ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND NATION-BUILDING IN A DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract
Hunam's existence has noted the multifaceted role that art plays in the development of a nation. Over the years, art has also long been recognised as a potent tool for defining and sculpting cultural identities, nation-building and greatly influencing artistic expressions which act as a powerful force in forming communal unity, a sense of identity and cultural legacy. Focusing on major facets and effects on how artistic expressions impact the socio-cultural and political fabric of countries in the digital era, this paper presents an overview of the functions of creative expressions in nation-building, it illustrates how technology mediation affects socio-cultures and in what way this influences how identity, distinctive stories, historical experiences, civic involvement, social change, and value are transmitted between societies and individuals. This paper also explores artistic expression as mirrors that reflect a society's values, beliefs, and aspirations and explores how Nigeria with a leading role as the largest economy in Africa and leader in the continent's shift from fixed telephones to mobile phones, with over 220,715,961 million mobile internet subscribers who are driven by social media engagements, now stand a better chance to use technology as a vehicle for realistic artistic expressions and nation-building. This paper is anchored on Cultural Nationalism Theory and Cultural Policy Theory and uses quantitative data to inform its evaluations and submissions. The findings of this paper advocate that artistic expressions remain effective in building, preserving, and promoting nation-building in Nigeria and encourage the government to effect positive policies regarding this.

Keywords: *Artistic expression, Nation-building, Cultural policy, Cultural Nationalism, Digital Age*

1.0   Introduction
Art as a way of life is both intrinsic and externally fuelled by human activities to create and sustain changing cultures. Its relevance to society and nation-building is core and as old as human existence itself. From the early Maltravieso cave, Cáceres, Spain, which dates back over 64,000 years ago to the Egyptian cave art (9,000–6,000 BC), the ancient Taj Mahal colosseums of Mesopotamia, and the royal bronze arts from Benin, Ife, and Igbo Ukwu in Nigeria, artistic expression has illustrated its capacity to build a nation, document history and preserve human civilisation.

1.1   Background to the study
Man, as a creative agent, has employed artistic expressions to advocate, sustain, and transmit his cultural identity, values, and ethos from generation to generation since time immemorial. From the earliest cave art to modern civilization, artistic expressions have assisted man in sharpening, expressing, documenting, and transmitting his traditional, social, and political identities. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls between 1946 and 1956, which told the historical account of a lost world and civilization involving the interactions between man, angels, and spiritual beings; the remains of the Temple of Preah Vihear in Cambodia, which defined a people's belief system typology; the magnificent architectural art of the pyramid fields from Giza to Dahshur, Egypt, that showcase the culture of life after death; the Christ the Redeemer Art Deco statue of Jesus Christ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; The Igbo Ukwo bronze artefacts, Benin bronzes, Esie soapstone terracottas, and copper alloy head figures from Ife, which date back to the 1938's, are all iconic testaments to the impactful and dynamic potency of artist expression in conveying human culture and propelling nation-building, (Kleiner,2010).

In Nigeria, artistic expressions, before Nigeria's independence and post-independence, have remained a formidable tool in sharpening, orienting, and influencing the populace's mindset. From visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, and new media arts, artistic expressions like music, dance, theatre, and drama, paintings, print and book publications, illustrations, fashion, sculpture, and photography, to mention a few, have aided in the transmission of both traditional and contemporary information and

ideas from the past to the present day. Coupled with, famous artists like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Oris Wiliki, Bright Chimezie, the Oriental Brothers, Majek Fashek, Oliver de Coque, King Sunny Ade, Chief Ebenezer Obe, and literary giants like Chinua Achebe, Professor Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda N. Adiche, Ben Okri, and contemporary Nigerian artists like Akinola Lasekan, Dele Jegede, Uche Okeke, Ben Enwonwu, Obiora Udechukwu and professor Ola Olide, to mention a few, have all demonstrated how artistic expressions could be used as a vehicle for nation-building.

In addition, so much has evolved within man's contemporary evolution and his use of the arts to enhance his immediate socio-political and cultural space, environment, and nation. The transmission of values, education, and social life through artistic expressions mediated by technology has also, in many ways, impacted our society and how we view our nation and the world around us.

Based on the above, this paper stresses the adoption of this contemporaneous shift, which encourages technological intrusion in human affairs, and how this affects and influences human interactions, relationships, entertainment, productivity, experiences, economic impact, societal, political, and communicative factors, among others, as a viable vehicle for prompting artistic expressions and influences for nation-building.

