

A History of the Isukha-Idakho Bullfighting in Western Kenya

Larry Iswekha Chiteyi¹
Kizito Muchanga Lusambili²
Ahaya Luke Ochieng³

¹chiteyilarry@gmail.com (+254718143355)

²kmuchanga@mmust.ac.ke (+254710363494)

³lahaya@mmust.ac.ke (+254726769848)

¹<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7656-6973>

²<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5430-4558>

³<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2813-6527>

^{1,2,3}Department of Social Science Education, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

ABSTRACT

The traditional sport of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting offers a glimpse into the enduring cultural history of the Isukha and Idakho people in western Kenya. This age-old custom, which has origins that go back many centuries, represents the resilience, prosperity, and cohesion of these communities. The Isukha and Idakho people's traditional identities are fundamentally shaped by bullfighting, which is a significant aspect of commemorating life events such as weddings and burials. Bullfighting in Isukha-Idakho has faced challenges from globalization, industrialization, and shifting societal dynamics throughout its history. The technique has faced several difficulties due to changes in agricultural operations, animal welfare concerns, and outside influences. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, the Isukha and Idakho people have proven to be resilient and adaptable, and they continue to work to preserve and chronicle their cultural legacy. Bullfighting-related community get-togethers have not only strengthened social ties but also had a significant impact on the economy and tourism. The history and cultural importance of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting are discussed, as well as the challenges that they face in preserving their cultural legacy.

Keywords: Bullfighting, Cultural, Globalization, Idakho, Isukha, Modernization

I. INTRODUCTION

The people of Isukha-Idakho refer to bullfighting as "Ingabo ya Bisukha na Bidakho," which is a translation of the Spanish phrase "a shield for Isukha and Idakho people." It is a cultural practice that is deeply rooted in the traditions of the Isukha and Idakho people of western Kenya, and it is both priceless and historically significant.¹ This specific type of bullfighting, which is distinct from the more common bullfights, held in the Spanish custom, has been an essential component of the history of their culture for many decades.

They inhabitants see bullfighting as something more than just a sport; rather, they consider it as a ceremonial and symbolic celebration of the centrality of cattle to their way of life. This attitude informs the bullfighting that takes place in their communities. It is a manifestation of the region's profound respect for livestock which have long been significant on multiple levels, including economic, social, and spiritual. This ceremony, which is steeped in history and tradition, has evolved over the course of time, and it is now utilized as the primary focus of a variety of different festivities and get-togethers. It demonstrates the communities' dogged will and unwavering commitment to preserving their cultural uniqueness in the face of the onslaught of modernization.² This study looks into the heritage of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting, examining its beginnings, cultural significance, customary norms and conduct, as well as the issues it faces in today's rapidly changing world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

¹ Odhiambo, ES Atieno. "Historicising the Deep Past in Western Kenya ES Atieno Odhiambo." *Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor Gideon S. Were* (2002): 29.

² Lusambili, Kizito Muchanga, and Charles Cheneku Simbe. "Historicizing the Determinants of the Catholic Evangelization in Western Part of Kenya, 1902-1978."

Kenyan culture places a high value on sport, and various native traditional sports have endured since prehistoric times. Bullfighting among the Idakho and Isukha people, two minor Luhya tribes, is one that stands out. On select Saturdays and on holidays, the event is held at the Malinya grounds in Kakamega. In contrast to the Spanish *corrida de toros*, where a man battles the bull, in Isukha-Idakho bullfighting, bulls fight each other.³ The construction of the Malinya stadium in the Ikolomani constituency was supported by the national government because the event has grown so popular among residents and tourists. In the past, the sport served to commemorate important local occasions like funerals while also fostering peace by bringing people together. But as of late, it serves as both a means of entertainment and a source of income for bull owners since the owner of the victorious bull always returns home with some money.

