

## SESSION TWO: FOCUS ON PROSPERITY (SDG 7, 8, 9, 10,11, and 12)

## 12. Cultural Heritage: Enabler For Actualization of Sustainable Development Goals: A Case of Ife Cultural Heritages.

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### Abstract

Our cultural heritage defines who we are and how we express ourselves. It functions as a fundamental basis for individual and collective identity formation, as well as a catalyst for the generation of novel ideas and imaginative expression across diverse populations. The significance of culture in fostering human development lies in its ability to provide enduring solutions to both local and global challenges. The relationship between economic growth and cultural heritage is significant since it contributes to generating income and is esteemed due to its potential economic value. Cultural heritage centers play a crucial role in fostering the expansion of urban areas and promoting the advancement of sustainable tourist practices. The advantages of cultural heritage encompass the generation of employment opportunities, capital investment, and the provision of environmentally sustainable alternatives to corporate frameworks that fail to contribute to environmental betterment. The heritage should be protected and managed cautiously, as they possess the potential to serve as catalysts and enablers in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030. The Olojo Festival, which takes place in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, significantly contributes to the economic growth of both the historic city and the surrounding state. This study focuses on the impact of the Olojo cultural festival celebration on national development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Symbolic Interactionism and Restoration Theory, which emphasize the importance of approaching the monument to be restored with a deep sense of humility. The recommendation ultimately suggests that cultural heritage ought to be utilized as a source of inspiration for individuals and communities, motivating them to actively pursue sustainable development for the collective well-being of present and future generations.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development, Cultural Heritage, Olojo Festival, Ile Ife.*

### Introduction

The cultural background of individuals plays a significant role in shaping their identity and influencing their modes of self-expression. It functions as a fundamental basis for individual identity, innovation, and artistic expression for all individuals. The significance of culture in human development lies in its provision of enduring solutions to both local and global challenges. The economic growth of a society is contingent upon its cultural heritage, as it generates revenue and is esteemed due to its potential economic value. In Ile Ife which is widely regarded as the ancestral homeland of the Yoruba people, its profound significance is attributed to both its rich natural and cultural diversity. The Ife cultural heritage aligns with the objectives of the United Nations' Vision 2030 such as Olojo Cultural Festival, Aje Cultural Festival, the Oranmiyan Cultural Heritage Site, Moremi and Oduduwa Cultural Site, among others. The insufficient emphasis placed on the sector in the ancient city makes it difficult to achieve the SDG agenda 2030 of the community. Several efforts are being made by the Ooni of Ife and other cultural stakeholders in the historic city to actualize the goals. The efforts have assisted in generating jobs in the community, thereby addressing SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Jobs and Economic Growth). Based

on the findings of this work, it was deduced that Ife Cultural heritage site and festivals have the potential to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Relevant stakeholders should collectively establish a conducive environment for the preservation and promotion of the Cultural heritage sector and the inclusion of the sector as a distinct objective within the SDGs is imperative.

Fatomilola (2017), opined that each person possesses memories, whether positive or negative, that serve as the fundamental components of their own Cultural legacy. Similarly, communities, regions, or nations make the deliberate decision to safeguard a portion of their historical inheritance and their cultural heritage. UNESCO (2001), individuals have consistently exhibited a fundamental inclination to draw upon their historical background as a means of safeguarding the perpetuation of a shared identity that undergoes transformation. Stating further that people's cultural legacy is a communal property that tells the history of a people, a city, or a territory, and is handed from one generation to the next. Dauge's (2000), cultural heritage has a crucial role in enabling current generations to comprehend their historical context and effectively adapt to the continuous societal transformations. Dauge further asserts that cultural heritage serves as a stabilizing factor in an era characterized by rapid change. The significance of cultural heritage sustainable development has been extensively acknowledged and promoted by prominent international organizations such as the United Nations and UNESCO (ICOMOS 2011). Ansari and Khan (2020), says cultural heritage is a fundamental component of numerous old towns across the globe. Nevertheless, it consistently faces significant risks because of prevailing development demands. United Nations (2017), the importance of cultural heritage cannot be emphasized, as it serves as a fundamental cohesive element within a society. The corpus of knowledge reveals that it encompasses both tangible artefacts and intangible elements of a community or culture that have been inherited from preceding generations. They suggest further that if these elements are carefully preserved in the present subsequently, they can be transmitted to future generations which include historical architectural structures, landscapes, literary works, and artistic expressions. In addition, it encompasses intangible elements such as social behaviors, rituals, performing arts, oral traditions, festivals, Indigenous knowledge and practices related to environmentally sustainable living, traditional crafts, language, and natural heritage (UNESCO, 2020). The body added that culture and heritage have a significant role in shaping society, as humanity has always relied on historical knowledge to construct and enhance the current and forthcoming periods. UNESCO (2012), also revealed that the cultural and creative industries are experiencing significant growth in the global economy, with growth rates of 17.6% in the Middle East, 13.9% in Africa, 11.9% in South America, 9.7% in Asia, 6.9% in Oceania, and 4.3% in North and Central America. They opined further that investing in culture and creativity has demonstrated to be a highly effective strategy for revitalizing urban economies. In contemporary times, numerous cities, like Ile Ife in Osun State, Nigeria, have adopted the utilization of cultural institutions as strategic tools to enhance their reputation, foster both rural and urban growth, and entice visitors and investments.

