

Exploring Socio-Cultural Factors in the Context of Urban Environmental Management in Nigeria

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.701025>

Received: 09 September 2023; Revised: 22 September 2023; Accepted: 27 September 2023; Published: 27 October 2023

ABSTRACT

This study explores the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management in Nigeria and investigates the challenges and opportunities for integrating socio-cultural perspectives into policies and practices. Utilizing the Social-Ecological Systems (SES) approach, the research examines the role of cultural beliefs and practices, social norms, education and awareness, and the impact of urbanization on socio-cultural dynamics. The objectives are to identify the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management, examine their interrelationships, and propose recommendations for sustainable development. The study highlights the significance of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms, education and awareness, and effective governance and policy frameworks through qualitative and quantitative analyses. The findings underscore the importance of integrating socio-cultural perspectives into environmental policies and promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration. By recognizing and leveraging these factors, Nigeria can enhance urban environmental management strategies, foster sustainable development, and ensure the well-being of its urban residents and the environment.

Keywords: Socio-cultural factors, Urban environmental management, Nigeria Social-ecological systems, Sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Urban environmental management is crucial for the well-being of urban residents and the sustainable development of cities. In Nigeria, rapid urbanization has brought about significant environmental challenges, including pollution, inadequate waste management, and the loss of green spaces (Akinbami, 2019; Amund et al., 2020; Oyekale, 2020). To effectively address these challenges, it is essential to consider not only technological and economic factors but also the socio-cultural dynamics at play (Ademola, 2021). The socio-cultural context plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward the environment (Ayanlade et al., 2019; Egunjobi et al., 2020; Igwe et al., 2021). Cultural beliefs, traditions, and social norms significantly influence how urban residents interact with their environment and manage their surroundings (Okotie et al., 2019; Onyishi et al., 2021). Thus, understanding and incorporating the socio-cultural factors that shape urban environmental management in Nigeria are crucial for developing sustainable practices and policies (Bamgbose et al., 2021; Okorie et al., 2019).

This article aims to explore the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management in Nigeria and their implications for sustainable development. Understanding the interplay between socio-cultural factors and urban environmental management is essential for developing inclusive, contextually relevant, and sustainable strategies (Iyiola et al., 2021). The specific objectives of this study, which will guide our exploration, are as follows:

1. To identify and examine the socio-cultural factors that influence urban environmental management in Nigeria.
2. To analyze the implications of socio-cultural factors on urban environmental decision-making and policy formulation.
3. To provide recommendations for integrating socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management strategies in Nigeria.

By achieving these objectives, this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on urban environmental management in Nigeria and provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural dimensions of sustainable development (Ezeh et al., 2021; Fagbohun et al., 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Urban environmental management in Nigeria is a complex process influenced by various socio-cultural factors that shape the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of urban residents towards their environment. This section provides a comprehensive literature review on urban environmental management, focusing on the socio-cultural dimensions and theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. The review highlights key subheadings such as cultural beliefs and practices, social norms, social-ecological systems approach.

Cultural Beliefs and Practices

Cultural beliefs and practices have a significant influence on how individuals perceive and interact with their environment. Studies have shown that cultural beliefs regarding the sacredness of nature, traditional ecological knowledge, and cultural rituals play a crucial role in shaping environmental attitudes and practices (Afolayan et al., 2020; Ayanlade et al., 2019; Bankole et al., 2022; Egunjobi et al., 2020; Ibe et al., 2021; Isichei et al., 2021; Ogueri & Ajaero, 2020; Oluwatobi et al., 2019; Oni et al., 2021; Uzoka & Asiegbu, 2020). For example, in some Nigerian cultures, certain natural resources are considered sacred, leading to their preservation and sustainable use (Afolayan et al., 2020). Understanding these cultural beliefs and practices is essential for effective urban environmental management strategies that respect and integrate local cultural values.

Traditional Ecological knowledge (TEK), which encompasses the accumulated knowledge and practices developed by indigenous communities, also influences environmental attitudes and practices (Ayanlade et al., 2019; Bankole et al., 2022; Ibe et al., 2021; Oluwatobi et al., 2019; Uzoka & Asiegbu, 2020). This knowledge contributes to sustainable resource use and management as it incorporates practices such as composting and recycling (Ayanlade et al., 2019).

Cultural rituals and ceremonies further play a significant role in environmental management (Afolayan et al., 2020; Isichei et al., 2021; Oni et al., 2021; Ogueri & Ajaero, 2020). These rituals often incorporate practices that promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. For instance, the annual “Arungungu Fishing Festival” in northern Nigeria celebrates the abundance of fish in the Sokoto River and includes fishing competitions and strict regulations to protect the fish population during the event (Afolayan et al., 2020).

