

TITLE - Music Blogging in Lagos, Nigeria: Challenges, Benefits, and Cultural Significance in Digital Music Promotion

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Abstract

This study investigates music blogging in Lagos Nigeria and its implication on digital music promotion, consumption through downloads, challenges and opportunities for bloggers in Lagos Nigeria. Based on qualitative interviews with a major music blogger in Lagos, case studies and existing literature, the paper examines challenges, opportunities and cultural significance of blogging amidst a saturated and fast changing global music digital economy. Findings reveal that music blogs in Lagos Nigeria, experience limitations such as cyber threats, minimal monetization, unpredictable algorithms, creators and audience fatigue. Bloggers use a hybrid approach of websites and social media to manage content release, arouse audience interest and facilitate interaction. Through the lens of Use and Gratification theory, this research investigated the gratification of consuming music through downloads, motivation of creators who pitch for music blog placement, the essence of music blogging, and the ethical approaches of bloggers. By showing that Nigerian music blogs function not only as a digital promotional tool but also as cultural institutions, this study fills a gap in literature, while providing new insights into the unique dynamics of Lagos digital music ecosystem. This study concludes with recommendations such as policies and regulations, improving content quality, and Creating industry standard for music bloggers in Lagos Nigeria.

Keywords. Music blogging, Nigeria Music industry, digital music economy in Nigeria, Use and Gratification theory, Lagos music blogging consumption.

1.0 Introduction

The Nigeria music industry has experienced digitalization that has positively impacted the local and global music market through music export that has popularized Afrobeat consumption creating both local and global opportunities for music creators. This transformation is in line with (Adedeji, 2023) research where he opined that the Nigeria Music industry has gone through multiple phases, from analogue, to digital, vinyl to CDs and now internet driven music distribution, streaming and download. This study agrees with Adedeji that technology has greatly influenced the Nigeria music industry from production, to distribution and to consumption. However, most existing research and discussion on the music has focused on streaming platform, digital music distribution platforms, today's contemporary Nigeria popular music export with little attention, giving to music blogging platforms in Nigeria, evaluating its impacts on the digital transformation and digital consumption adoption in today's Nigeria music industry even though music blogs like Notjustok.com founded in 2006 (Wikipedia contributors, 2025), Naija loaded.com founded in 2009 (Wikipedia contributors, 2025a) and Tooexclusive.com founded in 2010 (Owogram, 2022) has been instrumental in revolutionizing digital music experience in Nigeria through new music premier, commentaries, music industry reviews acting as gatekeepers in the aspect of digital music platform as music blogging platform pioneers. Although now they appear to be less significant due to music streaming platform and digital distribution platform saturation, concerns on their relevance, challenges, opportunities and more, will be investigated in this paper.

1. challenges Lagos music blogs face

2. benefits blogs provide to Artists, audiences and creative eco system in Lagos

3. how music bloggers are adapting in today's digital music industry

This study used qualitative method, purposive interview, cases studies and secondary Industry data.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

For this study, we apply Use and Gratification theory. UGT as a Framework, helps us understand how people interact with audience, according to (Raji et al., 2020) a particular media or channel cannot compel the audience to consume specific content. This means, only use and Gratification does. In Nigeria, 98.2% of mass communication students use social media for communication, collaboration, news sharing, research, opinion expression, and international connections, with Facebook and WhatsApp as preferred platforms (Musa et al., 2016). Egede and Chuks-Nwosu (2013) found that during privatization processes, media houses used inconsistent targeting strategies. More recent work confirms that UGT's focus on active audiences remains relevant across television, radio, the internet, and social media (Anum & Zulfiqar, 2025). UGT holds that audiences are not passive consumers but active participants who choose media to satisfy needs such as entertainment, information, social connection, and identity (Ruggiero, 2000). This has been extended to digital platforms such as streaming (Camilleri & Falzon, 2020) and mobile media (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). In Lagos' music scene, blogs fulfill informational needs (music updates), cultural needs (validation of Nigerian identity), and social needs (community belonging). Blogs are therefore not residual platforms but active spaces where Nigerians negotiate culture and belonging.

