

Digital Music Marketing in Nigeria Music Industry: Perspectives of Selected Music Marketers in Ibadan

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Abstract

The quest for survival among musicians in the music industry and the question of how artists get known, as well as how existing artists maintain their fans in the music industry, continues to raise a bubble of voices in the sector. This calls for a discourse in popular musicology and specifically in music marketing studies. In order effectively to market music in the vibrant and diverse music industry, Nigerian music marketers need a vibrant approach. Digital streaming platforms offer a broad reach and awareness for music releases, encompassing both local and worldwide services. This study defined the functions of music marketers and concentrated on the tactics utilized by marketers in this field. Both primary and secondary data were used in the investigation. In this discussion, a few chosen music marketers were interviewed. Results showed different platforms used in marketing and that public relations contribute to attracting and maintaining a favorable public image. Musicians attract and retain fans by using fan engagement methods including targeted digital advertising, free performance tickets, and online contests. The study concludes that the success of music marketing depends on understanding audience interest and application of digital marketing strategies. It recommends for consistent further studies on current trends as new digital technologies emerge.

Keywords: digital, marketing, music, music industry

1. Introduction

The Nigerian music industry has experienced significant transformations in recent years, largely driven by advancements in digital technology and the growth of social media platforms. With the proliferation of smartphones and internet access, digital music marketing has become a crucial component of how artists and music marketers reach and engage with audiences. Traditional methods of promoting music through physical sales, radio airplay, and live performances have been complemented and in some cases replaced by digital channels such as streaming platforms (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube), social media and digital advertising.

In Nigeria, a country with one of the largest and most dynamic music scenes in Africa, digital music marketing has become an essential tool for the commercialization and global reach of Nigerian music. Artists, record labels, and marketers now rely heavily on digital platforms to distribute and promote music, create brand awareness, and foster fan engagement. Despite the rapid adoption of digital marketing strategies, there remains a lack of comprehensive research that explores the perspectives of local music marketers in specific Nigerian cities, such as Ibadan, which serve as key hubs for regional music production and consumption. Music marketing essentially consists of promoting music via online distribution and selling music locally as well as social distribution like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and others, to link artists with their fans and promote success in the industry, it includes a variety of components like branding, advertising, public relations, social media marketing, influencer alliances, and live events.

All facets of the entertainment industry have been impacted by digital technology and digitalization, but the music sector has been particularly hard hit. The music industry had not altered much for a while. The marketing sector is crucial to the music business. Finding a marketing company that can effectively promote one's music can help it come alive in a time when there are billions of diverse musicians, everyone is trying

to be the next big thing, and there seem to be few people with long attention spans. One crucial lesson in marketing is that one cannot just do marketing. You must have a game plan in place before releasing content on digital music platforms, or there is a risk of not getting the favorable feedback desired. The coordination of activities both before and after the release plays a significant role in the process of releasing music. Budgeting is a further crucial element. The amount of money spent on releasing a song or music video is not as crucial as making sure the intended audience hears the song. Even when the song has been released, poor marketing decisions could prevent it from being successful.

Other musicians are competitors, just like in any other field, and they may prevent your fan base from listening to your music. However, effective marketing may set you apart from the competitors. It makes it possible for your music to be properly branded, heard, and viewed by the right audience. It is a sincere technique to advance your reputation and increase visibility among potential listeners. The more creative and unique the marketing concept, the more probable it is that an artist will stand out, be noticed, and find success. To understand the subject matter and succeed in the field, one must be knowledgeable of marketing strategies. When using marketing, the marketing mix takes into accounts each of the following elements: product, price, place, promotion, process, people, and physical evidence. The marketing mix is crucial and effective.

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This research, therefore, seeks to examine the role and effectiveness of digital music marketing in the Nigerian music industry, specifically from the perspective of selected music marketers in Ibadan, Oyo State. Ibadan, being a city rich in cultural heritage and home to a growing number of music professionals, offers a unique lens through which to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the digitalization of music marketing.

2. Research Method

In this research study, personal interviews were the primary method of data collection. The interviews allow for a deep exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights, making them particularly suitable for this study, which seeks to understand the opinions of selected music marketers regarding digital music marketing strategies in Ibadan. To gather qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected music marketers in Ibadan which allowed for flexibility in probing deeper into specific responses. The interview process was structured around key topics such as digital marketing strategies used in promoting music, social media platforms and streaming services, challenges in digital music marketing and impacts of digital platforms on the success of Nigerian music. A purposive sampling technique was used to select three prominent participants who are actively involved in music marketing in Ibadan. The three participants are also involved in Music production. The interviews were conducted in-person at their studios and also audio-recorded with the informed consent of the participants. The interviews were thematically analysed.