Watene (2015), elaborates on the notion that the safeguarding of a community's cultural heritage necessitates more than just the preservation of physical artifacts; it also requires the active promotion of the associated creative practices and living culture. Fatomilola (2018), it is widely acknowledged that Ile Ife holds significant historical and scientific importance as the birthplace of human existence, supported by empirical evidence. He revealed that in Ile Ife, several cultural heritage activities align with the objectives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030. These activities include the Olojo Cultural Festival,

Aje Cultural Festival, the Oranmiyan cultural heritage site, the Moremi Cultural Heritage Site, and the Oduduwa cultural site, among others. The Olojo festival is a significant cultural celebration that commemorates the initial emergence of dawn, afternoon, and night throughout the process of creation. Olafare (2022), informed that "Olojo" encompasses both a literal and figurative significance, denoting the possessor or controller of time. The annual commemoration of Olojo's festival holds great significance since it marks a complete cycle of the Oonirisha. He agrees with the day its appropriate position in the historical records. He proclaimed the Yoruba calendar. Over the last two decades, alongside charitable contributions, sponsorship has been acquired from private corporations, politicians, and governmental entities. The Ile Ife cultural festival is presently being positioned as a significant national event by diverse marketing consultants who are tasked with securing funding and issuing invites to esteemed guests. Eredumi (2020), the Cultural festival serves to support the local economy, aligning with the primary objective of SDG 2030. This event provides advantages to individuals from various social backgrounds both within and beyond the community. Moreover, it has emerged as a catalyst for the advancement of cultural tourism, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of Ile Ife city and the broader Osun State region. Undoubtedly, the diverse cultural heritage sites and festivals of Ile Ife possess numerous elements that have the potential to facilitate the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 agenda, provided they are effectively utilized. The engagement in cultural heritage activities serves to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including but not limited to Goal 4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all; Goal 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all; Goal 12, which emphasizes responsible consumption and production patterns; and Goal 13, which addresses the urgent need to combat climate change and its impacts. The preservation of cultural heritage assets in Ile Ife has the potential to generate employment possibilities within the local communities, so it contributes to economic growth and provides decent work for the unemployed youth in the area, aligning with the objectives of Goal 8. The sustainable management of these sites has been noted to have the potential to foster responsible consumption and production, thereby aligning with Goal 12. Additionally, efforts to reduce waste and promote sustainable practices can also contribute to climate action, in line with Goal 13. This is because these sites can function as carbon sinks and facilitate the conservation of biodiversity.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The importance of cultural heritage in accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN is becoming more widely recognized (UNESCO 2020). However, research is still ongoing to determine how various forms of heritage—whether tangible, intangible, historical, or modern—can directly support the SDGs (Africa World Press 2022). SDGs including Quality Education (SDG 4), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) frequently connect with cultural heritage (UNESCO 2020). However, it is frequently forgotten how specifically African cultural heritages contribute to the accomplishment of these objectives.

Ile-Ife, a significant cultural site in Nigeria and Africa, is recognized for its profound history, especially as the spiritual and historical capital of the Yoruba people. While numerous studies have investigated Ife's importance in archaeology, history, and cultural influence, its contribution to modern sustainable development,

particularly regarding the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has not been thoroughly examined in current literature (Adetayo 2020). The increasing body of scholarship on cultural heritage as a facilitator for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) predominantly emphasizes generic or global case studies, including those from Europe, Asia, or indigenous groups (Cambridge 2023). Research concentrating on Ife as a case study is limited, necessitating greater emphasis on how this historically significant place in Africa contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (Adetayo 2020).

