



## ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FESTIVALS TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE EZUMEZU IGBERE FESTIVAL

Ifeanyichukwu K. Ibekwe

Department of Geography & Environmental Science,  
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria.

### Abstract

Festivals and events, if well-packaged for tourism, can be a veritable instrument for community development especially in developing countries in dire need of catalysts for the take-off or sustenance of sustainable development of the society. Triennially, the people of Igbere – a community in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, South-eastern Nigeria – gather to celebrate the *Ezumezu Igbere* festival with pomp and pageantry. Huge sums of money are often raised through donations and other commitments for community development by illustrious and well-to-do sons and daughters of the community and their friends and associates. Despite these gigantic sums of money realized, the community still lacks basic socio-economic amenities such as clean portable water in the public domain, efficient and affordable primary healthcare facilities, among others. The objective of this study therefore, is the assessment of the contributions of Ezumezu Igbere festival to community development and to the sustainability of the livelihoods of households in the Community. The survey method was used to gather, through the use of a questionnaire, the primary data analyzed; and, the 2-Way ANOVA and Chi-Square statistical techniques were used to test the hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The findings include the confirmation that the Ezumezu Igbere festival, through the direct utilization of proceeds of the festival, has failed to contribute significantly to the development of infrastructural projects in the Community. However, the festival has contributed significantly to community development in Igbere through the provision of a firm platform for the age grades to implement their community development projects. Also, the festival has contributed significantly to increased income generation by farmers and artisans, among others, during and immediately after the festival.

### 1.0 Introduction

Generally, festivals and events such as the Carnival Calabar, Carnival Rivers (CARNIRIV) both in Nigeria, Notting Hill Carnival in the United Kingdom and Rio Carnival in Brazil, though much larger than, and conceptually different from the *Ezumezu Igbere* festival, as well as mega sporting events like the *Federation Internationale de Football Association's*, (FIFA's) World Cup Final and the International Olympic Committee's (IOC's) world athletics competition, among others, have the ability to engender the socio-economic development of host-communities. They do this by encouraging the development of infrastructural facilities, boosting of tourism and ensuring the sustainability of the livelihoods of

households. These festivals and events, if effectively managed, attract enormous socio-economic advantages to a people (Mmom, 2003). They can also become important vehicles for achieving and strengthening unity among the diverse socio-cultural groups within the society. Thus, such festivals and events have been described as “an engine and pivot for strengthening unity among a people” (Mmom & Ekpenyong, 2015). This is because festivals usually have a powerful pull on the people causing them to forget their differences and divert attention from animosities to merry-making.

Studies have confirmed that festivals and events represent one of the fastest growing forms of tourism – cultural tourism – with the potential to re-invigorate and boost local economies (Ukwayi, Ojong & Austine, 2012). Tourism has become an important phenomenon that communities in both developed and developing countries are eager to harness for the socio-economic development of their societies. There is usually an influx of visitors into the community during festivals and events. People from all walks of life are encouraged to visit such festival and event destinations for fun and adventure and, sometimes, to discover what hitherto, were unknown to them. For this reason, festivals and events are seen as catalysts that have the capacity to attract a wide-range of visitors especially to destinations with great tourism potentials. Consequently, hotels and other accommodation facilities are built and or upgraded to take care of the expected upsurge in visitor arrivals. This increases the demand for labour, both skilled and unskilled, to cater for these building projects; and, the number of people engaged to service the visitors directly and indirectly is enormously increased. Accordingly, this helps in achieving, not only the sustainability of the livelihoods of families but also in developing the local economy (Spurr, 2006).

Triennially, the people of Igberere community in Abia State, Nigeria, gather with a lot of fanfare and excitement to celebrate the Ezumezu Igberere festival. This is a socio-cultural festival which takes place once in three years in Igberere – a community in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. Formerly known as the ‘Anniversary’ celebration, the festival, which started in 1963, is marked by the mass return, to their ancestral hometown, of Igberere indigenes and friends from all parts of the world where they habitually live. It is also characterized by the joyous reunion of friends and relatives who have not seen each other for, at least, the 3 preceding years. It is a time of merry-making and exchange of gifts during colourful ceremonies involving age-grades, and particularly, the retiring age grade, and during which indigenes gather to “assess the achievements made individually and collectively to move the society forward” in the preceding three years (Chike, 2014). Furthermore, the festival presents an opportunity for the community to make plans for the future development of the community essentially through the implementation of self-help projects for the improvement of the living standards of the people.

During the festival, in addition to the excitement and celebrations, pledges and commitments are made by individuals and groups towards the development of the community. The wealthy and well-to-do members of the Community and their friends make or pledge donations and assistance, in cash and or kind, towards the amelioration of the sufferings of the people, in particular, and the development of the community, in general. Despite the huge sums of money often pledged by individuals and groups and or realized during these festivals, the Community still finds it difficult and incapable of effectively executing projects that enable households to achieve sustainable livelihoods and obviate the sufferings and deprivations which characterize the day-to-day living experiences of the people.

It is against this background therefore, that this study aims to assess the contributions of Ezumezu Igberere Festival to the socio-economic development of Igberere community. Specifically, the study sets out to:

- i. Appraise the nature of the contributions of the Ezumezu Igberere festival to community development in Igberere community in terms of the development of socio-economic infrastructural projects.
- ii. Identify and enumerate the infrastructural projects which have been executed in the community as a result of the Festival in the period since 1963.

- iii. Evaluate the contributions of the festival to the sustainable livelihoods of households in the community in terms of income and employment generation. And,
- iv. Suggest recommendations for the development of Ezumezu Igberere festival as a sustainable vehicle for the community development in Igberere.

