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The Role of Traditional Marriage Institutions in Sustaining Cultural Identity and Heritage Preservation in Edo State

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Abstract: *This study examined the role of traditional marriage institutions in sustaining cultural identity and heritage preservation in Edo State, Nigeria. Among the Edo, marriage is governed not by individuals alone but by enduring social institutions, the council of elders, the Okaegbe or family head, lineage and family heads, and cultural custodians, that regulate rites, legitimise unions, transmit values, arbitrate disputes, and enforce norms. These institutions function as the organising machinery through which the rich heritage of Edo marriage, its introduction (Ivbuomo), symbolic bride price (Erhunmwun), coral-bead regalia, and communal rites, is codified, enforced, transmitted, and adapted. Adopting a descriptive survey design supported by key-informant interviews and observation, the study sampled 238 respondents, including elders, family heads, custodians, married couples, and youth, across selected Bini and Esan communities. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests at the 0.05 level of significance, within the frameworks of structural-functionalism and social-institutions theory. Findings show that marriage institutions perform strong roles in legitimising unions (90%), regulating rites and norms (88%), and upholding elders' authority (85%), and that respondents overwhelmingly affirm their contribution to cultural identity, heritage preservation, and social cohesion. However, the institutions face significant challenges from modernisation, the decline of elders' authority, youth detachment and migration, foreign values, and commercialisation. Chi-square analyses revealed statistically significant relationships between the strength of marriage institutions and cultural-identity affirmation, between institutional authority and heritage preservation, and between institutional adaptation and continuity. The study concludes that traditional marriage institutions are the decisive custodial mechanism sustaining Edo cultural identity and heritage, and that their revitalisation, through strengthened authority, documentation, legal recognition, and adaptive reform, is essential to the survival of the heritage they protect.*

Keywords: *traditional marriage institutions, cultural identity, heritage preservation, Edo State, elders, social institutions, intangible heritage.*

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Introduction

Every society sustains itself through institutions, the enduring, patterned arrangements of roles, norms, and authority through which social life is organised and reproduced. Among the most fundamental of these is the institution of marriage, which in traditional African societies is not merely a personal relationship but a corporate arrangement governed by families, lineages, elders, and custodians. Among the Edo people of Edo State, Nigeria, heirs to the historic Benin Kingdom, the traditional marriage institution stands as one of the central pillars of social organisation, and, through its governance of one of the culture's most elaborate rites, as a principal guardian of Edo cultural identity and heritage.

A cultural institution, in the sociological sense, is a stable complex of norms, roles, and relationships organised around a core social function. The traditional marriage institution among the Edo comprises the interlocking roles and authorities that govern how marriage is contracted and celebrated: the council of elders whose blessing and oversight are indispensable; the Okaegbe, the eldest male or head of the family who presides over the ceremony; the lineage and family heads who negotiate and consent; and the cultural custodians who hold the knowledge of the rites. These actors do not merely participate in marriage; they constitute the institution that defines, regulates, and legitimises it, and in doing so they act as custodians of a heritage far larger than any single wedding.

The heritage this institution governs is rich and layered. Edo marriage proceeds through the introduction, known as Ivbuomo, a period of inquiry, the negotiation and payment of the symbolic bride price, Erhunmwun, understood as a gesture of appreciation to the bride's family rather than the purchase of the bride, and an elaborate ceremony featuring the presentation of kola nuts and palm wine, the adorning of the couple in coral-bead regalia, ancestral prayers, and communal feasting and dance. Coral beads, symbolising royalty, purity, and ancestral authority, connect the couple to the Benin royal heritage and remain among the most sacred symbols of Edo marriage. Each of these elements is defined and enforced by the marriage institution, which specifies who must be involved, what must be done, and what a valid marriage requires.

Crucially, these institutions do more than stage a ceremony; they sustain identity and heritage. By insisting that a marriage is not complete, and a husband not fully legitimate, until the customary rites are properly performed, such that a man who skips the traditional rites is not fully recognised as a legitimate husband under Edo custom, the institution compels the reproduction of the heritage in each new union. In governing marriage, it transmits the values of respect for lineage, family honour, and ancestral alignment that define what it means to be Edo. The traditional marriage institution is thus a mechanism of cultural continuity, encoding and enforcing Edo identity across generations.

