

## INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION MEDIA

Stephen A. UDOH *Ph.D*  
Department of Music  
University of Uyo  
Uyo, Nigeria.

### ABSTRACT

*Music is an ancient art form that began in prehistoric times. It carries with it a history for each human culture throughout time. Although there are many varied definitions of music, it is a cultural universal because every culture throughout time and history has made music a primary component of life. The study sought to assess the influence of music in traditional communication media. From the study, it is noted that traditional communication media are very useful tools in rural communication and information service delivery. Their uses and functions include passing on knowledge and experience, conveyance of moral concepts, giving answers to questions of vital significance to human beings, gives information concerning historical events, and educating rural people on the dangers of some sexually transmitted diseases through dances and songs. It is further concluded that music has a great impact on traditional communication in many ethnic groups in various ways through the use of musical instruments. For instance, in the Igbo land of Nigeria, several musical instruments are used to communicate, such as which is the Oja and Igba that have been utilized in several cultural activities among them. One of the recommendations gotten from the study stated that the use of music in traditional communication should be encouraged in rural areas as a way of reserving culture.*

**KEYWORDS:** Traditional Media, Traditional Communication Media, Music

### Introduction

Traditional communication media is defined as the way or means of passing messages or information within a community or rural area. According to Wikipedia (2017), traditional communication media is defined as means or forms of communication that have existed since before the advent of new media or the Internet. Chiovoloni (1993) sees traditional communication media as all organized processes of production and exchange of information managed by rural communities. Traditional communication media is as old as civilization, and while new media has infiltrated every aspect of life, interpersonal communication, which is a component of traditional communication media, continues to reign supreme in traditional societies and rural areas. Interpersonal communication will continue to dominate, and it is difficult to provide any other substitutes (Yadav, 2009).

The history of music is a lengthy topic that requires much depth and time. Music is an ancient art form that began in prehistoric times. It carries with it a history for each human culture throughout time. Although there are many varied definitions of music, it is a cultural universal because every culture throughout time and history has made

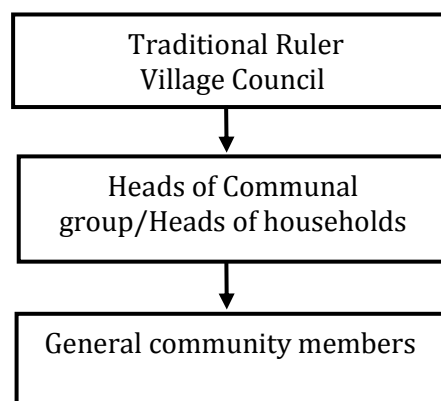
music a primary component of life. For ages, music was passed down through oral tradition on a fundamental level, but for formal purposes, recorded music began with the written tradition of medieval monks during the period from 500 AD to 1400 AD. Music is the art form that combines rhythm and sound to form a functional melodic line. Music itself transcends time, space, and cultures. Music can carry a mood without speaking any specific words. It can also be captured and recorded in a written universal language unique to any other art form (Becker and Blakeley, 2021).

Indigenous African music has an enormous impact on its indigenes due to the messages (communication) it carries across all fields of endeavor because music in this part of the world is intimately linked with language and many languages, including that of Boosi, are "tone languages". Citing Kamien (1994), "tone languages permit the use of music for communication: drummers, trumpeters, and other musicians convey messages and tell stories by imitating the rhythms and pitch fluctuations of words". Unfortunately, little attention is paid to indigenous music with its intrinsic connotations in Africa. A lot of the varieties of musical instruments in Africa are not documented for the benefit of the current youth and future generations. Those that are documented are "Eurocentric" in form. That is, documentation of African music was done by European musicologists in a similar context (Aasoglenang, Millar, and Simon, 2014).

### Concept of Traditional Media

Traditional media, according to Wilson (1997), assert that "traditional media channels of communication display a wide variety of characteristics that are attributed to their nature and functions. These characteristics can be classified as source-related, message-related, and channel- or media-related".

The above definition affirms that traditional media channels of communication are authoritative, credible, and authentic. Messages are transactional, and the channels used are low-cost, time-honored, and popular. The above assertion proves the downward flow of messages. Under downward flow, the message or information originates from the traditional ruler or village council and is delivered to the heads of households, and the communal groups act as channels for the transfer of messages, directives, and decisions to the community members. The mode of transmitting messages from the top hierarchy of the community could also be public meetings at the village square or the use of the town crier. Illustrate the downward flow of messages.



