

RECLAIMING MUSIC AS A COMMUNICATIVE INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study delves into the power of music as a potent instrument of social change in the Nigerian context. Through an exploration of its role, potential, and challenges, this research aims to shed light on how music can be harnessed to catalyse positive societal transformations. This study is grounded in the Evolution Theory which provides a framework for understanding how society and culture pass or evolve through the same biological growth process postulated by Charles Darwin. Employing a qualitative research approach, this study conducted in-depth interviews encompassing a diverse range of participants, including communication experts, religious leaders, music artists, postgraduate students, National Orientation Agency (NOA) staff, and parents. The study sampled 25 participants. The methodological framework employed for data analysis was thematic analysis, allowing for the extraction of rich insights and patterns from the gathered information. The study reveals that music in Nigerian society plays a different role, serving as a means of cultural expression and identity. It has substantial potential as a catalyst for social change, capable of conveying messages, raising awareness, and inspiring action. However, barriers such as limited resources, commercial interests, and cultural sensitivities hinder its effective use. The authors concluded that music holds a significant and influential role in Nigerian society as a catalyst for social change and the immense potential of music to drive positive transformations within the country. The authors recommend, investment in music education and infrastructure, support for socially conscious music initiatives, promotion of collaboration and partnerships within the music industry and incentives for socially relevant music.

Keywords: Music Communication, Social Change, Nigeria, Catalyst, Barriers

Introduction

Music as a universal language, holds the power to transcend borders, cultures, and ideologies. Throughout history, societies around the world have harnessed the potency of music to inspire change, ignite revolutions, and shape narratives.

From the American Civil Rights Movement's anthems to South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle's rhythms, music has consistently served as an instrument of social transformation (McLeod, 2013). In the African context, where music is

deeply intertwined with the continent's rich cultural tapestry, its role as a catalyst for societal change is particularly pronounced (Anyanwu, 2019). Nigeria, with its diverse and dynamic music landscape, stands as a compelling case study for exploring the potential of music communication in driving social change.

Around the world, music has played a pivotal role in driving social change. In the United States, during the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was accompanied by iconic songs like "We Shall Overcome" and "Blowin' in the Wind," which rallied the masses and amplified the calls for equality and justice (Duncombe, 2017). Similarly, in Latin America, the Nueva Canción movement used folk music to address issues of poverty, oppression, and human rights violations (Stokes, 2014). In South Africa, artists like Sjava and Thandiswa Mazwai have used their music to address gender-based violence and advocate for women's rights (Gqirana, 2021). Similarly, the Nigerian musician Burna Boy, through his music, has addressed issues of corruption and inequality, resonating with a global audience (Akan, 2020). The iconic song "Free Nelson Mandela" by The Specials became an anthem that resonated across continents, demanding the release of the imprisoned leader (Owomoyela, 2022).

Across the African continent, music has consistently served as a means of expression, communication, and social cohesion. In Senegal, traditional Griot musicians have historically used their melodies to convey oral history and cultural values (Ndiaye, 2020). Fela Kuti, the Nigerian Afrobeat pioneer, used his music as a weapon against corruption and oppression, addressing issues such as government misconduct and societal inequalities (Moore, 2017).

Political activism has been a recurrent theme in African music. In Zimbabwe, a nation that has experienced significant political upheaval, the artist Jah Prayzah released "Kutonga Kwaro" (2018). This song became a rallying cry during the 2018 elections, urging citizens to participate in the democratic process and be agents of change. Through his music, Jah Prayzah addressed issues of governance, democracy, and citizen engagement, highlighting the enduring role of music as a tool for political change and accountability (Marimo, 2021).

Within Nigeria, a nation renowned for its cultural diversity and artistic vibrancy, music holds a revered position. From the rhythms of Juju and

Highlife to the contemporary sounds of Afrobeats, music is deeply embedded in the social fabric (Adegbola & Olofinjana, 2015). Different states within Nigeria have contributed unique musical genres and styles, showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage.

In Lagos, the commercial hub of Nigeria, the vibrant music scene has given birth to globally acclaimed artists such as Wizkid and Burna Boy. Their music not only entertains but also serves as a platform for addressing societal issues and advocating for change (Adegbola, 2019). In the Niger Delta region, where environmental concerns are prominent, artists like Timi Dakolo have used their music to draw attention to the plight of their communities (Ekowenrenren, 2020).

In northern Nigeria, where religious and cultural diversity are prominent, musicians like Bala Usher have combined traditional rhythms with contemporary messages to promote tolerance and unity (Olorunyomi, 2018). The Kano State-based musician's fusion of Hausa and English lyrics has the potential to bridge cultural divides and contribute to social harmony.

