The Impact of Digital Innovation and Access to the Growth of African Folk Music in Contemporary Nigeria

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of digital innovation and access to the growth of African folk music in contemporary Nigeria. It examines the extent to which digital technology has influenced the traditional process and structure of the contemporary folk music industry. The study gathers its primary data, using an ethnographic approach and the qualitative research methodology. Findings reveal a positive and negative impact of digital innovation on the music industry. It concluded that the government agencies and stakeholders should organize a symposium to fast track proper utilization of the modern innovation in music. While it recommends that independent artiste familiarize themselves with the current digital tools at their disposal and stay updated on the technological advancement of the era.

Keywords: Access, Artiste, Digitalization, Impact, Innovation

Introduction

Back in its early days, the contemporary Nigeria music industries focused its source of revenue then on sales of musical materials such as cassette, record plate, etc., and fees charged by endorsement of an artiste by brands, fees charged during performances and concerts. Some companies felt they could transfer their brand name to another, which will affect the products and services of the proposed brand thereby generating revenue through this means. Those days are long gone as

increased penetration of the Internet has brought about new revenue models, thereby necessitating that artist look for more technological means to market their contemporary African folk music brands.

With the ubiquity of mobile devices, increased internet penetration, lower data costs and the rise of social media platforms, peer-to-peer sharing and word of mouth marketing that help to drive sales in the music industry is now aided by technology and given rise to a need for the music industry to embrace digitalization/digital means in taking the industry to the next level.

According to the Internet World Stats, Nigeria's internet penetration base on its population stands at 50.2% as against 53.7% in South Africa and 85% in Kenya. Social media usage also points to the fat that a massive percentage of Nigerians population is now using social media to interact with friends, find new content and most especially discover and share African folk music via these devices.

Penetration of leading social networks in Nigeria as of 3rd quarter 2017 (Statistic). The question, however, in what ways has digitalisation disrupted and increased opportunities for the music industry against traditional/primitive means in a country like Nigeria where disposable income is still low?

Three Major Areas Stands Out

Creating and engaging with fans: With the rising and popularity of social media and the emergence of digital platforms, artiste are now able to grow their fans base, and by extension their markets with little to no serious effort. Unlike before artiste no longer need to expand most of their marketing budgets to create live events, set up media appearance and execute other experiential activities before they can interact with their fans. On this digital age, comments, likes, downloads of musical clips and sharing help artiste feel the pulse of their online community and get the necessary feedback needed to develop their craft while creating a familiar bond with them.

Reaching new markets: The current digital space has also helped a great deal to increase the artistes. As followers on social media and YouTube views increases these made artistes gaining new brand evangelists who take music into their blog

online and offline tribes, leading to more business opportunities and partnerships that increase the net as of the acts.

A good example is the pop star Tekno who without an album to his name, is one of the most popular, most downloaded and obviously, one of the richest Nigerian artiste presently. The quality of his music and the reach that digital has given him ensures that his music is popular and appreciated globally. That he has been able to pen music deals with Universal Music Group and reportedly, Drake's Ovo music label other artist like Davido, Wizkid and Tiwa Savage and also beneficiaries of the current digital exposition in the music industry as their songs now reach bigger markets. Davido sold out a 10,000 capacity concert in Surinaria.

Increasing Revenue for Music Works

Digital music sales and streaming platforms like MLN+, Spotify, Apple music, Cloud, Boomplay, Google play music and Deezer are guiding Gen. Y and Z consumers a new way to access music without having to pay the high cost that comes with outright ownership. With a fraction of the cost of what one would have had to pay for a CD, consumers can now 'rent' (stream) a song or album and even share it with their followers on social media platform. The monetization channels for music are now expanded and multi-platforms meaning revenue is no longer limited to CD sales, shows and endorsement alone, but can also be derived from hundreds of local and international digital music sales platforms. What these opportunities signifies is how much the marketing of music has evolved with the introduction of technology and digital platforms.

The Impact of Digital Innovations and Accessibility

It is impossible to overstate the importance of digital advances and accessibility in the music industry. The arrival of the Internet and worldwide web (www) began to have significant impacts on lots of people in the late 20th century and early 21st century which intensifies the digitalization of cultural productions (Hesmandhalgh, 2013). It strengthened claims that digital innovation could bring efficiency. Digitalization make the copying of information easy and occupies less disk space and bandwidle than other non-print media experienced through computers without much stress. That is why the recording industry was the first cultural industry to utilize digitalization (Hesmandhalgh, 2013). According to him,

the spread of technological innovations like personal computers (PC) and the internet in the cultural industries first had a major impact on the recording industry. These technological innovations include the development of Mp3 and other related compression. Standards in the 1990s which allowed information to be compressed into manageable files. The introduction of multi-media computers with large storage capacity, CD players, sound cards and speakers and the development of easy-to-use software that can convert CDs into Mp3 file, and also have the capacity to download Mp3 files from distant network computers (Hesmandhalgh, 2013).