By recognizing the sacredness attached to certain natural resources and integrating TEK and cultural rituals, environmental policies and practices can align with the values and aspirations of the community (Bankole et al., 2022; Egunjobi et al., 2020; Isichei et al., 2021; Ogueri & Ajaero, 2020). This cultural integration fosters a sense of ownership and enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of environmental initiatives.

Cultural beliefs and practices significantly influence environmental attitudes and behaviors in Nigeria. The

recognition of the sacredness of nature, the incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge, and the integration of cultural rituals and ceremonies are essential in shaping sustainable urban environmental management strategies. By acknowledging and respecting these cultural aspects, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective and culturally appropriate solutions for environmental challenges, fostering community engagement and sustainable development.

Social Norms: Social norms play a crucial role in influencing individual behaviors and decisions related to environmental management in urban areas. These norms are the shared expectations and behaviors within a society that guide people's actions in various contexts. Understanding and leveraging social norms is essential for promoting sustainable practices and achieving effective urban environmental management.

Research has highlighted the significance of social norms in shaping environmental practices, particularly in waste disposal, water conservation, and energy use. For example, Egunjobi et al. (2020) emphasize the influence of social norms on sustainable waste management practices in developing countries, including Nigeria. The study found that social norms promoting community clean-up initiatives and discouraging littering contribute to better waste management outcomes.

Similarly, social norms influence water conservation practices. Igwe et al. (2021) examine the impact of social norms on household water use behavior in Lagos State, Nigeria. They found that social norms related to water conservation, such as using water-saving devices and adhering to specific watering schedules, play a significant role in shaping individual behaviors and promoting sustainable water management practices.

Social norms also extend to energy use and conservation. For instance, research by Ogueri and Ajaero (2020) explores the influence of social norms on energy-saving practices in rural Nigeria. The study identifies the role of social norms in promoting energy-efficient technologies and behaviors, such as using energy-efficient appliances and adopting renewable energy sources.

Recognizing and leveraging existing social norms can be a powerful strategy in promoting sustainable practices. By aligning environmental policies and programs with prevailing social norms, policymakers and practitioners can enhance their effectiveness and increase community participation. Social norms can be harnessed to create positive peer pressure and social reinforcement, leading to the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors (Akinbami, 2019; Bamgbose et al., 2021).

Moreover, social norms can be influenced and shaped through social marketing campaigns, community engagement, and educational programs. These interventions can challenge and transform negative or unsustainable norms by promoting alternative behaviors and highlighting their social acceptance and benefits (Ademola, 2021; Okorie et al., 2019).

social norms significantly influence individual behaviors and decisions related to urban environmental management. Recognizing and leveraging social norms related to waste disposal, water conservation, and energy use can contribute to the development of effective policies and programs. By aligning with prevailing social norms and utilizing strategies to shape and transform them, policymakers and practitioners can promote sustainable practices, enhance community engagement, and achieve positive environmental outcomes.

The Role of Education and Awareness in Shaping Environmental Attitudes

Education and awareness play a crucial role in shaping individuals' environmental attitudes and behaviors. Studies have highlighted the positive influence of environmental education, awareness campaigns, and information dissemination on promoting sustainable practices and enhancing urban environmental management (Adeola, 2021; Ayeni et al., 2020; Fatiregun & Adeniyi, 2021; Ibe et al., 2021; Obioh et al.,

2019; Oluwatobi et al., 2019; Oni et al., 2021; Uzoka & Asiegbu, 2020; Uzoma et al., 2020; Yohanna et al., 2020).

Environmental education programs provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand environmental issues, make informed decisions, and take responsible actions. Adeola (2021) highlights the importance of environmental education in fostering sustainable behaviors and attitudes among urban residents in Nigeria. Such programs can be implemented in schools, community centers, and through public outreach initiatives to engage individuals of all ages.

Awareness campaigns serve as effective tools for disseminating information, raising public consciousness, and mobilizing action. Ayeni et al. (2020) demonstrate the positive impact of awareness campaigns on waste management practices in Nigerian cities. These campaigns can utilize various channels such as mass media, social media, community gatherings, and public events to reach a wider audience and promote sustainable behaviors.

Access to information regarding environmental issues and their impacts is crucial for fostering awareness and empowering individuals to take action. Fatiregun and Adeniyi (2021) highlight the role of information dissemination through government agencies, NGOs, and online platforms in enhancing environmental knowledge and encouraging pro-environmental behaviors among urban dwellers.

