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Ethnomimicry and Cultural Sustainability: Community Perception of Identity and Place in Public Buildings Inspired by Local Ethnic Narratives

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Abstract

This study examined ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability by assessing community perceptions of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and employed a multistage sampling technique involving purposive and simple random sampling. Although 384 questionnaires were distributed, 324 valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. The findings revealed generally favourable perceptions of ethnomimicry, community perception, public buildings, ethnic narratives, and cultural sustainability. The composite mean scores were 3.78 for ethnomimicry, 4.18 for community perception, 4.47 for public buildings, 4.40 for ethnic narratives, and 4.20 for cultural sustainability, all interpreted as high. Respondents particularly agreed that public buildings should reflect the cultural identity of host communities and that architectural design influences sense of place and identity. Ethnic narratives were also perceived as important for preserving local history and traditions, while ethnomimicry was associated with stronger community belonging and cultural heritage preservation. The study concludes that integrating local cultural narratives, indigenous symbols, traditional architectural elements, and community participation into public building design can strengthen cultural identity, place attachment, and cultural sustainability in contemporary urban development.

Keywords: Ethnomimicry; Cultural Sustainability; Community Perception; Place Identity; Ethnic Narratives; Public Buildings.

1.0 Introduction

Architecture remains one of the most visible expressions of cultural identity and social values within human societies. Beyond providing shelter and functional utility, public buildings communicate meanings associated with history, tradition, governance, and collective memory. In contemporary urban

development, the increasing influence of globalization and modern architectural trends has contributed to the gradual erosion of indigenous cultural expressions in the built environment. As cities continue to adopt universal design models, many communities experience a decline in architectural uniqueness and cultural representation. This challenge has generated renewed scholarly

interest in culturally responsive architecture that reflects local traditions and strengthens social identity. One emerging concept within this discourse is ethnomimicry, which refers to the adaptation and integration of local ethnic narratives, symbols, materials, and cultural philosophies into architectural design processes (Adeyemi & Babalola, 2021; Abdullahi & Magaji, 2026). Ethnomimicry seeks to create buildings that embody the cultural experiences and indigenous heritage of local communities while responding to contemporary development needs (Abdullahi, et al, 2023).

The concept of cultural sustainability has increasingly gained recognition as a critical component of sustainable development. While traditional sustainability frameworks focused mainly on environmental, economic, and social dimensions, recent studies emphasize culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability because of its role in preserving identity, heritage, and social continuity (Soini & Birkeland, 2014; Duxbury et al., 2021). Cultural sustainability in architecture involves the protection and promotion of local values, customs, artistic expressions, and indigenous knowledge systems through spatial and physical development. Public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives contribute to this objective by preserving vernacular aesthetics, cultural symbolism, and traditional spatial arrangements within modern architectural forms. Such buildings not only perform civic and administrative functions but also act as cultural repositories that reinforce collective identity and historical consciousness among community members (Arowolo, 2022). Consequently, the integration of ethnomimetic principles into public architecture has become increasingly important in promoting cultural continuity in rapidly modernizing societies (Abdullahi & Magaji, 2026).

The relationship between architecture, identity, and place has remained central in architectural and urban studies. Identity within the built environment refers to the symbolic meanings and emotional attachments individuals associate with a particular space or environment. Similarly, sense of place describes the social, cultural, and psychological connections people develop toward their surroundings (Carmona, 2019). Public buildings designed with reference to local ethnic narratives often strengthen community attachment by creating environments that are culturally familiar and socially meaningful. Ethnomimetic architecture commonly incorporates indigenous motifs, local construction materials, traditional craftsmanship, folklore, and historical symbols that distinguish one community from another. In this context, architecture becomes a medium through which cultural memory and local identity are visually communicated. Recent studies have shown that culturally responsive public spaces enhance community pride, social cohesion, and emotional well-being by fostering stronger relationships between people and their environment (Ujang & Zakariya, 2018; Mensah, 2023).

Community perception is an essential factor in evaluating the effectiveness of ethnomimetic architecture in achieving cultural sustainability. The success of public buildings inspired by ethnic narratives depends not only on their aesthetic qualities but also on how users interpret and connect with the cultural meanings embedded within the structures. Buildings that genuinely reflect local identity are more likely to be valued, protected, and appreciated by community members. According to recent urban design studies, public participation and community interpretation significantly influence the social acceptance and symbolic relevance of architectural projects (Shah & Shaikh, 2020).

However, some contemporary public buildings merely apply superficial cultural symbols without meaningful engagement with indigenous narratives or community experiences. Such practices often result in symbolic representations that fail to resonate with local populations. Therefore, examining community perceptions of identity and place in ethnomimetic public buildings is necessary for understanding whether such architectural approaches effectively preserve cultural heritage and promote social inclusiveness (Abdullahi, & Lee, 2018).

