

KING SOLOMON'S QUEST FOR WISDOM AND IT'S APPLICATION IN GOVERNANCE (1Kings 3:9): IMPERATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA.

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Abstract

This study explores King Solomon's application of wisdom in governance as presented in biblical narratives, particularly 1 Kings 3:1–28 and examines how such wisdom principles could inform the leadership paradigms of contemporary African leaders. Drawing from textual exegesis and qualitative interviews with Christian leaders, theologians, and political scholars across Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana, the paper investigates the practical imperatives of divine wisdom—discernment, justice, moral integrity, and administrative skill—in addressing Africa's sociopolitical challenges. Findings reveal a significant disconnect between religious knowledge and leadership practice among modern African leaders, while highlighting the relevance of Solomon's model as a foundation for transformational governance. The study concludes by offering theological and ethical recommendations for fostering wisdom-based leadership within African sociopolitical systems.

Keywords: Wisdom, Governance, African Leadership, Biblical Ethics , Political Theology

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Introduction

Leadership in Africa remains at a crossroads. Despite abundant natural and human resources, the continent continues to grapple with chronic underdevelopment, corruption, tribalism, and poor governance. Scholars, theologians, and policy experts have long debated the reasons for these persistent failures, with many pointing to a deficit not just of knowledge or education, but of wisdom. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, wisdom is not merely intellectual acumen but moral insight, spiritual discernment, and practical governance rooted in fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10). This study turns to one of the most emblematic figures of wise leadership in biblical history—King Solomon—as a model for examining the application of wisdom in governance and its implications for Africa's contemporary leadership crisis.

Solomon's reign is widely cited in biblical literature as a golden age marked by peace, prosperity, and administrative ingenuity. His famed request for wisdom (1 Kings 3:9), and his judicious handling of the "two mothers" case (1 Kings 3:16–28), highlight a leadership approach grounded in moral clarity and spiritual dependence. However, contemporary African leadership appears to lean more on political maneuvering, ethnic patronage, and short-term economic fixes than on principles of divine wisdom.

This article seeks to bridge this gap by exploring the core attributes of Solomon's wisdom in governance and their practical relevance to today's African context. In doing so, it draws on both biblical exegesis and empirical insights from interviews with Christian clergy, public theologians, and civic leaders. The central thesis is that the reintegration of wisdom—understood biblically and ethically—into African leadership models is not merely desirable but imperative for sustainable governance.

The study is situated within the field of Religious Biblical Studies and offers a cross-disciplinary engagement with theology, ethics, and political leadership. By interpreting ancient biblical texts through a contemporary African lens, the paper aims to contribute to both academic scholarship and practical policy conversations about the future of leadership in Africa.

Literature Review

The Person of King Solomon.

According to the Bible, the third king of Israel was Solomon. From Solomon's birth God loved him, as demonstrated by God's command through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidah (2 Sam. 12:25), meaning "loved by the Lord" (Hoerber, 1986:439). This favour can be seen in God's choice to have Solomon build the temple (1 Chronicles 22:6-10), a task which his father David was not allowed to do.

A combination of Biblical texts and a "military topographic list" from Egypt (Levy et al 2008:16460) are traditionally used to conclude that Solomon lived during the tenth Century BC. The discovery of clay bullae which were used to seal official documents in much the same way wax were used to seal supports Biblical account of a developed political organization during this period. In addition, the results of Ben- Yosef, Langgut etc (2017:411) points to a centralized governmental organization during this period. This evidence supports that the Biblical account of King Solomon was true.

The application of wisdom in leadership has been a recurrent theme in biblical theology and African political discourse. Scholarly interpretations of Solomon's reign emphasize not only his intellectual acumen but also his capacity for discernment, justice, and spiritual insight (Waltke, 2004; Longman, 2012). His governance style, particularly in 1 Kings 3–10, is often studied as a prototype for effective theocratic administration. The Old Testament paints Solomon as a leader who relied not on personal ambition or military might, but on wisdom that stemmed from divine fear and covenantal responsibility (Goldingay, 2006).

African biblical scholars have drawn parallels between Israel's monarchical history and modern African governance structures. For instance, Oduyoye (2001) argues that wisdom in African thought is inherently communal, pragmatic, and rooted in the moral order of society—a perspective that aligns closely with the biblical portrayal of Solomon's leadership. However, this alignment is largely absent in practice. Contemporary African leadership, as scholars such as Eze (2016) and Nwagbara (2020) observe, often deviates from these principles, favoring autocracy, nepotism, and clientelism over accountability and moral vision.

Several empirical studies have attempted to assess the influence of religious ethics on political behavior in Africa. Kalu (2008) notes that while many African leaders profess Christian or Islamic faith, few translate these beliefs into governance outcomes. Similarly, Adediran and Asaju (2021) argue that leadership crises in Africa stem from the marginalization of spiritual and moral dimensions of public office. These studies underscore a key research gap: the lack of applied wisdom—as defined by Scripture and African communal values—in contemporary leadership models.

On the practical front, wisdom has been interpreted in public theology not merely as a virtue but as a strategy for governance. Scholars like West (2010) and Mugambi (2013) advocate for a prophetic engagement of religious institutions in reshaping public leadership culture. Their work suggests that biblical models such as Solomon's reign should not be viewed as ancient relics but as transformative templates for today's complex political realities.