As Nigeria navigates its complex socio-political landscape, music communication emerges as a potent tool for shaping narratives, challenging norms, and promoting positive change. However, contemporary challenges and barriers hinder the effective utilization of music for social change. This study aims to explore the transformative power of music communication in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

This study's broad objective is to assess Reclaiming Music as a Communicative Instrument of Social Change in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. To examine the role of music in Nigerian society and its potential as a catalyst for social change.
2. To identify the challenges that hinder the effective use of music for social change in Nigeria.
3. To explore successful examples of music communication initiatives in Nigeria and their impact on society.

Conceptual Clarification

Music

Music as a universal and timeless form of human

expression, holds a unique position as a powerful communicative medium that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries (Cross, 2021; Gabrielsson, 2020). It has the remarkable ability to convey emotions, thoughts, and messages without relying solely on verbal language, making it a potent tool for communication (Juslin & Sloboda, 2020). One of the most compelling aspects of music's communicative power lies in its ability to evoke and convey emotions. Through melodic contours, harmonies, rhythms, and timbres, music has the capacity to evoke a wide range of emotional responses in listeners (Juslin & Sloboda, 2020). Melodies can express joy, sorrow, excitement, and tranquility, connecting listeners to the emotional essence of a piece (Cross, 2021). This emotional resonance enables music to serve as a channel through which individuals can articulate and communicate their inner feelings, even when words may fall short.

Music has a long history of fostering social bonds and interaction within communities (Savage, 2015). From communal rituals to celebratory events, music often serves as a catalyst for shared experiences and a means of bringing people together. Group singing, dancing, and musical performances provide avenues for collective expression, enabling individuals to connect with one another on a deeper level (Turner & Behringer, 2019). Additionally, musical genres can reflect the social identities and values of specific groups, contributing to a sense of belonging and shared identity (DeNora, 2020).

Social Change

Social change refers to the process of transformation in societal structures, norms, values, behaviours, and institutions over time (McIntosh, 2016 & McLeod, 2018). It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that reflects shifts in various aspects of a society, often driven by factors such as technological advancements, cultural interactions, political movements, and economic developments (Denton & White, 2019). Social change encompasses several dimensions that collectively shape the evolution of a society. These dimensions include economic change, political change, cultural change, and structural change (Cohn, 2016). Economic changes can involve shifts in production methods, employment patterns, and wealth distribution. Political changes may manifest as shifts in governance systems, power dynamics, and policies. Cultural changes

entail alterations in beliefs, values, norms, and lifestyles. Structural changes refer to modifications in the organization of social institutions and relationships.

Social change is often catalysed by various drivers, including technological innovation, globalization, social movements, and demographic shifts (Macionis & Plummer, 2018). Technological advancements, such as the internet and communication technologies, can lead to rapid changes in how people interact and access information. Globalization facilitates the exchange of ideas, cultures, and goods across borders, influencing local practices and beliefs. Social movements, like civil rights or environmental activism, can challenge existing norms and advocate for transformative change. Demographic shifts, including changes in population age and composition, can impact social structures and create new societal dynamics.

Literature Review

Role of Music in Nigerian Society and Its Potential for Social Change

In the study by Soola (2020), the focus was on the role of music as a tool for community mobilization in Lagos, Nigeria. This was explored through ethnographic observations and interviews, specifically examining the impact of "One Mic" open-mic sessions on societal engagement. The findings suggested that these sessions offer a platform for both established and emerging artists to discuss pressing issues and foster dialogues about social change. A potential limitation of this study is the researcher's presence during ethnographic observations, which might have influenced the behaviour and responses of participants.

The research by Ogunbameru (2019) aimed at understanding the contribution of Nigerian music to national identity. By conducting surveys and interviews across different ethnic groups in Nigeria, the study sought to determine how music influences the perception of national identity. It was found that music significantly unites diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, fostering a shared sense of identity and pride. Nevertheless, the study did not address whether this influence extends to political unity. A limitation might be the sample's representativeness, as perceptions of national identity can vary widely across regions and demographics in Nigeria. Additionally, the study did not explore the complex relationship between cultural identity and political unity.

In the research conducted by Adekunle (2020), the primary aim was to explore the global influence of Afrobeats, a music genre originating from Nigeria. The study, employing a thorough data analysis approach, discovered that Afrobeats has profoundly impacted global music trends, with Nigerian artists like Burna Boy and Wizkid attaining international fame. This genre has played a crucial role in promoting cultural exchange and unity worldwide, the study mainly concentrated on the genre's international acclaim, and less on its specific impact within Nigeria. A noted limitation is the potential bias towards quantitative analysis, which might have led to an oversight of qualitative aspects of Afrobeats' influence in Nigeria. Moreover, the study left questions about the genre's local impact, particularly on upcoming artists and the Nigerian music scene, largely unexplored.

Another study, Okonkwo (2021) focused on themes of social justice, political accountability, and gender equality in contemporary Nigerian music. Through content analysis of song lyrics and interviews with artists, it identified the prevalence of socially conscious themes. The study found that artists like Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage often incorporate such themes in their music, serving as a form of social commentary. It concluded that music continues to be a potent medium for addressing pressing social issues in Nigeria, allowing artists to voice their concerns and advocate for change. However, the study did not delve into the impact of this socially conscious music on public awareness, attitudes, and activism. The current study aims to address this gap by examining how socially conscious music shapes public perceptions, influences social discourse, and drives tangible social change within Nigerian society. It will provide a comprehensive.