The manner that music is disseminated and enjoyed has changed dramatically with the emergence of digital music services like iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon Music. Listeners can now stream or download music straight to their digital devices at any time and from any location, replacing the need to purchase actual CDs or records. Adopting contemporary digital technologies by a firm is known as digital innovation. Organizations use this procedure as a strategic plan to enhance their business processes. In addition to enhancing consumer satisfaction and performance, digital innovation can be applied to develop new company strategies. Along with enhancing consumer performance and experience, digital innovation may be leveraged to develop new business models. New business models can be developed through digital innovation, which also enhances customer performance and experience.

Music is now streamed and consumed on a larger scale online more than before and consumers highly benefit from it. This paradigm shift did not happen immediately but has certainly hastened in the last few years. For number of 30 million paid subscribers worldwide, however, by 2019 it had tripled more than that figure to 100 million paid subscriber. Same with it closest competitor, Apple music, which was launched in 2015 and now has over 60 million paid users worldwide (Cole, 2019).

In the new digital environment, the use of online music has grown vastly affected money retail CD shops. Consumers now have a more active capacity in sharing, uploading, commenting and remixing music. For instance, streaming platforms like Spotify (European online music provider) entered the United States market in

July 2011 and immediately became popular, Spotify offers a subscription model which enables users to listen to unlimited amounts of music for a monthly subscription fee or consume for free on a limited quantity (Leuidijk & Nieuwahius, 2012). Other streaming platforms like YouTube music, sound cloud, Tidal are also deeply use.

One important feature these digital platforms have in common is their "algorithmic foundations", i.e. using machine learning to sort out the music preference and listening habits of their consumers. The key streaming platforms have also done a great job in guiding their users in the music they desire in a method of personalized and branded playlists (Cole, 2019).

Digital technology in the copyright industry has introduced Digital Rights Management (DRM) tools and system which plays a vital role in digital management of music sales to prevent piracy. Digital Rights Management (DRM) tools help to control the copyright in digital works by making the digital works with information about its copyright protection and owner which is regarded as 'rights management information also it implements 'Technological Control Measures' (TMPs) that assist in controlling access to the user of digital works (Ahmadu-Suka, 2011).

Impact of Digital Access and Innovations on Artiste

According to Wistrom & Defillippi (2016), before digitalization, the artiste depend on music publishers and record labels to distribute their works and the artists granting them licenses of their musical works. This is because the record labels and music publishers were the main controllers in the old record era. Thus, artiste had to contact them to publish their work. For the artists, the record label deal was the greatest business opportunity, and the larger the record label grows, the more desirable it becomes for the artiste and his/her management. Artiste gets revenue from record sales as agreed on a contract which serve as their significant income, the income enabled artists to make a good living. Since a significant number of records were sold and extra income from music licence collecting societies. The days of just focusing on traditional album promo, billboards, press runs and interviews are gone. We are in the innovative digital era where the likes of

Beyonce, Drake, Rihama, Ed Sheeran, Jay Z, Davido, Wizkid and many others are also turning to Instagram and Spotify to announce their latest albums.

One of the notable examples is Drake's Spotify takeover to release his 2018 album "Scorpion" (Cole, 2019). Reported by McDermott (2019) cited in Cole (2019), 'as part of the streaming services first-ever total artiste takeover, visitors to Browse homepage were greeted with a massive grid of Drake faces, on the cover of nearly everyone of the page's playlists. All categories that could be only tangentially tied to the artiste.

Suddenly, became Drake playlists, as part of a massive and campaign for the rapper's new album (para 5). This method has not been observed before and despite it generated many negative feedbacks from Spotify users, it also introduced a new means for established artiste and online streaming services working together to produce innovative campaigns (Cole, 2019).

Digital technology and social media have not only influence the way music is consumed on personal devices but has also influenced the live shows and festival circuits, respectively. Artiste and brands have been able to work together during music related technology innovations. They were using 'Kendrick Lamar and Nikobs SNKRS app for the American artist's 2018 tours' as an example.

"Lamar, who is signed to Nike as one of their celebrity endorsers, teamed up with the global sportswest gaint for an activation that would take place during his live performance on his tour, primarily through Nike's SNKRS app" (Cole, 2019, para 8). Concert attendees who had Nike's SNKRS app were able to buy the tour merchandise, including a pair of Kendrick Lamar's Latest Nike sneakers at the concert. This example shows how technology is being used to allow fans to purchase limited edition products from their preferred artists in an innovative means.

Another means of technological innovation in live shows and concerts is through virtual reality concerts. This includes the development of more sophisticated VP headsets joined with their broader acceptance which has opened new opportunities for companies to produce products that connect concerts to fans.

