



RETHINKING INDIGENOUS AESTHETICS AND KNOWLEDGE IN TENI'S *FARGIN* AND FLAVOUR'S *ADA ADA*

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Abstract

Popular music in Nigeria serves as a vibrant platform for cultural expression, allowing artists to connect with both local and global audiences through a unique mix of contemporary sounds and traditional elements. This research delves into the world of popular music, aiming to uncover the indigenous aesthetics and knowledge systems reflected in today's Nigerian hits, with a particular focus on "Fargin" by Teni and "Ada Ada" by Flavour. By analyzing the lyrics, visual aspects, and performance settings, the paper argues that both songs highlight African ways of knowing, intricately woven into language, attire, dance, ritual symbols, and community values. "Fargin" taps into Yoruba moral teachings, emphasizing family loyalty and traditional views on destiny and respect for parents, while "Ada Ada" showcases Igbo marriage customs, celebrates womanhood, and captures the spirit of community festivities through rich cultural imagery. This paper explores how these artists utilize cultural aesthetics, oral traditions, and symbolic motifs to tackle themes of identity, morality, and community values in today's world. Grounded in performance theory and Afrocentric perspectives, the research posits that these artistic expressions go beyond mere entertainment; they act as living archives of tradition, transforming ancestral wisdom into modern musical forms. In conclusion, the study argues that such musical works challenge Western aesthetic norms by re-centering indigenous perspectives, serving as vital tools for cultural preservation and educational resources that communicate African identity, ethics, and social memory to both contemporary and global audiences.

Keywords: Indigenous Aesthetics, knowledge Systems, Cultural Iconography, Popular Music, Global Audience.

Introduction

Over the years, the Nigerian popular music industry has grown to become a prominent and powerful cultural phenomenon in Africa and beyond, serving not only as entertainment but also as a dynamic arena for cultural production, identity negotiation, and knowledge dissemination.

In recent decades, the worldwide emergence of Nigerian music within the Afrobeats genre has garnered considerable academic interest on how current artistes innovatively blend modern soundscapes with entrenched indigenous aesthetics and knowledge systems. This fusion demonstrates a deliberate and planned interaction with tradition, in which artists utilise language, rhythm, symbolism, and performance to convey culturally rooted themes that appeal to both local and global audiences.

Despite the growing global prominence of Nigerian popular music, a persistent controversy exists regarding the degree to which this music maintains or undermines local cultural values.

Some critics assert that globalisation and commercialisation threaten traditional forms, while others believe that modern artists deliberately reinterpret and disseminate indigenous knowledge systems to maintain their continuity and relevance. Thus this study is situated within this framework, with the aim to examine how indigenous aesthetics and knowledge systems are integrated and manifested in current Nigerian popular music. Two songs (Fargin, and Ada Ada) by two prominent Nigerian artistes (Teni, and Flavour) have been purposively selected for this study. These pieces were chosen because of their explicit connection with indigenous customs and rich cultural richness. Fargin emphasises themes of filial piety, destiny, diligence, and respect for parental authority, drawing significantly from Yoruba moral philosophy. The song explores indigenous ethical frameworks that regulate societal behaviour and individual aspirations through its lyrical composition and visual expression. While Ada Ada, on the other hand, presents a joyous depiction of Igbo marriage customs, highlighting womanhood, group celebration, and the symbolic depth of matrimonial ceremonies. Igbo values and social customs are preserved and projected through the song's visual and performing components, which act as a cultural archive.

In order to investigate how meaning is created within these musical texts, this study uses a qualitative methodology that integrates lyrical analysis, visual semiotics, and performance contextualisation. Performance theory, which highlights the expressive and embodied aspects of

cultural creation, and Afrocentricity, which promotes the inclusion of African worldviews in academic discourse, serves as the theoretical foundation for the analysis. These theoretical frameworks offer a lens through which Nigerian popular music's cultural value can be critically appraised beyond its commercial appeal.