2.2 Music Blogging in Global Contexts

The way new music release are discovered and how Audience engage to digital music platform can be attributed to music blogging effect. Research shows that music sampling on blogs is strongly linked to blog popularity, especially in niche markets rather than mainstream hits (Dewan & Ramaprasad, 2012). Blogs often collaborate with labels and PR agencies while trying to maintain independence (Jetto, 2015). Jetto (2015) also noted that most bloggers are passionate fans writing about music they love. Contrary to the belief that free downloads weaken sales, research shows that blog readers remain dedicated fans who purchase more albums, and positive commentary from bloggers is important for marketing (Barker &

Maloney, 2012). Meta data has improved how people access music blogging platforms online. At the same time, blogs intersect with platform politics around copyright, visibility, and monetization (Gillespie, 2010) Unlike in Western markets where blogs have declined, Lagos blogs continue to matter. This shows the Nigerian case is unique and requires localized study.

2.3 African Digital Media and Music Promotion

Scholars and researches has shown how digital platforms shape cultural and people in Africa . In Ghana, smartphone use and youth demand have fueled rapid growth in the digital music market (Statista, 2025). Across the continent, ICT tools have been central to promoting and preserving culture, often through projects driven by both governments and NGOs (Endong, 2018). Africa's creative industries, including music, fashion, and film, are increasingly digitalized (Madichie & Hinson, 2022a). Technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality further drive these developments (Madichie & Hinson, 2022b). Digital media also create challenges around copyright and legal protection (Mabweazara, 2018; Madichie & Hinson, 2022a). Beyond music accessibility and downloads, music blogs in Africa serve as cultural platforms where artist and audience connect at a deeper level and Nigeria Blogs remain a vital platform to music promotion and Music cultural programming.

2.4 Nigeria's Hybridized Music Culture

Nigerian hip-hop often resists cultural homogenization by reasserting indigenous values (Ojebuyi & Fafowora, 2021). Artists like Tuface use code-mixing and code-switching, which strengthens local identity but sometimes creates comprehension challenges (Ogah-Adejoh, 2021). Yoruba culture in particular has shaped modern Nigerian popular music, influencing genres like juju, fuji, and Afrobeats (Adedeji, 2010) This hybridization reflects wider global cultural flows (Stanislaus & Ekwok, 2014). The musical element of Nigeria music has always had hybrid, Afrobeats blends multi music elements and code switch to create local and global appeal rooted in Nigeria music culture which Lagos as the gateway to local and cross boarder digital consumption.

2.5 Lagos as a Digital Creative Hub (continue here after prayer)

Lagos is often described as Africa's creative capital (Offorjamah, 2025). Nigeria had 84 million internet users in 2022, with forecasts of 117 million by 2027, representing 48% penetration (Sasu, 2024). Streaming adoption has grown quickly, offering artists new ways to reach global audiences. Adenubi and Oduroye (2025) argue that streaming growth in Nigeria

is not only economic but also cultural, enabling traditional sounds to mix with modern genres. Lagos also hosts creative hubs such as the Co-Creation Hub, which fosters innovation alongside cultural projects like Playable City Lagos (Madichie & Hinson, 2022b). The city has long been a center of performance, creativity, and exchange (Boluwaduro, 2018; Whiteman, 2012). Blogs fit within this hybrid ecosystem, operating as promotion channels, cultural archives, and community spaces.

2.6 Copyright, Piracy, and the Struggles of Music Blogging and Digital Creativity

There are existing intellectual property rights laws in Nigeria and scholars such as (Afolayan, 2000) opined in his research that Nigeria intellectual property protection over the years has been ineffective as a result of weak enforcement process and non-implementation to protect the law itself. Key challenges include outdated and non-sustainable policies, inadequate anti-piracy systems, and lack of harmonization between local and international IP laws due to varied cultural backgrounds (Aguboshim & Ifeyinwa, 2020). Beyond legislative inadequacies, contemporary challenges encompass internet and technology-related issues, enforcement difficulties, financial constraints, limited awareness, and absence of a general IP culture (Olubiyi et al., 2022). However, recent developments show promise, as Nigeria enacted a new Copyright Act in 2023 that expands authors' rights, increases sanctions for criminal infringements, and addresses digital and online copyright challenges (Akintoye, 2023). Even with the laws in place, there is a need to implement and enforce intellectual property to better improve this intellectual property laws to not just protect but to improve Nigeria creative economy.

