

## **Indigenous music broadcast: A case study of Okpan Arhibo's tracks on Delta Rainbow Television, Warri, Nigeria**

<https://doi.org/10.70118/TACJ0013>

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the broadcast of indigenous music on Delta Rainbow Television, Warri, Nigeria, focusing on the works of Okpan Arhibo. Indigenous music, a vital element of cultural heritage, has witnessed declining attention among the Urhobo youth, who increasingly gravitate towards Western music genres such as Hip Hop and Pop. The study aims to assess the frequency and impact of Okpan Arhibo's tracks on television viewers, recognising the potential of broadcast media to bridge cultural gaps and foster identity preservation. Using a Self-Respondent Interview Questionnaire, data were collected from 200 viewers via email correspondence. Data interpretation involved pictorial evidence analysis and mean score calculations to determine the popularity and resonance of five tracks by Okpan Arhibo: *Konojuvwe*, *No Basket for Rotten Mangoes*, *Oghene Mudia Kevwe*, *Erhovwo Me Guonoree*, and *Inoge Gbe*. Findings indicate that these tracks receive frequent broadcasts on Delta Rainbow Television and exert a significant cultural impact on viewers, promoting values embedded in Urhobo folklore, history, and aesthetics. The results further reveal that frequently airing these tracks enhances cultural appreciation, creating a platform for younger generations to reconnect with their heritage. As a medium with extensive reach, television emerges as a critical tool for preserving and disseminating indigenous culture. The study concludes that consistent broadcasting of Indigenous music fosters cultural sustainability and encourages societal cohesion. Recommendations include increased airtime for indigenous music on television, partnerships between musicians and broadcasting stations to expand reach, and government intervention to promote cultural preservation through media sponsorship. These measures are critical for ensuring that the richness of Indigenous music continues to influence and educate the Urhobo community while also creating avenues for the global recognition of Nigerian cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Music, Cultural Heritage, Delta Rainbow Television, Okpan Arhibo

## Introduction

Okpan Arhibo stands out as a leading proponent of indigenous music, notably recognised for his dynamic genre known as Urhobo Discos. This vibrant style, marked by its energetic performances and captivating drumbeats, has notably impacted society, especially in Nigeria. His music is a central feature on television programs, most prominently at Delta Rainbow Television Station in Warri, which showcases a curated compilation of his tracks designed to entertain the Urhobo community and their neighbouring audiences. Television is an undeniable powerhouse for broadcasting music, effectively highlighting a variety of genres through engaging music videos and live performances. It serves as a primary entertainment source for countless Nigerian families, ensuring it reaches many audiences. As noted by researchers Chertknow and Feehan (2022), television is remarkably accessible, acting as a key instrument for connecting with the public, particularly in major urban centres where live music events thrive. Furthermore, as articulated by Sayles (2024), the structure of music tracks reveals that a song typically comprises multiple tracks, each playing a vital role in the overall album. This organisation simplifies the selection process for broadcasting. Consequently, television offers a powerful platform for talented musicians like Okpan Arhibo and enriches the cultural landscape, dramatically enhancing the accessibility of indigenous music for all.

The broadcast of indigenous music on television involves airing music tracks showcasing various communities' cultural heritage. One notable example is the music of Okpan Arhibo, whose work reflects the rich traditions of the Urhobo people in Delta State, Nigeria. Okpan Arhibo's music can be classified as indigenous because each track conveys elements of Urhobo folklore. Indigenous music is synonymous with traditional music, characterised by using local languages in the lyrics. Each song in the album is grounded in data derived from local source materials that contribute to the composition. These materials are collected through participatory observation and include age-old stories passed down orally, religious experiences, insights into family life, and reflections on the social, economic, and political systems of the indigenous communities in that region. The influence of Indigenous music on society is facilitated through its broadcast on television and various social media platforms. The frequency with which a musical track is aired often captivates viewers and attracts their attention. A piece of music's impact on a community is determined by how it is usually listened to and viewed. When a musical track is played frequently, it becomes easier for individuals and groups to learn, memorise, and engage with the song by singing, rehearsing the lyrics, and dancing to it. Indigenous music is characterised by its use of proverbial, idiomatic, comical, and satirical lyrics. These lyrics convey the oral history, cultural knowledge, and aesthetic values of specific communities and the educational messages embedded within each musical track. The rich heritage of the Urhobo people of Delta State is prominently featured in many soundtracks by Okpan Arhibo.