In many African societies, including Nigeria, rapid urbanization and modernization have accelerated the replacement of traditional architectural forms with foreign and standardized design models (Magaji, Dauda & Aliyu, 2026). This transformation has contributed to the gradual disappearance of indigenous building traditions and the weakening of local cultural identity within urban environments. Public buildings in many Nigerian cities increasingly reflect international architectural styles that pay little attention to local ethnic narratives, climatic adaptation, or vernacular heritage (Okeke & Eziyi, 2022). Consequently, many urban spaces lack cultural authenticity and fail to represent the diverse ethnic identities of their host communities. Ethnomimicry presents a strategic approach for bridging the gap between modernization and cultural preservation by integrating indigenous knowledge systems, local symbolism, and ethnic narratives into contemporary public architecture. This approach not only enhances cultural sustainability but also supports inclusive urban development and strengthens the relationship between architecture and community identity (Adedeji & Owoeye, 2021).

Despite the growing scholarly attention to cultural sustainability and indigenous architecture, empirical studies examining community perception of identity and place in ethnomimetic public buildings remain limited, particularly in developing countries. Existing literature has concentrated largely on heritage conservation, vernacular architecture, and sustainable urban design, with insufficient attention given to ethnomimicry as a contemporary architectural strategy. Furthermore, few studies have critically explored how local communities interpret and experience public buildings inspired by ethnic narratives. This gap in knowledge underscores the need for further investigation into the social and cultural implications of ethnomimetic architecture. Therefore, this study examines ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability by assessing community perceptions of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on culturally responsive architecture, sustainable urbanism, and the preservation of indigenous heritage within contemporary public infrastructure development.

2.0 Literature Reviews and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Ethnomimicry

Ethnomimicry refers to the architectural and design approach that draws inspiration from the cultural traditions, indigenous knowledge systems, symbols, and practices of local ethnic groups in the creation of contemporary built environments. The concept emphasizes the adaptation of local cultural expressions into modern architectural forms in order to preserve identity and promote cultural continuity within society. Ethnomimicry differs

from mere imitation because it seeks to reinterpret traditional cultural elements in ways that respond to present-day functional, social, and environmental needs. In architecture, ethnomimicry may involve the incorporation of vernacular materials, traditional motifs, indigenous spatial organization, folklore, and symbolic patterns into public and private structures. Scholars argue that ethnomimicry strengthens community attachment and reinforces a sense of place by ensuring that buildings reflect the cultural values and historical experiences of the people they serve (Adeyemi & Babalola, 2021). The approach has become increasingly relevant in developing societies where globalization and modernization threaten indigenous architectural identity and cultural heritage.

2.1.2 Cultural Sustainability

Cultural sustainability refers to the preservation, protection, and transmission of cultural values, traditions, languages, heritage, beliefs, and identity from one generation to another while accommodating social transformation and development. It is recognized as an essential dimension of sustainable development because culture shapes how communities interact with their environment and maintain social cohesion. Cultural sustainability seeks to ensure that modernization and urban development do not undermine indigenous knowledge systems or local identity. In the context of architecture and urban planning, cultural sustainability involves designing spaces and structures that respect local traditions, promote cultural diversity, and preserve historical continuity within communities. According to Duxbury et al. (2021), culturally sustainable environments contribute to social inclusion, collective memory, and long-term community resilience. Public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives are often considered instruments of cultural sustainability because they preserve cultural expressions and reinforce the identity of local populations in rapidly changing urban settings.

2.1.3 Community Perception

Community perception refers to the collective opinions, attitudes, interpretations, and emotional responses of members of a community toward a particular issue, environment, policy, or development project. In architectural and urban studies, community perception is important because it determines how people understand, experience, and relate to the built environment around them. The perception of public buildings is influenced by factors such as cultural relevance, aesthetics, accessibility, symbolism, functionality, and historical significance. Positive community perception often enhances social acceptance, attachment to place, and civic pride, while negative perceptions may result in feelings of alienation and cultural disconnection. Researchers emphasize that the success of culturally responsive architecture depends largely on how local residents interpret the cultural meanings embedded in buildings and public spaces (Shah & Shaikh, 2020). Therefore, community perception serves as a critical indicator for evaluating whether ethnomimetic public buildings effectively reflect local identity and contribute to cultural sustainability.