## **Geographical Scope**

### **Location and Size**

The Igberere Community is one of the prominent communities in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, South East Nigeria. The Community also known as *Igberere Ebiri* or *Ebiri Okomoko* lies approximately within Longitudes  $7^{\circ} 35' 30''$  and  $7^{\circ} 40' 0''$  East of the Greenwich meridian and Latitudes  $5^{\circ} 43' 30''$  and  $5^{\circ} 42' 0''$  North of the Equator. Igberere is bounded to the north and north-west by Item and Alayi communities respectively and by Ozuitem community to the west and south-west. It also shares boundaries with Umuhu Ezechi and Abiriba communities in the south and east respectively; and, is found about halfway between Umuahia and Ohafia on the Umuahia-Uzuakoli-Ohafia Road.

### **Physiography, Rainfall and Climate**

Igberere is situated in the wet equatorial climatic zone with high cloud cover. The climate is also characterized by limited sunshine, low sunshine hours, extended high cloud cover and relatively high humidity of about 96 percent most part of the year. The mean daily temperature is put at  $27^{\circ}\text{C}$  with the feature of incessant rains of about 2,200 millimeters per year as inferred from observations recorded in respect of nearby town of Umuahia with identical meteorological regime. There are two climatic seasons in the area, namely: rainy season and dry season. The rainy season is usually long and takes place between the months of March and October with a short spell of dryness in August referred to as 'August Break'. The dry season begins in November and ends in February and is usually accompanied by a dry cold harmattan in December and January. The vegetation of the area is typically tropical rain forest. The area is characterized by an admixture of flat, low-lying land, flood plains, valleys and plateaus.

### **People, Population and Settlements**

The people of Igberere are squarely of the Igbo ethnic origin with projected populations, based on the 1991 Nigerian census figures, of about 28, 491 persons in 2016. This is made up of about 14, 532 females (or 51.0 percent) and 13, 959 males (or 49 percent) respectively. It is to be noted that the majority of the active population of Igberere live outside the boundaries of the community in such places as Aba, Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and other parts of Nigeria as well as outside the shores of Nigeria in the United States of America, Europe, Asia, among others where they are engaged in trading, civil service, studies, professions, to mention just a few. These people are therefore not included in this projected population as the principle of population enumeration is based on residence and physical presence and not on proxy or such other criteria.

The people of Igberere live in clustered communities of about 300 – 500 inhabitants for the biggest communities and much less for the small communities. This population increases enormously during the Ezumezu Igberere and other festivals and events when there is mass return of indigenes from all parts of the country and the world, at large. The people of Igberere are mostly farmers and, depend hugely on natural resources – land, forests, and rivers, among others, for livelihood. Thus, the mainstay of the economy of the area is farming which employs about 72 percent of the people across the 13 autonomous communities. A few of them are civil/public servants – about 10 percent and petty-traders, 12 percent and, yet others engage in hunting, sand-mining and fishing, in various agri-business ventures such as poultry, among others.

### **Economy**

The major agricultural crops in the Community include cassava, yam, oil palms, rice, corn and plantain with farming constituting the main occupation of the people though on a subsistence basis. There is also a noticeable presence of other plant species such as the Indian bamboo and an enormous variety of herbaceous plants and grasses. The economy is characterized by a high incidence of poverty as about 15 percent of the people in the area earn N5, 000 or less per month. This translates to about N167 or US

\$0.46 per day in a 30-day month given the prevailing (as at July, 2018) exchange rate of N360/dollar. Furthermore, 46 percent of them earn N10, 000 or less which means a daily income of about N333 or US \$0.93 per day. Similarly, 35 percent of the residents earn between N11, 000 and N25, 000 or N367 and N833 per day translating to between US \$1.02 and N2.30 per day. The implication of these figures is that about 71 percent of the respondents live below the poverty line of US \$1.90 (World Bank, 2015) per day (Ibekwe, 2017).

### **Administration and Governance**

The Igbere traditional governance and administrative structure is characterized by a tri-polar arrangement made up of: the Ezes-in-council (Ndieze-in-council known as the Igbere Clan Council of Ndieze, ICCON), the Age Grades and the Igbere Welfare Union (IWU). There are 13 autonomous communities in Igbere, namely: Agbor, Amaiyi, Amakpo, Amankalu, Amaofufe, Amoji, Amakwu, Eziana, Ibina-nta, Ibina-ukwu, Ohumola, Okafia and Umuisi autonomous communities. Each autonomous community has an *Eze* (King) as the traditional ruler who sits with other *Ezes* in council, with a rotational headship arrangement, for decision-making purposes. Thus, traditional authority in Igbere is diffused and not concentrated in the hands of a singular supra-communal entity. The autonomous community is composed of villages and each of the villages is headed by an *Ezeogo* who represents the village in all traditional matters. The age-grade system is a prominent dimension of this governance structure – all adults, male and female, belong each to one age grade or another. The age grade, which is a rallying point for people who believe they were born within the same period of up 3 years interval or as defined by its constitution, whether codified or not, is the main vehicle through which the people of Igbere contribute to community development. On the other hand, the IWU is a union of all adult persons of Igbere origin. It is organized along geographical lines. For example, Lagos Branch, Aba Branch and Home Branch, amongst others. During the Ezumazu festival, the oldest age grade retires from active community service and after about 39 years of service, usually, in a colourful ceremony called *Igboto Nma* and a new one is birthed.

Fig. 1 shows the map of Igbere community with the major socio-economic and geographical features clearly delineated. Inset is the map of Abia State showing Bende Local Government Area.