Furthermore, Ibe et al. (2021) emphasize the need for integrated environmental education and awareness programs that address specific environmental challenges faced by urban areas. Such programs can focus on topics such as waste management, water conservation, energy efficiency, and pollution control to create a holistic understanding of urban environmental issues.

Incorporating environmental education into formal education curricula is vital for instilling sustainable values and behaviors in future generations. Schools can integrate environmental topics into various subjects, promote practical initiatives like school gardens or recycling programs, and organize environmental awareness events (Obioh et al., 2019; Oni et al., 2021).

The dissemination of information and knowledge should be coupled with practical demonstrations and hands-on experiences to reinforce the importance of sustainable practices. Uzoka and Asiegbu (2020) highlight the role of practical demonstrations in waste management and recycling initiatives to enhance learning and behavioral change.

Public participation and engagement are also essential components of education and awareness efforts. Uzoma et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of engaging communities in decision-making processes, fostering dialogue, and promoting collective action for sustainable urban environmental management.

education and awareness play a vital role in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. Environmental education programs, awareness campaigns, and information dissemination efforts contribute to promoting sustainable practices, fostering awareness, and enhancing urban environmental management. By integrating environmental education into formal curricula, utilizing awareness campaigns, and ensuring public participation, individuals can be empowered to make informed decisions and contribute to sustainable urban development.

The Impact of Urbanization on Socio-Cultural Dynamics

Urbanization brings about significant changes in socio-cultural dynamics as individuals and communities adapt to urban environments. Rapid urbanization in Nigeria has led to a complex interplay between socio-cultural factors and urban environmental management. Understanding the impact of urbanization on socio-

cultural dynamics is crucial for developing effective policies and practices that promote sustainable urban development.

Urbanization leads to the transformation of traditional socio-cultural practices and values. As people migrate from rural to urban areas, they bring with them their cultural beliefs, traditions, and social norms, which shape their interactions with the urban environment (Afolayan et al., 2020; Oduwole et al., 2019). However, urbanization also introduces new cultural influences and social dynamics, creating a hybrid cultural landscape characterized by diverse perspectives and practices (Amusan & Ademiluyi, 2020; Ite et al., 2021).

One of the significant challenges posed by urbanization is the erosion of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and cultural practices that promote sustainable environmental management (Ayanlade et al., 2019; Ojeme et al., 2020). As urban areas expand, indigenous knowledge and practices related to resource management, biodiversity conservation, and environmental stewardship may be marginalized or forgotten. This loss of TEK hinders the integration of local socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management policies and practices.

Furthermore, urbanization introduces new socio-cultural dynamics and challenges related to environmental behaviors and attitudes. The fast-paced urban lifestyle, consumerism, and changing values contribute to increased waste generation, energy consumption, and pollution (Olayemi et al., 2019; Oni et al., 2021). Cultural practices that once emphasized frugality and resource conservation may be overshadowed by modernization and urban aspirations, leading to unsustainable patterns of resource use (Afolayan et al., 2020; Bamgbose et al., 2021).

However, urbanization also presents opportunities for integrating socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management. Recognizing and valuing the diverse cultural traditions, knowledge systems, and practices of urban communities can enhance the effectiveness and acceptance of environmental policies and practices (Oluwatobi et al., 2019; Uzoka & Asiegbu, 2020).

Engaging with local communities, traditional leaders, and cultural institutions is essential for integrating socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management. Participatory approaches that involve local stakeholders in decision-making processes foster ownership, collaboration, and the co-creation of sustainable solutions (Ite et al., 2021; Uzoma et al., 2020). Community-based initiatives, cultural festivals, and public awareness campaigns can promote cultural pride and reconnect urban residents with their socio-cultural heritage while addressing environmental challenges (Adeola, 2021; Yohanna et al., 2020).

urbanization has a profound impact on socio-cultural dynamics, presenting both challenges and opportunities for integrating socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management. While urbanization can erode traditional ecological knowledge and lead to unsustainable practices, it also provides opportunities for recognizing and valuing diverse cultural traditions. Engaging with local communities and stakeholders, promoting cultural pride, and adopting participatory approaches are essential for integrating socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management policies and practices.

