

The Impact of Oral Traditions on African Indigenous Musical Practices: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: *Background:* This paper examines how oral tradition has been instrumental in creating, documenting and transforming African indigenous musical cultures. This is important as they act as vital conduits through which musical practices are passed on from one generation to the other, enabling survival consistent with preserving numerous ethnic musical traditions from external pressure and modern challenges. *Objective:* This study sought to map out how oral tradition affects the continuation and evolution of Indigenous musical practice in Africa, not only for its positive prospects for creativity but also for the difficulties it has ever faced in the present world. *Methods:* Based on the above themes, a systematic literature review was conducted with particular emphasis on those examining oral transmission of African Indigenous musical practices. The functions, challenges, and adaptation of oral traditions in musical practices were gathered by synthesising findings from oral traditions sources across the different African communities. *Results:* The review showed that oral tradition is vital in preserving and transforming indigenous musical practices. It enables the retention of cultural identity while creating new music styles and, at the same time, facilitates the production of new musical forms. However, there are challenges, such as the disappearance of traditional forms, vulnerability to distortion, and finally, there is no standard notation. In light of these challenges, this paper proposes potential solutions – integrating written and oral methods ensures that music is preserved more accurately and readily available. *Conclusion:* Oral tradition plays the critical role of preserving Indigenous musical practices among African people up to date, though modern development complicates its effectiveness. New technologies and the combination of the oral/written modality could help to overcome these difficulties and ensure the continuation and evolution of Indigenous music for future generations. Further studies should be directed to the differences between the regions, the influence of modernity, and the importance of technologies for maintaining these traditions.

Keywords: Africa, cultural heritage, cultural preservation, Indigenous musical practices, oral tradition.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Most African cultures use oral methods to educate and transfer knowledge to the next generation, often through musical games (Joseph & Hartwig, 2015). These practices occur in social functions and ritual ceremonies where music is the main communication medium (Westerlund, 1999). As a result, musical knowledge in Africa is rooted in oral traditions, an invention of the Indigenous people used to pass down culture, values, beliefs, and histories through music (Lebaka, 2019a). This transmission occurs through singing, dancing, hand clapping, and performing traditional musical instruments.

Oral traditions entail transmitting knowledge through spoken or sung words rather than written records, which has been significant in sustaining and disseminating Africa'

s musical heritage (Femi et al., 2017). This practice is intimately associated with memory, and the use of mnemonic devices, such as rhythmic patterns, melodic motifs, and storytelling, aid in memorisation and ensure that knowledge of music is passed from one generation to the next (Lebaka, 2019a). Charry (2000) highlights Indigenous musical instruments' role in reinforcing the mnemonic function of griot performances, aiding both the griot and the audience in remembering the stories and their underlying messages. Consequently, Africa's diverse cultural practices are embedded at the core of its cultures, with diverse musical traditions passed down orally from one generation to another (Kubik, 2010).

Musical practices vary in different African regions and communities, each shaped by their distinct musical practices patterned on their histories, cultures and ethnicities. In Nigeria, Indigenous musical practices occupy an integral part of the cultural society/tradition of many ethnic groups. Izu (2022) explores how cultural festivities, like the Ovwuvwe cultural festival in Delta State, were helpful in the dissemination of cultural practices and knowledge through songs. These festivals are celebration events and arenas for teaching the community's narrative, beliefs and ethical norms through singing and dancing. This form of oral tradition is essential in preserving the culture of a community as it is threatened by modernisation.

Harrison (2020) also confirms how songs have been employed in various African cultures to convey information on environmental aspects, social relations, and moral education. They typically bear several layers of meaning that can only be comprehended by connoisseurs of the culture, making them an effective means of preserving and passing down cultural practices to the next generations. Recognising this diversity, the researcher sees the need to look deeply into these musical traditions and understand the profound impacts oral tradition has had in preserving and sustaining these musical traditions. According to Rabatoko (2017), oral traditions are vital in preserving Indigenous musical practices that are important to people and enabling the clear and engaging retention of cultural knowledge.