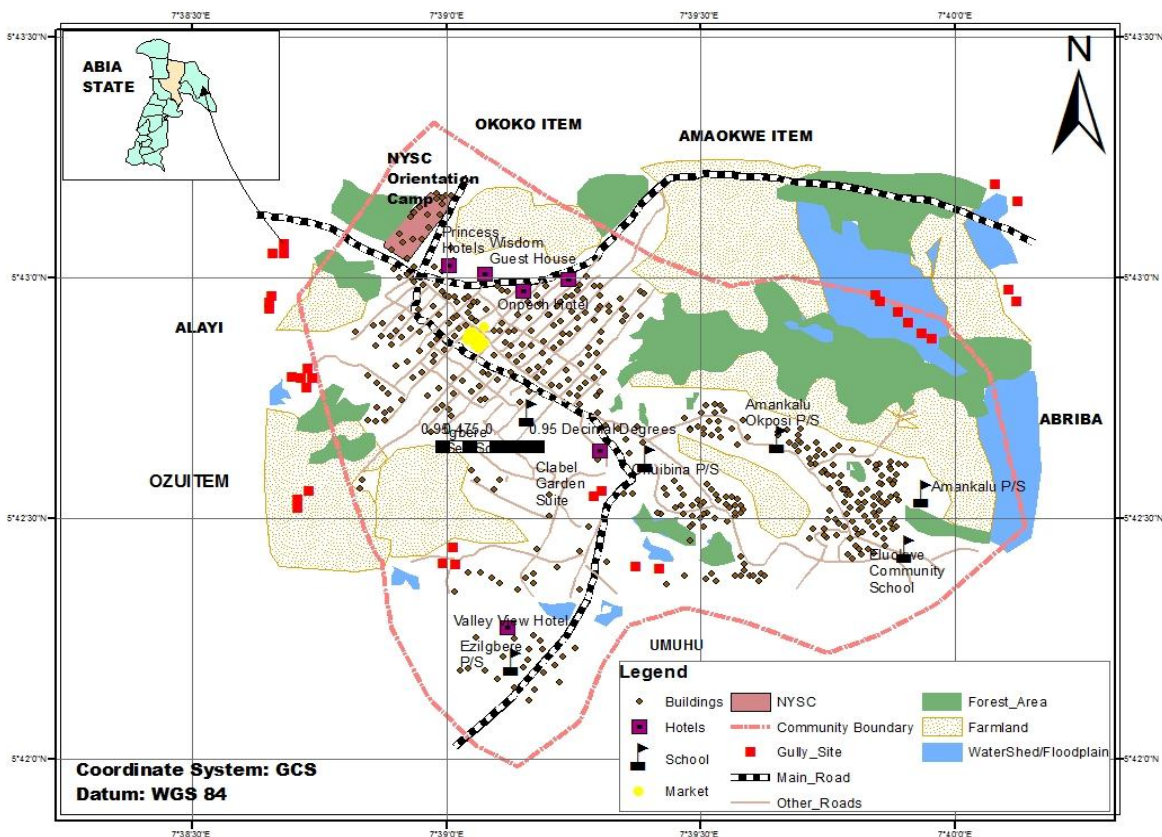


FIG.1: Map of Igberu Community showing modern socio-economic and geographical features.

## 2.0 Literature Review

There has been a mounting academic and policy-making interests in festivals and events as a major component of tourism and by extension, a viable instrument for community development and for the socio-economic development of communities and countries. A lot has been written, in recent times, therefore, by scholars and policy-makers on community development and festivals and events as veritable instruments for employment generation, income boosting, socio-economic infrastructural development, among others. This section of the paper is discussed under the following sub-titles:

### 2.1 Community Development

Community Development has been described as “a process whereby local people cannot only create more jobs, income and infrastructure but also help their community become fundamentally better able to manage change” (Cavaye, 2015). The United Nations sees it as that “process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems” (UNTERM, 2014). It takes place at the grass roots and local level to enable the community to reduce the poverty and sufferings that characterize the day-to-day living experiences of her people, create employment and economic opportunities and achieve socio-economic, cultural and environmental development of the area through concerted action. In other-words, Community Development is not an individualistic phenomenon but

happens by concerted or collective action of community members to generate solutions to common problems (PeerNetBC, 2012). Put differently, it is a local people-oriented process which not only enhances the creation of more jobs, income and infrastructure in the community, but also helps the community become fundamentally better able to manage change.

According to Cavaye (2015), the concept of Community Development combines the idea of 'Community' with that of 'Development'; and, argues that a community is a group of people with a shared identity, be it common cultural heritage, language, physical geographical location, beliefs and or other shared interests. On the other hand, development is seen as a process which increases people's choices (Sen, 1999) and "involves change, improvement and vitality – a directed attempt to improve participation, flexibility, equity...the creation of wealth" (Cavaye, 2015), not necessarily in terms of money but of what the people value. Taken together therefore, community development means that a community engages its members in a process aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental situations of the community.

The objective of community development is to improve the quality of the life of the members of the community by building up the community's stock of capital – natural, physical, financial, social and human capital (DFID, 1999). It involves a broad spectrum of activities by community leaders, citizens, professional and civic leaders whose goal is to improve socio-economic well-being of members of that community. There is a myriad of approaches adopted by communities, over time and space, to achieve this goal. This includes: Women Self-help groups (WSHG), Community Capacity building (CCB), Social Capital formation (SCF), and Sustainable development approach (SDA) as well as Asset-based community development (ABCD), Faith-based development (FBD) and Community-Driven development (CDD). The CDD, which is practiced extensively in Igbere, involves the shifting of overreliance for development from the government to the local community. This is a kind of self-help approach to community development.