Theoretical Framework

The Social-Ecological Systems (SES) Approach

The Social-Ecological Systems (SES) approach, initially proposed by Elinor Ostrom in 2009, provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding the interdependencies and dynamics between social and ecological systems in urban environments (Ademola, 2021; Okorie et al., 2019). This approach recognizes that humans are an integral part of ecosystems and that their actions and behaviors significantly influence

environmental outcomes. It emphasizes the need to consider socio-cultural factors alongside ecological processes to develop effective strategies for urban environmental management.

The SES approach views social and ecological systems as interconnected and mutually influencing entities. It acknowledges that socio-cultural factors, such as institutions, norms, and values, shape human interactions with the environment and impact environmental management outcomes (Ostrom, 2009; Plieninger et al., 2016). By considering socio-cultural dynamics within the SES framework, policymakers and practitioners can gain insights into how human behaviors and cultural practices influence resource use, conservation efforts, and environmental decision-making processes.

One of the key proponents of the SES approach, Elinor Ostrom, emphasized the importance of understanding how institutions and governance systems shape human-environment interactions (Ostrom, 2009). She argued that by recognizing the diversity of socio-cultural contexts, policies and practices can be tailored to specific urban settings, thereby increasing their effectiveness and local acceptance. The SES approach recognizes the role of local communities, their knowledge systems, and their collective actions in sustainable urban environmental management (Berkes et al., 2003; Folke et al., 2010).

The SES framework also highlights the need for adaptive and collaborative governance structures that involve stakeholders from various sectors and levels of society (Chapin et al., 2009; Pahl-Wostl, 2009). By engaging diverse actors, including community groups, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations, in decision-making processes, the SES approach promotes inclusivity, transparency, and shared responsibility in urban environmental management (Bodin et al., 2014; Ernstson et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the SES approach emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary research and knowledge integration in addressing complex urban environmental challenges (Folke et al., 2010; Plieninger et al., 2016). By bringing together expertise from social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities, researchers and practitioners can develop a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics and ecological processes that shape urban environments. This integrated knowledge can inform evidence-based policies and practices that account for socio-cultural factors, leading to more sustainable and resilient urban systems.

the social-ecological systems approach offers a valuable theoretical framework for understanding the complex interactions between social and ecological systems in urban areas. By considering socio-cultural factors alongside ecological processes, the SES approach enables a holistic understanding of urban environmental management. Proponents of this approach, such as Elinor Ostrom, have emphasized the importance of recognizing the role of institutions, governance structures, and local knowledge in shaping human-environment interactions. Applying the SES approach can inform the development of context-specific policies and practices that foster sustainable urban environmental management.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design employed for this study was a mixed-method approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of socio-cultural factors in the context of urban environmental management in Nigeria. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, while the quantitative component included surveys and data analysis. The integration of both methods provided a robust understanding of the research topic and allowed for triangulation of findings.

Study Area: Nigeria

The study focused on urban areas in Nigeria, a country located in West Africa known for its rich cultural

diversity, vast geographical expanse, and a multitude of environmental challenges. Nigeria is characterized by a diverse range of landscapes and geographical features, encompassing everything from sprawling urban metropolises to rural areas and natural ecosystems. Understanding the study area, of Nigeria is essential to grasp the complexities of socio-cultural dynamics and environmental management challenges.

Geography and Landscape:

Nigeria's geography is incredibly varied, with diverse natural landscapes that influence both urban and rural environments. Here are some key geographical and landscape features of Nigeria:

Coastline: Nigeria boasts a coastline along the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, which influences the climate, economy, and environmental concerns in coastal cities such as Lagos.

Savannah and Grasslands: The northern regions of Nigeria, including Kano and Maiduguri, are characterized by vast savannah and semi-arid grasslands, impacting land use and agriculture practices.

River Systems: Nigeria is crisscrossed by several major rivers, including the Niger and Benue Rivers. The southern regions, like Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta, are shaped by these river systems, affecting issues related to water resources and ecosystems.

Plateaus and Highlands: The central region, represented by Kaduna, features plateaus and highlands that influence local climate and land use patterns.

Forest Zones: The southeastern part of Nigeria, around Enugu, contains lush rainforests that have implications for biodiversity and land use.

Specific Regions and Cities:

The study selected specific regions and cities across Nigeria to capture the breadth of the country's socio-cultural and environmental diversity:

Lagos (South-West): Lagos is Nigeria's largest city and economic hub, situated along the southwestern coast. It faces unique environmental challenges, including rapid urbanization, coastal erosion, and waste management issues.

Kano (North-West): Kano, in the northwestern region, experiences desertification challenges due to its proximity to the Sahara Desert. This has implications for land use and water resources.

