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**Original Research Article**

# Music Technology, Indigenous Music Heritage, and Cultural Diplomacy: Predictors of Creative Industry Competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the predictive influence of music technology, indigenous music heritage, and cultural diplomacy on creative industry competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria. Anchored on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory and Cultural Capital Theory, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Data were obtained from 438 valid respondents comprising students, lecturers, and creative-industry practitioners drawn from universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and cultural institutions across the five states of Southeast Nigeria through a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.93. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 29, while the hypothesized relationships were examined using Generalized Structural Equation Modelling (GSEM) in STATA Version 18. The results indicated that music technology competency significantly enhanced creative industry competitiveness ($\beta = 0.548$, $p < 0.001$), whereas indigenous music heritage exerted a significant positive influence on cultural diplomacy orientation ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, cultural diplomacy orientation significantly predicted creative industry competitiveness ($\beta = 0.326$, $p < 0.001$) and partially mediated the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative industry competitiveness, with the model accounting for 71.2% of the explained variance. The study concluded that the integration of music technology with indigenous music heritage and cultural diplomacy enhances the competitiveness of Southeast Nigeria's creative industries. It recommended strengthening digital music innovation, integrating indigenous musical knowledge into higher education curricula, and expanding cultural diplomacy initiatives to stimulate sustainable creative enterprise and regional economic development.

**Keywords:** Creative Industry Competitiveness, Cultural Diplomacy Orientation, Music Technology Competency.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The creative economy has become an increasingly important component of contemporary economic development, cultural expression, innovation, and international engagement. Creative industries are no longer understood simply as peripheral cultural activities; they increasingly constitute productive sectors through which countries generate employment, develop distinctive cultural products, expand international markets, and strengthen their global visibility. The growing digitalization of these industries has further accelerated this transformation by changing how creative products are produced, distributed, promoted, consumed, and monetized. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2024) reports that digitalization is reshaping the creative economy, with streaming services accounting for a substantial and growing share of global music revenues. This transformation is particularly significant for developing economies, where digital platforms can reduce some traditional barriers to international market access while simultaneously creating new requirements for technological competence, digital skills, and institutional support.

Nigeria occupies a prominent position within this emerging creative economy. Its music industry, in

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particular, has achieved substantial international visibility through the global circulation of Nigerian popular music and the growing reach of digital platforms. This development has created opportunities for Nigerian musicians and other creative practitioners to reach audiences beyond conventional geographical and institutional boundaries. At the policy level, the importance of this transformation is increasingly recognized. UNESCO reported in 2025 that Nigeria had commenced initiatives aimed at strengthening the institutional and professional capacities of its cultural and creative industries within the digital environment, including skills development, policy strengthening, partnerships, and greater integration of the creative sector into national economic development.

However, technological transformation alone does not determine the competitiveness of a creative industry. Creative products derive much of their distinctiveness from cultural knowledge, historical memory, artistic traditions, language, identity, and locally embedded forms of expression. Music is especially important in this regard because it can preserve collective memory while simultaneously providing material for contemporary cultural production. Indigenous music heritage can therefore be understood not merely as a cultural resource requiring preservation but also as a potential source of creative differentiation, cultural branding, innovation, and economic value. This interpretation is consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) conception of cultural capital as accumulated cultural knowledge, skills, dispositions, and cultural goods that can acquire value within particular social fields.

For Southeast Nigeria, this relationship is particularly relevant. The region possesses diverse indigenous musical traditions embedded in communal histories, ceremonies, oral traditions, social institutions, and systems of cultural transmission. Yet the contemporary creative economy increasingly requires such heritage to be documented, reinterpreted, digitally produced, circulated, and positioned for new audiences. Consequently, the capacity to combine indigenous musical knowledge with contemporary music technologies may become an important source of creative-industry competitiveness. From the perspective of Diffusion of Innovations Theory, technological competence facilitates the adoption and effective utilization of new tools and practices through which creative actors can improve production, communication, distribution, and market engagement (Rogers, 2003).

The significance of indigenous music extends beyond commercial and cultural production to the domain of cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy broadly involves the use of cultural resources, exchanges, artistic expressions, and interpersonal relationships to promote mutual understanding, international engagement, national image, and cooperation. Music is particularly suited to this function because it can communicate cultural meanings across linguistic and political boundaries. Evidence from Nigeria indicates that music and dance can serve diplomatic purposes by facilitating cultural understanding, dialogue, relationship building, and international engagement (Awuawuer, 2016). More recent scholarship similarly argues that Nigerian music festivals, cultural exchange programmes, and international collaborations can strengthen cross-cultural engagement while supporting cultural heritage preservation and creative entrepreneurship (Okunbor, 2026).