Bulls used in bullfights are typically trained by being kept in zero-grazing conditions and separated from other livestock to make more aggressive. The animals are also well-cared for and fed a special diet that includes vitamins and regional herbs.⁴ A chosen individual speaks to the bull and sings battle songs to it the night before the fight to get it ready. To make them more aggressive, some bulls are fed *busaa*, a local drink, while others are given a few puffs of marijuana. To prevent bewitching by the opposing group, the bulls are also subjected to traditional rituals and sorcery. Between the bull owner and the animal itself, this ritual is considered sacred and involves a secret pledge. The ceremonies are often horrifying: drunk people and women in their menstrual cycle are not permitted near the bull.⁵ On the day of the event, *isukuti* chanting and old-fashioned war songs fill the stadium. A sacrifice is made to call on the spirits of the ancestors before the bull is released from the homestead. The bull owner then walks the animal outside while playing war music to agitate it and blowing trumpets to announce the impending conflict. The fighting bulls are then brought to the field to engage in a struggle lasting from 4 to 30 minutes. The losing bull always runs away, endangering the onlookers because it has the potential to seriously injure someone while running.⁶ People of the village where the winning bull comes from escort it back home in songs of praise. The owner of the winning bull receives a cash price. Later on, celebrations fill the village with locals enjoying the traditional brew. It is important to preserve such traditional sports. They are authentic and are an integral part of our specific cultures, presenting the need to ensure their continuity.

III. METHODOLOGY

This work's research methodology was qualitative. Field recordings of texts, films, or audio made during the initial data collection were used to collect and analyze non-numerical data. This was done in an effort to better understand the thoughts, perspectives, and experiences of many people. In this inquiry, it was also used to unearth specific facts about a subject and generate original ideas. The study's research methodology was historical. In a historical research design, a researcher systematically collects data and evaluates it by comparing it to prior occurrences to identify the causes, impacts, or trends of those events, with the aim of using the data to understand and explain past, present, and expected future events.⁷ Studies in the historical research design are mostly descriptive in nature, beginning with a narration of events in chronological order, and their analysis addresses the issues of relationships, explanations, and repercussions of occurrences.⁸

The inhabitants of Abakamega were the study population. These were residents of the Ikolomani and Shinyalu constituencies. The convenience and snowballing sampling methods were used in this investigation. This sampling process made it possible for the study to use primary data sources that were already accessible without the need for any additional steps. Participants were gathered using this strategy wherever they could be found, typically in convenient locations. Both primary and secondary sources were employed in the investigation. Primary sources included questionnaires, oral and key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. It used historical records from the Kenyan state archives as secondary sources. Furthermore, other libraries were visited to acquire and collect secondary data. These libraries included those from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, the Kenya National Library in Kakamega, and the University of Nairobi's virtual library. Additionally,

³Mugwima, Benard M., and Deisser Anne-Marie. "Conservation of Natural and Cultural heritage in Kenya." (2018).

⁴Ursinus, W. W., Femke Schepers, E. A. M. Bokkers, M. B. M. Bracke, and H. A. M. Spolder. "General overview of animal welfare in a global perspective." *Animal Welfare in Global Perspective* 240 (2009): 4-53.

⁵Sharpes, Donald K. *Sacred bull, holy cow: A cultural study of civilization's most important animal*. Peter Lang, 2006.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.

⁷P. Leedy, (1997). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, Englewood, Prentice Hall, p.190

⁸*Ibid.*, p.190

journals, reports, books, theses—both published and unpublished—and social media platforms (youtube videos) were used.

IV. FINDINGS

Bullfighting between Isukha and Idakho communities is often referred to as "*Ingabo ya Bisukha na Bidakho*," which means a shield for those communities. The Isukha and Idakho groups, who are a component of the wider Luhya ethnic group in western Kenya, engage in a traditional form of bullfighting. These communities' customs and beliefs have a long history that is strongly ingrained in this cultural practice. These are the conclusions:

1. Ancient Origins

It is possible to trace the history of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting back several generations, if not centuries. It probably developed as a result of the communities' strong interaction with the cattle in the *mubwayilu* (Grazing fields), which have long been important for the region's culture and economy. Bullfighting in Isukha-Idakho is thought to have its beginnings in the distant past, maybe dating back hundreds of years.⁹ It is a traditional cultural practice that evolved as a result of the communities' strong historical connection to cattle, which have held significant cultural and economic importance in the region. In this regards, cattle have traditionally been central to the way of life of the Isukha and Idakho people.¹⁰ Cattle were not only sources of food and livelihood but were also symbols of wealth (*miandu*), prestige, and power within the communities. Additionally, bulls, being powerful and virile animals, have always been associated with strength and prosperity in the Isukha and Idakho cultures.¹¹ Bullfighting evolved as a symbolic representation of these attributes and the significance of cattle in the lives of the communities.