In summary, while there is substantial literature on biblical wisdom and African leadership challenges, few studies attempt an empirical correlation between the two. This paper addresses that gap by conducting field research among African Christian leaders and theologians to investigate how Solomon's wisdom can inform current governance practices.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs two intersecting frameworks:

a) Biblical Wisdom Framework

Solomon's wisdom is often described using the Hebrew term *hokmâ*, which encompasses practical intelligence, spiritual insight, and ethical judgment. As seen in 1 Kings 3:9–12, wisdom in the Solomonic tradition involves the ability to “discern between good and evil” and to govern justly. Proverbs, many of which are attributed to Solomon, further expand this vision by linking wisdom to the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7), diligence (Prov. 10:4), and justice (Prov. 29:4). The biblical model of wisdom is not abstract but functional—demonstrated in decision-making, administration, diplomacy, and moral leadership (Van Leeuwen, 1997).

b) African Communitarian Leadership Theory

In African indigenous systems, wisdom is relational and collective. Leadership is traditionally evaluated based on service, humility, and the ability to maintain harmony and justice in the community (Mbiti, 1969; Gyekye, 1997). This aligns with the biblical model of Solomon, whose early reign reflects a balance between divine authority and public accountability. The ubuntu ethic “I am because we are”—resonates with the concept of wisdom as both spiritual and social capital.

By integrating these frameworks, the study positions Solomon's wisdom as a bridge between ancient Judeo-Christian theology and African communal political philosophy. This dual approach allows for a nuanced interpretation of both Scripture and sociopolitical realities in Africa. Exegesis of 1 Kings 3:9 “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” 1 Kings 3:9 (NIV)

Literary and Canonical Context

1 Kings 3:9 occurs within a broader narrative describing Solomon's early reign and the well-known episode of his divine encounter at Gibeon (vv. 4–15). This passage follows the establishment of Solomon's political authority and precedes the demonstration of his wisdom in adjudicating the case of the two mothers (vv. 16–28). The pericope belongs to the

Deuteronomistic History (Deut–2 Kings), which seeks to interpret Israel's monarchy through theological lenses—especially covenant fidelity and divine guidance (Nelson, 1987).

This verse serves as the theological climax of Solomon's prayer and request, marking a transition from divine offer to human petition. It is unique in its structure and content when compared to the typical ancient Near Eastern petitions of monarchs, which often request military power or long life (Brueggemann, 2000).

Lexical and Syntactical Analysis

- a. "Give your servant" (Heb. נָתַתְּ לִי) (nāṭan lî)

The Hebrew verb *nāṭan* ("to give") in the imperative underscores Solomon's humility and dependency on divine provision. Referring to himself as "your servant" (*na'arka*) indicates his posture of submission, a striking contrast to royal self-exaltation.

- b. "A discerning heart" (לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ – *lēb šōmēa'*)

Literally translated as a "listening heart," the phrase does not primarily denote intellectual knowledge but a receptive and obedient disposition—particularly in judicial and moral matters. In Hebrew anthropology, the *lēb* (heart) is the seat of decision-making and moral reasoning (Waltke, 2004).

- c. "To distinguish between right and wrong" (לְהַבִּיחַ בֵּין יָשָׁר וּבֵין עָוֹן) (lehābīn bēn yāšar ūbēn ʿawōn)

The verb *lehābīn* (to discern, understand) combined with the ethical polarity *ṭōb* and *rā'* ("good and evil") evokes not mere administrative skill, but ethical discernment rooted in God's moral order. This harks back to Genesis 3:5, but here it is sanctified discernment, granted through divine favor rather than autonomous pursuit.

Theological and Ethical Implications

- a. **Leadership as Stewardship, Not Entitlement**

Solomon's prayer reveals a theology of leadership rooted in service rather than domination. His self-identification as a "servant" challenges autocratic models and aligns with biblical paradigms of kingship under Yahweh's sovereignty (cf. Deut. 17:14–20). In Solomon's perspective, leadership is a divine trust, not a personal right.

- b. **Wisdom Rooted in Humility and Moral Awareness**

Unlike modern notions of wisdom as strategic acumen or IQ, Solomon requests the ability to listen—to God, to the people, and to truth. This positions wisdom as moral and relational, not just cognitive. It also reinforces the biblical notion that true governance requires attentiveness to justice, righteousness, and community wellbeing (Goldingay, 2006).

c. A Paradigm for Just Governance

Solomon's model invites contemporary leaders especially in African contexts—to embrace wisdom as ethical discernment, guided by both divine principles and public accountability. In a continent grappling with leadership crises, this passage calls for a transformative approach to leadership, anchored in divine dependence and moral clarity (West, 2010).

4. Intertextual and Contextual Resonances

- a. Deuteronomy 17:18–20 – the king's duty to uphold Torah as the foundation of wise governance
- b. Proverbs 2:6 – “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”
- c. James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God...”

These cross-references amplify the theological motif that wisdom is divine in origin, granted to those who seek it with humility and a desire to serve justly.