Of note, only $5 billion, or 25% of Africa's potential Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over $20 billion, is being generated by the continent, according to UNESCO. This means Nigeria's artistic potential can only be fully realised with significant investment and government backing. According to ARTSLIT Limited (2023), -an indigenous online visual art space marketer and art promoter, Nigeria might make over $13 billion a year by leveraging its booming art industry. Furthermore, the Nigerian art industry needs to be encouraged to grow alongside the country's estimated GDP, estimated at $440 billion if it must catch up with its African and global counterparts, who are already earning and growing their GDP via art expression. In the words, if the arts and creative economy contribute to youth engagement in countries with higher GDPs and thriving art markets.it is expected that the 157 million youth population segment in Nigeria stated by Worldometer, (2023) can become a creative force that can lead to a viable socio-cultural integration and national GDP. (Ovio, as cited in the Cable, 2023)

Statista (2023)- Figure 1, equally stated that roughly 197.6 million US dollars, or 154 billion Nigerian nairas (NGN), or 0.7 per cent of Nigeria's GDP, came from the film and music industries in 2023 while the information and communication industry's most lucrative sector (telecommunications and information services), added 2.84 trillion NGN (about 3.64 billion US dollars) in GDP, despite substantial investments in the movie and music industries. This reiterates the views of Ovio, (as cited in the Cable, 2023) on the above that artistic expression could be channelled for effective national GDP growth.
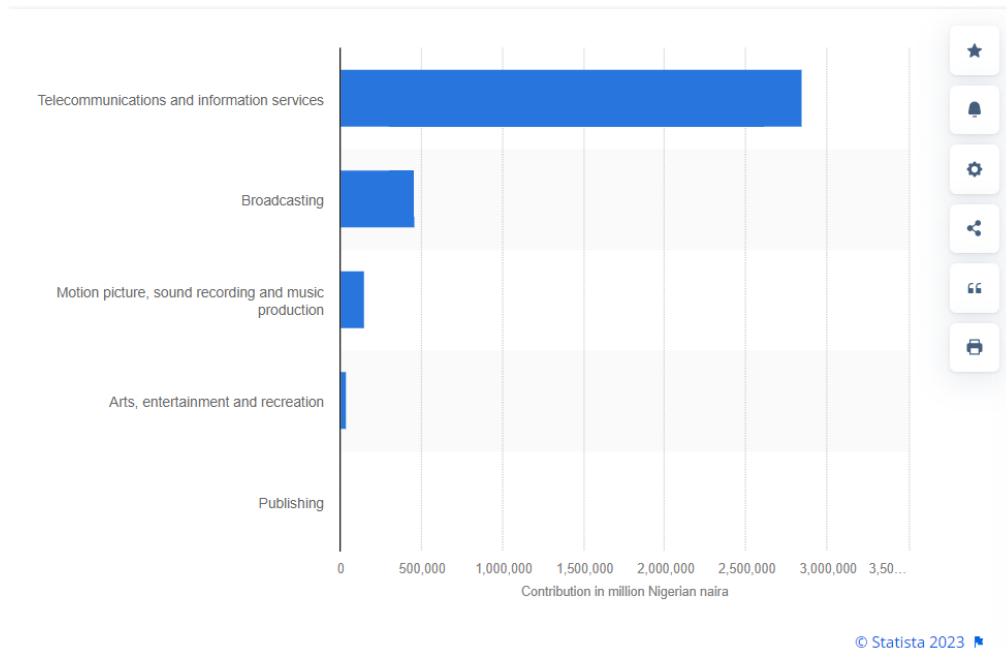
Figure 1. *Contribution of Nigeria's creative and communication industry to the GDP in 2023. Image source: Statista, (2023)*

1.2   Research Problem

The contemporary socio-economic environment is characterised by rapid changes, including the advancement and convergence of technology and artistic endeavours. While there has been much scholastic work on the milieu, only a few have been able to address the urgent need to explore the effectiveness and potential of technological mediation to provide a feasible avenue for artistic contributions towards nation-building. The question of how Nigeria could use various digital tools and interactive platforms to address the current cultural migration and influences of foreign cultures and shape experiences capable of unlocking Nigeria's artistic potential for "social cohesion" and "cultural progress in the context of national life arises. This study thus seeks to explore the use of digital solutions, with an emphasis on how artistic expression contributes to the development of a nation. By addressing these issues, the study findings can help policymakers and the government choose the best ways to assist the creative sector while also establishing the appropriate cultural identities for nation-building and fostering equitable socio-cultures, ethos, and social values in Nigeria.