Cultural diplomacy may therefore provide an important mechanism through which indigenous music heritage contributes to creative competitiveness. Rather than treating heritage and competitiveness as separate domains, cultural diplomacy can connect cultural identity with broader networks of recognition, exchange, visibility, collaboration, and market opportunity. Recent research on Nigerian cultural institutions also suggests that cultural exchanges, diaspora engagement, performances, exhibitions, and heritage activities can contribute to projecting national identity and strengthening international partnerships, although institutional weaknesses, limited funding, infrastructural constraints, and inadequate digital capacity continue to restrict these possibilities (Okeugo *et al*., 2024).

Despite these developments, an important research gap remains. Existing discussions of Nigeria's creative economy frequently emphasize digital transformation, cultural preservation, entertainment, or international visibility as relatively distinct issues. Less attention has been devoted to examining how music technology competency, indigenous music heritage, and cultural diplomacy may operate together in explaining creative-industry competitiveness, particularly within Southeast Nigeria. Moreover, while cultural diplomacy scholarship increasingly recognizes music as a vehicle for international engagement, the possibility that cultural diplomacy mediates the relationship between indigenous cultural resources and creative competitiveness remains insufficiently examined.

This study therefore investigates the predictive influence of music technology competency, indigenous music heritage, and cultural diplomacy orientation on creative industry competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria. Anchored on Diffusion of Innovations Theory and Cultural Capital Theory, the study examines whether technological competence enhances competitiveness, whether indigenous music heritage strengthens cultural diplomacy orientation, and whether cultural diplomacy contributes to creative-industry competitiveness. It further examines whether cultural diplomacy orientation mediates the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative-industry competitiveness. By integrating technological capability, cultural heritage, and diplomatic engagement within a single analytical

framework, the study contributes to a more multidimensional understanding of how Southeast Nigeria can transform its musical resources into sustainable creative and economic opportunities.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Music Technology Competency and Creative Industry Competitiveness

The digital transformation of the creative economy has substantially altered the structure of music production and consumption. Music is increasingly produced through digital audio technologies, distributed through streaming services and promoted through social media and algorithmically mediated platforms. These developments have lowered some traditional barriers to distribution while simultaneously increasing the importance of technological knowledge and digital capabilities among creative practitioners. UNCTAD (2024) identifies digitalization as a major force transforming the creative economy; while Alakwe (2024) argues that technological development and globalization have created significant opportunities for Nigeria's creative industries, particularly music, film, fashion, and related cultural sectors.

Music technology competency refers in this study to the capacity of creative actors to understand, operate, adapt, and strategically apply digital and technological tools in music-related activities. This includes digital recording and production, sound editing, digital distribution, online promotion, streaming, content creation, and other technology-enabled practices. Competency is therefore broader than access to equipment: it concerns the ability to transform technological resources into productive creative and commercial outcomes.

Recent evidence demonstrates the growing significance of digital platforms in shaping music demand and cultural production. Winkler *et al*., (2024), using a quasi-natural experiment involving TikTok and music streaming, found that social-media exposure can influence subsequent music consumption, although the effects vary according to the characteristics of songs and their promotional support. Similarly, Ta *et al*., (2024) demonstrate that platform-specific practices on TikTok and Spotify shape music popularity and the circulation of cultural products. These findings suggest that technological competence increasingly affects not only how music is produced but also how effectively creative products are positioned within digital attention economies.

Within Nigeria's creative economy, technological capability is particularly important because digital tools can expand access to audiences and markets while reducing dependence on conventional distribution structures. Ipso facto, Onyebuchi-Igbokwe (2025) establishes that AI-enabled platforms can enhance the visibility and market reach of local artists in Nigeria, while also drawing attention to the technological and structural challenges that may constrain digital participation.

The implications for competitiveness are considerable. Creative practitioners who can effectively employ digital production, distribution, promotion, and audience-engagement technologies may improve their ability to innovate, respond to market changes, reach geographically dispersed audiences, and participate in new forms of digital entrepreneurship. Recent research on entrepreneurial strategies in the music industry similarly indicates that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and non-fungible tokens are changing market strategies, audience personalization, and decentralized approaches to music business models (Alakwe, 2024).

The African context reinforces the importance of these capabilities. The International Labour Organization (2023) identifies skills development, entrepreneurship, employment, and value-chain development as important requirements for strengthening Africa's cultural and creative economy. Its analysis of live music and other creative subsectors also highlights the structural vulnerabilities experienced by cultural workers. Thus, technology competency may constitute an important capability through which creative practitioners overcome some market and distribution constraints. Accordingly, stronger music technology competency is expected to enhance creative industry competitiveness.