*Downward flow of communication in a community*

Every human society has developed its own indigenous and traditional modes and channels of communication, which characterize its existence, organization, and development. These traditional modes and channels of communication form the basis upon which rural counties interact, socialize, and progress based on their cultural heritage. The chiefs, council elders, family heads, and institutional leaders plan and direct the affairs and conduct of the people. These leaders provided people with the maximum amount of information on issues related to the wellbeing of people in the society. Traditional modes and channels of communication therefore have cultural relativity. The communication process is initiated when a source sends or utters symbolic sounds based on his experience to the receiver, who had similar experiences, and attaches a common meaning to such experiences. The traditional communication modes are determined by the totality of the historical and economic experiences of the people. Some of these models include festivals, drama, music or songs, dance styles and steps, color of clothing, tales and proverbs, gunshots, body language or gestures, talking drums, poetry, woodcarvings, legends, myths, storytelling, and various traditional institutions.

These modes and channels of communication function through face-to-face, interpersonal, and group communication. These channels act both vertically and horizontally; they are natural and real. They have proved very useful in the tasks of solving problems, maintaining social oneness, and making meaningful development and progress. The most popular form of traditional communication is the town crier or village information officer. He hails from the lineage of chiefs, or the family headman. He goes around the whole village with messages from the council of chiefs to the people, beating the drum and announcing the message. Sometimes he may spend three to four days disseminating messages to the people. This structure of communication provides opportunities for feedback. Also, there is a personal relationship between the communicator and the people. It has enhanced unity, cooperation, and continuity among the people. This mode of communication is still in vogue among the people of Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District. Traditional musical instruments are the channels of disseminating information and are highly obeyed by the people because of the authority and authenticity of the messages they deliver.

### **Concept of Traditional Communication Media**

Traditional communication media are vehicles that are rich in variety and are readily and economically viable. They are tools or channels used for passing information or messages to the people in rural communities. Traditional communication media include the following: talking drums, wooden gongs, folk tales, drama presentations in village squares, story-telling, wrestling contests (especially when a wrestler dies, there will be a wrestling contest during his burial signifying that he was a wrestler), dancing, religious rituals, myths, theatrical elements, songs, proverbs, puppet theater, etc. Majmudari (2000) opined that these traditional communication media have the capacity to change and adapt to the socio-political situation in the rural community and that they are the most effective tools in information dissemination in rural areas, tribal areas, and among illiterates as they do not understand the language of modern communication.

According to Gomtas (2017), traditional media of communication are a complex system of communication that pervades all aspects of rural and urban life in Africa. It is complex in the sense that it is not only one system but a network of other systems that operate at various levels of society. In reality, it is simple in its operation, and its credibility depends on trust. Traditional communication media are very useful tools in rural communication and information service delivery. Their uses and functions include the passing on of knowledge and experience, the conveyance of moral concepts, giving answers to questions of vital significance to human beings, giving information concerning historical events, and educating rural people on the dangers of some sexually transmitted diseases through dances and songs (Stichele, 2000). They are useful for rural development and education (Kamlongera, 1999). Live drama, puppet theater, and other popular and traditional media have been used and are still being used in a top-down way to support educational campaigns aiming to convince sedentary farmers and nomadic herders to adopt new techniques for their occupations. In this case, traditional communication media are used much more as an extension tool than as an interactive communication channel (Chiovoloni, 1993).

### **Concept of Music**

According to Wikipedia (2023), music is generally defined as the art of arranging sound to create some combination of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, or otherwise expressive content. Exact definitions of music vary considerably around the world, though it is an aspect of all human societies and a cultural universal. While scholars agree that music is defined by a few specific elements, there is no consensus on their precise definitions. The creation of music is commonly divided into three categories: musical composition, musical improvisation, and musical performance, though the topic itself extends into academic disciplines such as criticism, philosophy, and psychology. Music may be performed or improvised using a vast range of instruments, including the human voice. Music often plays a key role in social activities, religious rituals, rites of passage ceremonies, celebrations, and cultural activities. The music industry includes songwriters, performers, sound engineers, producers, tour organizers, and distributors of instruments, accessories, and sheet music. Compositions, performances, and recordings are assessed and evaluated by music critics, music journalists, and music scholars, as well as amateurs (Wikipedia, 2023).