Yet these institutions face mounting pressure. Modernisation, urbanisation, the erosion of elders' authority, the spread of foreign religions and values, the migration and detachment of youth, and the commercialisation of rites all weaken the institutional machinery on which the heritage depends. Where the institution weakens, its capacity to sustain identity and preserve heritage weakens with it. This study therefore examines the role of traditional marriage institutions in sustaining cultural identity and heritage preservation in Edo State, investigating the functions these institutions perform, their contribution to identity and preservation, and the challenges that threaten their vitality.

Statement of the Problem

Edo cultural identity and heritage, long anchored in strong traditional institutions, are under strain in an era of rapid social change. The traditional marriage institution, historically a central custodian of that identity and heritage, appears to be weakening: the authority of elders is contested, the knowledge of custodians risks passing unrecorded, foreign faiths and Western wedding models compete with customary practice, and the commercialisation of rites distorts their meaning. As the

institution weakens, so too does its capacity to regulate, transmit, and legitimise the heritage it governs, raising the prospect that Edo marriage traditions, and the cultural identity they express, may erode.

Despite the evident centrality of these institutions, their role in sustaining identity and heritage has not been systematically examined. It is not known with precision what functions the marriage institution performs, how strongly it performs them, how it contributes to cultural identity and heritage preservation, or how the pressures upon it are undermining its authority and continuity. Much existing scholarship describes the rites of Edo marriage or the participation of the community, but few studies analyse the institution itself, the structured roles and authorities that govern marriage, as the mechanism through which heritage is sustained. Without such evidence, efforts to strengthen the institution and safeguard the heritage cannot be properly directed. The problem this study addresses is therefore the gap between the acknowledged custodial role of traditional marriage institutions in sustaining Edo cultural identity and heritage and the absence of systematic evidence on their functions, contributions, and vulnerabilities.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the role of traditional marriage institutions in sustaining cultural identity and heritage preservation in Edo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the functions performed by traditional marriage institutions among the Edo people;
2. examine how traditional marriage institutions contribute to sustaining cultural identity and heritage preservation in Edo State; and
3. identify the challenges weakening traditional marriage institutions in Edo State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

4. What functions do traditional marriage institutions perform among the Edo people?
5. How do traditional marriage institutions contribute to sustaining cultural identity and heritage preservation in Edo State?
6. What challenges are weakening traditional marriage institutions in Edo State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

7. $H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between the strength of traditional marriage institutions and the affirmation of Edo cultural identity.
8. $H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between institutional authority and heritage preservation among the Edo people.
9. $H0_3$: There is no significant relationship between institutional adaptation and the continuity of traditional marriage among the Edo people.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarifications

A social institution is an established and enduring pattern of roles, norms, values, and relationships organised around a fundamental social need or function. Institutions such as the family, religion, and marriage provide the stable structures through which societies regulate behaviour, transmit culture, and reproduce themselves across generations. The traditional marriage institution denotes the complex of customary roles and authorities, elders, family and lineage heads, the Okaegbe, and custodians, that governs how marriage is contracted, celebrated, legitimised, and sustained within a

traditional society.

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging and self-understanding that individuals and groups derive from shared culture, values, symbols, language, and practices; it answers the question of who a people are and what distinguishes them. Heritage preservation is the safeguarding of a people's cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, so that it endures and is transmitted to succeeding generations. This study situates the traditional marriage institution as a mechanism that links the two: by governing a central cultural practice, the institution both expresses and reproduces cultural identity, and both enforces and transmits the heritage that identity is built upon.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Traditional Marriage Institutions, Cultural Identity, and Heritage Preservation



Figure 1. Conceptual framework linking marriage institutions and their functions to cultural identity and heritage preservation. (Author's construct, 2026.)

The Edo Traditional Marriage Institution

The Edo, an Edoid people comprising the Bini, Esan, and related groups who trace their origins to the founders of the Benin Kingdom, share a closely similar marriage institution. Its defining feature is that authority over marriage rests with the collective, not the couple. The process begins with families, proceeds through the mediation of elders and heads, and is presided over by the Okaegbe, the eldest male or head of the bride's family, who anchors the ceremony. Kola nuts and palm wine are shared; the bride price is negotiated and paid, with the family customarily accepting only what is proper and returning the rest with blessings; prayers are offered to ancestors and deities; and the couple, adorned in coral beads, is joined amid communal feasting and dance. At every step, institutional roles, who may speak, who must consent, who presides, who blesses, structure the event.