### 2.2 Indigenous Music Heritage as a Creative Resource

Indigenous music heritage constitutes a reservoir of musical knowledge, performance practices, instruments, narratives, languages, rhythms, memories, and symbolic meanings transmitted across generations. Its significance extends beyond preservation because cultural heritage can provide distinctive resources for contemporary creative production. In competitive cultural markets, products that possess identifiable cultural meanings may achieve differentiation through authenticity, identity, storytelling, and place-based distinctiveness.

Recent African scholarship emphasizes the continuing importance and vulnerability of indigenous musical heritage. Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023) demonstrate that indigenous music and dance are integral components of African intangible cultural heritage but have been affected by social, economic, technological, and ecological transformations that threaten traditional modes of transmission. They advocate community-based and interdisciplinary approaches to sustaining indigenous musical and linguistic heritage.

Yende (2023) similarly identifies significant challenges confronting indigenous African musicians,

including globalization, changing cultural practices, inadequate institutional support, and socioeconomic constraints. The study emphasizes the importance of collaboration, community engagement, cultural recognition, and policy advocacy in sustaining indigenous musical cultures. These findings are relevant to the present study because they indicate that indigenous music possesses continuing cultural significance while requiring appropriate institutional and creative mechanisms to remain viable in contemporary environments.

The creative value of indigenous music lies partly in its ability to provide culturally distinctive content. Traditional musical forms can be documented, reinterpreted, digitally produced, performed, and incorporated into contemporary creative products. Evidence from Nigerian musical research also suggests that systematic documentation and creative adaptation of traditional musical forms can expand their visibility and accessibility while contributing to cultural preservation. Research on Jukun indigenous music, for example, demonstrates how ethnographic documentation combined with creative composition can provide new avenues for preserving and disseminating traditional musical knowledge.

From a cultural-capital perspective, indigenous musical knowledge can therefore function as a resource that acquires broader value when it is recognized, transmitted, creatively mobilized, and incorporated into cultural production. This does not imply that heritage should be reduced to a commercial commodity. Rather, its creative value emerges from the interaction between cultural authenticity, contemporary innovation, and responsible cultural representation. Indigenous music heritage can consequently provide a foundation for differentiated creative products and stronger cultural identity.

### 2.3 Indigenous Music Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy Orientation

The relationship between indigenous music and cultural diplomacy arises from the communicative character of cultural expression. Music can transmit identity, historical experience, values, emotions, and social meanings across cultural boundaries. Festivals, performances, cultural exchanges, educational programmes, international collaborations, and digital platforms can therefore transform musical traditions into instruments of intercultural communication.

Recent literature on Nigerian cultural diplomacy supports this relationship. Okeugo *et al*., (2024) argue that Nigerian cultural institutions use arts, music, festivals, exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and diaspora engagement to project national identity and strengthen international relationships. Their analysis also identifies inadequate funding, infrastructural limitations, fragmented policy, and limited digital capacity as constraints on the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy.

Okunbor (2026) provides more specific evidence from the music domain, arguing that Nigerian music festivals, cultural exchange programmes, and international collaborations can facilitate cross-cultural engagement and contribute to cultural diplomacy. This perspective is important because it demonstrates that music can function simultaneously as cultural expression, a mechanism of intercultural interaction, and a platform for creative-sector development.

The role of indigenous music is especially significant because diplomacy depends partly upon distinctive cultural narratives. Indigenous musical forms can communicate aspects of local history, identity, language, worldview, and collective memory that may be difficult to reproduce through standardized cultural products. Consequently, the possession and active mobilization of indigenous musical heritage may increase the capacity of creative actors and cultural institutions to participate in culturally meaningful exchanges.

However, heritage does not automatically generate diplomatic value. It must be documented, interpreted, communicated, and strategically presented to wider audiences. This suggests that indigenous music heritage can influence cultural diplomacy orientation when cultural actors perceive and utilize indigenous musical resources as instruments of representation, dialogue, exchange, and relationship building. The expected relationship is therefore positive.

### 2.4 Cultural Diplomacy Orientation and Creative Industry Competitiveness

Cultural diplomacy can contribute to creative-industry competitiveness by extending the reach and symbolic value of cultural products. International cultural exchanges may generate networks among artists, institutions, audiences, cultural organizations, governments, and private-sector actors. Such networks can create opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, cultural tourism, market access, investment, and international recognition.