Moreover, whereas physical heritage (such as monuments and artifacts) frequently prevails in discourse, intangible cultural heritage (including language, traditions, and festivals) within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals remains inadequately examined (The Cultural Economy of Tourism in Africa 2021). Ife possesses a rich array of intangible legacy, including oral traditions, indigenous knowledge, and artistic practices, which could significantly contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; yet, this dimension remains predominantly underexamined in contemporary literature (Elugbaju A, 2022).

The existing gap pertains to the insufficiently examined correlation between Ife's cultural legacy and certain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing intangible heritage, community engagement, and contemporary preservation methodologies. Rectifying these deficiencies could enhance the academic discipline and provide pragmatic answers for utilizing Ife's cultural assets in sustainable development initiatives.

### **Research Questions**

- (1) Does the Ile Ife cultural heritage promote environmental sustainability through traditional knowledge and skills?
- (2). To what extent does the Ile Ife cultural heritage contribute to economic development?
- (3.) Does cultural heritage preserve and promote peace in society as outlined in the SDG Agenda 2030
- (4). Does the cultural heritage sector promote the SDG 2030 agenda?
- (5.) How effective does the Ile Ife Cultural Heritage use for the actualization of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030?

### **Literature Review**

UNESCO (2020), the intersection of culture and sustainability holds significant relevance in contemporary society, characterized by its dynamic and ever-evolving nature. Culture has a pivotal role in fostering connections among diverse interest groups and making significant contributions to the advancement of society, as well as the development of individual and collective identities, and the promotion of inclusivity. It serves as a helpful complement to the three fundamental dimensions of sustainability, namely the economic, social, and environmental aspects. The esteemed institution acknowledged additionally that the interconnection between culture, art, and sustainable development might be delineated through various perspectives, yet they all concur with the pivotal part that culture assumes. Babarinsa (2021), cultural heritage, refers to the collection of tangible artefacts and intangible qualities that pertain to a particular group or civilization. These elements are inherited from preceding generations, actively conserved in the present, and transmitted to future generations for their advantage. Falola (2019), argued that the creative endeavors of individuals result in the formation of cultural legacies, which are then conserved and transmitted through oral traditions or tangible records across numerous

generations of human societies. The academic scholar proceeded to assert that Nigeria boasts a diverse array of cultural heritage sites and festivals, encompassing notable examples such as the Eyo festivals in Lagos, the majestic Ooni Palace, the artistry of Calabash carving, and the esteemed Alaafin Palace in Oyo. Additionally, the scholar highlighted the Ekpo Masquerade in Akwa Ibom, the Igue Festival in Edo, the Mmanwu Festival in Enugu, the Durba in Kaduna, the Kano City Walls, and the Agungun Fish Festival in Sokoto as further manifestations of Nigeria's rich cultural tapestry.

Nordon (2020), it is emphasized that cultural festival activities should possess sustainability in terms of resource utilization and energy usage. The professor emphasized the inclusion of culture inside the ecological pillar, as it serves as a fundamental component of the sustainability framework. Olafare (2022), the Cultural festivals in Nigeria serve as a means to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda. These festivals exemplify the SDGs through the showcasing of positive examples, thereby inspiring others. The individual expressed the viewpoint that culture can be seen as the fundamental underpinning of all human endeavors, thus emphasizing its significance in achieving sustainable development. The individual also highlighted the Yoruba Cultural legacy as an example that endeavors to exemplify this notion, while not receiving adequate promotion comparable to that of Cuba and Brazil.

In the word of Ogunwusi (2022), the utilization of cultural heritage sectors in the celebration of cultural festivals has significant implications for national development. The esteemed monarch proposed that the incorporation of our culture, traditions, and legacy into every sociocultural advancement of our nation holds significant importance, particularly for the global community and the black population. He expressed the viewpoint that the culture of a nation or specific race cannot expand or adopt new cultural elements, but rather must be conserved and maintained sustainably for future generations to benefit from, ultimately contributing to the improvement of society. He further stated that the culture of Africa, particularly the Yoruba culture, provides us with optimism for a more inclusive and heterogeneous nation. The speaker emphasizes the necessity of passionate and resolute guidance for our culture to effectively propel our nation towards economic revitalization and national prosperity. The individual highlighted that culture possesses the principles, significance, and inherent benefits to facilitate a return to historical practices of equitable wealth allocation and to transform urban areas into hubs of trade and affluence, aligning with the central objectives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development mandate. Ogunwusi (2022) emphasized the necessity of reforming our nation's governing structure, which has been in place for the past six decades, due to the systemic deficiencies and defective procedures it encompasses. Goldin (2019), the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage activities serve as an independent objective, while also contributing to the achievement of various Sustainable Development Goals. These goals encompass the promotion of gender equality, the establishment of safe and sustainable cities, the provision of decent work opportunities, the facilitation of economic growth, and the fostering of inclusive and peaceful societies, among others. The scholar posits that the successful and culturally sensitive implementation of development aims might yield indirect benefits for culture.