Conclusion

1 Kings 3:9 offers a profound portrait of leadership anchored in listening, humility, and ethical clarity. Solomon's request becomes a theological blueprint for public servants, reminding both ancient and contemporary readers that governance, if it is to be godly and effective, must be rooted not in power, but in wisdom that listens to both God and the people. For today's African leaders facing moral, political, and social crises, Solomon's example offers a biblical corrective and a spiritual imperative.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach, suitable for exploring lived experiences and interpretive perspectives of individuals regarding wisdom in leadership. Specifically, it seeks to understand how African Christian leaders perceive and apply the concept of Solomon's wisdom in addressing contemporary governance challenges.

Phenomenology is appropriate here because it allows for deep engagement with participants' reflections on the spiritual, ethical, and political dimensions of leadership aligning with the interpretive nature of biblical theology and the communal ethos of African thought.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of Christian leaders, theologians, and faith-informed political actors across three African countries—Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana. These countries were selected due to their robust Christian presence, diverse political experiences, and historical involvement in faith-informed civic engagement.

Using purposive sampling, 18 participants (6 per country) were selected based on the following criteria:

- Minimum of 5 years in religious leadership or public service
- Affiliation with a Christian denomination or theological institution
- Demonstrated engagement in public discourse (e.g., sermons, academic writing, civic advocacy)
- Participants included bishops, theologians in Theological Schools, pastors, and political figures known for integrating faith with governance.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted both in-person and via online platforms (Zoom, WhatsApp calls) over a period of six weeks. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes. The interview guide included open-ended questions such as:

“How would you define wisdom from a biblical perspective?”

“What specific leadership qualities do you observe in Solomon’s governance?”

“Do you think these qualities are reflected in African leadership today?”

“What challenges do leaders face in applying wisdom in the political sphere?”

With participants' consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview transcripts. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) method, the process involved:

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Coding for significant statements and patterns
3. Generating themes (e.g., "Justice as Wisdom," "Moral Deficiency in Governance," "Spiritual Discernment").
4. Reviewing and defining themes within the broader framework of Solomon's leadership and African political realities
5. Synthesizing findings in light of theological and socio-political literature.

Results and Findings

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed several dominant themes that reflect how participants understand and interpret Solomon's wisdom in relation to contemporary African leadership. These themes are grouped under five major headings:

Wisdom as Discernment and Justice

Almost all participants emphasized discernment—the ability to distinguish right from wrong—as a core component of Solomon's wisdom. Many referenced the iconic judgment between the two mothers in 1 Kings 3 as a model of ethical clarity and administrative justice. "Solomon did not rush into judgment; he investigated, he discerned. That's what is lacking in our leadership today judgments are politically motivated, not morally grounded," said a bishop from Lagos, Nigeria.

Participants argued that the lack of discernment in governance has led to corruption, judicial compromise, and favoritism in leadership across many African states. Wisdom, in their view, must include the ability to listen deeply, weigh evidence, and act justly.

Wisdom Requires Moral and Spiritual Integrity

Another recurring theme was the moral dimension of wisdom. Participants agreed that wisdom is not merely intellectual or strategic competence but deeply tied to righteousness, humility, and obedience to God. "Solomon's wisdom was a gift because he feared the Lord. Today our leaders want wisdom without submission to divine authority.

Many lamented that African political systems are dominated by self-interest, greed, and a lack of spiritual accountability. Several participants stressed that wisdom divorced from morality becomes dangerous and self-serving.

The Disconnect Between Religious Identity and Political Practice

- A significant finding was the perceived contradiction between the professed Christian faith of many African leaders and their actual conduct in public office.
- “We have leaders who take oath of office with the Bible at their inauguration but govern like unbelievers.
- Participants expressed concern that while Africa is highly religious, religion has not translated into ethical governance. Infact African religiosity has been described as one million mile wide but less than one inch deep. This disconnect, they suggested, points to the lack of transformative wisdom—wisdom that informs not just personal piety but public policy.

Wisdom Is Communal, Not Just Individual

Many respondents emphasized that African wisdom traditions view leadership as a communal responsibility, aligning with the biblical model in which Solomon was accountable to both God and his people.

“In Africa, a wise leader is one who maintains harmony, listens to elders, and serves the whole tribe. That’s Solomon before he fell,” said a pastor from Accra. Participants proposed that leadership today must return to this relational and servant-based model, where leaders are evaluated not by wealth or power, but by how they uplift their communities.

Wisdom Must Be Taught and Disciplined

Several participants noted the absence of intentional discipleship and mentoring for emerging leaders. While Solomon received wisdom directly from God, he also learned from David and had access to priestly advisors. “Wisdom is not inherited genetically; it must be nurtured spiritually and intellectually,” one Kenyan respondent argued.

The lack of ethical formation in theological education and civic leadership training was cited as a major gap. Many called for the integration of biblical leadership models into political science curricula, seminary programs, and church leadership development tracks.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study underscore a pressing need for a renewed understanding and application of wisdom in leadership within the African context. Drawing from both the biblical model of Solomon and the perspectives of African Christian leaders, it becomes evident that wisdom—when properly understood—transcends intellectual prowess or political strategy. Instead, it embodies moral discernment, spiritual accountability, and communal responsibility, all of which were central to Solomon's early reign.