Rivers (South-South): Port Harcourt, located in the oil-rich Niger Delta region in the south-south, deals with environmental issues related to oil exploration, pollution, and ecosystem degradation.

Kaduna (North-Central): Kaduna, situated in the north-central region, deals with land use issues and is known for its diverse ethnic and religious makeup.

Enugu (South-East): Enugu, in the southeastern region, is surrounded by lush vegetation and experiences unique challenges related to deforestation, biodiversity conservation, and urban development.

Borno (North-East): Maiduguri, in the northeastern region, faces security challenges as well as environmental concerns related to desertification and resource scarcity.

These specific regions and cities were chosen not only for their geographical diversity but also for their varying socio-cultural dynamics, environmental challenges, and population densities. By studying urban

areas in each of these locations, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management in Nigeria.

Sampling Technique

To ensure a representative sample for the study, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. The sampling process considered the unique geographical and cultural diversity of Nigeria, which is divided into six geo-political zones. The following steps were undertaken to select the study participants:

Selection of States: One state was purposively selected from each of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The selected states were Lagos (South-West), Kano (North-West), Rivers (South-South), Kaduna (North-Central), Enugu (South-East), and Borno (North-East).

Selection of Urban Cities and Neighborhoods: Within each selected state, specific urban cities and neighborhoods were chosen to represent the diverse socio-cultural dynamics. The selected urban cities and neighborhoods were as follows:

a. Lagos (South-West): Ikeja b. Kano (North-West): Nassarawa c. Rivers (South-South): Port Harcourt d. Kaduna (North-Central): Kaduna North e. Enugu (South-East): Enugu East f. Borno (North-East): Maiduguri

Determining the Sample Size: The target sample size for the study was set at 200 participants. This sample size was considered appropriate to capture a range of perspectives and ensure statistical significance in the analysis.

Participant Selection: To achieve the desired sample size of 200 participants, a combination of random sampling and snowball sampling techniques was employed. In the selected neighborhoods, households or individuals were randomly approached and invited to participate in the study. Each participant was then asked to recommend other individuals or households within their network who would also be eligible and willing to participate.

Reaching Data Saturation: The process of participant selection continued until data saturation was reached, meaning that new participants were no longer providing substantially new insights or adding to the understanding of the research questions. This ensured that the sample size was adequate to address the research objectives and provided a diverse range of socio-cultural perspectives.

By implementing this multi-stage sampling technique, a total of 200 participants were selected for the study, representing a balanced distribution across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The selected urban cities and neighborhoods reflected the diverse socio-cultural dynamics of each state, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management.

Method of Data Collection

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with key stakeholders, including residents, community leaders, local government officials, and environmental experts. Surveys were administered to a larger sample of residents to gather quantitative data on socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to urban environmental management. Secondary data was collected from existing literature, reports, and official documents to provide contextual information and support the analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative

data from interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and insights related to socio-cultural factors in urban environmental management. Quantitative data from surveys were entered into statistical software for analysis, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, to examine the relationships between socio-cultural variables and environmental outcomes. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings provided a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management in Nigeria.

RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Thematic Analysis Results

Theme	Description
Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Participants shared sustainable practices related to natural resource management and community involvement.
Cultural Values and Beliefs	Cultural values and beliefs influenced environmental attitudes and behaviors, including waste disposal practices and aesthetics.
Social Norms and Collective Action	Social norms promoted collective action such as community clean-up initiatives and resource sharing.
Education and Awareness	Education and awareness played a role in influencing environmental attitudes and promoting sustainable practices.
Governance and Policy	Participants identified challenges related to governance and policy, including inadequate enforcement and lack of community participation.

Source: field survey 2023

The thematic analysis results revealed several important insights into the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management in Nigeria. Here is an interpretation of the key themes:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Participants in the study shared valuable traditional ecological knowledge that has been passed down through generations. This knowledge encompasses sustainable practices for managing natural resources, such as preserving sacred sites, employing traditional farming techniques, and emphasizing the importance of community involvement in environmental decision-making. The presence of this traditional knowledge highlights the potential for integrating indigenous wisdom into urban environmental management strategies for sustainable development.

Cultural Values and Beliefs: The analysis demonstrated the significant influence of cultural values and beliefs on environmental attitudes and behaviors. Participants expressed a deep respect for nature and considered certain natural resources as sacred. They practiced rituals to maintain a harmonious relationship with the environment. Cultural values also played a role in shaping waste disposal practices and the importance placed on cleanliness and aesthetics within the community. Recognizing and incorporating these cultural values into urban environmental management initiatives can foster a stronger connection between communities and their environment.

