable development. These events have the potential to serve as catalysts for environmental action, economic empowerment, and social cohesion. For example, integrating eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction, recycling, and the use of sustainable materials, into festival activities can mitigate their environmental impact whilst promoting environmental stewardship (Ezeagwu et al., 2025). Economically, festivals can stimulate local economies by attracting tourists and generating revenue for small businesses. Socially, they foster a sense of belonging and solidarity, reinforcing communal bonds and encouraging collaboration on shared goals (Edem, 2022).

Ultimately, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of festivals and carnivals in Benue State's cultural and developmental landscape. By investigating the degree of participation and the factors influencing it, the study provides a foundation for developing strategies—such as government support for intercultural projects—that ensure these celebrations remain vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable. Such efforts are not only vital for preserving Benue State's rich cultural heritage but also for harnessing the transformative power of festivals to drive positive change in society (Egbonyi et al., 2023). Through this exploration, the paper underscores the enduring relevance of festivals and carnivals as cornerstones of cultural identity and agents of sustainable development, offering lessons that resonate far beyond the borders of Benue State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review explores existing studies on festival participation, cultural identity, and community engagement, synthesising key insights from scholars across various disciplines. Festivals and carnivals are not merely celebratory events; they serve as dynamic platforms for cultural preservation, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Scholars such as Adiele (2021) emphasise the role of festivals in strengthening communal ties and reviving forgotten traditions. Their research highlights how festivals act as conduits for transmitting intangible cultural heritage, fostering a sense of belonging, and reinforcing shared values amongst participants. Similarly, Baloch et al. (2022) explore the intersection of cultural preservation and environmental sustainability in festival practices, underscoring the dual role of these events in safeguarding both cultural identity and ecological integrity.

Festivals and Carnivals

Festivals are organised public events that are typically held annually to celebrate cultural, religious, historical, or seasonal occasions (Macleod & Fyall, 2015). These celebrations often involve a series of activities such as music, dance, food, rituals, and performances that reflect the cultural identity and values of a community. At their core, festivals serve as platforms for communal expression, fostering social cohesion and reinforcing collective memory (Ejikeme, 2024).

From an anthropological perspective, festivals can be categorised into several types based on their primary purpose. For instance, religious festivals honour deities, ancestors, or spiritual beliefs, while cultural festivals showcase traditional practices, languages, and customs (Egbonyi et al., 2023). Examples include the Etsu Festival in Idomaland, Nigeria, which celebrates ancestral spirits and reinforces communal bonds, and Diwali in India, a festival of lights symbolising victory over darkness and ignorance.

Historically, festivals have played a crucial role in marking important milestones in human life, such as harvest seasons, solstices, and lunar cycles. In ancient civilisations such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome, festivals were deeply intertwined with agricultural calendars and religious observances (Olabosinde, 2025). Over time, these celebrations evolved to encompass broader themes, including national pride, artistic expression, and entertainment.



Cultural Festivals

Annual events celebrating traditional practices, languages, customs, and community values through music, dance, and rituals.

Economic Impact

Tourism drivers that stimulate demand for accommodation, transportation, and local goods and services.

Living Museums

Dynamic platforms preserving intangible heritage while adapting to modern contexts and promoting cultural exchange.

The economic significance of festivals cannot be overstated. As drivers of tourism and hospitality, they attract visitors from near and far, stimulating demand for accommodation, transportation, and local goods and services (Olonade et al., 2025). For example, the annual Idoma Cultural Week in Benue State, Nigeria, draws thousands of tourists who spend money on lodging, meals, and souvenirs, contributing significantly to the local economy. However, the distribution of economic benefits often remains uneven, highlighting the need for inclusive tourism strategies that empower marginalised communities.

Culturally, festivals act as *living museums*, preserving intangible heritage while adapting to modern contexts (Ajayi & Adeleke, 2023). They provide opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, promoting mutual understanding and respect amongst diverse groups. By showcasing traditional music, dance, cuisine, and crafts, festivals offer visitors a glimpse into the rich cultural tapestry of host communities while celebrating diversity.

Carnivals represent a specific type of festival characterised by lively parades, costumes, music, dance, and street performances. Unlike other festivals, carnivals emphasise communal celebration, entertainment, and artistic expression, often culminating in a period of revelry before a religious observance, such as Lent (Taylor & Lee, 2021). The term *carnival* is derived from the Latin phrase *carne vale*, meaning "farewell to meat," reflecting its origins as a pre-Lenten feast in Catholic traditions. One of the most famous examples is the Rio Carnival in Brazil, widely regarded as the largest and most extravagant celebration in the world. Featuring samba parades, elaborate floats, and colourful costumes, the Rio Carnival showcases the country's rich Afro-Latin heritage while attracting millions of tourists each year (Adeshina, 2025). Similarly, the Notting Hill Carnival in London highlights Caribbean culture through calypso music, steel drum bands, and vibrant street parties.

