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NIGERIA'S CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

PERSPECTIVES, PROBLEMS, AND PROSPECTS

Edited by
Ikechukwu Obiaya, Kizito Ogedi Alakwe
and Emmanuel Ezimako Nzeaka



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Nigeria's Cultural and Creative Industries

Perspectives, Problems, and Prospects

Edited by Ikechukwu Obiaya, Kizito Ogedi Alakwe and Emmanuel Ezimako Nzeaka

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13 New media with new trends

Digitalisation and the use of social media in the Nigerian music industry

Wale Adedeji

Introduction

The advent of new media has significantly transformed Nigeria's creative and cultural industries, particularly in the realms of Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, and the music industry, as projected by Afrobeats music. Digital platforms have facilitated unprecedented access to global audiences, enabling Nigerian creatives to showcase their work beyond local borders. This shift has led to increased revenue streams and job creation within these sectors. The integration of local narratives with universal themes allows for a unique cultural export that resonates with diverse audiences, thereby enhancing Nigeria's soft power on the global stage through her creative and cultural industries. The new media is currently playing a pivotal role in redefining Nigeria's creative landscape by promoting innovation and expanding cultural reach. As digitalisation continues to evolve, it is essential for stakeholders within Nigeria's creative ecosystem, ranging from content creators to regulatory bodies, to embrace this transformation. By doing so, they can harness the potential of new media technologies to further elevate Nigeria's cultural significance on the world stage (Alakwe, 2019).

Moreover, new media have fostered a dynamic interplay between Nigerian and global cultures, challenging traditional perceptions of cultural imperialism. While American media often dominate perceptions among Nigerians, the rise of transnational collaborations between Nigerian artists and international counterparts serves to create a more balanced narrative (Banjo & Umunna, 2022). This exchange not only enriches the artistic landscape but also promotes a greater appreciation for Nigerian culture both domestically and internationally.

Looking at the music industry critically, one can rightly say that the new media have fundamentally transformed the sector, reshaping how music is produced, consumed, distributed, and marketed (Adedeji & Röschenthaler, 2024). The rise of social media platforms has become a pivotal aspect of music marketing strategies, enabling artists to engage directly with their audiences. This democratisation of the music landscape fosters greater communication and interaction between fans and artists, facilitating the emergence of online music celebrities.

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However, while new media promotes diversity in musical styles and enhances fan engagement, it also presents challenges such as a potential decline in music quality, heightened competition among artists, and, of course, the complications of copyright (Adedeji 2023). Consequently, this chapter explores the impact of new media, driven by internet technology, on the music sector of Nigeria's creative and cultural industries. It focuses on how social media has influenced the production, promotion, distribution, and global consumption of Afrobeats music. The study examines the role of social media in promoting music, branding, and maintaining fan bases in the Nigerian music industry, with a specific focus on current Afrobeats artists.

Methodology and theoretical framework

The study is conducted using qualitative research methods within the framework of digital ethnography. This includes an analysis of various digital media, like audio, video, and online blogs, as appropriate. Crucial to this study is the review of relevant literature to highlight the concept of the new media and social media and the Nigerian popular music scene, as well as the music industry. Through a review of relevant literature and concepts, the study is able to integrate previous research as a base for establishing the convergence of new media and the music industry, while the use of social media by artists in the current dispensation can be rightly situated within the framework of the agenda-setting theory.

The agenda-setting theory (AST) succinctly proffers that the media have the power to set an agenda for public discussion and also shape public opinion. AST was first proposed in 1972 by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in their 1972 article "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media" in the journal *Public Opinion Quarterly*. McCombs and Shaw's original article proposed that the media have the power to influence public opinion by selectively highlighting certain issues and events. They argued that the media's agenda-setting function shapes the public's perception of what is important and worthy of attention. Since its introduction, agenda-setting theory has undergone significant development and refinement, with numerous researchers contributing to its expansion and application across various fields (McCombs et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2017).