2.7 Research Gap

Global and African research has examined digital platforms, but few studies focus on Nigerian music blogs. Much attention is given to Afrobeats' global rise, but less is said about blogs as transitional platforms between analogue promotion, streaming, and algorithm-driven markets. This study addresses these existing gaps, by investigating music blogging both as a promotional platform and cultural music institution particularly in today Lagos Nigeria music industry.

This study used qualitative method, purposive interview, cases studies and secondary Industry data.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses an exploratory qualitative design. I chose this approach because Nigerian music blogging especially in Lagos, has received very little scholarly attention compared to music streaming or the global spread of Afrobeats. With so little existing research, I needed a design that would let me capture industry and audience experiences, while connecting them to the broader theory of Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT),

This study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm (Simply Psychology, 2024) which focuses on understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals within their social context. My aim was not to generalize to all bloggers, but to understand how practitioners interpret their roles, manage constraints, and contribute to Nigeria's creative economy. This allowed me to center insider voices while recognizing that music blogs are deeply tied to Lagos' cultural and economic context. I did consider other approaches. A quantitative design could have produced statistics on user behavior, but that would have reduced complex socio-cultural practices into numbers. A full ethnography with long-term community immersion would have offered deeper observation, but it wasn't realistic in terms of access, time, or funding. The chosen mix semi-structured interview, case studies, and secondary industry data gave me a design that was both rigorous and feasible.

3.2 Data Sources

This study relied on three complementary data sources: one key informant interview, two case studies, and secondary industry data.

1. Key Informant Interview

I reached out to seven established Lagos-based bloggers. Six of them declined, some citing time constraints, others hesitating to discuss industry practices on record. Only one, Mr. Nelson Nsah, Director of Akpraise Blog, agreed to participate. His willingness was important because he brought over a decade of insider experience, active involvement in connecting artists, fans, and advertisers, and a visible role in Lagos' blogging ecosystem. The interview covered themes such as:

Monetization and sustainability models

Content curation and quality control

How algorithm changes on platforms affect traffic

Ethical questions like piracy perceptions

Relationships with artists, fans, and advertisers

Mr. Nsah's testimony provided insights that industry reports could not capture on their own.

2. Case Studies: NotJustOk , Naijaloaded and Tooexclusive.com

I selected NotJustOk , Naijaloaded, Tooexclusive.com as case studies because of their longevity, reach, and influence.

Notjustok.com founded in 2006 (Wikipedia contributors, 2025), Naija loaded.com founded in 2009 (Wikipedia contributors, 2025a) and Tooexclusive.com founded in 2010 (Owogram, 2022) I Investigated archived posts from 2010–2025, traffic data from ahrefs.com, media interviews with founders, and user-generated commentary. Comparing both cases highlighted shared challenges (like monetization and audience retention) and differences in strategy (moving into streaming vs. sticking to the blog model).

3. Secondary Data

To place findings in a wider context, I used industry reports, statistical databases, and academic literature. This triangulation gave the study both insider depth and broader industry perspective.

3.3 Data Collection

The interview with Mr. Nsah was conducted virtually in March 2025 via WhatsApp and lasted about 40 minutes. I prepared a 12-question guide based on the study's objectives and piloted it with a Lagos-based promoter to check for clarity.

Sample questions included:

Does music blogging still has a place in todays digital Nigeria music industry

“What are the biggest challenges facing Lagos music blogs today?”

“How has your platform adapted to the rise of streaming services like Spotify and Boomplay?”

“What strategies help blogs stay visible and credible in such a saturated space?”