1.3   Research questions

  a) How does art expression contribute to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage within the context of nation-building?
  b) What role do Digital media platforms play in expanding the reach of artistic expression in Nigeria?
  c) How do government policies, institutions, and funding impact the relationship between art expression and nation-building?
  d) How does Artistic content in the digital age have the power to inspire patriotism and unity?
  e) What are the challenges and barriers artists face when using their work to contribute to nation-building, and how can these challenges be addressed?

1.4   Research Objectives

The objectives of this study include the following:

  a) To investigate the role that artistic expression plays in nation-building through the promotion and protection of cultural heritage
  b) To enumerate how digital media platforms contribute to the dissemination of artistic expression in Nigeria

c) To determine how money, institutions, and policies of the government can affect the relationship between artistic expression and nation-building.
d) To explain how, in the digital age, artistic content may promote togetherness and patriotism
e) To enumerate the difficulties and obstacles that artists encounter when utilising their creations to support the development of their country and provide ways to overcome them.

2.0   Literature Review

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, 1949-51, (as cited in Tuer (1992)) attributed that "It is in the national interest to support institutions that convey national sentiment, develop shared understanding, and add to the variety and depth of rural and urban life in Canada", Tuer investigated what lies beneath the hallowed aura that ties federal arts funding to national identity and centralization of cultural finance to the maintenance of national unity and wondered whether such internal cultural policies or official culture wouldn't lead to the development of an inferior and dependent culture identity that is partly influenced by elitist culture and imperialism tendencies. The UNESCO Cultural Policy of 1969, on the other hand, contradicts Tuer's viewpoint because, rather than a government intervention as an internally controlled move on cultural policy that distributes high-class cultures unfamiliar to the masses, it is the democratisation of culture that ignores the dilution of standards, enabling everyone, men and women alike, regardless of social origin or economic condition, to develop their personalities to the fullest and participate fully in cultural activities that foster nation building. This aligns with the position of this paper.

This aspect of the study examines documented past findings on the milieu and draws connections to the gaps identified. It provides a critical and systematic examination of existing research, publications, and scholarly works related to this study topic. The researcher thematic review of the literature is as follows:

2.1.   Components of Nation Building and its Objectives

The process of bringing together a society of people with different histories, languages, cultures, and religions within the borders of a sovereign state with a single national constitution and legal system, a national public education system, an integrated national economy, and shared symbols and values is known as nation-building. These people work to eliminate historical divisions and injustices, promote unity, and cultivate a conscious sense of being proudly patriotic state men and women, devoted to the nation, and open to the continent and the world. (Okeke, Ike, and Oku, 2022)

According to Alesina and Reich (2015), half of all French youngsters spoke a foreign language in 1860. French was a country of different languages, dialects, and currencies back then. Travelling outside of one's community was uncommon because of the communication barriers, and hatred of the French state was rampant. French rulers therefore stressed the imperative "to form a homogeneity of French citizens, culture and state" beginning with the *French Revolution* and continuing into the nineteenth century.
Similarly, after Italy's unification in 1860, which was headed by a Northern elite that then dominated the country -Massimo d'Azeglio (one of the country's founders) famously observed, "Italy has been made; now it remains to make Italians." This was because as of 1860, at most only ten percent of the Italian population spoke what would become the Italian language. Of the pre-unification states, just one railway line crossed them all, and several of them were overtly antagonistic to the new country. Hence measures like imposed compulsory military service, frequently with the express intention of integrating and mixing people from different parts of the nation; prohibition of languages other than the *national language* in schools; extended road and rail connections; and instituted state-controlled education, including compulsory stated influenced elementary schooling where the national language and values where taught. "Frenchmen" and "Italians." Were thus formed in the late 19th and early 20th century using cultural nationalism, (**Patriarca,** 2010; **Gooch,** 2013).

This is akin to the introduction of the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme in 1973 which was introduced by the Nigerian federal government after the civil war of the late 1960s with a core focus to re-integrate the country.

In light of the above, the objectives of nation-building refer to a set of plans and tactics used to reconstruct a prosperous, stable, and unified nation and are sought in nations that have experienced substantial political, social, and economic upheaval. These objectives include Political stability, Economic development, Social cohesion, Security, Education and Health, Infrastructure development, Good governance, Cultural preservation, Reconciliation, International Relations, Environmental Sustainability and Rule of Law.

Relying on the above, **Lyttelton,** (2001), asserted that homogeneity is the core ingredient of nation-building, Lyttelton argued that "There cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles" to promote national ideas. This belief holds that Nations remain together when inhabitants share common values and tastes and can interact with one another. People's homogeneity can be fostered by education, teaching a single language, and constructing infrastructure for easy travel, but it can also be built through brutal force, such as *outlawing local cultures* or even *genocide*. The researcher alludes to the above to justify some of the cultural nationalism policies and decrees (like the regional compulsory education of 1954) handed out when Nigeria became a federating state.