However, oral traditions face considerable challenges nowadays, mainly due to the effects of modernisation and globalisation. The advent of Western civilisation, the infusion of new technologies, the influence of new Information Communication Technologies, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and literacy tradition have all contributed to the gradual jettisoning of oral culture and traditions. As Izu (2021) points out, there is a growing concern about how such influences have weakened the essence of Indigenous musical practices, which might lead to cultural erosion and even loss of identity, such as deculturation. However, modern influences have introduced new elements into these practices and, at the same time, presented an opportunity for novelty and creativity. Indigenous communities have adapted and incorporated modern technology, instruments and styles into the Indigenous musical practices and expressions, making them relevant in the contemporary world.

1.2. Research Purpose

Despite the vital role oral tradition plays in developing Indigenous musical practice in African societies, there remains a need to get an extensive understanding of the impact oral tradition has had on musical practices. Hence, this paper aims to present the impact of oral traditions on Indigenous musical practices in African societies, focusing on how oral traditions contribute to preserving, evolving, and transmitting musical knowledge and cultural identity within diverse African communities.

To achieve this, the paper employs a systematic literature review and critically evaluates existing studies on oral traditions' role in African Indigenous musical practices. The study specifically focused on papers related to African oral traditions and Indigenous musical practices, enhancing the clarity of its scope. Additionally, the paper aims to contribute to the existing literature by offering unique insights and filling the identified gap in understanding the impacts of oral traditions. This study is guided by

the belief that a detailed investigation of the impact of oral traditions on African Indigenous musical practices will not only contribute to scholarly knowledge but also offer valuable insights for cultural preservation efforts. By identifying and synthesising key findings from existing literature, the study aims to provide a foundation for future research and contribute to the ongoing discourse on the dynamic interplay between oral traditions and musical practices in African societies.

1.3. Research Methods

In this study, the researcher employed the systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to analyse existing scholarly literature on the impact of oral transmission on African Indigenous musical practices, following the three phases outlined by Brereton et al. (2007), planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting the review.

During the review planning phase, a review protocol was established. This protocol outlined the research questions, identified the databases to be queried, defined the search terms, and set the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. The research questions were:

RQ1. What are the impacts and roles of oral transmission on Indigenous musical traditions in Africa?

RQ2. How does oral transmission contribute to African Indigenous musical practices?

RQ3. What are the challenges and implications of oral transmission of musical knowledge in Africa?

RQ4. How can oral transmission be enhanced to preserve and disseminate African Indigenous musical traditions?

The databases were ResearchGate, Google Scholar, JSTOR and Web of Science. The search terms were "oral transmission in Africa," "oral traditions in Africa," "Indigenous musical traditions in Africa," "African Indigenous musical practices", "challenges of oral transmission of Indigenous musical knowledge in Africa", "benefits of oral transmission of Indigenous musical knowledge in Africa", "roles of oral traditions in sustaining Indigenous musical knowledge/practices in Africa", the role of oral transmission in the continuity and preservation of Indigenous musical traditions in Africa" "implications of oral transmission for preserving and disseminating Indigenous musical knowledge in Africa" integrating oral and written methods of Indigenous musical practices in Africa" and the contributions of oral transmission to the evolution and adaptation of African Indigenous musical practices" are used to identify relevant studies.

The inclusion criteria were publications written in English because the research only reads English, studies published within the last 20 years, and publications that were peer-reviewed articles, conference papers proceedings or published theses. The exclusion criteria were publications that did not meet the inclusion criteria or were duplicates, non-English articles, studies unrelated to the topic, and non-academic sources.