## **2.2 Festivals and Community Development**

There is a growing interest in festivals and events such as carnivals, arts and cultural festivals, sports fiestas, among others, as important instruments of tourism with enormous potentials for the socio-economic advancement of communities, in particular, and countries, generally. Empirical studies confirm that festivals and events have the capacity to generate, directly and indirectly, increased job opportunities, increased incomes and have usually influenced the positive development of infrastructural facilities in host communities and or countries. They have often offered great opportunities to countries and communities, depending on the scale, for the take-off and or sustenance of the socio-economic development of the society. This is even more important for developing countries in dire need of catalysts for the sustainable trigger-off of the development process. This partly explains the fierce competition among countries and communities for the hosting rights of events such as international sports events including the Olympics Athletics Competition and the various World Football Competitions organized by the IOC and FIFA respectively, among others. Arts and cultural festivals such as the Rio Carnival, Carnival Calabar, and so on, have greatly contributed to the development and improvement in the quality of infrastructural facilities in host-communities or countries. This is due, on the one hand, to the stringent requirements with regards to the quality and standards usually set by the organizers of these events and festivals. And, on the other hand, these facilities must be in such a state as to be able to attract visitors and spectators to the events/festivals. The United Nations declared 2017 as the 'International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development' in recognition of the big role that tourism plays for the socio-economic development of countries and communities. This is also in recognition of increasing demand by

tourists for environmentally low-impact tourism (Shehadi, 2017). According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism facilitate “economic growth, social inclusion, cultural and environmental preservation, (and increases) our understanding, tolerance and empathy for our fellow man” (Rifai, quoted in Shehadi, 2017).

### **2.2.1 Increased Income Generation**

Several studies have confirmed the positive impact of events and festivals on the incomes of individuals, households, communities and the society in general. For instance, Allen & Shaw (2000) while studying the impact of arts and cultural festivals in East Midlands, England, identified eleven of such events and festivals. The cost and benefits of organizing these events were critically examined by the authors. They concluded that the festivals generated revenue benefits in excess of £4 million pounds as additional income to the regional government and about £7 million pounds to each of the host-communities. In their own study, Saayman, Saayman & Du Plessis (2005), analyzed the spending patterns of visitors to 3 world cup cricket matches in South Africa. The authors concluded that arts, cultural and sports events are planned occurrences of limited duration which have an enormous impact and capacity to improve the living standards of residents as well as improve the economies of host-communities. Contributing, Attah, Agba & Nkpoyen (2013), studied the contributions of Calabar Fiesta on the socio-economic development of Calabar Metropolis, Nigeria, and argued that the Fiesta provides great opportunities for businesses to thrive “thereby promoting supplementary income generating activities” (pp. 40) despite the fact that the festival encourages immoral sexual behaviour in the metropolis. Similarly, Amalu & Ajake (2012) assessed the influence of Carnival Calabar on the economies of residents of Calabar Metropolis, Nigeria. The result of the study includes the confirmation that the increase in tourists’ visitation especially for the Christmas festival event benefitted most people through the provision of employment and business opportunities and increased income generation.

However, several scholars, for example, Zimbalist (2011) have questioned the income boosting outcomes of mega sporting events especially for developing countries. The author, often referred to as the ‘renowned economist Brazilians love to hate’, studied the probable impacts of two mega sporting events – the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games – on the Brazilian economy and concluded that the numbers do not often add up as projected. That is, the pre-event projections of advantages including projected economic boom, massive generation of employment, among others, following these events, do not often happen in reality.

### **2.2.2 Infrastructural Development**

The hosting of mega events and festivals has been known to spur or boost the development or upgrading of infrastructural facilities in the society. Hotels and restaurants, event centres, stadia and sports complexes as well as good road network, telecommunications systems, among others, have been constructed or upgraded by communities and countries to be able to host, accommodate and entertain visitors and tourists during events and festivals. Thus, “events present an opportunity to generate the political will necessary to make investments in general infrastructure that can lead to long-run economic growth” (Bauman & Matheson, 2013). This is because mega events such as the World Cup and the IOC athletics competition require a large amount of very specific sports infrastructure in order to accommodate the range of events. For example, FIFA requires World Cup hosts to have at least 12 modern stadia with seating capacity of at least 40,000 spectators with at least one of the stadia being able to seat 80,000 spectators for the opening and final matches (Bauman & Matheson, 2013). In addition, other infrastructural facilities such as telecommunication systems, security personnel and systems, accommodation facilities, roads, among others, also benefit from the hosting of events and festivals (Zimbalist, 2011; Watson, 2013). In Igbere, the MacAgbai Okorie-led Ohabuikwe Ebiri II age Grade embarked on the construction of a modern event centre at Ovum, Igbere, for the hosting of Ezumazu Igbere. This project is, unfortunately, stalled at this historical juncture.



### **2.2.3 Promotion of Community Identity, Unity and Oneness**

Arts and cultural festivals as well as events such as sporting events create, reinforce and enhance the sense of a place of a people or community. They assist in fashioning out strategies which help to enhance the community's identity – and, this is reflected in the community's sense of a place – which is a powerful tool in community development as it unites peoples of common cultural and historical heritage. In other-words, arts and cultural festivals enable communities to effectively understand its historic, cultural, economic and social contexts which are critical in attempts by the community to achieve a given level of development (NSW, 2016). It has also been described as an engine and pivot for strengthening unity among a people. During cultural festivities as CARNIRIV, community people tend to forget their differences; warring communities down their weapons and their attention is diverted from wars to fun. Through this process, unity is enhanced between and among communities in a region (Mmom & Ekpenyong, 2015).