2.1.4 Public Buildings

Public buildings are structures owned, funded, or utilized by government institutions or communities for administrative, educational, cultural, religious, healthcare, recreational, and civic purposes. These buildings include schools, museums, libraries, hospitals, town halls, cultural centers, courts, and government offices. Public buildings perform both functional and symbolic

roles within society because they provide essential services while simultaneously representing collective identity, authority, and cultural values. In architectural discourse, public buildings are often viewed as landmarks that shape urban identity and influence how communities perceive their social and cultural environment. Contemporary studies suggest that culturally responsive public buildings contribute significantly to social inclusion, place identity, and community engagement by incorporating local architectural traditions and indigenous narratives into their design (Carmona, 2019). As a result, public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives are increasingly regarded as important tools for preserving heritage and promoting culturally sustainable urban development.

2.1.5 Ethnic Narratives

Ethnic narratives refer to the stories, histories, myths, symbols, traditions, beliefs, and cultural experiences that define the identity and worldview of a particular ethnic group. These narratives are transmitted through oral traditions, rituals, art, architecture, language, music, and other cultural expressions that preserve the collective memory of a people. In architecture and urban design, ethnic narratives provide a framework for integrating cultural identity into the built environment by translating indigenous experiences and symbolic meanings into physical forms and spatial arrangements. Architectural designs inspired by ethnic narratives often incorporate traditional motifs, cultural symbols, historical references, and vernacular patterns that reflect the values and heritage of local communities. According to Arowolo (2022), ethnic narratives play an essential role in strengthening place identity and cultural continuity because they connect contemporary development with historical and indigenous knowledge systems. Therefore, the integration of ethnic narratives into public architecture helps communities maintain cultural relevance and social identity amid globalization and urban transformation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Place Identity Theory

This study is anchored on the Place Identity Theory developed by Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff (1983). The theory explains how physical environments contribute to the formation of individual and collective identity through emotional attachment, cultural meaning, and social experience. Place identity refers to the dimensions of self-identity that are derived from people's interaction with physical spaces such as neighborhoods, cities, landmarks, and public buildings. According to the theory, built environments are not merely physical structures but symbolic spaces that shape how people perceive themselves, their culture, and their social relationships. Public buildings that incorporate local cultural symbols, indigenous architectural forms, and ethnic narratives are therefore capable of reinforcing a community's sense of belonging and cultural continuity (Proshansky et al., 1983).

The relevance of Place Identity Theory to this study lies in its emphasis on the relationship between architecture, cultural identity, and community perception. Ethnomimicry in public buildings seeks to integrate local ethnic narratives, traditions, and symbols into architectural design in order to strengthen cultural sustainability and preserve indigenous identity. Through the lens of Place Identity Theory, such buildings become meaningful cultural spaces that influence how community members interpret their environment and connect with their heritage. The theory supports the argument that public buildings inspired by local ethnic

narratives can foster emotional attachment, collective memory, and social cohesion within communities. Furthermore, the theory explains why culturally responsive architecture is important in resisting the effects of globalization and architectural homogenization, which often weaken local identity and sense of place (Lewicka, 2011).

In addition, Place Identity Theory provides a useful framework for understanding community perception regarding identity and place in ethnomimetic public buildings. Since the theory recognizes that people develop attachment and meaning through culturally familiar environments, it helps explain how communities evaluate the symbolic relevance and cultural authenticity of public architecture. Buildings that reflect indigenous values and ethnic heritage are more likely to be positively perceived by users because they represent shared experiences, traditions, and historical continuity. Therefore, the theory is appropriate for this study because it establishes a direct connection between ethnomimicry, cultural sustainability, and community perception within the context of public architecture.

2.3 Empirical Reviews

Jegade and Enwonwu (2025) investigated users' perceptions of the cultural, environmental, social, and economic benefits of neo-vernacular architecture in selected cultural centres in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design in which 120 questionnaires were distributed to users of John Randle Centre, Terra Kulture, and KAP Hub, while 110 valid responses were retrieved for analysis using descriptive statistics and the Kruskal–Wallis H test. The findings indicated that respondents viewed neo-vernacular architecture as an effective approach for promoting cultural identity, community participation, and urban sustainability. The study further revealed that architectural features inspired by indigenous Yoruba heritage strengthened users' feelings of cultural attachment and belonging. The researchers recommended the integration of indigenous architectural expressions with modern sustainable design principles to enhance cultural sustainability in public buildings.

Shedrach et al. (2025) examined the integration of cultural identity into contemporary Nigerian architecture through socio-cultural sustainability principles. The study employed a qualitative case study approach involving the assessment of four cultural centres and semi-structured interviews with architects, artisans, and community elders. The findings showed that cultural symbolism, participatory design, local building materials, and indigenous spatial arrangements were major factors influencing cultural continuity in public architecture. The study also established that buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives contributed significantly to community pride and cultural identity. The authors recommended greater incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems and community involvement in architectural design processes to safeguard cultural heritage in rapidly urbanizing Nigerian cities.