This institutional character is precisely what makes the marriage a vehicle of heritage. The institution encodes the rites as obligations, not options: it defines the sequence, specifies the symbols, assigns the roles, and enforces the norms, and in doing so it ensures that each marriage reproduces the cultural pattern. Its sanctions are real, an improperly conducted marriage may be deemed illegitimate, a breach may invite communal disapproval, and its authority, vested in age, lineage, and custom, lends the heritage its binding force. The institution thus functions as both a rulebook and an enforcement mechanism for Edo marriage heritage.

Plate 1. Stylised coral-bead regalia and beaded crown, sacred symbols of Edo marriage that the institution defines and enforces. (Author's illustration.)

Institutions, Identity, and Heritage Preservation

A substantial literature in sociology and anthropology establishes the centrality of institutions to the preservation of culture and identity. Institutions are the carriers of tradition: they store cultural knowledge in their roles and rules, transmit it through socialisation and enforcement, and stabilise it against the flux of individual choice and social change. Marriage institutions in particular are widely recognised as key sites of cultural reproduction, since they govern the formation of families, the transmission of values to children, and the alignment of unions with ancestral and communal norms. Where such institutions are strong, cultural identity is affirmed and heritage is preserved; where they weaken, both are placed at risk.

Scholarship on intangible cultural heritage reinforces this view, emphasising that heritage lives in the institutions, practices, and communities that bear it rather than in objects alone, and that safeguarding it requires sustaining the social structures through which it is transmitted. For marriage heritage, this means that preservation depends not only on individuals performing rites but on the health of the institution that defines and enforces them. The elders' council, the family heads, and the custodians are not incidental to the heritage; they are its living infrastructure, and their authority and continuity are the conditions of its survival.

Modernisation and Institutional Change

The literature is equally clear that traditional institutions face profound pressures under modernisation. Research on modernisation and traditional marriage in Edo communities documents how urbanisation, formal education, foreign religion, and changing values since independence have reshaped customary practice and challenged the authority of traditional institutions. The erosion of elders' authority, as younger generations look to new sources of status and knowledge, strikes at the heart of the institution; foreign faiths sometimes bypass or discourage ancestral elements; Western-style weddings offer an alternative model; and the commercialisation of rites shifts their governance from custom toward the market. At the same time, observers note institutional resilience: elders' authority, the bride price, and coral-bead symbolism remain, in practitioners' words, non-negotiable, indicating that the institution retains real force even amid change.

This dynamic of pressure and resilience frames the study's expectations: that the marriage institution continues to perform strong roles in legitimising and regulating unions; that it is perceived as vital to identity and heritage; and that modernisation, the decline of elders' authority, youth detachment, and foreign influence are the principal challenges weakening it.

Empirical Studies and Identified Gaps

Existing empirical work on Edo marriage is largely descriptive or historical, cataloguing rites and symbols or tracing their transformation under colonial and modern influence. Valuable as this scholarship is, it seldom analyses the marriage institution as such, the structured roles and authorities that govern marriage, or treats it as the explanatory variable in the preservation of identity and heritage. Studies of community participation illuminate who takes part in rites, but participation and institution are not the same: participation describes involvement, while institution describes the governing structure of roles, norms, and authority that organises that involvement and gives it binding force. Few studies bring inferential methods to bear on the relationship between institutional strength and heritage outcomes. The present study addresses these gaps by making the traditional marriage institution its central object, and by testing its relationship to cultural identity and heritage preservation.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in structural-functionalism and social-institutions theory. Structural-functionalism views society as a system of interrelated institutions, each performing functions that maintain social order and cohesion; from this perspective, the traditional marriage institution