In addition to this, the Isukha-Idakho bullfighting tradition is extensively rooted in the traditions and rituals of the people. Not only is it a kind of entertainment or sport, but it also plays an important part in the rituals that are performed to mark significant life events like marriages, burials, and initiation rites. Throughout these events, bullfighting serves as a metaphor of the change or transformation that was taking place, and it continues to do so now. It is essential to note that a significant portion of the history of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting, including its point of origin, has been handed down from oral tradition. Stories, myths, and histories relating to the practice have been preserved thanks to the efforts of community members and elders, which helps to retain the ritual's historical and cultural relevance.¹²

2. Cultural Significance

In the Isukha and Idakho communities in western Kenya, bullfighting also has a strong cultural significance. This customary practice has a significant impact on their cultural identity and many facets of their lives; it is much more than just a source of entertainment.¹³ Isukha-Idakho Bullfighting is a representation of identity and cultural heritage. It illustrates the long-standing connections to cattle and the history of the Isukha and Idakho communities. Within the community, bullfighting is frequently utilized to commemorate important life milestones and events. It serves as a means of commemorating and remembering important occasions like weddings, memorial services, and initiation rituals. This activity strengthens cultural customs and fosters a feeling of cohesion and solidarity among community members. The bull is considered to be a symbol of strength, virility, and prosperity in this culture. Bullfighting represents these qualities symbolically, and the outcome of the matches can have significant cultural and social repercussions.¹⁴

In addition, activities around bullfighting serve as social opportunities that bring the community together. They offer opportunities for networking, making new contacts, and strengthening existing ties within the community. They offer occasions for the exchange of stories, music, dance, and food, all of which contribute to the strengthening

⁹Bulimo, Shadrack Amakoye. *Luyia Nation: Origins, Clans and Taboos*. Trafford Publishing, 2013.

¹⁰Kavulavu, Leen. "The History and Culture of Idakho People of Western Kenya during Pre-colonial Period." (2017).

¹¹Kabaji, Egara Stanley. "The construction of gender through the narrative process of the African folktale: A case study of the Maragoli folktale." PhD diss., 2005.

¹²Wanjohi, Kibicho. "Cultural tourism: a trade-off between cultural values and economic values." *Cultural tourism in Africa: strategies for the new millennium* (2002): 77.

¹³Smith-Akubue, Dorothy Ann Robinson. *Evangelism and western education in western Kenya: Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), 1905-1949*. West Virginia University, 1995.

¹⁴Zurcher, Louis A., and Arnold Meadow. "On bullfights and baseball: An example of interaction of social institutions." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 8 (1967): 99.

of the social structure of the community.¹⁵ The bullfighting industry is also a source of income for a significant number of residents of the area. Breeding and providing care for the special breed of bulls that are utilized in bullfighting is a lucrative business opportunity for local farmers and ranchers. In the communities of Isukha and Idakho, bullfighting is deeply intertwined with other cultural practices, beliefs, and rituals. It is an integral part of people's culture that also features elements such as ceremonies, music, dance, and storytelling. Due to the threat of modernization, the tradition of bullfighting is a manifestation of an effort to maintain the social bonds and cultural traditions of a society.¹⁶ The Isukha-Idakho Bullfighting tradition can also function as a one-of-a-kind regional attraction that is capable of attracting tourists to the local area. It makes a significant contribution to the identity of the area and may result in economic benefits, such as increased tourism.