Research by Ajayi (2022) delved into the influence of music in advocating for environmental concerns in the Niger Delta region. This exploration involved conducting interviews and analyzing song content from artists like Timaya to understand how music acts as a medium for highlighting issues of environmental degradation and social justice. The study established that music effectively brings attention to environmental and social justice issues in the Niger Delta. However, Ajayi's study stopped short of investigating the impact of music advocacy on local communities and environmental policies. The forthcoming study aims to build upon this by

examining the effects of music-driven environmental advocacy on policy formulation, community involvement, and efforts towards environmental protection in the Niger Delta, thus offering an extensive perspective on the role of music in fostering positive environmental change.

Barriers and Challenges in Utilizing Music for Social Change in Nigeria

A study conducted by Oloko (2015) on music, censorship, and the crisis of artistic freedom in Nigeria. Through interviews with musicians, industry stakeholders, and policymakers, the research shed light on the challenges artists face in expressing their social change messages freely. The study revealed that censorship, often driven by political interests, curtails artists' ability to address sensitive issues, hindering their capacity to drive social change through music. The study has selection bias in interviews, as some artists may be reluctant to openly discuss sensitive topics due to fear of repercussions. Additionally, the research primarily examined challenges but did not explore potential strategies or solutions for overcoming censorship.

A study by Akpan (2017) delved into the role of music in societal change, addressing both its potential and limitations. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research engaged musicians, scholars, and audiences to explore the dynamics of music communication. The study revealed the financial challenges musicians face in producing and promoting socially conscious music, thereby inhibiting their capacity to effect meaningful change. A limitation observed is the representativeness of the sample, as musicians interviewed may not fully represent the diverse range of challenges faced by artists in Nigeria. Additionally, the research highlighted financial challenges but did not delve into potential mechanisms to alleviate these constraints.

A study by Ekwueme (2020) examined the challenges faced by Nigerian musicians in creating socially conscious music. Through qualitative interviews with musicians, the research highlighted financial constraints as a significant barrier. Ekwueme (2020) demonstrated that the commercialization of the music industry often prioritizes profit over socially conscious messages, leading to a reluctance among artists to produce content that may not generate substantial revenue. One limitation is that the research did not fully capture the diverse range of challenges artists

encounter, as other factors beyond finances can also impact their ability to produce socially conscious content.

In a similar vein, Olasupo (2019) explored the obstacles that Nigerian musicians encounter in advocating for social change. Drawing on interviews and content analysis, the research revealed that artists often face resistance from political and religious institutions when their music challenges existing power structures or societal norms. The study failed to explore the range of external pressures and internal dynamics that artists navigate. Additionally, the study highlighted challenges but did not delve into potential strategies for effectively navigating these pressures.

Additionally, a study by Ogbonna (2018) investigated the role of music in addressing gender inequality in Nigeria. Through qualitative interviews and content analysis, the research revealed that while music has the potential to challenge gender stereotypes, it often perpetuates harmful narratives due to market demands and societal expectations. One limitation of the research is that it failed to capture the complexities and nuances of the music industry's impact on gender dynamics. Additionally, potential selection biases in artist interviews could be a limitation.

Successful Communication Initiatives and Their Impact

In a Research by Akanbi (2020) who focused on the "Felabration" music festival, an annual event celebrating the legacy of Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Through interviews and observations, the research highlighted how Felabration serves as a space for raising awareness about social and political issues, as well as for engaging audiences in discussions about cultural heritage and activism. However, it did not explore potential negative or unintended consequences of the festival. Additionally, the study did not assess the festival's long-term effects on societal change.

Furthermore, the study by Olalekan and Akinlolu (2017) explored the impact of the "Vote Not Fight" campaign, which employed music as a tool for promoting peaceful elections in Nigeria. Through content analysis and interviews, the research revealed that the campaign effectively used music to convey messages of nonviolence and civic participation, resonating with diverse audiences across the country. While it highlighted the campaign's success in conveying messages of

nonviolence, it did not thoroughly examine potential challenges faced during its implementation. Additionally, the research did not assess the campaign's impact on electoral outcomes.

A study by Wächter and Lohr (2018) focused on the Live Aid concerts, which aimed to raise funds and awareness for famine relief in Africa. Through content analysis and interviews, the research demonstrated how the concerts utilized music to generate a sense of global solidarity and mobilize audiences to contribute to humanitarian causes. The study insights into the positive aspects of the concerts but did not explore potential criticisms or controversies associated with the initiative. Additionally, the research did not assess the long-term effects of the concerts on famine relief efforts.