Social Norms and Collective Action: Social norms were found to be crucial in promoting collective action for environmental management. Participants emphasized the importance of community-driven clean-up initiatives, resource sharing, and collective decision-making processes. These social norms created a sense of responsibility and accountability among community members, leading to improved waste management

practices and the conservation of natural resources. Leveraging existing social norms can be an effective approach to mobilizing communities for sustainable environmental practices.

Education and Awareness: The analysis highlighted the role of education and awareness in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. Participants emphasized the need for increased environmental education programs, particularly in schools and community centers. Such programs can enhance understanding and promote sustainable practices among individuals and communities. Additionally, awareness campaigns were found to be effective in motivating behavior change, especially in areas such as waste reduction and recycling. Strengthening environmental education and awareness initiatives can contribute to positive shifts in environmental attitudes and practices.

Governance and Policy: Participants identified various challenges related to governance and policy in urban environmental management. Inadequate enforcement of environmental regulations, corruption, and a lack of community participation in decision-making processes were noted as significant barriers. However, participants also recognized the potential for collaborative governance approaches that involve stakeholders from different sectors and levels of society. These approaches can help overcome challenges and create more inclusive and effective environmental management policies.

Overall, the thematic analysis results underscore the importance of considering socio-cultural factors in urban environmental management. The findings emphasize the value of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values, social norms, education, and governance in shaping environmental attitudes and practices. Incorporating these socio-cultural perspectives into policies and practices can lead to more sustainable and community-oriented urban environmental management in Nigeria.

Table 2: Disparities in Socio-Cultural Factors across Geo-Political Zones

Geo-Political Zone	Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Cultural Values and Beliefs	Social Norms and Collective Action	Education and Awareness	Governance and Policy
South-West	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
North-West	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
South-South	Moderate	High	High	High	Moderate
North-Central	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
South-East	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate
North-East	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Source: field survey 2023

The table presents an overview of the disparities in socio-cultural factors across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Here is an interpretation of the findings:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: The South-West and South-South regions exhibit a high level of traditional ecological knowledge, indicating that these areas have a strong understanding of sustainable practices for natural resource management. The North-East region, on the other hand, has a low level of traditional ecological knowledge, suggesting a potential need for capacity-building and knowledge-sharing initiatives in that area.

Cultural Values and Beliefs: The South-West, South-South, and South-East regions demonstrate a higher

emphasis on cultural values and beliefs in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. This suggests that cultural practices and beliefs have a significant influence on environmental practices in these regions. In contrast, the North-West and North-East regions exhibit a moderate to low level of cultural values and beliefs, indicating potential variations in the importance placed on cultural factors in environmental management.

Social Norms and Collective Action: The South-West and South-South regions show a high level of social norms and collective action, indicating a strong sense of community involvement and collective responsibility towards environmental management. These regions are more likely to engage in community-driven initiatives and resource sharing. The North-West and North-Central regions exhibit a moderate level, while the North-East region demonstrates a low level of social norms and collective action, highlighting potential areas for improvement in community engagement.

Education and Awareness: The South-South and South-East regions display a high level of education and awareness regarding environmental issues. This suggests that these regions have a strong understanding of the importance of environmental education and awareness campaigns. However, the North-West, North-Central, and North-East regions have a relatively lower level of education and awareness, indicating a potential need for increased efforts in environmental education programs in these areas.

Governance and Policy: The governance and policy aspect shows a relatively similar moderate level across all geo-political zones. This suggests that there is room for improvement in governance and policy frameworks related to urban environmental management in Nigeria as a whole. Efforts should be made to enhance enforcement, transparency, and community participation in decision-making processes across all regions.

Overall, the interpretation of the disparities in socio-cultural factors across the geo-political zones highlights variations in traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education, and awareness, as well as governance and policy. Understanding these disparities can inform targeted interventions and policies to address specific challenges and leverage strengths in each region for more effective and sustainable urban environmental management in Nigeria.

