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Research article

HERITAGE CONTINUITY AND TOURISM READINESS IN EFIK AND QUA TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS IN CALABAR SOUTH NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses community perceptions of heritage continuity, participation, tourism contribution and institutional readiness surrounding Efik and Qua traditional festivals in Calabar South, Nigeria. Purposive survey of 400 active festival participants, equally drawn from Efik and Qua, using transparent descriptive statistics and evidence triangulation with the source narrative. 43% reported never participating, 40% regarded preservation as moderately important, and 40% considered the festivals culturally insignificant. Perceived economic effects were limited: 53 reported negligible community benefits, while 53 rated local-government support ineffective. Respondents nevertheless reported some visitor potential, with 65% perceiving at least a slight festival-period increase in tourist influx. Digital reach and environmental communication were weak; 45% reported negligible social-media influence and 48 perceived no tourist environmental knowledge. Implications: Festival policy should prioritise community co-production, historically accurate interpretation, transparent support, visitor services, environmental management and measurable marketing. By separating respondent perception from verified tourism performance, the study provides a defensible baseline for culturally respectful festival development and avoids treating reported visitor, employment or social effects as independently measured causal outcomes for future monitoring.

KEYWORDS

Efik heritage; Qua heritage; festival tourism; community perception; cultural safeguarding; destination readiness; Calabar South; environmental management

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Introduction

Traditional festivals are living institutions through which communities remember, negotiate and publicly perform identity. They can transmit language, dress, music, foodways, ritual knowledge and social obligations, but their continuity cannot be inferred merely from the existence of an annual event. Continuity depends on participation, intergenerational learning, legitimacy among custodians and the ability of organisers to adapt presentation without displacing cultural meaning. Tourism introduces additional opportunities and pressures because a festival becomes simultaneously a community practice, a public event and a marketable visitor experience. The analytical challenge is therefore to determine whether tourism development strengthens the cultural institution or converts selected elements into spectacle while participation, knowledge and local control weaken.

Calabar South contains Efik, Qua and other cultural communities whose histories and institutions contribute to the identity of the wider Calabar destination. Cultural performance is important to the city's tourism image, yet destination branding can blur distinctions among communities, festivals and ceremonial traditions. The study from which This study is developed examined Efik and Qua traditional festivals and recorded community perceptions of historical significance, participation, host-community effects, tourism contribution and implementation constraints. The source also contained references to Leboku and Yakurr communities that are geographically and culturally distinct from the Efik and Qua setting. Rather than reproducing that conflation, the present study confines interpretation to the stated Efik and Qua survey population and treats any externally borrowed examples as contextual errors in the archive.

The policy problem is not a simple shortage of cultural attractions. It is the absence of a defensible evidence chain linking cultural resources, community support, visitor demand, enterprise benefit and environmental management. Promotional claims frequently describe festivals as drivers of employment, cohesion and tourist arrivals, but these claims require indicators. Resident perceptions can identify legitimacy gaps, expectations and experienced constraints; they cannot, by themselves, establish visitor counts, expenditure, business turnover or causal economic impact. This distinction is essential for a journal article because strong conclusions should follow the measurement actually undertaken. The analysis therefore uses terms such as perceived benefit, reported participation and respondent-rated support rather than presenting opinions as audited outcomes.

The study addresses four connected questions. First, how did respondents rate heritage preservation, participation and cultural significance? Second, what social and economic effects did they perceive within the host community? Third, what evidence of tourism readiness emerged from reported visitor change, business effects, promotion and recommendation? Fourth, what institutional, infrastructure, digital and environmental constraints were reported? These questions support a more useful interpretation than a binary judgment about whether festivals 'cause' tourism development. They reveal where community confidence is strong, where it is conditional and where investment or governance changes are required.

This study interprete festival development as a place-management issue. Cultural events affect movement, temporary infrastructure, waste generation, public-space use, accommodation demand, transport, safety and neighbourhood experience. A festival strategy that ignores these systems may attract attention while transferring congestion, litter and service pressure to host communities. Conversely, a strategy grounded in cultural authority, spatial planning and environmental safeguards can create a visitor experience that supports local enterprise without weakening heritage continuity. The article therefore integrates cultural-tourism analysis with practical destination governance.

