An Exploratory Study of Musicologists' Contributions to Music Broadcasting in Selected Radio Stations in Southwestern Nigeria (2000-2025)

By

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Abstract

This study investigates the contributions of musicologists to music broadcasting on selected radio stations across Southwestern Nigeria, emphasizing their pivotal role in shaping radio music programming. As radio remains a dominant platform for music dissemination, the expertise of musicologists becomes increasingly important in ensuring the cultural relevance and quality of broadcast content. This research examines how musicologists influence music selection, genre diversity, curation, and audience engagement within the framework of radio programming. Using a qualitative research approach, the study conducted interviews with purposeful selected musicologists who are on-air-personalities to explore their perspectives on the role of musicologists in the radio broadcast industry. The findings reveal that musicologists play a critical role in ensuring that music programming is culturally relevant, contextually rich, and genre-diverse. They are instrumental in selecting music that resonates with diverse audiences, diversifying the playlist, and

providing historical context and critical analysis to enhance the listening experience. Musicologists also contribute to the development of radio content that fosters deeper engagement and understanding of different musical traditions. The study highlights the need for greater collaboration between musicologists and radio professionals to improve content quality and audience satisfaction. By exploring the intersection of musicology and radio broadcasting, this research aims to advance the understanding of how musicological insights can enhance radio music programming. The findings offer valuable recommendations for radio stations and musicologists to collaborate more effectively in shaping music content. This research is useful for scholars, radio practitioners, and musicologists interested in the integration of music expertise in cultural production and media.

Keywords: Musicologists, Music Broadcasting, Radio Stations, Cultural Relevance, Music Programming

Introduction

Musicology, the scholarly discipline that explores music's history, theory, and cultural significance, holds a prominent position in the shaping of music in various media forms. In Nigeria, the music industry has evolved through several phases, influenced by a combination of indigenous traditions, colonial encounters, religion and modern global trends. The role of musicologists in this context cannot be overstated, as their expertise in understanding musical traditions, history, and social contexts significantly impacts how music is curated and presented to the public. In particular, radio stations, as one of the most influential platforms for music dissemination in Nigeria, are an essential part of the cultural fabric that helps shape public perceptions of music. Southwestern Nigeria, has long been a cultural hub with rich musical heritage and growing media landscape, this makes it an important focal point for understanding the role of musicologists in the radio broadcasting sector. Radio in Southwestern states in Nigeria, serves as a critical medium for music distribution, as it reaches audiences across different demographics, offering access to a wide variety of genres that reflect both the diversity and unity of Nigerian culture. Over time, the role of musicologists within radio stations in this geopolitical zone has gained increasing significance, with

musicologists not only selecting music but also providing insightful analysis, historical background and context for the pieces played.

The importance of musicologists in radio broadcasting is particularly relevant in the context of preserving and promoting Nigeria's diverse musical traditions, ensuring that modern music programming remains culturally grounded and reflective of the country's rich heritage. While contemporary Western genres like hip-hop, pop, and electronic music dominate global media, Nigeria's indigenous music forms, including highlife, juju, waka, sakara, afrobeat, and traditional drumming, are crucial in maintaining cultural continuity and national identity. Musicologists contribute to the critical task of diversifying the music playlist on radio, promoting not only popular music but also indigenous sounds that may otherwise be sidelined in mainstream programming. Radio stations in Ibadan, such as Premier 93.5, Ibadan, Oyo State, Gateway 90.5 FM, Abeokuta and host of others have emerged as key players in the Nigerian music industry, providing an essential platform for local and regional music. These stations are known for their commitment to promoting cultural diversity through their programming, and the contributions of musicologists are key to shaping their music content. By integrating expert knowledge and contextual analysis into their programming, musicologists ensure that listeners are exposed to a broad range of music that resonates with various aspects of Nigerian life, from cultural festivals to daily experiences.

The core aim of this study is to explore how musicologists in Southwestern Nigeria have contributed to music broadcasting, with a particular focus on their role in radio programming. By investigating the perspectives of both musicologists who are radio professionals, the study seeks to illuminate the intersections between academic musicology and radio production, highlighting the ways in which these experts influence the selection, curation, and presentation of music/music related programmes. The study is also motivated by a desire to understand the challenges and opportunities that arise in the collaboration between musicologists and radio stations, particularly in terms of ensuring that music programming remains diverse, culturally rich, and engaging.

