

FIGHTING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE MUSIC OF HOPE

By:

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Abstract: Retrospectively, a look at the past ere the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the present and the view about the life post-pandemic in the face of the horrendous state of insecurity pervading Nigeria can be fundamental for the quality of life and security among the female gender living in the multi-tenanted apartments. Although, the previous study I co-investigated did not mention specifically how the female gender responded to music during the pandemic period. This present study aims to reveal life post pandemics in the face of scarcity and insecurity threatening the lives of Nigerians, especially women. The question is, music that sensitized these women during the COVID-19 pandemic, can the tool of music resurrect a sense of hope in the lives of the women living in the multi-tenanted apartment? How far has the tool of music been used as an elixir to restore hope and raise the psyche of the female folks residing in the multi-tenanted apartment? And how often do these women listen to music daily, and does music mean anything to these women living in the multi-tenanted apartment whose daily preoccupations are getting the daily bread for their children? This present study documents the musical genres that depict hope to the women living in the slum, mentions and provides a content analysis of the specific music carrying the message of hope. This study implies that when music is meaningfully engaged during disease outbreaks by any society, the researcher proposes that the possibility of the citizens contracting such disease will be minimized to the barest minimum. All hands must therefore be on deck to enrich the cultural sector by all the stakeholders.

Key words: *Music listening, multi-tenanted, female gender, hope.*

Introduction:

The United Nations (2020) assert that, “Emerging evidence on the impact of COVID-19 opines that women’s economic and productive lives are the hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Stating that, in almost all part of the World, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, and are more likely to be employed in the informal sector. Daniel Defoe also lamented that the poor appeared far more vulnerable to plague (Jordison, 2020). Women are vulnerable to insecurity and scarcity, especially, women living in the slum and in multi-tenanted apartments and are likely to get lost in thought in a bid to solving or trying to resolve the big issues confronting them.” Luceno-Moreno et al., (2020) assert that that, resilience-the capacity of dealing with adversities as challenges- has been found to be a protective factor of the psychopathologies related to the pandemic.

The worldwide rise of HIV infections since its emergence in 1981 affirmed that, there should always be a plan B for countering new emerging diseases, as there are also scarcity in the available control measures for such infectious disease, public health, thus face the questions of how to contain the spread of the infection and who are the most vulnerable to face the after effect of the disease outbreak in terms gender are also very important. Most importantly, are the ways in which these message of disease containment and the after effect are spread and received by these gender, whose hall mark is scouting for daily survival for their children. This study examines how the female gender were able to combine effectively the Covid-19 containment measures amidst scarcity and insecurity pervading Nigeria and listening to music while working or selling in the market, how fare has music re-ignited in them a measure of hope?

Chamoro-Premuzic et al., (2012); TerBogt et al., (2017) through their research had shown that, women are more likely than men to listen to music for enjoyment, consolation, releasing negative emotions or reducing loneliness (North, 2010; Lonsdale & North, 2011). Similarly, women who sing or play an instrument report higher levels of wellbeing than men (Krause et al., 2019), adding that, music listening is positively related to individuals’ ratings of music’s importance in their lives.

The medical profession has helped to ameliorate rise in diseases by introducing hospitalization and critical care measures during disease outbreak. For people suffering loneliness, lack, hunger, insecurity, the medical care has the chance of remaining an island. Hence, the need to embrace music, at such a time when hopes seem lost. Body of research has demonstrated how music has helped to resuscitate hope in people.

During COVID-19, health practitioners should consider using music to create awareness, sensitize, kill boredom, improve metabolism, ease stress and improve the health of the populace just like music therapy was used on the war veterans after the 2nd world war (Hargreaves & North, 1998). Chase (2020) added that, pandemic planning must not focus exclusively on ventilators or critical care.” Adding that, clinicians should ask “how do we best deliver holistic care to the frailest and most vulnerable among us?”

The UN advocated that, COVID-19 messaging on public health must be acceptable, culturally appropriate and understandable by all; the messaging should also be distributed in conflict-affected contexts to reach all women and girls, including those in refugee and settlements for internally displaced people (IDPs) as well as in remote and rural communities. A policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on women (2020) revealed that, Scarcity and insecurity increased globally as the COVID-19 pandemic combines with economic and social stresses with a compulsory lockdown to restrict movements and contacts of persons.