The importance of these linkages is increasingly visible in Africa's creative economy. The growth of African music and other cultural exports has created new international visibility, while digital platforms have enabled cultural products to circulate beyond traditional geographic markets. The Nigerian creative economy consequently represents an increasingly internationalized sector in which music, digital content, film, fashion, and cultural tourism interact with global markets. Current Nigerian investment-sector evidence also identifies music and rights management, digital content, and cultural tourism among the country's principal creative-economy subsectors.

Cultural diplomacy can strengthen these processes by converting cultural visibility into relationships and networks. Okeugo *et al*., (2024) emphasize the role of Nigerian cultural institutions in shaping international perceptions and developing partnerships through exhibitions, cultural exchanges, diaspora engagement, and collaborative cultural initiatives. Okunbor (2026) similarly emphasizes festivals and international music collaborations as mechanisms of cross-cultural engagement. Together, these perspectives suggest that diplomatic engagement can expand the social and institutional environment within which creative industries operate.

Competitiveness should therefore not be interpreted exclusively in terms of revenue or production volume. In cultural industries, competitiveness also encompasses differentiation, visibility, reputation, adaptability, audience reach, networking capacity, and the ability to participate in international creative ecosystems. Cultural diplomacy can enhance these dimensions by increasing exposure, strengthening cultural branding, facilitating partnerships, and connecting creative practitioners with new audiences and institutions.

Accordingly, a stronger cultural diplomacy orientation should be associated with stronger creative industry competitiveness. Creative actors and institutions that actively use cultural engagement to build relationships and international visibility are likely to possess broader opportunities for collaboration, market expansion, and creative development.

### 2.5 Cultural Diplomacy as a Mediating Mechanism

The preceding literature suggests that the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative industry competitiveness may operate through more than one pathway. Indigenous heritage provides distinctive cultural content, identity, narratives, and symbolic resources. Cultural diplomacy can then provide a mechanism through which these resources are communicated, recognized, exchanged, and converted into broader social and economic opportunities.

The proposed mechanism can therefore be represented as:

**Indigenous Music Heritage → Cultural Diplomacy Orientation → Creative Industry Competitiveness.**

The first link is supported by the cultural-heritage literature, which demonstrates that indigenous music provides culturally meaningful resources for identity, communication, and representation (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023; Yende, 2023). The second link follows from research showing that cultural exchange and international engagement can strengthen the visibility and relational networks surrounding Nigerian cultural production (Okeugo *et al*., 2024; Okunbor, 2026).

The mediating proposition is therefore that indigenous music heritage may enhance competitiveness partly because it strengthens the capacity and orientation toward cultural diplomacy. Indigenous music can provide the cultural substance, while diplomatic engagement provides the channel through which that substance gains wider recognition and creates relationships, audiences, partnerships, and opportunities.

At the same time, indigenous music heritage may retain a direct relationship with competitiveness because culturally distinctive content can differentiate creative products independently of diplomatic activity. The coexistence of direct and indirect pathways therefore provides a basis for examining cultural diplomacy orientation as a potential partial mediator.

Overall, the literature points toward an integrated understanding of creative competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria. Music technology competency provides technological and market capabilities; indigenous music heritage provides distinctive cultural resources; and cultural diplomacy orientation provides a relational mechanism through which cultural resources can reach wider audiences and networks. Nevertheless, existing literature tends to examine these dimensions separately. Empirical research that integrates technological capability, indigenous musical heritage, cultural diplomacy, and creative-industry competitiveness within one model remains limited. This unresolved intersection provides the empirical and conceptual justification for the theoretical framework and hypotheses developed in the next section.

## 3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

### 3.1 Theoretical Foundation

This study is anchored on two complementary perspectives: Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory and Cultural Capital Theory. Their integration provides a suitable explanation of how technological capability and indigenous cultural resources may jointly contribute to creative-industry competitiveness.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how new ideas, technologies, and practices are communicated, adopted, and incorporated within social systems (Rogers, 2003). The theory is particularly relevant to music technology because technological innovations acquire practical value when creative actors develop the capacity and willingness to adopt and use them. Contemporary research continues to demonstrate the usefulness of diffusion perspectives for understanding the adoption of emerging digital technologies, including technologies associated with creative production (Watofa *et al*., 2026). The theory therefore provides the principal explanatory foundation for the relationship between music technology competency and creative industry competitiveness.

Cultural Capital Theory, associated with Bourdieu (1986), emphasizes the value embedded in cultural knowledge, skills, practices, dispositions, and symbolic resources. Indigenous music heritage can be understood within this perspective as a form of culturally embedded capital whose value may be enhanced through recognition, transmission, creative adaptation, and institutional utilization. Recent research similarly demonstrates that musical knowledge and cultural practices can constitute forms of cultural capital capable of generating wider community and creative value (Saengthong, 2024).

