

Harnessing the Harmonious Sounds of Naija Music: A Catalyst for Ethnic Integration in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria, a nation of rich cultural diversity with several ethnic groups, has contended with challenges related to ethnic tensions, division, and management of ethnic diversity, employing various approaches to foster national integration. In the continual search for measures of fostering national integration, this study looks at a different perspective on the role of contemporary Nigerian music, often referred to as "Naija music," as a tool for fostering ethnic integration in the country. Relying on secondary sources such as articles, journals, texts, blogs and music statistical data, through content analysis, it observes that Naija music, characterized by its universal appeal, transcends geographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries, making it a unifying force that brings Nigerians from various ethnic backgrounds together. This paper argues that the popularity of Naija music, characterized by artists with audiences across all states of the federation, can foster common bonds amongst the diverse entities within the federation. This cross-cultural appreciation of Naija music demonstrates its potential as a unifying force in Nigeria. The findings of this research offer valuable insights into the use of music to foster national integration, enhance social cohesion, and promote unity among Nigerians.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Integration, National Unity, Naija Music, Youths.

Introduction.

Nigeria, with its assorted ethnic composition, has consistently struggled with national integration, given the numerous arrangements of identities, which, despite government efforts at unification, find themselves at more common points of divergence than convergence. As a result of this, ethnic tensions continue to rise with hostilities directed by members of one ethnic group against another. The government has initiated measures to unify the diverse elements of the country, such as the adoption of Federalism, federal character, unity schools, National service scheme, etc. and a host of other prescriptive measures to resolve the thorny problem of national unity in Nigeria. Despite these measures, Nigeria continues to grapple with problems of ethnic integration. The need for one whole and indivisible Nigeria calls for exploring other methods to cater to the perpetual need for ethnic integration.

Therefore, this study looks at music's role in fostering national integration, particularly pop music which has become mainstream among the youths enjoying mass consumption by various identities across the country. This is observable in social events such as weddings, concerts, and festivals,

where music from artists, regardless of their ethnic background, is unanimously patronized and enjoyed by all who listen to them. This discernible pattern, therefore, raises the question of the capacity of music to serve as a low-hanging complementary instrument of national integration in the country.

Thus, as Nigeria continues to find ways to foster national integration, pop music can serve as an instrument to enhance unity by bringing people of diverse ethnic identities in the country together. This unity is attained in the nuances, slang, dance, and melodies of the songs, which helps to connect individuals to similar sources of entertainment and bridge the ethnic divides that exist between them. The paper is organized into various sections, starting with the introduction, followed by the review of literature, The Unifying Power of Naija Music, Case studies of Naija music artists with cross-ethnic fan bases, Theoretical Framework, and implications for ethnic integration and national unity.

Conceptual Clarification

Music

Davies (2012) defines music as the deliberate organization of humanly created sound, systematically structured into a discernible aesthetic entity with the intent of facilitating communication orchestrated from a creator towards a designated or unforeseen audience, which can manifest either publicly through the conduit of a performer or privately when the performer transitions into the role of the listener. Similarly, Nnanyelugo & Ukwueze, (2020) adopting Alan's 1992 definition of music, explained it as an "art of expression in sound, rhythm, melody and harmony which is pleasant to the ear, and which may take the form of singing with or without an accompaniment (acapella) in choral music, instrumentation or a combination of singing and playing instrument Ogunrinade (2016) emphasizes that music is an arrangement of sound designed to evoke pleasure or excitement when heard, functioning as a source of entertainment, and also fostering a sense of camaraderie among individuals, weaving an intricate tapestry of pleasure, influence, and identity.

Ethnic Integration.

Musiyiwa (2008) defines national integration as the condition of unity and collaboration among the majority or entire population of an envisioned, aspired, or established nation, built to fulfil a particular objective, often in the pursuit of realizing and maintaining the nation's cherished aspirations. As per Nwabueze in Ekweariri (2012), the concept of national integration implies bringing together individual components and eliminating barriers that foster segregation. It entails achieving unity and cooperation, serving as the process of amalgamating distinct elements into a cohesive whole. An overarching definition is provided in the work (Uzoagba & Nwoha, 2018) by Weiner 1967 who explains national integration as the coexistence of a society with diverse ethnicities, each characterized by its unique language or distinct cultural traits. He identifies five key areas that make for holistic national integration. They include the amalgamation of varied cultural loyalties and the cultivation of national identity, the incorporation of political entities into a shared territorial framework with a governing body capable of exercising authority, the unification of those in power and those governed, the assimilation of citizens into a shared political process, and ultimately, the integration of individuals into purposeful organizational activities.