In today's era of digitalisation and social media, AST can be applied to social media use in the music industry to analyse how specific agendas have been set towards influencing tastes, shaping artists' reputations, and breaking in new artists, as well as promoting and building fan bases and communities. The various key players involved are the artists, influencers, music industry professionals, and streaming platforms. This study is carried out from the perspective that the advent of social media and its use in the Nigerian music industry is transformational and has offered new vistas and possibilities to upcoming and established artists as well as music consumers.

New media: Definition, evolution, and classification

New media refers to all media innovations, including "computers, the internet, video games, virtual reality, memes, and much more" (Al-Quran, 2022). This is opposed to traditional methods like television and newspapers. It is a form of mass communication that relies on digital technology and the internet for information dissemination. New media have significantly evolved since the 1980s with the advent of digital technology (Creeber & Martin, 2009).

Unlike traditional media, new media allow interactive communication and real-time participation, enabling users to create, share, and consume content. The rise of the internet in the late 20th century facilitated new communication possibilities, and the concept of Web 2.0 allowed users to generate, share, and reuse content (Creeber & Martin, 2009). Websites, email, and online forums became essential communication tools, with the internet quickly becoming a primary source of news and entertainment. New media's popularity stems from its immediacy, fluidity, and freedom, democratising information dissemination. Unlike traditional media controlled by the state or other third parties, individuals now have the power to produce and share content freely. Digital communication has also compressed time and space, contributing to cultural globalisation (Chen, 2012).

As technology advanced, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram revolutionised communication by enabling real-time interaction and multimedia sharing. Mobile technologies further transformed new media, allowing access to content anytime and anywhere. Streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Deezer, and Spotify disrupted traditional media industries by providing on-demand access to diverse content, marking a new era in entertainment consumption. Social media has had a tremendous impact globally, and Nigeria has not been left out. The digital 2023 global overview report shows that 193.9 million Nigerians have mobile (phone) connections. This represents 87.7 per cent of the total population. There were 122.5 million internet users in Nigeria at the start of 2023, when internet penetration stood at 55.4 per cent, while Nigeria had a total of 31.60 million social media users in January 2023, equating to 14.3 per cent of the total population. (DataReports, 2023). This is by no means a small feat despite the myriad of issues associated with digital technology in the country, especially the high cost of procuring internet data, which is the pivot on which social media access rotates.

Major classification of new media

The Web 2.0

It has been established that internet technology is the enabler of the new media, which has fundamentally changed the way people learn, relate, create, and communicate. The internet technology (World Wide Web) has also evolved

over the years, leading to the current development of Web 2.0. This appellation has been ascribed to Tim O'Reilly, who popularised the term in 2004 through a series of conferences premised on internet technology. This has become a popular phrase to encompass the new generation of internet applications that enable content sharing and collaboration. (Anderson, 2007, S.M.E., 2011). This new internet technology enabled the proliferation of social media platforms, blogs, and online communities that facilitated the creation and dissemination of user-generated content – a vital tool in the new media discourse.

Platforms such as YouTube and TikTok enabled the easy sharing and consumption of user-generated videos, while WordPress and Blogger provided an accessible means for writers to self-publish their work. This democratisation of creative output not only empowered individual creators but also facilitated the growth of online communities centred around shared interests. With the availability of Web 2.0, there has been a proliferation of social media platforms and blogs, as well as online communities, which have greatly impacted the culture and creative industries in terms of production, distribution, and accessibility, among other influences.

Streaming media

Streaming media platforms, which deliver audio and video content via the internet in real-time, have significantly impacted the Nigerian cultural and creative industries. These platforms can be categorised as:

- **Video-on-demand (VOD)** platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Showmax, and Iroko-TV offer movies, TV shows, and original content.
- **Music streaming** platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music, and Boomplay provide access to millions of songs, playlists, and podcasts.
- **Live streaming** platforms like YouTube Live, TikTok Live, and Instagram Live enable real-time streaming of events and interactive sessions.