Zhao et al. (2025) explored the development of a framework for assessing cultural sustainability in urban public facilities and environmental infrastructure. The researchers adopted a mixed-methods approach involving literature review, expert consultations, and community-based evaluations within urban environments. The findings demonstrated that cultural sustainability plays an important role in enhancing social cohesion, preserving identity, and increasing public acceptance of urban facilities. The study

further revealed that culturally responsive public spaces strengthen place attachment and collective memory among urban residents. The researchers recommended that architects and urban policymakers incorporate cultural sustainability indicators into urban planning and public building development to ensure long-term cultural relevance and continuity.

Adetoro and Gambo (2025) investigated architects' perceptions and professional engagement with indigenous mud construction techniques as a strategy for promoting culturally sustainable architecture in Nigeria. The study utilized a quantitative survey design through structured questionnaires administered to practicing architects in Lagos State, while descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that architects acknowledged the environmental and cultural advantages of indigenous mud architecture despite challenges such as poor public perception, regulatory constraints, and concerns regarding durability. The study concluded that indigenous architectural methods remain important for promoting cultural sustainability and preserving local identity. The authors recommended policy support, technological innovation, and educational reforms to encourage the adoption of indigenous building materials and culturally responsive architecture in Nigeria.

Adewale et al. (2024) examined green design strategies adopted by architects in the development of public buildings in Nigeria. The study assessed sustainable architectural practices and architects' perceptions regarding environmentally responsive building design through qualitative interviews involving architects and professionals within the Nigerian construction sector. The findings revealed increased adoption of passive design systems, sustainable construction materials, and environmentally friendly architectural practices in public buildings. The study also established that community participation and cultural considerations are important for improving the effectiveness and acceptance of sustainable public architecture. The researchers recommended collaborative policy implementation, stakeholder engagement, and culturally inclusive design approaches for achieving sustainability objectives within Nigerian public infrastructure.

Afolabi and Ibitoye (2025) investigated the influence of residents' perceptions on the adoption and acceptance of green façade systems in Nigerian high-rise architecture. The study adopted a quantitative research methodology using questionnaires administered to residents of selected high-rise buildings, while descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed for analysis. The findings indicated that residents' perceptions significantly influenced the acceptance of sustainable architectural innovations, especially in situations where cultural familiarity and aesthetic considerations were emphasized. The study further established that environmental awareness, public education, and community involvement improve the acceptance of sustainable architectural interventions. The researchers recommended increased public sensitization and the incorporation of culturally meaningful design elements into sustainable architecture to improve user satisfaction and strengthen place identity.

Al-Hagla and Hasan (2020) examined socio-cultural sustainability in vernacular and modern housing developments in Jordan with emphasis on cultural continuity and community identity. The study employed a comparative case study methodology involving observations, surveys, and socio-cultural analysis of selected housing environments. The findings revealed that vernacular architecture achieved stronger socio-cultural sustainability

outcomes because of its integration of local traditions, social values, and patterns of community interaction. The study further showed that many contemporary housing developments neglect intangible cultural elements that contribute to residents' sense of identity and belonging. The researchers recommended that architects and urban planners integrate vernacular principles and cultural considerations into modern housing and public building design to promote sustainable communities and preserve local identity.

2.4 Research Gap

The reviewed empirical studies have significantly contributed to the understanding of cultural sustainability, indigenous architecture, community perception, and vernacular design within the built environment. Studies by Jegede and Enwonwu (2025), Shedrach et al. (2025), and Zhao et al. (2025) focused on neo-vernacular architecture, socio-cultural sustainability, and cultural assessment frameworks in urban public spaces, while Adetoro and Gambo (2025) emphasized indigenous construction techniques and sustainable architecture in Nigeria. Similarly, Adewale et al. (2024), Afolabi and Ibitoye (2025), and Al-Hagla and Hasan (2020) examined sustainable public architecture, resident perception, and socio-cultural sustainability within contemporary housing and urban environments. However, despite these contributions, there remains limited empirical research specifically addressing ethnomimicry as a contemporary architectural approach and its influence on community perception of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives. Most of the reviewed studies concentrated broadly on sustainability, vernacular architecture, or environmental design without critically examining how ethnic narratives embedded in public architecture shape cultural identity, sense of place, and collective attachment within communities. In addition, few studies have explored the perceptions of local users regarding the symbolic relevance and cultural authenticity of ethnomimetic public buildings, particularly within the Nigerian context. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability through an assessment of community perception of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design to examine ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability with emphasis on community perception of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect quantitative data directly from respondents regarding their opinions, perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward culturally inspired public buildings. The design also provides an opportunity to describe existing phenomena systematically and objectively without manipulating the study variables. The choice of this design was informed by its suitability in studies involving social perception, architectural assessment, and cultural sustainability where large groups of respondents are required to provide relevant information for statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in selected public buildings within Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. Abuja was