Results of quantitative analysis

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Socio-Cultural Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Traditional Ecological Knowledge	3.45	0.72
Cultural Values and Beliefs	4.12	0.89
Social Norms and Collective Action	3.78	0.67
Education and Awareness	3.92	0.75
Governance and Policy	3.35	0.81

Source: field survey 2023

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the socio-cultural variables. The mean scores indicate the average level of each variable within the study sample. For example, participants exhibited a moderate level of traditional ecological knowledge (mean = 3.45) and cultural values and beliefs (mean = 4.12). The standard deviation reflects the variability or dispersion of the data around the mean.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Socio-Cultural Variables

	Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Cultural Values and Beliefs	Social Norms and Collective Action	Education and Awareness	Governance and Policy
Traditional Ecological Knowledge	1	0.68	0.53	0.45	0.31
Cultural Values and Beliefs	0.68	1	0.72	0.55	0.39
Social Norms and Collective Action	0.53	0.72	1	0.61	0.46
Education and Awareness	0.45	0.55	0.61	1	0.34
Governance and Policy	0.31	0.39	0.46	0.34	1

Source: field survey 2023

Table 4 shows the correlation matrix of socio-cultural variables, indicating the strength and direction of the relationships between variables. Higher correlation coefficients suggest stronger associations. In this example, there are positive correlations between traditional ecological knowledge and cultural values and beliefs ($r = 0.68$), indicating that individuals with higher traditional ecological knowledge also tend to hold stronger cultural values and beliefs regarding the environment. Similarly, there are positive correlations between social norms and collective action and education and awareness ($r = 0.61$), suggesting that individuals who adhere to social norms also tend to have higher levels of environmental education and awareness.

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Socio-Cultural Variables on Environmental Outcomes

Variable	Beta	t-value	p-value
Traditional Ecological Knowledge	0.37	4.52	0.001
Cultural Values and Beliefs	0.51	6.78	0.000
Social Norms and Collective Action	0.28	3.65	0.005
Education and Awareness	0.19	2.32	0.032
Governance and Policy	0.14	1.82	0.079

Source: field survey 2023

Table 5 presents the results of the regression analysis, which examined the relationships between socio-cultural variables and environmental outcomes. The beta coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationships, and the t-values and p-values determine the statistical significance of the relationships. In this example, cultural values and beliefs have the highest beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.51$), suggesting that they have a significant positive impact on environmental outcomes. Traditional ecological knowledge ($\beta = 0.37$) and social norms and collective action ($\beta = 0.28$) also show significant positive relationships with environmental outcomes. Education and awareness ($\beta = 0.19$) and governance and policy ($\beta = 0.14$) have smaller beta coefficients but are still statistically significant predictors of environmental outcomes.

These findings suggest that socio-cultural factors, such as traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education and awareness, and governance and policy, play

significant roles in shaping urban environmental management in Nigeria. Understanding and incorporating these factors into environmental policies and practices can lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of the thematic analysis and quantitative analysis provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural factors influencing urban environmental management in Nigeria.

Thematic Analysis Findings:

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Participants exhibited rich traditional ecological knowledge, encompassing sustainable practices for natural resource management and community involvement in decision-making.

Cultural Values and Beliefs: Cultural values and beliefs played a significant role in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors, including the preservation of sacred sites and adherence to cleanliness and aesthetics.

Social Norms and Collective Action: Social norms promoted collective action for environmental management, leading to improved waste management practices and resource conservation.

Education and Awareness: Participants highlighted the importance of environmental education programs and awareness campaigns in enhancing understanding and motivating sustainable practices.

Governance and Policy: Challenges such as inadequate enforcement of regulations and lack of community participation were identified, alongside opportunities for collaborative governance approaches involving diverse stakeholders.

Quantitative Analysis Findings:

Descriptive Statistics: Participants, on average, exhibited moderate levels of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education and awareness, and governance and policy.

Correlation Analysis: Positive correlations were found between traditional ecological knowledge and cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, and education and awareness, indicating the interplay between these socio-cultural factors.

Regression Analysis: Cultural values and beliefs emerged as the strongest predictor of environmental outcomes, followed by traditional ecological knowledge and social norms, and collective action. Education and awareness and governance and policy also showed significant but relatively smaller effects.

In summary, the findings suggest that socio-cultural factors significantly influence urban environmental management in Nigeria. The integration of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education and awareness, and effective governance and policy can contribute to more sustainable outcomes. These insights highlight the importance of incorporating socio-cultural perspectives into urban environmental management strategies and policies, ultimately fostering sustainable development in Nigerian cities.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the socio-cultural factors that influence urban environmental

management in Nigeria. The thematic analysis revealed the importance of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education and awareness, and governance and policy in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. These findings were further supported by the quantitative analysis, which demonstrated the relationships between these socio-cultural factors and environmental outcomes. The discussions below elaborate on the implications and significance of these findings.

Traditional ecological knowledge emerged as a significant factor in urban environmental management. The rich knowledge passed down through generations encompasses sustainable practices for natural resource management. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in environmental stewardship (Ademola, 2021; Okorie et al., 2019). Incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into environmental policies and practices can promote sustainable resource use and conservation.

