

THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN CULTURAL FESTIVALS. A GENERAL OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Nigerian cultural festivals, offer a unique opportunity to explore the biopsychosocial model, a comprehensive framework integrating biological, psychological, and social dimensions of human physical activity. This paper delved into the multifaceted dimensions of these festivals on individuals and communities, highlighting their significance in promoting holistic well-being. Biologically, Nigerian cultural

festivals encompass physical activities such as traditional dances and sports, which enhance cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and overall fitness. These events also showcase nutritious traditional foods, promoting healthy dietary habits and awareness of indigenous health practices. Psychologically, these festivals foster mental well-being by providing joy, excitement, and opportunities for emotional expression. Participants experience stress relief and enhanced self-esteem through cultural pride and recognition. Socially, Nigerian cultural festivals strengthen community cohesion by bringing together diverse groups and fostering social bonds. They play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, enabling intergenerational knowledge transfer, and promoting inclusivity and social harmony. The economic opportunities generated through tourism and local business promotion further enhance community development and support. By examining Nigerian cultural festivals through the biopsychosocial lens, this paper underscores their profound impact on individual and communal well-being, emphasizing the importance of integrating biological, psychological, and social perspectives to fully appreciate their values. This holistic approach not only enhances our understanding of these cultural events but also informs policies and practices aimed at maximizing their entire benefits.

Key Words: *Biological, Biopsychosocial, Cultural Festival, Cultural Heritage, Perception, Psychological, Sociological.*

Introduction

There is hardly a community in Africa where there are no festivals to celebrate. Celebration of the living, honor the ancestors, venerate the dead, introduce or celebrate planting or harvesting season. Adjeketa, Shireku, and Abodu (2020) said that Africa has been tagged a “festival continent” As part of Africa, Nigeria has a large number of festival. According to the report from the Federal Ministry of Information (2018) there are about Three hundred and sixty-five (365) major cultural festivals in Nigeria. Notable among these Festivals are the Dubar Festival (Northern Nigeria) Eyo Festival (Lagos), Oshun Festival (Oshogbo Osun State), Argungu Fishing Festival (Argungu Kebi State) and Ige-Agba Yam Festival of Egede people of Benue State to mention few.

Nigeria, a land rich in diverse cultures, boasts a tapestry of vibrant festivals and rituals. These cultural celebrations offer profound insights into the nation’s social fabric, beliefs, and traditions (Nicholas, 2024) The Nigerian cultural festivals, rich in tradition and vibrant in expression, offer a unique lens through which the biopsychosocial model can be applied. These festivals, which encompass diverse dances, music, rituals, and communal activities, are more than mere celebrations; they are integral to the fabric of Nigerian society, reflecting its complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social dimensions. (Nwakoby, 1986). This paper sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how Nigerian cultural festivals influence and are influenced by the intertwined biological, psychological, and social factors. By examining these festivals through the lens, we gain a holistic understanding of their profound significance in Nigerian culture and their role in promoting the well-being of individuals and communities

Concept of Biopsychosocial

The biopsychosocial model is an approach to understanding mental and physical health through a multi-systems lens, understanding the influence of biology, psychology, and social environment. Dr. George Engel and Dr. John Romano developed this model in the 1970s (Engel, 1977).but the concept of this has existed in medicine for centuries. A biopsychosocial approach to healthcare understands that these systems overlap and interact to impact each individual's well-being and risk for illness, and understanding these systems can lead to more effective treatment. It also recognizes the importance of patient self-awareness, relationships with providers in the healthcare system, and individual life context (Soltani, Kopala-Sibley, and Noel. 2019).Biopsychosocial models are a class of trans-disciplinary models that look at the interconnection between biology, psychology, and socio-environmental factors. These models specifically examine how these aspects play a role in a range of topics but mainly psychiatry, health, and human development. In the field of kinesiology and physical education, (Amy and Steven, 2023) Biopsychosocial approach acknowledges that students' physical health and activity levels are influenced by the interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors. Integrating these components leads to a more comprehensive and effective physical education program. The biopsychosocial (BPS) approach in physical education is an extension of the broader BPS model that was initially developed to understand health and illness. This approach integrates biological, psychological, and social factors to provide a comprehensive understanding of health and behaviour. During festival Traditional dance is considered an activity that offers the involvement of different senses and connects movement to music with self-expression and applies different aspects of personality (Kaufmann, 2011; Studer-Lüthi and Züger, 2012). Music, which is a component of dance, improves physical performance. It's easier to start moving, walking, dancing or to deal with any kind of exercise if some people choose their music Thus cultural dance enhances physical fitness.

Physical fitness refers to the ability of your body systems to work together efficiently to allow you to be healthy and perform activities of daily living. Being efficient means doing daily activities with the least effort possible. A fit person can perform schoolwork, meet home responsibilities, and still have enough energy to enjoy sports and other leisure activities. A fit person can respond effectively to normal life situations, such as raking leaves at home, stocking shelves at a part-time job, and marching in the band at school. A fit person can also respond to emergencies - for example, by running to get help or aiding a friend in distress. (Corbin, & Masurier, 2017).

Biopsychosocial Effect of Cultural Festival

Cultural festivals are indigenous events that celebrate cultures, created and developed during the course of history, through live performances, food, arts and bringing people together to experience tradition and have fun, showcasing the diversity and identity of a community or an ethnic group. (Omotosho and Ogundiran, 2016). Dance and Movement through traditional dances and processions are central to many Nigerian cultural festivals. These activities involve significant physical exertion, promoting

cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and flexibility. Many festivals include traditional sports and games that encourage physical activity among participants, contributing to overall fitness and health (Adjekata, Shireku and Obado, 2024).