Literature review

Festival-tourism literature identifies economic, socio-cultural and place-image benefits, but it also warns that benefits are unevenly distributed and often measured through perception surveys rather than verified accounts. Residents may value pride, recognition and opportunities for trade while simultaneously experiencing crowding, noise, commercialisation or exclusion from decision-making. Chang (2017) shows that festival benefits and identity are related to attachment and support, while Choi et al. (2020) demonstrate that residents and attendees may interpret traditional festivals differently. These studies reinforce the need to disaggregate heritage value, social support and tourism utility instead of treating them as a single favourable attitude. Intangible cultural heritage is sustained through communities, groups and practitioners, not through branding alone. The UNESCO safeguarding framework emphasises identification, documentation, transmission and community participation. Safeguarding does not require freezing a tradition in an imagined historical form; it requires that change remain intelligible and acceptable to its bearers. This principle is especially important when public authorities or sponsors redesign ceremonies for media visibility. A professionally produced event may improve visitor legibility, yet decisions about sacred content, access, sequence and representation should remain accountable to legitimate custodians.

Tourism-development studies in Nigeria often emphasise employment, enterprise and destination image. Eneyo and Archibong (2024) discuss socio-economic implications of tourism development, while Eneyo et al. (2023) connect tourism with entrepreneurship in Cross River State. These contributions support the expectation that festivals can create temporary markets for food, transport, crafts, accommodation and performance. However, the size and distribution of those effects depend on local procurement, vendor access, visitor length of stay and leakage. The present dataset contains respondent judgments about business and employment, not transactions. It can therefore assess perceived inclusiveness and readiness, but not calculate a multiplier (Eneyo & Ekpenyong, 2018; Eyo et al., 2026; Onnoghen, Kujoh, et al., 2025; Onnoghen, Sylvanus, et al., 2023).

Spatial and service evidence from related research adds an important destination perspective. Eneyo (2026) shows that tourism-support services and environmental management must be considered together, while Eneyo's study of eateries in Calabar demonstrates that urban hospitality services follow spatial and patronage patterns. Festival demand is similarly time-bound and spatially concentrated. Visitor flows can intensify pressure on access roads, food-service clusters, sanitation facilities and public spaces. A festival policy that counts performances but does not plan these support systems is incomplete.

Community-based tourism scholarship argues that local participation should involve agenda setting, benefit rules and monitoring, not only attendance or volunteering. Invitations to perform can coexist with weak control over budgets, interpretation and commercial opportunities. In such circumstances, participation may be visible but not empowered. This

distinction is useful for the survey because reported participation levels were uneven, while ratings of government support and economic benefit were weak. The findings should be read as possible signs of institutional distance rather than proof that residents reject their heritage (Agbor et al., 2026; Eneyo et al., 2026; Onnoghen, 2026a, 2026b; Onnoghen, Inyang, et al., 2025; Onnoghen, Unimtiang, Nwagbara, et al., 2024; Unimtiang, Onnoghen, Efut, et al., 2025).

Digital promotion is now part of destination visibility, but online reach is not equivalent to cultural understanding. Social media can circulate images rapidly while simplifying narratives or repeating inaccuracies. Effective digital interpretation should identify the community, meaning, date, access conditions, environmental expectations and verified service information. The source survey asked respondents about social-media influence, allowing an assessment of perceived promotional strength. It did not measure impressions, engagement, conversion or audience origin; conclusions about digital performance must remain correspondingly limited (Ogbaji et al., 2025; Onnoghen, Unimtiang, Onnoghen, et al., 2024; Unimtiang, Onnoghen, Ogbaji, et al., 2025).