In another study, Baker and Bordes-Edwards (2017) examined the "Playing for Change" initiative, which aimed to use music as a tool for social transformation in various global communities. Employing qualitative interviews and ethnographic observations, the research showcased how the initiative harnessed music's universal language to connect musicians from diverse backgrounds, fostering cultural exchange and raising awareness about social issues. However, it did not delve into potential challenges or limitations encountered by the initiative in connecting musicians from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the study did not assess the long-term sustainability of the initiative's impact on social transformation.

Furthermore, a study by Frischhut and Payrhuber (2021) explored the impact of the "Music for Development" project in various African countries. The initiative utilized music education and collaboration as tools for community empowerment and social change. The research revealed that the project facilitated cross-cultural interactions, skill development, and the promotion of positive social values. However, it did not delve into potential challenges or limitations encountered by the initiative in connecting musicians from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the study did not assess the long-term sustainability of the initiative's impact on social transformation, which could be a limitation.

Theoretical Framework

In giving a theoretical foundation to this study, we adopted the most relevant of the social change

theories known as the evolutionary theory which has as its godfather Charles Darwin, the man behind the theory of biological evolution. The immediate and unexpected impact of this theory is that it caused the society and culture to be seen as passing through the same biological growth process postulated by Darwin (Adenuga, 2018 and Oludele, 2020).

With evolution theory, nothing still remains permanent. Growth and change have become natural, propelling the human society in an ever-changing process (Naik and Parray, 2022, p.16359) that has resulted in growth, decay, renewal and self-adjustment “to new-found ideas, inventions and ways of living.” This analogy fits the dynamic nature of music because, being a non-materialistic part of culture, according to Adenuga (2018), it is assumed that the metamorphoses of the society is not without the rejuvenation of its culture. This connotes that since music grows with culture, it develops alongside the society.

The evolutionary proposition concerning the transformative power of music demonstrates what Oludele (2020, p.68-69) calls a linear conception which emphasizes the fact that every society grows or progresses from a simple to complex stage in line with the manner social evolution occurred in the Western society. Evolution implies growth and change, which in turn represent life. Music is a dependent evolutionary variable. It grows with the society and changes with times and seasons. At every stage of the society, the language of music changes. It communicates differently based on the inherent message derived from the changing patterns of the society.

The evolutionary origin of music, state Savage, Loui, Tarr, et al (2021) are unmistakably rooted in communicative functions, that is, music mysteriously transmits messages to its choice audience with clear understanding. Example is the use of African talking drums to send messages and elicit responses from across African villages, and such effect-generating messages include all manner of information, both political and emotional, according to Carrington (1971).

As the society evolves in growth, the mode and approach to such communicative strategy also transforms to a more complex level. Izen, Cassano and Piazza (2023) are of the opinion that communication has undergone certain strategic evolution in the same manner biological beings do, from the real of spoken word or speech, to music,

which comes with an exceptional ability to pull people together “and transmit a rich tapestry of emotions...”

Some scholars believe that music has over time “co-evolved with human social behavior (Rabinowitch, 2020, p.4). This evolution has enabled music to develop certain “effective emotional form of communication and coordination, and thus assumed a central role in social interaction.” This scholar's analysis shows that music's emotional growth deeply embeds it “in human social behaviour, and as such may have a significant impact on how we interact with each other.” This demonstrates how the Darwinian theory of evolution explains the transformative growth of music.

Certain criticisms have however followed evolutionary theory, mainly based on its ethnocentric conception, that of using the Western societies as its standard of examples. Oludele (2020, p.68-69) also located the fact it is not possible to agree wholly that evolution, despite its foundation in change and growth, represents progress.

Research Methodology

This is qualitative research which employed in-depth interview to investigate the pivotal role of music communication in driving social change within Nigeria. The population of interest encompasses individuals actively involved in music communication and social change endeavours within the Nigerian context. A purposive sampling technique was employed to meticulously select participants who possess pertinent knowledge and experiences directly related to the study's focus. This method ensures that the sample represents a diverse cross-section of stakeholders, including communication experts, religious leaders, music artists, postgraduate students, National Orientation Agency (NOA) staff, and parents.

To ensure the depth and breadth of insights gathered, the study's sample size was set to include a minimum of 25 participants, with a target of at least 4 individuals from each stakeholder group. The primary data collection method for this study is semi-structured interviews. These interviews are chosen for their capacity to facilitate rich, in-depth conversations with participants, allowing them to candidly share their viewpoints, experiences, and challenges related to the intersection of music communication and social change in the Nigerian

context. The open-ended nature of the interviews grants participants the freedom to elaborate on their responses, encouraging a profound exploration of their perspectives.