Do audience still visit blogging platform today or has social media, distribution and streaming platform affected music blogging traffic and effect.

Follow-up questions were asked based on his responses. Informed consent was obtained, and he agreed to audio recording, transcription, and being named in the study.

For the case studies, I analyzed blog posts and commentary from three distinct phases:

1. 2006–2010 (early emergence of blogging)
2. 2011–2018 (expansion and mainstreaming)
3. 2019–2025 (era of streaming dominance)

Sampling focused on relevance, for example, viral controversies, top-10 releases, and posts with over 500 comments.

3.4 Data Analysis

I analyzed the data using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which allowed me to identify patterns across interviews, case studies, and reports.

The process followed five steps:

1. Familiarization: reading and re-reading transcripts and archives.
2. Initial coding: labeling segments (e.g., “piracy stigma,” “audience engagement,” “algorithm instability”).
3. Grouping codes: clustering into broader categories such as monetization and platform adaptation.
4. Linking themes to theory such as audience validation to UGT
5. Triangulation: cross-checking interview insights with case study and industry data.

For example, Nsah’s claim of “200–300 daily music submissions” matched external traffic data and media reports, confirming credibility. NVivo software was used to organize coding. I also practiced reflexivity. As both a researcher and someone with a professional background in Nigeria’s music Industry, I was conscious of my positionality. I regularly cross-checked interpretations with secondary sources to minimize personal bias.

3.5 Research Limitations

Despite its strengths, the study has some limitations:

1. Sample size; only one blogger agreed to be interviewed; six declined, reducing the range of first-hand voices.
2. Geographic scope; Lagos focus excluded other hubs like Abuja, Port Harcourt, and diaspora-driven blogs.
3. Self-reported bias; interview findings reflect personal experience.
4. Analytics access; reliance on public tools ahrefs.com limited deeper traffic insights.
5. Time frame; the study reflects industry conditions in 2025, though the field is rapidly changing.

These gaps were partly addressed through triangulation with case studies and secondary sources.

3.6 Rationale for Methodological Choices

Each method directly supported the research objectives:

Exploratory design → best for an under-researched and evolving phenomenon.

Key informant interview → insider, experience-based insights.

Case studies → historical and strategic contrasts.

Secondary data → validated findings against broader industry dynamics.

Thematic analysis → linked everyday practices with bigger theoretical debates on User gratification theory.

By combining practicality with theoretical depth, this methodology shows both rigor and reflexivity. It provides a solid foundation for understanding Lagos music blogs as cultural and promotional institutions within Nigeria's creative economy.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Challenges

Content Saturation

The Lagos music ecosystem produces an overwhelming volume of new tracks each week, creating intense competition for visibility. As Nsah (Akpraise) put it: “Some days, I wake up to 200 or 300 emails of new songs from Publicist and that’s just one day. It’s impossible to listen to everything.” Filtering this flood of submissions is not only time-consuming but also forces blogs to make difficult curatorial decisions. This reflects broader African digital realities, where youth-driven cultural production far exceeds existing channels of curation (Endong, 2018). It also ties to UGT’s emphasis on audience selectivity with so much available, audiences actively choose what satisfies their cultural and informational needs (Ruggiero, 2000; Musa et al., 2016).

Monetization Limits

Blogs rely heavily on advertising and sponsored posts, yet low advertising rates and artists’ limited budgets undermine sustainability. Nsah described it bluntly: “Many upcoming artists want promotion but can’t afford more than ten or twenty thousand naira. That doesn’t even cover data costs for running the blog.” This mirrors broader challenges across Africa’s creative industries, where outdated policies and financial constraints limit revenue (Afolayan, 2020; Olubiyi et al., 2022). It also exemplifies the undervaluation of digital labor (Aguboshim & Ifeyinwa, 2020).