The rise of streaming has transformed Nigeria's film industry, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when cinema closures led to increased reliance on streaming platforms (Kouletakis et al., 2023). This shift has encouraged filmmakers to embrace digital distribution, with African-targeted VOD services helping mitigate economic barriers (Dovey, 2018). Streaming also revolutionised music consumption in Nigeria, enabling artists to reach global audiences and engage dynamically with fans. Platforms democratise music promotion, allowing independent artists to track progress and bypass traditional gatekeepers (Adedeji, 2023; Adedeji & Roschenthaler, 2025). Streaming media has reshaped content access, empowering Nigerian filmmakers and musicians to reach broader audiences. However, challenges like data costs and payment accessibility must be addressed to unlock the industry's full potential and support economic growth (Alakwe, 2024).

Social media

Social media refers to online platforms or tools that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, information, or other users in a virtual environment. As a form of new media, social media has some unique features, among which are being digitised, being interactive, being immediate and virtual, and relying on user-generated content (UGC). Social media has revolutionised the way people interact, communicate, share ideas, and consume information globally.

At present social media have become an integral part of our daily living, and it is practically impossible to imagine life without them, as their mobility (through apps) portends fluidity in sharing ideas, photos, video clips, information, or messages on the go, without inhibition, through popular platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), or WhatsApp, among others. Apart from easy accessibility, social media also offers the advantage of wider reach with an instant feedback mechanism. This makes it distinct from the traditional media forms, having an opportunity to review or analyse their posts through the numbers of likes, views, and comments that are visible, making it instantly interactive or "two-way dialogic" (Walsh, 2022).

The impact and relationship between social media and Nigeria's culture and creative industry is inestimable, with the visibility of the transformation in the way Nigerians interact, create, and share cultural content. Through social media, there have been opportunities for cultural promotion, creative expression, and economic empowerment. Using the current Afrobeats music rave as an exemplification, the impact and influence of social media on the Nigerian cultural industry are further explored in subsequent sections of this study.

Digital arts

Digital arts, or digital media arts, are creative works that use digital technology as the primary medium, including digital painting, CGI, digital sculpture, animation, interactive art, and photography. The rise of digital art has transformed the way artists create and redefined the concept of art itself, merging with various sectors of the creative industries to create new platforms and engagement opportunities for both artists and consumers.

One key transformation of digital art is the shift from static to dynamic media. It enables rapid creation, sharing, and access, facilitating the global dissemination of artistic ideas (Manovich, 2001). This democratisation of art allows artists to reach broader audiences and subvert traditional power structures in the art world. Platforms like DeviantArt and Instagram have empowered artists, allowing them to curate their works and expand their voices (Hanna, 2015). As Sam-Duru (2024) notes, digital art has provided new-generation Nigerian artists with opportunities to gain recognition in a competitive industry. In Nigeria, digital art has impacted the music, film, and fashion industries, driven by the youth's exposure to global trends. Artists incorporate

digital art in music videos, films, and ads, while Nigerian fashion designers use digital graphics and augmented reality (AR) to enhance exhibitions and create immersive experiences. Digital art is now an integral part of Nigeria's creative industries and cultural landscape.

Virtual reality and augmented reality

Virtual Reality (VR) and AR are transformative technologies reshaping how we engage with digital content, with significant implications for Nigeria's creative and cultural industries. VR is a computer-generated simulation of a 3D environment, allowing users to interact with complex data in a seemingly real way (Essien & Okon, 2022). It immerses users in a virtual world, disconnecting them from the physical environment. In contrast, AR overlays digital content onto the real world, enhancing it with virtual objects, sounds, and other sensory inputs. AR enables interaction through devices like smartphones and AR glasses (Agwuna et al., 2024).

These immersive technologies, or extended reality (XR), are revolutionising Nigeria's creative sectors, offering new ways to engage with art, entertainment, and cultural heritage. VR transports users into simulated environments, while AR blends the real and virtual worlds. Nigeria's creative industries are embracing XR in areas like film and music, such as the VR-enhanced set design in *Jagun Jagun* (2023) and virtual tours promoting Lagos State's cultural tourism. As VR and AR continue to evolve, they hold great potential for immersive storytelling, cultural preservation, education, and global tourism promotion in Nigeria's creative landscape.