3. Symbolism

Bulls are seen as symbols of strength, vigor, and prosperity in the region. The bullfighting spectacle is meant to serve as a metaphor for these attributes. The outcome of a bullfight can have both cultural and societal significance, and the victorious bull is typically seen as a mark of pride for its owner.¹⁷ In addition, the Isukha-Idakho bullfighting style involves a great deal of symbolism, which is reflective of the sport's deep cultural and social significance. The bull is a symbol of vigor and strength since it is a powerful and robust animal. These characteristics are celebrated through the art of bullfighting in Isukha-Idakho, and the matches itself serve as a metaphor for dominance and power. Cattle, and particularly bulls, have long been seen as a symbol of wealth and success among these people. It is common practice to view a successful bull as an image of honor and prosperity, as well as a reflection of the wealth of the owner of the bull. Weddings, funerals, and initiation rites are just a few examples of big life events and changes that are typically marked by bullfighting. The ritual serves as a reminder of how significant these moments are for both individuals and the community at large. Events featuring bullfighting build a sense of community and bring people together. They promote community cohesion by giving Isukha and Idakho residents chances to interact, bond, and celebrate shared customs.

The preservation of traditional traditions and cultural heritage are represented by bullfighting. The communities' dedication to maintaining their cultural identity and preserving their traditions for future generations is evident in this. The Isukha and Idakho communities' oral culture includes narratives and anecdotes about bullfighting.¹⁸ To conserve traditional information and transmit it to the next generation, elders and community members exchange these tales. The region's economy depends on the breeding and upkeep of the particular breed of bulls used in bullfighting. The bulls represent the owners' financial success and, in turn, support the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers. Bullfighting in Isukha-Idakho is a distinctive local attraction.¹⁹ The custom invites tourists who are curious to engage in and learn about this traditional activity because it represents the region's cultural character. The practice of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting demonstrates a commitment to preserving cultural continuity in the face of modernization and outside pressures.²⁰ It represents the neighborhood's tenacity in upholding its customs and sense of self. Cultural ideals like honor, tradition, and communal harmony are embodied in the practice. These ideals are reinforced by the bullfighting's symbolic elements, which also provide the Isukha and Idakho communities a sense of pride and identity. Richard Amisi made a suggestion that the bullfighting day involves more than just two bulls going head-to-head; rather, it is a meeting of two clans or villages to compare their farming, leadership, and other characteristics.²¹

4. Traditional Rules and Conduct

The Isukha-Idakho style of bullfighting is unique in comparison to the more traditional and well-known Spanish type. It is not about killing the animals, but rather about the physical conflict that occurs between the two bulls.²² The bulls are free to participate in a battle of strength and supremacy by locking horns with one another. The battle will continue until one of the bulls gives up or a victor is determined in accordance with the predetermined

¹⁵Heath, Dwight B. *Drinking occasions: Comparative perspectives on alcohol and culture*. Psychology Press, 2000.

¹⁶Smith-Akubue, Dorothy Ann Robinson. 1995. *Op. Cit.*,

¹⁷Sharpes, Donald K. *Sacred bull, holy cow: A cultural study of civilization's most important animal*. Peter Lang, 2006.

¹⁸Casal, Paula. "Whaling, bullfighting, and the conditional value of tradition." *Res Publica* 27, no. 3 (2021): 467-490.

¹⁹Miya, Florence Ngale. "Educational content in the performing arts: Tradition and Christianity in Kenya." (2004).

²⁰Amatsimbi, H. S. "Christian missions, government and local councils partnership in educational development: The case of western Kenya, 1911-1938." *International Journal of Education and Research* 1, no. 9 (2013): 1-14.