Environmental management is often peripheral in festival research despite its direct relevance to host welfare. Temporary events can increase single-use packaging, food waste, wastewater, noise, traffic and pressure on toilets or drains. Eneyo (2025) frames environmental management as the organised prevention and control of human pressures, while the riverine-women study by Eneyo et al. (2026) illustrates how livelihood and conservation issues intersect. For cultural festivals, environmental responsibility should be incorporated into vendor agreements, site plans, collection schedules and visitor communication rather than treated as a post-event clean-up exercise (Igelle et al., 2023; Inah et al., 2022; Onnoghen, Adeniyi, et al., 2024; Onnoghen, Anabaraonye, et al., 2024; Onnoghen, Anabaraonye, Owoh, et al., 2025; Onnoghen, Nwobu, et al., 2024; Onnoghen, Olisah, et al., 2024; Onnoghen, Onwuzurike, & Anabaraonye, 2025; Onnoghen, Unachukwu, et al., 2024).

The literature gap addressed here is methodological as much as substantive. Existing celebratory accounts often move from cultural importance to tourism success without documenting the intermediate mechanisms. This study develops a more cautious chain: community recognition and participation influence the credibility of presentation; credible presentation, together with access, services and promotion, affects visitor readiness; visitor activity may then produce local benefits and environmental costs. Each link requires separate evidence. The survey provides evidence primarily for respondent perception at the first three links and should not be stretched beyond that boundary (Eneyo et al., 2022).

Conceptual and analytical framework

The analytical framework combines heritage continuity, social licence and destination readiness. Heritage continuity refers to perceived importance, participation and cultural significance. Social licence refers to host-community acceptance, perceived cohesion, economic fairness and confidence in public support. Destination readiness refers to perceived visitor change, business response, promotion, infrastructure, digital reach and environmental communication. These dimensions are related but not interchangeable. A festival may possess high symbolic value but low service readiness, or it may attract visitors while community support declines. The framework also distinguishes inputs, reported responses and independently verifiable outcomes. Inputs include organising committees, funding, venues, marketing and public services. Reported responses include survey answers about significance, participation and benefit. Verifiable outcomes would include attendance registers, visitor origin, expenditure, vendor revenue, waste volumes, incidents and satisfaction scores. The source archive contains the second category and descriptive information on the first, but little of the third. The results are consequently interpreted as a perception baseline that can guide a future monitoring system rather than as an impact evaluation.

Methodology

The study described a population of approximately 8,300 active participants associated with Efik and Qua festival groups and selected 400 respondents purposively, with 200 respondents assigned to each group. Purposive selection was intended to reach people with experience or knowledge of the festivals. This design is appropriate for eliciting informed views, but it does not create a probability sample of all residents or visitors. Statistical generalisation beyond the sampled participants is therefore not claimed. The instrument contained twenty closed-ended questions organised into four domains: historical background and cultural significance; host-community effects; tourism contribution; and challenges to tourism development. Most items offered three response categories. The results reported frequencies and percentages for the 400 respondents. Where the text and table totals aligned, values were transcribed directly. Where interpretations exceeded the

data, the numerical distribution was retained and the conclusion was narrowed. No individual-level dataset was available, so multivariable analysis, reliability estimation and subgroup comparison could not be reproduced.

The methodology proposed multiple regression for the relationship between festivals and social norms and an independent-samples t test for tourism contribution. The archive did not provide a complete model specification, variable coding, coefficients, assumptions or auditable output for those tests. Moreover, several source items are categorical perceptions rather than continuous measurements of norms or tourism performance. The present article therefore does not repeat unsupported inferential claims. It uses frequencies, percentages, combined positive-or-moderate shares and analytical comparison across domains. This decision preserves the observations while improving statistical defensibility. Data quality procedures involved four steps. First, denominators were checked against the stated sample of 400. Second, response categories were relabelled in neutral language where wording was leading or evaluative. Third, festival terminology was reviewed to remove references that were not demonstrably Efik or Qua. Fourth, findings were classified as reported perception, documented sample characteristic or proposed policy response. Percentages are presented to one decimal place, and counts are shown where available. The analysis was prepared so that another researcher can reconstruct each percentage from the frequencies.

