

MUSICAL ARTS EDUCATION AND ITS CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MEDIA ERA OF MUSIC JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

This paper focuses on the practices in the new media era of music journalism in Nigeria in relation to the old paradigm of Journaling music. The emergence of internet has brought all most a total shift of music journalism that was formerly presented in print, radio and television. For over a decade now, the online trending practices of music journalism in Nigeria have both positively and negatively affected the profession which includes the easy entry and exit. Employing descriptive research design, this study aims to showcase the trending practices of online music journalism in Nigeria. The study further discusses the challenges in the new media era and thus, suggests the ways to restructure the ideas through music education with regard to the standard of the old paradigm of music journalism in Nigeria.

Overtime, traditional journalism has always shown resilience by getting over whatever challenge thrown up by technological advancement for example from print to radio; from radio technology to television; from satellite technology and now to internet. Today, the revolution brought about by the internet has opened the journalist gateway for different people to practice the profession. The new digital system which consist of mobile phones, computer, internet, social media and other digital gadgets have changed the face of journalism not just in Nigeria but the entire globe. Accordingly, with the aid of these portable and affordable gadgets, a music journalist can record, process, edit and distribute news for mass consumption in any environment and at any given time. The online environment has created opportunities to the young generation and has made today's music journalism a

“mobile office”. The internet has redefined the power relations between the news producers and the news consumers unlike in the traditional music journalism as the consumers are now more empowered to take responsibility of what they consume. There is always a room for interaction between the news producer and the consumers (fans of the music artist involved in the news shared). Most times, the interactions or reactions from the consumers seem to be chaotic (see naijaloaded.com).

However, music Journalism in the new media era, has been tagged anybody's business where non-professional music journalists or critics irrespective of their professions post musical news online for the consumption of the masses. This has diminished the value and standard of journalism by conferring the highly cherished status of a music journalist on anyone who has in his/her possession a mobile phone, computer and other electronic devices. Tolabi (2011) opines that the process by which computerization or digitization impacted upon the media of the 21st century has moved on many fronts and at different speeds (p. 16). This is as a result of the digital system that the internet permits. The internet is the fastest growing medium of music journalism as it has made the world a global village. This is attainable because it is accessible in any part of the world. Consequently, there are emerging trends and practices of music journalism of today that are completely different from the old paradigm and their “distinguishing qualities include ubiquitous news, global information access, instantaneous reporting, interactivity, Multimedia content, and extreme content customization” (Pavlik as cited in Emmanuel 2017, p. 12).

Research on music journalism in Nigeria has received little or no attention by music scholars. Therefore, this study focuses on the trending practices of online music journalism and its challenges. Through the description of online music review and information from already existing literatures in journalism, this study showcases the challenges in the trending ways of journaling music in Nigeria and the ways it could be addressed.

Theoretical Framework

Media effect theories within the field of media and communication cover many areas of inquiry, but share a common emphasis on the explanation of online or digital media. Castells (as cited in Jalal, 2020, p. 6) gave the concept of mass self-communication which is applicable in merging the media effect theories and digital

media. Castells further explains that mass self-communication shares the concept of self-selectivity with mass communication and it recognizes that media content can be generated by the user whereas mass communication research focuses on content reception mostly. Valkenburg and Peter, (2013) affirm that digital media technologies allow both media content reception and media content generation which leads to the experience of self-generated media effects.

Self-generated media effects are caused by self-generated media content, on the behavior, attitudes and cognition. Castells interrogates the digital democracy of new media which has led to its direct and indirect effects on the users. Thus, this is a major focus of this study with regard to music journalism in online environment.

Music Journalist/Music Journalism in Nigeria

Music journalism is now a common and prevalent form of journalism across media, including online newspapers, magazines, industry publication, amateur blogs, music websites and social media. Music journalism is a kind of entertainment media coverage as Sanusi (2015) states that “the traditional roles of mass media revolves round four basic roles which include surveillance, correlation, transmission of cultural heritage, and entertainment” (p. 9). A music journalist is often referred to as a music analyst or critic.

Traditionally, the focus of a music journalist is entirely on music reviews and reporting. He/she gathers information about music artist, to preview for upcoming live shows, to review albums and songs, to interview with or review the profiles of musicians and write critical essays about music culture (Jordan et al 2019). Hence, they are demanded to write knowledgeable and creative articles about artists, bands, records sales, and the music industry. This is attainable because, most magazines, periodicals and newspapers have sections created for music and entertainment as Celasin (2013) informs, “periodicals indicate popular singers, music groups and their life views, expression styles, song lyrics, introduction and reviews of new albums and the advertisement” (p. 83). Thus, Music journalists report on the latest music releases and public performances of all genres. Apart from print, online newspapers and magazines, their work is also used on radio and television broadcasts.