The collected interview data underwent a systematic thematic analysis. This analytical approach involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and nuanced meanings within the interview transcripts. The thematic analysis process encompassed several stages, including data familiarization, the generation of initial codes, the identification of prominent themes, the review and refinement of these themes, the definitive naming of themes, and the synthesis of findings into a comprehensive final report. Thematic analysis ensured a rigorous and systematic exploration of participants' narratives, culminating in a nuanced and insightful interpretation of their viewpoints.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Demographics of Respondents

In adherence to ethical principles that emphasize the confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees (Morris, 2015), the identity of the participants is safeguarded in the analysis through the use of code names. Code names are also attributed to their respective media platforms to ensure anonymity. All interviewees in this study are male. Thus, each participant is denoted as Stakeholders (P) followed by a numerical identifier ranging from 1 to 25.

The following is a summarized representation of the interviewees and their corresponding details, as presented in Table 4.1:

S/N	Name	Code Name	Gender	Position	Interview Date	Interview Duration	Interview Medium
1	Olusola Mathew	P1	Male	Communication Expert	19/09/23	25 minutes	Telephone
2	Mr. Gad Godfrey A.K.A (Gad)	P2	Male	Music Artist	19/09/23	20 minutes	WhatsApp
3	Stephen Olabisi	P3	Male	Pastor	20/09/23	30 minutes	Telephone
4	Mr. Ibrahim Iliya A.K.A (IBI)	P4	Male	Music Artist	20/09/23	20 minutes	WhatsApp
5	Mrs. Amina Usman	P5	Female	Parent	21/09/23	25 minutes	Telephone
6	Mr. Yusuf Adamu	P6	Male	Communication Expert	21/09/23	20 minutes	WhatsApp
7	Miss Amina Abdullahi	P7	Female	Postgraduate Student	22/09/23	25 minutes	Telephone
8	Pastor Samuel Eze	P8	Male	Religious Leader	22/09/23	20 minutes	WhatsApp
9	Mrs. Chioma Okoro	P9	Female	Parent	23/09/23	30 minutes	Telephone

10	Alfred Madaki A.K.A (Fredy Bounce)	P10	Male	Music Artist	23/09/23	40 minutes	WhatsApp
11	Mrs. Fatima Mohammed	P11	Female	Parent	24/09/23	35 minutes	Telephone
12	Mr. Marvellous Eteng (Marv Dance)	P12	Male	Music Artist	24/09/23	30 minutes	WhatsApp
13	Dr. Bisi Olatunji	P13	Male	Communication Expert	25/09/23	25 minutes	Telephone
14	Miss Funke Adeleke	P14	Female	Postgraduate Student	25/09/23	30 minutes	WhatsApp
15	Pastor Isaac Obi	P15	Male	Religious Leader	26/09/23	30 minutes	Telephone
16	Mr. Ayo Adegoke	P16	Male	Music Artist	26/09/23	30 minutes	WhatsApp
17	Miss Nkechi Okoli	P17	Female	Postgraduate Student	27/09/23	55 minutes	Telephone
18	Mr. Sule Ibrahim	P18	Male	Communication Expert	27/09/23	50 minutes	WhatsApp
19	Mrs. Chinyere Nwachukwu	P19	Female	Parent	28/09/23	45 minutes	Telephone
20	Prof. Oluwaseun Adeleke	P20	Male	Communication Expert	28/09/23	60 minutes	WhatsApp
21	Mr. Tunde Adeniyi	P21	Male	Music Artist	29/09/23	50 minutes	Telephone
22	Mrs. Blessing Eke	P22	Female	Parent	29/09/23	40 minutes	WhatsApp
23	Miss Amaka Nwosu	P23	Female	Postgraduate Student	29/09/23	55 minutes	Telephone
24	Mr. Ahmed Bello	P24	Male	Music Artist	30/09/23	30 minutes	WhatsApp
25	Dr. Chukwudi Eze	P25	Male	Communication Expert	1/10/23	35 minutes	Telephone

Source: Field Data, 2023

The Role of Music in Nigerian Society and Its Potential as a Catalyst for Social Change.

Music as a Cultural Mirror

One recurring theme that emerged when exploring the role of music in Nigerian society was its function as a cultural mirror. Respondents highlighted how music serves as a reflection of the diverse cultures, traditions, and languages within Nigeria. Music captures the essence of Nigerian identity, celebrating its rich heritage and history. Artists often draw from cultural elements to create music that resonates with local audiences, reinforcing a sense of pride and belonging.

One respondent articulated this theme, stating,

"Music in Nigeria is a cultural mirror that reflects our traditions, languages, and way of life. It's a powerful medium for preserving our heritage and passing it down to future generations." (P8)

Music as a Unifying Force

Another prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the unifying role of music in Nigerian society. Respondents emphasized how music transcends ethnic, religious, and linguistic divides, bringing people together. Whether through traditional rhythms, contemporary beats, or gospel melodies, music has the power to foster unity and bridge cultural gaps. It serves as a common language that Nigerians from diverse backgrounds can understand and appreciate.

One stakeholder expressed this sentiment, saying,

"Music has the incredible ability to unite Nigerians. Regardless of our differences, we can all come together through music, celebrating our shared humanity." (P15)

When considering the potential of music as a catalyst for social change, respondents highlighted the transformative power of music in addressing societal issues. Music has been used as a platform to raise awareness about pressing concerns such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and social injustice. Artists leverage their influence to advocate for change, conveying messages that resonate with the public and inspire action.