The research objectives were to synthesise literature on the impacts of oral traditions on Indigenous musical practices in Africa in terms of preservation, sustenance, and accessibility. In the review conducting phase, which comprised the following tasks, the first was to locate available literature by searching through the databases and the search terms defined in the Review Protocol. The different keywords were used separately and in conjunction to obtain a more relevant search. In some instances, while searching for this term, other related terms like influences, challenges, roles and benefits were used instead of impacts, and the search results were positive.

These searches were conducted in June-August 2023 and returned 108 papers collectively across all the databases. To achieve the study's objective, these papers were analysed to eliminate the papers that merely touched on oral traditions/transmission. This was done by accessing the articles, reading their abstracts in detail and going

through the rest of the paper quickly while searching for the specific information. Upon this step, which included excluding articles published in key and marginal journals and applying further inclusion criteria, the number of papers was narrowed down to 77 after briefly examining titles and abstracts. These papers were also considered based on their abstracts, discussions, and conclusions; this helped eliminate twenty-four papers considered irrelevant to the study area.

The final 53 papers were deemed relevant and used for data extraction and synthesis in the final steps. In the data extraction process, four more papers were identified as relevant and fulfilling the inclusion criteria through the reference list search, known as snowballing. These papers were incorporated in the subsequent stage of Reporting the Review to increase the number of papers under review to 57.

2. Findings

The tables presented below summarise the findings of the systematic literature review. Each of the 57 papers analysed identified at least one impact of oral tradition on African Indigenous musical practices. The review identified several concepts as impacts of oral traditions in African Indigenous musical practices. These concepts are listed in the tables below.

2.1. The Impact and role of oral tradition on Indigenous Musical Traditions in Africa

Table 1. The Impact and role of oral tradition on Indigenous Musical Traditions in Africa

Impact	Description	Key References
Preservation of Cultural Practices and Rituals	Oral tradition is crucial in maintaining and upholding cultural practices and rituals related to Indigenous musical traditions in African communities. The passing down of musical knowledge from generation to generation ensures authenticity and integrity.	Nompula (2011); Lebaka (2019a); Turino (2008); Harper (2017)
Learning Social Practices through Oral Transmission	Oral tradition is instrumental in learning social practices associated with Indigenous musical traditions, such as dance, singing, and drumming. Social practices play a significant role in passing down beliefs and values within the community.	Mauwa (2020); Muparutsa (2013); Nwamara (2017)
Preservation of Specific Musical Styles and Techniques	The reliance on memory, storytelling, and direct interpersonal communication enables the perpetuation of specific musical styles, instruments, vocal techniques, and performance practices, ensuring the authenticity and integrity of Indigenous musical traditions—for instance, the Jindwi people's oral transmission of the Chimaisiri dance in Zimbabwe.	Turino (2008); Harper (2017); Mauwa (2020); Nota (2017)
Role of Oral Tradition in Sustaining Griot Traditions.	Griots, traditional West African musicians and storytellers, have orally passed down their musical knowledge and historical narratives, serving as custodians of the oral tradition.	Ebine (2019); Ouattara (2018); Al-Muid and Elementary (2021)
Transmission of Mbira Knowledge and Cultural Practices.	The mbira, a traditional musical instrument, is transmitted orally within families and communities among the Shona people in Zimbabwe, preserving their ancestral practices and spiritual connections.	Matiure (2011); Nota (2017); Chipendo (2015); Eyre (2015); Lindroth (2018)
Vibrant Drumming Tradition among the Ewe People.	Ewe drumming traditions among the Ewe people in Ghana, deeply intertwined with the Ewe community's history, social life, and spiritual practices, are transmitted via oral tradition from master drummers to younger apprentices.	Anku (2009); Agawu (2003); Gbolonyo (2009)
Sustaining Umngqokolo (Throat Singing) among the Xhosa People.	Umngqokolo, a traditional vocal music style, is transmitted through the oral tradition, with experienced practitioners teaching younger generations in informal settings among the Xhosa people in South Africa.	Levine (2005); Dargie (2017); Black (2018)
Preservation of Amazigh (Berber) Musical Heritage.	Amazigh communities in North Africa preserve their rich musical heritage, including oral storytelling, songs, and traditional instruments, through oral transmission within families and communal gatherings.	Morgan, Falola, and Oyeniyi (2012); Sadiqi (2007)
Oral Transmission as a Powerful Mnemonic Device.	Oral transmission of music serves as a powerful mnemonic device within Zulu culture in South Africa, allowing learners to memorise songs and ensure their preservation within the community.	Mkhombo (2019)
The connection between Oral Tradition and Cultural Practices.	The traditional reliance on oral tradition in Africa successfully preserves and transmits Indigenous musical knowledge, influencing values and attitudes towards musical practices.	Lebaka (2017); Nzewi (2010)