The challenges associated with broadcasting music tracks on television are unrelated to the appropriate selection of musical pieces by on-air personalities (OAPs). The choice of musical tracks is made by OAPs, who also consider the lyrics in each song. However, it is nearly impossible for OAPs to fully grasp the diverse preferences of the viewing audience regarding which musical tracks will resonate with all demographic groups. Consequently, meeting viewers' expectations for a musical broadcast becomes complex. Determining a programming schedule that aligns a particular musical track with the availability of all viewer categories is also quite challenging. As a result, a musical track of interest may air when a significant portion of its potential audience cannot tune in. These factors are especially pertinent when considering the broadcast of indigenous musical tracks, including the various pieces produced by Okpan Arhibo.

Music is regarded as indigenous when its tracks are composed traditionally. This context sets the stage for cultural musicians to perform indigenous music. Such music utilises the local community's language, with lyrics reflecting people's experiences, histories, and belief systems. This informs, educates, and connects the younger generation with the cultural practices their elders uphold. While listening to the music, the inherent cultural messages are conveyed to the audience. Indigenous music fosters audience participation, as listeners can easily relate to the language, rhythmic beats, and dance steps that accompany the performances. In light of this, this paper explores the broadcast of Okpan Arhibo's indigenous music tracks on Delta Rainbow Television Station in Warri.

Television serves as a well-established medium of mass communication, delivering diverse programming. It provides a platform for music videos, allowing numerous artists to gain popularity. The visibility of hip-hop and pop music videos on television has significantly contributed to promoting these genres within society. Unfortunately, this emphasis on contemporary music has drawn the attention of many young people away from indigenous music, which holds the key to cultural heritage. Engaging with indigenous music can enrich young audiences with valuable insights into their cultural history. Television is a helpful medium for gaining immediate insight into our surroundings. Delta Rainbow Television prioritises Western music's broadcast, often overlooking Indigenous music, particularly the works of Okpan Arhibo, during their weekly programming. There is uncertainty regarding the frequency with which the music of Okpan Arhibo is featured on Delta Rainbow Television in Warri. Therefore, this paper seeks to address the question of how often musical tracks by Okpan Arhibo are broadcast on Delta Rainbow Television Station, Warri, Nigeria.

### **Importance of Indigenous Music in Nigeria**

Nigeria is home to over two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups, each with distinct languages and rich cultural heritage, totalling more than 500 languages. Music serves as a vital medium for expressing the diverse cultures of its people. Indigenous music is an integral part of every culture, including Nigeria. This genre of music has gained global recognition, acceptance, and respect. Moreover, indigenous Nigerian music is increasingly appreciated by many within the country, reflecting various cultural traditions. Indigenous music is characterised by its traditional performance style. However, some forms of indigenous Nigerian music have been influenced by Western or foreign cultures due to the impact of Western music on specific indigenous musicians. These adapted styles have contributed to the evolution of indigenous music in Nigeria. A notable example is the Urhobo Disco genre, created by Okpan Arhibo, which draws inspiration from hip-hop and pop music styles. Similarly, the Makoso genre features Urhobo interpretations in tracks by Okpan Arhibo.

Indigenous music holds excellent significance for numerous reasons. One primary aspect is its role as a source of enjoyment for the audiences it serves. Indigenous people often prefer their music to other cultures when seeking entertainment. Additionally, indigenous music is vital in various cultural contexts, including traditional marriages, funerals, child-naming ceremonies, housewarming celebrations, thanksgiving services, chieftaincy title ceremonies, and countless other rituals and rites organised within their communities. Moreover, indigenous music offers valuable lessons for the younger generation, imparting moral insights that foster wisdom, understanding, and knowledge about life. It plays a crucial role in cultural education and training, ensuring these traditions are passed down effectively.

McLeod (2024) discovered that culture and the community hold their music in high esteem. This significance stems from the inspiration it provides and the faith, hope, and aspirations evoked when individuals engage with the performances of Indigenous musicians. Their music often evokes memories of the past, especially when the songs

are crafted to honour past heroes' achievements or commemorate victories over adversaries and rival communities. Much of Indigenous music narrates the history of previous generations' triumphs, making it easier to connect the past with the present. This perspective aligns with the ideas presented in McLeod's study. The researcher notes, "The fact that Indigenous people are still here firstly needs to be recognised, and that music by the people is still at the heart of who they are, as it has been for millennia." The information presented above underscores African people's value and engagement with their music through a lens of responsibility and potential. It is essential to note that Indigenous music serves a vital function in preserving cultural heritage, which is why communities hold it in such high regard. Amplifying its influence among the population highlights television's crucial role in broadcasting Indigenous music, a function that cannot be overstated.