As a platform, radio serves a wide range of functions beyond entertainment; it is a tool for education, cultural exchange, and social engagement. Musicologists, with their understanding of the social and cultural contexts of music, bring an analytical perspective that goes beyond the entertainment value of music. They are able to provide listeners with historical background, contextual significance, and critical perspectives that enhance their understanding of music within its broader societal and cultural contexts. For instance, musicologists often introduce listeners to the historical roots of specific genres, the evolution of musical traditions, the structure of the music and the socio-political factors that influence the creation and dissemination of music. This knowledge enriches the overall listening experience, fostering a deeper connection between the audience and the music being played. Radio broadcasting is a particularly potent medium for fostering cultural continuity. In Nigeria, where there is a rich variety of ethnic groups, each with its own unique musical traditions, the role of musicologists in ensuring that diverse musical traditions are represented in programming is invaluable. The contribution of musicologists ensures that listeners are exposed to a broad spectrum of musical styles and traditions, from traditional Yoruba music to contemporary Nigerian pop and everything in between. This diversity helps counterbalance the dominance of Western musical styles in mainstream media and encourages listeners to appreciate the richness and variety of their own cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the collaboration between musicologists and radio professionals is crucial for fostering content that is both intellectually stimulating and accessible to a broad audience. Radio broadcasters, with their understanding of the technical and logistical aspects of radio production, bring valuable skills to the collaboration. However, without the expertise of musicologists in curating music that is culturally and historically informed, radio stations may miss an important opportunity to offer listeners a more enriched and educational experience. By working together, musicologists and radio practitioners can ensure that radio programming not only meets the entertainment needs of audiences but also serves as a space for learning, reflection, and cultural engagement. As radio continues to be an important medium for cultural exchange, the collaboration between musicologists and radio practitioners will be key to ensuring that music programming remains inclusive, diverse, and culturally rich. This study aims to

contribute to a deeper understanding of how musicologists can continue to shape the future of radio broadcasting and enhance the listening experience for audiences across Nigeria.

Literature Review

The role of musicologists in media, particularly in radio broadcasting, has been explored in various studies. According to Hegarty (2006), musicologists provide a historical and cultural framework that enriches the audience's understanding of music. Their work ensures that music programming is not only entertaining but also informative, offering historical context, analysis, and critical reflections that enhance the listening experience. Similarly, Agawu (2003) emphasizes the importance of musicologists in preserving and promoting traditional music forms in the face of globalization, ensuring that indigenous music genres remain a central part of the cultural conversation. In the context of Nigeria, scholars have highlighted the significant role of musicologists in shaping music broadcasting. Oloyede (2012) points out that musicologists in Nigeria help radio stations craft playlists that reflect the country's diverse musical traditions, from traditional Yoruba drumming to contemporary Nigerian pop. The first academic musician to join the NBC was Fela Sowande, who was deeply committed to the development of music and music education in Nigeria. (Omibiyi,1979). Fela Sowande joined the NBC and became the Head of Music and Music Research. In this role, he organised field research on traditional music and used the materials he collected to educate the Nigerian public on the radio and as a basis for his compositions. He has several pieces composed in a European style (Omibiyi, 1972). However, despite their contributions, the relationship between musicology and radio broadcasting, relevance of musicologists in media houses are often been under-explored, and more empirical research is needed to understand the dynamics of this collaboration.

Research on the impact of musicologists on radio programming is limited, yet studies suggest that musicologists play a vital role in diversifying the music playlist. In her study, Nwachukwu (2016) argues that musicologists ensure the inclusion of a variety of musical genres, from classical African music to contemporary global sounds, thus broadening the musical offerings on radio. This, in turn, promotes greater cultural exchange and understanding among listeners.

Ojemuyiwa and Ogunleye (2018) also note that the contributions of musicologists in radio music programming are crucial in fostering a deeper connection between the audience and music, as their analyses offer insights into the historical and cultural contexts of the music being played.

Audience engagement in music broadcasting is another area where musicologists make significant contributions. According to Wilson and Woodward (2017), musicologists enhance audience engagement by curating music that resonates with local and international listeners, often providing context that deepens the audience's appreciation of the music. Musicologists' insights into cultural traditions and musical evolution also play a role in creating compelling narratives that attract and retain listeners.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the contributions of musicologists to radio music programming. Qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews, are well-suited to capturing the nuanced perspectives of musicologists and radio practitioners on this topic. The research was conducted in Ibadan, focusing on key radio stations known for their diverse and rich music programming. The participants in this study included three musicologists such as; Adeolu Abe, Femi Akande, and David Adedokun – as well as radio practitioners from stations within the southwestern Nigeria. Interviews were conducted with musicologists who are radio practitioners to explore their views on their role and contributions as musicologists in radio broadcasting. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for an open exchange of ideas while ensuring that key research questions were addressed. The questions focused on relevance of musicologists in radio broadcasting, music selection, genre diversity, curation practices, and audience engagement strategies within the context of radio programming. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings from the interviews conducted with musicologists working in radio broadcasting. Through the responses of the interviewees, the study highlights the valuable contributions of musicologists to the programming and overall quality of music broadcast on radio stations in