Review of Literature

Plurality and Diversity of the Nigerian State

Imam et al. (2014) contend that with over 374 different ethnic groups and a population of over 180 million, Nigeria is the third-most ethnically diverse country in the world, with a jumble of cumbersome and intricate identities. Nigeria adopted a federal system, described as best fitting for managing diversity in a manner that guarantees uniformity and preservation of group identity. However, the present reality is that the federal system itself has been defiled, with Osaghae & Suberu (2005) holding that the country is severely divided, with critical political issues fiercely disputed along the lines of convoluted ethnic, religious, and regional divisions with consequences fertile for state fragility and disintegration.

Another defining characteristic of the plural nature of Nigerian society is the existence of multilingualism, numbering over 515, spoken by over 373 ethnic groups. Similarly, as with multiple ethnic identities, Nigeria is also diverse along religious lines, not in the stretch of ethnicity, but with consequences as striking as ethnicity. This position is reaffirmed by Osaghae & Suberu (2005), stating that religious identification ranks next to ethnicity, and serves to activate ethnicity. Adediran et al. (2021) reiterate that over the years, attempts by Christianity and Islam to outwit one another in terms of doctrine, commitment, organization, and development have stymied their unity and led to the development of fanaticism, which has crystallized along ethnic lines. According to Canci & Odukoya (2016), the Igbo and other smaller ethnic groups living in the South are largely Christians, whereas the Hausa-Fulani and other smaller ethnic groups living in the North of the country are Muslims. The Yoruba people of the Southwest are almost equally Muslim and Christian, while groups in the middle belt consist of a mixture of Christians and Muslims. This split between the Muslim North and Christian South in Nigeria, particularly in Northern Nigeria, where Islamic identity predominates, increases ethnic fractionalizations.

Furthermore, Osaghae & Suberu (2005) argue that the country is also diverse along regional lines, particularly the North/South divide, which later became three regions and subsequently four before it collapsed under military rule. With regionalism reduced to "North for Northerners," "East for Easterners," and "West for Westerners," a discriminatory system that denied rights and privileges to persons from other regions living in these areas and removed them from the political process had taken root, further contributing to the strengthening of the divide between natives and non-natives. (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005) The country is also geographically diverse, with a semiofficial demarcation of the country into geo-political zones in the aftermath of the 1995 constitutional conference to accommodate states based on their ethnic similarity (Temitope Faluyi et al., 2019). This geographical demarcation also constitutes a form of plurality within the country, as pertinent national issues are usually considered along the lines of the geopolitical arrangement of the country, which sometimes at the elite level and the level of the masses generates contentious conflicts, further deepening flames of hostility in the country.

Thus, from the preceding discussions, Nigeria's plural nature remains as it has always been despite several legal and constitutional measures to wield disparate identities together. Some of these measures include the adoption of Federalism, the federal character principle, the quota system, zoning, etc. The inadequacies of these measures lie not in their capacity not to respond to the needs that demand them but largely in the manner of implementation.

Management of ethnic conflict in Nigeria/government response

Ojie & Ewruhjakpor (2009) opine that the first strategy for managing Nigeria's heterogeneity, particularly in response to conflict, was the adoption of Federalism, with the contention by Suberu, (2010) that Nigerian Federalism serves as a model of constructive federalist ethnic conflict-management. Furthermore, Ukiwo (2005) adds that Nigeria has used a variety of strategies to manage ethnic diversity, including the establishment of regions, states, and local governments, the switch from parliamentary system of government to presidential system of government, the institutionalization of quota systems, the outlawing of ethnic political parties, consociational politicking, and the adoption of the federal character principle, blaming inadequate implementation, distorted views, and a lack of political will as the causes of the persistent ethnic squabbles in the country.

Others include the therapeutic policies of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) and Unity Schools. Another adopted strategy for managing conflict is the Rotational Presidency between the six geopolitical zones, to ensure the polity's fairness, equity, and fair play. (Ojie & Ewruhjakpor, 2009; Ndubuisi, 2014). Other prescriptive measures identified by Adediran et al. (2021) include the institutionalization of democratic tenets, the institutionalization of the federal character, the protection of cultural rights, including the religious and linguistic rights of minorities, the promotion of inclusive narratives and socialization mechanisms, the establishment of the inter-religious council and the inter-ethnic council, respect and tolerance of cultural differences, and intergovernmental organizations.