Music is an art that, in one form or another, permeates every human society. Modern music is heard in a bewildering profusion of styles, many of them contemporary, others engendered in past eras. Music is a protean art; it lends itself easily to alliances with words, as in song, and with physical movement, as in dance. Throughout history, music has been an important adjunct to ritual and drama and has been credited with the capacity to reflect and influence human emotion. Popular culture has consistently exploited these possibilities, most conspicuously today by means of radio, film, television, musical theater, and the Internet. The implications of the uses of music in psychotherapy, geriatrics, and advertising testify to a faith in its power to affect human behavior. Publications and recordings have effectively internationalized music in its most significant, as well as its most trivial, manifestations. Beyond all this, the teaching of music in primary and secondary schools has now attained virtually worldwide acceptance (Epperson, 2022).

## Traditional Communication Media and Digital Communication Media

Communication is a key element of all types of businesses as it impacts relationship outcomes. Trust is the confidence of one party to rely on another party. In the marketing concept, trust is the basis for loyalty. As relationships based on trust are so highly valued, parties desire to commit themselves to such relationships. There are basically two types of communication channels: traditional and digital (Sayenko, 2019).

According to Lumen (2000), there are several reasons why these traditional methods of communication still have their place, which include:

**Reader Preference:** One of the most important elements of any type of communication is how effective the message is. Communication is most effective when the message is clearly received by the intended audience. Some people prefer to read information from a sheet of paper rather than a device screen, or prefer to read a novel from a hard-bound book rather than on a tablet device. Human senses come into play in communication, and touch is a very strong human trait. In communication, it's all about the receiver instead of the sender, so by putting the receiver of the communication first, the message will be more effective.

**Storage and Archive:** Another advantage of traditional communication method is the storage of documents. Many organizations today believe in having a hard-copy document to back up electronic records. Servers and mainframes have been known to crash with an ensuing loss of data. Despite the fact that emails, texts, and other digital communication have been found to be legally binding, the storage and archiving of paper documents continues to be important since electronic storage is not foolproof.

**Security:** A third advantage of traditional communication techniques is closely related to data storage: data security. Data breaches and malicious hacker attacks have shown that no electronic record is completely safe, even with firewalls and cyber-security software.

**Convenience:** While convenience was listed above as a benefit of digital communication, it is also a benefit of traditional communication. In order to open an email, read a text, or scan a social media post, you must have a functioning device that is connected to the internet. We all know that there are times when we are unable to be online thanks to poor signal coverage or the dreaded dead battery. There are even times when we wish to be disconnected on purpose to have a bit of a break.

**Perception:** Finally, traditional communication methods can make a good impression and improve the receiver's perception of the message sender. How many of us find it a little overwhelming to wade through a mountain of email, texts, and social media posts every day? A simple thing like a business letter on upgraded stationery has been shown to differentiate a sender from others. A formal written proposal sent to a customer usually gets opened, in contrast to an email that is flagged for later or marked as unread. A hand-written note is almost always opened right away because of its novelty.

On the digital side of communication media, which includes social media, podcasts, and displays, some characteristics, as stated by Kapor (1993), still keep it in place, such as:



***Instant and Fast-Paced Communication:*** Communication using digital techniques is instant. As soon as the sender hits the Submit, Enter, or Send key, the message is available to the audience in a matter of microseconds. The business benefit of instant communication is obvious—little to no delay of valuable information being sent to individuals, customers, or the organization. Responding to a competitor’s new product release, informing colleagues of project status, scheduling an “all-hands” meeting, and acknowledging a customer complaint are all accomplished nearly instantly.

***Extensive Communication:*** Another benefit of digital business communication is that it is extensive. One email message or text message can be easily routed to thousands of employees at the same time. A post on social media can be seen by millions of customers. Never before have we had the “reach” that a single digital communication can provide. Additionally, digital communications can be extensive in their contents as well; while sending a printed forty-page report by mail has associated costs, it’s virtually cost-free to send the same content digitally.