Southwestern Nigeria. The findings also explore the role of musicologists in curating music content, training the next generation of broadcasters, and preserving cultural heritage.

Contributions of Musicologists to Music Broadcasting

Dr. Olufemi Sunday Akande, a musicologist who lectures at the Department of Music, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun state, Nigeria who is the pioneer and the current radio producer of *Lessons* from *Stories of Song Writers* on OOU 92.1 FM, emphasized several key areas in which musicologists contribute to radio programming. First, he highlighted the significant role that musicologists play in shaping the musical content broadcast on radio. His programme, which began in 2017, aims to provide cultural and historical insights into songs, with an initial focus on indigenous music. This underscores the musicologist's essential role in cultural preservation and the promotion of indigenous music such as *waka, fuji, juju*, ensuring that it remains a central element in modern broadcasting. Music plays a central role in broadcasting because it connects cultural meaning and public engagement (Baxter, 2013). *Music selection and contextual storytelling help deepen listener understanding of sound and meaning, fostering enlightened audience participation.* According to Dr. Akande, musicologists are crucial in curating music that resonates with diverse audiences, ensuring a mix of genres and historical context that enhances the listener experience.

Furthermore, Dr. Akande's programme not only serves as a platform for music dissemination but also as a training ground for music students. The students, who engage in presenting the programme, gain practical experience in music journalism and broadcasting, further cementing the role of musicologists in educating future broadcasters. This integration of academic knowledge and practical application reflects a comprehensive approach to music education and professional development in broadcasting. This aligns with research showing that music broadcast programmes serve not only entertainment but also cultural and educational functions, helping to sustain and popularise … music (Ayokunmi, 2024).

Musicologists as Educators and Advocates for Media Integration

Dr. Akande also emphasized the importance of music journalism in academic curricula, particularly within the Department of Music at Olabisi Onabanjo University. He has advocated for the inclusion of music broadcasting courses as part of the curriculum, underscoring the need for formal education in music journalism to train students for careers in media. This perspective aligns with the findings of previous studies which argue that a robust integration of music and media studies helps nurture future professionals capable of curating music that is culturally relevant and educative. Such training develops graduates equipped to articulate musical meaning in community contexts and broadcast settings (Frith, 2012). Dr. Akande's belief in the power of musicologists as radio producers and presenters is informed by his observation that music comprises 60 to 70 percent of daily radio content. Musicologists, therefore, hold an indispensable position within the radio industry, as they possess the knowledge to select music that aligns with the thematic goals of various programmes, while also ensuring the music's cultural and historical significance is communicated to the audience. This observation is particularly important given the growing influence of radio as a platform for cultural expression and public education.

Audience Engagement and Content Quality

A key finding from Dr. Akande's interview is his emphasis on the importance of musicologists in maintaining listener engagement. He explained that musicologists understand the structure of music, the nuances of different genres, and the stories behind songs, which directly influence their ability to design engaging and informative programming. The involvement of musicologists in radio broadcasting not only ensures that content is of high quality but also creates opportunities for listeners to develop a deeper understanding of the music they listen to. This approach directly addresses the growing demand for educational content in media, as listeners seek to connect with music on a more intellectual level. In terms of audience retention, Dr. Akande highlighted that musicologists play a pivotal role in ensuring that listeners remain engaged. His programme, *Lessons* from *Stories of Song Writers*, provides a unique mix of music and storytelling, which has proven to be effective in retaining listeners. This observation supports the literature on the impact of storytelling in music

programming, which suggests that combining entertainment with educational content enhances the overall listener experience and promotes loyalty.

