

**JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES AND
BUILT
ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH (JESBER)**

2026, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 684-692

Published by Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Calabar, Nigeria

Print ISSN: 3141-5547 | OPEN ACCESS



Research article

EVENT MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS AT EFIK AND QUA TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS IN CALABAR SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Cultural festivals require more than compelling heritage content: they depend on planning, public-sector coordination, promotion, participant engagement and a visitor experience capable of sustaining future attendance. This study evaluated the management effectiveness of the Efik and Qua traditional festivals in Calabar South, Nigeria, and examined how management-related perceptions corresponded with satisfaction and behavioural intentions. A secondary quantitative analysis was conducted on an archived cross-sectional survey of 400 active festival participants selected purposively and equally from Efik and Qua groups (200 each) within an estimated population of 8,300. The available aggregate frequencies were reorganised into four management domains: participation and cultural stewardship; institutional and promotional effectiveness; experience evaluation; and post-event behavioural intention. Descriptive statistics were used because respondent-level records were unavailable. Frequent participation was reported by 17.5%, while 42.5% had never participated. Local-government support was judged ineffective by 52.5%, social media influence negligible by 45.0%, and 47.5% reported at least moderate infrastructure challenges. Only 22.5% were very satisfied; however, 62.5% were at least somewhat likely to recommend the festivals and 70.0% were definite or possible future attendees. The coexistence of weak operational ratings and comparatively stronger revisit potential indicates that cultural attachment may sustain demand despite management deficiencies. The study concludes that professional event governance, digital audience development, co-created programming, service standards and post-event evaluation are necessary to convert cultural appeal into dependable festival performance.

KEYWORDS

cultural festival, event management, participant engagement, satisfaction, behavioural intention, Calabar South

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INTRODUCTION

Festivals have become strategic instruments through which places interpret heritage, mobilise residents, attract visitors and stimulate temporary concentrations of economic activity. Their outcomes nevertheless depend on the quality of event management. Programming, stakeholder coordination, visitor communication, access, safety, infrastructure and evaluation determine whether cultural content becomes a coherent experience or remains a loosely organised celebration. Event tourism scholarship therefore treats festivals as planned systems in which symbolic value and operational capability are mutually dependent (Getz, 2008; Getz & Page, 2016).

The Efik and Qua festivals are embedded in the cultural landscape of Calabar South. They communicate identity through performance, ritual, costume, music and communal participation, while also providing a potential platform for destination marketing and local enterprise. The archived study from which this paper draws documented substantial cultural interest but also reported uneven participation, limited institutional effectiveness, infrastructure constraints and weak digital promotion. These conditions raise a management question that differs from the historical question addressed in the source studies: does the current event-delivery system support favourable attendee evaluations and future patronage?

This question matters because cultural appeal alone does not ensure a sustainable event portfolio. Repeat attendance and recommendation are shaped by how visitors interpret quality, convenience, reliability and social value. Poor coordination can suppress local participation, reduce expenditure capture and weaken confidence among sponsors and public agencies. In settings where formal visitor monitoring is limited, a structured reanalysis of existing survey evidence can still reveal operational priorities and establish a baseline for subsequent longitudinal research.

The study therefore aimed to evaluate event-management effectiveness and behavioural intentions at the Efik and Qua festivals. Specifically, it assessed (a) participation and cultural stewardship, (b) government support, infrastructure and online promotion, (c) satisfaction and recommendation, and (d) intention to attend future editions. The analysis is deliberately descriptive; it does not claim causal relationships that cannot be tested without respondent-level data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Festival management as an integrated system

Planned events combine temporal concentration, purposeful programming and multiple stakeholder interests. Getz (2008) argues that event tourism connects event design with destination development, while Getz and Page (2016) emphasise the need to evaluate event portfolios, experiences and legacies. For community festivals, management effectiveness is visible in the alignment of cultural custodians, residents, vendors, security providers, transport operators, government agencies, sponsors and media. Fragmentation across these actors can produce attractive performances but inconsistent access, information and service delivery.

Location and place fit also influence event viability. Leenders et al. (2015) show that the host setting is not a neutral container: accessibility, identity and spatial organisation condition festival value. In Calabar South, the relationship between neighbourhood infrastructure and festival programming is therefore central. Operational planning should treat transport, sanitation, crowd movement, vendor zones and accommodation information as parts of the experience rather than external constraints.

Participation, heritage stewardship and social capital

Community participation performs both productive and legitimising functions. Residents contribute local knowledge, voluntary labour, cultural authority and informal promotion. Arcodia and Whitford (2006) link festival attendance with social-capital development, particularly through networks and shared identity. Yet participation is not automatically inclusive. Where programming is perceived as externally controlled or insufficiently connected to community priorities, residents may become spectators rather than co-producers. Deery and Jago (2010) further caution that event impacts include social costs as well as benefits; managers must monitor congestion, exclusion, conflict and unequal distribution of gains.

Heritage stewardship requires a balance between continuity and adaptation. Cultural festivals can preserve intangible heritage by creating settings for intergenerational transmission, but commercial pressures may simplify or detach performances from their meanings. Evaluation should consequently include cultural indicators—knowledge, participation and perceived significance—alongside visitor numbers and revenue (del Barrio et al., 2012).