Solomon's Wisdom and Ethical Discernment

Solomon's request in 1 Kings 3:9 "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong"—was not a plea for power, but for judicial clarity and moral soundness. This aligns closely with participants' concerns that contemporary African leaders often lack the ethical compass required to make just and people-centered decisions.

The theme of discernment in governance is particularly relevant in contexts plagued by corruption, favoritism, and ethnic bias, where decisions are driven by personal or political gain rather than the common good. As Waltke (2004) and Goldingay (2006) argue, biblical wisdom is ultimately about living well under God's order, a standard many African political systems currently fail to uphold.

Spiritual Integrity and Leadership Collapse

Solomon's downfall as chronicled in 1 Kings 11 provides a cautionary tale about the loss of spiritual and moral grounding. Though he began with divine wisdom, his drift toward idolatry and political alliance-building led to national decline. This narrative echoes the sentiments of participants who lament the growing secularization and moral decay among leaders who once professed strong religious values.

As Kalu (2008) and Adediran & Asaju (2021) observe, there is often a sharp disjunction between religious identity and political behavior in Africa. The findings suggest that wisdom without spiritual discipline is unsustainable, and when separated from divine guidance, can result in catastrophic governance failures.

The Role of Community in Wisdom Leadership

The African communitarian framework resonates deeply with the biblical portrayal of Solomon's early reign, where justice, consultation, and public service were central. Participants' emphasis on ubuntu and communal responsibility reinforces the notion that wisdom is not a private virtue but a relational ethic. In this sense, leadership becomes a sacred trust, not a personal entitlement.

Gyekye (1997) and Mbiti (1969) both affirm that African traditional leadership systems value eldership, consensus, and humility—traits that mirror the wisdom ethic found in Proverbs. The discussion points to the urgent need for civic structures and leadership models that reflect this communitarian wisdom, rather than imported Western models that may not align with local realities.

Discipleship and Leadership Formation

The recurring concern over the absence of ethical and spiritual formation in leadership development is a wake-up call for theological institutions and the Church. As participants rightly noted, wisdom must be taught, modeled, and disciplined. Solomon had the benefit of David's mentorship and priestly counsel; contemporary leaders need similar structures of accountability, instruction, and formation.

West (2010) and Mugambi (2013) call for a prophetic role of the Church in shaping public theology and leadership ethics. The findings support this view, proposing that religious institutions must move beyond pulpit preaching to practical leadership engagement—training, mentoring, and holding leaders accountable.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore Solomon's application of wisdom in governance and examine how such wisdom can inform the leadership landscape of contemporary Africa. Through a blend of biblical-theological analysis and empirical qualitative inquiry, it was revealed that wisdom, when understood as spiritual discernment, moral integrity, and communal responsibility, remains highly relevant for African leaders navigating complex sociopolitical challenges.

Solomon's early reign offers a compelling vision of justice-centered, God-dependent leadership, and his eventual downfall serves as a stark warning against pride, syncretism, and ethical compromise. The research findings suggest that the disconnect between religious profession and political practice in Africa is symptomatic of a broader failure to cultivate and apply divine wisdom in governance.

As African nations continue to contend with issues of corruption, injustice, and leadership instability, the imperative is not merely for more education or economic reform, but for wisdom-anchored leadership formation. The Church, theological institutions, and civil society have a critical role to play in nurturing leaders who embody the values seen in Solomon's biblical model.

Recommendations

1. Integrate Wisdom Literature in Leadership Training

Theological institutions and civic academies should embed biblical wisdom texts (especially Proverbs and 1 Kings 3–11) into leadership development programs, promoting reflection on justice, humility, and servant leadership.

2. Establish Mentorship and Accountability Structures

Like Solomon learning from David and priestly advisers, leaders today should be supported by structured mentorship and spiritual accountability networks.

3. Bridge Theology and Public Policy

Public theologians should serve as mediators between Scripture and governance, crafting frameworks that translate biblical wisdom into policies, laws, and ethical governance structures.

4. Strengthen the Prophetic Voice of the Church

Churches must actively engage political systems—not just through critique but through civic education, advocacy, and training of morally grounded leaders.

5. Encourage Interdisciplinary Research

Future studies should explore wisdom-based governance models using a multidisciplinary lens, drawing from biblical studies, ethics, political science, and African philosophy.

In conclusion, if African leaders are to govern with justice, compassion, and effectiveness, they must, like Solomon, seek a wisdom not rooted in personal ambition or foreign ideologies, but in the fear of the Lord and service to their people.

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MUSIC AS AN ART AND INSTRUMENT FOR NATION BUILDING

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Abstract

The paper is based on the system theory which postulates that the components of government as well as the society are both analytical and dynamic. Words and music are two distinct symbolic modes. Yet, as human ways of communication or forms of expression, they have much in common. They have important similarities as signifying systems, their mutual penetration is suggested by metaphors like “the language of music” or “the music of language”, and they are multi-modally united in all song genres. Through music texts and sound, systems and society are analyzed. To achieve the paper’s objective, related musical texts were used. The paper advocates that music, as an art, should be embraced in all institutions of learning – from the Primary School level to the Tertiary level. The paper also advocates that good music should be encouraged and pursued because. good music can build, transform, remold and reform to bring positive attitudinal change towards one another in the society. Good music can also advocate true, patriotism, nationalistic spirit and loyalty towards nation building in Nigeria.