The results of the systematic literature review featured in **Table 1** above indicate that oral tradition plays a significant and diverse role in maintaining and continuing Indigenous musical practices in Africa; the review presented a complex picture that does

not dismiss the vital importance of oral tradition in the continuation of various types of musical practices in the continent. It also stresses the fact that oral tradition remains a critical means by which African communities preserve cultural and expressive practice, thereby promoting the continuity of certain musical styles, instruments, voices, and performativity (Harper, 2017; Lebaka, 2019b; Nompula, 2011; Turino, 2008). This method assumes a dynamic role in the transmission of social practices that are inherent in Indigenous musical practices, including dancing, singing, and drumming, which facilitate the dissemination of beliefs and values within Indigenous communities (Mauwa, 2020; Muparutsa, 2013; Nwamara, 2017).

The examples drawn from the different African communities show that oral tradition plays a vital role in passing down the Indigenous musical heritage of societies. For example, the Jindwi people who passed the Chimaisiri dance from generation to generation through oral transmission in Zimbabwe (Mauwa, 2020) and the sustained Griot traditions in West Africa, the people continue passing the art of the griot traditions to this present day (Ebine, 2019) are clear indications of how oral methods facilitate heritage, continuity and sustenance of certain musical practices. According to Hale (1998), griots use their extensive repertoire of songs, stories, and proverbs to transmit complex social, political, and historical information, making them crucial to the survival of African oral traditions. Furthermore, the spread of the *mbira* among the Zezuru people in Zimbabwe (Nota, 2017) and the Ewe drumming culture among the Ewe people in Ghana (Anku, 2009; Agawu, 2003) shows how oral transmission helps keep the culture intact.

The Xhosa people's preservation and continuation of "*umngqokolo*" vocal music in South Africa (Levine, 2005; Dargie, 2017) and the richness of musical cultures of the Amazigh (Berber) populations of North Africa (Morgan et al., 2012; Sadiqi, 2007) underscores the diverse ways through which oral tradition allows passing on complex musical knowledge from one generation to another.

This SLR also shows that oral tradition is not solely a way of transferring knowledge; it is a process that facilitates the evolution of Indigenous music practices in Indigenous communities over time (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023). Thus, it can be concluded that despite the weaknesses and exposures to which oral tradition is vulnerable, including the loss of the traditional genres, its efficiency and relevance remain in numerous African regions (Nzewi, 2010).

2.2. Contribution of Oral Transmission on Indigenous Musical Practices in Africa

Table 2: Contribution of Oral Transmission on Indigenous Musical Practices in Africa

Impact	Description	Key References
Effective Transmission of Core Musical Heritage	Oral tradition effectively transmits core musical heritage in African communities, preserving and transmitting the musical traditions of different ethnic groups.	Muparutsa (2013); Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023)
Encouragement of Creativity and Innovation	Oral tradition encourages creativity, innovation, and experimentation within Indigenous musical traditions, developing new styles, hybrid forms, and fusion genres.	Agawu (2003); Kisliuk (2010); Kubik (2010)
Collaborative and Interactive Nature of Oral Transmission	Oral musical arts production involves a collaborative and interactive process, allowing musicians to adapt and modify musical practices over time in response to changing societal dynamics and individual artistic expressions.	Nzewi (2007); Kubik (2010)
Innovation and Creation of New Musical Styles	Oral tradition enables musicians to innovate and create new musical styles and genres by incorporating elements from other cultures or adapting existing aspects to suit their artistic vision.	Kubik (2010); Njoku (2022); Babátúndé and Oladipo (2018)