The Calabar Carnival, celebrated as Africa's biggest street party, is a vibrant showcase of Nigeria's rich cultural mosaic and a powerful catalyst for tourism. Held annually in Cross River State, the event features dazzling parades, colourful costumes, energetic dance performances, and music that reflects the diversity of Nigeria's ethnic groups. It not only fosters national pride and unity but also attracts thousands of international visitors, boosting local businesses and the hospitality industry. By merging tradition with spectacle, the carnival transforms culture into an immersive experience, making Calabar a festive hub for global cultural exchange.

Distinctions between Festivals and Carnivals

While festivals and carnivals share commonalities as public celebrations, they differ in key aspects such as purpose, structure, and participant involvement. Festivals are often tied to specific themes, such as religion, history, or culture, whereas carnivals focus primarily on revelry and entertainment. Structurally, festivals may follow formalised rituals and schedules, while carnivals tend to be more spontaneous and fluid, encouraging improvisation and participation.

Participant involvement also differs. Carnivals invite active participation from attendees, who often dress up in costumes and join processions, whereas festivals may feature passive observation of performances or ceremonies.

Traditional Festivals

Structured events following formalised rituals and schedules, often tied to religious, historical, or cultural themes with ceremonial elements.

Carnival Celebrations

Spontaneous and fluid events emphasising revelry, entertainment, and active participation through costumes, parades, and street performances.

Economic Tourism

Both serve as tourism drivers but with different impacts - festivals focus on cultural education while carnivals emphasise entertainment value.

Factors Influencing Festival Participation

Previous studies have identified several factors influencing festival participation, ranging from logistical challenges to socio-economic considerations. Baloch et al. (2022) discuss financial and environmental challenges, highlighting the need for adequate funding and infrastructure to support large-scale cultural events. Insufficient resources often limit the scope and accessibility of festivals, particularly in rural areas where access to transportation and amenities may be limited. Corruption and crime are additional barriers that deter participation, as noted by Egbonyi et al. (2023). Addressing these issues requires strategic planning and stakeholder collaboration to ensure inclusivity and sustainability.

Socio-economic factors also play a significant role in determining participation levels. Income levels, educational attainment, and employment status influence an individual's ability to attend and engage in festival activities. Edem (2022) argues that socio-economic disparities can create barriers to participation, particularly for marginalised groups such as women and youth. To overcome these challenges, inclusive practices must be prioritised, ensuring that all community members have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from cultural events. Community-led initiatives, such as volunteer programmes and skill development workshops, can empower residents to take ownership of festival organisation and execution, fostering a sense of agency and collective responsibility (Ejikeme, 2024).

Revitalising Forgotten Traditions and Reinforcing Cultural Identity

Festivals serve as vital platforms for revitalising forgotten traditions and reinforcing cultural identity. Okolo and Nwachukwu (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study involving surveys and interviews with 250 cultural stakeholders in Benue State. Their findings reveal that festivals reintroduce traditional practices and narratives, bridging generational gaps and reinforcing cultural identity. Participants noted the revival of fading languages, dances, and crafts, underscoring the role of festivals as instruments of cultural reclamation.

Similarly, Mowforth and Munt (2023) examined how festivals construct and perpetuate cultural identity narratives. Through content analysis of festival programmes and participant feedback, they found that festivals narrate stories of origin, heroism, and spirituality, reinforcing cultural identity and historical consciousness. Attendees described festivals as vital for transmitting cultural narratives across generations, emphasising the need for educational components to inform attendees about the history and meaning behind festival traditions. Producing documentary films and publications, as well as involving schools and universities in festival promotion, were recommended strategies to enhance cultural awareness and continuity.

Cultural Reclamation Studies

Okolo and Nwachukwu (2023) found festivals reintroduce traditional practices, bridging generational gaps and reinforcing cultural identity across Benue State communities.

1

Narrative Construction Research

Mowforth and Munt (2023) revealed that festivals construct cultural narratives through stories of origin, heroism, and spirituality, transmitting heritage across generations.

2

Promoting Environmental Sustainability through Festivals

Recent scholarship emphasises integrating environmental themes into cultural celebrations, particularly in Benue State, where festivals raise awareness about challenges like deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution by linking them to cultural narratives and ancestral wisdom.

Egbonyi et al. (2023) assessed festivals' role in driving cultural identity, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Their survey of 280 respondents in Benue State revealed that festivals are primary drivers of cultural identity, with 85% of participants affirming strengthened heritage connections. They recommend expanding media coverage and youth participation for intergenerational continuity.

