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GENDER AND MUSIC PERFORMANCE AS A CAREER IN NIGERIA: FEMALE PARTICIPATION, PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND CAREER CHOICE

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Abstract

Music performance in Nigeria is a cultural practice, a way of living and a part of the creative economy. However, women become involved in and maintain careers in performance in social contexts that equate musical power, technology, mobility, and leadership with males. The researcher studied 40 scholarly articles to critically examine the participation of females, their perception and choice of career. The findings from the articles reveal that the real issue is not just the gender balance of numbers, but the concentration of women at various positions, in various instruments, genres, in technical work, in decision-making and acknowledged forms of authority. These are controlled indirectly by public approval. Women can be honored as singers and yet asked questions as drummers, conductors, audio engineers, bandleaders or performers who speak to sexual and social power. Family support, education, mentorship, digital access and visibility of role models boost performance self-efficacy, while religious restrictions, objectification, harassment, precarious incomes, the expectations of motherhood and male-dominated networks reduce career options. The article concludes that Nigeria needs gender disaggregated data on the industries, safer and more comfortable work environments, training for everyone, and a performance culture that evaluates female performers according to artistic ability and not the expectation of them fitting into gender norms of respectability.

Keywords: Career choice; Female musicians; Gender; Music performance; Nigeria

1. Introduction

Music performance is not restricted to singing in front of an audience. It encompasses the interpretive, innovative and communicative use of voice, instrument, conducting, ensemble and production and digitally mediated presentation skills. The concept of “musician” is also not straightforward, but the training and accumulated expertise are still significant aspects of developing one's professional identity (Zhang *et al*., 2018). Today's artists also often have a multi-faceted career including teaching, composing, producing, managing and performing (Bartalet *et al*., 2019; López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020). In this respect, music performance is both an artistic calling and the result of an educational

process, market economies, institutions and societies.

Music in Nigeria is the cultural memory, social criticism, religious meaning and economic possibility. Women have always been involved in indigenous, sacred and popular music but their involvement has not resulted in equal authority. Researches on the drum culture of Nigeria, music studio technology, music leadership, and choral leadership among Nigerian women have revealed that women are highly visible but their access to drum, audio technology, leadership and decision making is restricted (Adejube&Iwunwa, 2026; Adepegba, 2025; Nwobu, 2022; Samuel, 2018). The same goes for public recognition: a female performer is celebrated as a cultural icon and simultaneously criticised for transgressing limits of modesty, sexuality, religion and/or home responsibilities.

This article presents a framework of three processes that mediate the impact of gender on music performance careers. First of all, it structures opportunity by assigning ‘masculinity' or ‘femininity' to specific roles. Secondly, it forms public opinion, sometimes to the detriment of women's competence, and thus its respectability more visible than its competence. Thirdly, it influences career selection in ways that impact our own beliefs, family support, safety, training and expected rewards. Thus, the Nigerian question is not about women performing, it is about entry, stay, leadership and success of women in music as a profession. The need for an opinion is because different activities are excluded in a quieter way for instrumentalists, technicians, students and community performers.

2. Music Performance as Work and Social Practice

Music performance is an activity, a self-understanding and a job. The term “musician” is not a universal one, as even this simple term has several different meanings; however, the duration of training is often used to distinguish musicians from non-musicians, as seen by Zhang *et al*. (2018). This definitional problem is particularly significant in Nigeria, where a performer could sing in a church, lead a traditional group, perform at events, teach music, record music, accept commissions and paid engagements, without ever having secured any full-time status. A limited view of success by the standard of only celebrity, recording studios or formal employment would remove much of the work that actually leads to musical success.

Career paths tend to be a combination of modern-day, and are typically not linear. Music careers are defined as “a series of creative and income-generating jobs,” according to Bartalet *et al*. (2019). López-Íñiguez and Bennett (2020) also reveal that musicians often find they do not enter the profession as they had envisioned when they began their training. This means that being adaptable is a key ingredient in retaining job security as well as the need to be lifelong learners and being able to combine roles. This is no trivial detail. Portfolio careers expect flexibility and mobility, self-promotion, travel, collaborations and frequent re-entry to informal work spheres and may be a

disadvantage for women who do not have this flexibility.