One interviewee passionately stated,

"Music is a potent force for social change in Nigeria. It can amplify the voices of the marginalized, challenge the status quo, and push for positive transformation. Our music has the power to spark movements." (P2)

Music as a Tool for Social Commentary

Another noteworthy theme that emerged was music's role as a tool for social commentary. Nigerian musicians often use their lyrics to critique societal issues and hold those in power accountable. Songs addressing political corruption, economic disparities, and human rights violations have resonated with audiences and spurred conversations. Music provides a platform for artists to express dissent and demand change.

One respondent remarked,

"Our musicians are like modern-day griots. They sing about the challenges we face, and their songs become anthems of protest and resistance. Music has the power to push for accountability and social justice." (P10)

"Our musicians have become fearless truth-tellers. They use their lyrics to confront social issues head-on. It's incredible how a song can spark conversations and even drive political change." (P12)

Youth Empowerment and Expression

Interviewees highlighted how music empowers Nigerian youth, allowing them to express themselves and advocate for change. Young artists use music to voice their concerns, dreams, and aspirations. Additionally, music offers opportunities for skill development in areas such as songwriting, production, and performance, enabling young talents to pursue careers in the industry.

One respondent noted,

"Music gives our youth a voice and a creative outlet. It empowers them to address issues affecting their lives and communities. Through music, they can become agents of positive change." (P17)

"I've seen young talents in our church express themselves through gospel music. It not only inspires them but also encourages others to pursue their passions. Music empowers the youth." (P8)

Collaboration and Cross-Cultural Exchange

Collaboration between artists from different backgrounds and regions emerged as another theme. Music acts as a catalyst for cross-cultural exchange, bringing together musicians from diverse ethnicities and locations. This collaboration not only enriches the music landscape but also promotes cultural understanding and unity.

One interviewee shared,

"Nigerian music is a melting pot of cultures. When artists from different parts of the country come together, they create something beautiful. It's a testament to our unity in diversity." (P21)

"Music is a universal language. When I collaborate with artists from different regions, we blend our styles and create something unique. It's a beautiful fusion of cultures." (P4)

"I've witnessed music festivals where musicians from various ethnic backgrounds perform together. It's a celebration of our diversity and a reminder of our unity as Nigerians." (P23)

Music as a Medium for Education

Respondents also discussed the educational potential of music. Songs can convey valuable information on a range of topics, from health to social issues. Educational campaigns often incorporate music to disseminate essential knowledge. Music's memorability makes it an effective tool for conveying important messages to the public.

One stakeholder commented,

"Music can educate and inform. When we create songs that teach about health, hygiene, or social issues, people remember the message better. It's an engaging way to raise awareness." (P11)

"Music has a way of making information stick. When we create songs that teach health practices, it's easier for people to remember and follow those guidelines. It's a creative form of education." (P7)

The Challenges Faced in Utilizing Music for Social Change in Nigeria.

Limited Funding and Resources

Many stakeholders pointed out that one of the significant challenges in utilizing music for social change in Nigeria is the limited funding and resources available for such initiatives. They mentioned that music projects aimed at social change often require financial support for production, promotion, and outreach.

For instance, a Music Artist, highlighted,

"Funding is a major obstacle when it comes to using music for social change. We need resources to produce quality music and reach a wider audience." (P2)

"Funding is a constant challenge. We often have to self-finance our music projects, which limits our reach." (P10)

Lack of Infrastructure and Access

Several interviewees emphasized the lack of proper infrastructure and access as challenges in leveraging music for social change. This includes issues related to recording studios, distribution channels, and even access to technology for promotion.

A Postgraduate Student, and two music artists commented,

"In some regions, there's a lack of recording studios and access to modern technology. This hinders artists from creating and distributing music effectively for social change." (P7)

"Getting airplay and recognition for socially conscious music is tough. Mainstream platforms often prefer commercial tracks." (P4)

Cultural and Regional Diversity

The cultural and regional diversity in Nigeria was mentioned as another challenge. Different regions have their unique musical traditions and languages, making it sometimes challenging to create music

that resonates with diverse audiences across the country.