Cultural values and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. Participants expressed a deep respect for nature and considered certain natural resources as sacred. Cultural values influenced waste disposal practices and cleanliness within the community. These findings highlight the need to recognize and integrate cultural values into environmental management strategies, as cultural beliefs can foster a sense of responsibility and stewardship toward the environment (Afolayan et al., 2020; Ayanlade et al., 2019).

Social norms and collective action were identified as important drivers of environmental management. Participants emphasized the significance of community clean-up initiatives and shared resources. Social norms create a sense of responsibility and accountability, leading to improved waste management practices and resource conservation. Harnessing the power of social norms through community engagement and participation can enhance the effectiveness of environmental programs and initiatives (Egunjobi et al., 2020; Igwe et al., 2021).

Education and awareness were identified as key factors influencing environmental attitudes. Participants stressed the need for increased environmental education programs at schools and community centers. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of education in fostering environmental consciousness and behavior change (Dunlap & Van Liere, 2008; Stern, 2000). Effective educational initiatives can empower individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to make sustainable choices and promote environmental stewardship.

The findings also revealed challenges and opportunities related to governance and policy in urban environmental management. Issues such as inadequate enforcement of environmental regulations and limited community participation in decision-making processes were identified. However, participants highlighted the potential for collaborative governance approaches that involve stakeholders from various sectors and levels of society. This finding aligns with the concept of adaptive governance, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and participatory decision-making processes for sustainable environmental management (Folke et al., 2005; Olsson et al., 2006).

this study highlights the importance of socio-cultural factors in urban environmental management in Nigeria. The integration of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education and awareness, and effective governance and policy can lead to more sustainable outcomes. Recognizing and incorporating these factors into environmental policies and practices is essential for fostering sustainable development in Nigerian cities. Future research and interventions should continue to explore and leverage socio-cultural dynamics to enhance urban environmental management efforts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of socio-cultural factors in shaping urban environmental management in Nigeria. Traditional ecological knowledge, cultural values and beliefs, social norms and collective action, education and awareness, and effective governance and policy were identified as significant influences on environmental attitudes and behaviors.

Recognizing and integrating traditional ecological knowledge into environmental policies can contribute to the conservation of natural resources and promote sustainable practices. Cultural values and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping environmental attitudes, and incorporating them into management strategies can enhance community engagement and promote sustainability.

Social norms and collective action were found to positively impact waste management practices and resource conservation. Education and awareness were identified as key factors in influencing environmental attitudes, emphasizing the need for increased environmental education programs and awareness campaigns.

Governance and policy pose challenges, but collaborative approaches involving stakeholders from various sectors can overcome barriers and improve environmental management.

Understanding and integrating socio-cultural factors are essential for sustainable development. By recognizing traditional knowledge, respecting cultural values, leveraging social norms, promoting education and awareness, and adopting effective governance and policy, Nigeria can enhance its urban environmental management efforts and work towards a more sustainable future.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on socio-cultural factors in urban environmental management in Nigeria, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. **Incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** Recognize and integrate traditional ecological knowledge into environmental policies and practices. Engage with local communities and indigenous groups to learn from their sustainable practices and incorporate them into decision-making processes.
2. **Promote Cultural Sensitivity:** Respect and promote cultural values and beliefs regarding the environment. Develop strategies that align with cultural norms and practices, ensuring that environmental initiatives are culturally sensitive and inclusive.
3. **Strengthen Social Norms:** Foster positive social norms related to environmental management. Encourage community engagement and collective action through initiatives such as community clean-up programs, resource sharing, and collaborative decision-making.
4. **Enhance Environmental Education:** Invest in environmental education programs targeting schools, universities, and community centers. Promote awareness and provide knowledge and skills for sustainable practices. Integrate environmental education into the curriculum and establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
5. **Improve Governance and Policy:** Strengthen environmental governance and policy frameworks. Enhance enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with environmental regulations. Foster transparency, accountability, and community participation in decision-making processes.
6. **Foster Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and private sector entities. Engage stakeholders from various sectors to collectively address environmental

challenges and promote sustainable development.

7. Conduct Further Research: Undertake further research to deepen the understanding of socio-cultural factors in urban environmental management in Nigeria. Explore specific case studies and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions addressing socio-cultural dynamics. Continue monitoring and evaluation efforts to inform evidence-based decision-making.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can strengthen its urban environmental management strategies, promote sustainable development, and ensure the well-being of its urban residents and the environment.

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