

Research article

The Persistence of Tradition Amid Modernization: A Functionalist Study of Nubian Customs in Egypt

Imam Wicaksono

Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
imamwicaksono@ugm.ac.id

Abstract

This study explores the customs and local traditions of the Nubian tribe in Egypt that have endured despite the pressures of modernization and globalization. The research addresses two key questions: the functions of the Nubian tribe's customs and traditions that remain preserved today and the relationships between the various elements of Nubian customs. This study applies Bronislaw Malinowski's functionalism theory, which asserts that each cultural element functions to fulfill human physiological and psychological needs. Additionally, Talcott Parsons' Social System theory is used to understand how Nubian customs function as an integrated system in which roles and norms establish social order within the community. The findings reveal that enduring Nubian traditions include pregnancy rituals, traditional healing, the prohibition of women riding donkeys, marriage customs, pregnancy invocation rituals, death rites, and crocodile keeping. The holistic relationship among cultural elements is evident in the use of the Nubian language in rituals, oral traditions, and intergenerational communication, which serves to protect Nubian cultural identity from external cultural influences.

Keywords

Egyptian; Functionalism; Malinowski; Nubi Tribe; Parsons

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nubi tribe, an indigenous group of Egypt, is known for its unique cultural and traditional characteristics. However, contemporary geographical maps do not designate a specific location for the Nubi as a distinct geographical entity. Historically, the Nubi people inhabited areas along the Nile, primarily in southern Egypt and northern Sudan (Saleh, 2023). Their ancestral lands were significantly impacted by the construction of the Aswan Dam, which began in 1899, with the first phase completed in 1907 (Bayoumi & Bennafla, 2023). The expansion of the Aswan High Dam in 1929 further displaced the Nubi, and by 1970, the entire tribe had been relocated from their original settlements due to the rising waters of Lake Nasser, which submerged much of their ancestral homeland (Adams, 1977).

This displacement can be compared to other global forced relocations due to large infrastructure projects. A notable example is the Three Gorges Dam in China (Peng et al., 2022; Freer, 2001; Zhu & Li, 2022), which, similar to the Aswan Dam, resulted in the submersion of extensive land and the forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of people. The relocation of the Nubi tribe and their cultural erasure echo broader global phenomena where large-scale developmental projects displace indigenous communities, often leading to the loss of historical and cultural landmarks. In the case of the Nubi people, the Aswan Dam became a symbolic marker, not only of modern development but also of the erasure of the tribe's historical presence in southern Egypt (Saleh, 2023).

Similarly, in other regions of the world, infrastructural advancements such as dams and urbanization often destroy indigenous settlements. In both Egypt and China, these large-scale construction projects have had profound socio-cultural consequences, altering the way of life for native populations and diminishing the visibility of their traditional territories and practices (Elshenawy, 2023; Xi & Hwang, 2011; Morgan & Waretini, 2013).

The lives of the people of southern Egypt, such as the Abu Simbel, Aswan, Sohaj, Qena, and several other surrounding areas, have different social patterns from the lives of Egyptians in the north, such as Alexandria, Dimyat, Cairo, and Giza (Fuller & Lucas, 2021). The lives of the people of northern Egypt are heavily influenced by foreign cultures that have entered their lives, such as clothing styles, the shape and decoration of their homes, the form of events on certain days such as weddings, births, and deaths, to adjustments in diet and treatment patterns (Rampersad, 1999).

The Nubi people, an ethnic group residing in southern Egypt and northern Sudan, have preserved a rich cultural heritage, deeply rooted in the local customs and traditions handed down through generations for over a millennium. The geographical landscape of southern Egypt, characterized by its arid desert expanses and the life-giving Nile River, has shaped the Nubi tribe's way of life. The region's harsh environment and the cyclical flooding of the Nile fostered a reliance on agricultural practices and communal living, which in turn reinforced the importance of local customs and traditions as means of cultural cohesion and survival (Syanawi, 2023).

In this challenging landscape, where the environment often dictated the rhythm of daily life, tradition became not only a means of preserving cultural identity but also a crucial adaptive strategy. The Nubi tribe's customs, including their social structures, rituals, and oral history, ensured the continuity of knowledge and practices that enabled them to thrive in the desert and along the Nile. These practices have been successfully transmitted across generations, from the elderly to the youth, reinforcing a sense of communal responsibility and identity (Gatto, 2006).