This study contends that modern Nigerian popular music shows an alternate trajectory in which indigenous aesthetics are re-inscribed inside modern forms rather than erased despite the fact that globalisation is frequently linked to cultural homogenisation. Thus, these musical compositions affirm the legitimacy of African epistemologies in international cultural discourse and contest the hegemony of Western aesthetic paradigms. Afrobeats and kindred genres have been instrumental in changing how the world views Africa and in giving Africans and the diaspora a reinvigorated feeling of cultural pride and identity

This study therefore argues that Nigerian popular music serves as a storehouse of living tradition, translating traditional wisdom into modern expressive forms that transcend time and location. Furthermore, the study demonstrates the ongoing significance of indigenous aesthetics and knowledge systems in influencing contemporary African artistic practices by analysing the cultural content such as Fargin and Ada Ada. By doing this, it upholds the idea that popular music is still an important medium for the creation, transmission, and maintenance of African cultural identity, ethics, and social memory rather than being a trivial or simply creative genre.

Popular Music in the Nigerian Context

Within the framework of this study, Nigerian popular music can be conceptualized as a hybrid cultural formation that fuses indigenous expressive traditions with global musical influences. Veal (2000) as cited in Nwokolo (2025) consistently emphasize that contemporary Nigerian genres—especially Afrobeats—are not purely modern inventions but are rooted in earlier forms such as highlife, fuji, and traditional percussion-based music, which are reworked within global sonic frameworks.

As Sunday-Kanu (2024) argues, Afrobeats exemplifies this hybridity through its fusion of “African traditional music, jazz, funk and rock,” positioning Nigerian popular music as both locally grounded and globally oriented. This conviction makes Obijiaku (2019) to highlight that Nigerian musical production is characterized by structural hybridity, where indigenous musical principles coexist with Western forms to create new expressive possibilities.

From a linguistic and cultural perspective however, Onanuga and Akingbe (2020) note that Nigerian popular music operates within a specific socio-cultural milieu where language, rhythm, and context are central to meaning-making. This vehemently reinforces the idea that popular music is deeply embedded in everyday life and reflects the lived realities of its audiences. They further explain that one cannot separate the linguistic style of Nigerian pop from its geographical and political reality; that is, its language, rhythm, and context are deeply bound together (Akingbe and Onanuga 2018). This is why Makinde and Nnebe (2025) succinctly observe that Nigerian music—particularly street-pop and Afrobeats—functions as a site of linguistic innovation, incorporating code-switching, vernacular expressions, and culturally specific idioms. What these scholars are trying to say is that Nigeria pop music is a living and accelerating engine of language evolution which has the potential to continually develop its language within its milieu in society across generations.

Beyond its sonic qualities, scholars such as Salawu and Fadipe (2022) conceptualize indigenous African popular music as an “agency of identity creation and recreation,” where artists act as cultural philosophers that interpret and project societal values through their music. Invariably, when music is seen as an agency of identity creation and recreation, it simply means shifting the spotlight onto how music actively shapes who people are, rather than just “soundtracking” or presenting a culture that already exists. This core thought aligns with that of Babalola (2023) who believes that music generally and popular music in particular, should be understood as a transnational expressive mode, connecting local experiences with global cultural flows. More often than not, indigenous African popular music: artists are not only seen as Cultural Philosophers; Creators and Re-creators of Identity, they are also viewed as Moral Advocates and Social Critics. This is why Bamidele (2000) asserts that artists generally should always give us a sense of life through their creative pieces; because they are usually seen as ...”sustainer(s) of the community and its institutions...who constantly warn the society of an impending disaster.” This important thought is also shared by the duo of Ogazie and Odetade (2017), who further affirm that artists generally and musicians particularly are agent of social change through their continued transition of historical, sociopolitical, religious and educational instructions channeled through their works.

The above alignment highlights the conceptual synergy among these scholars. For instance, Babalola (2024) cements the conversation by bridging the gap between internal cultural philosophy and external global systems. He illustrates how modern African music behaves as a fluid and borderless force in creating change. If Salawu and Fadipe analyze how identity is actively manufactured and remade on a local, communal level, Babalola's framework explains where that identity travels and what it collides with. The intersection of these scholarly frameworks reveals that modern Nigerian and African popular music is not just a form of entertainment; it is a highly dynamic "living archive" that actively shapes and scales cultural identity.