performs vital functions, regulating unions, integrating families, transmitting values, and reinforcing solidarity, whose disruption threatens the wider social order. Social-institutions theory, complementing this, holds that institutions are the durable carriers and enforcers of culture, storing, transmitting, and stabilising cultural patterns through their roles, norms, and sanctions. Together, the frameworks predict that the strength, authority, and adaptability of the marriage institution determine its capacity to sustain cultural identity and preserve heritage, and that the weakening of the institution undermines both, an expectation that directly informs the study's hypotheses.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, appropriate for systematically describing the functions, contributions, and challenges of traditional marriage institutions without manipulating variables. It was supplemented by key-informant interviews with elders, custodians, and family heads, and by non-participant observation of marriage ceremonies, to contextualise and triangulate the survey findings.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised members of Edo communities knowledgeable about or involved in the traditional marriage institution, including elders and custodians, family and lineage heads, married couples, and youth, across selected Bini and Esan communities in Edo State. Using a combination of purposive and stratified random sampling, a sample of 238 respondents was drawn to ensure representation across institutional roles, age groups, and communities, with deliberate inclusion of both the custodians who embody the institution and the youth who must inherit it. The sample size was considered adequate for the descriptive and inferential analyses employed.

Instrumentation

The principal instrument was a structured questionnaire, the Traditional Marriage Institutions Questionnaire (TMIQ), comprising four sections: demographic data; functions performed by the marriage institution; perceived contribution to cultural identity and heritage preservation (measured on a five-point Likert scale); and challenges weakening the institution. The instrument was validated by three experts in sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, and its reliability, established through a pilot test using Cronbach's alpha, yielded a coefficient of 0.86, indicating high internal consistency. Interviews followed a semi-structured guide, and an observation checklist guided the recording of institutional roles at ceremonies.

Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were administered in person over an eight-week period, achieving a return rate of 92%. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, while the three hypotheses were tested using the chi-square (χ^2) test of independence at the 0.05 significance level. Qualitative interview and observation data were analysed thematically to illuminate the statistical patterns. A decision rule of mean ≥ 3.00 was adopted for accepting perceived-contribution items on the five-point scale.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant authorities, and participation was voluntary, informed, and confidential; due respect and permissions were observed in approaching elders and custodians and in attending ceremonies. The study acknowledges limitations: its focus on selected Edo communities limits generalisability to all Edoid groups; self-reported data may be subject to bias; and the cross-sectional design captures a moment in an evolving institutional landscape. These limitations are mitigated by triangulation across survey, interview, and observation sources.

Result

This section presents the findings in line with the research questions and hypotheses. Of the 238 respondents, the sample spanned custodial, familial, marital, and youth categories across the selected communities. Table 2 summarises the demographic profile of the sample.

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents (N = 238)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	%
Age group	Youth (18–35)	82	34.5
	Adults (36–59)	98	41.2
	Elders (60+)	58	24.4
Institutional role	Elder / custodian	52	21.8
	Family / lineage head	56	23.5
	Married couple	72	30.3
	Unmarried youth	58	24.4
Ethnic sub-group	Bini	146	61.3
	Esan	92	38.7
Marital status	Married	140	58.8
	Single	98	41.2

Source: *Field survey, 2026.*

Research Question 1: Functions of the Marriage Institution

The traditional marriage institution was found to perform strong roles across all functions examined. Its role in legitimising unions was rated strongest, followed by regulating rites and norms and upholding elders' authority, with arbitrating disputes and transmitting values also strongly affirmed. The sanctioning of breaches, while still substantial, was rated somewhat lower, an early sign that the institution's enforcement capacity, though real, is under greater pressure than its ceremonial and regulatory roles.