In the Nubi's original settlement areas, particularly those located along the Nile in southern Egypt, these traditions were woven into every aspect of life. The landscape, with its Nile-centric agricultural economy, made preserving customs vital for community stability. Every age group within the Nubi tribe, from children to elders, consciously upholds these traditions, understanding their integral role in maintaining not only personal and social identity but also the tribe's connection to its land and history (Rampersad, 1999).

Given that the tribe's traditional practices are intertwined with the land — whether through agricultural rituals, social ceremonies, or the oral transmission of history — the geographical setting and landscape play a critical role in shaping the continued prioritization of these customs. The environmental and historical context thus underscores why traditions are central to the Nubi community: They are not simply cultural artifacts but essential elements of survival, identity, and continuity within a landscape that is both physically and symbolically significant (Ma, 2024).

All aspects of the Nubi tribe's life, starting from birth, child growth, adolescence, adulthood, marriage, birth, family, aging, and death, are all passed by adhering to the local customs and traditions of the Nubi tribe. The Nubi people, in the past, also had a tradition of preserving corpses. Preserving corpses in the Nubi tribe is not much different from preserving corpses in northern Egypt, the only difference is the basic ingredients of the embalming used to preserve the corpses (Lemos et al., 2023). The

older generation of the Nubi tribe and their younger generation successors feel that their lives are full of peace, do not feel lacking, and are always given security because they obey and comply with the local customs and traditions taught by their parents. The Nubi tribe feels that it is sufficient to carry out their daily activities in their area, they do not carry out many activities outside their area (Quintana, 2024).

The Nubi tribe lives in a location far from other tribal settlements. The closest distance to other settlements is 30 km. Most of the Nubi tribe live in the Aswan and Abu Simble areas, both of which are part of the southern Arab Republic of Egypt (Janmyr, 2016). The Nubi tribe's settlement is surrounded by the Nile River which flows from the Aswan dam to the north. The current Nubi tribe settlement is a relocation of their old settlement which is now the Aswan dam. The Aswan Dam was first built in 1902 AD and was expanded twice, namely in 1912 AD and 1933 AD (Goharian et al., 2022). The relocation of the Nubi tribe to a new place did not reduce the Nubi tribe's enthusiasm to maintain and hold tightly to the local customs and traditions of the Nubi tribe. The shape of their houses and villages in the new place resembles the old place and does not follow the layout or design of modern cities as is the case in other areas of Egypt, especially in northern Egypt (Dafalla, 1975).

This literature review examines the rich cultural heritage of the Nubi tribe, highlighting its historical artifacts, settlement patterns, linguistic distinctiveness, and evolving religious practices, thereby establishing the foundation and relevance of this study on the functional and relational aspects of Nubian customs. Research into Nubian temples, trade artifacts, and settlement layouts reveals a society with advanced socio-cultural practices and economic connections, underscoring the significance of women in religious and social domains (Ochala, 2023; Then-Obłuska & Dussubieux, 2023). Studies indicate that while largely limited to the Nile Valley, Nubian trade networks fostered a unique economic landscape, further supporting a cohesive community identity, facilitated by narrow streets and reliance on donkeys as primary transportation (Budka et al., 2023; Kimura, 2018). Additionally, the Nubian language, distinct from Arabic, serves as a vital cultural marker that links the Nubi to other Nilotic groups while reinforcing internal cultural continuity across generations (Starostin, 2020; Jakobi, 2020; Oei, 2018; Abuoaf & Osman, 2022). Furthermore, the tribe's religious landscape has evolved from indigenous beliefs and Christianity to predominantly Sunni Islam, though some pre-Islamic customs persist, reflecting the complex religious development within Nubian society. Collectively, this scholarly perspectives position this study to further investigate Nubian customs' current functions and interconnectedness, particularly as they contribute to the tribe's

resilience against cultural assimilation. By examining these aspects, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of Nubian traditions' roles in meeting communal needs and maintaining cohesion, offering insights into cultural preservation amid modernization pressures.