²¹ Richard Amisi (52 years), Oral Interview on 2/07/2023

²²Boisseron, Bénédicte. *Afro-dog: blackness and the animal question*. Columbia University Press, 2018.

criteria.²³ It is important to note that in Isukha-Idakho bullfighting, the norm is for there to be a pair of bulls who engage in a physical combat against one another. The bulls square off against one another in a restricted arena, which is typically a field or some other area that has been allocated specifically for the battle. In contrast to traditional bullfighting in Spain, here are no such things as "matadors or picadors," and the bulls are not attacked with any kind of weaponry. The primary objective of the fight is on the horns of the bulls as well as their natural strength.²⁴

It is customary to have judges or referees present at a bullfight in order to oversee the event and make conclusions regarding the victor depending on the established guidelines. They watch out for the animals' safety and make sure the fight is carried out in a manner that is not unfair. The battle will continue till one of the bulls gives up or the judges decide that one of them should be the winner. The ability of the bull to display its strength and authority is frequently decisive in determining who wins.

The Isukha-Idakho style of bullfighting places a strong emphasis on treating the bulls with kindness. During the bullfights, the animals do not suffer any injuries or be treated cruelly, and efforts are made to ensure that they are in good health.²⁵ During bullfights, safety precautions are typically taken to safeguard both the animals and the people watching. In order to keep the surroundings under control and prevent the bulls from coming into contact with the spectators, this may involve the deployment of barricades or fence. The bullfight is typically preceded by a variety of culturally significant rituals, prayers, and rites that have been practiced for generations. These rites contribute to the sanctification of the occasion and lend it a dimension of the spiritual.²⁶

The bullfight is an event for the community, and members of the community will frequently take part in the event's organization as well as the bouts themselves. It is not just a sport for spectators; rather, it is a gathering of the community. The final result of the bullfight may carry a certain amount of symbolic weight among the society. It is possible that the triumphant bull will come to be regarded as a symbol of respect and strength, and that its owner will receive notoriety and status as a result. It became clear that the Isukha-Idakho bullfighting competition is a distinct cultural practice that embodies the cultural ideals and customs of both the Isukha and the Idakho groups. The customary rules and conduct ensure that the ritual is carried out correctly while also showing consideration for the welfare of the livestock and the importance of the occasion from a cultural perspective.²⁷

5. Community Events

Social events such as bullfights happen in the neighborhood. They offer opportunities for social interaction, cultural celebration, and connection. These events usually include entertainment in the shape of dancing, music, and other genres. In the long tradition of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting, community meetings have also played a critical role in maintaining and celebrating this age-old sport. These events provide chances for people to connect socially, to preserve and strengthen cultural traditions, and to bring people together. Bullfighting has traditionally played a significant role in wedding ceremonies among the Isukha and Idakho communities. Bullfighting is a common way to commemorate the occasion and symbolize the importance of a couple's union.²⁸ Furthermore, bullfighting occasionally occurs as a component of young people's initiation rites. It teaches cultural values and responsibilities and acts as an analogy for the transition from infancy to adulthood.²⁹ Occasionally, funeral rites involve bullfighting as a way to honor and commemorate the deceased. The tradition highlights the respect for the departed as well as the cultural significance of the occasion.

In Isukha-Idakho, bullfighting plays a significant role in a number of community celebrations and events. These festivals usually include a lot of bullfights and may attract attendees and participants from various geographic areas. A fun and cultural element of local gatherings like produce fairs or customary festivals could be bullfighting. These events foster a feeling of community and pride in the area. Bullfighting is sometimes incorporated into religious celebrations and rituals, particularly those that hold particular cultural and spiritual significance for the surrounding

²³Desch-Obi, M. Thomas J. *Fighting for honor: The history of African martial art traditions in the Atlantic world*. Univ of South Carolina Press, 2008.

²⁴Fiske-Harrison, Alexander. *Into the arena: the world of the Spanish bullfight*. Profile Books, 2011.

²⁵Lusambili, Kizito Muchanga, and Charles Cheneku Simbe. "Historicizing the Determinants of the Catholic Evangelization in Western Part of Kenya, 1902-1978."

²⁶Higgs, Robert J., and Michael Braswell. *An unholy alliance: The sacred and modern sports*. Mercer University Press, 2004.

²⁷Jewell, R. Todd, Afsheen Moti, and Dennis Coates. "A brief history of violence and aggression in spectator sports." In *Violence and aggression in sporting contests: Economics, history and policy*, pp. 11-26. New York, NY: Springer New York, 2011.

