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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56877

Title: Amidst Western Influence: A Study of the Post-Colonial Ezza Ezekuna New Yam Festival (Oke Aku),

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article titled "Amidst Western Influence: A Study of the Post-Colonial Ezza Ezekuna New Yam Festival (Oke Aku)" provides a significant ethnographic and theoretical exploration of cultural resilience in the face of globalization. By focusing on the Oke Aku festival of the Ezza people, the author addresses the tension between indigenous heritage and the pervasive influence of Westernization. This research is highly relevant for scholars of African studies, cultural anthropology, and post-colonial sociology, as it documents how traditional festivals serve as vital mechanisms for identity preservation in a rapidly modernizing world.

The theoretical framework is a major strength of the manuscript, effectively utilizing both Cultural Imperialism Theory and Cultural Hybridization. The author skillfully balances these perspectives, moving beyond a simplistic narrative of cultural loss to explain how the Ezza people actively adapt and "hybridize" their practices. By showing how Western elements—such as modern music, clothing, and digital media—are integrated into the festival without necessarily destroying its core spiritual and social significance, the paper offers a nuanced view of "negotiated identity."

The methodology is grounded in a qualitative approach and content analysis, allowing the author to capture the deep perceptions of the Ezza people. The description of the Oke Aku as the "beginning of the new year" in the indigenous calendar highlights its foundational role in the socio-economic and spiritual life of the community. The author's analysis of the transition from the planting season to the harvest provides a clear window into the agricultural rhythms that sustain the Ezza identity. The finding that the

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festival remains an "enduring relevance" despite Western influence suggests a high degree of cultural agency among the participants.

One of the most insightful sections of the paper is the discussion on the "challenges" faced by traditional practices. The author documents how Western education, religion, and globalization have altered the sacrificial and ritualistic aspects of the festival. However, the resilience of the Ezza people—their ability to maintain the essence of the Oke Aku while embracing modernity—is presented as a form of "cultural resistance." This section would be even stronger if the author included specific examples of how the youth, in particular, engage with the festival using modern technology or social media.

To further elevate the manuscript for publication in an international academic journal, a few minor revisions are recommended. First, the author could provide more detailed "Case Studies" or specific descriptions of the changes in the festival's physical performance. For instance, comparing a traditional ceremony from the early post-colonial era with a contemporary 2024 or 2025 celebration would provide a more vivid illustration of the "hybridization" process. Second, a brief exploration of the Economic Impact of the festival in the modern era—such as its role in local tourism or the commercialization of the yam harvest—would add a practical, development-oriented dimension to the study.

Furthermore, from a structural perspective, the author should ensure that the distinction between "Westernization" (as a process) and "Western Influence" (as an outcome) is consistently maintained. A summary table or a "Resilience Map" showing which parts of the festival have changed the most (e.g., entertainment) versus which have remained the most traditional (e.g., the indigenous calendar) would help readers visualize the dynamics of cultural change. Linguistically, the paper is well-written and professional, though a consistent glossary of Ezza terms would assist international readers unfamiliar with the dialect.

In summary, this article represents a vital contribution to the understanding of cultural continuity in Nigeria. It successfully captures the complex ways in which traditional heritage survives and thrives amidst the pressures of a globalized world. By highlighting the Oke Aku as a "living heritage," the author provides a powerful argument for the necessity of cultural preservation and promotion. With the addition of more specific comparative data and a look at the economic dimensions of the festival, this paper will be an excellent resource for researchers and cultural advocates alike.

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Recommendation: Recommend for publication with minor revision.