Ethical interpretation is particularly important because cultural knowledge can include restricted or sacred content. The questionnaire stated that participation was voluntary and anonymous. This reanalysis uses only aggregate data and does not reproduce personal identifiers or confidential ritual detail. It also avoids claiming authority over community histories that were not documented through named custodians. Future research should obtain approval from an appropriate institutional ethics body and a culturally legitimate community process, because formal consent and cultural permission address different responsibilities. The principal limitations are the purposive sample, reliance on self-report, absence of raw respondent records, lack of visitor or business transaction data and uncertainty around the exact festival events considered by respondents. The survey may also be affected by acquiescence, recall and wording effects. These constraints do not make the archive unusable. They define the question it can answer: how a selected group of participants rated heritage, community effects and tourism readiness at the time of the survey. They prevent claims about causal impact, population prevalence or current 2026 conditions.

Results and discussion

The sample and instrument provide broad coverage of festival-related perceptions but should be read in relation to the purposive design. Equal allocation between Efik and Qua groups gives balanced representation within the archive, yet it does not show the actual proportions of participants or residents in Calabar South. The survey's value lies in comparing response patterns across themes. The strongest analytical signal is not uniformly positive support; it is a mixed profile in which cultural recognition and visitor potential coexist with weak participation, limited perceived benefit and institutional concerns.

Table 1. Study design and evidential scope

Element	specification	Defensible use
Population	Approximately 8,300 active participants	Sampling frame reported by source; not independently verified
Sample	400 respondents; 200 Efik and 200 Qua	Balanced purposive participant sample
Instrument	20 three-option items	Descriptive perception evidence
Unavailable material	Individual records and complete inferential output	No reproducible regression or t test

Heritage-continuity responses were divided. Forty percent regarded preservation as moderately important and 23% as extremely important, producing a combined 63% who assigned at least moderate importance. However, 38% rated preservation as not important. Participation was weaker: 43% reported never participating, 40% participated occasionally and 18% frequently. Similarly, 40% considered the festivals not culturally significant, compared with 35% who rated them somewhat significant and 25% very significant. These distributions do not support a claim of universal community attachment.

Table 2. Heritage continuity indicators

Indicator	Response category	n	%
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Preservation importance	Extremely important	90	23
	Moderately important	160	40
	Not important	150	38
Participation	Frequently	70	18
	Occasionally	160	40
	Never	170	42.5
Cultural significance	Very significant	100	25
	Somewhat significant	140	35
	Not significant	160	40

Note. Percentages use n = 400.

The coexistence of stated preservation value and limited participation is analytically important. People may support the idea of cultural continuity while facing barriers of age, cost, timing, social position, religious belief or weak information. Alternatively, respondents may recognise cultural importance but perceive contemporary event forms as disconnected from their expectations. Because the questionnaire did not ask why people participated or abstained, these explanations remain hypotheses. A future study should separate non-participation caused by practical barriers from principled disengagement or lack of knowledge.

Perceptions of host-community effects were predominantly cautious or negative. On social influence, 48 reported no significant impact, 30% selected enhanced cultural awareness and 23% selected strengthened social bonds. On economic effect, 53 selected negligible impact, 28 job-creation opportunities and 20% increased local business. These answers do not measure jobs or turnover, but they indicate that a majority of respondents did not recognise substantial local economic benefit. Such a perception can weaken social licence even where some enterprises benefit.

Table 3. Perceived host-community effects

Domain	Positive/high	Intermediate	Negative/none
Social effect	Strengthened bonds: 23%	Awareness: 30%	No significant effect: 48
Economic effect	Increased business: 20%	Job opportunity: 28	Negligible effect: 53
Quality of life	Significantly improved: 23%	Slightly improved: 35%	No improvement: 43%

Note. Categories report respondent perceptions, not audited outcomes.

The economic finding should not be interpreted as evidence that the festivals generate no spending. It shows that perceived benefit was not broad or visible among the sampled participants. Benefit may be concentrated among vendors, transport operators, performers or businesses near event sites. It may also be temporary or offset by costs. Transparent vendor selection, local procurement and publication of basic event accounts can improve both actual distribution and public confidence. A future economic assessment should collect visitor expenditure, vendor sales, paid employment, sponsorship and leakage rather than asking a single perception question.