Culture is mandated to play a substantial part within the framework of the United Nations' agenda for the year 2030, specifically under Sustainable Development Goal 11. To ensure the security, resilience, and sustainability of human settlements and cities, it is imperative to foster inclusive. UNESCO (2020), objective 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals emphasizes the need for intensified endeavors to safeguard and sustain

global natural and cultural resources. In Ile Ife, located in the Southwest region of Nigeria, it serves as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. This region, along with the entirety of Nigeria and various other parts of the globe, has witnessed rapid growth in the tourism industry. Notably, cultural tourism accounts for 40% of the total revenue earned from tourist activities (Ogunwusi, 2022). Upon critical assessment of this statement, it can be argued that these initiatives provide significant advantages across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular emphasis on SDG 8, which pertains to "Decent work and economic growth," as well as SDG 11, which focuses on "Sustainable cities and communities."

Awolalu and Dopemu (2019), it may argue that most cultural holidays in Africa include a religious nature due to their association with certain divinities, spirits, or ancestors. Within the Yorùbá cultural context, it is observed that each deity is linked to an annual cultural event known as "Odún." The term "Odún" possesses the additional connotation of denoting a year, and when employed in the context of festivals, it signifies an "annual festival". It can be observed that the Yorùbá community celebrates significant cultural events on an annual basis. Olafare (2022), the cultural heritage of Ife, a city situated in the southwestern region of Nigeria, presents an abundant source of exploration. Olafare further asserts that this ancient town is deeply rooted in historical significance and enveloped in enigmatic qualities, thereby providing a captivating window into the intricate fabric of African culture. The speaker elaborates on the cultural legacy of Ife, highlighting its ancient sculptures, exquisite artworks, vivid festivals, and oral traditions. They emphasize that these elements serve as evidence of the remarkable inventiveness and creativity exhibited by the people of Ife. Ilé-Ifè, a town renowned as the city of 201 gods according to J. K. Olupona, has a variety of cultural festivals. These include the Edi festival, Qbátálá festival, Qbameri festival, Qsàrà festival, Qrànmiyàn festival, and Qlọjọ festival. The Qlọjọ festival holds the distinction of being the most prominent among all other festivals.

### **The Historical Significance of Ile Ife**

Fashola (2019), Examining the abundant cultural legacy of Ife, emphasized that one cannot overlook the profound importance of the historical kingdom that flourished in this area. He further xrayed that the Kingdom of Ife, situated in contemporary Nigeria, occupies a significant position in African history and is often recognized as the cradle of Yoruba civilization. Ife, with a history spanning more than a millennium, has significantly influenced the cultural terrain of West Africa. Horton (1979) stated that when examining the cultural history of Ife, one cannot disregard the importance of sacred locations and ceremonies in forming the spiritual customs of this historic African culture. The scholar informed further that revered locations function as tangible representations of the metaphysical domain, serving as intermediaries connecting the mortal and celestial realms. Oseghale et al (2009), the inhabitants of Ife hold great reverence for these sites, as they attribute vast power to them and consider them crucial for the preservation of harmony and equilibrium in their existence. Craddock (2013) noted that the cultural heritage of Ife, characterized by its elaborate sculptures, mythological narratives, and deeply ingrained customs, exerts a lasting influence on contemporary manifestations within the African continent.

### **How Ife cultural History Connects**

**The Origins of Legends:** Following Yoruba mythology, the establishment of Ife is attributed to Oduduwa, a

mythological entity widely regarded as the ancestral originator of the Yoruba ethnic group. According to popular folklore, Oduduwa is believed to have descended from the celestial realm using a chain, subsequently establishing his dominion in the region of Ife.

**Artistic Excellence:** An outstanding characteristic of Ife's cultural history resides in its noteworthy artistic accomplishments. The kingdom is widely recognized for its exceptional bronze and terracotta sculptures, which are regarded as exemplary works of African art. The sculptures included in this collection portray human figures characterized by detailed features, so exemplifying the exceptional skill and workmanship demonstrated by the artisans of Ife.