Algorithmic Instability

Findings show that blogs remain vulnerable to shifts in Google and Facebook’s algorithms. Nsah noted: “Once Google changes its ranking, your traffic can drop overnight, no matter how hard you’ve worked.” This reliance reflects Camilleri and Falzon’s (2020) view that digital consumption is increasingly shaped by platform logics. For Nigerian blogs, this creates instability in visibility and reach, echoing wider concerns in Africa’s digitalized industries (Madichie & Hinson, 2022a).

Piracy Perceptions and Security Risks

Blogs are sometimes conflated with piracy platforms, undermining legitimacy. Content theft and hacking are common risks. Nsah recalled: “I’ve had my site cloned before. Someone copied my content word for word and even fooled artists into paying them.” This highlights

Nigeria's fragile intellectual property protections (Mabweazara, 2018; Olubiyi et al., 2022). Bloggers' vulnerability reinforces Afolayan's (2020) claim that inadequate IP systems hinder creative industries.

4.2 Benefits

Despite challenges, blogs remain vital entry points for emerging artists. One user commented on Naijaloaded's forum: "I first discovered Fireboy here before he blew on streaming apps." Such testimonies confirm blogs' role in exposure and align with UGT's idea that audiences seek validation and recognition from media platforms (Ruggiero, 2000; Musa et al., 2016).

Cultural Archiving

Beyond promotion, blogs preserve Nigeria's music memory. By storing songs, articles, and controversies over nearly two decades, platforms like NotJustOk and Naijaloaded act as archives. This supports Adedeji's (2010) argument that Yoruba and indigenous practices underpin continuity, while also reflecting Stanislaus and Ekwok's (2014) framing of Afrobeats as heritage made global. Blogs embody this duality, sustaining the present while preserving the past.

Community Engagement

Finding show that blogs foster lively digital communities. Comment sections on Tooexclusive, for instance, are filled with arguments over lyrics, beats, and artist credibility. One 2019 post with over 600 comments saw fans debating Burna Boy's Grammy chances long before his global win. These exchanges reinforce UGT's idea that audiences use media for belonging and identity formation (Raji et al., 2020). Blogs are thus not just distribution hubs but spaces for cultural dialogue.

Networking:

Blogs also act as intermediaries between artists, DJs, and promoters. Nsah emphasized: "Many DJs still reach out to me for songs , sometimes I connect them directly with the artist." This role mirrors Offorjamah's (2025) view of Lagos as Africa's creative capital and Madichie & Hinson's (2022b) portrayal of hubs as cultural enablers.

4.3 Strategies

Hybrid Promotion:

Blogs increasingly integrate TikTok and Instagram to expand reach. NotJustOk, for example, runs cross-promotions where blog content is clipped for TikTok. This reflects the hybrid nature of Nigerian promotion, where blogs and social media co-exist (Ojebuyi & Fafowora, 2021).

Quality Control

Selective curation remains a strategy. Nsah explained: “If I post everything, my credibility drops. I only push what I believe has some standard.” This echoes Ogah-Adejoh’s (2021) view that curatorial choices are acts of identity and differentiation.

Collaborations

Partnerships sustain relevance. Naijaloaded frequently collaborates with DJs for mixtapes, while NotJustOk pivoted into streaming with Mino Music. Tooexclusive, constant platform feature re modeling also may explain why it has maintained steady visibility. This pattern supports Boluwaduro’s (2018) and Whiteman’s (2012) arguments that collaboration fuels cultural survival in Lagos.

4.4 Linking to Theory

The findings reaffirm the relevance of UGT in explaining why audiences engage with blogs: for information, validation, belonging, and identity (Ruggiero, 2000; Musa et al., 2016). Hybrid promotion and cultural archiving also align with cultural hybridity frameworks, showing how Nigerian music mixes local and global (Adedeji, 2010; Ojebuyi & Fafowora, 2021). Meanwhile, monetization struggles, piracy risks, and algorithmic dependency highlight structural weaknesses in Africa’s digital economy (Mabweazara, 2018; Olubiyi et al., 2022; Madiche & Hinson, 2022a).