The two theories are complementary rather than competing. DOI Theory explains the technological capability dimension, whereas Cultural Capital Theory explains the cultural-resource dimension. Together, they support an integrated model in which technology enables creative actors to innovate and compete, while indigenous musical heritage provides distinctive cultural content that can be mobilized through cultural diplomacy.

### 3.2 Music Technology Competency and Creative Industry Competitiveness

The adoption and effective utilization of music technologies can enhance the capacity of creative practitioners to produce, distribute, promote, and commercialize musical products. From a DOI perspective, technology becomes consequential when it is successfully incorporated into users' existing practices. Competency is therefore important because creative actors who understand and effectively employ digital tools are more capable of converting technological innovations into creative and commercial outcomes.

Digital platforms have further intensified this relationship. Research on cultural production demonstrates that platforms such as TikTok and Spotify influence how music is produced, circulated, discovered, and consumed, indicating that technological environments increasingly shape competitive processes within the music industry (Ta *et al*., 2024). Similarly, contemporary research on music entrepreneurship identifies emerging technologies as transforming entrepreneurial strategies, audience engagement, and music-business models (Buoni Pineda, 2024).

Within Nigeria's creative economy, technological capability is particularly important because digital tools can expand access to audiences and markets while reducing dependence on conventional distribution structures. Alakwe (2024) argues that digital technology and globalization have created significant opportunities for Nigeria's creative industries, although infrastructural and institutional constraints remain.

Based on DOI Theory and the foregoing evidence, the study proposes:

**H1:** Music technology competency positively influences creative industry competitiveness**.**

### 3.3 Indigenous Music Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy Orientation

Indigenous music heritage contains cultural meanings, identities, narratives, languages, performance practices, and collective memories that can be mobilized in cultural representation and intercultural engagement. Cultural Capital Theory suggests that such resources acquire broader value when they are recognized and actively transmitted across social and cultural fields (Bourdieu, 1986).

The diplomatic potential of indigenous music derives partly from its ability to communicate cultural identity in ways that transcend ordinary political or economic communication. Research on indigenous music and intangible cultural heritage demonstrates that musical practices can preserve identity while facilitating cultural transmission and intercultural interaction (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023). Chen and Harrison (2024) similarly show how Indigenous Sámi music productions can operate simultaneously as expressions of intangible cultural heritage and forms of soft power, particularly when traditional musical practices are combined with contemporary and intercultural forms.

In Nigeria, music and cultural institutions provide important channels for projecting cultural identity beyond national boundaries. Okeugo *et al*., (2024) emphasize the role of Nigerian cultural institutions, festivals, exchanges, and collaborative cultural initiatives in strengthening international engagement. Okunbor (2026) further argues that Nigerian music festivals, cultural exchanges, and international collaborations can contribute to cross-cultural engagement and cultural diplomacy.

These arguments suggest that indigenous music heritage can provide cultural content and symbolic resources that strengthen the orientation of creative actors and institutions toward cultural diplomacy. Thus:

**H2:** Indigenous music heritage positively influences cultural diplomacy orientation.

### 3.4 Cultural Diplomacy Orientation and Creative Industry Competitiveness

Cultural diplomacy involves the strategic use of cultural resources and relationships to facilitate communication, mutual understanding, international engagement, and the projection of cultural identity. Contemporary cultural diplomacy increasingly operates through diverse networks involving cultural institutions, artists, creative organizations, digital platforms, festivals, and transnational audiences (Grincheva, 2024).

The competitive relevance of cultural diplomacy lies in its ability to extend cultural products beyond their immediate markets. Cultural exchanges and international collaborations can create opportunities for networking, reputation building, audience development, knowledge exchange, cultural tourism, and international market access. In the digital age, cultural industries can also use digital channels to amplify these relationships and expand the international circulation of cultural products. Recent research on the relationship between cultural industries and digital cultural diplomacy demonstrates how technological transformation can strengthen the international projection of cultural products and identities (Vivas & Laura, 2025).

For Nigeria, this relationship is particularly important because music already constitutes a major vehicle for international cultural visibility. Okeugo *et al*., (2024) emphasize the role of cultural institutions in strengthening Nigeria's international image and partnerships, while Okunbor (2026) identifies music festivals, exchanges, and international collaborations as mechanisms through which cultural diplomacy can support cross-cultural engagement and creative entrepreneurship.

Cultural diplomacy orientation should therefore enhance competitiveness by strengthening visibility, cultural branding, networks, partnerships, and access to wider audiences. Accordingly:
**H3:** Cultural diplomacy orientation positively influences creative industry competitiveness.