Tourism-readiness responses were somewhat more favourable. Twenty-five percent perceived a substantial increase in tourist influx and 40% a slight increase; together, 65% perceived some increase during festival periods. Thirty-five percent perceived no noticeable change. This distribution supports the conclusion that respondents recognised visitor potential, but it cannot establish the volume, origin or additionality of visits. Some people present at an event may be local residents, return migrants or visitors already in Calabar for other activities.

Table 4. Tourism-readiness indicators

Indicator	Strong response	Moderate response	Weak/no response
Tourist influx	Substantial: 25%	Slight: 40%	No change: 35%
Recommendation	Highly likely: 25%	Somewhat likely: 38%	Not likely: 38%
Future attendance	Likely: 38%	Conditional/unsure: 33	Unlikely: 30%
Government support	Very effective: 18%	Somewhat effective: 30%	Ineffective: 53

Note. Visitor change and intentions were self-reported.

Recommendation and future-attendance indicators also revealed conditional support. One quarter were highly likely to recommend the festivals, 38% somewhat likely and 38% not likely. For future attendance, 38% indicated a positive intention, 33 were uncertain or conditional and 30% were negative. These are useful demand-side signals because willingness to recommend and revisit often reflects the overall experience. Nevertheless, intentions are not behaviour. Tracking ticketing, registration or anonymised mobile counts would provide a stronger test of repeat attendance. Institutional ratings were weak. Only 18% considered local-government support very effective and 30% somewhat effective, while 53 considered it ineffective. This majority assessment may reflect funding, promotion, infrastructure, coordination or perceived fairness, but the item does not identify which function failed. The appropriate conclusion is therefore that respondents expressed low confidence in public support, not that government objectively provided no support. An event-governance audit could compare assigned responsibilities, budgets, delivery and community feedback. Infrastructure responses appeared less negative than the government-support rating: 20% reported significant transport or accommodation challenges, 28 some challenges and 53 no infrastructure issue. This result should be interpreted cautiously because people may assess conditions relative to familiar local standards, and respondents were not necessarily tourists. It suggests that infrastructure was not the dominant perceived barrier for a majority, but it does not verify capacity during peak demand. Event-day traffic counts, accommodation occupancy, toilet ratios and accessibility audits would be more conclusive.

Table 5. Implementation and environmental communication constraints

Indicator	Favourable	Partial	Unfavourable
Infrastructure	No issue: 53	Some challenge: 28	Significant challenge: 20%
Social-media influence	Major: 25%	Moderate: 30%	Negligible: 45%
Tourist environmental awareness	Well informed: 20%	Limited: 33	None: 48

Digital and environmental communication were clear weaknesses. Forty-five percent considered social media to have negligible influence, 30% considered it moderately influential and 25% a major tool. On tourist environmental awareness, 48 perceived no awareness, 33 limited awareness and 20% adequate information. These perceptions point to a communication gap covering both promotion and responsible behaviour. Digital strategy should therefore move beyond publicity photographs to verified schedules, cultural interpretation, route information, waste expectations and emergency contacts.