***Convenient Communication:*** Digital business communication is convenient, which serves to foster better communication. For example, computer programmers can relay information to their development team with a few mouse clicks, which means that they are more likely to do so. Additionally, the fact that digital communication is instant and extensive also contributes to the convenience of using these techniques for anyone relaying information.

***Communication for Change:*** Finally, the advent of digital communication in the business environment has contributed to positive social change and served to change the environment itself. Always being connected may not seem to be a benefit at first glance, but if that factors into more flexible work hours, employees may be happier at work. A team-oriented workforce, which tends to foster sharing and support among team members, has been shown to contribute to greater employee productivity and success. And who does not appreciate a shorter—or even non-existent—commute? Virtual and remote offices have also been credited with tangible benefits to employees.

### **Music in Traditional and Modern Communication**

Traditional music fulfills a number of roles, in addition to its use for entertainment and amusement. One of such roles is as a medium of cultural communication. For instance, in the Igbo land, apart from the oja ‘flute’, there are several other Igbo traditional musical instruments such Ikoro (giant gong), gba Membrane drum), Ekwe (gong), Ogene (metal gong) I, etc. employed in cultural communication. Chukwu (2011), researches on the African membrane drum which the Igbo people call igba. Chukwu (2011) notes that “the membrane drum is about the commonest traditional musical instrument found in various shapes and sizes in Africa”. Chukwu asserts that the drum is commonest in Africa, noting that the Igbo people call it Igba or Ogwe, Dundun, Iyaalu, Bata varieties exist among the Yoruba while such varieties of the drum as gangan, kalangu exist among the Hausa. Chukwu (2011) denotes the communicative abilities of the drum in the following:

*The membrane drum plays both melodic and rhythmic roles, as far as African drum music is concerned. Hence, the membrane*

*drum is a melo-rhythmic instrument. As such, the African membrane drum is normally used as singing or talking musical instrument.*

Okoro (2013) notes that Umuopara, Nguru, Mbaise have a specially designed giant clapperless bell they call 'Ozuru-Igbo', which is their unique name for 'Ogene'. Okoro (2013) discusses the use of 'Ozuru-Igbo' and observes:

*With it, town criers draw the villagers' attention; while diviners utilize it as they invoke the gods. It is sounded to punctuate the minuets recorded and read after the latest age-grade meeting deliberations. At times it is struck to draw attention to a point of correction marked by raising one's hand during the communal social gathering discussion. The 'Umuada/Umumgboto', married first daughters of every house hold during their group condolence visit to the bereaved family of a departed husband/father play a single "Ozuru-Igbo" to announce their arrival and departure. In the course of this event, it is occasionally struck and alternated with choral shouts of grief. During the "Umunna", kindred male assembly for "Mmanya Ori", a given market day palm wine drinking, those in attendance are called to order during discourse by sounding the instrument in a running rhythm.*

In most Igbo dance performances and also in most indigenous African dances, the communicative ability of the musical instruments like the Oja and Igba becomes highly evident. This aptly captured in the following:

*In most African dance groups, for instance, the drumbeats spur and energize a good dancer to a state of ecstasy, and elevate the spirit of both dancers and spectators..... This is evident in the Atilogwu dance or the Ese or Ukom dance groups of the Igbo society; the bata dance group of the Yoruba; the kalangu or ganga dance music of Hausa; The Ganda dance of Giriama in Kenya; the nammadu tuned drum ensemble or the entenga drums of Uganda etc.*

Musical instruments are used in various forms of communication in the Igbo land in some occasions some of which includes:

**Death/Burial Announcements:** According to Ahamefula, (2013), at burial ceremonies, sounds of cry are used to show grief by the loved ones of the deceased. Hence, it is expected that enough cries are demonstrated at the funeral to show how important or how so much dear is departed soul. Besides, spontaneous cries mostly by groups especially women are used to indicate the death of a member of a family. Thus, in a community when sounds of cries are heard in such a manner, one would begin to enquire of the cause of the sound to verify who has died. In most cases, the younger ones are sent towards the direction of the to confirm what has actually happened. The Oja music in various parts of the Igbo cultural area is also used to talk to the deceased

and bid him farewell. In the Ibibio culture, according to Okon et al (2007) gun shots are used during the burial of a prominent personality and also acts as means of passing information to neighbouring villages.