Within the plethora of these prescriptive measures, this study locates the role of Pop music in Nigeria, which has become a dominant feature of national identity. Given the general geographic acceptance of the audience in Nigeria, particularly amongst the youths, it suffices to propose that music can significantly help blur divisive lines in Nigeria and foster social integration. Thus, the next section examines music and social integration, particularly within the Nigerian context.

Music and National Integration in Nigeria

Olaniyan (2006) contends that Nigeria's diverse ethnic makeup presents challenges in establishing a shared national identity, and transitioning from ethnic to national identity can be facilitated through social events, which can effectively communicate national identity such as language, dance, drama, music etc. Olabiwonninu & Amole, (2019) contend that music helps to communicate ideas, portray culture, socialize people, stimulate emotions etc. Implicit from the above is the potential role of music in fostering group integration. According to Parncutt & Dorfer (2011), once existential issues are resolved, art and music may play an essential secondary role in integration, with integration involving acceptance by groups, the lack of prejudice and frequency of contact, stressing that music plays an important role in the negotiation, construction, and maintenance of identities, as the kind of music listened to, shapes and expresses the identity of the listener.

As delineated by Jerome et al. (2022), music serves diverse functions, including emotional expression, aesthetic pleasure, entertainment, communication, symbolic portrayal, adherence to societal norms, affirmation of social institutions and religious ceremonies, cultural continuity and stability, and social integration. Sa'id et al. (2021) assert that music fosters unity and a shared sense of belonging among individuals, transcending diverse backgrounds. Lidskog (2016) further reiterates that music serves as a symbolic marker for groups, allowing expression and preservation

of identity, and provides a platform for shaping and reconsidering identity over time. (Lidskog, 2016)

Koelsch (2013) outlines the social functions of music, comprising: (i) contact, fostering connection among diverse individuals; (ii) cognition, enhancing understanding of the music maker's perspective; (iii) co-pathy, promoting emotional resonance and group cohesion; (iv) communication, facilitating interaction between listener and performer; (v) coordination, fostering enjoyment through synchronized actions like dancing; (vi) cooperation, involving multiple individuals in music production; and (vii) social cohesion, harmonizing diverse backgrounds and blurring divisive identities. These distinct social functions of music help to knit together individuals, thus imbibing the cultural elements of the music and translating them to interactions and relations with other individuals.

In Nigeria, the kind of music that enjoys favourable disposition, particularly amongst the youth, is popular music. Ojukwu et al. (2016) define popular music as all current musical expressions that possess widespread and immediate appeal, inherently capturing the attention of a large audience. The authors note further that Social media and other contemporary technologies have facilitated the diffusion of popular music, turning it into a powerful catalyst for transformation in both societal behaviour and a nation's economy. Ogunrinade (2016) posits that popular music, such as hip-hop and afrobeat, enjoys broad acceptance, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. It is characterized by universal accessibility, disregarding factors like ethnicity, religion, geography, gender, age, and socioeconomic status. According to Jerome, Perry et al. (2022), popular music plays a crucial role in shaping identity, fostering unity, and instilling pride. Examples like Hani music in China, Minoritet1 in Norway, and Iban in Malaysia illustrate how popular music can weave together diverse ethnic identities, reshaping notions of nationalism and influencing majority/minority dynamics, leading to the empirical contention by Jerome, Su-Hie et al. (2022) that Pop music plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions of unity and belonging, stressing that popular music has a significant impact on the way regular individuals perceive and experience a sense of unity and inclusion within various contexts, be it within a community, a specific location, a region, or a country.

In Nigeria, artists skillfully blend elements of their cultural identity into music, incorporating local and foreign styles. By drawing from various regions, artistes present a national expression rather than an ethnic one, contributing to the establishment of a unified Nigerian identity. Historical figures such as Victor Olaiya, I.K. Dairo, Celestine Ukwu, Osita Osadebe, and Fela Anikulapo Kuti exemplify this approach across highlife, juju, and Afrobeat genres. (Olaniyan, 2006). Ojukwu et al. (2016) stresses that the language of pop music in Nigeria is mostly composed of pidgin English and a medley of local languages such as Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, showcasing linguistic variety, while some exclusively perform in local languages. Those who perform exclusively in local languages also enjoy widespread patronage by people from other ethnic backgrounds which in the aforementioned social functions of music helps to ensure co-pathy and social cohesion, and which, helps to promote a national cultural identity.