Part of the preceding statement equally emphasises the multidimensional scope of nation-building, in the context of this study, it reiterates Ovio, (as cited in the Cable, 2023) argument and poses the challenges faced by the Art practitioners (who are part of the mediums for nation-building) as they attempt to contribute to nation-building. Therefore since it is the government and policymakers who direct, fund, and support the areas they trust will best provide homogeneity, national values and cohesion, since the utilisation of creative expressions remains pragmatic in reaching the same purpose and has remained an age-old practice for nation-building, the researcher argues that the government at all levels in Nigeria should not shy away from funding the medium of Art expression.

2.2.   Art as a Medium of Transmission

In the views of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), (2024)-World Heritage Convention, Polynesian art, sculptural pieces such as the huge stone of Easter Island from Rapa Nui culture, which stood at a height of 60 feet (88 tonnes) and dated back to the A.D. 300, are a remarkable and distinctive ethnoreligious cultural art of the Rapanui people which were used in ritual rights and practices that honour the continuity of life after death and deification. This belief system like other historical facts, became possible through the artistic culture of oral tradition and documented history passed on from one generation to another as a form of art education.

Fichner-Rathus (2010) believed that through art we can give the concepts of beauty, truth, immortality, order and harmony true expressions and that art enables us to weave our experiences into a coherent body of knowledge and communicate them. Thus the concept of the role of artistic expression in nation-building is based on the goal of supporting human development, cohesion, economic growth, and socio-political and socio-cultural advancement through artistic mediums. *Because art has touched everything around us and is all around us.*

In most industrialised countries, artistic expressions are used as means of religion and moral instruction, education, product manufacturing, emotion and idea sharing, and experience enlargement. Diogu (nd). He argued that art played a pivotal role in Nigeria's traditional pre-independence, where the use of dance, music, folklore, and knowledge of cultural archetypes (cultural policy) formed the basis of education and the transmission of cultural belief and value systems especially after the civil war of 1967-1970. Contemporary scholars believe that the post-independence civilization opened us up to the aftermath of colonial imperialism and the beginning of cultural migrations via Western media that brought illusive changes to our traditional value system, yet artistic expression has remained a frontline vehicle for re-orientating and re-routing consciousness and sustaining native cultural ethos.

In their study, Eze and Uzo, (2019) stated that the huge importance of visual art in developing a strong and virile Nigeria has not received enough scholarly attention. They averred that art has been the basis of the achievements of most great world civilizations from ancient times to the present, from ancient

Greece to the mediaeval era and the high Renaissance (1500–20 AD). Given their account, the researcher deduce that the historical facts discovered in Nigerian ancient arts of Ife, Benin, Igbo Ukwu and Esie among others which describe an indigenous civilization remain a potent clue to the veracity of art as a formidable tool for nation-building. The researcher also strongly opines that it is imperative therefore that the government of the day pay more attention to the influence of artistic expression and its impact on society and sociocultural economy.

2.3 `Art Technology and Nation-Building
It was Pablo Picasso who stated that "mystery enhances experiences and that too much knowledge will compromise the authenticity of the relationship between art and the viewer" While we could assent that Picasso was half right, current trends and innovations that amplify artistic experiences abound in today's digital age. These mediations employ knowledge-based technologies to give better meaning to works of art and allow viewers to relate to the work of art better. From virtual reality technology (VR) to immersive creative learning and experiences (IE) and Artificial intelligence which adopt next-generation technology to foster contemporary art education and appreciation. Thus human civilization is on a trajectory where technological-based knowledge (AI) now enhances artistic interpretations.

The use of technology to improve and influence human interactions in society and daily life is referred to as technological mediation. Verbeek (2015) articulates that it describes human interaction with technology and how this interaction shapes human perspective, culture and daily practice. Rosen, Cheever, Rokum, Carrier, and Whaling (2013) in Toluwani (2022) noted that research into this milieu is difficult because interactions between humans and things are dynamic; spatial, and result in a variety of outcomes.