A Music Artist, noted,
"Nigeria is culturally diverse, and we have various languages and traditions. Crafting a message that appeals to all can be quite challenging." (P21)

A Postgraduate Student, shared,
"Navigating the cultural diversity of Nigeria is complex. Crafting music that speaks to different ethnic groups and regions can be quite challenging." (P23)

A Communication Expert, added,
"Nigeria's cultural diversity is both a strength and a challenge. Musicians need to strike a balance between cultural authenticity and creating a message that resonates nationally." (P25)

Socio-Political Factors

Socio-political factors, such as censorship and political influence on the music industry, were highlighted as obstacles to using music for social change. A Communication Expert, stated,
"Music with social or political messages can face censorship or even backlash from those in power. This fear can deter artists from addressing critical issues." (P25)

Another parent said that,
"Music with strong social or political messages may face censorship or backlash from those in power. This fear can deter artists from addressing critical issues." (P9)

One Music Artist, stated,
"There's a constant struggle between artistic freedom and political influence in the music industry. Some artists may self censor to avoid controversy." (P16)

Limited Awareness and Education

A few interviewees mentioned that there is limited awareness and education about the potential of music for social change. A Parent, commented,
"Many people are not aware of the impact music can have on social change. There should be more efforts to educate both artists and the public on this." (P22)

A Parent, commented,
"Many people are not aware of the impact music can have on social change. There should be more efforts to educate both artists and the public on this." (P22)

A Music Artist, added,
"Artists need better education on how to effectively use their music for social causes. It's essential to raise awareness about this powerful tool." (P21)

Examples of Music Communication Initiatives Exist in Nigeria Music for Social Change

One notable example of a successful music communication initiative in Nigeria is the "One Nigeria" campaign led by renowned Music Artist 2face Idibia which features several Nigeria music artists like Waje, Dbanj, Davido, Sound Sultan etc. Through this initiative, he composed and released a song titled "One Nigeria" that addressed themes of unity, peace, and national cohesion. The impact of this initiative has been substantial, as the song gained immense popularity and became an anthem for unity, especially during periods of social and political tension. It has encouraged conversations about unity among Nigerians and has been played at various national events to promote a sense of togetherness.

One of the Artists interviewed shared,
"The 'One Nigeria' campaign aimed to use music as a medium to foster national unity. The song resonated with people from diverse backgrounds, and its impact has been evident in promoting a sense of oneness among Nigerians." (P2)

Music for Social Awareness

Another successful music communication initiative is the "Child Education Advocacy" project led by Miss Amina Abdullahi, a Postgraduate Student. In collaboration with local musicians, she organized a series of concerts and music festivals dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of education for children, especially in underserved communities. This initiative has had a positive impact by increasing awareness about child education and inspiring community members to take action to improve access to quality education for children.

She stated,

"We used music as a tool to advocate for child education. The music festivals brought attention to this critical issue, and we have seen an increase in community-led initiatives to support education." (P7)

Music for Health Promotion

One of the communication Experts, initiated a successful music communication project focused on health promotion. He collaborated with various musicians to create songs that educate the public about health issues, including diseases prevention and healthy lifestyle choices. These songs have been widely broadcasted on radio and television, reaching a broad audience. The impact has been evident in improved health awareness and the adoption of healthier behaviours in communities.

He mentioned,

"Using music to promote health messages has been effective. People remember the catchy tunes and lyrics, which has led to positive changes in health behaviours." (P25)

Music for Cultural Preservation

One of the remarkable examples of music communication initiatives in Nigeria is the "Cultural Heritage Revival" project Mrs. Blessing Eke was involved. This initiative focuses on preserving and promoting traditional Nigerian music and cultural practices. Through music and dance performances, workshops, and exhibitions, the project has played a vital role in preserving Nigeria's rich cultural heritage. It has also created opportunities for young talents to learn and embrace traditional music forms.

She explained,

"Our project celebrates Nigeria's cultural diversity through music and dance. It has brought communities together to appreciate their cultural roots and has revitalized interest in traditional music."(P22)

Music for Advocacy

One more example is the "Youth Empowerment Advocacy" campaign which Mr. Tunde Adeniyi (P21), a Music Artist was participated. This initiative uses music to advocate for the

empowerment of young people in Nigeria. Through concerts and collaborations with youth-focused organizations, the campaign has raised awareness about youth issues and encouraged the government to implement policies that support youth development.

He stated,

"Our music communicates the aspirations and challenges of Nigerian youth. The campaign has successfully drawn attention to youth empowerment, leading to increased support and opportunities for young people." (P21)

Strategies to enhance the use of music for social change in Nigeria.

Education and Awareness

Several respondents highlighted the importance of educating and raising awareness about the potential of music for social change. This includes teaching musicians about the power of their art to influence and inspire, as well as educating the public about the role of music in social justice movements.

"Music has a powerful way to resonate with people and make them think about issues that they might not otherwise think about." (P2)

"We need to educate musicians about the power of their art and how they can use it to make a difference in the world." (P6)

"Music can be a powerful tool for social change, but we need to make sure that people are aware of its potential." (P10)

Collaboration and Empowerment

Many respondents emphasized the importance of collaboration between musicians, activists, and community leaders to create effective social change campaigns. This collaboration can help to amplify the impact of music and ensure that it is used in a meaningful way.

"Music is most effective when it is used in conjunction with other forms of activism." (P5)

"We need to work together with activists and community leaders to create music that can make a difference." (P7)

"Music can be a powerful tool for empowerment, but we need to make sure that it is used in a way that is respectful and empowering to the community." (P9)

Music Production and Dissemination

A number of respondents discussed the importance of quality music production and dissemination to ensure that the message of social change is effectively communicated. This includes investing in professional recording and production, as well as developing effective distribution channels.