Findings from Shagzatova (2020) affirmed that, the total GDP fell 23% during the lockdown. Agri-food system GDP fell 11%, Household fell by a quarter, leading a 9% points increase in the national poverty rate. As more women continue to lose their jobs and steady sources of income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that, necessary targeted support is provided to ensure food security to prevent these vulnerable individuals from succumbing to negative coping mechanisms. Shagzatova (2020) further finds a temporary, but substantial increase in the national poverty rate of 8.7% points due into poverty in Nigeria, as a result of reductions in employment income.

Absolutely, when all of these start happening, worry and anxiety set in on the way to survive and get one’s needs met.

Aristotle argues,

“the soul also seeks strengthening through musical leisure (Aristotle et al., 1998; Destrée, 2018). Music is not simply made for personal enjoyment, as Aristotle’s contemporaries had believed, but is embedded into our social being and is a crucial part of connecting with others.”

Spotify (2020) published an article highlighting changes to listening habits during the COVID-19 pandemic. People were listening more at home and choosing playlists that complimented other domestic activities such as cooking or cleaning and there was even a boost in certain listening selections. Saarikallio (2011) Found that subjects tended to choose music based on their current moods for the goal of mood improvement, but when they selected music consciously and specifically to regulate their moods, the target mood typically related to physiological arousal (e.g., to relax or perk up). Musical events and their contexts in the 1576–1578 plague outbreak in Milan that can help frame our consideration of the musical practices and their functions under COVID today. The medical and social responses to plague in turn impacted the practices of music making in such extraordinary times (Chiu, 2020). Thayer et al. (1994) found “listening to music” to be the third most frequent tactic employed by survey respondents to improve a bad mood, after talking or being with someone and controlling their own thoughts, and second most successful for achieving that goal, after exercise.

Schafer et al., (2013) People listen to music to regulate arousal and mood, to achieve self-awareness, and as an expression of social relatedness. The first and second dimensions were judged to be much more important than the third—a result that contrasts with the idea that music has evolved primarily as a means for social cohesion and communication.

This picture of cost and demand suggests that patrons, perhaps unable to pay higher prices, were interested in simpler images, produced quickly and cheaply. Moreover, as Steinhoff (2007) has noted, newly formed collaborations between ateliers in response to uncertain market conditions necessarily disrupted the earlier norms of stylistic unity. Economic factors, then, rather than psychological change—which is difficult to divine for individual historical actors and often just as difficult to discern for victims of trauma—may have been the root cause of perceived epochal style changes. These are, of course, the same methodological difficulties in historiography *tout court*, but the rush of information in this COVID ground zero—the chance observations and anecdotes—can increase the challenge.

Chiu (2020) Augustine worried that music—even religious songs—appealed too much to the senses and the flesh.

Many people, from fear and imagination alone, have fallen to pestilential fever; therefore, it is necessary to be joyful... One should stay in a bright and well-decorated home...with scents and fumigations. Or take a walk in a well-appointed garden, since the soul is restored by this. Furthermore, the soul gladdens in meeting dear friends and in talking of joyful and funny things. It is especially advantageous to listen to songs and lovely instrumental music, and to play now and then, and to sing with a quiet voice, to read books and pleasant stories, to listen to stories that provoke moderate laughter, to look at pictures that please the eyes... (Massa, 1540, 39r).

music has been used to facilitate healing and give communities hope ([Barz & Cohen, 2011](#)). Thompson et al. (2021) added that, the use of music to influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviors toward infectious diseases like COVID-19 is not a new phenomenon in Africa. In relation to HIV/AIDS and Ebola, for instance, research shows how popular artists in the region incorporated health-promoting messages and basic information about these diseases, and communicated preventative measures in their songs. There were also lyrics that assured their audience that this pandemic will not last forever, and that soon the world will recover from its negative impact. Whereas confinement has been shown to have a positive effect in the spread of the disease, it has been reported to have a negative impact on people's mental health ([Liu, 2020](#); [Wang C. et al., 2020](#); [Wang G. et al., 2020](#); [Xiang et al., 2020](#); [Yang et al., 2020](#)). Some of the effects analyzed in people under confinement included confusion, anger, fear, frustration, boredom or post-traumatic stress symptoms ([Brooks et al., 2020](#)).

During the current COVID-19 crisis, research has already shown the usefulness of music to enhance wellbeing. Intervention through music listening has been proven to promote emotional wellbeing in Italian clinical staff by reducing feelings of fear, sadness, and worry ([Giordano et al., 2020](#)).