4.5 Discussion

The findings highlight that Lagos music blogs continue to play a central role in Nigeria’s music ecosystem, but their significance extends beyond promotion. Interpreted through the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the persistence of blogs shows that audiences still rely on them to satisfy informational, cultural, and social needs. Even in an era

of streaming and social media dominance, blogs provide contextual knowledge, validation of cultural identity, and a sense of

belonging that aligns with UGT's assumption of active audience agency (Ruggiero, 2000; Musa et al., 2016). This suggests that Nigerian audiences are not passive consumers of global platforms, but strategic users who seek hybridized spaces that reflect their realities.

A second interpretation emerges when considering cultural hybridity. Nigerian blogs embody a negotiation between global and local forces, amplifying Afrobeats as both a global commodity and a local identity marker (Adedeji, 2010; Ojebuyi & Fafowora, 2021). Unlike in Western contexts, where blogs have largely declined (Dewan & Ramaprasad, 2012), Lagos blogs remain resilient precisely because they embed international exposure within culturally specific narratives. This shows that hybridity is not merely aesthetic but also structural—blogs operate as cultural bridges where global flows are localized and reinterpreted. The challenges bloggers face further underscore the precariousness of digital labor. The struggle for monetization, weak copyright enforcement, and infrastructural instability (Afolayan, 2020; Olubiyi et al., 2022) demonstrate that while blogs generate value for artists and audiences, their creators remain underprotected and undervalued. Terranova's (2000) notion of “free labor” is instructive here, as bloggers’ unpaid or underpaid work sustains an entire promotional ecosystem without proportional institutional support. This paradox reflects broader patterns in Africa’s digital creative economy, where innovation thrives but systemic vulnerabilities persist (Madichie & Hinson, 2022a). Taken together, these interpretations suggest that Lagos blogs are not residual or declining platforms but evolving cultural infrastructures. They thrive because they align with user gratifications, reinforce Nigeria’s hybridized identity, and sustain a participatory culture that streaming alone cannot provide. Yet, their long-term sustainability depends on resolving structural challenges through stronger policy interventions, better copyright enforcement, and innovative business models.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Music blogging in Lagos reflects the everyday realities of Nigeria's music industry. On one side, bloggers face constant struggles: difficulties with monetization, unstable algorithms, security risks from hackers, the piracy stigma tied to free content, and uncredited reposting by anonymous platforms. On the other side, blogs continue to serve as vital cultural spaces. They amplify both emerging and established artists, archive Nigeria's musical heritage, and build communities within the creative economy. When viewed through the lens of Uses and Gratifications Theory, Lagos music blogs appear as hybrid institutions. They are fragile yet indispensable, caught between global platform pressures and deep cultural roots. This dual role highlights both the vulnerability and the necessity of grassroots media in African music promotion.

5.2 Recommendations

Policy Implications

There is an urgent need to reduce internet data costs to enhance accessibility for both creators and audiences.

Strengthen copyright enforcement to protect blogs from piracy stigma and unauthorized content lifting.

Formally recognize music blogs as part of Nigeria's creative digital economy and extend institutional support through grants, training, and integration into national cultural policy.

Academic Implications

Expand African digital music scholarship to include sustained research on music blogs, which remain underexplored compared to streaming and distribution platforms.

Apply global theories in localized contexts, ensuring frameworks on digital media, labor, and cultural consumption capture Nigeria's unique digital hybridity.

Practical Implications

Artists should diversify promotional strategies by combining blogs with social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and streaming visibility.

Bloggers should professionalize operations through branding, audience research, and advertising structures to attract sustainable partnerships and revenue with easy access to pitching and transparency in publishing.

Cross-industry collaborations such as partnerships with DJs, promoters, and streaming platforms should be encouraged to strengthen visibility and legitimacy.

Future Research

Investigate the impact of music blogging on emerging independent artists in Nigeria, focusing on challenges and opportunities in music submission and listing.

Conduct comparative studies across African countries (e.g., Ghana, Kenya, South Africa) to map similarities and differences in digital music economies.

Adopt mixed-method approaches (interviews, surveys, web analytics) to capture both practitioner perspectives and audience engagement behaviors.

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