The synthesis of the systematic literature review results highlighted in **Table 2** above reveals the role played by oral traditions in the development and sustenance of Indigenous musical cultures in Africa. According to Muparutsa (2013), although oral methods are useful in the transmission of the core musical heritage, they also act as the

custodians of various musical traditions from ethnic groups, regions, and nations in the continent (Gwervevde & Mthombeni, 2023). In essence, the openness of oral tradition allows for the creation of new Indigenous musical styles and new fusing hybrids, as evidenced by the groups' innovative and experimental musical styles (Agawu, 2003). According to Kisliuk (2010), this continuous creation process ennobles tradition and culture and makes it possible to discover new musical identities while retaining the essence of the tradition.

The interactive nature of oral tradition, as emphasised by Nzewi (2007) and Kubik (2010), encourages collaboration among creators, performers, and audiences, enabling musicians to adapt and modify musical practices over time. This collaborative process, discussed in the context of the *Senwele* music performances in Nigeria (Njoku, 2022; Babátúndé & Oladipo, 2018), exemplifies oral transmission's role in evolving and adapting Indigenous musical practices within dynamic societal landscapes. Nzewi (2007) and Kubik (2010) highlight that oral tradition embraces interaction among the creators, performers, and audiences, allowing musicians to evolve their practices over time. This approach represents how oral transmission fosters the change and growth of Indigenous musicality within complex social environments. This can also be related to the *Senwele* music performances in Nigeria (Njoku, 2022; Babátúndé & Oladipo, 2018) and the *Seperewa* music tradition outlined by Agyefi (2021, 2022). The practice of 'oral transmission' is a testament to how adaptation fosters innovation. It can be concluded that with the help of the tradition of apprenticeship and mentorship, the *Seperewa* was restored, almost at the state of extinction, while incorporating other instruments, thus proving that Indigenous musical practices are versatile.

Furthermore, within the Acholi musical tradition in Uganda, oral transmission plays a vital role in preserving historical knowledge and supports the merging of traditional and modern components (Opiyo, 2015; Ochen, 2014). The seamless integration of electronic musical instruments and digital media within the Acholi musical tradition in Uganda gives an example of how oral transmission fosters the growth of musical traditions despite the need to conform to the modern world.

The Isicathamiya musical tradition in South Africa also supports oral transmission's role in developing Indigenous practices. Mkhize (2021) and Mowatt (2005) highlight Isicathamiya as a musical style achieved through rote learning and incorporating various musical styles and sounds. Thus, Gwervevde and Mthombeni (2023) noted how oral traditions support the sustenance of rhythmic patterns, melodic phrases, and performance practices. This foundation ensures that Indigenous musical practices are maintained and creates a platform for improvisation and innovation.

2.3. Challenges and Implications of Oral Tradition Impacts on Indigenous Musical Practices in Africa

Table 3: Challenges and Implications of Oral Tradition

Challenge/Implication	Description	Key References
Disappearance of Traditional Music Genres	The disappearance of traditional music performance genres within Vhavenda communities is attributed to challenges in conserving and propagating these musical traditions through oral transmission.	Emberly & Davhula (2016); Kruger et al. (2014)
Fast Disappearance of Indigenous Musical Practices among the Igbo People	The oral transmission mode is a reason for the fast disappearance of Indigenous musical practices among the Igbo people in Nigeria, leading to alterations or omissions of crucial musical components.	Nwamara (2017); Okpala (2016); Amadi (2023)
Susceptibility to Change and Distortion	Oral traditions are susceptible to change through individual interpretation, memory biases, and environmental factors, leading to potential variations and inaccuracies in the transmission of musical knowledge.	Turino (2008); Agawu (2003)
Absence of Standardised Notation	The absence of standardised notation or codification systems in oral transmission poses difficulties in ensuring consistency and accuracy in the transmission process, limiting broader access and understanding.	Nettl (2005); Jaji (2015)