Keywords: Music, Arts, Nation, Building, System.

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Introduction

Nation building is the conscious and focused application of people's collective resources, energies and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing a nation (Izuegbu, 2013 in Okobia, 2024:131). Harnessing the people's collective resources, energies and knowledge is a huge task in Nigeria because of diversities that make up Nigeria as a nation. Ohwofasa (2003) acknowledges the complexity of Nigeria by pointing out that 'against this backdrop, it becomes an arduous task to integrate the people and have a cohesive nation. Therefore, various effective tools have to be used in order to achieve this atmosphere without which a nation no matter how privileged and blessed can never move forward' (p. 84). This implies that nation building is premised on many variables which have to be effective for development to be possible and the quest for nation building to be achievable. There are many theories on nation building but this paper is based on the system theory which postulates that the components of government as well as the society are both analytical and dynamic. Analytical; because it separates government into component parts and relationships that are found in every political system; and dynamic; because it gives a guide to the forces that lead to instability and those that make for stability (Hendrike and Zeighetr1977:150 I Ugbayavwighren, 2006). The system theory is made up of various distinguishable components which regularly interact with one another on the basis of laid down rules and regulations to achieve major organizational goals. This implies that major organizational goals cannot be achieved in the face of anarchy. There can be no nation building in the face of breakdown in law and order. A mediator's role is imperative in providing amenable thread to patch the pieces and make it a 'whole'.

Conceptual Framework

'Art' originates from the Latin word 'ars' which means, skill or craft. Art is a diverse range of human activities in creating visual, auditory or performing artworks, expressing the author's imaginative or technical skill which is intended to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power. The definition of art was anything done with skill as the result of knowledge and practice. Music, theatre, film, dance, and other performing arts, as well as literature and other media such as interactive media, are included in a broader definition of art or the arts. Over the time, philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and Kant, among others also questioned the meaning

of art. The word art may refer to several things: (i) It is a study of a creative skill, (ii) it is a process of using the creative skill, (iii) it is a product of the creative skill and (iv) it is the audience's experience with the creative skill.

The creative arts (art as discipline) are a collection of disciplines which produce artworks (art as objects) that are compelled by a personal drive (art as activity) and convey a message, mood, or symbolism for the perceiver to interpret (art as experience). Art is something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses. The definition of art has generally fallen into three categories: representation, expression, and form. Plato first developed the idea of art as 'mimesis,' which means in Greek, copying or imitation, thus making representation or replication of something that is beautiful or meaningful, is the primary definition of art. Hegel's account of art incorporates his view of beauty. Hegel defines beauty as the sensuous appearance or expression of absolute truth. The best artworks convey, by perceptual means, the deepest metaphysical truth. According to Hegel, the deepest metaphysical truth is that the universe is the concrete realization of what is conceptual or rational. It means that what is conceptual or rational is real, and is the imminent force that animates and propels the self-consciously developing universe. The universe is the concrete realization of what is conceptual or rational, and the rational or conceptual is superior to the sensory. In this sense, the mind and its products alone are capable of truth. According to him artistic beauty is metaphysically superior to natural beauty.

Nzewi (2003) in Modeme (2014:160) further explained the term art focusing on 'musical arts' as an embodiment various discipline thus;

The term 'musical arts' reminds us in African cultures, the performance arts disciplines of music, dance, drama, poetry and costume art are seldom separated in creative thinking and performance practice. However, each has a distinctive feature with unique theoretical or descriptive terms in every culture area. Creative inspiration or a musical theme is a taproot fed by cultural and cosmic ideas, and artistic branches of this creative taproot are expressed and simultaneously, separately, or sequentially as structured sound from sonic objects (music), aesthetic/poetic stylization of body motion (dance), measured stylization of spoken language (poetry and lyrics), metaphorical reflection of life and cosmos displayed in action (drama), and symbolized texts and décor embedded in material objects (costume and scenery). Each branch resonates and reinforces the logic,

structure, form, shape, mood, texture, and character of the other, such that in the African musical arts, there are interrelationships that show how the music reflects the dance, language, drama and or costume. The dance bodily translates the music, language, drama and or costume and scenery. The poetry and lyrics narrate the music, dance, drama and or material objects. The drama enacts the music, dance, language, costume and or material objects; the material objects, costume and scenery highlight music, dance, drama and or language. (Nzewi, 2003:13).

In addition to the assertion above, Okonkwo (2006:169) says that music is part of life and that it is an art that is deeply rooted in human nature. To Nnamani (2009:36) 'Music is an art that interprets life and as such becomes a medium for the preservation, sustenance and understanding of cultural differences, problems and practices.' In summary, music tells the story and history of a people. Apart from the gazette norms and ethics guiding a country, society and or organizations, music helps to reinforce these ethics and norms thereby helping individuals to internalize the ethics and norms guiding them in order to be effective nation builders at their various levels and capacities.