Cultural festivals offer a wide range of benefits that extend across social, economic, cultural, and personal dimensions. Cultural dance is a common feature of most festivals, by implication, participants are engaged in physical motion that enhances the biological functions of the system of the body. Psychological well-being, health and socialization combined effects of participation in cultural festivals on the human system are link to an aspect of Biopsychosocial effect. This model was initially formulated by George L. Engel in 1977 and provides a comprehensive framework for understanding health and human behavior by integrating biological, psychological, and social factors. When applied to Nigerian cultural festivals, this model helps unravel the multifaceted impacts these festivals have on individuals and communities. This has been observed by Oyintonyo and Bipelegba, (2018), that cultural festivals often involve physical activities that promote fitness and health, such as traditional dances and games. Saeid, and Paul, (2022) noted that these festivals serve as significant outlets for emotional expression, stress relief, and the enhancement of mental well-being through communal joy and shared cultural identity. Socially, they foster community cohesion, cultural preservation, and social support, reinforcing the bonds that hold Nigerian communities together.

Psychological Benefits of Cultural Festival

Festival celebrations create opportunities for fun, enjoyment, amusement, and recreation. It brings a sense of joy, happiness, spiritual enlightenment, and quality time with loved ones. Cultural Dance Festivals hold significant psychological importance across cultures (Optimum Health Institute [OHI], 2024). They serve as platforms for emotional expression, community building, and personal identity construction. According to Hung, (2024), festivals, like multicultural events promote social sustainability. They provide opportunities for individuals to express suppressed emotions, experience catharsis, and engage in fantasy-making, impacting both participants and observers (Cristiane, 2019). Music festivals, for example, influence attendees' emotional experiences, contributing to the formation of personal cultural identities and enhancing subjective well-being (Nicholas, 2024). Additionally, festivals play a role in leisure participation, value creation, and emotional regulation, ultimately impacting the psychological, cultural, and social well-being of participants (Ezebuilo. and Ndukwe, 2023). Festivals act as cultural mediators, integrating diverse social groups and strengthening social capital through shared experiences and cultural inclusivity. Others benefit include:

1. **Mental Well-being:** Participation in festivals can enhance mental health by providing joy, reducing stress, and offering a break from routine.
2. **Sense of Belonging:** Being part of a collective celebration can enhance feelings of inclusion and belonging, contributing to overall psychological well-being.
3. **Emotional Expression:** Festivals provide an outlet for emotional expression and celebration, which can be cathartic and uplifting.

Social Benefits Cultural Festival

Festivals provide socio-cultural benefits to communities by fostering community cohesion, social exchange, and a sense of pride (Ebru, Cansev, Medet, 2018). They offer opportunities for socialization, interaction, and the sharing of ideas, which contribute to the social fabric of society (Ebru, 2019). Festivals also have positive impacts on the quality of life perceived by residents, as they create a sense of community bonding and meaning in people's lives (Kelley. 2022). Additionally, festivals have significant economic benefits, such as generating employment, attracting investments, and stimulating industries Cristiane (2019). The socio-cultural impacts of festivals play a crucial role in the decision-making process of residents to attend and revisit festivals (Ebru, 2019). Overall, festivals act as mechanisms to resolve social tensions, impart societal glue, and control behaviour through the expression of values and meanings Ebru, (2019). Other social benefits of cultural festivals as enumerated by (Eze, 1998) include the following:

1. **Social Interaction:** They provide opportunities for people to interact, network, and form new relationships, enhancing social connections
2. **Intergenerational Engagement:** Festivals often involve participation from all age groups, promoting intergenerational bonding and the transmission of cultural knowledge and traditions.
3. **Community Building:** Cultural festivals foster social cohesion by bringing people together, strengthening community bonds, and promoting a sense of belonging and unity.
4. **Tourism Boost:** Cultural festivals attract tourists, both domestic and international, which boosts local economies through increased spending on accommodations, food, transportation, and souvenirs.
5. **Cultural Preservation:** Festivals help preserve and promote cultural heritage, traditions, and practices, ensuring they are passed down to future generations.
6. **Cultural Exchange:** They provide a space for cultural exchange and learning, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation among different cultural groups.
7. **Identity and Pride:** Celebrating cultural traditions enhances community and individual identity, instilling pride and a sense of belonging.

Conclusion

The biological, psychological, and social impacts of Nigerian cultural festivals are profound and multifaceted. These festivals promote physical health through active participation, enhance mental well-being by fostering joy and emotional expression, and strengthen social cohesion by bringing communities together. By celebrating and preserving cultural heritage, Nigerian cultural festivals play a vital role in the holistic well-being of individuals and communities, making them essential to the nation's cultural and social fabric. Implementing these recommendations can enhance the biopsychosocial benefits of Nigerian cultural festivals, promoting physical health, mental well-being, and social cohesion. By addressing the biological, psychological, and social aspects of these festivals, organizers can create more inclusive, supportive, and enriching experiences for

all participants, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved and celebrated in a way that contributes to the holistic well-being of the community

Recommendation

1. Nigerians should Integrate Traditional Sports and Games to encourage the inclusion of traditional sports and games in festivals to promote physical fitness. Organize competitions and demonstrations to engage participants in physical activities.
2. Host workshops during festivals to educate attendees on the health benefits of physical activity and provide tips on maintaining physical fitness through traditional practices.
3. Promote preventative health care by setting up health screening stations and clinics at festival venues to provide basic health check-ups and preventative care. Offer services such as blood pressure monitoring, body mass index (BMI) assessments, and diabetes screenings.
4. Traditional festivals should be used as a platform to raise awareness about mental health issues and the importance of mental well-being. Distribute informational materials and provide resources for mental health support.
5. Activities such as yoga, meditation, and relaxation sessions should be incorporated into festival programs to help participants manage stress and improve mental health.

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