There is also music that is socially productive. Gaunt *et al*. (2021) introduce the concept of a musician as a "maker in society", which places a musician next to artistic ability and civic, cultural and communal responsibilities. This is especially fitting in Nigeria where performance can serve to maintain identity, to define social change, to facilitate worship, to offer commentary and to generate livelihoods. Sheppard and Broughton (2020) also demonstrate the link between social/cultural wellbeing and active engagement in music and dance. According to Ascenso *et al*. (2017) professional musicians' wellbeing can be related to identity, relationships, meaning, engagement and accomplishment. Music performance is then not an indulgence which has to be validated by the success of the market. It is a type of cultural labour of personal and collective value.

Going to work can be challenging. A supportive relationship and environment are crucial factors in the wellbeing of musicians (Ascenso *et al*., 2017; Perrier *et al*., 2025). These are general pressures which women face in addition to gender-specific stresses. Perrier *et al*. (2025) correlate the three needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness with wellbeing in professional female musicians and demonstrate that thwarting of these needs is detrimental to wellbeing. It is clear that there is a correlation: if a woman is talented and motivated, but is continually challenged or treated like an exception by others, maintaining a career can be challenging.

Education can either perpetuate the inequalities, or it can break them. Family, teachers, and peers are sources of performance self-efficacy, and public performance experiences could be particularly useful for girls (Zarza-Alzugaray *et al*., 2020). Music students in south-western Nigeria were exposed to performance, production, management, composition, and conducting, through the industrial attachment; however, the duration and supervision of the industrial attachment, as well as the logistics, were weak. These affected the outcome of the industry (Sofola, 2025). While the digital turn has opened up opportunities for musical learning and presentation, it has also become a new challenge for performers (Camlin & Lisboa, 2021).

3. Historical Location and Social Importance in Nigeria

It is erroneous to consider the evolution of music performance in Nigeria as a mere transference from "traditional" music to modern entertainment. The studies uploaded, on the contrary, show that there are areas where Indigenous practice, religion, popular culture, technology and commerce constantly remodels and reformulates each other. According to Oladejo (2022), music played an important role in pre-colonial and colonial Yoruba life and how women in particular, continued the legacy of Waka as an independent genre in the male-dominated music industry. Indigenous Igbo women's fashion is also tied to popular music in the present, as argued by Forchu (2025) who demonstrates the shift of women's music representations and musical identities in different contexts and intentions. These studies warn against the idea that women

have only recently been allowed to participate in music performance. Women have been involved with music for a long time, and the time, space, instruments and authority they have had have not been equal.

The history of the gender of performance in Nigeria is best told as one of boundaries and negotiations. Samuel (2018) proves that Yoruba women participating in the dùndún drumming defied a domain that was considered male and also illustrates the non-universality of the prohibition. Adepegba (2025) continues this conversation by adding the aspect of female drummers as technical experts, personal entrepreneur, digital personalities, and cultural entrepreneurs. Esan performance traditions are discussed by Aluede and Aluede (2022) who credit gender-specific ensembles and limited sonic areas, claim that exclusion is dangerous if it is absolute, and that this is the case under current conditions. It is not important to history that all traditions were oppressive to women in a similar way. It is a fact that cultural rules have been used to organise musical participation by sex, and that performers have constantly challenged and changed cultural rules.