Expanding Roles of Musicologists in Radio: Insights from Dr. Adeolu Abe

Another key interviewee, Dr. Adeolu Abe, a lecturer at Adeyemi University of Education, Ondo State, and former presenter of *Concert Hour* on Premier FM, added another significant dimension to the contributions of musicologists to radio broadcasting. Dr. Abe's programme, originally established to promote classical music appreciation, focused primarily on Western classical music, occasionally featuring African art music. The programme aimed to educate audiences on composers, musical forms, and the stylistic features of classical music. However, Dr. Abe highlighted a critical issue in the industry: the scarcity of recorded Nigerian art music. The problem was not a lack of composers but rather the lack of accessible audio recordings of Nigerian art music for broadcast purposes. This issue limits the representation of indigenous Nigerian music on radio, undermining efforts to promote local cultural heritage through music broadcasting.

Dr. Abe's reflections underscore a broader problem in Nigerian music broadcasting; the lack of proper documentation and archiving of indigenous art music. He suggested that musicologists are essential for curating music content, interpreting musical structures, and explaining the meaning of music to the audience. This expertise, he argued, enriches the listener's experience and deepens their appreciation for music, especially classical and indigenous genres that are underrepresented on mainstream media platforms. Dr. Abe's insights highlight that broadcasting in Nigeria needs musicologists not only to curate but to preserve local art music. He emphasized the role of musicologists in maintaining the integrity of cultural programming, which directly relates to the preservation of Nigeria's musical heritage. His reflections support the notion that musicologists should be actively involved in the preservation and curation of indigenous music on radio. This reflects scholarship documenting gaps in the documentation and archiving of indigenous art music, limiting its representation in broadcast media (Ayokunmi, 2024). His emphasis on preservation resonates with research on radio's role in cultural sustainability: that broadcast media can extend art music

beyond academic and performance spaces into public consciousness when recordings and resources become available (Ayokunmi & Kehinde, 2025).

Musicologists in Religious Music Broadcasting: Reverend David Adedokun's Perspective

Reverend David Adedokun, studied Church Music at Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho, Oyo state, Nigeria. He proceeded to Delta State University, Abraka for his Master of Arts degree in Music Composition and Media Communication. He is the presenter and owner of *Theology of Hymns* on Leadcity 89.1 FM, which portrays a further dimension to the role of musicologists in radio broadcasting. His programme, which focuses on the theological meanings and historical backgrounds of Christian hymns, aims to educate church leaders, choir members, and congregations on the correct usage of hymns within religious services. Reverend Adedokun's decision to take the programme to radio was influenced by the affordability and accessibility of the medium, which allowed him to reach a broader audience.

The programme highlights the significant religious and educational role of musicologists in liturgical contexts. Reverend Adedokun noted that many church leaders often lack proper understanding of hymn selection and usage, which affects the liturgical appropriateness of hymns. By using radio as an educational tool, he provides guidance on hymnology, ensuring that hymns are selected with theological and liturgical integrity. Reverend Adedokun emphasized that the involvement of musicologists in religious broadcasting can enhance the musical quality and educational value of radio content. His insights align with the broader theme that musicologists, with their expertise in musical structures, meaning, and context, improve both the musical and educational value of broadcast media content. Furthermore, his programme's digital outreach through online streaming platforms has expanded its impact, demonstrating the ability of radio to combine traditional broadcasting with modern technology to reach a wider audience. These roles are consistent with the scholarly literature noting that radio broadcasting is a critical space for cultural expression, public education, and community engagement (Ayokunmi, 2024; Ayokunmi & Kehinde, 2025).

The Need for Musicologists in Radio Broadcasting

The contributions of Dr. Akande, Dr. Abe, and Reverend Adedokun illustrate that musicologists play a critical role in radio broadcasting. Their work transcends traditional roles, as they are not only curating music but also serving as educators, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring the quality and diversity of radio content. Dr. Akande's emphasis on music journalism education, Dr. Abe's insights into the preservation of Nigerian art music, and Reverend Adedokun's focus on religious education through music all underscore the importance of engaging musicologists in broadcasting. Musicologists' specialized knowledge of music genres, structures, and contexts equips them to create meaningful content that resonates with audiences while preserving the cultural fabric of the country. The interviews collectively show that musicologists contribute not only to music selection but also to **training future practitioners, educating audiences, preserving cultural heritage, and enriching religious and cultural broadcasting**. These roles are consistent with the scholarly literature noting that radio broadcasting is a critical space for cultural expression, public education, and community engagement (Ayokunmi, 2024; Ayokunmi & Kehinde, 2025).