2.1. Entrepreneurial Marketing Theory

This study is based on entrepreneurial marketing theory. Entrepreneurial marketing refers to actively seeking opportunities and taking risks to a certain extent through innovative methods of risk management,

resource utilization, and value creation. Bjerke and Hultman (2002) established the four fundamental components of entrepreneurial marketing: actors, resources, process, and entrepreneurship. The desire and strategy to recognize and take advantage of chances to create value for customers, with an emphasis on initiative, opportunity-seeking, and creativity, is referred to as entrepreneurship. The process dimension encompasses all of the methods and techniques a business uses to try to add value for its customers. This theory is applicable to this discourse because a musician is seen as an entrepreneur who seeks to make his music acceptable, embraced and sold to the music industry for consumption.

2.2. Digital Marketing

In order to reach clients, digital marketing promotes goods and services using a variety of digital media (Kamal, 2016). According to Cruz, Leonhardt and Pezzuti (2017), content-based marketing techniques like blogging and posting on well-known social media platforms have become mainstays of modern digital marketing strategy. Social media influences every step of the decision-making process for consumers in the modern world (Appel *et al.*, 2020). Because social media allows brands to engage with customers more personally and interactively, it has become essential for branding. The internet's development has made it feasible to contact significantly larger numbers of potential customers than were before possible (Du Plessis, 2017). The extent of disruption and the increasing speed of digitization have had a significant influence on modern marketing strategies (Ruyter, Kruger & Ngo, 2018). Digital marketing is a multifaceted marketing platform that is used to promote all kinds of goods and services online or through other electronic media. It has emerged as the most successful way to conduct business online (Jaya & Jaya, 2016). Sales of music cassettes and CDs fell off significantly throughout the 1970s digital period, which forced producers to come up with creative ways to improve their products by modifying technological advancements. Thus, technological advancements also contributed to the resurgence of music-related products. As consumer preferences changed, more music items utilizing internet technology were sold (Kannan & Li, 2017).

In their 2016 review, Hamari *et al.* examined online collaborative consumption and the impact of the internet on the customer-provider relationship. The researchers proposed that as enjoyment is a key motivation, services should be enjoyable to use. Since major labels' financial clout prevented their music from being widely published in the past, independent musicians now have greater options to network, connect, promote, and distribute their work (Haynes & Marshall, 2017).

2.3. Social Media Marketing

Social media is the collective term for a number of well-known online platforms and social networking sites, each with distinctive features chosen by users for a range of private purposes. In addition to social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn, which are open to registration for individual musicians, there are other choices with a significant social media component, such as websites with user-generated material like YouTube, Soundcloud, Bandcamp, Songkick, WordPress and Spotify. Social media is a great platform for marketing campaigns because of its wide consumer base.

Social media is the collective term for a number of well-known online platforms and social networking sites, each with distinctive features chosen by users for a range of private purposes. Social media, according to Choi and Burnes (2017), is a marketing and business tool; yet, little is known about the reasons small businesses use social media and how consumer interaction increases customer loyalty.

While acknowledging that there are examples of musicians who have successfully used social media to support themselves and their careers, Choi and Burnes (2017) also express doubts about how representative these success stories are and whether they accurately reflect the experiences of the vast majority of musicians in the modern music industry.

According to Haynes and Marshall (2017), the term "social media" refers to a wide range of web-based apps that collectively comprise a vast ecosystem of connective media. Among its primary aspects are social networking and the creation and exchange of user-generated content. As social media grows more crowded and makes it harder for artists to monetize social media activity, traditional ways of contacting or developing audiences are more successful in generating the cash needed to thrive (Faisal, 2016). It is still possible to target audiences efficiently with social media.

Despite the challenges, social media has had a big impact on the interactions between artists and audiences, according to researchers (Oswari *et al.*, 2019). Music marketers and artists utilize social media as a medium to interact with fans, interact with their existing following, draw in new ones, and find interesting content. Maximizing online engagement involves creating posts that emphasize intimacy, intimate knowledge, artist authenticity, and quick reaction times.

Saboo, Kumar and Ramani (2016) assert that social media plays a significant role in the music industry and influences customers' purchase decisions. Since music songs are digital goods, buying them via social media platforms provides users with a complete shopping experience as well as rapid gratification. Evans *et al.* (2017) claim that social media has developed into a customer-facing online advertising platform.