The performance of women also served as speech in public. Yoruba communal life was commented on by waka musicians and waka bands made their living in a world that was male-dominated (Oladejo, 2022). Inyabri *et al*. (2022) argue that, in the case of the Ibibio, women's songs of satire offer cultural tools for resisting the pressure to marry, for asserting agency and challenging the patriarchy. The domestic or “backyard” sphere can be a space for Igbo women's music to become a “public” pathway to identity and social expression” (Forchu, 2025). Women in the Nigerian hip-hop and juju music also have regained control of the language and topics that had been traditionally the exclusive domain of men (Odetade, 2023; Onanuga&Onanuga, 2024). Not only is music performance an entertaining activity, it is also one that is necessary to making speech possible, it is an activity that establishes social memory, and it is an activity that allows marginalised voices to enter into public argument.

Its religious significance, too, is not a simple one. While the church or campus worship offers significant scope for women's voice participation, this does not necessarily lead to control of the direction of music. The issues faced by women in the choral leadership of Baptist churches as identified by Odusanya *et al* (2025) and the barriers that exclude women in the choral instrumentation of Pentecostal churches as identified by Adejube and Iwunwa (2026) are indicators of how women are underrepresented in church choral leadership roles. The issues identified by Odusanya *et al* (2025) and the barriers identified by Adejube and Iwunwa (2026) exposed that women are underrepresented in choral leadership roles in churches. In Ilorin, performance is negotiated, a space open to married women who want to articulate their personal, emotional and social unease within cultural and religious boundaries (Abiodun, 2019). Thus, religion has the potential to give access, community and legitimacy but at the same time to limit the distance women may go, walk, speak or appear.

Nigerian music is also economically and representatively valuable at the national and global levels. Bukayo-Ruwona (2020) argues that Afrobeats should not be considered only a circumscribed aspect of the license, and insists on the social roles and economic potentials of Afrobeats. The same dual nature of professional music and artistic and social value is also a reminder to us from Gaunt *et al*. (2021). The overall message is that culture is not safe without women in the technical, instrumental and leadership roles. It diminishes the number of individuals that can sustain, re-interpret and economically exploit that culture.

4. Female Participation: Why Visibility Is Not Equality

Before starting a discussion on the role of male and female "population" in Nigerian music, it is important to state that the literature that has been uploaded is not a dependable national count of performers. The Nigerian studies are basically genre driven, role driven or location driven. They explore drummers, audio engineers, church conductors, traditional groups, popular artists and specific regional traditions. These sources provide robust evidence of exclusion trends, but cannot be used to support an overall national male to female ratio. Inventing such a figure would give a sense of precision that would not be warranted by the lack of a sampling frame.

The experience of other countries around the world demonstrates the importance of counting women and men separately. Sergeant and Himonides (2022) established male numerical dominance in all orchestras, brass bands and popular music groups, most notably with leadership roles in popular music. Similarly, Topaz *et al*. (2022) determined that women were still underrepresented as key components of popular music, and that "visibility is not the same as equity or inclusion". These numbers cannot be exported to Nigeria but they depict two principles of analysis. Firstly, there is a difference in representation across genres and instruments. Secondly, women can be part of an ensemble but not in main, technical or decision making positions.

The structural pattern of the Nigerian evidence is followed. There is a noticeable presence of women as singers during Pentecostal worship services, but the other aspects of worship, such as instrumentation, sound and musical direction, are coded as masculine (Adejube&Iwunwa, 2026). Women conductors are faced with gendered and traditional challenges in Baptist choral ministries, as they contribute to worship and the life of the church (Odusanya *et al*., 2025). The use of technology and control room authority are seen as incompatible with femininity, which is the reason why Nwobu (2022) says audio engineering is still heavily male-dominated. The division is not just one between male and female performers, but one between male and female performers, and between male and female audiences. It is a balance between a visible femininity and a controlling masculinity.

The same separation is seen in the traditional and popular settings. Drumming female practitioners are feted in part because they are still not common in the Yoruba musical environment (Adepegba, 2025; Samuel, 2018). Through the

instrument, the dance and singing aspects of musical ensembles, Diepreye Osi is a woman who challenges the position of male hegemony and disrupts it as a leader of an Ijaw musical ensemble (Armstrong, 2023). While there was a sustained genre for women, Waka was also distinctive, and the male concentration in juju, highlife and fuji is also reflected in the music (Oladejo, 2022). Female participation in each is genuine, but constitutes a gendered participation.