Blogs and vlogs

A blog (or weblog) is an online journal or website that offers information in a conversational tone on topics like travel, fashion, music, and culture. It reflects the personality of the author and the purpose of the hosting site. Trinh and Nguyen (2019) describe blogs as electronic notes (audio/video) containing information on ideas, places, or trends. Blogging allows individuals to share their thoughts on products or services (Homsi et al., 2022) and is interactive, without gatekeepers.

A vlog (video blog) is an online video where individuals or groups share experiences on various topics. Vlogs can be informal or formal, resembling documentaries, and are popular on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Vlogging is increasingly common as video equipment and platforms become more accessible. Many bloggers have transitioned to vlogging, and vice versa, with "vodcast" as an alternative term (Al Kurdi et al., 2023). In Nigeria, blogs and vlogs are vital platforms for creative expression, cultural promotion, and entertainment. Nigerian bloggers and vloggers have gained significant followings, sharing experiences that showcase the country's rich culture to a global audience.

Digitalisation, Afrobeats, and the Nigerian popular music scene

Digitalisation marks a shift from traditional analogue methods to technology-driven processes, reducing time, effort, and space requirements while making some jobs obsolete. In the music industry, this transition led to the decline of physical media like vinyl, cassettes, and CDs, replaced by digital formats such as MP3 files that can be played on various devices, including smartphones (Hviid, Izquierdo-Sanchez, and Jacques, 2018). This shift reshaped the music business, rendering some traditional players redundant while opening opportunities for new ones, especially in music production, promotion, and dissemination (Kimachia, 2022).

The rise of digital platforms has enabled Nigerian musicians to promote their music independently, bypassing traditional record labels. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok allow artists to interact with global audiences and share music and content directly. Music distribution has also moved from physical spaces to digital streaming platforms, enabling artists to manage their own music publishing and marketing, fostering greater independence from record labels (Ofochebe, 2020). This transformation has fuelled the growth of Nigeria's music industry, particularly with the rise of Afrobeats.

Afrobeats, a sub-genre of Nigerian music, has gained global recognition, largely due to digitalisation. It evolved from Afro-hip-hop, which emerged in Nigeria in the late 1990s. Early Nigerian hip-hop artists incorporated local styles like juju, highlife, fuji, and afrobeat, blending them with English, Pidgin, and indigenous languages such as Yoruba and Igbo to appeal to a wider audience. This fusion helped hip-hop become mainstream in Nigeria by the early 2000s, and by 2012, the genre began to evolve into what we now know as Afrobeats, following the success of D'Banj's "Oliver" on UK music charts (Adedeji, 2013, 2014, 2022; Omoniyi, 2006, 2009). Afrobeats, characterised by African rhythms, beats, and languages, has become a global force in promoting Nigerian and African culture. The genre has not only raised the profile of Nigerian artists but also contributed to Africa's cultural visibility worldwide. It continues to set trends and create unique sounds, captivating fans both locally and internationally. A notable example is Asake, who gained global attention with his 2022 hit "Omo Ope" featuring Olamide. His blend of hip-hop with Yoruba language and fuji influences has helped solidify Afrobeats' international appeal.

This recognition of Afrobeats and the success the artists are able to achieve in this current dispensation is also traceable to the enablement through digitalisation. Digital technology has provided the music industry stakeholders with the right platform to showcase the talent and the uniqueness of this new sound on the world stage. Digital technology has fused the world into one global village via cyberspace, where nothing is ever obscure as long as it is online. Through streaming platforms like Apple Music, Spotify, Boomplay, or YouTube Music, which operate as digital or virtual music stores, Afrobeats

music is made available worldwide without the hindrance of location. Through social media, Afrobeats music and its artists are even brought closer to their fans worldwide. Access to the artists' lifestyle and activities is readily available through showcases across various platforms where communities are built, fan bases sustained, and interest in Afrobeats music stimulated. Enthusiasts can view, comment, and interact with artists and their music in real time thanks to platforms like Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and others.

Social media trends and the Nigerian music industry

There is no doubt that digitalisation and the introduction of technology have drastically changed how industries operate, and the music industry has not remained the same, with social media bringing even further changes to the way the music business operates, cutting across all stakeholders, including the consumers. The impact of social media on the way music is being experienced, disseminated, or consumed has been so radical, making artists more visible, music more accessible, and promotions fluid and interactive.