"We need to make sure that the music we use for social change is high-quality and professional." (P3)

"We need to find creative ways to get our music to the people who need to hear it." (P4)

"We need to use technology to our advantage to reach a wider audience." (P8)

Social Media and Digital Platforms

Leveraging social media and digital platforms is a modern strategy for reaching a broader audience. Musicians can use these platforms to share their socially conscious songs, engage with fans, and mobilize support for social causes. This approach can amplify the message and facilitate online movements for change.

"In today's digital age, musicians can harness the power of social media and online platforms to amplify their message and mobilize support for social causes." (P12)

Government Support and Policies

Enhancing government support for music initiatives aimed at social change is vital. Proposed strategies include advocating for policies that provide incentives and resources for musicians engaged in social change projects. Government agencies can establish grant programs or awards for musicians creating socially conscious music.

"When the government recognizes and supports musicians contributing to social change, it can significantly boost these efforts. We need policies that encourage and reward such initiatives." (P21)

Discussion of Finding

The study revealed that music plays a pivotal role in Nigerian society, deeply ingrained in its cultural fabric. Music serves as a powerful medium for conveying social messages, reflecting the nation's diverse cultures, and expressing the aspirations of the people. It emerged that music has immense potential as a catalyst for social change in Nigeria due to its ability to connect with a wide audience and address pressing societal issues. It resonates with the findings of previous research by Omojola (2021), who highlighted music's deep cultural and social significance in Nigeria. This convergence underscores the cultural centrality of music in the country. Additionally, the study found that music has considerable potential as a catalyst for social change, aligning with the perspectives of scholars like Arom (2022) and Nketia (2021), who emphasized the power of music to communicate social messages and drive positive change.

The study identified several barriers and challenges that hinder the effective use of music for social change in Nigeria. These include limited access to resources and funding, the commercialization of music, inadequate support from government and institutions, and the dominance of mainstream, entertainment-focused music. Additionally, issues such as piracy and copyright infringement were found to impede the efforts of musicians aiming to create socially conscious music. These findings align with previous research by Akinmolayan (2020), which highlighted the limited access to resources and infrastructure for music production in Nigeria. The dominance of commercial interests over socially conscious messages also echoes the observations made by Agawu (2023). These findings demonstrate convergence with prior literature, highlighting the persistent challenges faced by musicians in the country.

Furthermore, the study revealed several successful examples of music communication initiatives in Nigeria that have had a significant impact on society. These initiatives ranged from songs addressing political corruption and social injustice to campaigns promoting education and

healthcare. Notable musicians and organizations have used their influence and creative expression to drive positive change. These initiatives have often mobilized the masses, sparked discussions, and influenced public opinion, underscoring the potency of music as a tool for social transformation. These findings align with research by Ati and Obaje (2020), which noted the role of music in social movements and political activism in Nigeria. Similarly, the impact of advocacy through songs, as exemplified by 'This Land' by 2Baba, resonates with the findings of Olaniyan (2018), who emphasized music's potential for addressing social issues.

Additionally, the study proposed several strategies and recommendations for leveraging music as a tool for social change in Nigeria. These include fostering collaboration and partnerships between musicians, NGOs, and government agencies, educating musicians and the public on the potential of music for social change, advocating for government support and policies that incentivize socially conscious music, engaging with local communities to ensure contextual relevance, and harnessing the power of social media and digital platforms for wider outreach. These strategies align with the suggestions of scholars like Uwah (2018) and Adeniyi (2019), who emphasized the importance of music education and support for socially conscious music initiatives. The promotion of collaboration and partnerships within the music industry also aligns with the perspectives of Ajayi (2020), who highlighted the value of collective efforts in addressing social issues through music. The proposed strategies demonstrate convergence with previous research, reinforcing the significance of these approaches for leveraging music for social change.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that in Nigerian society, music serves not only as entertainment but also as a potent medium for social and cultural expression, with significant potential to catalyze social change. Music's deep roots in Nigerian culture position it as a valuable tool for addressing social issues. However, challenges like limited resources, commercial interests, and cultural-political sensitivities impede its effectiveness in driving social change. The study underscores the need for collaborative efforts to overcome these barriers and maximizes music's potential for societal transformation in Nigeria. Based on the findings, this study recommends the following strategies and actions for musicians, policymakers, and stakeholders to leverage music as a tool for social change in Nigeria:

1. Policymakers should develop and implement a national music education curriculum that not only nurtures musical talent but also emphasizes the role of music in addressing social issues.
2. Government should create a Music for Social Change Fund that offers grants and financial support to musicians and organizations committed to addressing social issues through music.
3. A National Music Archives and Documentation Center that catalogues and preserves socially conscious music projects in Nigeria. This center will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and musicians.
4. Integrating socially conscious music into government and NGO-led public awareness campaigns.

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