Digital innovations and access have made artists less dependent on the tradition players in the music industry as many bands and single musicians now distribute their music directly on the Internet. Leurdijk & Nieuwenhius (2012) argue that 'the record companies have lost their key position as the gate keeper and dominant supplier and now have to compete with new players on the market, such as concert promoters and hardware manufacturers. Still because of their experience, budget and network, the large labels remain very powerful on the music market, although less powerful than one of two decades ago" (p. 24). According to Nordgard (2016), digital change has reshaped the music industries value chains and structures, including the role of the artiste.

To a large extent, most artistic works are consumed for free, leaving artiste with little or no income for most of the upcoming artiste. They are willing to produce music videos and songs and upload them on social media for free to gain popularity. While they are gaining market popularity and fame, they are not properly paid for. For instance, most restaurants have been using music to entertain their customers without proper payment and hence, artiste are losing capitals on their work.

Impact of Digital Innovations and Access on The Music Industry's Labour and Economy

Digital innovations have impacted the control of all rights that permits music to simply connect with other media content turning to a major revenue source. Revenue of 1891 million USD from sync rights was collected from rights holders in 2014. According to IFPI (2015) cited in Wikstrom & DeFillippi (2016), beforehand, it was common to assign sync rights music publishers to licence than to movie and television producers, additionally, as game developers and other advertising agencies. In the course of digitalization, the advertising business has become more important with direct links for artiste.

Digital innovations have also been argued to have become immoral. Although usage adds value to our life in terms of convenience, the commodification of products, services and transparency. However, while an individual uses online platforms, information is being supplied to the platform owners during transactions involved in these benefits. The question is can the platform owners be

trusted to keep the information at their disposal secret? The most likely answer is no. the reason is that today, Google has been able to provide a technological base that enables online business and startups a possible a venue to do a business out of the information at their disposal.

The bag data issue is bringing business opportunities to online business and online users are also deriving certain benefits from using them. Zuboff (2015) argues these as surveillance capitalism involving 'big data' and the 'big other'. Every information supplied by people on social media platforms like Facebook or online platforms where consumers can shop goods or contraband because they were obtained without people's understanding of the aim that they were supplied. For example, when people share their information with their loved ones on Facebook, unknowingly to them that they are recorded and generated for analysis by being solid to firms like Google. The information becomes goods to Google because they were bought from Facebook and contraband because illegally taken since Facebook users were not informed. It seems the rule of law that protects consumers can no longer protect online users with this new development.

Recently, Facebook owner, Mark Zuckerberg was called for questioning concerning the use of peoples information. This attempt is one approach that may be deployed to question the integrity of Google and other online businesses. In line with the foregoing, Zuboff (2015) suggest that privacy rights can be instituted and asserted and can be invoked as a legitimate action against the obscurity of their surveillance operations.

According to Wallbank (2012), a 72 hours volume of the video is uploaded on YouTube per minute. To the artists, it is an avenue to promote their works, and they are uploaded in most cases for free so that they can be exposed to consumers and build their audience. Google leverages this promotional service by providing the platform but makes money from advertisers using the platform to promote business other than music businesses. While music consumers are watching music videos for free, it is affecting total revenues, which is supposed to accrue to the music industries, but Google is making money from advertisers. Thus Google as using artist's as the platforms attract viewers necessary to be exposed to advertisers while this is going on, information on the number of people with likes

on YouTube is being collected as part of the big data for analysis which are sold to advertisers.

Conclusion

Nigerians' access to music has changed as a result of local competitors like Boomplay and international streaming services like Apple Music and Spotify. These platforms work on a basis wherein artiste are frequently paid royalties determined by the number of streams.

The music industry has undergone a technological revolution, affecting live performances, distribution, and production. Digital recording technology advancements have made it possible for musicians to produce high-caliber/quality music from home, democratizing the process of making music.

In the context of this study, three key areas are noteworthy; creating and engaging with fans, reaching new markets and increasing revenue for music work which are pivotal to the impact of digital innovation and access to the growth of music in contemporary Nigeria was exhaustively discuss in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the observation made in the course of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. Independent artists familiarize themselves with the current digital tools at their disposal and stay updated on the technological advancement of the era.
2. Government agencies should provide adequate funds to music industry in order to harness quality music production.
3. Embracing forms of digital rather than physical scarcity could potentially help artists to bridge the gap in value and provide the foundations for a music economy.
4. Music artistic should be given proper orientation on music innovation and digitalization in order to harness its full potentials.
5. Government agencies and stakeholders should organize a symposium to fast track proper utilization of the modern innovation in music.

6. Setting up of monetization systems for digital cultural content as well as copyright monitoring should be enforce to ensure protection of intellectual property.

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