Before the internet, an artist's only chance of landing a recording contract was to get recognition from major record labels. Technology created an even playing field and made it possible for independent performers to record, promote, and release their own music. Independent musicians need to take a more calculated approach that requires both business acumen and the possibility of financial gain (Tarassi, 2017).

A career in music required a number of positions to be filled, including managers, bookers, venue owners, and musicians. With the advancement of home recording equipment, music production became more accessible and gives musicians greater control over composition and recording. Independent musicians refined their recording and promotional methods with creative marketing approaches and a desire to spread their own ideas to a global audience (Walzer, 2016).

2.4. New Trends in Marketing Music to Consumers

Prior to the internet, major record companies' publicity was the primary source of support for musicians who were able to secure a recording contract. Technology has leveled the playing field by giving independent musicians additional opportunities to produce, promote, and release their own music. Tarassi (2017) argues that independent artists should take a more nuanced approach that requires both the possibility of financial benefit and entrepreneurial skills. To sustain themselves financially, musicians, venue owners, bookers, managers, and other professionals were required. With the advancement of home recording equipment, music production became more accessible and gave musicians greater control over composition and recording. Independent musicians refined their recording and promotional methods with creative marketing approaches and a desire to spread their own ideas to a global audience (Walzer, 2016). The diverse duties that were previously filled by various artists and departments under major labels were the responsibility of the independent artist.

Although the independent artist was in charge of all sectors, such as marketing, legal, songwriting, music production, and artist development, Thomson (2012) points out that running an independent career may have presented logistical and financial challenges.

2.5. Becoming Marketable

In order to progress in their professions within the music sectors, the majority of independent musicians seek assistance with marketing, administrative, and managerial tasks. Music intermediaries, according to

Pride *et al.* (2017), have multiple uses in the music industry. These uses include enhancing the skills and resources of independent musicians and offering benefits to the marketing channel and, ultimately, end consumers. These intermediaries include traditional participants like record labels, music publishers, management firms, booking agencies, and recording studios in addition to digital actors like streaming services, online PR firms, website content management systems, email marketing platforms, and so on.

This is considered too risky due to the unpredictable nature of the marketing environment. Donnelly (2014) claims that the digital music industry (DMI) no longer supports the traditional business model in which music companies develop artists from the ground up. Instead, they make the assumption that independent musicians are already capable of displaying some level of success or market readiness. "Market readiness," a well-known business term, describes how to assess if a product, in this case, an independent musician and their recorded music offerings is ready for commercialization. For an independent musician, quality production and songs are crucial. Songwriting and music production are included in this.

3. Results from the Interviews

"The global market for Nigerian music has expanded thanks to streaming services like Boomplay, Apple Music, and Spotify. We used to just reach local audiences, but today anyone in Europe, America, or Asia may listen to our music with a few clicks. It has increased our opportunities and reach Adeyeye (2024)."

"For our artists, Instagram and TikTok are revolutionary. One 30-second video has the potential to become viral and attract global fan attention. Millions of views have been attained by artists, which was unthinkable only a few years ago. My clients; musicians have direct access to their audience thanks to these channels Ajayi (2024)."

"The way we promote music has been totally changed by social media. Waiting for radio jingles is no longer an option. We share teasers of new songs on Twitter or Instagram, and the buzz starts to grow in a matter of hours. One major benefit of social media is that we may reach a worldwide audience in addition to local ones (*ibid.*)."

Bolaji (2024) stated that "Digital marketing has revolutionized how we connect with fans. Before, you had to tour extensively or rely on TV shows and radio to promote an album. Now, we can interact with our fans directly through social media posts, live streams, and even virtual concerts. It's much easier to build and maintain a fanbase." Adesoye (2024) agreed, arguing that now, artists can be compensated according to how many times their songs are streamed. Relying exclusively on physical music sales is a significant change. The problem is that services like Spotify only pay a small percentage for each stream, so musicians must receive millions of plays in order to earn a sizable sum of money. Meanwhile, Ajayi (2024) observed:

"The internet infrastructure in various areas of Nigeria is one of our largest problems. Even while more individuals are using digital platforms, many still struggle with erratic internet access, which degrades streaming quality and makes it difficult to find material quickly. This may reduce digital marketing's efficacy."

Bolaji (2024) opines that: "The music industry here is still playing catch-up when it comes to digital marketing. While the younger generation is fully embracing it, there's a gap in knowledge among older professionals who might still prefer traditional methods like radio airplay. We need more training and awareness about the power of digital tools." According to Olusanya (2024):

"Digital ads on platforms like Facebook and YouTube allow us to target specific audiences. If we want to reach younger listeners or a particular geographic location, we can customize our

campaigns. It's more efficient than traditional forms of marketing, and we can track our results in real-time."