The relocation of the Nubi tribe initially raised concerns that its people would abandon their customs and traditions. However, the Nubi community has continued to uphold its local customs, remaining committed to cultural practices and lifestyle unchanged by displacement. Despite technological and communication advancements that now permeate Egypt, these innovations have not diminished the Nubi people's adherence to their heritage. This resilience in preserving cultural identity makes the Nubi tribe's legacy a unique and invaluable cultural heritage. Thus, this study is essential for understanding (1) the functions of the Nubi tribe's customs and traditions that have endured over time and (2) the interrelationships among the elements of these traditions. This research holds significant importance for documenting a unique case of cultural resilience and providing insights into how traditional societies maintain their identity amidst modernization. The findings will contribute to the global discourse on cultural preservation, offering a universal perspective on the strategies communities use to sustain their heritage in a rapidly changing world.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach, focusing on in-depth data collection to understand the attitudes, interactions, and events that sustain the Nubian customs and traditions and the interrelations among their cultural elements. The research process involves gathering relevant literature to analyze the dynamics within Nubian culture. Collected data is then analyzed to reveal phenomena and evidence contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the role of customs and traditions in Nubian life and the interconnections among cultural elements. This approach enables the study to present Nubian cultural phenomena as empirical evidence, enriching the research construction and conclusions on cultural resilience amidst social changes.

This research applies the theory of cultural functionalism proposed by Bronislaw Malinowski and Talcott Parsons' theory of social systems. Malinowski posited that culture should be studied holistically, as an "organism" in which each element is interconnected and contributes to maintaining the cultural structure. This perspective emphasizes that any change in one cultural aspect impacts others (Scott, 2022). Malinowski further argued that each cultural element fulfills specific functions that

meet basic human needs, categorized into physiological and psychological (Budisiwi & Kw, 2015). Physiological needs include food, drink, and reproduction, driven by individual biological impulses (Wulan et al., 2016). Psychological needs, on the other hand, such as security and happiness, emerge from social interactions and are influenced by social contexts like family and community settings (Rohinsa, 2023).

From the functionalist viewpoint, culture holds practical value for the community that practices it, thus encouraging its preservation. Malinowski emphasized that all cultural aspects, including myths and religion, serve specific functions. For instance, myths are more than mere stories; they are regarded as "energy facts" that carry moral significance, maintain social order, and provide practical guidance in daily life. In primitive cultures, myths fulfill essential physiological needs that support cultural continuity (Malinowski, 1948). Beyond myths, Malinowski viewed religion as a stabilizing psychological force for society, aiding individuals in facing future uncertainties. Through religious rituals, psychological needs such as security and peace are met (Cassaniti & Chladek, 2022). Malinowski distinguished between routine activities, which lack special significance, and rituals, which carry deeper meanings and psychological impacts on individuals within society (Margócsy, 2022).

In addition to Malinowski's functionalism, this study applies Talcott Parsons' social systems theory to examine the relationships among cultural elements and their roles in maintaining social order. Parsons viewed society as an integrated system, in which each cultural element and individual role creates a balance that upholds social structure (Parsons, 1991). This system includes four primary functions, AGIL (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency), which involve adapting to the environment, achieving goals, integrating community components, and maintaining social values and norms. In the context of the Nubian community, Parsons' theory helps explain how customs and traditions, through roles and norms, create stable social order and support cultural identity preservation amid modernization challenges. By combining the theories of functionalism and social systems, this research provides a deeper understanding of how local customs and traditions not only fulfill basic needs but also establish a social structure that enables the Nubian community to preserve its culture in the face of change.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings, revealing various Nubian traditions that have persisted amid modernization and globalization. These findings illustrate how

the Nubian community preserves customs and traditions that form a vital part of their cultural identity through practices that reflect the functions of culture in daily life. These enduring traditions include life-cycle events such as pregnancy rituals, traditional healing, prohibitions against women riding donkeys, marriage, pregnancy petitions, and death rituals. Additionally, unique symbolic elements, such as keeping crocodiles, play a role in cultural preservation. The study further reveals the holistic interconnectedness of Nubian cultural elements, as seen in using the Nubian language in rituals, oral traditions, and intergenerational communication. This linguistic preservation not only reinforces their cultural identity but also serves as a defense mechanism against external influences.

3.1. Meeting Psychological Needs

Human psychological needs indicate that humans, as social beings, require security, comfort, and recognition from their environment (Anas, 2023). The appreciation received by individuals from their social interactions fosters inner peace by fulfilling psychological needs (Astuti & Purnama Sari, 2023). Satisfying these psychological needs is essential for individual growth and mental well-being, influenced by one's interaction with the social context. Conversely, unmet psychological needs can lead to serious mental health issues (Rohinsa, 2023).