Technology and innovation have brought about a new school of contemporary Nigerian artists enjoyed by the youths, such as 2face idibia, usually credited with attracting a whole new generation of millennials to Nigerian music, Psquare, Dbanj etc., who heralded a new generation of Pop Music from the early 2000's. (Ojukwu et al., 2016) These artists enjoyed significant national acclaim and patronage that saw them perform in almost every nook and cranny of the country. From festivals

to concerts to university socials and national events, their music traversed the entirety of the Nigerian ethnic makeup, which blurred divisive lines of tribal or ethnic disharmony. The rendition of their music with largely pidgin language is seen as a catalyst for revitalizing national identity, given its capacity to foster linguistic unity, facilitate social identification, and promote informal bonding and solidarity.

Such is the pattern in which the "new school" artists have emerged, whose music further transcends the ethnic conclave of their environment, enabled by the availability of various streaming platforms such as Spotify Music, Apple Music, etc. This new Afrobeats embraces the softer side of music and churns out lyrics focused on love, parties, fun, national issues, and sometimes religion. These new crops of Afrobeats laid the foundation for the new Afrobeats, with pioneering artists like Davido, Wizkid and Burna Boy championing this new generation and with fans across states in the Nigerian federation.

For example, in 2021, Spotify data revealed the top 10 music-listening cities in Nigeria, and the data is shown in Table 1 below

No	State	City
1	Lagos	Lagos
2	Niger	Suleja
3	FCT	Abuja
4	Rivers	Port Harcourt
5	Edo	Benin City
6	Enugu	Enugu
7	Anambra	Onitsha
8	Kano	Kano
9	Oyo	Ibadan
10	Imo	Owerri

Source: (Spotify 2021: SocietyNow, 2021)

Table 1 above shows that pop music by these new school artists is patronized across the major regions in Nigeria, even in states and cities that are accorded minority status within the Nigerian federation. It is also revealed that the most listened-to artists include Burna Boy, wizkid and Asake. Data also shows a 291% year-over-year rise in local music consumption, as Nigerians listened to nearly three times as much local music in 2022 as they did in 2021.(Eberechukwu Elike, 2022.) Another benefit of pop music in Nigeria which is a significant part of the entertainment industry, according to Onanuga (2019) is its impact in bolstering the country's economy, with artists consistently securing prestigious accolades at international award ceremonies on an annual basis. According to National Bureau of Statistics data, the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector consistently contributed at least 4% to Nigeria's GDP between 2016 and 2021. (Vanguard 2023.) This attests to the significant music consumption in Nigeria across all areas.

Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory

This theory deals with the group mentality and the study of how groups or categories of people behave in collectivity. It was propounded by Tajfel and Turner (1986). The theory helps to understand how humans form and maintain their social identities. The theory states that individuals

forge an identity for themselves, maintained through social contact with others. Group membership are formed based on shared characteristics like race, gender, religious affiliations or social status. The Social Identity theory also posits that people derive a part of their self-concept from their perceived membership in a group, which thus intertwines personal identity with group identity. The social identity theory highlights how a human's sense of belonging and status within a group shapes attitudes and behaviours. The social identity approach emphasizes the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of identity. Therefore, as stated above, our group affiliations are not static; they shift in response to the complex dynamics of human relationships and other environmental factors. (Cynthia, 2023: Paul, 2023)

One major factor that has influenced the growth of Naija Music is the intense emotional and social attachment music lovers feel towards their music idols and the music they produce. From the data available in this study, Naija music has played a pivotal role in unifying a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria. Naija music has been a significant source of employment and empowerment for Nigeria's predominantly youthful population. This accounts for why Naija music enjoys a national appeal. Across the lengths and breadth of Nigeria's vast Territory, music is a unifying language that is enjoyed by all. However, in this study, it must be pointed out that certain musical contents and lyrics which do not meet up with the required values and customs of a particular region of Nigeria can be subjected to censorship and a form of apathy. This explains why contemporary Nigerian Artists take their time to produce danceable, entertaining music that also addresses contemporary societal issues and trends in the industry. Thus, even social groups can influence the kind of music that makes the airwaves.

The Unifying Power of Naija Music; Emergence and Characteristics of Contemporary Naija Music, Naija's music's widespread popularity and appeal.

Historically, Afrobeats originated as a fusion of elements like traditional African rhythm, Jazz, Funk, and other contemporary musical elements. The use of lengthy instrumental solos, horn components, repeated grooves and complex interplay of diverse rhythms characterized this unique musical genre. Afrobeat attracted worldwide recognition because of its ability to fuse different styles. "Music is a weapon." these were the famous words of the King and Pioneer of Afrobeats; Fela Kuti who used his music as a weapon of protest and radicalism against successive military regimes in a post-independent Nigeria seeking a national identity.