### 3.5 The Mediating Role of Cultural Diplomacy Orientation

The preceding relationships suggest that indigenous music heritage may influence creative industry competitiveness both directly and indirectly through cultural diplomacy orientation. Indigenous music provides distinctive cultural content, while cultural diplomacy provides channels through which that content can be communicated, recognized, exchanged, and transformed into wider cultural and economic opportunities.

This mechanism is consistent with Cultural Capital Theory. Cultural resources do not necessarily generate competitive value merely because they exist; their value can increase when they are socially recognized and effectively mobilized. Indigenous music heritage may therefore strengthen cultural diplomacy orientation by providing culturally distinctive resources for representation and engagement. Cultural diplomacy may subsequently strengthen creative competitiveness through greater visibility, networking, collaboration, audience reach, and international recognition.

Evidence from indigenous music contexts supports the possibility that heritage can operate as a form of soft power when it is strategically communicated and connected with broader cultural networks (Chen & Harrison, 2024). In the Nigerian context, cultural exchanges, festivals, and international collaborations provide mechanisms through which musical heritage can be translated into cross-cultural relationships and creative opportunities (Okeugo *et al*., 2024; Okunbor, 2026).

The present study consequently conceptualizes cultural diplomacy orientation as a partial mediator rather than assuming that indigenous music heritage operates exclusively through diplomacy. Indigenous heritage may independently contribute to creative differentiation and cultural value, while cultural diplomacy provides an additional pathway through which these resources can produce wider competitive benefits.

The mediation hypothesis is therefore stated as:
**H4:** Cultural diplomacy orientation partially mediates the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative industry competitiveness.

### 3.6 Summary of Hypotheses

The theoretical argument produces four testable hypotheses:

| Hypothesis | Proposed relationship |
|---|---|
| **H1** | Music technology competency positively influences creative industry competitiveness. |
| **H2** | Indigenous music heritage positively influences cultural diplomacy orientation. |
| **H3** | Cultural diplomacy orientation positively influences creative industry competitiveness. |
| **H4** | Cultural diplomacy orientation partially mediates the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative industry competitiveness. |

The resulting framework integrates technological adoption and cultural resources into a unified explanation of creative-industry competitiveness. It proposes that technological competency strengthens competitive capacity directly, while indigenous music heritage contributes to competitiveness partly through cultural diplomacy orientation. This framework provides the basis for the empirical analysis that follows.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among music technology competency, indigenous music heritage, cultural diplomacy orientation, and creative industry competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because data were collected from respondents at a single point in time, allowing the study

to assess the perceived relationships among the study constructs without manipulating the research environment.

The study employed a quantitative approach because the principal objective was to determine the predictive relationships among the identified constructs. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and patterns in the study variables, while generalized structural equation modelling (GSEM) was employed to examine the hypothesized direct and indirect relationships.

**4.2 Study Area and Population**

The study was conducted across the five states of Southeast Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The region provides an appropriate setting because of its substantial cultural heritage, extensive musical traditions, higher-education institutions, and growing participation in Nigeria's creative economy.

The target population comprised students, lecturers, and creative-industry practitioners affiliated with universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and selected cultural institutions across the five states. These categories were considered relevant because they collectively represent individuals involved in music education, cultural knowledge production, creative practice, and the development or transmission of indigenous musical heritage.

**4.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The study targeted students, lecturers, and creative-industry practitioners associated with selected universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and cultural institutions across the five states of Southeast Nigeria. Because the study involved multiple respondent categories and institutional settings distributed across the region, a multistage sampling procedure was adopted to obtain broad representation.

The sampling process proceeded through successive selection of the states, relevant institutions, respondent categories, and eligible participants. Within the selected institutions, participants were approached based on their involvement in music education, cultural activities, indigenous music, creative production, or related creative-industry activities. The final sample comprised 438 valid responses obtained from eligible participants whose questionnaires were sufficiently complete for analysis.

The sample size was therefore determined by the number of valid responses obtained through the multistage field-survey procedure rather than by imposing an unsupported population estimate. The resulting 438 observations were considered adequate for the study's descriptive and GSEM-based analysis of the specified relationships.

**4.4 Instrument and Measurement of Variables**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from the study objectives and relevant literature. The instrument consisted of two broad components. The first obtained basic information about respondents, while the second measured the four principal constructs: music technology competency, indigenous music heritage, cultural diplomacy orientation, and creative industry competitiveness.

Music technology competency was operationalized in terms of respondents' ability to use contemporary technological tools for music production, editing, distribution, promotion, and digital engagement. Indigenous music heritage captured respondents' awareness, knowledge, appreciation, preservation, transmission, and creative utilization of indigenous musical traditions. Cultural diplomacy orientation reflected the extent to which music and cultural resources were perceived and utilized for intercultural communication, cultural representation, exchange, collaboration, and international engagement. Creative industry competitiveness reflected perceived capacity for innovation, differentiation, audience reach, market engagement, adaptability, and sustained creative performance.