If the above is true, the researcher submits that artistic expression submerged in technology is a better way to interpret and simplify these complex interactions. In addition, Toluwani's (2022) contribution to Verbeek's notion noted that since technology could impact human behaviour, interactions between humans and technology can be creatively innovated to accomplish specific objectives. In this context, it could take on the role of a medium for accomplishing nation-building objectives (political stability, economic development, social and cultural cohesion and unity, security, education, and health). Some technology-mediated platforms in today's society include social media platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, X-formally Tweeter, TikTok, Pinterest, and more), websites, AI technologies for mobile phones, augmented reality arts, and immersive experience learning. All these are potent avenues that can mediate artistic expression for nation-building objectives,

2.4 Summary of Literature Review.
It is critical to understand the significant implication of art as a form of cultural and traditional expression, as well as its important function in nation-building. Art, as a channel for cultural, knowledge, and educational transmission, serves to preserve and convey the essence of a society's heritage which then evolves into a national culture. Furthermore, art expressions, serve as an indicator of national development and technical improvement, representing a society's progress and values over time. The above reviews emphasise that artistic expressions are equipped to play a critical role in today's digital world. As a result, efforts should be made to use art's potential to preserve and promote cultural heritage.

By incorporating art into modern digital technologies, we can effectively overcome cultural, political, and socioeconomic gaps. Besides, art expressions can stimulate inspiring patriotism and nationalism, fostering a sense of unity and pride among individuals within a nation – thus affirming its role as a tool for nation-building.

3.0 Methodology and Theoretical Anchorage
To collect data for this paper, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used. Primary data were gathered through surveys, while secondary data were gathered through online and offline works of literature. This study relies theoretically on the Cultural Nationalism Theory by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), which refers to movements of group allegiance based on shared heritage,

cultures, religion, symbolism, history, songs, semiotics, ethos, and nationalist belief systems rather than ethnicity or institutions of statehood, and the Cultural Policy Theory by UNESCO (1960), which emphasises government's role and actions in promoting laws and programmes that regulate fund, and support activities related to the arts and creative sectors (such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, literature, and filmmaking, among others) that serve as a medium of nation-building. A descriptive essay method was thereafter employed to analyse findings and grow submissions.

3.1. Data Population, Collection and Analysis

This paper used quantitative data (mainly questionnaires) to inform its evaluations and submissions on the milieu. Because of the limitation of time and proximities, Google Forms and analysis were used to administer the questionnaire online which was anchored on the Cultural Nationalism and Cultural Policy theories.

The questionnaire included 20 items and was designed using a 5-point Likert scale. Of the over 90 population (participants) enrolled for this study, 52 actively participated in the online administered questionnaire, with 35 male respondents accounting for 67.3% of the total and 17 female respondents accounting for 32.7%. Respondents state residence and location ranged throughout numerous Nigerian states, with Anambra State having the most respondents, followed by Lagos and Ogun (see Figure 2). 15.4% of respondents had a first degree, while 23.1%, 13.5%, and 40.4% held master's degrees, PhDs, or Western African Examination Council (WAEC) certifications, respectively. 3.8% of respondents held both a higher diploma and an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) or National Certificate in Education (NCE). The median age of respondents was 35-45 (19,2%) while the 15-25 years' bracket appears to be the highest respondents age range. The mode of statistical analysis was used to evaluate the frequency count of the data sets.
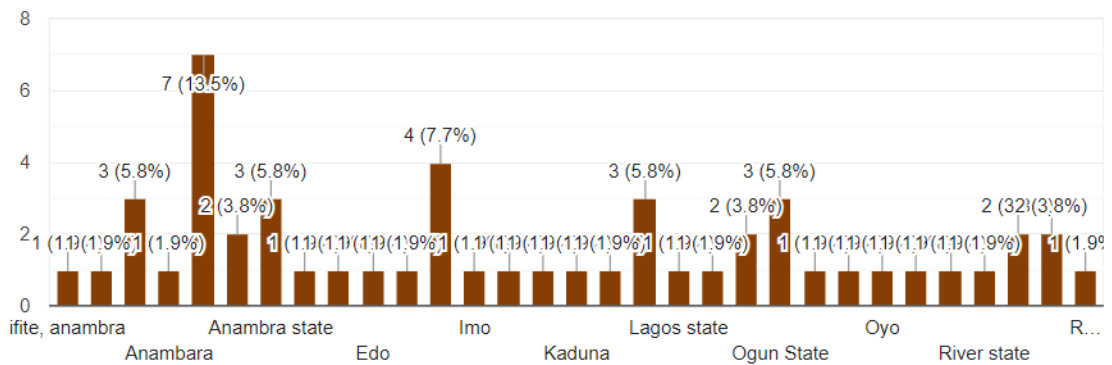

Figure 2: Histogram chart of *questionnaire respondents by location and state of resident distribution. Image source: Toluwani, (2023)*

3.2 Results/Findings

The questionnaire's Likert scale parameters ranged from strongly disagree to disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree, with strongly disagree having the lowest value (i.e., strongly disagree-1, disagree-2, neutral-3, agree-4, and strongly agree-5); the questionnaire results are shown in the table below.

Table 1.