Obviously, scholars have seen popular music artists as cultural philosophers who use indigenous languages and traditions to interpret societal values and reshape identity from within (deMaría and Straits, 2024, Elenwo, 2021). Babalola (2023) expands this view by showing how that localized identity behaves as a "transnational expressive mode." Through his concept of "lyricapitalism," Babalola illustrates how artists take these deeply rooted, local struggles—such as postcolonial economic survival—and sync them with global cultural and digital flows. Together, these perspectives prove that African popular music acts as a powerful bridge, allowing local experiences to be continuously reinvented on a global stage while offering a shared, borderless sense of belonging for both domestic audiences and the worldwide diaspora.

In many African societies, musicians do not just provide entertainment; they are seen to carrying profound social responsibilities. Ogazie and Imasagbor (2022) position that musical artists should not allow themselves to be seen as social pollutants, instead through their works, they should be viewed as modern cultural philosophers or vanguards of social reformation. This is because they translate complex cultural, socio-political anxieties, economic struggles, and historical events into digestible, relatable narratives for the public. By composing in indigenous languages, they protect vulnerable linguistic heritage while continuously evolving the language to fit contemporary contexts (Salawu and Fadipe, 2022). Ultimately, this framework shows that indigenous African popular music is a living archive—a dynamic space where societal values are continuously debated, preserved, and reinvented.

Theoretical Framework

Literary and cultural studies often draw on interdisciplinary paradigms to interpret texts, practices, and identities. Two influential frameworks—Performance Theory and Afrocentricity were adopted for this study. The duo theoretic frameworks offer complementary lenses for examining cultural production, especially within African and diasporic contexts. Performance Theory is seemed to have emerged in the mid-20th century through the works of Richard Schechner, Victor Turner, and Dwight Conquergood. It conceptualizes performance not merely as artistic display but as a social process through which meaning is produced and negotiated. It emphasizes the embodied, dynamic, and interactive nature of cultural expression. Afrocentricity, in the other hand as developed by Molefi Kete Asante in the 1980s, is a theoretical and methodological framework that seeks to center African people as agents of their own history and culture. It emerged as a response to Eurocentric scholarship that marginalized African perspectives and repositioned Africa as peripheral.

Together, these theories provide a robust foundation for analyzing African creative works, which include media contents, narratives, oral traditions, and performative practices. These theories frame culture as active and processual, rather than static text. Which means aligning with contemporary cultural studies that view African creative works not just as artifacts to be preserved, but as living, evolving practices that actively shape (and are shaped by) society.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the intersection of indigenous knowledge and contemporary music. Utilizing purposive sampling, *Teni's Fargin* and *Flavour's Ada Ada* were selected as primary case studies due to their dense representation of Yoruba folk-narrative and Igbo ceremonial aesthetics. Data is analyzed through a triangulated method of Lyrical Analysis, Visual Semiotics and Performance Analysis. These efforts try to deconstruct the use of indigenous idioms and moral storytelling, decode cultural symbols, such as coral beads (Eze) and traditional fabrics, as signifiers of identity. While doing this, the paper examined the contextual "re-living" of these traditions in modern spaces. The study is anchored in the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) framework, focusing on how traditional aesthetics are re-mediated for the digital age. These songs were selected via purposive sampling for their distinct yet complementary "re-indigenization" strategies. *Flavour's Ada Ada* represents a high-gloss,



ceremonial Igbo aesthetic, essential for studying visual symbols of ritual and marriage. Conversely, Teni's Fargin utilizes Yoruba folk-storytelling tropes, offering a rich site for analyzing how indigenous moral codes and oral traditions are re-mediated within contemporary Afrobeats to influence modern social behaviour.

Indigenous Aesthetics in Fargin and Ada Ada

Indigenous aesthetics in this study refers to the culturally grounded artistic principles that shape meaning, beauty, and expression. These aesthetics are embedded in performance choices that reflect Nigerian cultural traditions. For instance, the language in both alums serves as a primary carrier of indigenous knowledge. In Fargin for instance, Teni uses Yoruba-inflected pidgin and street slang to construct humor and social commentary. A lyrical example below will suffice:

Oh oh
Yeah yea
Oni kin bo pata
Olohun maradona
Oni Teni olomoge cinderella
Oni Ohun to fi sayayi po
Oni Teni Ohun to fi seyin po
Oni I wanna marry you
Oni teniola lemme carry you
Oni if you shake am
I go put ring on it
Oni if you rock am
I go put a ring it
Oni se mo le de be ehn
Mo ni rara
Oni se mo le kibo
Mo ni rara
Uncle I'm still a fargin oo
Walai
I don't know nothing oo
Oni don't take it personal
I just wanna know you better
Don't take it personal
I just want to show you love
If I dey lie mey water carry me go 4ce
Olohun jigijigi
Olohun jigijigi
Olohun Mr Rasaki