### **The Spread of Indigenous Music via Television**

Television plays a crucial role in the dissemination of music. Artists produce music videos that are subsequently submitted to television stations for broadcast to the audience. The extensive reach of television broadcasts makes it an essential medium for promoting music, including indigenous genres. Idolor (2005), as referenced in Ojakovo's (2013) work, highlights that television facilitates the transmission of recorded music videos to audiences far beyond what artists might imagine in terms of reach. The researcher suggests that television enables audiences to engage with the creativity of the artist through participation in music broadcasts. The studios recognise that all music genres can effectively reach audiences through television broadcasting.

The relationship between the promotion of indigenous music and the influence of television is supported by the research conducted by Mari (2016). The study highlights that Nigerian cultures, including indigenous music, are being showcased through television as a medium of mass communication. The researcher proposes that broadcasting videos of indigenous music can significantly aid in spreading the people's cultural heritage. Television's capacity to combine sound and visuals allows for a far-reaching dissemination of content. Consequently, television broadcasts enable indigenous music to extend its reach beyond local boundaries. By airing programs that feature this music, television effectively disseminates information to the public. This communication channel promotes a broader awareness of music content, much like other information shared via television. Therefore, it is evident that there exists a direct correlation between the spread of indigenous music and its transmission through television.

Television is a powerful platform for advertorial programs, particularly for musicians seeking to promote their music. Advertising on television offers numerous advantages, primarily due to its ability to reach large audiences. This vast exposure benefits musicians by attracting a significant viewer base to their music. As audiences repeatedly engage with music content on television, their interest typically grows, positively influencing album sales and patronage. According to TEC Direct Media (2024), "TV is often the first medium we think of for reaching large amounts of people in a short time." This statement underscores television's efficacy as a prominent tool for advertising various products and content, including Nigerian music. The literature supports the notion that advertising music on television is compelling. Mock, the Agency (2023) found that television is particularly well-suited for promoting indigenous music, noting its high daily viewership. In light of this evidence, it is clear that television advertising will continue to drive engagement and patronage from musicians. For many years, TV has proven to be a significant medium for reaching a diverse range of consumers across major cities, towns, and villages throughout Nigeria.

Leveraging television to promote Indigenous music is an effective strategy, as its extensive reach allows Nigerian Indigenous musicians to connect with a diverse

audience. The synergy of audio and visual elements on television can captivate viewers and hold their attention. In contrast to other advertising mediums, where promotions are often overlooked, TV commercials are particularly impactful because they are seamlessly integrated into the programming that viewers are engaged with and cannot be skipped. Many viewers enjoy regularly tuning in to watch Indigenous music on television, especially when the station offers a dedicated programming schedule for Indigenous music broadcasts.

The popularity of an indigenous music track is often correlated with its frequency of broadcast on television and the level of viewer interest it generates. Emaeyak (2018), in his study of television music practices in Nigeria, found that indigenous music receives significantly less airtime than Western and popular music of Western origin. This limited airtime dedicated by TV stations to Indigenous music could negatively affect the interest of Indigenous people in engaging with music from their own culture, including works by artists such as Okpan Arhibo. Television is widely recognised as a vital instrument for cultural development in Nigeria. Folorunso (2015) posits that indigenous music reflects a way of life, encapsulating the attributes and values of a culture. Therefore, providing adequate airtime for its broadcast is essential. Indigenous music nurtures a sense of identity, allowing individuals to connect with the music of their heritage, and television plays a significant role in promoting this cultural identity through the presentation of indigenous music.

## **Data Analysis**

Data generated for this study consists of both secondary and primary sources. Secondary data, which is the various documents in the literature, relate to the subject of Indigenous music and the role of television in the broadcast of music. On the other hand, primary data is collected through the entire field survey and phone calls, where the researcher interacts and interviews on aspects of the study. The researcher utilised information from Okpan Arhibo 's biodata and reports from the Delta Rainbow television station Warri. The following research questions guided the study in analysing the data.

**Research question 1:** Who is Okpan Arhibo? This question seeks to provide brief biographical information about the composer of the numerous Indigenous Nigerian musical tracks using the pictorial evidence approach shown in Figure 1.1



Fig. 1.1: Picture of Okpan Arhibo

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Okpan Arhibo is celebrated as one of the foremost maestros of Urhobo music. His exceptional skill and mastery of indigenous Nigerian sounds earned him widespread acclaim, leading to his title as the “King of Urhobo Music.” One of his standout tracks, 'Konojuvwe,' catapulted him to fame during his early career. Hailing from the Agbarho Kingdom in the Ughelli North council area of Delta State, Nigeria, Arhibo may have produced over 200 songs throughout his lifetime, spanning from 1947 to 2022. He was a legendary figure in Urhobo music, renowned for inventing the “Urhobo Makoso.” By incorporating Disco and Makoso dance styles into his work, he created a distinctive musical experience that was captivating, inspiring, and compelling.