The present study has therefore, become necessary, particularly at this time, when communities and the country, as a whole, are in search of credible and effective vehicles for the development of the society. There is a paucity of empirical studies on arts and cultural festivals and sports events as important tools in the tourism industry in Nigeria today. Particularly, there is a dearth of empirical research linking festivals and events to community development in the country. This is surprising given the fact that a lot of work has been done elsewhere on mega sporting events, namely, the World Cup and the Olympic Games and other international events and festivals. Indeed, the literature on events and festivals as veritable tools for community development in Nigeria is scanty. The reason for this, until recently, may not be far-fetched given the localized nature and the small scale of these events and festivals in Nigeria. However, for most of the communities these events and festivals represent a significant factor in their attempt to overcome poverty and backwardness in their respective communities. They also represent powerful tools for defining and sharpening the community's personality and identity, and for forging bonds of unity among the people. This study therefore, contributes to the search for solutions to these challenges by appraising the contributions of the Ezumuzu Igberere festival to community development in Igberere, Abia State, Nigeria. This is the first time, as confirmed by existing literature that an empirical study of the Ezumuzu Igberere and its impact on community development is carried out. It is expected that this will generate further scholarly and research interests in, not only this area but also, in other aspects of the socio-economic lives of the people.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The ex-poste facto research design is considered appropriate and adopted for this study because it is impossible to apply the entire protocol of pure experimental research design in investigating the probable impact of the Ezumuzu Igberere festival on the socio-economic development of the community. The ex post facto research design is a rigorous and systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher or scientist has no control or influence over the independent variable(s) and its (their) relationship(s) with the dependent variable(s). Also known as the 'causal comparative method' (Lord, 1973; Simon and Goes, 2013) or 'after-the-fact' research design (Andrew-Essien, 2006), it is the type of investigation which starts after the occurrence of the fact (event, phenomenon and or situation) without interference from the researcher. The researcher does not have control over the independent variables because they have already manifested before the start of the research or because these variables are, by their



nature, not amenable to manipulation. The researcher merely takes the dependent variable (that is, the effect) and embarks on retrospective examination of the data to establish causes, relationships and associations; and, in so doing, attempts to provide their meanings and understanding (Ibekwe, 2016).

The primary sources of data for the research consisted mainly of data acquired through a field survey using a questionnaire designed, instrumented and administered to elicit information on, among others, the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in Igbere. These include: data on family size, educational levels of household members, income, age, gender and occupation.

### Sample size

The Taro Yamane (1967) formula was adopted to determine the sample size for the study. The population of each of the 13 autonomous communities was used as a basis for determining the required sample size. This formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where:

$n$  = sample size

$N$  = finite population

$e$  = level of significance (0.05 level of significance)

1 = unity

Table 1 contains information on the population of the 13 autonomous communities of the study area broken down into male and female populations. The population of each of the communities was projected from the 1991 census figures to 2016 given a population growth rate of 2.8 percent per annum using the following compounding formula:

$$P = P_n(1+r)^n \quad (2)$$

Where:

$P$  = Projected Population

$P_n$  = Population of a given year (Here, the  $P_n$  is 1991)

$n$  = Number of years (1991 to 2016; that is, 25 years)

1 = Unity (a constant)

Thus,

Agbor Community	$731 (1+0.028)^{25} = 1,458$
Eziama Community	$773 (1+0.028)^{25} = 1,542$
Amaoji Community	$213 (1+0.028)^{25} = 425$
Amiyi Community	$1,615 (1+0.028)^{25} = 3,221$
Ibina-Ukwu Community	$3,019 (1+0.028)^{25} = 6,021$
Okafia Community	$1,456 (1+0.028)^{25} = 2,904$
Ohumola Community	$920 (1+0.028)^{25} = 1,835$
Umuisi Community	$255 (1+0.028)^{25} = 509$
Amaofufe Community	$162 (1+0.028)^{25} = 323$
Ibina-Nta Community	$551 (1+0.028)^{25} = 1,099$
Amakpo Community	$463 (1+0.028)^{25} = 921$
Amukwu Community	$1,490 (1+0.028)^{25} = 2,972$
Amankalu Community	$2,638 (1+0.028)^{25} = 5,261$

**Total = 28,491**

Source: Author's projections based on the 1991 Census figures, 2018.

Applying the Taro Yamane (1967) formula:

$$\frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Substituting,

$$\frac{28,491}{1 + 28,491(0.05)^2} = 400 \text{ copies of the questionnaire}$$

It is important to point out that the 2006 census figures were not used for this study because the outcome of the 2006 enumeration exercise was rendered on local government basis making it impossible to isolate the populations of each of the 13 autonomous communities in Igbere. On the contrary, the populations of each of these communities are contained in the census figures for 1991.

The cluster sampling technique was adopted to select the 13 communities in Igbere as clusters. Thereafter, the simple random sampling technique was used to select, based on the Bourley (1988) proportional allocation formula, respondents from each of the communities according to the size of their populations, a total of 400 respondents (Table 1). The questionnaire itself was divided into three sections. Section A focused on the collection of socio-demographic data of individual respondents including age, occupation, income level and educational qualification. Section B, on the other hand, concentrated on the collection of data in respect of the level of income generation and employment opportunities before, during and after Ezumezu festivals. Similarly, Section C dealt with the role and impacts of Age Grades in community development in Igbere while Section D handled the perception of the Ezumezu festival as a vehicle for community development by the respondents.

In addition, the participatory research approach, involving individual interviews, informal discussions and observations was used to gather, supplement and or cross-check the authenticity of data collected through the use of the questionnaire. The interview sessions, based on semi-structured questionnaire, were held mostly with *ndi ezes* of the autonomous communities. Interview sessions were also held with selected members and executives of the age grades in the community. Informal (one-on-one) discussions were also held with certain classes of people in the community including key informants such as teachers, other community leaders, among others. Observations (see-it-yourself) involved the physical sentience of the environment and the indices of community development in Igbere. The development projects in the form of roads, markets, schools, healthcare facilities, among others, were observed.

The data for this study were also obtained from secondary sources, including: publications by the Igbere Welfare Union (IWU), the Age Grades, and the Igbere Clan Council of Chiefs (ICCON), among others.

The data gathered from the field were analyzed using mainly descriptive statistics, namely: tables, cross tabulations, frequencies, relative frequencies and charts, generated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). However, hypothesis 1 was tested using the Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) which is given as:

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + \tau_j + \lambda_k + (\tau\lambda)_{jk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \quad (3)$$

where

$\mu$  = the grand mean,  $\tau_j$  = treatment effect for the  $j$ th level of factor A,  $\lambda_k$  is the treatment effect for the  $k$ th level of factor B,  $(\tau\lambda)_{jk}$  is the interaction effect for the combination of the  $j$ th level of A and the  $k$ th level of B.