A. Marriage Traditions

The Nubian community is known for its insularity, partly due to a local tradition of endogamous marriages. One of the most prominent customs in Nubian society is marriage within the community, particularly between cousins within the same extended family (Ahmed, 2018). Nubian marriages between cousins are conducted in two ways. The first method involves a vow taken by the parents at the birth of their children, wherein a father vows that his newborn daughter will marry her male cousin. In the second method, if a young woman wishes to marry, her father must seek permission from his siblings, prioritizing marriage within the paternal or maternal family, even if the male cousin is not particularly inclined toward the union (Dafalla, 1975). This custom reflects a commitment to maintaining kinship ties and protecting the Nubian community from cultural assimilation. Thus, this practice strengthens social cohesion and prevents cultural mixing that could erode Nubian identity.

If a Nubian woman desires to marry but no suitable Nubian man is available, she may delay marriage until she finds a Nubian partner. The Nubian people consider it preferable to wait for a Nubian suitor rather than marry someone from outside the community (Ali, 2010). Nubian marriage traditions follow a detailed, multi-stage process. To simplify, these stages are divided into three. The first stage includes exchanging gifts and bridal dowry from the groom's family to the bride's family, consisting of essentials for the couple's future life together. This process also includes family introductions. The next stage is the tradition of applying henna on the bride's hands, which is concluded with exchanging wedding rings. The second stage is the wedding ceremony, which involves communal prayers and recitations. Family members and residents attend the prayer gathering. This is followed by the formal wedding ceremony, which typically occurs in the evening. The final stage is the wedding celebration, which starts the morning after the official ceremony and is planned by the bride and groom to continue for up to seven days (Khalil, 2020). The marriage tradition serves a purpose beyond uniting individuals; it is pivotal in sustaining kinship ties and ensuring social continuity within the Nubian community.

B. Pregnancy Petition Tradition

Certain customs are observed for Nubian women who wish to conceive. One practice involves visiting respected elders for prayers and advice, as the prayers of these elders are believed to hold power in fulfilling desires. Another custom requires crossing the Nile River and bathing at its clean, southern banks, where the waters remain untainted by industrial or agricultural pollutants (Rampersad, 1999). These practices reflect the Nubian community's attempts to fulfill psychological and spiritual needs related to family aspirations for children. Visiting elders and performing the Nile River ritual offer inner peace and spiritual support, which are believed to enhance the chances of pregnancy. This practice exemplifies how the Nubian people integrate local beliefs and spiritual values to achieve family happiness and well-being.

C. Death and Mourning Rituals

When a Nubian dies, the community has a specific burial tradition led by the village youth. Once the death is confirmed, young men proceed to the cemetery to dig the grave and prepare for the funeral. They undertake these tasks without compensation. Meanwhile, Nubian women prepare the prayer hall in the village center, cleaning and setting out carpets for the prayer and farewell rites. Following

the prayers, Nubian women express their grief with ceremonial cries as the deceased is taken to the burial site (Dafalla, 1975). This practice aims to bring peace to the grieving family by providing a final honor to the deceased.

Another distinctive mourning custom pertains specifically to Nubian women. When a Nubian man passes, his wife must adhere to specific prohibitions, including refraining from using mirrors, leaving the house, or adorning herself (Dafalla, 1975). These prohibitions serve to protect the dignity of Nubian women after their husband's death. The Nubian burial and mourning practices, including young men's contributions and specific prohibitions for widows, illustrate communal solidarity in supporting grieving families. The restrictions for widows reflect the Nubian community's high regard for the role and dignity of women.

D. Crocodile-Keeping Tradition

Among the western Nubians, a unique tradition involves keeping live crocodiles in their homes. These crocodiles, regarded as protectors, bring peace to households, as Nubians believe they safeguard their homes (Ahmed, 2018). Nubians have a unique relationship with these crocodiles, including sharing the Nile with them, and no Nubians swimming in the river are reportedly attacked. In contrast, Nile crocodiles are hunted in the northern and central Nile regions of Egypt for their skins, but the Nubians, viewing crocodiles as guardians of the river, refrain from hunting them (Adams, 1977). This practice reflects the Nubian community's respect for nature and belief that crocodiles symbolize prosperity and serve as protectors of the Nile, the source of Nubian life. When a crocodile dies, it is preserved as a household ornament, symbolizing the community's enduring respect (Ahmed, 2018).

For the Nubian people, the crocodile is a sacred animal, revered as a guardian of the Nile. To them, the crocodile possesses unique powers, and instances of infidelity among married Nubian women, if discovered, involve a severe penalty: the woman's body is offered to the crocodile (Adams, 1977). The crocodile-keeping tradition is noteworthy for its symbolic significance; it represents the Nubians' harmony with their environment and commitment to protecting nature. The custom of keeping crocodiles also highlights Nubian cultural beliefs emphasizing ecological balance and respect for natural symbols associated with blessings.