Trends and Challenges of Online Music Journalism

In Nigeria, we have so many blogs, vlogs and websites that uploads music news online for public consumption such as Naija vibes, Naija Extra, Jaguda.com, Naija Loaded.com, MP3 bullet, Too Xclusive, Pulse Nigeria, Notjustok among others. These blogs and websites have created trending practices of music journalism in Nigeria that have influenced and challenged the ethics and standard of journalism as a profession. These new practices were aided by the invention of digital system as journalism has always embraced technological changes overtime.

Adelabu (2014) asserts that journalism is a technology driven profession from the time of Gutenberg printing press till now, journalism has always been at the forefront of embracing technology innovation. The trending practices of music journalism in Nigeria are discussed hereunder.

1. Audience participation: The new media technology has redefined the power relations between the news producers and the news consumers unlike in the traditional news room as the consumers are now more empowered to take responsibility of what they consume. There is always a room for interaction between the news producer and the consumers which could be regarded as the fans of the music artist involved in the news shared. The interactive sections are exciting as well as chaotic as fans try to protect the image of their favorite artists.

2. Open and free: The nature of internet has made the entry and exit in modern music journalism open and free. The need to obtain any form of legal training for the profession is more or less disregarded as the new technology gives access to anybody with the required electronic devices to own a website, record, process and upload news online without keeping to the standard or ethics of journalism.

3. Everyone is a music critic/journalist: The new media practices are quite different and strange to the traditional media operations such as print, radio and television. This has diminished the values and standards of journalism by conferring the highly cherished status of a music journalist on anyone who has in his/her possession a mobile phone, computer and other electronic devices.

4. **Instantaneous reporting /fake news:** One of the trending practices in Nigeria music journalism is impromptu news reporting. This is a non-professional practices trending in the online media. As a result, no room for organization, proper investigation, processing and editing of the news gathered before distribution. This act results to dissemination of fake news thereby misinforming the audience about an artist or music.

5. **Subjective criticism/reporting:** In the new media practices of music journalism, music reviews are based on personal appealing to a particular genre of music or artist. Objective reporting which is one of the features of traditional music journalism, has been disregarded by the modern bloggers and reporters. They upload what they think will attract more readers, more likes and more subscribers to their channel or website by creating catchy and controversial headlines. Most times, the headline contradicts with the information given.

6. **The content vanishes:** According to Troehler (2018), "the internet was a curse and a blessing at the same as it has destroyed the revenue model of the traditional music journalism but enabled the rise of an infinite number of blogs". Back in the days, the record companies/labels needed music journalists to promote their products in their media. The artists also relied on the reporters to be the intermediaries between them and their fans. Accordingly, extended interviews and tour reports created an image of music journalism which are full of indecent dressing, sex, drug abuse, popular artists profile, preview of live shows, new releases among others. Today, artists/bands just deliver articles about their works and achievements by themselves on social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and other social media to fascinate Nigerians especially the young.

7. **Ubiquitous news:** The issue of not collecting news from the field before reporting is now a common practice in the new media. One gets to read exactly the same content of an article in different music websites and blogs. This results to lack of creative writing which has disvalued the art of music review and thus, interrogates the authenticity of the musical information in online environment.

8. **The reduction in review of albums:** The digitization fundamentally, changed our ways to consume music. iTunes started what has now become a reality with Spotify thereby reducing the concept of album release in Nigeria. Prior to the

time, the reviews were essential pieces, deciding the financial success of a record. Now, the review of an album has become obsolete instead, single release and review has taken over.

Professionalism, Music Arts Education and Music Journalism

Professionalism encompasses the conduct, aims, values, responsibilities, and ongoing development of a practicing professional in the field (Westerlund and Gaunt, 2021). Professional, an expert, skillful, knowledgeable, compassionate, committed to excellence to his/her career or work. Bowman (2007) clarifies that professional is not simply the opposite of amateur rather, professions are defined in part by skills and bodies of knowledge that require sustained and highly specialized study. According to David (2021), “professionals made deep personal commitments to develop and improve their skills, and where appropriate, they have the degree and certificates that serve as the foundation of this knowledge” (p. 115). Hence, music education engages both craft skills, nurturing, teaching and learning of musical arts for future professionals.