Contextual variables also influence the uses of music ([North et al., 2004](#); [Greb et al., 2018](#)). Thus, being alone while listening to music contributes to relieving tension, coping with difficult times, enjoyment and reducing feelings of loneliness ([Tarrant et al., 2000](#)).

This gender gap in pandemic care work corresponded to a dramatic reduction in women's paid labor hours, particularly among mothers of young children ([Collins et al., forthcoming](#)).

Following methodological approaches to studying the use of music in people's everyday lives draw on testimonies of the perceived uses people make of music, and also the degree of impact they believe these activities have on their everyday lives ([Craft et al., 1993](#); [DeNora, 2000](#); [North et al., 2000, 2004](#); [Schäfer et al., 2013](#)). The data analyzed in this study reports women perceptions on listening to music in times of distresses and lack, music being a tool of rejuvenating their mindsets and shifting their attention away from the worries and anxieties they encountered.

Interviews were conducted among women living in the slum of Makoko and some living in the multi-tenanted apartment in Lagos, Nigeria. The study made use of willing respondents within these vicinities and found that, some of them do not want to respond to some of the questions posed to them by the research assistant. However, the study was able to get 46 respondents in the female gender between the ages of 21 to 81 and above to answer the interview questions.

The making of music along with all manner of public events and rituals were casualties, the making of music, particularly its performance in public, has repeatedly played redeeming roles in times of tyranny and oppression. Asserting that, the role of music as a means of hope and solidarity in slavery and oppression is not a romantic myth. Scholars need to reinvent themselves as ambassadors and teachers who use language to encourage the love of music in the communities in which they reside (Botstein, 2020).

Folkman (2010) asserted that, the decreased control over one's own circumstances can impact a person's feeling of hope, particularly in times of high psychological stress. Uncertainty can exist within stressful situation, and hope is one way to cope with uncertainty. Individual's way to cope with uncertainty, those with high hope are likely to generate alternative routes to goal attainment and be more adaptable when encountering obstacles (Synder, 2002). This study investigated the impact of the pandemic on women living in the slums and multi-tenanted apartments, whose daily preoccupation is to provide their children daily bread and make ends meet. Another way to put the scourge and angst of COVID-19 behind you is to express gratitude to those who have affected your life, pre-pandemic, in positive ways. Lessons from a pandemic according to James

(2020). Using indigenous languages and music in crafting COVID-19 messages result in greater comprehension of the message, stating that, an indigenous musical health communication serves as a vehicle of edutainment in COVID-19 prevention. The music communicates hope and promise in the capacity of ancestral deities to step back into time during periods of catastrophe to alleviate the sufferings of their subjects.

Lehman composed a tune “Sweet caroline” a popular music tune that embraces togetherness and intimacy both lyrically and through its live performance. The song devalued touch at a time when it should be celebrated as a point of comfort in the present and as hope for the future. However, the songs proposed that, when you are struck and have nowhere to go, you can always depend on music (Trayvids, 2017). Erasmus and Morelli (2) added that, listening to music during the pandemic contributed to proactive and reactive coping strategies, allowing people to connect with others, escape, focus, relax, and find hedonic well-being and hope.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Marital status
2. Religion
3. Age range? 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61 -70 etc
4. How often do you listen to music?
5. What music do you like listening to? (mention the artiste/song/ genres)
6. How does this music make you feel?
7. Does this music give you assurance of hope? Yes/no
8. Does this music ignite stress relief? Yes/no
9. Does the music make you better than you were? Yes/no
10. Is there any song in particular that when you listen to it, gives you hope? (please ask them to cite the specific lyrics too?)
11. When you're down what do you do first?

Table 1. Participants' Characteristics

Respondents' Age	21 - 30 years	Count	24
		%	52.2%
	31 - 40 years	Count	7
		%	15.2%
	41 - 50 years	Count	7
		%	15.2%
	51 - 60 years	Count	6
		%	13.0%
	71 - 80 years	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	81 years	Count	1

	Above	%	2.2%
Total		Count	46
		%	100%
Marital Status?	Married	Count	20
		%	43.5%
	Single	Count	26
		%	56.5%
Total		Count	46
		%	100%
Religion	Muslim	Count	8
		%	17.4%
	Christian	Count	38
		%	82.6%
	Other	Count	0
		%	0
Total		Count	46
		%	100%

Q4. What Music Do you like listening to?