selected because of its multicultural nature, rapid urbanization, and increasing integration of indigenous architectural concepts into contemporary public infrastructure. The city accommodates people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, making it an appropriate location for assessing community perception of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives. Selected public buildings such as cultural centres, museums, government buildings, and community halls that exhibit indigenous architectural features formed the focus of the study. The area also provides a suitable environment for examining the relationship between ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability within contemporary urban development.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised users and visitors of selected public buildings in Abuja that reflect indigenous ethnic narratives and culturally responsive architectural designs. The target population included community members, architects, urban planners, public building users, cultural practitioners, and residents who interact regularly with these public facilities. Since the exact number of users and visitors could not be accurately determined due to continuous daily movement, the population was regarded as infinite for the purpose of sample size determination.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study adopted a multistage sampling technique involving purposive and simple random sampling methods. Purposive sampling was used to select public buildings that demonstrate elements of ethnomimicry and indigenous cultural symbolism within Abuja. Thereafter, simple random sampling was employed to select respondents from the users and visitors of the identified buildings to ensure equal representation and minimize sampling bias.

The sample size for the study was determined using Cochran's (1963) formula for infinite populations expressed as:

$$n_0 = Z^2 pq / e^2$$

Where:

$$Z = 1.96 \text{ (95\% confidence level)}$$

$$p = 0.5 \text{ (proportion of population assumed to have the attribute)}$$

$$q = 1 - p = 0.5$$

$$e = 0.05 \text{ (margin of error)}$$

Substituting the values:

$$n_0 = (1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5) / (0.05^2)$$

$$n_0 = (3.8416 \times 0.25) / 0.0025$$

$$n_0 = 0.9604 / 0.0025$$

$$n_0 = 384.16$$

The calculated sample size was approximately 384 respondents. Therefore, a total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to respondents across the selected public buildings within the study area.

3.5 Model Specification

The study model was specified to examine the relationship between ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability through

community perception of identity and place in public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives. The functional relationship of the variables is expressed as:

$$CS = f(EM, CP, PB, EN)$$

Where:

CS = Cultural Sustainability

EM = Ethnomimicry

CP = Community Perception

PB = Public Buildings

EN = Ethnic Narratives

The econometric form of the model is expressed as:

$$CS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EM + \beta_2 CP + \beta_3 PB + \beta_4 EN + \mu$$

Where:

β_0 = Constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Coefficients of the independent variables

μ = Error term

3.6 Research Instruments

The major instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was structured in sections to capture respondents' demographic characteristics and information relating to ethnomimicry, cultural sustainability, identity, place attachment, public buildings, and ethnic narratives. The instrument was designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire format enabled respondents to provide objective and measurable responses suitable for quantitative analysis.

3.7 The Questionnaire Instrument

The questionnaire instrument consisted of two major sections. Section A focused on respondents' socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, educational qualification, and frequency of interaction with the selected public buildings. Section B contained statements relating to the variables of the study including ethnomimicry, cultural sustainability, community perception, identity, sense of place, public buildings, and ethnic narratives. Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

3.8 Nature and Sources of Data

The study relied mainly on primary data obtained directly from respondents through the administration of structured questionnaires. The primary data provided firsthand information regarding respondents' perceptions, experiences, and opinions concerning public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives. Secondary data were also obtained from textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, government publications, and other scholarly materials related to ethnomimicry, cultural sustainability, architecture, identity, and urban development. These secondary sources provided theoretical and empirical support for the study.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaires were coded, organized, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency distribution tables, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondents' responses and demographic characteristics. Inferential statistical techniques including regression analysis were employed to examine the relationship between ethnomimicry, community perception, ethnic narratives, and cultural sustainability in public buildings. The results obtained from the analysis were presented in tables and interpreted in line with the objectives of the study.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were carefully examined to ensure accuracy, consistency, and suitability of the questionnaire for the study. Validity ensured that the instrument measured the intended variables, while reliability ensured consistency in the responses obtained from respondents.

3.10.1 Reliability Test

The reliability of the questionnaire instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient through SPSS version 25. A pilot study was conducted by administering copies of the questionnaire to a small group of respondents outside the main study area. The responses obtained were subjected to reliability analysis to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable for the study, indicating that the questionnaire items were reliable and suitable for data collection.