Music and Nation Building

Ugbeyavwighren (2006:218-219) posit that nation building has a far wider scope including development, He further argues that whereas, development involves the utilization of available resources for rapid socio-political and economic growth, nation building composes of the existing socio-political and institutional frameworks in the exploitation of developmental impulses towards the attainment of self-sustained development in a geographically bounded area. That, nation building is a concerted institutional effort at effective management of cultural plurality, social disorganization and political uncertainties into a united and stable society and maximally exploit available human and natural resources towards the attainment of an ever-growing development. Nation building involves the additional responsibility of the creation and management of institutions and conducive environment for self-sustained development. In a nutshell, nation building can be summarized into the following; nation building involves,

1. existing socio-political and institutional frameworks within a geographical bounded area

2. concerted institutional effort at effective management of cultural plurality, social disorganization and political uncertainties into a united and stable society
3. creation and management of institutions and conducive environment for self-sustained development and
4. maximally exploiting available human and natural resources for development and wealth creation.

Corroborating Ugbeyavwighren (2006), Onuoha (2024:20), aver that 'Nation building involves various activities and strategies with the sole purpose of fostering national unity, promoting economic development, strengthening governance structures and enhancing social cohesion.' Okobia (2024) citing Izuegbu (2013) states that nation building is a process that aims at unification of the people who are in the same State/state for it to be politically stable and viable. It has to do with the willingness of the people in a State to work together and live as one so as to enhance a viable political and stable community (p. 131). Bereketeab (2020) elucidates that 'nation building involves creating a sense of shared purpose among citizens by developing common values, symbols, language, history, institutions that build them together as one nation'. Fostering unity has been one of the core themes of many composers' advocacy - music as an art on the other hand, has been in the forefront of persuading and promoting a united and stable society – building a stable nation. Idamoyibo (2021:25,28-29) says that the relevance of music is seen in the general functioning of the society; that many musicians present issues of the moment and provide stimulus to re-thinking about behaviors that are inimical and contrary to the norms of the society and such vices that could even be dangerous to those who indulge in them and the society. They prompt members of the society to examine facts about reality. They deal with frank issues of life and there is no hiding in the practice. Musicians have played significant roles in educating and enlightening the public through their musical performances. Most themes are philosophically educative either by use of direct statements or by use of idioms, epigrams and proverbs that are poetically structured to stimulate further reasoning and realization of meaning through deduction. In addition, he further says that just as people need government to provide leadership that is capable of ensuring their enhanced living in a peaceful, just, egalitarian and developed society, the government also needs the people in solidarity to enable it provide and acceptable form of leadership that will foster sustainable national development. Government and the people governed, therefore, make use of

music to mobilize both parties to tackle issues of national interest, in order to develop or change policies to ensure rapid development as a nation.

The Place of Music in Nation Building

A development planning error, which plagued many developing countries including African countries in the decades of the 50s and 60s, is the separation of social development from economic development. Politicians tended to believe that they were building the country in a hurry. So, they erected bridges, built roads, imported new industries and put on other infrastructure without planning for their management for the human resources that will utilize those for the benefit of the people and for what the people intend to be in life (Okafor 2005:247). The place of music in nation building is not subject to debate. Okonkwo (2006:169) cites the National Commission for Colleges of Education in its Minimum Standard that ‘music has the potential for being one of the most reliable subjects for enhancing human personality. This implies that music has the potential, capacity, and capability of molding individuals to the extent that they can become viable members of the society who contribute positively to nation building. This music potential is usually achieved through texts and sound.

Ohwofasa (2006) avers that;

Music whether Traditional or Western, could be likened to the 'Prophet' or 'Teacher' who directs the people to the path of Truth and Light. Furthermore, music could also [be] the 'mouth-piece' of the nation because; music does not only educate, entertain and inform, it also does the following: Music preaches Freedom and Need for a democratic society. Music preaches Justice and Equality in our society. Music preaches Unity in our society. Music preaches the need to be strong and self-reliant individuality and as a nation in general. Individuals who studied music formally/informally pay tax directly or indirectly to stipulated authorities who in-turn, use this money for one project or the other. Music must be recognized for its value as retardant of social decay. Music promotes a balanced mental and emotional health to the people thereby helping to cure stress (p. 66).

A united and stable society will provide an enabling environment for self-sustained development. This is expressed in the song-texts of Idolor’s Nigeria, *O Tore Ose Owan*.

Nigeria <i>O tore Ose Owan</i> in <i>Okpe</i> Language	Nigeria Our Fatherland (English)
Nigeria Otore ose owan re aha rie uku	Nigeria Our Father land, our heritage,

Erhe vbo otore ororo ghwe onana-a Eje ahe ero te otore ose owan Nigeria Osolobughwe oghale re owan Evbe omame aruoke Evbe omame otore re aha we ewawo Evbe isurhen, eji vbe irhie re erhe kpe irherin Evbe ebele buebun R'igho onya rue otore owan Nigeria Owian r' ote r'owan okionana Eje vbe odame r'ana ha' hwaphi' otore ose owan na K'owian k'owia, ru wa wian Biko mw'ero rhoeye Ti'ufiuphele n'uvuien N'aweiphian vbe ehen owhu Nigeria	We have no other land than this, Let us jointly build our fatherland Nigeria God has blessed us We have suitable climate We have fertile land for agriculture, We have streams and rivers for fishery; We have many resources For the economic sufficiency of our Country Nigeria Our responsibility now Is the concern to rebuild our fatherland. In whatever endeavour you find yourself, Please, be deligent. Do not be selfish, Let us have one unity of purpose Nigeria
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The song texts are a summary of individual and collective responsibility and effort in building our fatherland therefore, in whatever endeavour we find ourselves, diligence and selflessness is required. The song texts also encouraged oneness and unity of purpose.