$y_{ijk}$  = the dependent variable, while factor A and B are the independent variable and  $\varepsilon_{ijk}$  is the error term.

and,

Visitors variable is the factor A ( $\tau_j$ ), Guest variable is the factor B ( $\lambda_k$ ) and the interaction between the two factors Visitors\*Guest is AB ( $(\tau\lambda)_{jk}$ ).

On the other hand, hypothesis 2 was tested using the Chi-Square statistical technique which is given as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i} \quad (4)$$

The chi-square table value is given by;

$\chi^2_{tab((r-1) \times (c-1), 0.05)}$ , where,  $(r-1) \times (c-1)$  is the degree of freedom (df).

R = number of rows  
C = number of columns  
df = degree of freedom.  
0.05 = level of significance

**Table 1: Population of Igbere Community in 1991 and the Projected Population in 2016**

	1 9 9 1			2 0 1 6			Copies of Q'naire
Community	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Distributed
Agbor	333	398	731	714	744	1458	20
Eziama	366	407	773	756	786	1542	22
Amoji	213	255	468	208	217	425	6
Amiyi	814	801	1615	1,578	1,643	3221	45
Ibina-Ukwu	1,449	1,570	3019	2,950	3,071	6021	85
Okafia	669	787	1456	1,423	1,481	2904	40
Ohumola	448	472	920	899	936	1835	26
Umuisi	130	125	255	249	260	509	7
Amaofufe	75	87	162	158	165	323	5
Ibina-Nta	239	312	551	539	560	1099	15
Amakpo	212	251	463	451	470	921	13
Amukwu	808	682	1490	1,456	1,516	2972	42
Amankalu	1,232	1,406	2638	2,578	2,683	5261	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>6988</b>	<b>7553</b>	<b>14541</b>	<b>13959</b>	<b>14532</b>	<b>28491</b>	<b>400</b>

Source: Author's Projections from the National Population Commission (NPC), 1991 Census.

#### 4.0 Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents to the questionnaire are analyzed and presented in Table 2 which shows that 49 percent of the respondents are males while 51 percent are females. Similarly, the age distribution of the population of the respondents shows that children of 18 years or less constitute about 11 percent of the population while those in the age brackets of 19 – 35 years make up 24 percent, 36 -50 years constitute 32 percent and 65 and above 14 percent. The implication of this age structure is that the greater number of people in the community are active and productive as opposed to ageing, dependent population. In terms of educational qualification, the majority of the people are secondary school certificate holders (43 percent), followed by those with tertiary educational qualification (32 percent) while those without formal educational qualification (7 percent).

As can also be seen from Table 2, the main occupations of the people are farming, hunting and fishing which together employ 72 percent of the people. However, 12 percent of the respondents are petty-traders while artisans and technicians (carpenters, auto-mechanics, electricians, plumbers, and so on) make up 6 percent and civil/public servants 4 percent. In the same vein, Table 2 indicates that 15 percent of the respondents earn N5, 000 or less per month. This translates to about N167 or US \$0.42 per day in a 30-day month given the prevailing (as at July, 2017) exchange rate of N400/dollar. Furthermore, 46 percent of the respondents earn N10, 000 or less which means a daily income of about N333 or US \$0.83 per day. On the other hand, 35 percent of the respondents earn between N11, 000 and N25, 000 or N367 and N833 per day translating to between US \$0.92 and US \$2.1 per day. The implication of this finding is that more than 71 percent of the respondents live below the poverty line of US \$1.90 (World Bank, 2015) per day. This scenario highlights the high incidence of poverty in the community as only about 5 percent of the respondents earn N50, 000 or more per month (that is, N1, 667 or US \$4.2 per day).

**Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>1. Sex of Respondents</b>		
Male	196	49
Female	204	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>2. Age of Respondents</b>		
≤ 18 Years	44	11
19 - 35 Years	96	24
36 - 50 Years	128	32
51 - 65 Years	76	19
65 Years and above	56	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>3. Educational Qualification of Respondents</b>		
No Basic Education	28	7
Basic/Primary Education	72	18
Secondary Education	172	43
Tertiary Education	128	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>4. Occupation of Respondents</b>		
Farming/Hunting/Fishing	288	72
Trading	48	12
Technicians/Artisans	24	6
Civil/Public Service	16	4
Studies/Unemployed	24	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>5. Income Level of Respondents</b>		
< N5,000	60	15
N5,000 - N10,000	124	31
N11,000 - N25,000	140	35
N26,000 - N50,000	56	14
≥N50,000	20	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's field survey, 2018.

Similarly, Table 3 shows the annual total number of guests in all the hotels in Igbere as provided by the hotels' guest registers. For example, there were altogether 152 guests in all the hotels in 1999, 89 in 2000, 201 in 2008 and 188 in 2014. The total number of hotel guests represents about 21 percent of the total arrivals of visitors (friends and associates) and returning Igbere indigenes for the various years. Thus, in 1999 the total number of arrivals was 724, 424 in 2000, 957 in 2008 and 895 in 2014. This means that the remaining 79 percent of the arriving guests and visitors stayed in private family, friends and own houses and accommodations.

**Table 3: Annual number of visitors/returnees and income generated**

Year	No. of Hotel Guests	Total No. of Visitors/Returnees	Cost of Hotel Accommod. N'000	Income Generation N'000
1999	152	724	828	2,123
2000	89	424	715	1,833
2001	96	457	708	1,815
2002	190	905	950	2,435
2003	85	405	591	1,515
2004	102	486	630	1,615
2005	199	948	1129	2,895
2006	87	414	740	1,897
2007	95	452	801	2,051
2008	201	957	1310	3,333
2009	78	371	875	2,244
2010	84	400	629	1,613
2011	185	881	990	2,538
2012	72	343	559	1,433
2013	84	400	586	1,503
2014	188	895	1003	2,572
<b>Total</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>9462</b>	<b>13044</b>	<b>33,415</b>

Source: Author's fieldwork & Computations, 2018, from Guest Registers of Hotels.