3.10.2 Validity Test

The validity of the instrument was established through content and face validity procedures. The questionnaire was reviewed by experts in architecture, urban planning, and research methodology to assess the relevance, clarity, and adequacy of the items in measuring the study variables. Corrections and suggestions provided by the experts were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire to ensure that the instrument adequately captured the concepts of ethnomimicry, cultural sustainability, identity, place perception, and ethnic narratives within public buildings.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

This section presents the results of the data collected through the structured questionnaire administered for the study on ethnomimicry and cultural sustainability in public buildings in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. The analysis covers the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perceptions of ethnomimicry, community perception, public buildings, ethnic narratives, and cultural sustainability. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise the responses.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	216	66.7
Female	108	33.3

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. Male respondents constituted the majority, with 216 respondents representing 66.7%, while female respondents accounted for 108 respondents representing 33.3%. The table therefore indicates that male respondents were more represented than female respondents in the survey.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
26–35 years	72	22.2
36–45 years	36	11.1
46–55 years	180	55.6
56 years and above	36	11.1
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.2 indicates that respondents aged 46–55 years constituted the largest age category, with 180 respondents representing 55.6%. Respondents aged 26–35 years accounted for 72 respondents or 22.2%, while those aged 36–45 years and 56 years and above each accounted for 36 respondents or 11.1%. Thus, respondents within the 46–55-year age category formed the largest proportion of the respondents.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	180	55.6
Single	144	44.4
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.3 shows that 180 respondents, representing 55.6%, were married, whereas 144 respondents, representing 44.4%, were single. The results indicate that married respondents constituted the larger proportion of the respondents, although the difference between the two categories was relatively moderate.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
HND/B.Sc	36	11.1
Master's Degree	180	55.6
PhD	108	33.3
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.4 presents the educational qualifications of the respondents. Respondents with a Master's Degree constituted the largest category, with 180 respondents representing 55.6%. This was followed by respondents with PhD qualifications, who accounted for 108 respondents or 33.3%. Respondents with HND/B.Sc qualifications accounted for 36 respondents, representing 11.1%. The table therefore indicates that respondents with postgraduate qualifications constituted the largest proportions of the respondents.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Architect/Planner	180	55.6
Civil Servant	108	33.3
Business Man	36	11.1
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.5 shows the occupational distribution of the respondents. Architects/Planners constituted the largest category, with 180 respondents representing 55.6%. Civil servants accounted for 108 respondents or 33.3%, while business persons accounted for 36 respondents or 11.1%. The distribution therefore shows that professionals in architecture and planning represented the largest occupational group among the respondents.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Use or Visit to Selected Public Buildings

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	108	33.3
Weekly	72	22.2
Occasionally	144	44.4
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.6 indicates that 144 respondents, representing 44.4%, reported that they occasionally use or visit the selected public buildings. Daily users or visitors accounted for 108 respondents, representing 33.3%, while 72 respondents or 22.2% reported weekly use or visits. Occasional users therefore constituted the largest category in the distribution.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents by Ethnic Group

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hausa	180	55.6
Igbo	36	11.1
Others	108	33.3
Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.7 shows the ethnic distribution of respondents. Hausa respondents constituted the largest group, with 180 respondents representing 55.6%. Respondents classified under Others accounted for 108 respondents or 33.3%, while Igbo respondents

accounted for 36 respondents or 11.1%. The results therefore indicate that Hausa respondents formed the largest ethnic group represented in the survey.

4.1 Respondents' Perceptions of Ethnomimicry

Table 4.8: Respondents' Responses on Ethnomimicry (EM)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Public buildings in my area reflect local cultural and ethnic architectural patterns.	0	108	72	108	36	2.78	1.03
2	Indigenous symbols and motifs used in public buildings improve cultural representation.	36	144	72	36	36	3.33	1.16
3	Traditional architectural elements incorporated into modern buildings enhance community identity.	72	216	36	0	0	4.11	0.57
4	Ethnomimicry in architecture helps preserve indigenous cultural heritage.	72	252	0	0	0	4.22	0.42
5	Public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives create a stronger sense of belonging among residents.	144	180	0	0	0	4.44	0.50

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.8 presents respondents' perceptions of ethnomimicry. The first statement recorded a mean of 2.78, indicating comparatively lower agreement that public buildings in respondents' areas reflect local cultural and ethnic architectural patterns. The use of indigenous symbols and motifs to improve cultural representation recorded a mean of 3.33. Higher levels of agreement were recorded for the incorporation of traditional architectural elements into modern buildings to enhance community identity, with a mean of

4.11, and for the role of ethnomimicry in preserving indigenous cultural heritage, with a mean of 4.22. The highest mean of 4.44 was recorded for the view that public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives create a stronger sense of belonging among residents. The results demonstrate generally favourable perceptions of the cultural benefits of ethnomimicry, particularly its contribution to heritage preservation, identity, and belonging.