Institutional support, communication and digital promotion

Public agencies commonly provide permits, security, infrastructure, publicity and funding. Their effectiveness affects both resident trust and organiser capacity. Social exchange research suggests that local support strengthens when benefits are credible and decision processes are trusted (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Gursoy et al., 2017). Weak support can also discourage private sponsors because responsibilities and expected returns remain unclear.

Digital channels expand the temporal and geographic reach of festivals. Effective social media is not merely the publication of posters: it involves audience segmentation, storytelling, schedules, wayfinding, live interaction, user-generated content and post-event relationship management. When online visibility is weak, culturally valuable events remain dependent on local awareness and cannot easily convert interest into travel planning or advance bookings.

Satisfaction and behavioural intention

Service-quality and tourism research distinguishes perceived quality from satisfaction and subsequent behavioural intention. Quality reflects judgements about performance attributes, satisfaction evaluates the overall experience, and intentions indicate probable recommendation or return. Baker and Crompton (2000) found that festival quality influences satisfaction and behavioural intentions, while Oliver (1999) explains that loyalty is built through repeated favourable evaluations rather than a single transaction.

For community festivals, emotional and cultural attachment may partly compensate for operational weaknesses, but this buffer cannot be assumed to persist indefinitely.

Conceptual orientation and research gap

This study adopts an input–experience–response logic. Participation, public support, infrastructure and promotion represent management conditions; satisfaction represents experience evaluation; recommendation and future attendance represent behavioural responses. The source studies concentrated on history and tourism development. A distinct event-management analysis is needed to identify operational weaknesses and determine whether favourable future intentions coexist with low satisfaction. The aggregate dataset cannot test mediation or causality, but it can expose this pattern and guide a stronger future measurement model.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and study setting

The paper used a secondary descriptive design to reanalyse an archived cross-sectional survey on Efik and Qua traditional festivals in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Calabar South forms part of the Calabar metropolis and contains communities with continuing Efik and Qua cultural traditions. The unit of analysis was the reported response category, not an identifiable individual.

Population, sample and data source

The archived study estimated 8,300 active festival participants: 4,200 Efik and 4,100 Qua. It purposively selected 400 participants, allocating 200 to each group. Purposive selection was appropriate to the original study's interest in persons familiar with festival practices, but it limits population-level generalisation. This reanalysis used only the anonymised aggregate frequency tables supplied in the attached materials.

Measures and analytical procedure

Variables were grouped into four domains. Cultural stewardship comprised preservation importance and participation frequency. Management capacity comprised local-government support, social-media promotion and infrastructure constraints. Experience evaluation comprised overall satisfaction. Behavioural intention comprised likelihood of recommendation and willingness to attend a future edition. Frequencies and percentages were checked against the reported sample of 400 and reorganised into comparable tables. No significance test, regression coefficient or reliability statistic was generated because item-level observations and scale scores were not available.

Quality control and ethical considerations

Category totals were arithmetically verified and wording was harmonised without changing the underlying counts. The original materials indicated voluntary and anonymous participation. The present analysis involved no names, contacts or sensitive personal records. Because only archived, anonymised aggregate results were reanalysed, the paper presents no claim of fresh fieldwork. Future studies should obtain institutional ethical approval, record response rates and retain de-identified respondent-level data for multivariate analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1. Participation and cultural stewardship indicators

Indicator	Response	Frequency	Percent
Preserving historical background	Extremely important	90	22.5
	Moderately important	160	40.0
	Not important	150	37.5
Festival participation	Frequently	70	17.5
	Occasionally	160	40.0
	Never	170	42.5

Source: Secondary analysis of the archived Efik and Qua festival survey (n = 400).

Table 1 reveals a weak conversion of heritage concern into active participation. Although 62.5% considered preservation at least moderately important, only 17.5% participated frequently and 42.5% had never participated. The 25-percentage-point gap between non-participation and frequent participation suggests that cultural approval alone is insufficient; organisers require accessible roles, regular community communication and programming that invites participation beyond attendance.

Table 2. Institutional, promotional and infrastructure assessments

Management dimension	Positive/major n (%)	Moderate n (%)	Negative/negligible n (%)
Local-government support	70 (17.5)	120 (30.0)	210 (52.5)
Social-media role	100 (25.0)	120 (30.0)	180 (45.0)
Infrastructure challenges	80 (20.0)	110 (27.5)	210 (52.5 no major issue)

Source: Secondary analysis of the archived Efik and Qua festival survey (n = 400).

A majority considered local-government support ineffective (52.5%), and 45.0% regarded social media as having negligible influence. Infrastructure responses were more mixed: 47.5% reported significant or moderate challenges, whereas 52.5% perceived negligible impact. Management weakness is therefore clearest in governance and promotion, although almost half of respondents still encountered infrastructure constraints requiring operational attention.

Table 3. Overall festival satisfaction

Response category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative favourable percent
Very satisfied	90	22.5	22.5
Somewhat satisfied	140	35.0	57.5
Not satisfied	170	42.5	—
Total	400	100.0	—

Source: Secondary analysis of the archived Efik and Qua festival survey (n = 400).