Table 2 Participants Listening Habit

How often do you listen to music?	Every time	Count	3
		%	4.3%
	Everyday	Count	19
		%	41.3%
	Very Often	Count	10
		%	21.7%
	Weekends	%	2
		Count	4.3%
	Once in awhile	Count	8
		%	17.4%
	Free time	Count	2
		%	4.3%
	During Activities	Count	2
		%	4.3%
Total		Count	46
		%	100%

Q5. What music do you like listening to?

Word Cloud showing Participants Musical Preference



Q6. How does this music make you feel?

Word Cloud showing how Participants feel when listening to their preferred music



Table Depicting

Does this music give you assurance of hope?	No	Count	10
		%	21.7%

	Yes	Count	36
		%	100%
Total		Count	78.3%
		%	100%
Does this music ignite stress relief?	No	Count	3
		%	6.5%
	Yes	Count	43
		%	93.5%
Total		Count	46
		%	100%
Does the music make you better than you were?	No	Count	3
		%	6.5%
	Yes	Count	43
		%	93.5%
Total		Count	46
		%	100%

Q10. Is there any song in particular that when you listen to it, gives you hope?

Word Cloud Depicting Artiste Participants of which participant find their works to give hope.



Some Songs of Hope Highlighted by Participants

S/N	Artiste and Song	Lyrics	Translation
1	Saoti Arewa -	Allahu Lai lai ila ila	There is none great like Allah

	Ami	Ise olohun ni po reke, ara Olohun ni npo repete,	The work of God is great, God is wonderful
2	Amin by Tope Alabi	Ose mi da bi ohun, opin mi ni ipin Ti ko Jo ti eni keji Mi o la le hu, emi ni ami aseda latorun Adagbeyin ni mi o wa fi mi joba Ohun gbogbo ti o ti ko da Odami ofunmi ni re Emi ni beeni, ase olodumare ni Amin lohun, emi lami	He made me like Him, my end is an end like none I can't cry, I am an heavenly creature A lowly place I am yet he made me a ruler Everything that has not been created he gave me I am yes, it is the command of the Almighty Amen, I am
3	Capable by Judikay	Capable God o What can't you do? What won't you do? Nothing impossible Nothing impossible What can't you do? What won't you do? Nothing impossible with our God	
4	Ojo ola mi adara by Ojo Ade	Nnkan yi da mi loju beesi ni oye mi yege Ti ojo oni ba ti le koro, Ojo ola mi adara	There is this one thing I am certain of and I understand. If today might be bitter, my tomorrow will be good
	FOR YOU Song by Teniola Apata ft Davido	Cos I don dey wait oh oh oh... And I still dey pray oh oh oh oh I still dey pray oh oh yeah O da na All my ego na for you All my Raba na for you Gbogbo owo mi na for you yeah, Oh girl for you All the moto for my garage for you yeah	I have been waiting for you... And I am still praying oh oh oh I still pray oh oh yeah (call) All my money is for you All my money is for you Every of my money is for you yeah, Oh girl for you All the cars in my garage is for you yeah
	Obinasom by Mercy Chinwo	See the way you love me see the way you care for me You carry my matter for your head oh Ineme obinasom Like a little baby You watch over me oh you no dey carry me dey play oh Ineme obinasom	
	Abdul Kabir Bukola Alayande (Ere Asalatu) – Omo Medina	Nibo la bi Muhammad si- ni Mecca ni o, ni Mecca ni o Nibo lo to Muhammad si- ni Mecca ni o, ni Mecca ni o Amin Olorun po ni jara - ni Mecca ni o,	

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Q11. When you're down what do you do first?

Table showing participants first course of action when down

When you're down what do you do first?	Watch Movies	Count	2
		%	2.2%
	Listen to Music	Count	12
		%	26.1%
	Pray	Count	8
		%	17.3%
	Sing Praises	Count	5
		%	10.9%
	Practice	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	Take a beer	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	Go out	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	Go on Social Media	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	Play Games	Count	2
		%	4.3%
	Eat	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	Cry	Count	5
		%	10.9%
	Stay Quiet	Count	1
		%	2.2%
	Be Around People	Count	2
		%	4.3%
	Rest	Count	2
		%	4.3%
Think		2	
		4.3%	
Chat with Friend(s)		1	
		2.2%	
Sleep		1	
		2.2%	
Total	Count	46	

	%	100%
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