This is why there is a need for examples to be more than just a case of celebrities. While a handful of successful women become role models for the country, the majority of performers remain at a disadvantage to gain access to instruments, rehearsal facilities, production technology, contracts and opportunities for leadership. The careers of South African women studied by de Villiers and Henneberry (2024) show how female musicians often sustain themselves through branding, networking, lifelong learning and work outside music. Sikamo's (2025) historical account of Zambia also demonstrates that women's professional fortunes rise and fall with wider political and cultural conditions. Nigerian analysis should therefore measure not only who appears on stage, but who controls sound, owns production, negotiates payment, leads ensembles, receives mentoring and remains in the profession over time.

5. Public Opinion and the Gendered Test of Respectability

The opinion of the public is not an after-the-fact commentary that starts after a performance. It comes before the woman reaches the stage in her career. Families, Religious communities, Teachers, Promoters and audiences/online users tell us what types of female performance are acceptable. These messages affect the kind of instruments girls get, whether parents pay for training, and whether or not married women are allowed to travel, and whether music is considered a viable career for women. Perception is therefore a material career state of public perception.

The middle problem is unconditional approval. Women can be accepted as singers, dancers or as bearers of cultural identity, but may not be accepted as technical experts, outspoken artists, and as leaders. Abiodun (2019) demonstrates the ways Muslim women performers in Ilorin negotiate with culture and religion as to what they can do. Maguraushe (2023) shows a similar case of a woman musician who was bullied online in Zimbabwe for transgressing her religious identity. In Nigerian Pentecostal worship, there are instances where women's assertiveness is considered inappropriate, despite holding formal leadership roles, such as apostleship and prophecy (Adejube&Iwunwa, 2026). Therefore, public acceptance is frequently contingent on women's recognisability as women, their subservient and moral roles.

This form is supported by sexual representation. Eze (2020) claims that sexualised images of women in Nigerian hip-hop can contribute to the performances' status and marketability for men. Similarly, Fosudo and Balogun (2025) point to strong female objectification in some of the Afro-pop videos, where women's bodies are used

as marketing tools. Ibitoye (2022) relates objectifying musical texts to a larger social setting where women are seen as objects of sexual pleasure. The design of these studies varies and it is not appropriate to draw the conclusion that music is the sole cause of sexual violence. They do, however, demonstrate a consistent representational economy that is based on the sale of women's bodies over women's agency.

For women, the repercussions are far-reaching. Having to compete in popular music is not just one's duty as a woman. She has to play a secondary role to the already boxed-in-and-boxed-out feminine spectacle of an industry. She might be judged more harshly on her appearance, attire, sexuality and relationships than on her technique. Onyeji and Onyeji (2021) present a case study of the Batswana through an examination of how performance costuming can be a representation of cultural sexism despite being perceived as aesthetic tradition. Public judgement can therefore, have seemingly normal artistic aspects such as costuming, dancing, instrumental and stage presence.

But these meanings are not passively accepted by female artists. Saint Janet's juju performance takes a feminist approach to discussing sexuality and challenges the notion of women not talking about sex (Odetade, 2023). Nigerian female hip-hop artists counter the intrusive nature of stereotyping language through "talk back" by reclaiming language, reworking stereotypes and gaining agency (Onanuga&Onanuga, 2024). Akpan-Obong (2023) believes it is possible to recreate the subordination of women in folk music while simultaneously giving women a proper artistic earning. This is a very important double capacity. Music can perpetuate sexism, but it can also change the story in which sexism is a natural thing.

There is therefore need to make the public discussion more sophisticated and go beyond the dichotomy of the moral panic versus the uncritical celebration. While Afrobeats need to be taken on its own merits, some issues must be addressed, such as objectionable content, which Adeniyi (2020) justifiably rejects to reduce Afrobeats to libertinism. It is better to differentiate between artistic freedom and degradation of the female. A woman's performance should not be judged on her moral purity before the audience comes to appreciate her work and the objectification of the female should not be defended as a necessary part of commercial music as it is an attack on her.