According to Adesoye (2024), marketers must be exceptional communicators in order to effectively and captivatingly convey ideas and messages to music enthusiasts. Equally important is computer proficiency for engaging an online audience. This implies that a music marketer can create a deeper bond with the intended audience and utilize the right strategies to cater to their specific needs and preferences. Data analytics and reporting, according to Ajayi (2024), are crucial in the digital age because they let marketers evaluate and understand the wide range of behaviors displayed by today's more perceptive consumers.

Ajayi (2024) explains that marketers are always looking for new brands with innovative products, as well as established brands. Music Marketing is well recognized in the industry for abilities of marketers to select more so that most music marketers are musicians; and thus understands the needs of music listeners.

Social media platforms have also been a platform for marketing in the digital age. Music marketers use various social media platforms they are conversant with and depending on the audience they intend to reach. Adesoye (2024) admits he uses Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and has professional profiles online. A wide range use of functions applicable for marketing, such as communicating and collaborating with other users, scheduling posts, using monitoring and analytics tools and integrating different social media platforms to increase brand awareness and online presence depends on the expertise and experience of every music marketer.

Managing a launch or the release of a new album is a major issue in music marketing. It behooves a music marketer to be acquainted with the best practice for the music to trend or gain popularity. Ajayi (2024) observes that marketing a new album begins with the process of identifying and understanding the target audience before selecting the right strategies to reach them. A thorough evaluation of the music becomes necessary; the solutions it provides are those the music addresses, age range, class and status. With this assertion, then, it becomes very easy to create a strategic plan to attract and engage the audience, gain feedback from them and assess the risks involved. Adeyeye (2024) opines that after developing an effective plan, the next thing is to fix the most timely launch date and establish a clear timeline for campaign deadlines. It is important to make a list of the necessary resources and people needed for a successful launch, and then select a project team made up of department leaders who meet regularly to discuss progress, identify challenges and come up with the appropriate solutions for any issues that arise. Getting feedbacks from team members on the plan to find any areas that can be improved or streamlined is also necessary.

Adeyeye (2024) claims that the marketing manager develops the promotional plan for a performer's next album or tour. They collaborate closely with the artist to craft the campaign's message, as well as with the label's artists, organizing promotional campaigns to connect with both current and new fans. It indicates that music marketers form alliances with other industry professionals, ranging from tastemakers, DJs, and curators to press contacts at media companies. They work with the press department of the record company to arrange artist interviews with radio shows, print magazines, blogs, podcasts, and music streaming platforms.

Additionally, music marketers help create electronic press kits for reporters and interviewees that contain information on the musicians. Music marketers monitor statistics to evaluate the effectiveness of email marketing campaigns, social media posts, and other approaches to reaching music lovers, whether they operate on their own or as part of a record label's marketing division. According to Adesoye (2024), music marketers create advertisements to promote an artist's music in collaboration with advertising agencies, record labels' internal advertising departments, or art departments.

These could be print advertisements in publications, radio commercials, social media adverts, or billboards. An artist's online presence is managed by the music marketing team, who also make sure that new music videos are posted on the official artist page and the record label website, and that the artist's latest tracks are accessible through online music streaming services. To make sure they have access to both the artist's new music and back history of releases, music marketers collaborate with radio stations, streaming services, and playlist curators.

In addition to drawing in new fans, marketers utilize social media as a medium to share music, videos, interviews, and other content with people who already follow the artist. You can utilize social media to build relationships and continue conversations with fans and other independent musicians, as well as to increase fan involvement. Social media marketing data provides marketers with important demographic details about an artist's fan base, such as age range, geography, and listening preferences.

4. Discussion of Findings

The importance of social media in Ibadan's music promotion was one of the most notable conclusions drawn from the interviewees. Platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok were cited by music marketers as crucial resources for expanding fan bases, reaching audiences, and generating excitement about new music releases. This research supports the global trend that social media platforms are essential for music marketing, particularly for up-and-coming musicians. The capacity of Ibadan's music marketers to interact with both domestic and foreign audiences on social media advances our knowledge of how digital marketing has dissolved regional borders in the African music sector. This information can be used to investigate further how social media can be used by music marketers in developing nations to increase exposure without having to make large financial investments. According to Bolaji (2024): "An artist's career path can be drastically altered in a matter of days by a single Instagram post or TikTok challenge. We are no longer constrained by conventional media like TV or radio. This illustrates how music advertising is moving toward more participatory, immediate, and economical methods.