Music journalism as a profession involves categories of individuals that engaged in collecting information, processing and reporting news to the public through the media. Information are based on musical concerts, artists, music releases and other current social issues as related to music. However, the misconception of music journalism in Nigeria as the sub-system in the entertainment industry with little or no degrees to establish a career needs to be addressed. This belief was as a result of the invention and easy access to the internet and social media, which permits easy entry in the profession. According to Miwa (2004),

As a profession, journalism is subject to pressures and demands that draw a line between the ideal and the possible. Any approach to the social impact of journalism must, therefore, take into account such tension: between an ideal form of journalism, that meets and fulfills the needs and interests of the public, and the journalism that is possible due to the professional, economic and ideological contexts which exert a key influence upon the information that is produced. Music journalism occupies a peculiar space within the field of journalism and therefore, has to be analysed as a distinct type (p. 43).

The practices in the new media are not typically professional or bureaucratically organized in the same degree as the traditional media. There are cadres and area of specialization in the traditional media where pieces of information are collected and must undergo editorial processes before broadcasting or publishing them as news. The new media operators take the DIY (Do It Yourself) route with the aid of new digital system. This becomes easier with the invention of mobile devices such as smart phones and iPhone which serve the same purposes almost as a set of computer and could be used to collect, process and disseminate information online with or without any legal training of any kind. This means that individuals from any realm of study, can stay in their comfort zones, record/shoot, edit and upload any news on the internet or social media because the system permits such act. Most people in such practice usually refer themselves as bloggers and not journalists; yet, they distribute messages about Nigerian Music, artists and other related issues across the entire globe since it could be accessed in any part of the world. They only protect their commercial interest and not the quality or the originality of the music news shared.

Restructuring Media Organizations and Redefining Music Journalism in Nigeria

Issues of regulation amongst the online music journalists could be achieved through organizing a media convergence between all existing online music media. According to Sanusi (2015), "media convergence combines the power of radio and television to give the audience opportunity to enjoy the features of radio, television and newspaper in one bouquet" (p. 12). This is applied in the traditional media to regulate and maintain the media ethics as well as to avoid fake news and misinforming the masses especially the upcoming generation.

There is need for musicologists in Nigeria to change the ideology of taking popular music as unserious music and realize that we are in a digital era where technology keeps evolving. Consequently, music scholars in Nigeria should engage themselves in the online music review as to lay the right track as well as lead in the new media era. In order words, music critics have to be more creative in form and content of their articles which will attract the readers.

Finberg (2013) worries for the future of journalism profession because, journalism degrees are in danger of becoming perceived as irrelevant. The skill

acquisition of music journalism should be taught in the undergraduate levels as to establish a strong foundation of this area of study to the future Nigerian music journalists. This will help in creating a great standard in music review especially in the Nigerian pop culture. Emmanuel (2017) advised, “scholars, the world over are advocating that with the changing journalism landscape, coupled with the dynamics of journalism skills within the digital environment, there is an urgent need to change the manner in which journalism is taught and learnt” (p. 19).

Again, Jacke et al (2014) elucidate that in spite of the numerous texts on popular music that draw upon music journalism for context, the study of the field still appears to take a lowly position within popular music studies. Music scholars especially in Nigeria should explore this area of study and seek for urgent change in the manner in which music journalism is taught and learnt in the institutional level. Through education, efforts could be made positively to influence the processes of new media democracy and developments that have been seriously affecting music journalism in Nigeria.

Again, many online magazines and newspapers have to catch up fast in the online environment with regard to music and entertainment to be able to retrieve their content from the amateur blogs and monetize their reporting adequately.

Conclusion

The emergence of internet and its associated applications have redefined and challenged the practice of music journalism not just in Nigeria but the entire globe. The new media practices are quite different and strange to the traditional media operations as the cherished status of a music journalist is now conferred on anyone who has in his or her possession a mobile phone, computer and other electronic devices. These trending practices have diminished the values and standards of journalism in Nigeria.

The traditional and online music journalists no longer the sole purveyor of information, they now have to work with the audience as they jointly scan the environment for news of interest. The traditional music journalists and their media organizations are currently challenged by new technology to innovate and renovate their system to meet the changing taste of the audience they serve. Hence, through

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studies in music journalism in the higher institutions in Nigeria, these could be addressed.

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Appendix

Link: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=KQ7FpYDQLOI>