**Research Question Two:** What is the frequency of broadcast of indigenous Nigerian music by Okpan Arhibo on Delta Rainbow Television Station in Warri? The researcher collected data from two hundred (200) viewers via email to address this research question. These viewers are knowledgeable about the interpretation of indigenous music presented on television. A self-administered interview questionnaire focused on the indigenous Nigerian music broadcast on Delta Rainbow Television in Warri, Nigeria, served as the primary research instrument for data collection. Responses from the 200 viewers were analysed using mean score statistics, applying a benchmark of 2.5 mean scores to determine the acceptance or rejection of the ten items in the research instrument. This analysis aimed to ascertain the frequency level of indigenous music broadcasts on Delta Rainbow Television and to evaluate the impact of these broadcasts on the 200 viewers with access to this content. The viewers were asked to rate the frequency at which the following indigenous Nigerian music tracks by Okpan Arhibo were broadcast on Delta Rainbow Television Station, Warri, Nigeria. The responses were categorised as follows: Highly Frequent (HF) = 4; Moderately Frequent (MF) = 3; Not Frequent (NF) = 2; Highly Not Frequent (HNF) = 1. The results derived from the responses of the 200 viewers are presented using mean score calculations in Table 1.1 as follows:

Table 1.1: Analysis of Frequency of Broadcast of Indigenous Nigerian Music by Okpan Arhibo on Delta Rainbow Television Station Warri

S/N	Questionnaire items	N	HF	MF	NF	HNF
1.	Konojuvwe	200	120	40	35	5
2.	Urhobo Me Jovwo	200	40	20	80	60
3.	Zabu Zabu	200	30	23	40	107
4.	Clear Conscience Fear No Accusation	200	24	16	70	90
5.	No Basket for Rotten Mangoes	200	130	40	20	10
6.	Who Will Bell the Cat	200	34	22	55	89
7.	Oghene Mudia Kevwe	200	131	34	12	23
8.	Erhovwo Me Guonoree	200	128	32	15	25
9.	U.P.U Liberia	200	32	30	58	80
10.	Inoge Gbe	200	132	40	18	10

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.1 presents the frequency with which indigenous music tracks by Okpan Arhibo are broadcast on Delta Rainbow Television Station in Warri. The analysis revealed that the following tracks were frequently aired: "Konojuvwe," "No Basket for Rotten Mangoes," "Oghene Mudia Kevwe," "Erhovwo Me Guonoree," and "Inoge Gbe." Television viewers noted that these specific tracks were among the most frequently broadcast on Delta Rainbow Television. This suggests that Okpan Arhibo's music made a significant impression on viewers each time it was aired. Furthermore, these tracks had a notable impact on the 200 respondents who participated in the study, as they highlighted that, out of the ten musical tracks considered, indigenous music possesses the unique ability to influence viewers due to its inherent characteristics. Indigenous music catalyses social change by fostering community cohesion and serving as a unifying force in many African cultures. Peralta (2024) found that:

At the core of our everyday experience with music, we use it to relax, express ourselves, come to terms with our emotions, and improve our well-being. It has evolved into a tool for healing and self-expression, often dictating how we, as individuals, take steps to impact society (p.1.).

The findings indicate that the broadcast of indigenous music significantly enhances its visibility and resonance. Therefore, television's importance in disseminating indigenous music cannot be overstated.



## Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the frequency with which indigenous music tracks by Okpan Arhibo are aired on Delta Rainbow Television in Warri, Nigeria. Given its extensive reach, television plays a crucial role as a medium for spreading music content. A symbiotic relationship exists between music and its televised broadcast. Through television, artists are introduced to audiences, leading many musicians to achieve considerable fame, including Okpan Arhibo, who produced over 200 tracks, many of which are regularly featured on Delta Rainbow Television. Participants in the study identified five tracks by Okpan Arhibo as being broadcast most frequently, profoundly impacting viewers. Consequently, this paper concludes that the broadcast of music, particularly the indigenous tracks by Okpan Arhibo on Delta Rainbow Television, has had a significant influence due to their regular airing. The paper makes the following recommendations:

1. Television stations should prioritise the broadcast of indigenous music tracks to promote the cultural heritage, especially that of the Urhobo in Delta State.
2. Indigenous musicians should seek opportunities to have their music aired on broadcasting television stations, which will facilitate reaching a wider audience.
3. The government should support the growth of indigenous music by providing sponsorship for its broadcast on television.

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