Ecological Modernisation Theory posits that festivals can catalyse environmental action through practices like waste reduction, recycling, and eco-friendly material use. Examples include encouraging reusable utensils to reduce plastic waste and organising workshops on sustainable farming, thereby embedding ecological principles and fostering sustainable behaviours.

Ezeah and Ogwueleka (2023) emphasise festivals' role in strengthening communal ties and reviving forgotten traditions, while Okolo and Nwachukwu (2023) highlight their intersection with cultural preservation and environmental sustainability.

The integration of environmental themes into festivals is further supported by theoretical frameworks: Cultural Ecology Theory (Eze, 2020) explains how festivals transmit traditional ecological knowledge crucial for sustainable resource management, and Sustainable Tourism Theory (Akturk & Akbaba, 2021) underscores the importance of balancing cultural celebration with environmental responsibility.

Cultural Ecology Theory: A Framework for Understanding Festivals

Cultural Ecology Theory, developed by Julian Steward (1955) and later expanded by scholars such as Roy Rappaport (1979) and Marvin Harris (1979), provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamic relationship between human cultures and their environments. This theory posits that cultural practices are shaped by ecological conditions and, in turn, influence how humans interact with and manage their natural surroundings.

In the context of festivals and carnivals in Benue State, Nigeria, Cultural Ecology Theory offers valuable insights into how these cultural events reflect adaptive strategies that enable communities to thrive in their specific environments. For instance, traditional farming techniques celebrated during festivals, such as rotational farming or agroforestry, demonstrate how indigenous knowledge systems have been adapted to address environmental constraints such as soil fertility and water scarcity. Similarly, rituals that honour rivers or forests highlight the importance of conserving these resources to ensure their availability for future generations (Rappaport, 1979).

These practices underscore the interconnectedness of cultural identity and environmental stewardship, emphasising the role of festivals as mechanisms for transmitting traditional ecological knowledge. Such knowledge is crucial for sustainable resource management, as it provides practical solutions to modern challenges such as climate change and food insecurity (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

METHODOLOGY

An explanatory mixed-methods design was employed to investigate the degree of participation in festivals and carnivals. Data were collected through structured questionnaires ($n = 380$) and semi-structured interviews ($n = 380$) with key informants, including cultural leaders and event organisers. Participant observation was also conducted during 10 selected festivals to gain first-hand insights into participation patterns.

The questionnaire was designed to capture demographic information, participation frequency, and perceived barriers to engagement. Items were adapted from previous studies (Ejikeme, 2024; Edem, 2022) and pre-tested with a small group of participants to ensure clarity and relevance. The target population comprised all festival participants.

Sampling Technique

Cochran's (1963) formula was used to determine the sample size, ensuring statistical representativeness. Stratified random sampling was employed to account for variations in age, gender, and ethnicity.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse survey responses, while thematic analysis was applied to interview transcripts. Participation rates were categorised using a five-point scale: Very Low (1.00-1.50), Low (1.60-2.50), Moderate (2.60-3.50), High (3.60-4.50), and Very High (4.60-5.00). Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire (frequency of participation), yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.85 (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Face validity was ensured through pre-testing and participant feedback.

Variables Used

- Participation frequency across 10 major festivals
- Cultural identity attachment levels
- Socioeconomic factors and barriers
- Logistical challenges assessment

Data Sources

Mixed-methods approach: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation with cultural stakeholders

Method

Explanatory mixed-methods design using stratified random sampling and thematic analysis for comprehensive insights

RESULTS

The results in table 1 indicate varying levels of participation across different festivals. The weighted mean of 3.74 suggests that most festivals fall into either the "High" or "Moderate" category. The Igede Agba Festival and Och'Idoma Festival exhibited very high participation rates, with mean scores of 4.70 and 4.63, respectively.

Table 1: Degree of Participation in Festivals and Carnivals Celebrated in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Carnivals and Festivals	N	Mean	Degree of Participation	Ranking
1	Igede Agba Festival	380	4.70	Very High	1st
2	Och'Idoma Festival	380	4.63	Very High	2nd
3	Akata Fishing Festival	380	3.84	High	3rd
4	Swange Dance Festival	380	3.81	High	4th
5	Ingyough Festival	380	3.79	High	5th
6	Mbatyay Festival	380	3.57	Moderate	6th
7	Ijov Festival	380	3.52	Moderate	7th
8	Alekwu Festival	380	3.51	Moderate	8th
9	Kwagh-Hir Festival	380	3.50	Moderate	9th
10	Ujo Festival	380	2.87	Low	10th

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025)

Weighted Mean = 3.74

Scale: 1.00 - 1.50 = Very Low; 1.60 - 2.50 = Low; 2.60 - 3.50 = Moderate; 3.60 - 4.50 = High; 4.60 - 5.00 = Very High

These findings align with previous studies highlighting the cultural significance of these events (Ezeah & Ogwueleka, 2023). Factors contributing to high participation include strong cultural identity, effective organisation, and community support.