**Social Organization:** In addition to serving as a hub for artistic expression, Ife has a sophisticated social structure, indicating a well-organized community. The governance of the kingdom was entrusted to a series of monarchs referred to as Oonis, who had dual power in both political and religious domains.

**Cultural sharing:** The impact of Ife transcended its territorial boundaries through the facilitation of trade and the sharing of cultural practices. The kingdom functioned as a central point for commercial activities, drawing traders from various regions of Africa and other distant locations.

### **The Influence of Ife's Cultural Heritage on Contemporary Africa**

**1. The Influence of Ife's Cultural Heritage on Fashion:** The cultural legacy of Ife has significantly impacted the realm of fashion. The traditional dress of the Yoruba people is notable for its brilliant color palette and elaborate patterns, which are deeply influenced by the cultural aesthetics of Ife.

**2. Musical Rhythms and Melodies:** The rhythmic patterns and melodic compositions originating from Ife's cultural history persistently resonate within contemporary African music. The impact of traditional Yoruba drumming, characterized by intricate polyrhythms and dynamic live presentations, has permeated several musical genres including Afrobeat, highlife, and juju music

### **The Ile Ife Cultural Calendar**

Traditional festivals hold great importance in commemorating the liveliness of Ife's cultural timetable. The festivals not only provide an occasion for celebration and enjoyment, but also act as a mechanism for the preservation and exhibition of the cultural legacy of the Ife community. These festivals provide an insight into the customs, ideologies, and principles that have been transmitted across successive generations, through a range of intricate rituals and vibrant parades.

**1. Cultural Significance:** The traditional festivals of Ife are of great cultural importance to its inhabitants. These events allow participants the chance to reestablish a connection with their cultural heritage, demonstrating reverence towards their forebears and divine entities. The celebrations frequently encompass ceremonial practices, traditional dances, and artistic presentations that are firmly grounded in the historical and mythological heritage of Ife.

**2. Community Cohesion:** Festivals serve as a platform for individuals from many backgrounds to converge, thereby cultivating a collective consciousness and building a sense of communal solidarity. During these festive occasions, folks gather in communal settings to engage in the exchange of narratives, amusement, and elation. The Olojo Festival serves as a significant attraction, drawing a multitude of attendees from both domestic and international locations, who converge in Ife to partake in the spectacle of this big occasion. The increase in population not only enhances the economic performance of local enterprises but also fosters the development of

social connections among participants.

**3. Economic Significance:** Traditional festivals exert a substantial influence on the economic landscape of Ife and its environs. During these events, local artisans and craftsmen capitalize on this occasion to exhibit their expertise by producing elaborate artworks, sculptures, and traditional costumes, which are subsequently marketed and sold. In addition, food merchants establish stalls that provide customary delights, including pounded yam accompanied by egusi soup or amala served with ewedu soup. The occurrence of festivals attracts a significant number of tourists, so stimulating the local economy by generating higher sales and greater revenue from tourism.

**4. The Preservation of Cultural legacy:** Traditional festivals play a vital role in the conservation and transmission of Ife's cultural legacy to forthcoming generations. During these celebratory events, the younger generation is provided with opportunities to familiarize themselves with the customs and traditions passed down by their forebears, through engaging in performances, rituals, and storytelling.

**5. Tourism Attraction:** The traditional festivals of Ife have garnered significant acclaim as prominent tourism destinations, attracting a diverse range of visitors from all parts of the globe. The Olojo Festival, for instance, has been officially recognized and inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.



**Figure 1: The Ooni of Ife Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi with the traditional Aare crown while offering prayer for sustainable Peace, Economic Prosperity and Development in Ife land and Nigeria at large.**  
Source: Field Data, 2023





**Figure 2: The Olojo Festival Aare Crown. Source: Field Data 2023**



**Figure 3: The Ooni of Ife Palace, Source: Ooni Palace, Ile Ife, Osun State, 2023.**



Figure 4: Ori Olokun Ile Ife, Source: Field Data, 2023



Figure 5: Ile Ife Moremi Status, Source: Ooni Palace Ile Ife, Osun State, 2023.  
Theoretical framework

## **Symbolic Interactionism Theory**

Symbolic interactionism represents the sociological framework that primarily focuses on the interpersonal interactions and cultural significance shared among individuals within a given community. The analysis is regarded as a micro-level examination. Instead of examining the disparities in access between persons of different socioeconomic backgrounds, interactionists perceive culture as a product of social interactions and the subjective interpretations of individuals regarding one another's behaviors. From this standpoint, individuals sustain and transmit cultural practices. Symbolic meanings are attributed to every item and action, and language functions as a medium through which individuals can convey and share their interpretations of these meanings with others. Symbolic interactionists regard culture as a dynamic and fluid phenomenon, as its nature is contingent upon the interpretation of meaning and the interactions between persons in the process of transferring these meanings. Interactionist research examines the transformations that occur in language.