Social media has played a pivotal role in digitalising music in Nigeria, where artists mostly use social media platforms to share music, promote shows, and interact with fans. The platform has allowed music creators to gain fame without passing through the traditional media and gatekeepers. Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook are now powerful marketing tools that allow music artists to share their music and become easily recognised. This has created a new generation of Nigerian music creators who freely showcase and share their music on social platforms. The Nigerian artists, especially the current mainstream Afrobeats performers, can employ the use of social media to secure a space in the highly saturated music scene and also maintain their grip, popularity, and fan base globally. It is quite evident that the social media platform has made the task of being a music artist easier for Nigerian acts, but as expected from any new technological innovations, the issue of its downsides should not be ruled out, some of which are highlighted in the concluding part of the study.

Content creation is the key

Content creation is the key on which social media interaction relies. To engage the audience and get results, aspiring and established artists need to constantly create and post their UGC, which can be the subject of discussion, criticism, and interaction. Instagram and TikTok have been constantly employed by Nigerian artists in this realm. The importance of content creation cannot be overemphasised, as it's the most significant way for an artist to be active on social media (SM), which remains a crucial place to be in the music industry. Through content, the interest of fans will be continually stimulated, a basis for finding and keeping long-term fans.

In terms of content creation and engagement with the "netizens" (online citizens), the Nigerian artiste community are taking advantage of this digital

technological provision to advance their art and popularise the afrobeat genre worldwide in the process. Highlighting the importance of content creation in today's music business, an active player, Emeka Akumefule, known musically as BlaqBonez, explained:

> Sometime[s] in 2018, I made a video of me talking to Nasty C, and it went viral, my album moved from number 19 to number 6, and this made me realise how powerful a viral video can be for marketing purposes. It dawned on me that I could reach out to people with those kinds of videos and direct their attention to the music I'm pushing. Ever since then, I figured I should make more content.
>
> (BlaqBonez in Laketu, 2020)

This quote sums up the credence of content creation with the evidence that proper engagement through audio and video content on social media is an indirect marketing strategy for the artist, his brand, and music. It is apparent that BlaqBonez, till now, is an artist who is constantly in the news through his content and music, which enjoys a lot of rebroadcasting and reposting by bloggers and music sites on social media. This has been a positive boost for his brand and music.

From obscurity to limelight

Every Nigerian artist wants to "blow" – this is a parlance widely used in the Nigerian popular music scene to denote that an artist has come to the limelight and is successful. So every artist strives to blow. Cobhams Asuquo documented this in his song "One Hit," where he explained the narrative of "blow" in a prayer-like mood, asking God for just one hit song, which he believes can change his destiny. To Asuquo, a successful hit song brings an artist to the limelight, so he earnestly and satirically yearns for it in order to "blow" like Olamide, Adekunle Gold, Simi, and Small Doctor, who are all established artists mentioned in the song at the time it was released in 2018.

However, it should be noted that every song is a potential hit and the artist a potential star it gets to the right platform, while a lot of "good" songs and their singers never saw the light of day because of a lack of the right exposure. Social media has played and has played a vital role in bringing most of the new waves of Afrobeats artists to the limelight from total obscurity. The Nigerian popular music scene is at present saturated with hits that have gone global through the Afrobeats genre, and it is interesting to note that most of these stars breaking the charts got their big breaks through their posts and content on SM. We can list popular artists like Teni, Ruger, Ayra Starr, Rema, or Joe Boy and still keep counting. Let us look into two instances where social media brought artists from obscurity to the limelight to buttress this discussion.