Only 22.5% reported high satisfaction. Combining very and somewhat satisfied responses yields 57.5%, leaving a large dissatisfied segment of 42.5%. The distribution indicates a fragile experience base: favourable evaluations constitute a majority, but not a decisive one.

Table 4. Recommendation and future-attendance intentions

Outcome	Strong/definite n (%)	Conditional n (%)	Negative n (%)	Positive or conditional total
Likelihood of recommendation	100 (25.0)	150 (37.5)	150 (37.5)	250 (62.5%)
Future attendance	150 (37.5)	130 (32.5)	120 (30.0)	280 (70.0%)

Source: Secondary analysis of the archived Efik and Qua festival survey (n = 400).

Behavioural intention was more favourable than high satisfaction. In total, 62.5% were highly or somewhat likely to recommend the festivals, while 70.0% were definite or possible future attendees. Nevertheless, the conditional categories are substantial. Management improvements could convert these undecided participants into firmer advocates and repeat attendees.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that Efik and Qua festivals possess a reservoir of cultural and behavioural support, but the management system does not yet convert that support into consistently strong participation or satisfaction. The preservation result accords with del Barrio et al. (2012), who argue that cultural value cannot be judged solely by market outcomes. Respondents recognise heritage importance, yet high non-participation suggests that stewardship mechanisms remain narrow. This partially aligns with Arcodia and Whitford's (2006) account of festivals as social-capital platforms: the potential exists, but social capital requires repeated opportunities for meaningful involvement.

The weak assessment of government support is consistent with social-exchange explanations of resident support. Gursoy and Kendall (2006) and Gursoy et al. (2017) show that trust and credible benefits shape acceptance of events. In Calabar South, ineffective support may refer to gaps in coordination, funding, infrastructure, marketing or transparency. The aggregate data cannot isolate these mechanisms, but the finding contradicts any assumption that public sponsorship by itself constitutes effective governance. A published budget or ceremonial presence is not equivalent to a clear delivery structure with accountable responsibilities.

The limited perceived role of social media points to an underdeveloped audience-management function. This result complements Getz and Page's (2016) argument that contemporary event tourism requires strategic portfolio and market development. A festival with strong local meaning can remain externally invisible if schedules, access information, cultural interpretation and booking links are not available early and consistently. A content calendar, verified event pages and partnerships with destination businesses would make promotion operational rather than episodic.

Satisfaction and intention results present an important tension. High satisfaction was only 22.5%, yet 70.0% were definite or possible future attendees. This pattern is compatible with Baker and Crompton (2000), who distinguish quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions, and with Oliver's (1999) view that loyalty can reflect more than immediate service evaluation. Cultural identity, family ties and ritual obligation may sustain attendance even where management performance is weak. The result therefore aligns with studies that treat festivals as socially embedded experiences, but it cautions against interpreting revisit intention as proof of operational excellence.

The analysis also adds a contextual qualification to event-impact literature. Deery and Jago (2010) call for balanced assessment of positive and negative social effects. In Calabar South, almost half reported infrastructure problems and more than two-fifths were dissatisfied. These values are too large to be dismissed as marginal. Event managers should include resident inconvenience, mobility, waste and service reliability in evaluation dashboards rather than relying exclusively on attendance estimates and publicity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Efik and Qua festivals retain meaningful cultural appeal and a viable base for future attendance, but their management architecture is underperforming. Participation is shallow, public support and online promotion receive weak ratings, and satisfaction is not sufficiently robust. The stronger recommendation and attendance intentions indicate opportunity rather than confirmed loyalty. Sustainable growth will depend on converting cultural attachment into a reliable, inclusive and professionally managed experience.

Five actions are recommended. First, establish a year-round festival management committee with documented roles for cultural custodians, local government, residents, tourism businesses, transport providers, security agencies and sponsors. Second, use co-design workshops and volunteer pathways to increase resident participation, especially among young people. Third, publish an integrated operational plan covering access, sanitation, vendor zoning, crowd movement, emergency response and accessibility. Fourth, implement a digital promotion calendar with schedules, cultural interpretation, maps and visitor information. Fifth, administer a standard post-event survey with respondent-level service-quality, expenditure, satisfaction and intention measures so that future editions can be compared statistically.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The analysis is limited by purposive sampling, archived aggregate data and the absence of demographic controls, item-level responses and temporal information. Relationships between management attributes, satisfaction and intentions could not be tested. A future probability-based or stratified study should use validated multi-item scales, compare Efik and Qua respondents, distinguish residents from visitors, estimate visitor expenditure and apply structural-equation or regression models only after reliability and validity have been established.

DECLARATIONS

Funding: No external funding was reported for this secondary analysis. Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. Data availability: The analysis is based on aggregate tables contained in the archived study materials; no respondent-level dataset was available. Author contributions: Both authors contributed to conceptualisation, analysis, interpretation and manuscript preparation. Ethical statement: Only anonymised aggregate data were reanalysed; no new contact with participants occurred.

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