## **The Restoration Theory**

The Restoration Theory posits the necessity of approaching the monument to be restored with a deep sense of humility, focusing solely on the preservation of the structure and exhibiting an exceptional level of meticulousness in comprehending the original designers' objectives during the creative process. Hence, it is imperative for the restoration endeavor to adhere to the essence of the monument, thereby ensuring methodological accuracy and effective project management. The approach proposed by Annoni (1882-1954) is intriguing in its emphasis on placing the monuments themselves at the focal point of restoration projects. Annoni suggests that these monuments possess the ability to serve as the primary source for interpreting and guiding appropriate interventions.

## **Methods**

The study employed a survey research design. The survey methodology is the most suitable research design for this study due to its ability to effectively sample and gather respondents' opinions. The population of Ife in the year 2023 is 409,274. The population estimates and projections shown above are derived from the most recent edition of the United Nations World Urbanization Prospects. The figures provided pertain to the urban agglomeration of Ife, encompassing not only the population of Ife itself but also the surrounding suburban districts. Most of the population in Osun State is mostly engaged in agricultural activities and has a strong inclination towards entrepreneurial pursuits. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of individuals employed in the civil and public sectors persists. The cultural heritage sector distinguishes itself from other sectors utilized by citizens within the metropolis. The sample size of 384 was determined using the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator, with a confidence level of 95% and an error limit of 5%. The study employed a questionnaire designed with a combination of dichotomous and Likert scale formats to gather data. The questionnaire was distributed through face-to-face interactions, utilising the multistage sampling technique, among the residents of Ile Ife Metropolis in Osun State. The multistage sample technique was adopted for the research work because it helps to reduce costs and time, and it was also used to simplify data collection for the work. During the initial phase, Ile Ife, a conglomerate, underwent division into three distinct regions, specifically Ife Central, Ife East, and Ife South. For the second stage, two communities were deliberately selected from each local government area based on their notable literacy rates and significant access percentages to cultural heritage sites in the Ife zone. The selected areas are Ilare, Moore, Okerewe, Enuwa, Ifetedo, and Olode, respectively.

During the third stage of the study, the researchers selected six communities and administered the questionnaire to them in a non-proportional manner, with each community receiving an equal number of questionnaires (384/6 = 64). Employing a deliberate approach, the researchers distributed 64 copies of the questionnaire to respondents within these communities. To conduct data analysis, basic percentages and mean analysis techniques were utilized, and the results were presented in a tabular style to enhance clarity.

### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Result**

A total of 384 participants in Ile Ife administered the questionnaire, which served as the primary tool for data collection in this study. The study achieved a return rate of 369 (96%), with 15 (4%) questionnaire copies remaining unreturned. Consequently, the data reported in this study is based on the 369 questionnaires that were returned. Based on the data shown in Table 1, it can be observed that most of the respondents, specifically 60%, agreed with the notion that the Ile Ife cultural heritage effectively contributes to the promotion of environmental sustainability employing traditional knowledge and skills. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of the respondents hold the view that the primary focus of mainstream Ile Ife cultural heritage festival sites is to prioritize the promotion of environmental sustainability in their programming.

The study of Table 2 indicated that 51% of the participants acknowledged, to a moderate degree, that the cultural history of Ile Ife contributes to the economic value within the community. This implies that a significant number of participants in the study expressed that the Ile Ife Cultural heritage, including festivals such as the Oranmiyan festival, Aje Festival, Moremi Festival, and the renowned Olojo Cultural Festival, serve as effective platforms for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (No poverty), 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructures), and 11 (Sustainable Cities). This is achieved through the economic development facilitated by these cultural festivals in the region of Ile Ife and its surrounding areas. This statement implies that survey participants expressed consensus regarding the positive impact of the diverse cultural legacy of Ile Ife in advancing several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the use of new approaches during the annual cultural festival held in the town. The respondents expressed their disagreement with the idea that cultural heritage is not included in the pursuit of the economic development goals outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Table 1 : Respondent responses on does the Ile Ife cultural heritage promote environmental sustainability through traditional knowledge and skills?**

<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>40%</b>
	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source, (field survey, 2023)