Conclusion

This study highlights the essential and multifaceted contributions of musicologists to radio broadcasting in Southwestern, Nigeria, underscoring their pivotal role in shaping culturally relevant and diverse music programming. Musicologists, as demonstrated through the interviews with Dr. Akande, Dr. Abe, and Reverend Adedokun, play an instrumental role in curating music, diversifying genres, and providing context that enhances the listening experience. Their expertise ensures that radio content remains engaging, educational, and culturally enriched, which is crucial for sustaining audience interest and fostering deeper cultural understanding. The findings reveal that musicologists are not only vital in music curation but also serve as educators and cultural preservers. Their involvement in training the next generation of media professionals, particularly in the field of music journalism, is crucial for the continued development of broadcasting in Nigeria. By incorporating musicological insights into radio programming, stations can better cater to the cultural and musical preferences of their diverse audiences. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for greater collaboration between musicologists and radio professionals to improve the overall quality of music

programming and audience engagement. This research advocates for the increased involvement of musicologists in radio stations, particularly in programme production, music curation, and cultural preservation. In doing so, the quality of music broadcasting can be elevated, and radio can better serve as a platform for both entertainment and cultural education. Additionally, the study calls for radio stations to prioritize the preservation of indigenous music and the documentation of Nigerian art music. Addressing these gaps in local representation will help preserve Nigeria's rich musical heritage and ensure that the airwaves reflect a more accurate and inclusive portrayal of the country's cultural diversity By fostering this collaboration, radio stations can enhance their programming, engage listeners more effectively, and contribute to the ongoing cultural dialogue in Nigeria.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are made to enhance the role of musicologists in radio broadcasting and to improve the quality and cultural relevance of music programming. First, radio stations should consider employing more musicologists, not just as music curators but also as programme producers, presenters, and educators. Musicologists possess valuable expertise that can enrich programming by introducing contextually relevant and diverse music. Their involvement ensures that the content is not only engaging but also culturally enriching. By curating playlists that reflect the country's cultural heritage and musical diversity, musicologists can help radio stations connect with a broader audience while also preserving and promoting indigenous music traditions.

Second, stronger collaboration between musicologists and other radio professionals, such as producers, presenters, and technical staff, is essential. When musicologists work alongside radio professionals, they can create content that balances entertainment with educational value. This collaboration can lead to music programming that better serves the cultural and educational needs of the audience. Radio stations should encourage open dialogue and cooperation between musicologists and media practitioners to ensure that music programming remains both culturally relevant and engaging. Third, musicologists can play a key role in training the next generation of media professionals. Universities and other

academic institutions should strengthen curricula related to music broadcasting, music journalism, and media studies. By offering practical training and internships at radio stations, students can gain hands-on experience, which is critical in today's media landscape. This kind of education will ensure that future media professionals are equipped with the skills needed to produce content that is culturally informed and intellectually enriching.

Fourth, one of the major challenges identified in this study was the lack of access to recorded Nigerian art music. Radio stations, in collaboration with musicologists, should prioritize the documentation and preservation of indigenous music. This can be achieved by establishing partnerships with cultural institutions, record labels, and musicians to create a digital archive of Nigerian music. The preservation of indigenous music will not only enrich radio programming but also ensure that Nigeria's rich musical heritage is safeguarded for future generations. Fifth, radio stations should expand their reach by utilizing digital platforms for music broadcasting. As demonstrated by Reverend Adedokun's programme *Theology of Hymns*, streaming content online helps extend the programme's audience beyond traditional radio frequencies. By investing in digital platforms and streaming their programmes, radio stations can reach a global audience while maintaining their local identity. This is particularly beneficial for music programmes that focus on niche genres or cultural education, providing a wider platform for meaningful content. Additionally, radio stations should prioritize the inclusion of indigenous art music in their daily programming. This means featuring works by local composers and musicians, which can help foster an environment where Nigerian music thrives. Musicologists can lead initiatives to identify, curate, and promote these works, ensuring that indigenous music receives the attention and recognition it deserves on national and international stages. Lastly, there should be public awareness campaigns aimed at educating listeners and media professionals about the role of musicologists in broadcasting. Many people are unaware of the significance of musicologists in curating music, offering historical context, and ensuring the cultural relevance of programming. By raising awareness about their importance, radio stations can build a more informed and appreciative audience, which will, in turn, contribute to the success of music programmes and the sustainability of musicological contributions in the media. By implementing these

recommendations, radio stations in Nigeria can enhance the cultural relevance and educational value of their programming. The active involvement of musicologists will ensure that radio remains a powerful medium for cultural preservation, audience engagement, and the promotion of Nigeria's musical heritage.

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Appendixes



Dr Olufemi Sunday Akande



Dr Olufemi Sunday Akande



Reverend David Adedokun