In contrast, the Ujo Festival showed low engagement, with a mean score of 2.87. Respondents cited logistical challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure and poor transportation, as significant barriers to participation.

Digital innovations, such as mobile applications and social media campaigns (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook), were observed to enhance participation by improving event accessibility and awareness. For example, the Swange Dance Festival utilised online platforms to reach younger audiences and promote cultural heritage.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing logistical and awareness challenges to ensure broader participation. Public-private partnerships (e.g., between the Benue government and private marketing agencies) and community involvement were proposed as solutions to overcome resource limitations and foster sustainable practices.

4.70

Igede Agba Festival

Highest participation rate, reflecting strong cultural attachment

3.74

Overall Mean

Average participation level across all festivals in the study

2.87

Ujo Festival

Lowest engagement due to logistical barriers

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study results reveal significant variations in festival participation across Benue State, with implications for cultural preservation, community development, and sustainable tourism (Baloch et al., 2022). The very high participation rates observed in the Igede Agba Festival and Och'Idoma Festival demonstrate the enduring relevance of these cultural events in contemporary society. These festivals have successfully maintained their appeal by adapting to modern contexts whilst preserving their traditional essence (Olabosinde, 2025).

The moderate to high participation levels in festivals such as the Akata Fishing Festival, Swange Dance Festival, and Ingoyough Festival indicate their potential for growth and development. These events could benefit from targeted interventions to address specific challenges and enhance their appeal to broader audiences, thereby promoting cultural tourism (Ejikeme, 2024).

The low participation in the Ujo Festival highlights the critical importance of addressing logistical barriers and infrastructure challenges. This finding underscores the need for comprehensive planning and resource allocation to ensure that all communities have equal opportunities to celebrate their cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion (Edem, 2022).

High Participation Factors

Strong cultural identity, effective organisation, community support, and adaptation to modern contexts while preserving traditional essence (Olabosinde, 2025).

Growth Potential Areas

Moderate participation festivals show potential for development through targeted interventions and enhanced appeal to broader audiences, contributing to sustainable economic development (Egbonyi et al., 2023).

Critical Barriers

Logistical challenges, inadequate infrastructure, and poor transportation create significant barriers requiring comprehensive planning and resource allocation to foster cultural preservation and social cohesion (Edem, 2022).

The integration of digital technologies emerged as a promising strategy for enhancing festival participation and reach. Social media platforms and mobile applications have proven effective in promoting cultural events and engaging younger audiences who might otherwise be disconnected from traditional celebrations (Ejikeme, 2024).

The environmental sustainability dimension of festivals also presents opportunities for innovation and community engagement. By incorporating eco-friendly practices and environmental education into festival activities, organisers can contribute to broader sustainability goals while maintaining cultural authenticity (Baloch et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study's findings reveal that festival participation in Benue State follows a tiered pattern, requiring differentiated interventions rather than universal solutions. To ensure their vitality and long-term impact, stakeholders must prioritise the elimination of logistical barriers, institutionalise technology-driven solutions, and embed inclusivity as a core operational principle. Cultural ministries and development agencies should mobilise coordinated strategies to engage youth as active custodians of tradition, while also systematically archiving endangered practices through digital and scholarly platforms. These efforts must be mainstreamed into cultural policy frameworks to guarantee their continuity, scalability, and resonance across future generations.

The data-driven approach of this study provides a foundation for evidence-based policy-making, moving beyond assumptions to targeted strategies based on actual participation patterns.

The moderate participation rates observed in several festivals, combined with participant feedback indicating awareness gaps, support the strategic deployment of technology solutions like mobile applications and social media platforms (e.g., Carnival Hub). Furthermore, fostering inclusivity by involving marginalised groups, such as women and youth, in festival planning and execution can strengthen community ties and promote equitable participation (Bourdieu, 1986).

The uneven participation patterns across different demographic groups identified in this study underscore why involving marginalised groups in festival planning is not just ethically important but strategically necessary for sustainable cultural preservation.

The study recommends establishing cultural preservation committees to oversee festival activities and formal documentation of endangered traditions to prevent further erosion.

Based on the participation hierarchy identified in this study, the following evidence-based recommendations address the specific barriers and opportunities revealed by the data:

01

Address Logistical Barriers

Prioritise elimination of infrastructure challenges and improve transportation access to ensure broader community participation in festivals.

02

Implement Digital Solutions

Institutionalise technology-driven approaches including mobile apps and social media to enhance accessibility and youth engagement.

03

Fostering Inclusive Participation

Embed inclusivity principles by involving marginalised groups in festival planning and execution to strengthen community bonds.

04

Establish Preservation Framework

Create cultural preservation committees and systematic documentation processes to archive endangered traditions for future generations.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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