Mr rasaki
Teni makanaki
Sun mo bi je jo kawasaki
Uncle I'm still a fargin
I don't know nothing o
E say I no go use you play rara
I no go use you joke rara
I no go use you play futuballu.2ce
Ohohoho futuballu.2ce
Oni don't take it personal
I just wanna know you better
Don't take it personal
I just wanna show you love
If I dey lie mey water carry me go.4ce
Omoele jo ko jo...
Dance dance dance eeh
Teni on the beat eeh Makanaki
Mystro on the beat eeh...

Teni in this song weaponizes language for humor and social critique. She for instance coined “Fargin” is a deliberate linguistic device to create humorous shield. The word "Fargin" is a deliberate, heavily Yoruba-accented mispronunciation of the English word "Virgin." In standard Yoruba phonology, the "V" sound does not natively exist, often being replaced by an "F" or "B" sound by older speakers or those with strong regional accents. By leaning into this exaggerated, localized accent, Teni immediately injects a sense of comedic naivety into her character. However, the social commentary is sharp: she adopts the persona of an innocent, local girl to disarm a predator. It highlights the vulnerability of young girls while using humor to make a taboo topic—the preservation of bodily autonomy and sexual consent—approximable and widely transmittable on Nigerian radio.

In the lyrics is the “Maradona” wordplay, subverting to be a smooth talker. As showcased in the song, "O ni kin bo pata, o l'ohun Maradona", it is obvious that the infusion of the name has a lot to pass across to an average Nigerian audience. In Nigerian street slang for instance, "Maradona" named after the legendary, deceptive dribbler Diego Maradona, refers to a smooth-talking player, a con artist, or someone trying to cleverly "dribble" or manipulate his/her way into a situation. The phrase "O ni kin bo pata, o l'ohun Maradona" literally translates from Yoruba/Pidgin to: "He asked me to remove my underwear, saying he is a Maradona." Teni uses this slang to expose the ridiculous, overly confident lines men use to seduce women. There is also a brilliant linguistic

double entendre hidden here: “o l’ohun Maradona” phonetically sounds like the Yoruba phrase “o l’oun ma do mi” (meaning “he says he will make love with me”). Through this clever, humorous wordplay, Teni calls out the deceptive tactics of sexual predators who treat sexual conquest like a game of football.

Besides the above, Teni furthermore creatively passed a quick message with the “Uncle” dynamics and aggressive rejection. The Lyric: “O ni se mo le debe ehn? Mo ni rara! O ni se mo le ki bo? Mo ni rara! Uncle, I’m still a fargin oh” Teni cleverly uses the Yoruba/Pidgin street euphemisms “debe” (to get in there/reach the destination) and “ki bo” (to insert/penetrate) alongside the word “rara” (an emphatic Yoruba word for “No”). In Nigeria, “Uncle” is a term of respect used for older men, relatives, or family friends. By juxtapositioning the predatory, graphic street slang (debe, ki bo) coming from an “Uncle,” Teni creates an uncomfortable, darkly humorous, yet highly realistic social commentary on the “perverted uncle” trope. Her sharp, repetitive response “Moni rara!” (I said NO!) Shifts the power dynamic. She uses the absolute finality of the Yoruba rara to model sexual decorum and assertiveness, showing young women that it is entirely okay to firmly decline unwelcome sexual advances.

In addition from the song, we could see the singer mock the predator’s (Uncle) false promises and hyper-masculinity. “O ni oun jigijigi, boasting about his sexual prowess... O ni if you shake am I go put a ring on it. She uses the onomatopoeic Yoruba/Pidgin slang “jigijigi” to describe vigorous sexual movement or prowess, coupled with the classic wedding promise (“put a ring on it”). Teni mimics the older suitor’s desperate bragging. By adopting a theatrical, storytelling cadence, she turns the man’s attempt at hyper-masculine seduction into a joke. The social commentary targets the manipulative transactional nature of these encounters, where men promise marriage, love, or material wealth (“Teniola lemme carry you”) purely as a tool for immediate sexual gratification.