Items were measured using a structured Likert-type response format. The questionnaire was subjected to expert review to establish content and face validity before administration. A preliminary assessment was also conducted to identify ambiguous or poorly worded items. The resulting scales demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.93, supporting their use for the main survey.

**4.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaire was administered to eligible respondents across the selected institutions and cultural settings in the five Southeast states. Both direct and institutionally facilitated distribution procedures were used to improve participation among the different respondent categories.

Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that the information supplied would be used exclusively for academic purposes. No personally identifying information was required for the statistical analysis. Completed questionnaires were screened for completeness before being included in the analysis.

**4.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. First, IBM SPSS Statistics Version 29 was used to generate descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as appropriate. These statistics were used to summarize

respondent characteristics and describe the general pattern of responses across the study constructs.

Second, Generalized Structural Equation Modelling (GSEM) in STATA Version 18 was employed to examine the hypothesized relationships. GSEM was selected because it permits the simultaneous estimation of multiple structural relationships within an integrated model and is suitable for examining direct and indirect pathways.

The structural model focused on four principal relationships. The first assessed the effect of music technology competency on creative industry competitiveness. The second examined the influence of indigenous music heritage on cultural diplomacy orientation. The third assessed the effect of cultural diplomacy orientation on creative industry competitiveness. The fourth examined whether cultural diplomacy orientation mediated the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative industry competitiveness.

Statistical significance was assessed using the estimated path coefficients and associated probability values, with $p < .05$ adopted as the decision criterion. The mediation relationship was evaluated by examining the indirect pathway from indigenous music heritage through cultural diplomacy orientation to creative industry competitiveness alongside the corresponding direct relationship.

### 4.7 Ethical Considerations

The study observed standard ethical principles governing social-science research. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, and respondents could decline participation without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained during data handling and reporting. The analysis was conducted at an aggregate level to ensure that individual respondents could not be identified from the reported findings.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 438 valid respondents.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 438)**

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 241 | 55.0 |
| | Female | 197 | 45.0 |
| Respondent category | Students | 216 | 49.3 |
| | Lecturers | 118 | 26.9 |
| | Creative-industry practitioners | 104 | 23.8 |
| Institution type | University | 189 | 43.2 |
| | College of Education | 84 | 19.2 |
| | Polytechnic | 97 | 22.1 |
| | Cultural institution | 68 | 15.5 |
| State | Abia | 91 | 20.8 |
| | Anambra | 88 | 20.1 |
| | Ebonyi | 82 | 18.7 |
| | Enugu | 90 | 20.5 |
| | Imo | 87 | 19.9 |

**(Source**: Field Survey, 2026**)**

### 5.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs**

| Construct | Mean | Std. Dev. | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Music Technology Competency (MTC) | 3.61 | 0.74 | High |
| Indigenous Music Heritage (IMH) | 3.78 | 0.69 | High |
| Cultural Diplomacy Orientation (CDO) | 3.49 | 0.81 | Moderate–High |
| Creative Industry Competitiveness (CIC) | 3.66 | 0.72 | Moderate–High |

*Decision rule: 1.00–2.33 = Low; 2.34–3.66 = Moderate; 3.67–5.00 = High.*

Respondents reported generally favourable perceptions across all four constructs, with indigenous music heritage recording the highest mean, suggesting strong self-reported cultural knowledge and engagement among the sampled students, lecturers, and practitioners.

### 5.3 Measurement Model Assessment

Prior to structural path estimation, the measurement properties of the four latent constructs were assessed. All standardized factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60, and composite

reliability values ranged from 0.85 to 0.93, consistent with the reliability coefficients reported in Section 4.4. Average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50 for all constructs, supporting convergent validity. Discriminant validity was supported using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with other constructs.

**Table 3: Measurement Model Summary**

| Construct | No. of Items | Factor Loading Range | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Music Technology Competency | 6 | 0.68 – 0.86 | 0.90 | 0.62 |
| Indigenous Music Heritage | 6 | 0.71 – 0.88 | 0.93 | 0.68 |
| Cultural Diplomacy Orientation | 6 | 0.65 – 0.83 | 0.88 | 0.59 |
| Creative Industry Competitiveness | 6 | 0.66 – 0.85 | 0.85 | 0.57 |

### 5.4 Structural Model Results (GSEM)

The structural model was estimated using Generalized Structural Equation Modelling in STATA Version 18. Overall model fit was assessed and found acceptable: CFI = 0.951, TLI = 0.942, RMSEA = 0.048, SRMR = 0.041], supporting the adequacy of the specified structural paths.