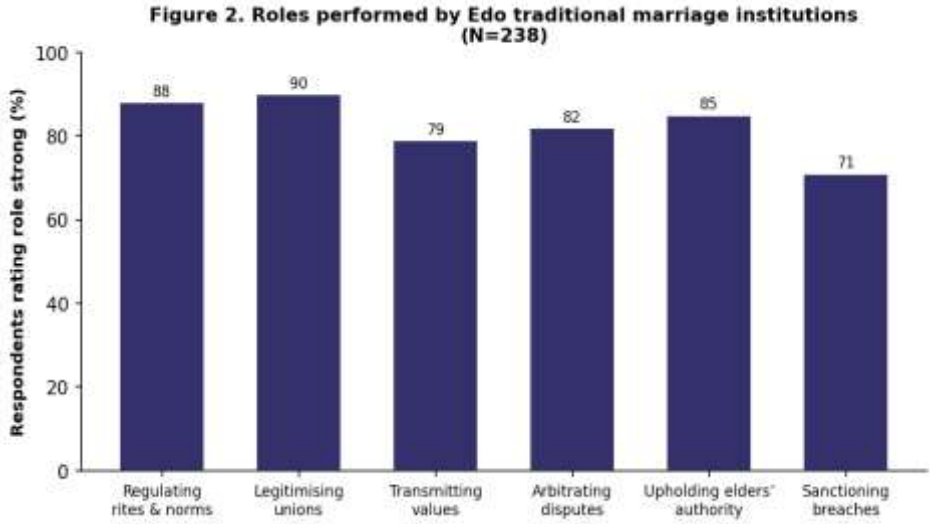


Figure 2. Roles performed by Edo traditional marriage institutions (N = 238).

The pattern is instructive. Legitimising unions (90%) and regulating rites and norms (88%) drew the strongest ratings, confirming that the institution remains the recognised authority on what constitutes a valid Edo marriage. Upholding elders' authority (85%), arbitrating disputes (82%), and transmitting values (79%) were also strongly affirmed. That sanctioning breaches was rated lower (71%) suggests that, while the institution still defines the norms, its power to enforce them against non-compliance is comparatively weakened, a vulnerability consistent with the reported decline of elders' authority.

Research Question 2: Contribution to Identity and Preservation

On the five-point Likert scale, all items exceeded the 3.00 decision criterion, and most exceeded 4.00, indicating strong agreement that the marriage institution sustains identity and heritage. Affirming Edo cultural identity attracted the highest mean, followed by preserving rites and symbols and sustaining family and lineage values. Reinforcing social cohesion and transmitting heritage to the next generation were strongly endorsed, while adapting custom to modern life drew more cautious responses.

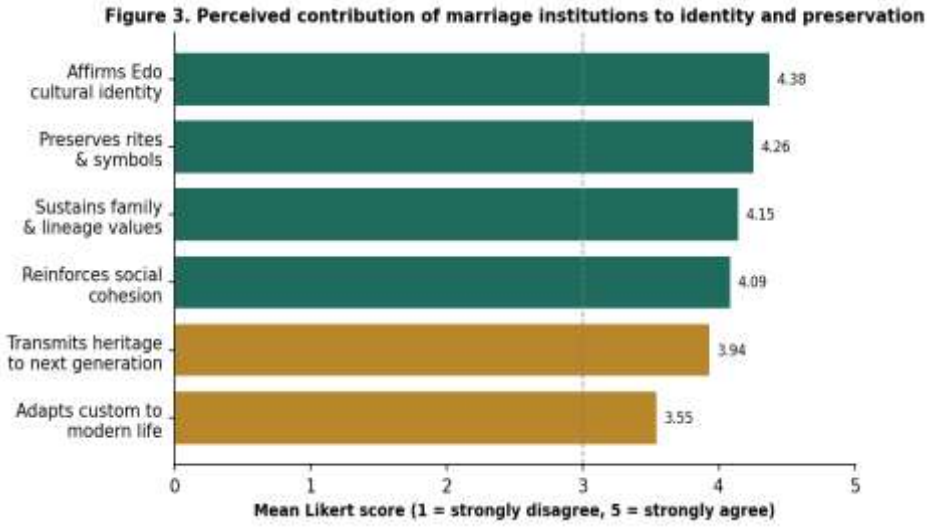


Figure 3. Mean Likert scores for perceived contribution of marriage institutions to identity and preservation.

Table 3. Perceived contribution of marriage institutions to identity and preservation (descriptive statistics)

Contribution item	Mean	SD	Decision
Affirms Edo cultural identity	4.38	0.59	Accepted
Preserves rites & symbols	4.26	0.64	Accepted
Sustains family & lineage values	4.15	0.68	Accepted
Reinforces social cohesion	4.09	0.71	Accepted
Transmits heritage to next generation	3.94	0.79	Accepted
Adapts custom to modern life	3.55	0.90	Accepted

Note: *Decision criterion = mean ≥ 3.00. Field survey, 2026.*

Research Question 3: Challenges Weakening the Institution

Modernisation and urbanisation emerged as the most frequently cited challenge, followed closely by youth detachment and migration and the decline of elders' authority. Foreign religion and values, the commercialisation of rites, and weak legal recognition of customary marriage also featured prominently. These findings align with the modernisation literature and highlight the institutional erosion, especially of authority and intergenerational continuity, that threatens the heritage.