Through Fargin, Teni achieved what few artists can: she took highlife music, doused it in street-level Yoruba-Pidgin, and used it as a trojan horse for sex education. By making the predator look ridiculous and giving the young woman a witty, unyielding voice, she stripped the shame away from the victim and redirected the humor toward exposing the absurdity of the harasser.



In Ada Ada, Flavour N'abania employs the Igbo language, reinforcing cultural identity, especially in the context of marriage rituals and communal celebration. The lyrics go thus:

Have you seen my beautiful baby
Have you seen my tomato baby oh iyele
Baby softly dey cool me temper Ada
Baby na sugar sugar iyo
Everybody dey wait
Put a kene n'ogbo
Ife di mma amaka
Better soup na money kill am o
Adanwa ngwa pekem pekem iya
Ada Ada oyolima
Ada Ada iyooo
Ada Ada Adanwa
Ada Ada chei asanwa
Ada Ada hei Ada
Ada n'idi ora nma
Everybody dey wait
Put a kene n'ogbo
Ife di mma amaka
Better soup na money kill am o
Adanwa ngwa pekem pekem iya
Ada Ada hei Adanwa
Ada Ada iyooo

Ada no dey lack Ada
Dem get am for everywhere
Ada no dey lack Ada
Dey get am for up and down
Baby na tomato baby
Too fresh like morning wine
Ada welelei
Iyooo ko ko ko
Everybody dey wait
Put a kene n'ogbo
Ife di mma amaka
Better soup na money kill am o
Adanwa ngwa pekem pekem iya
Ada Ada hei Adanwa
Ada Ada iyooo
Ada Ada Adanwa
Ada Ada chei asanwa
Ada Ada hei Ada
Ada n'idi ora nma
Everybody dey wait
Put a kene na ogbo
Ife di m mma amaka



Better soup na money kill am o
Adanwa ngwa pekem pekem iya
Ada Ada hei Adanwa
Ada Ada iyooo
Ada Ada Adanwa
Ada Ada chei asanwa
Ada Ada hei Ada
Ada n'idi ora nma
Everybody dey wait
Put a kene n'ogbo
Ife di mma amaka
Better soup na money kill am o
Adanwa ngwa pekem pekem iya
Ada Ada hei asanwa
Ada Ada iyooo
Pekem pekem pekem iya
Pekem pekem pekem pekem iya ije (2x)
Pekem ya ije
Pekemkem ya ije
Pekem pekem iya pekemkem
Adanwa ngwa welu ya ngwa welu ya ngwa choba ya (4x)
Pekemkem pekem pekem iya ijawa ije o ka omee iyekem yekem iya pekemkem
Mummy bye bye
Daddy bye bye
In nine months' time we will come visiting
With a boy and girl
A na-akpo ejima
Ada Ada iyooo

In Igbo culture, names carry heavy ontological meaning. By naming the track and the protagonist "Ada Ada," Flavour invokes the deeply respected status of the Ada (the first daughter). The first daughter holds a sacred, institutional role within the Umuada (the assembly of native-born women) and her father's lineage. By repeating "Ada," Flavour is not just praising a beautiful bride; he is validating her lineage, moral standing, and structural importance to the family she is leaving and the one she is joining. The lyrics act as an audio blueprint for the traditional rites required to properly wed an Igbo woman. Flavour explicitly maps out the material culture and social expectations. The instance of emphasizing "Ada ada, ichakebe ogo" (Ada, you have brought honor/prestige) goes beyond mere repetition. He uses deep, dialectal Igbo terms to describe her beauty and character, framing her not just as a pretty individual, but as a source of pride to her entire lineage. Repeating "Ada" validates the bride's transition into marriage, signaling to the community that a daughter of high standing is being formally and respectfully handed over.

The song acts as a step-by-step lyrical narration of the traditional marriage rites. Flavour uses specific cultural vocabulary to evoke the sounds, sights, and demands of an authentic ceremony. "Ada Ada" functions as a modern archive. By wrapping traditional laws, gender roles, and marital rites in a vibrant Igbo dialect, Flavour ensures that young generations both at home and in the diaspora absorb the rigorous tenets of Igbo cultural identity under the joyous guise of a celebration. He proves that the Igbo language does not need to be diluted with English to be a massive commercial success, showing younger generations that their native tongue is vibrant, celebratory, and cool.