Mayorkun is an award-winning Afrobeats artist whose tremendous growth has been phenomenal following the release of his debut single "Ëleko" in 2016,

which won him the Rookie of the Year (2017) and Next Rated Artist of the Year (2018) at the Headies Awards. He released his debut album in 2018 and had his headline concert, "Mayor of Lagos," the same year. While Instagram and TikTok serve as the favourites of most Nigerian artists, Mayorkun was discovered on Twitter by Davido, who later signed him to DMW Records. In his own words:

> I was bored at the office, a bank, one day; just while I was pressing my phone, I impulsively posted a video I had recorded, where I was playing the keyboard of one of Davido's songs, The Money, on Twitter. I wasn't expecting anything. It was on a Friday and I was supposed to resume work in another bank the following Monday. Well, Davido retweeted the video. And he later sent me a direct message asking if I had other things I did besides playing the keyboard. I told him I had some songs. I sent like six songs. He liked one of them. He said if he came back from ATL. (Atlanta, Georgia, USA) he would sign me on
>
> (Mayorkun in Blueprint.ng, 2019)

Don Jazzy is a successful recording artist, producer, and record label executive at Mavins Records. Having cut his teeth with D'Banj and the defunct Mo-Hits Records, his present outfit paraded a lot of chart-bursting artists, from Ayra Starr and Rema, to Ruger and Johnny Drille. Most of the hitmakers at Mavins and its imprint Jonzin' World were sourced on SM through the content they posted back then. Ayra Starr, who is one of the leading female artists in Nigeria got signed to Mavin with the help of Instagram, as Don Jazzy highlighted, "I first saw a video of her [Ayra Starr] singing one of her original songs on Instagram. Her voice was so powerful, yet she looked so young. Immediately, I knew I would like to work with her. I sent her a direct message inviting her to our studio with a guardian" (Don Jazzy in Itodo 2023). And the rest, they say, is history.

Mayorkun and Don Jazzy's Mavin instances are a testimony that social media is a fertile ground for talents and talent hunters who understand and positively exploit the many advantages the SM networks are able to offer for business and artistic advancement. In his recent post on Instagram, Don Jazzy highlighted the importance of SM for any aspiring musician in Nigeria and shared the screenshot of his messages to three artists he signed when he sent them direct messages based on the content he saw on Instagram. To the upcoming acts, he admonished:

> From the 3 screenshots, you can see that I reached out to Ayra, Boyspice and Bayanni myself. I wouldn't have reached out to them if I hadn't seen a sample of what they can do on their Instagram pages. For the umpteenth time, showcase yourself on your page. I know it seems uncool to post a lot, but then again, you will be an uncool artist if it's only your family that gets to hear your beautiful music till you give up
>
> (The Nation, 2022)

Brand and music promotions

The incursion of digital technology has changed the landscape of the music industry forever, while social media, in particular, has continued to give musicians the opportunities they could previously have access to through recording companies' traditional structure (MI, 2021). Currently, the SM has availed the artist the opportunity to bring their music and brand directly to the audience and fans without inhibition. With social media, many Nigerian artists have broken a song up into the top-of-the-charts ladder with novel social media campaigns on various platforms. Some of the promotional trends artists engage in for marketing purposes are posting video "leaks," sneak previews or snippets of an upcoming song, creating a dance challenge around a new song, or doing outright giveaways of cash or gifts on social media.

A typical sneak preview or video "leak" of an upcoming song involves artists creating a short video of themselves or with friends "vibing" to a yet-to-be-released song. This is then posted on various social media platforms with captions that will elicit discussions, comments, criticism, and likes among the netizens. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube shorts are fertile ground for such snippets, which most of the time can become news items for online blogs and SM influencers that repost to their followers to get traffic on their platforms for sustenance and brand presence. Most of these song previews are major content being reposted on the HipTv Instagram handle.

Creating a dance/performance challenge or doing giveaways of cash or gifts to promote a song has become a popular social media trend among Nigerian artists. There has been the Kukere dance challenge by Iyanya, the "Fuck You" rap challenge by Falz, the "Friends" challenge by Sound Sultan (posthumous), and the "Buga dance challenge" by Kizz Daniel to be used here for further exemplification. "Buga" was the biggest song from Nigeria, which transformed into a global phenomenon and hit in 2022. The progressive and systematic rise of the song to a global hit started with the "Buga dance challenge" created by the artist and commissioned on SM with a one million Naira price tag in the first round. This challenge is for the fans to record themselves dancing to the Buga song with their version of the Buga dance and post on TikTok/Instagram with the hashtag #BugaChallenge while tagging the artist along.