Music and Nationalism

Nation building is a conscious effort towards the unity of nation which in turn is capable of making the nation strong (Izuegbu 2013 in Okobia 2024:131). A nation is as strong as its component part; and a weakened nation is like a weakened fiber and or fabric that is on the verge of extinction, annihilation. Nationalism in this case is that sentiment of loyalty towards the nation-state that is shared by all. Music as an art teaches, preaches and encourages the spirit of nationalism which is very potent for nation building; in tandem. Onwuekwe (2006:237) says that a great wind of change blew across Nigeria as Nationalists shouted with one voice for independence. The country was under British rule for about forty-seven years. In October 1, 1960, Nigeria attained her independence. As a Sovereign State, the destiny of the country rested in their hands as Nigerians. Reacting to this change, the first National Anthem was composed and it ran thus

Nigerian National Anthem after Independence

1. Nigeria, we hail thee

Our own dear native land
Thou tribe and tongue may differ
In brotherhood we stand
Nigerians all are proud to serve our sovereign motherland

2. Our flag shall be a symbol
That truth and justice reign
In peace or battle honoured
And this we count as gain
To hand on to our children
A banner without stain
3. O God of all creation
Grant this our one request
Help us to build a nation
Where no man is oppressed
And so with peace and plenty
Nigeria may be blessed.

A nation devoid of loyalty and patriotism from her subjects/citizens cannot survive long neither be developed. A nation devoid of nationalist spirit and nationalist tendency will struggle with the nemesis of under-development. The effectiveness of the feeling of loyalty is felt and re-informed by a reasonable level of cohesion. The concept of cohesion is further exemplified in the first stanza of the Nigerian National Anthem by Ben Odiase, which read as follow;

Arise. O compatriot

Nigeria call obey

To serve our father land

With love, and strength and faith

The labour of our hero's past

Shall never be in vain

To serve with heart and might

One nation bound in freedom

Peace and unity

Music and Integration

Ugbeyavwighren (2006:229) notes that national integration is the ability of the state to bring all the different sections of the state under one political umbrella. This is irrespective of political divide. He further points out that national integration is a concerted institutional effort to meet the requirement of legitimacy for all communities or section and develop the requisite trust or confidence among the different ethnic nationals. Fabiyi and Okafor (2003:117) note that the objectives of the National Youth Service Corps scheme are primarily to imbue Nigerian youths with the spirit of oneness and brotherhood of all Nigerians, irrespective of cultural or social background. That the NYSC Handbook has it that corps members are to be exposed to life in other parts of the country and to learn at first hand the many similarities and diversities of culture and traditions of the various ethnic groups in the country with a view to eliminating inherent prejudices. They note that the scheme was laid on the nation goals and objectives of

- A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and
- A free and democratic society.

Music embraces and encapsulates the subject and theme of integration as shown in stanza 1 below;

1. Nigeria, we hail thee
Our own dear native land
Thou tribe and tongue may differ
In brotherhood we stand
Nigerians all are proud to serve our sovereign motherland

Onwuekwe (2006:238) explains that the above text of the anthem implies that tribe is not a barrier. That although you are a Yoruba man, a Hausa, an Igbo, an Itshekiri, an Efik, a Tiv, no matter the tribe which destiny has grouped you under in Nigeria, in brotherhood we stand. All Nigerians without exception are proud to serve our sovereign motherland.

Tolerance one to another is vital to nation building. Another music text that gave advice on religious tolerance is given below;

2. *Ka Anyi Feen Chukwu N'ndo, Nigeria* (Religious Tolerance)

Ka Anyi Feen Chukwu N'ndo, Nigeria Let us serve god in peace in Nigeria

Udo ka anyi na-acho, biko We need peace, please

Ndi Igbo, ndi Hausa eh, ndi Yoruba The Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba

Ndi Calaber, ndi Rivers, ndi Bayelsa Calabar people, of Rivers, Bayelsa

Ndi Edo, ndi Delta, ndi Christian Edo people, of Delta, Christians

Ndi Moslem, biri n'udo biko Moslem people, live in peace, please

Source: Okpara, M. U.