Apart from the language, costume play vital role in passing across indigenous aesthetics. For instance, costuming in Ada Ada reflects traditional Igbo attire associated with weddings—symbolizing purity, beauty, and cultural pride.



Plates 1 & 2 are from Ada Ada Video



Plates 3 & 4 are from Ada Ada Video

In contrast, Fargin adopts contemporary street fashion, which still reflects indigenous urban youth identity, showing that indigeneity can exist in modernized forms.



Plates 5 & 6 are from *Fargin* Video



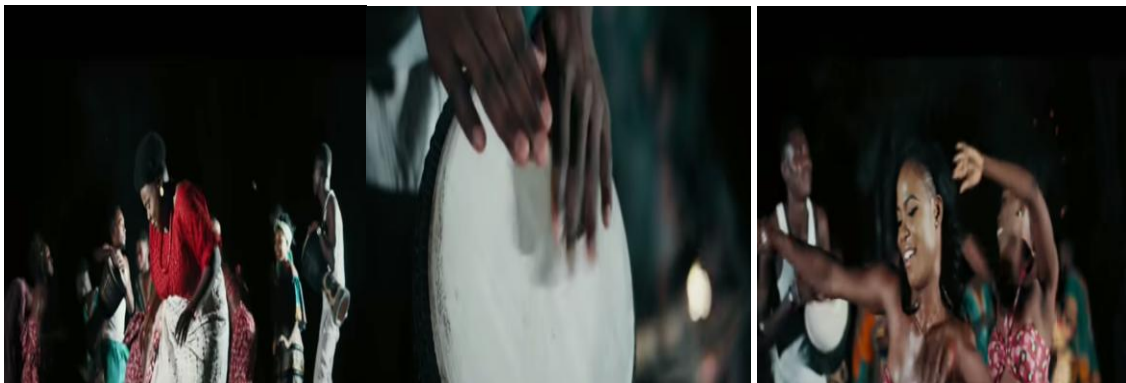
Plates 7 & 8 are from *Fargin* Video

Another prominent indigenous aesthetics in these two musical videos is dance. While both videos celebrate milestones and community, they showcase cultural aesthetics through two distinct ethnic lenses: Yoruba and Igbo. Dance in *Ada Ada* mirrors traditional Igbo dance styles used in ceremonies, emphasizing grace and communal participation. The dance movements are highly energetic, expressive, and deeply embedded in Igbo customs. It features choreographed groups performing traditional rhythmic stepping, synchronized hand movements, and expressive waist vibrations that mirror the fast-paced, percussion-driven Highlife beat.



Plates 9, 10 & 11 are from Ada Ada Video

The dance choreography showcases the bride's (Ada) graceful, rhythmic sway. It emphasizes poise, beauty, and purity. Her gentle footwork and shoulder movements represent modesty and the dignity of an Igbo woman stepping into marriage. Likewise, the video plays priority to indigenous African aesthetics of group over individual. The video is packed with communal dancing—elderly women, peer groups (Umu Ada), and the groom's entourage—signifying that marriage is a union of two communities, not just two people. Unlike the high-octane celebration of Ada Ada, the dance aesthetics in Fargin are subtle, narrative-driven, and theatrical. The choreography mirrors the mid-tempo, guitar-led rhythm, employing the Yoruba aesthetic of "Ewa" (Beauty/Gentleness) and "Iwa" (Character). Temi's body language in the video is that of a "protected daughter" rather than an "object of desire," which physically manifests the lyrics' theme of self-preservation. The dance movements executed by the singer and her dancers serve as a physical dialogue which has obvious meanings.



Plates 12, 13 & 14 are from Fargin Video

The movements involve playful retreating, hip-swaying, and hand gestures that mimic pushing a persistent suitor away. It uses dance to communicate boundaries, capturing the traditional Yoruba custom where a young woman maintains her dignity and modesty during courtship, the "No-Touch" body language. These are desired virtues that have gradually become eroded as a result of modernity. The video also relies heavily on mid-20th-century Nigerian fashion and dance styles. The subtle leg shifts and rhythmic nodding resemble the relaxed, social dancing found in classic Fuji and Jùjú music circles of the 1970s and 80s.