6. The Choice of Music Performance as a Career and its Relationship to Gender.

When deciding on their career, one person is thought to look at the careers, compare and choose the one he/she likes best. It does not go so smoothly for a music career. Training, social support, perceived income, role models, family responsibilities and safety are important factors, too, alongside interest, talent and identity. The weight of each factor is different for each gender.

Social support is particularly significant in performance, when competence is in the hands of the public. Family support and music-performance self-efficacy are

associated, as are public performance experience and girls' confidence, as demonstrated by Zarza-Alzugaray *et al*. (2020). In Nigeria, this implies that lessons, instruments, rehearsals and attachment placements, as well as early performances might be denied if family approval is denied. If music is deemed to be an unstable and/or questionable career for girls and women, they might be channeled into “safer” careers, and not have had their worth tested beforehand.

Education may help to broaden choice but it works only if it is linked to actual work. According to Sofola (2025), industrial attachment can expose Nigerian music students to music production, performance, management, composition and conducting. The benefits, however, can be constrained due to weak supervision and logistical challenges. Bartalet *et al*. (2019) and López-Íñiguez and Bennett (2020) also emphasise that music education should equip students to work in multiple professions, be an entrepreneur, to be mobile and adaptable. It is vital to prepare with sensitivity to gender as women may not have access to informal mentoring and technical apprenticeship. Confidence is a reward for networks and telling women to become more confident does nothing to change the structure, it only makes structural exclusion individualised.

Discrimination can be hidden within the language of confidence. Cannizzo and Strong (2020) exemplify depictions of creativity as a masculine trait, while simultaneously attributing low confidence in women as entrepreneurs to their lack of confidence. Cannizzo and Strong (2020) demonstrate how creative industries can portray men as naturally entrepreneurial and blame women for lacking in confidence, despite the fact that assertive women will face social penalties. Similar to this double bind situation exist for Nigerian women conductors and campus music leaders who have to prove their authority and yet a strong authority is seen as insubordinate and/or unfeminine (Adejube&Iwunwa, 2026; Odusanya *et al*., 2025). Increased sanctions for behaviours that are required to advance career are limiting career choice for women.

Other divisions are based upon technology and genre. Audio engineering is a technical skill, which involves music knowledge and control of music production, however, Nigerian women are discriminated in accessing, and working in the field of audio engineering due to the audio technical tools being masculinised (Nwobu, 2022). Women drummers are also faced with the ideology that rhythm and sacred instruments or power of the body is reserved for men (Adepegba, 2025; Samuel, 2018). Gender, thus, not only affects women's decision to choose music, but also which aspect of music seems available to them. While drumming, sound engineering and conducting or band leadership is still perceived as transgression, singing may be encouraged. Initial choice is also influenced by career sustainability. De Villiers and Henneberry (2024) looked at the role of brand, network, lifelong education and employment in music as a way for women musicians to deal with precarious work. The intrinsic motivation, education, networks, pay, job stability, marriage, childbearing, working hours and stress also influence women's decisions in the music industry, as shown in Yang

(2026). The findings are not Nigerian figures, but they do give a glimpse into pressures that are present in Nigeria's industry based on portfolio. A young woman might like performance but have a fair expectation to turn it down if she expects that it will pay erratically, be dangerous to travel, have bad contracts and little flexibility with the family.

The problem is exacerbated by motherhood. Women in the music career in academia might adopt extreme measures to accommodate childcare responsibilities and experience microaggressions, less support, and financial repercussions for doing so (Fitzpatrick & Sweet, 2023). But motherhood is not incompatible with music. It's that care is routinely viewed as a personal female issue and that is a consistent availability is rewarded. Thus, public opinion misinterprets the career breaks that are created by the structure as proof of women's lack of commitment.