Music helps to revitalize hope in a nation by encouraging all citizens to be united. According to Abolagba (2020:120) 'a nation cannot be developed if there is no unity amongst its people. Music is a magnetic agent that draws people together, creates room for the sense of brotherhood and instills the sense of belonging and collective responsibility'. Music as an art and integration are a global phenomenon that encourages oneness and brotherhood to ensure continuous nation building as captured in the music text below,

2. We Are One

i. All across the World

So many hearts in need

When we help each other is when we start to see

Every journey starts with just one step

Do what you can and just believe;

Chorus

We are one

When we stand together

We are one

Learn to lend a hand

Through the darkest night

United we are brighter than the star

Watch where we can be found

When we are one.

ii. Like branches of the tree

Blowing in the wind

We are bound together

Like strings without a wheel

Even mountains move and swing with one voice

Anywhere we come together

Let us all rejoice for we are on

Source: The Swam Prince

Music and Entrepreneur

Music as an art has the potential to sell and market Nigerian produce and the Nigeria project. It can sell our tourism, making it revenue earner for Nigeria besides its entertainment value. Music as an art is a very powerful tool used in disseminating information and promoting cultural norms, ideals, values, regulations, belief system and knowledge in the society and therefore nation. Alvan-Ikoku and Onuora-Oguno (2013:253,255) recount that Entrepreneurship has to do with an individual's ability to organize, manage and assume the risks of a business enterprise. Such ability eventually earns such as individual means of livelihood and recognition in the society. On the

other hand, music entrepreneurship is a field of study that incorporates music and business aspects. It deals with starting or organizing commercial music enterprise or venture especially one that involves financial risk. They further says that music entrepreneurship provides for individual numerous music business possibilities, ranging from music teaching, consultancy, composition and performance, music recording and production, music instrument technology, music therapy etc. Thus. the entrepreneurial proclivity of music as an art lays a very good foundation for nation building. Music as an art encourages genuine labour through text inherent in song writing. There is an axiom which says that 'hard work pays'- music as an art encourages genuine labour through skills acquisition and text inherent in song writing. The art encourages self-reliance which is one of the national policy goals. Nations need citizens that are hard-working and can contribute to nation building as human resources. Hence, Nigeria as a nation needs citizens that are self-reliant, patriotic and nationalistic. Oikilome (2020:254) quoted Fiske (1999) that over the years, studies have shown that music, theatre, and dance have been proven to have the transformative power to change lives of the young people in under privileged areas of the country; that music, theatre and dance opens up endless opportunities to tap from the wealth of knowledge of masters and teachers in the field thereby creating great talents. They further argue that art has been described as a tool for development apart from improving academic performance and student discipline. Oikilome (2020:258) quoted Goss (2000) that the arts provide a catalyst for the creation of social capital and the attainment of important community goals. Corroborating the above assertion Idamoyibo (2021:34,42) asserts that 'No nation develops significantly without a good system of education, that education generally provides human resources for nation building and music education is not an exception. Music has remarkable relevance in national development as it contributes significantly to the economy.

Music as an art has power to equip lives and empower individuals, thereby enabling them to contribute to their country of residence. It helps to promote economic propensity and prosperity of a nation by creating jobs, which keeps individuals busy, and contribute immensely to the Internal Generated Revenue of the nation and therefore have no time for crime.

Suggestions

Since music is one of those effective tools that helps to achieve a cohesive nation for nation building, the following suggestions are made;

- In Nigeria today where ethnic divide is tending towards collapse, music is an effective tool to re-create the bond of unity; therefore more music to market the Nigerian commodity should be composed and performed. Music performance draws many cultures and people together as it not only appeals to the mind, it is soothing with the rhythmic, melodic aesthetics and beauty; it also creates a unique and memorable musical-magical experience.
- National music concerts and competitions have in the past gathered peoples of different cultures and ethnicities under one common aim of performance and sharing of musical experiences that gives a sense of unity therefore; it should be encouraged at local government levels, state levels and national levels.
- A theme of unity can be given to all states/stakeholders to compose songs which should be performed at the national music festival and a winner should emerge at the end of the competition.
- Music contributes to economic growth of the nation through music entrepreneurship and human resources; the art should therefore be encouraged to be productive or develop through funding and provision of necessary facilities to music art education programme.
- Music is felt in every fabric of a nation; therefore, the art should be given maximum support by bodies, stakeholders, policy makers and government.

Conclusion

The paper contends that music as an art is a veritable tool for nation building by highlighting various aspects where music has been employed for the expression of absolute truth. The multifarious nature of Nigeria in terms of language, culture, and ethnic divide calls for cohesion: what better way can the society be cohesive except through the art of music? Through music-texts, calls for unity, patriotism, loyalty, integration and cohesion by all citizens of Nigeria and political leaders to be all-inclusive in adjudicating political decisions favourable to all is highlighted. Music also advocates for social change, the rule of law, equity and for the common good. The paper also emphasizes on the entrepreneurial aspect of music as an art by inferring that the art produces human resources that can market Nigeria through music-texts and expression/performance which can contribute to the development of Nigeria through revenue creation.

There is an axiom 'garbage in, garbage out' – this implies that it is what is feed into a system that that system brings out; a nation cannot rise more than is invested into that nation. Nation building involves the additional responsibility of the creation and management of institutions and a

conducive environment for self-sustained development. Therefore, the government should invest in activities that promote a conducive environment to boost developmental stride of the country. Finally, Idamoyibo (2021:33,36) avers that political leaders who are philosophical and those that possess sound reasoning faculty recognize the power of music in nation building through education and therefore develop policies and programmes that are capable of enhancing its study and practice because human development is central to nation building.

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