²⁸Ouma, Samwel. "Influence of Cultural Practices on Implementation of Development Projects in Shinyalu Sub-county Kakamega, Kenya." PhD diss., University Of Nairobi, 2016.

²⁹Ibid

community. It lends a sacred quality to the event. Bullfighting competitions offer a platform for social interaction and team spirit. During these gatherings, neighbors frequently share stories, food, and music, strengthening the neighborhood's social fabric.

Events featuring bullfighting in Isukha-Idakho are not just attended by locals but may also draw tourists and visitors from nearby areas who are curious about and eager to experience this distinctive cultural custom.³⁰ These exchanges improve the variety and understanding of civilizations. Through these events, the history and cultural relevance of the Isukha-Idakho bullfighting heritage can be taught to younger generations. Elders and community leaders use these gatherings as a means of passing down traditional knowledge and values. Bullfighting-related events might have a big economic impact on the area. They can boost the local economy by generating revenue from the sale of tickets, food stands, and locally produced goods. It's crucial to remember that the practice in Isukha-Idakho has historically been strongly associated with community celebrations. These festivals serve as more than just social events for entertainment; they also enable both Isukha and Idakho people preserve their cultural traditions and act as a symbol of cultural identity and important life milestones.³¹

6. Challenges and Changes

Isukha-Idakho bullfighting has had difficulties recently as a result of modernity, shifting cultural norms, and worries for animal welfare.³² Reforms have been demanded by several groups and activists in order to guarantee the animals' decent treatment and to bring the practice into compliance with modern ethical norms. Isukha-Idakho bullfighting has had many difficulties and modifications over the course of its existence, which has reflected the shifting dynamics of the surrounding environment, society, and culture. The Isukha and Idakho communities' perceptions of the practice have been impacted by these difficulties and modifications.³³ Bullfighting and other customs have faced difficulties since the Isukha and Idakho areas have become more modern and urbanized. As younger generations move into cities and change their habits, they can become less interested in continuing the practice. Animal welfare activists have raised concerns about the way bulls are treated in traditional bullfighting.

Changes in agricultural practices, land use, and the availability of grazing areas have influenced the traditional breeding and care of the bulls used in bullfighting.³⁴ This has posed challenges to maintaining the practice. The dynamics of cultural values and beliefs within the Isukha and Idakho communities have evolved over time. New generations may place less emphasis on traditional practices like bullfighting, impacting its continuity. External influences, including globalization and the spread of Western culture, have introduced alternative forms of entertainment and leisure activities, which compete with traditional practices like bullfighting. The conservation of indigenous cattle breeds and environmental concerns have played a role in shaping the future of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting.³⁵

It's possible that initiatives to preserve native cattle breeds will have an impact on both the availability of bulls for the practice and their care. Economic issues, such as the expenditures connected with keeping bulls for use in bullfighting, can be an obstacle to the survival of the sport.³⁶ Bullfighting has been practiced for centuries. Some people in the community may find that it places an undue financial strain on them.

The presence of an increased number of tourists and business interests may cause a change in the traditional format of bullfighting events. Tourism can have a positive impact on an economy, but it also has the potential to change the way traditional components of a practice are carried out. In spite of these obstacles, there have been significant efforts made to both maintain and reinvigorate the Isukha-Idakho bullfighting tradition. Leaders in the community, traditional fans, and researchers have all collaborated in an effort to record and save this cultural heritage.³⁷ Some of the adjustments have required making adjustments to the practice in order to deal with the issues.

³⁰Wandibba, Simiyu. *History and Culture of Western Kenya: The people of Bungoma District through time*. Gideon S. Were Press, 1990.

³¹Kidula, Jean Ngoya. *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*. Indiana University Press, 2013.

³²Ibid

³³Miya, Florence Ngale. "Educational content in the performing arts: Tradition and Christianity in Kenya." (2004).

³⁴Dawkins, Marian Stamp. "Evolution and animal welfare." *The quarterly review of biology* 73, no. 3 (1998): 305-328.