Table of modal distribution of data frequency.

SN	5 Likert Scale questions	Strongly Disagree-1	Disagree-2	Neutral-3	Agree-4	Strongly Agree-5
1	Artistic expression plays a vital role in shaping the cultural identity of a nation.	3 (5.8%)	0	1 (1.9%)	20 (38.5|%)	28 (53.8%)
2	Digital media platforms have expanded the reach of artistic expression in our nation.	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	25 (48.1%)	24(46.2%)
3	Artistic content in the digital age has the power to inspire patriotism and unity.	0	0	5 (9.6%)	27 (51.9%)	20 (38.5%)
4	Digital technology has democratized artistic expression, allowing more voices to be heard.	0	0	4 (7.7%)	23(44.2%)	24 (46.2%)
5	Government support for digital art initiatives is crucial for nation-building.	0	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.7%)	23 (44.2%)	24 (46.2%)
6	Artistic expression on social media can foster a sense of belonging to a nation.	0	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	30 (57.7%)	20 (38.5|%)
7	Online artistic communities contribute to the preservation of traditional culture.	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.7%)	3 (5.8%)	31 (59.6%)	13 (25%)
8	The government should invest in the development of digital art education.	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	0	17 (32.7%)	32 (61.5%)
9	Artistic content online can challenge prevailing narratives about our nation.	2 (3.8%)	0	3 (5.8%)	23 (44.2%)	24 (46.2%)
10	Artistic expression is a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy in the digital age.	1 (1.9%)	0	1 (1.9%)	31 (59.6|%)	19 (36.5%)
11	Digital art can convey complex political and social messages effectively.	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	24 (46.2%)	24 (46.2%)
12	Online artistic expression can bridge generational gaps within our nation.	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	10 (19.2%)	26 (50%)	13(25%)
13	Artists should take a more active role in addressing national issues through their work.	2 (3.8%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	19 (36.5%)	29 (55.8%_

| 14	Digital art can be a force for positive change in our society.	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.8%)	3 (5.8%)	17 (32.7%)	28 (53.8%)
15	The government should regulate artistic content on the internet to protect national values.	3 (5.8%)	6 (11.5%)	7 (13.5%)	18 (34.6%)	18 (34.6%)
16	Digital art can help resolve societal conflicts within our nation.	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	7 (13.5%)	28 (53.8%)	14 (26.9%)
17	Citizens have a responsibility to support local digital artists.	0	4 (7.7%)	4 (7.7%)	25 (48.1%)	19 (36.5%)
18	The government should provide funding for national art exhibitions in the digital space.	0	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	22 (42.3%)	27 (51.9%)
19	Digital art can influence public opinion and policy decisions.	0	0	1 (1.9%)	36 (69.2%)	15 (20.8%)
20	Artistic expression should adapt to the digital age to remain relevant to our nation.	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	2 (3.8%)	24 (46.2%)	23 (44.2%)
	Frequency Count	19	62	186	489	438
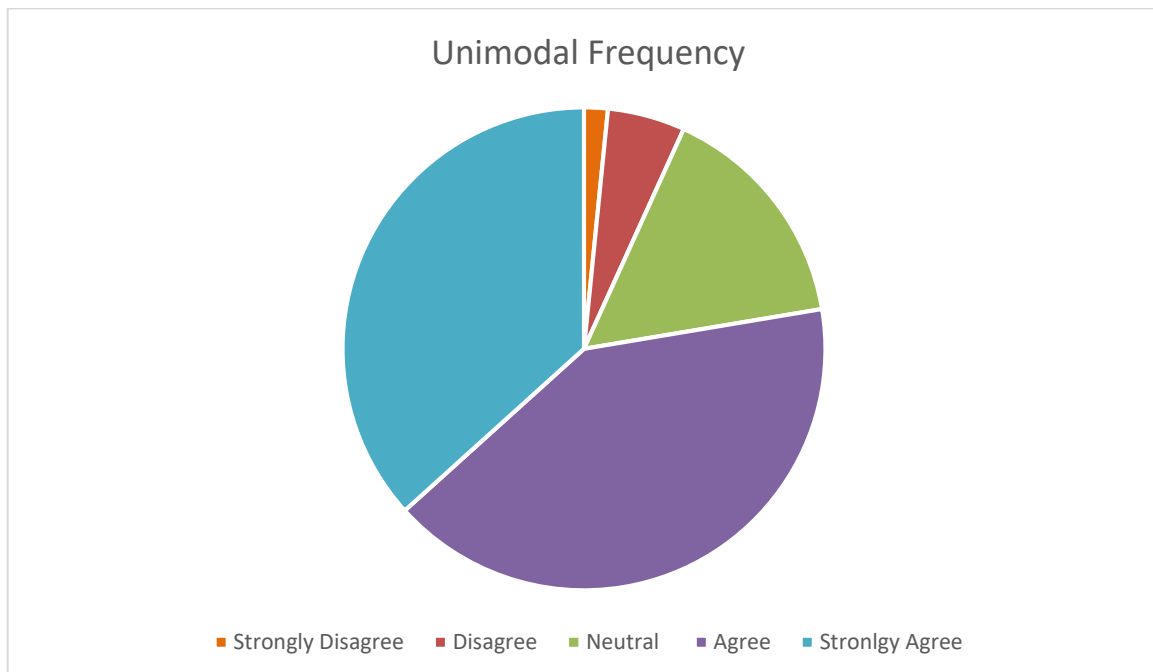
Figure 2. *A pie-chart representation of modal data frequency outcomes. Image source: Toluwani, (2023)*