It is also confirmed that the money spent on hotel accommodation represents 39 percent of the total expenditure in each of the years. Thus, the total sum of N828, 000 was spent on hotel accommodation by 152 guests in 1999, for example. This sum represents 39 percent of the total expenditure during an average stay in Igbere of 10 days. This means that the total spent in the same period by all arrivals in Igbere was N2, 123,000 on accommodation, food, toiletries, water, amongst other household daily needs. The value of goods and households consumables and other necessities bought outside and brought into the Community by the guest/visitor arrivals is not included in this amount of money. The figure represents the monies actually spent in Igbere in exchange for goods and services in the Community. It is also to be noted that expenditures are inversely related to and correlates positively with income. This means that these expenditures represent incomes to traders, artisans, farmers, hunters, et cetera, in the community.

Table 4, in the same manner, shows the infrastructural development projects in Igbere and the body responsible for their development – the Age Grades, the governments or the IWU. There are 20 projects in total out of which the Age Grades have or are building 15 representing 75 percent of the total projects while the IWU, through Ezumazu Igbere proceeds, has to its credit 2 projects or 10 percent of the total number of projects and the State Government of Abia is responsible for 15 percent or 3 of these projects. It must be pointed out quickly that the relative costs of the projects are not considered in this study but only their numerical plurality.

**Table 4: Socio-economic Infrastructural Projects in Igbere as at December 2017**

S/N	Project	B U I L T —→ B Y		
		Age Grade	Festival Proceeds	GOVT
1	Bus Stop at Onu-Ibina	Obi-Ebiri		
2	Igbere Secondary School		IWU	
3	Igbere Library	Ihe-Ebiri		
4	Igbere Post Office	Ohabuike		
5	Post Master's Quarters	Ugwu-Ebiri		
6	Rehabilitation of Oluo Nkuma	Ochonma		
7	Construction of Roads			Govt
8	Culvert at Ohumola	Ike-Ebiri		
9	Hall at Onu (Uncompted)	Uche-Ebiri		
10	Hostel Block at Igbere Sec Schl	Egwuatu		
11	Motor Park/Health Centre	Echeeme		
12	Public Borehole/Water Scheme			Govt
13	Welcome To Igbere mini-Tower	Umunabuike		
14	Power Generating Set to Igbere SS	Akaji-Ebiri		
15	Teachers' Qtrs at Igbere Sec. Schl	Akaji-Ebiri		
16	Ebele Modern Market	Omezi-Ebiri		
17	Eziama-Amoji-Ohumola Ring Road	Udo-Ebiri II		Govt
18	NYSC Lodge at Igbere Sec Schl	Odinma		
19	Solar Street Light	Ihe-Ebiri II		
20	Erosion Control		IWU	

Source: i. Author's field survey, 2018. ii. Various Age Grades' Programme Booklets.

### Test of hypothesis 1

H<sub>0</sub>: The Ezumazu Igbere festival has not contributed significantly to income generation by residents in the Community.

H<sub>1</sub>: The Ezumazu Igbere festival has contributed significantly to income generation by residents in the Community.



## Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

**Table 5: Dependent Variable: Income**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4504283.938(a)	14	321734.567	53.179	0.107
Intercept	69990927.517	1	69990927.517	11568.748	0.006
Visitors	0.000	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Guest	0.000	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Visitors * Guest	0.000	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Error	6050.000	1	6050.000		
Total	74295473.000	16			
Corrected Total	4510333.938	15			

a.  $R^2 = 0.999$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.980$ )

Since, the significance value (P-Value) of the Visitors variable (0.00), Guest variable (0.00) and the interaction between the two factors *Visitors\*Guest* (0.00) are less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) accepted. That is, the influx of Visitors, Guests alone and the combination of Visitors and Guests (*Visitors\*Guests*) contribute significantly to income generation in the community during the Ezumezu Igberere festival. Also, the value  $R^2 = 0.999$  shows a very strong relationship between the two variables (Visitor and Guest).

## Hypothesis 2

$H_0$ : The Ezumezu Igberere festival has not contributed significantly to the development of infrastructural projects in the Community.

$H_1$ : The Ezumezu Igberere festival has contributed significantly to the development of infrastructural projects in the Community.

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Development of Infrastructural Projects in Igberere**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Built_By	20	1.40	0.754	1	3

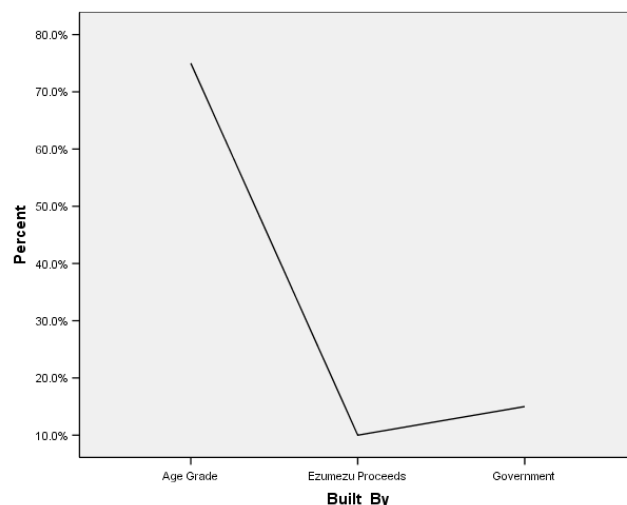
# Chi-Square Test Frequencies Built\_By

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Age Grade	15	6.7	8.3
Ezumezu Proceeds	2	6.7	-4.7
Government	3	6.7	-3.7
Total	20		

## Test Statistics

			Built_By
Chi-Square(a)			15.700
df			2
Asymp. Sig.			0.000
Monte Carlo	Sig.		0.000(b)
Sig.	95% Confidence	Lower Bound	0.000
	Interval	Upper Bound	0.001

## Graph



## DECISION RULE:

The null hypothesis is rejected, if the calculated chi-square ( $\chi^2_{cal}$ ) is greater than or equal to the critical value ( $\chi^2_{tab}$ ) from the chi-square table.