³⁵Aoyama, Yuko. "The role of consumption and globalization in a cultural industry: The case of flamenco." *Geoforum* 38, no. 1 (2007): 103-113.

³⁶Dadi, Genet, Mengistu Urge, and Tsegay Teklebrhan. "Assessment of commercial beef cattle fattening practices and performance in East Shoa Zone." *International Journal of Agricultural Science and Food Technology* 3, no. 3 (2017): 67-76.

³⁷Ritchie, Brent W., and Darryl Adair. "Sport tourism: An introduction and overview." *Sport tourism: Interrelationships, impacts and issues* 15, no. 6 (2004): 1-29.

For instance, steps might be done to ensure that bulls are treated in a kind and compassionate manner, or bullfighting could be incorporated into cultural celebrations.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The Isukha-Idakho people in western Kenya have a long history of bullfighting, which is evidence of their strong linkages to their environment and cultural heritage as well as their persisting cultural practices. Isukha-Idakho bullfighting has changed and adapted to new situations throughout history without losing its fundamental cultural relevance.

The custom of bullfighting is a long-standing cultural tradition that dates back many centuries. It illustrates the Isukha and Idakho communities' long-standing cultural legacy and their intimate bond with cattle. Bullfighting is more than just a kind of amusement; it has significant cultural and symbolic meaning. It stands for power, wealth, harmony, and the maintenance of traditional customs. Important life events like marriages, funerals, and initiation ceremonies have included the practice, including cultural rituals and symbolism to highlight these moments.

The modern era has presented obstacles for Isukha-Idakho bullfighting, such as shifting agricultural techniques, globalization's influence, and animal welfare issues. In spite of this, the communities have responded to these difficulties with resiliency and flexibility. Recognizing the value of Isukha-Idakho bullfighting as a cultural legacy, experts, community leaders, and aficionados have collaborated to record and preserve the practice. The goal of these initiatives is to guarantee the practice's survival. Bullfighting events function as social events that unite people, promoting social bonds and provide platforms for storytelling and cultural exchange.

Bullfighting in the Isukha-Idakho village can be economically and aesthetically significant, supporting local residents' lives and attracting tourists eager to witness this distinctive cultural custom. The Isukha and Idakho communities' tenacity and cultural diversity are in fact demonstrated by the legacy bullfighting. Despite the difficulties and modifications over the ages, this customary behavior continues to be an expression of cultural pride, continuity, and identity.

5.2 Recommendations

Preserving and promoting the Isukha-Idakho bullfighting tradition is crucial for sustaining the rich cultural heritage of these communities. To ensure its continuation and relevance in the modern era, it is recommended that local leaders, cultural experts, and community members work together to document and safeguard the practice, its rituals, and symbolism. Education programs should be developed to pass down the knowledge and skills required for bullfighting to the younger generations. Additionally, efforts to address animal welfare concerns should be a priority, ensuring that the practice is conducted in a humane and ethical manner. By recognizing the economic potential of bullfighting as a tourist attraction, the community can also explore opportunities for sustainable tourism development, thereby creating economic benefits for the local residents while preserving their cultural identity.

REFERENCES

- Amatsimbi, H. S. "Christian missions, government and local councils partnership in educational development: The case of western Kenya, 1911-1938." *International Journal of Education and Research* 1, no. 9 (2013): 1-14.
- Aoyama, Yuko. "The role of consumption and globalization in a cultural industry: The case of flamenco." *Geoforum* 38, no. 1 (2007): 103-113.
- Bogonko, Sorobea N. "Christian missionary education and its impact on the Abagusii of Western Kenya 1909-1963." PhD diss., 1977.
- Boisseron, Bénédicte. *Afro-dog: blackness and the animal question*. Columbia University Press, 2018.
- Bulimo, Shadrack Amakoye. *Luyia Nation: Origins, Clans and Taboos*. Trafford Publishing, 2013.
- Casal, Paula. "Whaling, bullfighting, and the conditional value of tradition." *Res Publica* 27, no. 3 (2021): 467-490.
- Dadi, Genet, Mengistu Urge, and Tsegay Teklebrhan. "Assessment of commercial beef cattle fattening practices and performance in East Shoa Zone." *International Journal of Agricultural Science and Food Technology* 3, no. 3 (2017): 67-76.
- Dawkins, Marian Stamp. "Evolution and animal welfare." *The quarterly review of biology* 73, no. 3 (1998): 305-328.