Notes: Figure 2 shows a *modal* frequency count that reflects the highest frequency pitching on the agreed scale with 489 frequency counts.

153

3.3 Discussion of Findings
The components and findings of this study agree with the elements of the research questions and objectives which the researcher sought answers for. Thus this section discusses the study's findings given for *Artistic Expression and Nation-Building in A Digital Age* **objectives.**

Relating the finding to the objectives of this study, the researcher observed that Questionnaires (QRE.) 1, 3,6,9,10 and 20 addressed the first objective of this study which was to investigate the role that artistic expression plays in nation-building through the promotion and protection of cultural heritage. It presented *modal* replies, with the maximum frequencies falling between the agree and strongly-agree Likert scales (28, 27, 30, 24, 31 and 24) respectively. To further analyze the respondents' emotions regarding the questionnaires, the researcher multiplied the numerical value of each emotional Likert scale level by the number of respondents, summed the totals, and divided it by the total number of respondents. The results equally position responses on a positive scale which stood above 4 points.

Table 2.

> *Table of analysis showing respondents' emotional response to questionnaire (QRE 1,3,6,9,10, and 20 data frequencies*

SN	QREs	Emotional level measurement	
1	QRE 1	3+0+3+80+140 = 226/52 = 4.4	4.4
3	QRE 3	0+0+15+108+100 = 223/52 = 4.3	4.3
6	QRE 6	0+2+3+92+120 =217/52 +4.2	4.2
9	QRE 9	2+0+6+9+92+120=223/52= 4.3	4.3
10	QRE 10	1+0+3+124+95 =223/52 =4.3	4.3
20	QRE 20	1+2+6_96+115 = 220/52 = 4.2	4.2

The significance of this finding connotes that the role that artistic expression plays in nation-building through the promotion and protection of cultural heritage is effectual, it also projects Art expression as a viable tool according to the findings.

The second objective of this study, which was *to enumerate how digital media platforms contribute to the dissemination of artistic expression in Nigeria,* was also itemised by the findings from QREs . 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 19. These all returned positive frequencies and reiterated the important role digital technology plays in fostering art expressions in nation-building, particularly QRE 2 and 3, as seen in the table below, which emphasised the lucid role technologically mediated art expressions play in nation-building.

Table 3.

> *Table of analysis showing respondents' modal frequency distribution for QRE 2 and 3 questionnaire data sets*

SN	Questionnaire	Strongly Disagree- 1	Disagree-2	Neutral-3	Agree-4	Strongly Agree-5
2	QRE 2	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	25 (48.1%)	24(46.2%)
3	QRE 3	0	0	5 (9.6%)	27 (51.9 %)	20 (38.5%)
	Frequency count	1	2	18	208	220

The above findings give credence to the role that social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X-formerly Twitter, Pinterest, Ticktok, and WhatsApp, to mention a few, have played in fostering artistic expressions that promote nation-building.

Thirdly, it was the objective of this study *to determine how money, institutions, and policies of the government affect the relationship between artistic expression and nation-building.* Thus, the research in QRE 5, 8, 15, and 18 echoed the concerns of government infractions towards the smooth sailing of artistic expression for nation-building in a digital age. In Nigeria, these assumptions and concerns are

predicated on government funding for art exhibitions at national levels and art initiatives, investment in digital art education, and favourable government regulations and policies.

The private and other non-governmental institutions are not left out in this pursuit because, if directed appropriately, the obvious result seen in the implementation of cultural policy and the cultural nationalism drive in the United Arab Emirates would be replicated in Nigeria. Thus fundamentally, the above are very crucial for a viable cultural nationalism and cultural policy direction that could build a nation and set it aside from others.