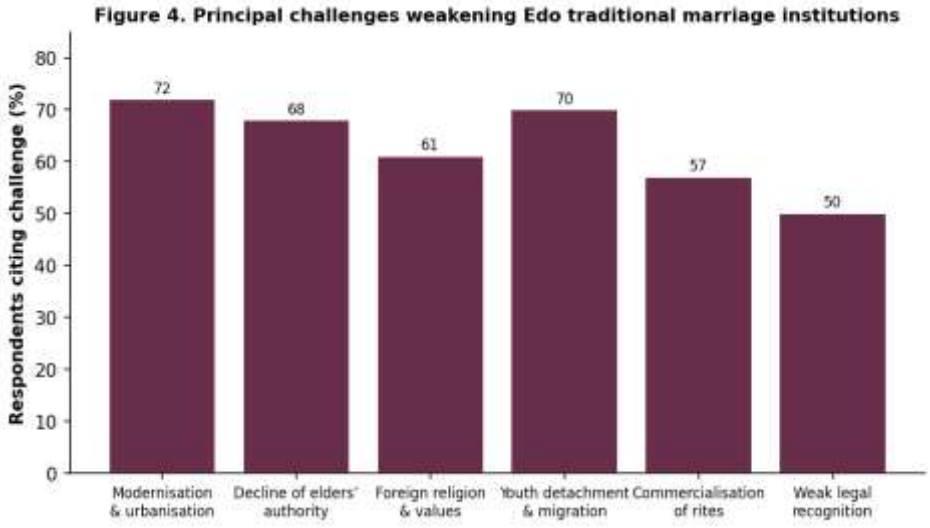


Figure 4. Principal challenges weakening Edo traditional marriage institutions reported by respondents.

Test of Hypotheses

The three null hypotheses were tested using the chi-square test of independence at $\alpha = 0.05$. Table 4 summarises the results.

Table 4. Summary of chi-square tests of the study hypotheses

Hypothesis	χ^2	df	p-value	Decision
$H0_1$ Institutional strength × cultural identity	30.18	4	0.000	Rejected
$H0_2$ Institutional authority × heritage preservation	26.44	4	0.000	Rejected
$H0_3$ Institutional adaptation × continuity	22.07	4	0.002	Rejected

Critical χ^2 at df = 4, $\alpha = 0.05$ is 9.49. All computed values exceed the critical value; null hypotheses rejected.

In each case the computed chi-square value exceeded the critical value of 9.49, and the associated p-values fell below 0.05. Consequently, all three null hypotheses were rejected. The strength of the marriage institution was significantly related to the affirmation of cultural identity; institutional authority was significantly related to heritage preservation; and institutional adaptation was significantly related to the continuity of traditional marriage.

Discussion of Findings

The findings present a coherent and instructive picture. First, the traditional marriage institution remains a strong and recognised authority among the Edo, performing robust roles in legitimising unions, regulating rites, and upholding elders' authority. This confirms the structural-functionalist expectation that the institution continues to discharge indispensable social functions, and it reflects the resilience that observers have noted in the non-negotiable elements of Edo marriage. The institution, in short, still governs: it defines what a valid marriage is and organises the roles through which it is achieved. That its weakest function is the sanctioning of breaches, however, foreshadows the study's central concern, that the institution's authority, while intact in principle, is being eroded in practice.

Second, the strongly positive perception of the institution's contribution to identity and preservation

affirms the study's central thesis. Respondents rated most highly the institution's role in affirming Edo cultural identity, precisely the outcome the study foregrounds, followed by preserving rites and symbols and sustaining lineage values. This confirms that the community understands the marriage institution not merely as a social convenience but as a carrier of who the Edo are: in governing marriage, it enforces and transmits the values and symbols that constitute Edo identity. The chi-square result reinforces this, establishing a significant relationship between institutional strength and identity affirmation. The heritage and the identity, the findings suggest, stand or fall with the institution that governs them.