**Table 2. Respondent responses on what extent does the Ile Ife cultural heritage contribute to economic value?**

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very High	36	10%
High	79	21%
Moderate	187	51%
Low	67	18%
Total	369	100 %

Source, (Field Survey 2023)

**Table 4: Respondent response on does the Ile Ife cultural heritage promotes SDG 2030 agenda through its contents.**

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	147	40%
Agree	38	10%
Disagree	132	36%
Strongly Disagree	52	14%
Total	369	100%

Source, (Field Survey, 2023)

**Table 5: Respondents' responses how effective does Ile Ife Cultural heritage be use for actualization of the Sustainable development goals 2030.**

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very Effective	177	48%
Effective	55	16%
Moderate	95	26%
Not Effective	23	6%
Can't Say	19	5%
Total	369	100%

Source, (Fieldwork 2023)

From the data in Table 3, 46 % of the respondents agreed that cultural heritage protects and promotes peace in society as indicated in the SDG Agenda 2030. This suggests that a significant proportion of the participants hold the belief that the sector serves as an effective means of fostering peace and prosperity within society by facilitating intercommunity, town, or city relationships, which aligns with one of the key principles advocated by the United Nations.

Based on the findings shown in Table 4, it can be observed that 40% of the participants surveyed agreed with the notion that the cultural heritage of Ile Ife contributes to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 agenda, as evidenced by the content associated with it. This indicates that a significant proportion of the participants in the survey hold the belief that the contents of the Ile Ife Cultural Heritage Festival have the potential to effectively contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development agenda for the year 2030. However, it is worth noting that 36% of the respondents express complete disagreement with this assertion, citing their exposure and experience with the societal challenges of underdevelopment in certain areas of the Ile Ife community. According to the findings presented in Table 5, the responses of the participants indicate the potential effectiveness of Ile Ife's Cultural heritage in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030. According to the respondent's feedback, it was found that 48% of them hold the view that the Ile Ife Cultural sector has a favorable opportunity for realizing the goals. This suggests that a significant number of respondents believe that the cultural heritage sectors in Ile Ife play a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 in Nigeria, provided that the policies of the United Nations and UNESCO consider the involvement of the Osun State and Nigerian government, as well as key stakeholders.

The findings indicate that the Ile Ife cultural festival, with an average participation rate of 56%, moderately contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030 among the population of Ile Ife City. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Nomishan et al. (2020), which demonstrated that respondents derive a moderate level of benefit from this phenomenon due to its ability to attract both internal and external investments, generate employment opportunities through increased cultural tourism, enhance infrastructure, and foster a sense of patriotism among community members. Nevertheless, despite the considerable advantages associated with the effective administration of Cultural Heritage for the local communities, future generations, and the overall socioeconomic welfare of society, this valuable resource has encountered several anthropogenic challenges on a global scale. According to the study conducted by Yılmaz and El-Gamil (2018), the diverse cultural legacy of Ile Ife contributes to the promotion of love, unity, commitment, and patriotism among its members, as well as the residents of Nigeria as a whole. This aligns with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) which focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions. Temgu *et al.* (2023), it appears that the multitude of cultural heritage materials in Ile Ife not only contribute to the promotion of national cohesion and intercultural dialogue but also have the potential to be utilized for tourism to facilitate sustainable development in Nigeria. However, the preservation of the captivating advantages stemming from Ile Ife's culturally rich legacy is currently at risk due to its inadequate inclusion in the policies of the SDG 2030 goal.

The Numerous Ile Ife Cultural heritage sites and festivals have the potential to significantly contribute to societal development, hence serving as a promising route for the realization of the SDG 2030 agenda. However,

for this sector to effectively harness its potential, the Nigerian Government and the United Nations must provide proper management and support. The absence of government commitment and the insufficient incorporation of culture as a goal has hindered the successful attainment of the SDG agenda in Nigeria, specifically in the southwestern region. Consequently, the shortcomings experienced during the implementation of the MDG initiatives in this area will likely persist, despite the broader scope of the SDG 2030 agenda. The findings suggest that the government, as well as other relevant entities and stakeholders responsible for advancing the cultural heritage sector, specifically with the numerous cultural heritage sites in Ile Ife, have not fully committed to the efforts aimed at promoting Ife's cultural heritage for the achievement of the sustainable development goals by 2030. The concept of agenda setting plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and directing attention towards specific issues. By strategically establishing the agenda and emphasizing the significance of Ile Ife's cultural heritage, individuals will be compelled to prioritize and contemplate its value.