**Call to War/Victory Announcements:** In Igbo land, especially in the olden days when traditional wars are fought, the Ikoru and other forms of indigenous instruments are used to summon the warriors for action. This could be sounded at any time of day depending on the urgency of the matter and once it is sounded the men of war would understand and respond immediately. However, none response could take to be an act sabotage or cowardice. In the same vein, the Ikoru can be sounded with joyous melodic tunes to signify victory over the opposing side. This is similar to the use of trumpet to alert the citizens to assemble for war in the Jewish culture during the Biblical days (Ahamefula, 2013).

**Social Communication:** The oja Igbo flute has been known to play a prominent role in social functions. The Igbo flute has the mastery of using it to address and call the names of people in an occasion especially the dignitaries (Ahamefula, 2013). In most cases, the dignitary so saluted who recognizes his name usually responds by answering to his name verbally or by dancing to the tunes of the flute or by drolling out cash to the flute player for such a special recognition. In some cases, an individual who has been addressed by the flute player responds by doing all these depending on his status.

Peer groups or age grade groups within communities have been known to devise conventions of using whistling and the oja sound to call their individual names and also communicate and pass on certain messages among themselves. They can so manipulate this system and signal the time assemble for an outing without members of their various households neither knowing when they sneak out one after the other nor even knowing their intentions.

African musical instruments can be classified under idiophones (percussions or concussion), membranophones (e.g. drums), aerophones (e.g. trumpets and horns), chordophones (e.g. string instruments), electrophones (e.g. synthesizers) (Maraire and Logan, 2005). Some examples of such instruments and their utilization in communication includes:

**GULIGO:** This is a side-drum. It is one of the main kinds of communication instruments that are often used during occasions. It is made of a double end hollow wood or empty small sized tin. The hollow ends are covered preferably with the skin of a cow and are drummed/played with stick. It is used in an ensemble. Other instruments used alongside with the "guligo" include "lugi", "bima,wia". The "guligo" is usually selectively used to announce funerals of Tindanas, Chiefs and elder persons. It is also used in funeral rites performances. Other imitated type of the "guligo" is called "koligo". It is made of metal and played during occasions like marriage ceremonies, festivals, community durbars, and other social events.

**GINGELGA:** This is a long fife. It is a local whistle made from hard wood like the "dopebgo" or "mollaa". It is used in an ensemble during war dance. A communication sound is produced by blowing air into it with the mouth. The "gengelga" is featured more in war dances and can be played Solo or in combination with other instruments.



***Flutes and Trumpets:*** They produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air. Common in traditional societies in Nigeria are the gourd horn, and ivory horn called “ekpere” among the Ika people of Delta State. Apart from being used as musical instrument, they are also used to announce the arrival and departure of icons at gatherings.

***Grand Talking Drum (ANAAM-EKPO or NTIN-OBON):*** It is musical instrument for communication in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom. It is used by masquerade group (ekpo cult) and they understand the messages they represent. It is normally stationed at the compound of a reputable traditional ruler. At the sounding of “anaam-ekpo” or “ntin-obon” in the community means that everybody must converge instantly, knowing that there was a serious matter or an important event to be addressed by the traditional ruler himself. Nobody dared disobey or delay to respond to the clarion call.

## Conclusion

Music may be performed or improvised using a vast range of instruments, including the human voice. Music often plays a key role in social activities, religious rituals, rite of passage ceremonies, celebrations, and cultural activities. The music industry includes songwriters, performers, sound engineers, producers, tour organizers, distributors of instruments, accessories, and sheet music. From the study it can be concluded that music has a great impact in traditional communication in many ethnic groups in various ways through the use of musical instrument. Takin for instance in the Igbo land in Nigeria, several musical instruments are used to communicate such as which is the Oja and Igba that has been utilized in several cultural activities among them. Music has its own way of enhancing communication between people and communities even by way of the spoken words with rhythms and beats practiced by rural and urban communities.

## Recommendations

From the study it is therefore recommended that

1. The use of music in traditional communication should be encouraged in rural areas as a way of reserving culture.
2. Information communication technologies should be brought into bear in planning and executing of cultural festivals, and storage of information can help the future generation researchers, corporate bodies, ministries and even museums for easy retrieval.

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