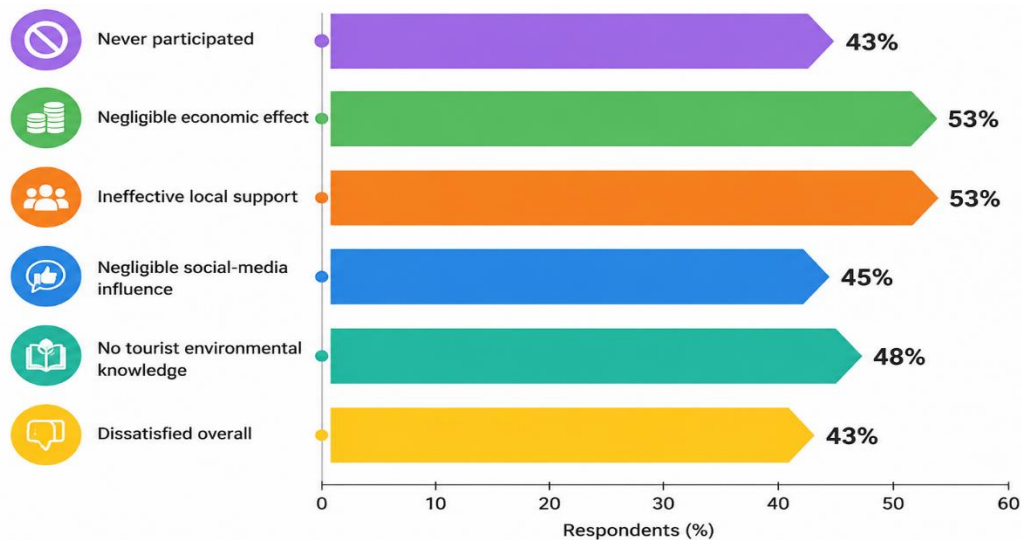


Figure 1. Selected indicators of festival participation, benefit and institutional readiness

The findings collectively portray festivals with cultural and visitor potential but incomplete social and institutional conversion. Positive responses rarely formed an overwhelming majority, and several important domains were divided. The most defensible interpretation is that support is conditional. Respondents appear to value aspects of heritage and recognise some visitor activity, while many do not perceive strong local benefit, public effectiveness or environmental communication. This mixed profile is more useful for policy than an unqualified statement that the festivals have enriched tourism. Related

research helps explain why conversion matters. Tourism support services determine whether visitors can move, eat, stay and access information, and environmental management determines whether host places absorb demand without deterioration (Eneyo, 2026). Calabar's eatery geography also demonstrates that services concentrate spatially and generate time-specific pressures (Eneyo, 2026). Festival planning should therefore identify the actual event footprint and connect cultural programming with transport, accommodation, food safety, waste collection and neighbourhood management.

References to Leboku, Ugep and Yakurr practices within a study framed around Efik and Qua festivals could confuse respondents, readers or policy makers. Cultural tourism depends on specificity. Each festival should be named correctly, connected to the appropriate community and interpreted through authorised histories. Correct terminology is not cosmetic; it protects cultural ownership, prevents misleading promotion and enables visitors to understand the diversity of Cross River State rather than encounter a generic cultural package. The results do not demonstrate that Western influence, cultural barriers or sponsorship caused weak participation. Those explanations appear in the source narrative but were not measured with a causal design. Cultural change may interact with religion, schooling, migration, digital media, generational preferences and event governance. A stronger study would use interviews with custodians and younger residents, observation across several festival cycles and a survey instrument that measures specific barriers. The present data identify a participation and perception problem; they do not isolate its cause.

Likewise, the observed 65% perception of increased influx cannot be converted into a tourism-growth rate. Respondents may notice crowds without knowing visitor origin or counterfactual conditions. Stronger evidence would compare normal and festival periods, distinguish day visitors from overnight tourists and record hotel occupancy, transport demand and spending. This distinction protects policy from overinvestment based on impression while still recognising that resident observation can identify changes worth measuring. The five analytical domains reveal different degrees of readiness. Heritage recognition is moderate but not universal; active participation is limited; perceived community benefit is weak; visitor potential is visible but unverified; and institutional communication requires improvement. The policy task is therefore not simply to advertise more. It is to strengthen the underlying cultural and service system so that promotion does not outpace authenticity, capacity or community support.

Policy implications

A first policy priority is culturally authorised documentation. A joint Efik-Qua heritage advisory arrangement should include recognised custodians, historians, performers, women, youth and relevant institutions, while maintaining the distinct authority structures of each community. Its role should be to verify names, narratives, permissible images, interpretation and records. Documentation should support transmission and visitor understanding, not transfer ownership of knowledge to government or sponsors.