Kwubei (2023) sees music as an integral part of Nigerian Society, with elements of varying cultural identities, particularly through interculturalism. Examples of contemporary Naija Musicians who have reflected some vital elements of interculturalism in their music are Phyno and Olamide's hit songs: Ojemba, Ghost Mode, etc. Interculturalism is reflected in the ways and manners in which artists of diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria unite to churn out musical content that gains nationwide acceptance across the airwaves through the use of popular slang spoken across Nigeria. (Kwubei, 2023) Nwamara, (2019) also shared this sentiment about the impact of music in Nigeria by describing music as an integral part of the everyday life of Nigerians, irrespective of ethnicity, religion or background. As a result, music is believed to play an essential role in early character moulding and inculcating cultural and moral values in Nigeria through various kinds of music. For music to facilitate national unity, there must be a fusion of diverse Nigerian languages in the new generation of Naija Music, as this allows it to gain broader national appeal across all strata of Nigerian society. (Nwamara, 2019)

Music plays a dual role in Nigeria. First, it contributes to human resource development, which provides employment and entertainment to many people across Nigeria. The second role, which is the focal point of this study, is music as a contributor to national resources, national integration, and nation-building. (Okoye, 2022) Afrobeat/Naija music has become Nigeria's selling point over the years by promoting Nigeria's cultural and global identity, tourism, economy, cross-cultural influence, and, above all, a form of national integration. Contemporary Naija Music artists like Olamide, Davido, Wizkid, and Asake enjoy nationwide support, and they have contributed a great deal in forging a sense of unity and national consciousness through their lyrics, which are national in outlook. Naija music is popularly enjoyed across all regions of the country, and its core characteristics in this contemporary time of infusing the various languages and dialects are noteworthy aspects of Naija music, which is a selling point. (Juliet, 2023)

It must also be noted that until recently, live performances by musical artists were exclusively reserved for the elites for important celebrations. However, in this era, music is accessible to every Nigerian who can access phones or other music-enabling devices. Burna Boy, Davido, Wizkid and Olamide are breaking the bounds and exporting Afrobeats/Naija Music to a global audience by shutting down famous venues across Europe and North America. Over the years, Naija music has proven to be a major tool which, if deployed by the government, will facilitate greater national integration and interconnectedness.

In recent times, Wizkid, Davido, Burna Boy, Olamide and Asake have played vital roles in exporting Naija music to a global audience that is now listening and paying close attention. This is evidenced by the many invites the above-listed artists and other Naija artists enjoy in international music shows and festivals. Thus, in this dispensation, Naija music has bridged cultural and physical barriers in selling and asserting itself in a global music industry that the American music industry has previously dominated. Rema, a contemporary and emerging Naija artist, could perform his hit songs at the FIFA Balloon dor for the first time in history. This was a significant milestone in Nigeria that is worth celebrating.

Contemporary Naija Music Artists with Cross-Ethnic Fan Bases: Patterns and trends in music Consumption and Appreciation

Artist	Geography of Top Listeners
Asake	Lagos, NG 542,833 listeners Katsina, NG 228,948 listeners Port Harcourt, NG 201,286 listeners London, GB 197,341 Listeners Nairobi, KE 160,364 listener
Odumodu	Lagos, NG 434,757 listeners Katsina, NG 197,547 listeners Port Harcourt, NG 186,836 listeners Ibadan, NG 102,910 listeners Anambra, NG 57,367 listeners
Davido.	Lagos, NG 484,311 listeners London, GB 255,340 Listeners Katsina, NG 202,840 listeners Port Harcourt, NG 185,463 listeners Amsterdam, NL 176,291 listeners
MI	Lagos, NG 54,817 listeners Katsina, NG 21,012 listeners Port Harcourt, NG 20,464 listeners Ibadan, NG 10,339 listeners Accra, GH 4,478 listeners
Omah lay	Lagos, NG 457,473 listeners Paris, FR 212,808 listeners Katsina, NG 196,854 listeners Port Harcourt, NG 189,119 listeners Amsterdam, NL 181,480 listeners
Kizz Daniel	Lagos, NG 422,795 listeners Katsina, NG 164,150 listeners Port Harcourt, NG 152,769 listeners Nairobi, KE 4,239,964 mol London, GB 99,669 Listeners

Source: Spotify 2023

Implications for Ethnic Integration and National Unity

This study has been able to highlight the multifaceted roles that Naija music can play in ethnic integration, national cohesion and national development through the diverse and dynamic musical

content that is produced for a ready-made and willing audience who consume this music for various reasons, and daily. Therefore, Naija music with its current trends and trajectory, based on available data and statistics has the potential of becoming a strong and domineering global musical genre that can surpass Hip Hop and other established global genres if properly nurtured, supported and exported as a product. With a unique selling point and a Nationwide consumption rate, Naija music can contribute to economic growth and the rise of the Country's GDP.