Consequently, the cultural heritage's relevance will gain widespread recognition, catalyzing achieving the vision outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Moreover, this approach can help safeguard the cultural sector from the imminent threat of extinction. This observation aligns with the research conducted by Widodo (2023), which asserts that the recognition of World Heritage sites as significant entities contributes to the attainment of many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 11. Goal 11 emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements. The researcher emphasized that World Heritage sites, including Ile Ife, have the potential to contribute significantly to the attainment of Goal 11 by facilitating sustainable tourism, safeguarding cultural heritage, and fostering economic growth that positively impacts local populations. Furthermore, the preservation of these sites serves to enhance the promotion of education and raise awareness regarding the significance of cultural heritage, as well as the imperative to save it for the benefit of future generations. In a similar vein, Centre's study (n.d.-e) in 2023 demonstrated a correlation between the Cultural Heritage status and various other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 4 on quality education, Goal 8 concerning decent work and economic growth, Goal 12 focusing on responsible consumption and production, and Goal 13 addressing climate action.

Preservation of the Ile Ife Cultural Heritage sites have the potential to generate employment possibilities within the Ile Ife communities, making a significant contribution to both economic growth and the promotion of decent work, in alignment with Goal 8. The promotion of responsible consumption and production (Goal 12) can be facilitated by the sustainable management of these locations, thereby fostering the adoption of sustainable practices and waste reduction. Ultimately, the preservation of these places has the potential to make a significant contribution to climate action, specifically Goal 13. This is due to their ability to function as carbon sinks, effectively sequestering carbon dioxide, and their capacity to facilitate the conservation of biodiversity.

In addition, the study conducted by Sridharan & Sharma (2023), revealed that cultural legacy, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects, exerts a significant impact on the progress and evolution of society across various dimensions. The significance of heritage protection is underscored by the presence of numerous elements. It has been seen that the preservation of the historic environment yields considerable benefits to local economies, particularly in terms of tourism, and serves as an effective means of attracting external investments. The authors emphasize the importance of adaptive reuse of historical structures in the promotion of

sustainable communities. This is primarily achieved by significantly reducing the carbon footprint associated with new construction projects and by preserving cultural heritage. Additionally, adaptive reuse contributes to enhanced social inclusion within these communities. The authors assert that the cultural heritage sector possesses valuable knowledge that can contribute to society's efforts in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This expertise encompasses various areas, including water and climate management as well as the carbon sequestration potential of forests on a global scale. The conclusion suggests that it is important for key stakeholders, such as government entities and prominent organizations involved in the development process, to prioritize the promotion of globalized approaches to development over indigenous cultural practices.

The government, along with key stakeholders such as UNESCO, the United Nations, and the Nigeria Ministry of Culture and Tourism, possess the ability to reframe this narrative through their agenda-setting role. By doing so, they can elevate the significance of the abundant cultural heritage of Ile Ife, rather than portraying it as inferior, to contribute to the realization of the sustainable development goals by 2030. The results of the study indicate that, on average, a significant proportion of the 201 cultural sites on Ile Ife, specifically 62%, have not demonstrated effectiveness in advancing the goals of sustainable development. These results align with the research conducted by Nwaolikpe (2021), which shows that the utilization of mass media may effectively transmit Nigerian culture to its population, resulting in both cultural transformation and preservation. Nevertheless, individuals often find themselves disconnected from their cultural heritage due to a lack of knowledge or emotional connection to their origins. This disconnection can be attributed, in part, to insufficient efforts by the media to foster awareness and appreciation of one's cultural roots, despite their potential to facilitate such awareness.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be deduced that the Ile Ife Cultural Heritage Site and Festival possess the potential to contribute towards the achievement of the agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal, provided that the sector is effectively involved in the implementation of SDG policies. The Ile Ife Cultural heritage sector prioritizes the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 through a range of activities that take place annually during cultural events in the historic town. The ineffectiveness of the government and other essential stakeholders in the cultural sector in promoting the sustainable development agenda might be attributed to their insufficient commitment.

## **Recommendation.**

1. The Nigerian government, United Nations, and UNESCO should create a conducive atmosphere for the preservation and promotion of the Ile Ife Cultural Heritage sector, as it can serve as a significant platform for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda.
2. It is imperative for governments and private groups to provide financial support for cultural programming disseminated through the media, given that the media serves as a potent instrument for facilitating societal transformation.
3. Lastly, it is imperative that the cultural heritage sector be recognized as an independent objective within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to effectively implement the SDG Goals 2030 in Ile Ife, Osun, and Nigeria.



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