As highlighted in **Table 3** above, which presents the findings of the systematic literature review, the prospects and difficulties associated with the oral transmission of Indigenous musical knowledge in Africa are highlighted. As an African cultural practice, oral tradition has sustained musical genres, rhythm, musical instruments, and narratives across generations (Isabirye, 2021; Mkhombo, 2019). However, significant challenges impede this process; for instance, Emberly and Davhula (2016) and Kruger et al. (2014) noted that the preservation of cultural music in Vhavenda communities in South Africa faces challenges resulting in the directionless society attributed to the loss of the performance genre and disruption of the oral transmission and dissemination of traditional knowledge.

In Nigeria, among the Igbo people, the fast disappearance of the Indigenous musical traditions is linked to the challenges within oral transmission methods such as alteration, omission of vital components and the absence of a written system for musical notation (Nwamara, 2017; Amadi, 2023; Agawu, 2003). To this end, Turino (2008), Nettl (2005), and Jaji (2015) highlight that the danger of distortion and loss of vital musical elements due to individual interpretation, memory and environmental predispositions as well, lack of standardised notation, or codification systems present challenge in the reliability and interpretation of material in the transmission process.

2.4. Integration of Oral and Written Methods for the Preservation, Evolution, and Accessibility of African Indigenous Musical Traditions.

Table 4: Integration of Oral and Written Methods

Integration Aspect	Description	Key References
Balanced Evolution with Retention of Traditional Elements	Integrating oral and written methods allows for a balanced evolution, where traditional elements are retained while embracing innovations.	Agawu (2003); Human (2008); Mugovhani (2015)
Revitalisation through Written Adaptations	The infusion of written paper-based adaptations revitalises orally transmitted traditional music collections, allowing interpretation and presentation by contemporary ensembles, ensuring the continuation of age-old traditions.	Mugovhani (2015)
Empowerment of Traditional Music Practitioners	Introducing written methods to traditional music practitioners empowers them to create, organise, and transcribe traditional music into Western notation, expanding the reach and popularity of Indigenous music.	Nyamwaka, Ondima, Kemoni, and Maangi (2013)
Utilising Technological Tools for Preservation	The use of technological devices to adapt traditional songs conserves and enhances their accessibility, acknowledging the transformations brought about by modern technology in the role of oral traditions.	Nhlekisana (2021)

The result of the review presented in **Table 4** above points out the need to balance oral and written methods to overcome hindrances that deter the preservation, growth and access of African Indigenous musical traditions (Green, 2019). Being aware of the shortcomings of oral tradition alone is not enough; this approach integrates the potential of different methods that provide accurate preservation, standard notations, and wide availability. Green (2019) argues that without written records, there is a looming risk of cultural loss due to possible misunderstandings and the natural fading of human memory. The review also found that written records enable recording rhythm patterns, melodies, and cultural background information that could be lost through the oral tradition (Human, 2008). Hence, balancing oral and written methods helps provide a more inclusive approach to documenting and disseminating Indigenous musical practices.

Agawu (2003) noted that integrating oral and written methods provides a standardised approach, offering structures for understanding, critiquing, and transmitting such oral and written traditions. This approach allows for preserving traditional elements while embracing innovations that foster Indigenous musical practices rooted in authentic culture. The review presented some examples, such as the Vhavenda people of South Africa using paper-based notation adapted from the traditional form (Mugovhani, 2015) as well as the Gusii practitioners of Kenya using

Western notation system, have integrated the oral transmission with the written mode (Nyamwaka et al., 2013).