The revolutionary influence of music streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, and Boomplay also surfaced as a major issue. In contrast to traditional distribution channels like CDs and physical sales, the marketers highlighted how these platforms have made it possible for Nigerian music to reach a worldwide audience. This finding contributes to the body of knowledge on the global expansion of Nigerian music. It underscores the increasing importance of digital distribution, which has made Nigerian music more accessible on a global scale. As Nigerian music continues to gain international recognition, this insight can inform discussions about the role of digital platforms in promoting cultural exchange and the global rise of Nigerian artists. Ajayi (2024) said: "Spotify and Apple Music have opened up a world of opportunities for Nigerian artists. Artists no longer need a major international label to go global. These platforms are the modern-day equivalents of music distribution hubs like the record stores of the past." This emphasizes the democratizing effect of streaming platforms in the global music industry.

Digital platforms present many opportunities, but Adesoye (2024) also pointed out important drawbacks. Recurrent themes included problems like the high expense of digital advertising, the unreliable internet infrastructure in some areas of Nigeria, and the low level of digital literacy among some industry professionals. Participants also mentioned that some audience segments still favor more conventional methods of discovering music, like listening to the radio or seeing live performances, even with the availability of digital tools. The difficulties found shed important light on the obstacles that still stand in the way of Nigeria's adoption of digital marketing, especially in areas outside of major cities like Lagos. This draws attention to the problem of digital literacy and internet access. Policy and initiatives targeted at enhancing digital infrastructure and training in Nigeria's music industry can benefit from an understanding of these obstacles.

Olusanya (2024) pointed out that not everyone, particularly in Ibadan's more rural areas, has reliable internet access. Even though streaming services are very popular in cities, not everyone can use them. When creating marketing strategies, we must take that into account. This comment highlights the necessity of hybrid marketing strategies that combine traditional and digital media, particularly when aiming to reach audiences with lower levels of digital connectivity. The interviews also showed that the Nigerian music industry is moving toward professionalizing digital marketing. To optimize the impact of digital marketing initiatives, a number of marketers in Ibadan talked about the necessity of increased understanding of digital tools, strategic planning, and focused campaigns. This realization will aid in comprehending the development of the music marketing sector in Nigeria. The increasing sophistication of digital tools necessitates professional expertise to use them efficiently. This research can help guide industry best practices and educational programs that aim to increase the marketing skills of African musicians.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shed light on how digital marketing has changed the Nigerian music scene, especially in Ibadan. Through emphasizing the pivotal function of social media and streaming platforms, the obstacles encountered by marketers, and the increasing significance of video content and digital advertising, the study provides significant insights into the evolving landscape of music promotion in Nigeria. The study also highlights that in order to utilize fully the potential of digital tools, there is a need for increased professionalization and the removal of obstacles related to digital infrastructure. These findings offer useful suggestions for musicians, music marketers, and industry stakeholders in addition to enhancing the body of knowledge already available on digital music marketing in Nigeria. The growth and success of Nigerian music, both domestically and internationally, depend on an understanding of the viewpoints of local marketers as the country's music industry continues to change in the digital era.

Nigerian music marketers use a wide variety of tactics successfully to market and promote music in the nation's vibrant and developed industry. The title of a song or piece of music has a bearing on the necessity of continual observation, investigation, and study of modern techniques for the development of marketing plans for up-and-coming musicians. With their limitless talent, young musicians are limited to their target audience since they lack knowledge about public relations and marketing. When promoting a recently released song, determining the ideal market or target audience is crucial.

It is important to note that the discussion revolves around the need for ongoing observation, research, and exploration of cutting-edge methods for advancing the marketing plans of nascent musicians and maintaining established performers in the music business. This study's goal was to determine marketing tactics for established and up-and-coming artists by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of a well-known music marketer. During the investigation, it was discovered that the public relations approach was effective in producing excellent results in the field of music marketing.

In conclusion, because technology has spread quickly, marketers understand how critical it is to adjust to digital or technological approaches to music marketing. The dynamic and lively music industry in the nation necessitates adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and a thorough comprehension of the varied audience. Nigerian music marketers who are successful overcome these obstacles by interacting with fans directly, welcoming teamwork, and use social media to highlight and promote the country's diverse musical heritage. Nigerian music marketers are at the forefront of a worldwide music industry thanks to their continuous blending of tradition and innovation. It suggests conducting regular follow-up research on current patterns as new digital technologies become available.

Finally, while Ibadan in Oyo State does not cover the whole states in Nigeria, future research could expand to include music marketers from other Nigerian cities to compare and contrast how digital music marketing strategies vary across different regions of the country.

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