



Cultural Heritage Digitization Strategies in West Africa: An Action Research Approach

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Abstract

In recent years, digitalization has emerged as a critical tool for preserving cultural heritage in West Africa, including Nigeria. However, there is a need to develop culturally sensitive strategies that align with local contexts and practices. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys among stakeholders including local authorities, heritage organizations, and communities. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews over a period of six months. Community engagement levels significantly varied across different sites, with higher participation observed in areas where digitization efforts were integrated into existing cultural activities such as festivals and community events (85% vs. 60%). The findings suggest that successful digital preservation initiatives require a tailored approach that considers local traditions and practices, ensuring equitable involvement of all stakeholders. Recommendations include integrating digitization into traditional cultural activities to enhance community ownership; establishing collaborative frameworks for knowledge sharing among heritage practitioners; and developing culturally sensitive training programmes for local communities.

Keywords: *Geographic, Digitalization, Heritage, Methodology, Preservation, Community, Ethnography*

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