A second priority is participation design. Organisers should identify why occasional and non-participants remain outside festival activity and develop pathways appropriate to different groups. Youth apprenticeships, school-based heritage sessions, rehearsal access, community documentation and transparent volunteer roles may increase engagement. Participation targets should be disaggregated by community, age and role, but collection must respect privacy and cultural protocol. Attendance should never be treated as the only sign of cultural commitment.

A third priority is local-benefit governance. Vendor selection, procurement, paid performance, transport contracts and craft sales should use published eligibility rules and maintain a record of local participation. Small grants or rotating stalls can widen access, while prompt payment and fair pricing protect livelihoods. Event reports should disclose aggregate numbers of local vendors, workers and contracts without exposing personal commercial data. This would allow perceived benefit to be compared with documented distribution.

A fourth priority is destination and environmental management. Each event should have a site plan showing entrance, routes, emergency access, toilets, water, waste points, vendor locations and accessible viewing areas. Waste collection should be timed to crowd peaks, and vendor agreements should cover packaging, wastewater and clean-up. Visitor communication should include cultural etiquette and environmental expectations. These measures connect heritage safeguarding to the physical conditions of the host place.

Finally, monitoring should use a small but auditable indicator set. Recommended indicators include resident participation, visitor origin, repeat attendance, local vendor share, paid roles, visitor expenditure, satisfaction, incidents,

waste collected, complaints and digital conversion. Baseline and post-event reporting would allow policy makers to distinguish promotional reach from destination outcomes.

Conclusion

The survey does not support either a dismissive or celebratory conclusion. Efik and Qua festival heritage retains recognised importance and perceived visitor potential, yet participation, perceived economic benefit, public support, digital influence and environmental communication were weak or divided. The strongest conclusion is therefore that tourism readiness was conditional rather than established. Community perceptions indicate where legitimacy and service systems require strengthening, but they do not prove economic impact or causation.

A defensible festival-development strategy should begin with accurate cultural terminology and community authority, then connect participation and interpretation to transparent local benefit, spatial planning and environmental management. Promotion should follow this foundation rather than substitute for it. By treating the survey as a perception baseline and specifying the additional indicators needed for verification, the article preserves the findings while preventing them from carrying more weight than the design permits.

Analytical scope and robustness

Analytical separation of cultural value and tourism performance is central to interpretation. A respondent can recognise a festival as part of community history without attending its contemporary public edition. Conversely, a person may attend for entertainment while possessing limited knowledge of ritual meaning. The questionnaire combined several of these attitudes but did not measure them as a validated scale. Reporting the distributions separately avoids constructing an unsupported composite index and allows organisers to identify whether a weakness concerns knowledge, participation, experience quality or institutional trust.

The equal allocation of 200 Efik and 200 Qua respondents improves comparative visibility but should not be mistaken for proportional representation. No subgroup tables were available, so the article cannot state that Efik and Qua respondents differed in their answers. Any future comparative claim would require the records, consistent community identifiers, a clear sampling strategy and tests that account for the categorical response structure. Until then, the combined totals describe the selected participant pool rather than either community independently.

The instrument used some options that were not fully symmetrical. For example, one positive category could refer to strengthened social bonds while another referred to cultural awareness, which are different outcomes rather than ordered levels of the same outcome. The present tables therefore do not calculate means from category codes. Frequencies are the appropriate evidence because assigning scores of one, two and three would imply an interval and order that the questionnaire did not establish. This methodological choice reduces apparent sophistication but increases validity.

Preservation policy should distinguish documentation from public disclosure. Oral histories, genealogies, sacred sequences and restricted symbols may require different access rules. A community archive can include public materials for education and protected materials governed by custodians. Digital tourism promotion should draw only from authorised public content. Such a system would address historical inaccuracy without assuming that every element of heritage should be made available for visitor consumption or commercial reproduction.

Festival environmental management should be treated as an operational system with assigned responsibility. A written plan needs estimates of attendance and vendor numbers, waste categories, collection frequency, toilet and water provision, noise management, road closures, pedestrian routes and emergency access. The survey's weak environmental-awareness rating provides a reason to prioritise this work, but it does not reveal actual waste volumes. Organisers should therefore weigh or count collected waste and document post-event restoration so that environmental claims become measurable.