Safety is also crucial. Duignan-Pearson (2019) demonstrates that in Johannesburg, women DJs are negotiating access to technology and performance space, as well as to motherhood expectations and potential risks of sexual violence. McCarry *et al*. (2023) state that a culture of harassment and sexual violence can be normalised in the music industries where misogyny, weak regulation and informal working arrangements are compounded. Nigerian women involved in career decision-making therefore, may make career choices with unequal risks as a consequence of considering the late-night venue, travel and reliance on gatekeepers. Passion is not an endorsement of unsafe work.

7. Women's Agency and Emerging Career Pathways

An analysis of the gender of victims would synonymise the very erasure it aims to counter. Nigerian women performers have also been creating genres, playing banned instruments, re-organising groups and turning performances into social criticism time and time again. They are not evidence of the elimination of barriers. It shows that barriers can be overcome and altered.

The drummers are a good example of women. In Samuel's (2018) research, women enter into the Yoruba patriarchal space in the capacity of performers in the contest of the dùndún. Adepegba (2025) talks about performers that have an embodied skill, entrepreneurship, innovation and digital branding. Their careers defy the notion of maintaining tradition through gender-segregated careers. To the contrary, innovation can sustain tradition and expand participation and audience.

Women's power has been exercised too in the repertoire and language. Waka musicians formed a musical environment that was sustained by women and made comments about postcolonial social life (Oladejo, 2022). Satire is used by Ibibio women to talk about marriage, power and patriarchy (Inyabri *et al*., 2022). Forchu (2025) argues that Igbo women's music is a process of negotiating indigenous philosophy and contemporary identity work. Saint Janet and Nigerian female hip-hop artists speak sexuality in their own terms and experience of denigration (Odetade, 2023; Onanuga&Onanuga, 2024). These practices are the means of

making performance a career tool and public authorship.

Examples of leadership are also crucial. As an Ijaw band leader, Diepreye Osi challenges male hegemony through her instrumentation, dance and singing in her ensemble (Armstrong, 2023). This study reveals that women conductors in the church context are an example which illustrates that female leadership can contribute to the improvement of the musical and spiritual lives of people even in an institution that may restrict its authority (Odusanya *et al*., 2025). These are examples of role models, but they should not be romanticised. Nothing can be gained from celebrating exceptional women and championing them while continuing to live in the conditions that make them exceptional.

Digital platforms have created new avenues for audience, cooperation and self-expression. Camlin and Lisboa (2021) have identified a wider digital turn in music education and Adepegba (2025) has demonstrated that digital visibility can be used positively to enable a woman drummer reach a wider global audience. Meanwhile, Maguraushe (2023) cautions that social media increases bullying and moral policing. Digital access thus does not eliminate but rather repurposes the gatekeepers. Women can avoid being promoted, but face platform harassment, appearance-based judgement and unstable attention economies.

Social norms can also be shaped by entertainment media. Evans *et al*. (2025) conclude that media interventions can be an enabler to change gender attitudes and behaviour among young women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa. This implies that Nigerian music can go beyond only reflecting gender relations. Performers and producers can expand the roles they can imagine for girls by using lyrics, videos, interviews, casting and the way they act. The music business becomes an arena for change and a cultural institution that can champion change.

8. An Agenda for Gender-Equitable Music Careers in Nigeria

The first is that credible data should be used. There is need for region and genre based mapping of performers, instrumentalists, conductors, producers, audio engineers, managers, songwriters and ensemble leaders in a disaggregated (gender) way in Nigeria. There should be no substitute for a national list of figures with celebrity lists or streaming charts. A helpful dataset should include data about jobs that are informal, have multiple employers, multiple jobs in the same portfolio, religious institutions and technical positions. It should also differentiate between participation and authority, pay, ownership and continuity of career.