Fourthly, this study took into cognisance objective 4 which sought *to explain how, in the digital age, artistic content may promote togetherness and patriotism*. As seen in other continents and nations that have thrived following their cultural nationalism and cultural policies (the Republic of China, Russia, United Kingdom, The United Arab Emirate, and Singapore), Nigeria could evolve if it harnesses the strength of its cultural diversity and art as a tool for nation building.

In providing a ground for the above thoughts, the researcher in QRE 1,3,6,10,12 and 14 observed the *modal* frequencies hinge on all positive scale levels (Agree & Strongly Agree) for the data sets. Frequency Table 4 below, indicates a strong *modal* shift towards the use of artistic expressions for shaping cultural identity, inspiring patriotism and unity; fostering a sense of belonging; serving as a tool for cultural diplomacy, bridging generational gaps and remaining a force for positive change.
Hence the researcher relying on the above findings submits that artistic content expression in this digital may hold the key to promoting togetherness and patriotism among Nigerians.

Table 4.
Table of analysis showing respondents' modal frequency distribution for QRE 1,3,6,10,12 and 14 questionnaire data sets

SN	Questionnaire	Strongly Disagree- 1	Disagree-2	Neutral-3	Agree-4	Strongly Agree-5
1	QRE 1	3 (5.8%)	0	1 (1.9%)	20 (38.5|%)	28 (53.8%)
3	QRE 3	0	0	5 (9.6%)	27 (51.9%)	20 (38.5%)
6	QRE 6	0	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	30 (57.7%)	20 (38.5|%)
10	QRE 10	1 (1.9%)	0	1 (1.9%)	31 (59.6%)	19 (36.5%)
12	QRE 12	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	10 (19.2%)	26 (50%)	13(25%)
14	QRE 14	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.8%)	3 (5.8%)	17 (32.7%)	28 (53.8%)
	Frequency count	6	12	63	604	640

In relating findings to objectives 5 - *"To enumerate the difficulties and obstacles that artists encounter when utilising their creations to support the development of their country and provide ways to overcome them"*, the researcher explores the outcomes of QRE 5,8,17 and 18 to list some of the challenges.
Similar to many African nations still dealing with the effects of cultural migration, foreign media influences, government funding, acceptance of local content by the populace, and digital illiteracy, Nigeria faces a range of challenges that hinder the impact of artistic expression as a tool for nation-building. During the 5th stakeholders forum of the National Gallery of Art (NGA) event held at the Aso Hall, International Conference Centre, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, on February 27, 2024, and chaired by Gen. Dr Yakubu Gowon (GCFR), former Head of State (1966–1975), it was emphasised that artistic and creative expressions are essential for nation-building and require full government

support. Dr. Gowon stressed the importance of government assistance for local artists and creatives to compete effectively on the global stage and enhance their contribution to the nation's GDP. He also advocated for the establishment of a National Gallery of Art in Abuja to promote tourism, cultural integration, and the implementation of cultural policies.

The researcher's findings for QRE. 5, 8, 17, and 18 encapsulate the aforementioned opinion and reaffirm this paper's stance. The total frequency exhibited a *modal* distribution, with a peak at 510 on the "strongly agree" scale, clearly indicating that the data aligns with the views and goals of this paper.

Table 5.
Table of analysis showing total' modal frequency distribution for QRE 5,8,17, and 18 questionnaire data sets.

SN	5 Likert Scale questions	Strongly Disagree-1	Disagree-2	Neutral-3	Agree-4	Strongly Agree-5
	Total Frequency count for QRE. 5, 8, 17, and 18	2	16	30	348	510

4.0 Conclusion

Artistic expression plays an indispensable role in nation-building, particularly in the digital age, as illuminated by this study. To fully leverage its potential, governments, institutions, the private sector, and the general populace must unite in supporting the effective utilisation of various art forms, including visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, and new media arts. These encompass music, dance, theatre, drama, paintings, print and book publications, illustrations, fashion, sculpture, and photography, all of which serve as powerful tools for fostering national development.

The study positions that the arts and creative economy significantly contribute to youth engagement, making it imperative to harness their capacity as a creative force capable of leading to viable socio-cultural integration and national unity. Moreover, with the advent of knowledge-based technologies and high social media engagement, artworks and expressions can acquire richer meanings, enabling viewers to better connect with them online and offline. This dynamic can give rise to a robust cultural policy and national culture that not only unifies but also drives economic growth, thereby catalysing socio-economic development and nation-building.

4.1 Recommendation

The researcher believes that with more art-friendly government policies and funding, along with public support, nations would become more integrated, socially and culturally connected, and economically sustainable.

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