Emphasis must be laid on the importance of music education as a means to foster national development. Music education enlightens the populace and music Producers on the economics of music production, the employment opportunities that music offers and its unifying potential. When Musical Artistes are properly educated, they will help to use the contents of their music to promote socialization, traditional heritage, unity, oneness and harmony. (Daniel Anazia, 2016.) expressed concerns about the lyrics and contents of contemporary Naija music which he describes as a necessity since music is a means to foster socialization on a large scale. He questioned the validity of contemporary music which he questioned if it was content-based or simply commercial noise. Due to the pervasive nature of contemporary Naija music, it has had effects on the social and moral behaviour of Teenagers and youths. Most contemporary artists focus on the business side of music while paying little or no attention to the contents of the music. Some musical contents have proven to contribute to the moral decadence in society, thereby betraying the very essence of national integration. Some of these lyrics focus on sexualization, money, drugs, partying, girls, clubbing, etc. which have adverse effects on the socialization, mood and social interactions of Nigerian youths. Therefore, from the above, Naija music can only influence the nation-building process if it facilitates the promotion of creativity and positive messages that centre on the beautiful side of love, national unity, harmony, oneness and societal issues.

(D. O. Ogunrinade, 2015) Music creates job and wealth opportunities for a wide variety of people in the country ranging from Music Producers, to Song Writers, Videographers, Graphic designers, etc. Music and culture thus play mutual roles in unification and also offer unlimited potential for national development at both the human and material level for a multi-cultural and multi-lingual society like Nigeria.

(Udo-Awaih & Kelechukwu, 2018.) emphasized Nigerian music as part of the tourist industry which attracts economic development and national stability. Over the years, music has proven to be a major source of tourist attraction to Nigeria, Music has no language barrier and is a universal language that can be enjoyed globally irrespective of ethnic, religious and cultural affiliations.

Nigerian music serves as a powerful catalyst for cultural unity and national cohesion through various interconnected elements. Rooted in a shared cultural experience, it intricately weaves together diverse elements from Nigeria's rich cultural tapestry, breaking down barriers and fostering a common identity among its people. This inclusivity is exemplified in the language used by many Nigerian artists, seamlessly blending English with local languages to make their music accessible to individuals from different linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, the celebration of diversity within the lyrics and themes of Nigerian music promotes a sense of unity amid the country's various cultural identities.

The nationwide popularity of iconic artists like Wizkid, Davido, and Burna Boy transcends regional and ethnic boundaries, providing a shared cultural reference point for people across the nation. This popularity not only contributes to a positive national narrative by communicating

uplifting stories about Nigeria and its potential but also acts as a form of cultural diplomacy on the global stage. Nigerian music, embraced particularly by the youth, serves as a unifying force among the younger generation, resonating with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Social media platforms play a pivotal role in amplifying this unity, creating virtual spaces where conversations and interactions around Nigerian music connect people. Additionally, cross-cultural collaborations within the music industry and the vibrant festival and concert culture featuring popular Nigerian artists further exemplify unity, showcasing how individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together for a common cultural celebration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Nigerian music acts as a powerful catalyst for national integration by providing a shared cultural experience, promoting inclusivity, celebrating diversity, and fostering a positive national narrative. The widespread appeal and influence of these artists contribute to a sense of unity among the diverse cultural identities within Nigeria. This study was able to critically examine the roles played by Naija music in fostering national integration through the various data and statistics available. Therefore, this study can aptly conclude that music, in the last two decades has been the only tool and weapon that has united and integrated Nigerians of diverse ethnicities without recourse to violence and destruction. The role of music cannot be underestimated, and just as this study has fully highlighted the inherent potential of Naija music as a tool of national integration.

Therefore, more efforts should be put into the promotion of Naija music and contemporary Naija Artistes should become partners with the government and relevant agencies of Society in promoting peace, harmony and national development.

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