- Desch-Obi, M. Thomas J. *Fighting for honor: The history of African martial art traditions in the Atlantic world*. Univ of South Carolina Press, 2008.
- E. Babbie and J. Mouton.(2002),*The Practice of Social Research*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, Clyde. *A dancing people: Powwow culture on the southern plains*. University Press of Kansas, 2003.
- Fiske-Harrison, Alexander. *Into the arena: the world of the Spanish bullfight*. Profile Books, 2011.
- Heath, Dwight B. *Drinking occasions: Comparative perspectives on alcohol and culture*. Psychology Press, 2000.
- Higgs, Robert J., and Michael Braswell. *An unholy alliance: The sacred and modern sports*. Mercer University Press, 2004.
- Jewell, R. Todd, Afsheen Moti, and Dennis Coates. "A brief history of violence and aggression in spectator sports." In *Violence and aggression in sporting contests: Economics, history and policy*, pp. 11-26. New York, NY: Springer New York, 2011.
- Kabaji, Egara Stanley. "The construction of gender through the narrative process of the African folktale: A case study of the Maragoli folktale." PhD diss., 2005.
- Kavulavu, Leen. "The History and Culture of Idakho People of Western Kenya during Pre-colonial Period." (2017).
- Kidula, Jean Ngoya. *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*. Indiana University Press, 2013.
- Leedy, P.(1997). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, Englewood, Prentice Hall.
- Lusambili, Kizito Muchanga, and Charles Cheneku Simbe. "Historicizing the Determinants of the Catholic Evangelization in Western Part of Kenya, 1902-1978."
- Miya, Florence Ngale. "Educational content in the performing arts: Tradition and Christianity in Kenya." (2004).
- Mugwima, Benard M., and Deisser Anne-Marie. "Conservation of Natural and Cultural heritage in Kenya." (2018).
- Odhiambo, ES Atieno. "Historicising the Deep Past in Western Kenya ES Atieno Odhiambo." *Historical Studies and Social Change in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor Gideon S. Were* (2002): 29.
- Ouma, Samwel. "Influence of Cultural Practices on Implementation of Development Projects in Shinyalu Sub-county Kakamega, Kenya." PhD diss., University Of Nairobi, 2016.
- Ritchie, Brent W., and Darryl Adair. "Sport tourism: An introduction and overview." *Sport tourism: Interrelationships, impacts and issues* 15, no. 6 (2004): 1-29.
- Sharpes, Donald K. *Sacred bull, holy cow: A cultural study of civilization's most important animal*. Peter Lang, 2006.
- Smith-Akubue, Dorothy Ann Robinson. *Evangelism and western education in western Kenya: Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), 1905-1949*. West Virginia University, 1995.
- Ursinus, W. W., Femke Schepers, E. A. M. Bokkers, M. B. M. Bracke, and H. A. M. Spoolder. "General overview of animal welfare in a global perspective." *Animal Welfare in Global Perspective* 240 (2009): 4-53.
- Wandibba, Simiyu. *History and Culture of Western Kenya: The people of Bungoma District through time*. Gideon S. Were Press, 1990.
- Wanjohi, Kibicho. "Cultural tourism: a trade-off between cultural values and economic values." *Cultural tourism in Africa: strategies for the new millennium* (2002): 77.
- Zali, M. "The interplay of traditional cultural events and cattle farm: humans and animals as victims of maduresse ancient tradition." *Adv. Anim. Vet. Sci* 6, no. 9 (2018): 347-354.
- Zurcher, Louis A., and Arnold Meadow. "On bullfights and baseball: An example of interaction of social institutions." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 8 (1967): 99.