Third, the challenge analysis and hypothesis tests together diagnose the institution's vulnerability. Modernisation, youth detachment and migration, and, tellingly, the decline of elders' authority are the leading challenges, and the significant relationships between institutional authority and preservation, and between adaptation and continuity, confirm that these erosions directly threaten the heritage. The decline of elders' authority is especially consequential, for the elders are the living core of the institution; as their authority wanes, so does the institution's capacity to regulate, transmit, and enforce. The weaker sanctioning role observed in the findings is the visible symptom of this deeper erosion. Youth detachment compounds the problem, for an institution whose custodians are ageing and whose heirs are disengaging faces a crisis of succession.

Fourth, the significant relationship between institutional adaptation and continuity carries a constructive message. It suggests that the institution's survival depends not on rigid preservation but on its capacity to adapt, to accommodate modern realities, ease the cost and commercialisation that deter the young, and find a place for valued custom within contemporary and religious life, without surrendering its essential authority and meaning. The interviews gave this texture: elders and custodians expressed determination to sustain the institution and lamented the erosion of their authority, while acknowledging that some adaptation is necessary to retain the young; younger respondents affirmed pride in Edo identity even where their engagement with the institution was limited, suggesting a latent commitment that a revitalised, adaptive institution might mobilise.

Finally, the findings position the traditional marriage institution as the decisive custodial mechanism of Edo cultural identity and heritage. It is through this institution, its roles, authority, norms, and sanctions, that the heritage is codified, enforced, transmitted, and, at its best, adapted and sustained. The institution's current strength in core functions is a considerable asset; its eroding authority and uncertain succession are a serious risk. The task, accordingly, is not to replace the institution but to revitalise it: to shore up its authority, secure its succession by engaging youth, document its knowledge, extend legal recognition to customary marriage, and support adaptive reform, so that this custodial machinery can continue to sustain the identity and heritage it has long protected.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the role of traditional marriage institutions in sustaining cultural identity and heritage preservation in Edo State. It found that these institutions perform strong roles in legitimising unions, regulating rites, and upholding authority; that they contribute powerfully to affirming Edo cultural identity, preserving rites and symbols, and sustaining social cohesion; and that they face significant challenges from modernisation, the decline of elders' authority, youth detachment, foreign values, and commercialisation. The rejection of all three hypotheses established that institutional strength is significantly related to cultural identity, that institutional authority underpins heritage preservation, and that institutional adaptation is decisive for continuity.

The central lesson is that the traditional marriage institution is the custodial mechanism through which Edo cultural identity and heritage are sustained, and that its vitality is the condition of their survival. The institution remains strong in its core governing functions, but its authority is eroding and its succession is uncertain, exposing the heritage it protects to gradual decline. Sustaining Edo

cultural identity and heritage therefore requires the deliberate revitalisation of the institution itself: strengthening the authority of its custodians, engaging youth to secure its succession, documenting its knowledge, extending legal recognition to customary marriage, and supporting adaptive reform that reconciles tradition with contemporary life. If the Edo can renew this institution, it can continue to affirm their identity and preserve their heritage, binding families and generations as it has done for centuries.

The study also points toward a research agenda. Future work might examine how the marriage institution operates in urban and diaspora Edo settings; evaluate specific reforms, such as the legal recognition or documentation of customary marriage, and their effect on institutional strength; and investigate the succession of custodial knowledge across generations. Comparative studies across Edoid and other Nigerian groups would help distinguish challenges peculiar to the Edo from those facing African traditional institutions more broadly.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

10. Communities and traditional authorities should strengthen the authority and standing of elders and custodians who embody the marriage institution, recognising and supporting their role as guardians of Edo cultural identity and heritage.
11. Youth should be deliberately engaged in the institution, through mentorship, cultural education, and participation in institutional roles, to secure the succession of custodial knowledge and reverse the detachment that threatens continuity.
12. The knowledge, roles, and norms of the traditional marriage institution should be systematically documented, in writing, audio, and video, to safeguard the heritage and support its transmission.
13. Government and legal authorities should strengthen the recognition of customary marriage within the legal framework, reinforcing the institution's authority and reducing its marginalisation relative to statutory and religious marriage.
14. Cultural custodians and community leaders should pursue adaptive reform that eases the cost and commercialisation of rites and accommodates valued custom within contemporary and religious life, sustaining the institution's relevance to younger generations.
15. Government and heritage agencies should support the traditional marriage institution as a custodian of intangible heritage through recognition, funding, and the involvement of communities as principal guardians of their traditions.

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