Consequently, combining oral and written modes extends the reach beyond localised communities so that people worldwide can engage, enjoy and appreciate the African Indigenous musical traditions (Agawu, 2003). The review also found that incorporating African music into education systems helps create cultural interconnection, respect, and understanding and a rich cultural identity for African music globally. Nzewi (2007) argues that there is always a need for writing in conjunction with oral tradition to preserve such knowledge within the community and its physical presence (Nzewi, 2007). Due to its harmonisation, both methods increase the sustainability and development of Africa's Indigenous musical practices and promote culture locally and internationally.

3. Discussion

The literature survey on the impacts of the oral tradition on Indigenous musical practices in Africa presents an existing narrative that brings out the importance and challenges of the oral tradition's critical roles in the survival, evolution and sustenance of these Indigenous musical cultures. Oral transmission cuts across all African communities as the pillar of Indigenous musical knowledge and passes through the test of time, allowing developments that meet the changing societal needs.

Preservation is the most highlighted aspect of the oral tradition, as it is central to transmitting rituals, practices, and musical heritage from one generation to another. Thus, memory, stories, and direct intercommunication help preserve such musical styles, instruments, vocals, and performances preserved in that form to remain authentic and wholesome. It is essential to remember that Indigenous music handed down through oral traditions is not simply a kind of educational approach; it is a living process that actively sustains the Indigenous music within their own cultures.

Also, it should be noted that oral tradition is instrumental in passing on Indigenous musical practices. Dance, singing and drumming are aural traditions integral for transferring beliefs within a community. This highlights how social practices and oral transmission are interlinked in musical traditions, which are a part of the social practice of African society.

Similarly, the literature highlights oral tradition contributions to the evolution and sustenance of Indigenous musical practices. It also helps in understanding the constant and active participation of the oral tradition in the development and transformation of Indigenous musical practices. Oral tradition, in contradistinction, is far from an attempt to freeze a specific culture since it not only allows for but fosters the generation of new creations, innovations, and the respective experimentations within these traditions. This dynamic process makes the oral tradition evolve positively, affording the discovery of new musical expression without losing focus on the tradition.

However, the challenges and implications of oral tradition in preserving and disseminating Indigenous musical knowledge in Africa are evident. The potential disappearance of traditional music genres within specific communities, susceptibility to change, and the absence of standardised notation systems highlight the vulnerability of these oral traditions. These challenges emphasise the need for thoughtful strategies and approaches in solving these problems in cognisance of the culture in which these traditions are practised.

4. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The findings of this study highlight several avenues for further research that might help illuminate the multifaceted connections between oral traditions and Indigenous

musical practices in Africa even further. An area of further study that might appear quite promising is the exploration of regional differences. While this study presents a general idea, future research could focus on particular areas or a particular ethnic group in order to find out the distinctive features and differences of musical practices. Such studies would enhance understanding of oral tradition in the given culture.

Another important direction for further studies is investigating the impact of modernisation/globalisation and 4IR on Indigenous music practices. As societies increasingly transform, it is vital to identify how these forces impact the sustainability of oral traditions. Are such traditions still multi-generational, changing with the culture, or are they being replaced with contemporary culture transmission? Interrogating these questions can shed light on African musical heritage endurance and adaptation to the changes in the global cultural context.

The use of technology to capture and pass on oral history and tradition is also an area of research that can be expanded considerably. With the possibilities offered by digital technology in capturing and disseminating cultural practices, it is appropriate to ask about the nature of the impact on traditional knowledge preservation and dissemination. Further studies could investigate how such traditions are digitised and whether digitisation improves or diminishes the authenticity of Indigenous music practices.

In conclusion, it may be equally valuable to examine the educational practices associated with preserving these musical traditions and procedures used in preserving the musical heritage passed from one generation to another. Studying how these practices are taught and learned by generations could explain how they are sustained into the future and how they can be adapted for future sustainability. It would help to find out what strategies would be efficient to safeguard Indigenous musical practices and their work in a rapidly advancing world.

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