3.2. Meeting Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are the most basic and dominant human requirements, characterized by their biological and physical nature (Muazaroh & Siti, 2019). Here the tradition of Nubians mostly on the bodily objectives, ranging from preventive to curative.

A. Traditional Healing Practices

Traditional healing practices, such as hot sand burial and "kay" (branding), exemplify how Nubians fulfill physiological needs related to health. These practices, integral to Nubian culture, draw attention even from outside communities. They preserve Nubian identity by maintaining traditional healing methods despite advancements in modern medicine. Specific traditional healing practices are detailed as follows:

Firstly, hot sand burial treatment. The Nubian practice of hot sand burial has gained worldwide recognition. It is not exclusive to the Nubians; patients from all over Egypt and various parts of the world seek this treatment. Primarily used for rheumatism, joint pain, and improving blood circulation, the hot sand burial therapy has become a hallmark of Nubian cultural identity (Ahmed, 2018).

Secondly, Kay treatment, where "Kay" is a treatment involving the application of heated metal to the patient's skin, based on the belief that fire possesses healing properties that drive away illness through its heat. This ancient technique, rooted in traditional healing texts, is believed to alleviate spinal inflammation, neurological diseases, and joint ailments (Ali, 2010).

B. Prohibition on Women Riding Donkeys

Donkeys are a primary means of transportation among the Nubians (Adams, 1977). Nubian custom prohibits women from riding donkeys, as this activity is believed to affect women's physical structure negatively. The Nubians view riding with legs straddled widely as potentially harmful to the lower body. Riding and load-bearing by donkeys are traditionally male responsibilities, as the donkeys often carry heavy items. This prohibition also prevents women from engaging in physically strenuous tasks associated with donkey transport. Culturally, Nubian women are closely guarded and restricted in movement; they generally only leave home with a clear purpose or male accompaniment (Adams, 1977). This prohibition highlights the Nubians' awareness of physical well-being and underscores the importance of honoring and protecting women's social status.

This practice reflects the Nubian approach to gender roles, aligning with deeply respected cultural values.

C. Pregnancy-Related Traditions

When a Nubian woman becomes pregnant, specific protective customs must be followed. It is believed that an owl flying overhead or landing above a pregnant woman's head could lead to a miscarriage. To counteract this, Nubian women traditionally secure a metal needle or pin facing upward in their hair to repel such supernatural threats (Dafalla, 1975). This practice showcases the Nubians' belief in shielding expectant mothers and their unborn children from perceived supernatural dangers. Such beliefs emphasize the value placed on protecting future generations and coping with pregnancy-related anxieties through culturally rooted protective practices.

3.3. Manifest and Latent Functions

From the various local customs and cultures of the Nubi tribe above, which are analyzed from the perspective of cultural practices and customs that have real (explicitly known) and latent (implicit or unintended) functions, the results of the analysis can be presented with the aim of understanding how they contribute to individual and social stability.

The manifest functions of the Nubi traditions serve immediate, recognized purposes for social cohesion, health, and emotional well-being within the tribe. The Nubian practice of endogamous (within-group) marriage, especially between cousins, functions manifestly to preserve social unity, reinforce family bonds, and maintain cultural continuity. By prioritizing marriages within the community, the Nubi tribe strengthens family ties and ensures the cohesion of cultural practices across generations (Ahmed, 2018). Additionally, the marriage tradition, which involves multiple ceremonial stages such as dowry exchange, blessings, and celebrations, fulfills psychological needs for security, identity, and acceptance within the community.

Furthermore, the tradition of avoiding owls and using metal needles or pins during pregnancy reflects the Nubi tribe's belief in protective measures for expectant mothers. This practice serves a manifest function by aiming to secure the health of mother and child through tangible actions that provide psychological comfort and safety, which reinforces communal values around family care (Dafalla, 1975).

Besides, daily traditional medical practices, such as kay (using hot iron) and hot sand burial, also serve as manifest functions for addressing physical ailments like joint pain and rheumatism. These methods align with the tribe's understanding of healing and play a critical role in promoting health and resilience within the community by addressing common physical issues with culturally accepted solutions (Ahmed, 2018).

Meanwhile, the latent functions of Nubi traditions are not explicitly recognized by community members, these hidden or unintentional effects contribute to broader social stability and cultural resilience, such as marriage customs and prohibitions against marrying outsiders that serve a latent function by creating a shared sense of identity distinguishing the Nubi people from surrounding groups. This exclusivity helps preserve cultural uniqueness, reinforcing collective identity and fostering an environment where social norms and values are passed down to future generations, even if the tribe members may not consciously view this as the purpose of endogamy (Khalil, 2020).