Secondly, music education needs to resist occupational segregation, in advance of its becoming normal. Girls should be introduced to the drums, brass instruments, production software, conducting and leading in live sound and ensemble as early as possible. Industrial attachment should be of a structured, supervised and be made to a credible career pathway (Sofola, 2025). Organisations need to employ women mentors in technical and leadership roles, they also need male mentors to ensure that everyone is included. It is not about

pushing all women into non-traditional careers; it is about taking away the social stigma from making their choice.

Thirdly, there is need for more transparent and safer labour practices in the industry. basic professional infrastructure, including written contracts, unambiguous payment terms, harassment policies, confidential reporting systems and penalties for harassment. McCarry *et al*. (2023) demonstrate the normalising of sexual harassment and violence in the context of weak regulation. Women should not have to speak in order to access the world. Labels, festivals, churches, venues, studios and professional associations should be responsible for the environment that they create. Fourthly, leadership is not a job. In church and campus music experiences, it has been observed that women can be designated as leaders while the men dominate the sound, instruments and the final decision in the music (Adejube&Iwunwa, 2026; Odusanya *et al*., 2025). Organisations should examine: Who leads the group, who chooses the repertoire, who has the technical systems, who signs the contracts and who represents the group. Authority must be practical and not ceremonial in order to achieve equality.

The fifth is Career Support for Care Responsibilities & Career Portfolios. Flexible rehearsal schedules, reasonable notice, reasonable child care assistance (if possible) and flexibility in non-discriminatory maternity arrangements would take the sting out of motherhood in the penalty-sheet. Women's careers take a hit when institutions take an unencumbered worker for granted, as Fitzpatrick and Sweet (2023) demonstrate. Commitment should be measured in terms of professional contribution and not being on call all of the time.

Sixthly, new public culture is needed. The media should assess women as musicians, not as a body, a wife, a mother or a moral icon. This does not mean that you have to be an enabler for criticism. It demands that men and women are treated equally, and that they are not insulted with the same types of statements. The objectification of the Nigerian hip-hop and Afro-pop studies cannot be detached from the limited roles that the audience might have for females (Eze, 2020; Fosudo& Balogun, 2025). Commercial strategy also imparts social meaning, which producers and artists need to be aware of.

Lastly, the policy should not be based on just “women.” A range of religion, ethnicity, class, geographical, technological and family expectation come together in the lives of various groups of musicians, among whom are Muslim singers in the city of Ilorin, Igbo women's ensembles, Yoruba drummers, church conductors, audio engineers, DJs and popular musicians. In the context of gender policy, it is therefore important that it is locally informed and role specific. A programme that is specifically for celebrity vocalists will not tackle the issues impacting community musicians, traditional artists or women behind the console.

9. Conclusion

Music performance as a career is not just a gender issue as women in Nigeria do not lack the interest and abilities in playing music; it is because opportunity, authority and respectability are not properly structured in the career. The literature

uploaded demonstrates that women are represented some traditional, religious and popular forms of performance, but that they are also represented in visible, but play limited roles. Men are more likely to have a sense of control over instruments, sound, leadership, production and informal networks that facilitate the promotion of careers.

This inequality is further entrenched in public opinion that is guided by clothing, sexuality, marriage, religion and motherhood, before the artistry is taken into account. All of these evaluations impact family support, self-efficacy, training, safety, and anticipated career benefits. They thus influence decision-making about careers well before discrimination can be seen.

However, Nigerian women do not wait for permission. Music-making by drummers, Waka players, bandleaders, conductors, satirists and hip-hop artists have helped to invent livelihoods that challenge inherited boundaries and speak from the experience of being a woman. Their successes create a space for possibility, but should not and will not be a justification for ongoing exclusion. This is not the right standard of success as a reflection of progress when a handful of women is excelling. Whether everyday women can access a variety of musical roles, safely work, be invested in, receive fair pay, and be supported to continue working without facing a gender-specific penalty.

Inclusion of the gender will make Nigeria's music industry robust if gender is not charity, but rather development in both the artistic, educational and economic sphere. People are found all over the place with talent. Opportunity, protection and authority must be all these also.

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