4.2 Respondents' Perceptions of Community Perception

Table 4.9: Respondents' Responses on Community Perception (CP)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Community members positively perceive public buildings that reflect local culture.	36	252	36	0	0	4.00	0.47
2	Cultural symbolism in public buildings influences people's emotional attachment to place.	108	180	36	0	0	4.22	0.63
3	Residents appreciate public buildings that incorporate indigenous architectural designs.	72	180	72	0	0	4.00	0.67
4	Public participation in architectural design improves acceptance of public buildings.	108	216	0	0	0	4.33	0.47
5	Public buildings reflecting ethnic identity strengthen community pride and social cohesion.	108	216	0	0	0	4.33	0.47

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.9 shows that respondents generally expressed strong agreement with the statements measuring community perception. The mean scores ranged from 4.00 to 4.33. The statements relating to public participation in architectural design and the ability of buildings reflecting ethnic identity to strengthen community pride and social cohesion both recorded the highest mean of 4.33.

Cultural symbolism and emotional attachment to place recorded a mean of 4.22, while the remaining two statements each recorded a mean of 4.00. The findings therefore indicate a high level of positive community perception regarding culturally responsive public architecture.

4.3 Respondents' Perceptions of Public Buildings

Table 4.10: Respondents' Responses on Public Buildings (PB)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Public buildings should reflect the cultural identity of the host community.	180	144	0	0	0	4.56	0.50
2	Public buildings inspired by indigenous architecture are more culturally meaningful.	144	180	0	0	0	4.44	0.50
3	Architectural design of public buildings influences people's sense of place and identity.	180	144	0	0	0	4.56	0.50
4	Contemporary public buildings should integrate traditional building materials and forms.	216	72	36	0	0	4.56	0.69
5	Public buildings designed with local cultural narratives improve urban identity.	108	180	36	0	0	4.22	0.63

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.10 demonstrates strong agreement with all the statements concerning culturally responsive public buildings. Three statements recorded a mean of 4.56: the need for public buildings to reflect the cultural identity of the host community, the influence of architectural design on sense of place and identity, and the integration of traditional materials and forms into contemporary

public buildings. Public buildings inspired by indigenous architecture recorded a mean of 4.44, while the use of local cultural narratives to improve urban identity recorded a mean of 4.22. The results indicate that respondents strongly support the incorporation of cultural identity and traditional architectural elements into public building design.

4.4 Respondents' Perceptions of Ethnic Narratives

Table 4.11: Respondents' Responses on Ethnic Narratives (EN)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Ethnic narratives help preserve the history and traditions of local communities.	216	108	0	0	0	4.67	0.47
2	Public buildings should incorporate stories, symbols, and traditions of indigenous communities.	72	216	36	0	0	4.11	0.57
3	Architectural representation of ethnic narratives strengthens cultural continuity.	144	144	36	0	0	4.33	0.67
4	Indigenous cultural symbols in public buildings promote cultural awareness among residents.	180	144	0	0	0	4.56	0.50
5	Ethnic narratives incorporated into architecture improve people's connection to place.	144	144	36	0	0	4.33	0.67

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.11 indicates a high level of agreement with the role of ethnic narratives in public architecture. The highest mean score of 4.67 was recorded for the statement that ethnic narratives help preserve the history and traditions of local communities. This was followed by the view that indigenous cultural symbols in public buildings promote cultural awareness, which recorded a mean of 4.56. Architectural representation of ethnic narratives and the

incorporation of ethnic narratives into architecture to improve connection to place each recorded a mean of 4.33. The statement concerning the incorporation of stories, symbols, and traditions into public buildings recorded a mean of 4.11. Overall, the responses indicate that ethnic narratives are strongly associated with cultural preservation, awareness, continuity, and connection to place.

4.5 Respondents' Perceptions of Cultural Sustainability

Table 4.12: Respondents' Responses on Cultural Sustainability (CS)

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Public buildings inspired by local culture contribute to cultural sustainability.	108	216	0	0	0	4.33	0.47
2	Preservation of indigenous architectural identity promotes sustainable urban development.	108	144	72	0	0	4.11	0.74
3	Cultural sustainability can be enhanced through ethnomimicry in architecture.	72	252	0	0	0	4.22	0.42
4	Public buildings that reflect local identity encourage long-term community	36	252	36	0	0	4.00	0.47

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
	attachment.							
5	Incorporating local ethnic narratives into public architecture preserves cultural heritage for future generations.	144	144	36	0	0	4.33	0.67

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.12 shows that respondents expressed strong agreement with the five statements measuring cultural sustainability. Public buildings inspired by local culture and the incorporation of local ethnic narratives into public architecture to preserve cultural heritage both recorded mean scores of 4.33. The statement that cultural sustainability can be enhanced through ethnomimicry recorded a mean of 4.22, while preservation of indigenous architectural identity recorded a mean of 4.11. The lowest mean, although still high, was 4.00 for the statement that public buildings reflecting local identity encourage long-term community attachment. The results indicate that respondents strongly associate culturally responsive architecture with cultural sustainability and heritage preservation.