The distinction between tourist influx and destination benefit also matters. An increase in people can generate sales, but it can also increase public-service cost, congestion and resident inconvenience. Net local value depends on how long visitors stay, what they buy, which businesses capture spending and how event costs are financed. A festival can be culturally successful with modest visitor numbers, while a heavily attended event can remain economically leaky or environmentally damaging. Policy targets should therefore balance heritage, community and visitor indicators.

Respondent confidence in government support can be strengthened through procedural transparency. Publishing a calendar, responsible agencies, vendor process, safety plan and post-event report would allow residents to evaluate

performance against stated commitments. Community meetings should occur before decisions are final, not only after programmes have been designed. Feedback mechanisms should record the issue, responsible body and resolution date. These practices convert support from a vague promise into an observable administrative process and create evidence for future research.

Tourism marketing should segment audiences rather than rely on a single generic campaign. Diaspora visitors may value reconnection and family participation; domestic cultural tourists may seek interpretation and scheduled experiences; international visitors may need clear access, safety and etiquette information; local residents may prioritise affordability and community control. Each segment requires different messages and service arrangements. The survey did not distinguish visitor groups, so segmentation is a recommendation for future implementation, not a finding about current demand.

A monitoring design should combine several time points. A pre-event resident survey can record expectations and concerns; on-site visitor research can capture origin, purpose, spending and experience; vendor logs can document sales and employment; and a post-event resident survey can assess disturbance, benefit and satisfaction. Repeating a core indicator set across years would show whether interventions improve participation and trust. A single cross-sectional survey cannot identify change, even when respondents are asked to recall previous conditions.

The article's strong conclusion rests on convergence rather than one percentage. Limited participation, weak perceived economic benefit, low government-effectiveness ratings and weak environmental communication all point towards incomplete institutional conversion. At the same time, preservation importance and perceived visitor increase prevent a conclusion of cultural or tourism failure. The combination supports the narrower judgment that readiness is conditional. This conclusion follows the available evidence without requiring unsupported regression, causal language or a claim that all residents share the same view.

Related-publication disclosure is particularly important when converting student research into an article. The journal version must identify the project, preserve authorship and explain the substantive changes. Reorganisation, new interpretation and updated literature do not create new data. The manuscript therefore cites the source project, reports that the data are no independent follow-up survey was undertaken. This approach protects research integrity and helps editors assess it in terms of analysis and presentation rather than data collection.

Future research should include qualitative evidence because closed response categories cannot capture contested histories or the reasons behind ratings. Interviews with legitimate Efik and Qua custodians, performers, vendors, youth, women, public officials and visitors would reveal where interpretations align or conflict. Observation could document the sequence and spatial organisation of activities without recording restricted content. The qualitative component should be analysed transparently, using a coding framework and illustrative quotations with consent, rather than used only to decorate predetermined conclusions.

Interpretive restraint does not weaken the article's policy relevance. On the contrary, it prevents scarce public resources from being assigned on the basis of exaggerated effects. Decision makers can act on the documented weaknesses in participation, perceived benefit, public confidence and communication while simultaneously commissioning the visitor and economic data needed for stronger evaluation. This staged approach is proportionate to the evidence and allows policy learning without waiting for a perfect dataset.

The recommended indicator system should be governed jointly so that measurement does not become another external demand placed on communities. Organisers can select a small set of indicators, define who collects them, agree how results are stored and determine which findings are public. Community review of the annual report would help interpret unexpected patterns and prevent numbers from displacing cultural judgment. Quantification should support, rather than dominate, the safeguarding purpose of the festivals.

Declarations

Funding

The study reported no dedicated external research funding. No additional funding was received for this secondary analysis.

Ethics statement

The questionnaire described participation as voluntary and anonymous. This study uses aggregate, de-identified records. The source did not provide an institutional ethics approval number; that status should be confirmed before submission.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author contribution

The author data collection and initial analysis. Journal conversion involved reorganisation, statistical clarification and language editing without alteration of the numerical findings.

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