Besides, practices like keeping crocodiles as guardians reflect latent cultural beliefs as it shows a symbolic preservation of sacred beliefs. Though the manifest purpose is protection, the latent function lies in reinforcing the Nubi's worldview that the Nile River is sacred and requires protection. This belief discourages the exploitation of natural resources (e.g., hunting crocodiles) and promotes environmental preservation, which supports the tribe's long-term survival by maintaining the Nile's health, a vital lifeline for their sustenance (Ahmed, 2018).

Finally, customs restricting women's movements (such as the prohibition on riding donkeys) manifestly aims to protect women's health and honor. Latently, however, these customs reinforce gender roles and control over women's physical space and activities, ensuring male authority in social affairs. These practices help preserve traditional family structures and social order within the tribe, strengthening continuity and cultural stability (Ali, 2010). In alignment with Malinowski's functionalism, the Nubi tribe's cultural practices fulfill manifest and latent needs essential to maintaining its members' social structure and psychological well-being. While manifest functions provide clear, immediate benefits—such as health, social integration, and protection—latent functions subtly reinforce cultural resilience, environmental respect, and social cohesion, all of which sustain the tribe's way of life. Through these practices, the Nubi tribe perpetuates its identity, honors its heritage, and adapts to societal changes while preserving its cultural integrity.

3.4. Cultural Holism in Nubian Traditions

Each element of human culture is interlinked and related to the larger social system. From a functionalist perspective, each cultural or social institution serves specific functions contributing to societal stability and balance. The Nubian culture, seen as a cohesive system, operates through its interdependent elements to maintain social harmony. The findings below illustrate how elements of Nubian culture influence each other:

First, the Nubian language. Nubian is a unique language used exclusively for communication among the Nubian people, with outsiders generally unable to understand it. This exclusivity fosters close kinship bonds within the community, as the Nubians feel comfortable communicating privately within their group. The continued use of the Nubian language reinforces Nubian cultural preservation through oral traditions, religious rituals, and intergenerational communication. Language acts as a cultural safeguard, deterring foreign customs and traditions from penetrating Nubian society, especially in southern Egypt, where direct interaction with outsiders is limited. This restricted communication scope has allowed Nubian culture to endure across generations, strengthening collective identity and reducing openness to outsiders (Ahmed, 2018).

Secondly, the limited use of modern technology is a notable feature of Nubian society. Although modern communication technologies are available, the Nubians in southern Egypt prefer interacting and socializing through non-technological means. This preference does not reflect a lack of access but rather a deliberate choice for interpersonal communication without over-reliance on technology. This non-digital social lifestyle promotes a manual communication model, reinforcing the daily use of the Nubian language. As a community, the Nubians have sustained themselves without extensive reliance on external societies, finding contentment within their close-knit network. This insular social structure explains why many Nubians abstain from using television, radio, gadgets, or other communication tools to connect with the world outside their community.

In summary, the Nubians' limited interaction and communication reach contribute to their lack of exposure to external cultural influences. Consequently, Nubian customs and traditions have been preserved effectively from one generation to the next, reinforcing a resilient cultural identity and limiting external encroachment.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the traditional customs of the Nubian community have persisted to the present day, serving essential functions in meeting the community's physiological and psychological needs. Practices that fulfill physiological needs include pregnancy-related rituals, traditional healing methods, and restrictions on women riding donkeys. Meanwhile, customs that address psychological needs include marriage traditions, pregnancy requests, death rituals, and crocodile rearing. These findings indicate that Nubian cultural practices play a substantial role in maintaining a balance between the physical and emotional well-being of the community. The contribution of this study lies in reinforcing cultural functionalism theory, particularly within the context of the Nubians, by underscoring the significant, interrelated roles that each cultural element plays in a holistic system. Using the Nubian language in rituals and oral traditions supports Malinowski's concept of interconnected cultural elements, adding value to cultural anthropology by providing a specific example of a minority culture that has maintained its existence despite modernization pressures. This research is limited by its focus on Nubian traditions in specific areas of Egypt, without a longitudinal study or comparative analysis with other local cultures in the region. Future studies could adopt a cross-cultural approach to explore how other traditions in Egypt or North Africa interact with and adapt to modernization. Additionally, in-depth research on the impact of modern technology and communication on Nubian traditions could be an important focus for future research.

STATEMENT

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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