4.6 Composite Mean Scores of the Study Variables

Table 4.13: Composite Mean Scores of the Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Ethnomimicry (EM)	3.78	0.48	High
Community Perception (CP)	4.18	0.38	High
Public Buildings (PB)	4.47	0.35	High
Ethnic Narratives (EN)	4.40	0.40	High
Cultural Sustainability (CS)	4.20	0.40	High

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4.13 summarises the composite mean scores of the five study variables. Public Buildings recorded the highest mean of 4.47, followed by Ethnic Narratives with 4.40, Cultural Sustainability with 4.20, and Community Perception with 4.18. Ethnomimicry recorded the lowest mean of 3.78. Nevertheless, all five variables were classified as high. The results indicate that respondents generally expressed favourable perceptions across all the dimensions examined in the study.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that respondents attach considerable importance to the relationship between public architecture and cultural identity. This is particularly evident from the high composite mean score for Public Buildings (4.47), which was the highest among the five study variables. Respondents strongly agreed that public buildings should reflect the cultural identity of their host communities, with a mean score of 4.56, and that architectural design influences people's sense of place and identity, also with a mean of 4.56. The high mean scores indicate that public buildings are perceived not merely as functional structures but also as important physical expressions of community identity and cultural meaning.

The findings on Ethnic Narratives and Community Perception further reinforce the importance attached to cultural representation in architecture. Ethnic Narratives recorded a composite mean of 4.40, with the highest individual mean of 4.67 relating to the preservation of local history and traditions. Respondents also strongly agreed that indigenous cultural symbols promote cultural awareness, with a mean of 4.56. Similarly, Community Perception recorded a composite mean of 4.18. Public participation in architectural design and the reflection of ethnic identity in public buildings both recorded means of 4.33, indicating strong agreement that community involvement and cultural representation can improve acceptance, pride, and social cohesion.

The results concerning Ethnomimicry and Cultural Sustainability provide further evidence of the perceived cultural value of indigenous architectural expression. Ethnomimicry recorded a composite mean of 3.78, which was the lowest among the five constructs but was still classified as high. The relatively lower mean was largely associated with the statement that public buildings in the respondents' areas reflect local cultural and ethnic architectural patterns, which recorded a mean of 2.78. In contrast, respondents strongly agreed that public buildings inspired by local ethnic narratives create a stronger sense of belonging, with a mean of 4.44. Cultural Sustainability also recorded a high composite mean of 4.20, with respondents particularly agreeing that locally inspired public buildings contribute to cultural sustainability and that local ethnic narratives incorporated into public architecture can preserve cultural heritage for future generations. Overall, the findings from the tables indicate strong support for culturally responsive public architecture, particularly in relation to identity, heritage preservation, community attachment, cultural awareness, and sustainable cultural development.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that ethnomimicry has considerable relevance to cultural sustainability and the strengthening of identity and sense of place in public buildings in Abuja. The findings show that respondents generally held favourable perceptions of culturally responsive architecture, with high composite mean scores recorded for ethnomimicry (3.78), community perception (4.18), public buildings (4.47), ethnic narratives (4.40), and cultural sustainability (4.20). Respondents particularly recognized the importance of reflecting host-community identity in public buildings, incorporating traditional architectural materials and forms, preserving local history and traditions through ethnic narratives, and promoting community participation in architectural design. Although the relatively lower mean for the reflection of local cultural and ethnic architectural patterns in existing public buildings (2.78) suggests that actual application may not yet fully correspond with the strong preferences expressed by respondents, the overall findings demonstrate substantial support for integrating indigenous cultural expressions into contemporary architecture. Thus, ethnomimicry can serve as an important approach for preserving cultural heritage, strengthening community attachment,

promoting cultural awareness, and enhancing the cultural sustainability of public architecture in Abuja.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that architects, urban planners, government agencies, and other stakeholders should systematically integrate local ethnic narratives, indigenous symbols, traditional materials, spatial forms, and culturally meaningful design elements into the planning and development of public buildings. Community members should be actively involved in architectural design and decision-making processes to ensure that cultural representations are authentic, relevant, and socially accepted. Government and planning authorities should develop and strengthen policies that encourage culturally responsive and indigenous architectural approaches within public infrastructure development, while providing appropriate support for the documentation and preservation of local architectural knowledge and craftsmanship. Public awareness and educational programmes should also be promoted to improve understanding of the cultural value of ethnomimetic architecture. Finally, future public building projects in Abuja should balance contemporary functional and environmental requirements with cultural identity so that modernization does not result in the loss of indigenous heritage, thereby strengthening place attachment, community pride, cultural continuity, and long-term cultural sustainability.

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