The #Buga promotional social media challenge trended, went viral globally, and achieved its digital marketing target for the song. "Buga" became the most searched song on Google in Nigeria in 2022 as well as the number one (#1) song on the Apple Music Top 100 chart in Nigeria, and at the end of 2022, "Buga" finished as the number one song on streaming with 57.9 million streams – the biggest in a calendar year in Nigeria (Oriowo, 2022). This is an attestation to what the new trend of content creation and tactics on social media platforms can achieve for an artist as compared to the traditional music industry public relations (PR) strategy of the hitherto pre-digital era.

About audience and fan base

Building a community of committed listeners and fans is one of the most important purposes of establishing a musical act. Building a community of committed audiences leads to the constant demand for new songs/albums, live shows, merchandise, and increased market value of the artist (MI, 2021). The SM platforms offer seamless avenues to do this. Artists, however, must understand the importance of creating a consistent profile for themselves, as their brand is their identity. A formidable brand brings product endorsement and an ambassadorial role, which in recent times is a trending fad in Nigeria, where artists can cash out and get additional revenues.

Social media platforms afford artists the opportunity to build communities and connect with fans online through the sharing of content that is personalised, direct, and tailored specifically towards advancing an artist's brand and philosophy. In creating a brand online, musicians should ensure uniformity in terms of their profile across various platforms in terms of their name, logo, biography, photos, and audio-visual content. Harmonisation ensures a distinct and uniform identity, which can reflect the artists' personality, style, and philosophy.

Most of the current Afrobeats music practitioners are exploiting social media positively in building and maintaining their fan base. Popular artists create content regularly and engage their fans in the discussion, most often going live on Instagram to engage their fans and followers' community to sustain their brand, and some have been known to engage SM influencers, music and online bloggers towards brand promotions. The Instagram space, for example, is awash with communities and groups of Afrobeats stars that constantly engage in discussions and banter about their favourites. The most popular are the Davido (OBO) Fans and the Wizkid (Machala Fans Club). These two operate like a football fans club on the social media space with steadfast support, love, and sharing of updates for their favourite artists.

Conclusion

Social media has become an essential tool for Nigerian music artists, helping them increase visibility, engage with fans, and promote their brands. It has been particularly crucial in the global spread of Afrobeats, allowing artists to reach wider audiences. Popular platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have significantly contributed to artist exposure and brand identity, offering more dynamic opportunities than traditional marketing. Chinonso Ihekire highlights in *The Guardian* that social media has made the music industry more profitable, with platforms like TikTok and YouTube enabling artists to create viral trends and music challenges (Ihekire, 2022).

Social media has empowered Nigerian artists by allowing them to share their music and trends directly with their audience. Artists can now gain recognition without needing significant funds from record labels, as social media has

democratised access to a global audience, regardless of location (Edidiong, 2020). The digital shift has also made it easier for newcomers to showcase their talent, bypassing the traditional music industry's bottlenecks. Many artists now enjoy multiple revenue streams and more control over their work through increased independence.

However, with the rise of social media, concerns about music piracy have surfaced. Digital platforms facilitate file sharing, making pirated music more accessible. Many young social media users may be tempted to download free music from illegal sources rather than paying for it through official channels. The issue is exacerbated by the high cost of internet access in Nigeria, leading many to turn to illegal blogs or file-sharing sites for free music. This unauthorised distribution can further damage the industry's copyright protection efforts.

The relationship between social media and music piracy remains a persistent issue in Nigeria's music industry. Copyright infringement, both digital and physical, has been a long-standing challenge, with stakeholders struggling to ensure fair compensation for music usage (Adedeji, 2016, 2023; Okoroji, 2009; Simmert, 2020). As digital access grows, there is an increasing concern that it may lead to more widespread piracy. Given the role of social media in the digital music landscape, it's crucial to implement measures to combat piracy, protect copyright, and reduce illegal music sharing to a minimum.

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