The null hypothesis is accepted, if the calculated chi-square ( $\chi^2_{cal}$ ) is less than the critical value ( $\chi^2_{tab}$ ) from the chi-square table.

At 5% level of significance and 2 degrees of freedom, the chi-square table value is 5.99, while the chi-square calculated value is 15.70. Since the chi-square calculated value is greater than the chi-square table value, that is  $15.70 > 5.99$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) accepted. That is, the Ezumezu Igberere festival has contributed significantly to the development of infrastructural projects in the community essentially by providing a platform for the age grades to implement their community development projects. The graph also shows that Age Grades, Ezumezu Proceeds and Government contributed 75%, 10% and 15% respectively to the development of infrastructural projects in the community in terms of the absolute number of projects.

The data provided and analyzed in this study confirm that the Ezumezu Igberere festival, through the utilization of the proceeds of the festival, has contributed insignificantly to the development of socio-economic infrastructural projects in the Community. Triennially, the people of Igberere gather to celebrate their oneness and review progress in the development of the Community – this provides opportunities to individuals and groups as well as friends and guests/associates to make immediate donations and or pledges to donate huge sums of money for community development in Igberere. Despite the huge sums of money often realized through this medium, the Community still lacks basic socio-economic amenities such as public potable hygienically-developed water supply sources, efficient basic community/primary healthcare facilities, among others. The empirical evidence provided in this study confirms that these

proceeds are responsible for only 10 percent of these projects. The reasons for this apparent failure are not far-fetched when considered against the backdrop of the following:

- i. The failure and or refusal of donors to make good their promises to commit specified sums of money for community development in Igbere. The donors make promises of bogus high-sounding amounts of money which attract super accolade and applause from the people but which they (the donors) have no intention, from the onset, of redeeming.
- ii. Equally important is the issue of accountability on the part of both the IWU and the Ezumazu Igbere Organizing Age Grade. There is the absence of professionalism in the preparation and periodic audit of the accounts and financial statements of the Union. Financial evidence also abounds to confirm that most of the organizers of the festival have not always deemed it necessary to enthrone probity and accountability in the handling of the affairs of the Community. These discourage even the most well-meaning and good-intentioned donors and project financiers.

Evidence in this study confirm that the Ezumazu Igbere festival has, however, contributed significantly to the development of infrastructural projects in the Community by providing a firm pedestal on which the age grades anchor to implement their community development projects. It is shown in this study that the age grades have contributed 75 percent of the projects in Igbere; and, this has been possible through the platform provided by the festival for the oldest age grade to retire with what has come to be referred to as legacy project and for the youngest to be birthed.

Similarly, the Ezumazu Igbere festival has contributed significantly to increased income generation by farmers, artisans, traders, and other residents in the Community during and in the period immediately after the festival. This is because the influx of guests and other arrivals puts pressure on the available food and water supply sources as well as on the available labour for plumbing, painting, among others. The additional incomes generated by residents in the Community have often enabled them to educate and train their children to acquire skills needed for sustainable livelihoods. Several have also embarked on self retraining and skill acquisitions and business expansion to ensure the sustainability of livelihood options.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This study set out to assess the contributions of Ezumazu Igbere festival to community development in Igbere – a community in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, South-east Nigeria – especially through the development of socio-economic infrastructural projects. Tangentially, it was also to evaluate the extent to which the festival contributes to the sustainable livelihoods of households in Igbere through the increased generation of income just before, during and immediately after the festival by members of these households.

One of the salient outcomes of this study is the confirmation that though, the proceeds (commitments and donations by individuals and groups) of the festival have failed to trigger off, with sufficient momentum, the sustainable development of the Community, it has however, provided a firm platform on which the age grades stand to execute their development projects. It is confirmed that the age grades are the real pillars of the development of infrastructural projects in the Community having built about 75 percent of these projects. However, these projects, the study notes, are not built in accordance with any pre-determined short-term, medium-term or long-term development plan. Sustainable development is a process which is achieved through

deliberate, painstaking and properly coordinated efforts to satisfy the needs of the present generation without compromising the capacity and ability of future generations to meet their own needs through the development and preservation of the stock of human, social, physical, financial (economic) and natural capital (WCED, 1987). Therefore, these development efforts by the age grades have not always, in reality, maximized the benefits accruable to the Community from the projects. This is because there is often a disarticulation between, and, sometimes, among the projects arising from the absence of synergistic linkages and interconnectedness.

Also, it has been shown in this study that the Ezumezu Igbere festival has contributed significantly to the sustainability of livelihoods in the community through increased generation of income to farmers, traders and artisans, among others. These increased revenues empower these traders and artisans to diversify and to adopt sustainable livelihood strategies and options capable of reducing their vulnerabilities and increase their choices to live more decently as human beings without compromising their dignity (Sen, 1999).

It is recommended that the Igbere Welfare Union (IWU) employs the services of professionally qualified finance officers to assist in the preparation and periodic reviews of the Union's financial statements. The need for probity and proper accountability, on the part of IWU executives as well as on the part of the Organizing Committee of the Ezumezu Igbere festival, need not be over-emphasized. More important is the need for a well-thought out development plan, to define and map the spatial and socio-economic development trajectories for the Community. Yet more critically, the IWU requires an executive committee peopled by visionary and innovative individuals capable of thinking out of the tool for tourism capable of attracting tourists from across the globe.

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