Apart from the indigenous aesthetics of dance, both songs act as repositories of indigenous knowledge: for instance, *Ada Ada* communicates knowledge about marriage rites, gender roles, and community values within Igbo society. In the other hand, *Fargin* reflects lived urban experience, encoding social knowledge about relationships, humor, and survival in contemporary Nigeria. It is worth noting that African epistemologies prioritize oral expression, performance, and social interaction as valid means of knowing. Thus, these songs challenge Western notions of knowledge by demonstrating that music itself is a legitimate site of knowledge production and transmission. In both songs, performance culture is central—meaning is not only in the lyrics but in gestures, vocal inflections, music videos, and audience engagement. These elements transform the songs into living cultural performances rather than static texts.

The visual storytelling in "Ada Ada" uses specific icons to communicate deep cultural meanings. For instance, the use of high-quality "George" wrappers and lace signifies wealth, status, and the "wrappers of adulthood." Traditionally, the wearing of coral beads are worn by royalty or those of high social standing. The heavy coral beads around the bride's neck and hair symbolize purity, royalty, and the "weight" of the new responsibility she is undertaking. The dominance of red and gold in the costuming represents vitality, fertility, and prosperity. The Horsetail (Nza): often carried by titled men or the bride during her entrance, is a symbol of authority and elegance in Igbo iconography.

In *Fargin*, the visual narrative relies heavily on a semiotic split, featuring two versions of *Teni* (the singer), existing in the same retro-indigenous settlement. One *Teni* acts as the traditional oral storyteller (the *Griot*). She is detached from the direct action, observing from a position of power, wisdom, and moral authority. She is often seen wearing bold makeup (a sharp face beat) and gold rings, symbolizing distinction and ancestral voice. The second *Teni* represents the

young girl being actively pursued by an older male predator "Uncle." This semiotic duplication allows Teni to be both the victim experiencing the pressure of sexual advances and the empowered advocate guiding her through it. It visually mirrors the internal psyche of a young girl attempting to protect her bodily autonomy under societal and patriarchal pressure.

The wardrobe in "Fargin" is highly deliberate, rejecting conventional Westernized definitions of pop-star femininity in favour of a culturally grounded, gender-neutral authenticity. Rejection of the male gaze is made prominent in the video. For instance, instead of form-fitting modern clothing or elaborate hair extensions, Teni sports her natural hair, minimal jewelry, and traditional Yoruba attire. The video honours her actual identity rather than changing her to fit standard commercial archetypes. The characters wear classic Yoruba fabrics and mid-century retro styles. For the young girl, the traditional attire symbolizes a connection to communal morals and upbringing (*Ìwà lẹwà*—character is beauty). The "Uncle" trying to seduce her is often dressed in a mix of older, flashy styles—symbolizing a misuse of seniority, wealth, and status to manipulate the youth - The Predator's Aesthetic:.

The song's success proves that indigenous moral philosophies—often dismissed as "old-fashioned," still hold significant social currency among Nigerian youth who are looking for an identity that balances global pop culture with their African roots.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that contemporary Nigerian popular music is far more than a commercial product or a medium for mere entertainment; it is a dynamic, living archive of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural aesthetics. Through a nuanced analysis of Teni's "Fargin" and Flavour's "Ada Ada," this study has illustrated how modern artists successfully bridge the gap between ancestral wisdom and contemporary global sounds. By embedding Yoruba moral philosophies of respect and destiny, alongside Igbo matrimonial traditions and communal celebration, into their lyrics, visuals, and performances, these artists actively preserve and renegotiate African identities in a rapidly globalizing world.

Grounded in performance theory and Afrocentric perspectives, the findings of this paper underscore the pedagogical and historical value of popular music. Songs like "Fargin" and "Ada Ada" serve as vital educational tools that transmit social memory, ethics, and community values

across generations. Ultimately, by re-centering indigenous worldviews, Nigerian popular music successfully disrupts and challenges dominant Western aesthetic norms. It asserts a distinct African agency, proving that local traditions are not static relics of the past, but fluid, resilient, and powerful forces capable of shaping global cultural discourse. Moving forward, academic frameworks must continue to recognize and study popular culture as a critical site for the preservation and celebration of African ways of knowing.

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