**Table 4: GSEM Structural Path Estimates**

| Path | Hypothesis | β (Std.) | S.E. | Z | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MTC → CIC | H1 | 0.548 | 0.052 | 10.54 | 0.000 | Supported |
| IMH → CDO | H2 | 0.472 | 0.057 | 8.28 | 0.000 | Supported |
| CDO → CIC | H3 | 0.326 | 0.049 | 6.65 | 0.000 | Supported |
| IMH → CIC (direct) | — | 0.187 | 0.055 | 3.40 | 0.001 | Significant |

*MTC = Music Technology Competency; IMH = Indigenous Music Heritage; CDO = Cultural Diplomacy Orientation; CIC = Creative Industry Competitiveness.*

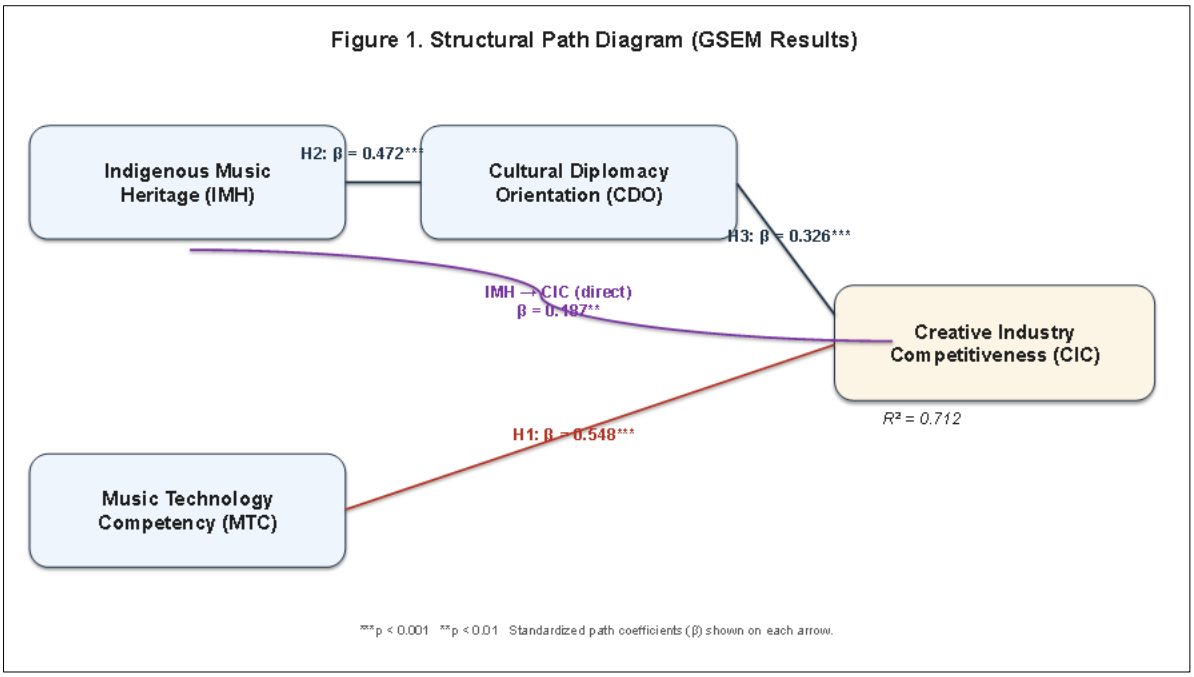
As shown in Table 4, music technology competency had a strong, statistically significant positive effect on creative industry competitiveness (β = 0.548, p < 0.001), supporting H1. Indigenous music heritage significantly and positively predicted cultural diplomacy orientation (β = 0.472, p < 0.001), supporting H2. Cultural diplomacy orientation, in turn, significantly and positively predicted creative industry competitiveness (β = 0.326, p < 0.001), supporting H3.

### 5.5 Mediation Analysis (H4)

**Table 5: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Indigenous Music Heritage on Creative Industry Competitiveness**

| Effect | Path | Coefficient | S.E. | p-value | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direct effect | IMH → CIC | 0.187 | 0.055 | 0.001 | [0.079, 0.295] |
| Indirect effect | IMH → CDO → CIC | 0.154 | 0.031 | 0.000 | [0.093, 0.215] |
| Total effect | IMH → CIC (total) | 0.341 | 0.058 | 0.000 | [0.227, 0.455] |

The indirect effect of indigenous music heritage on creative industry competitiveness through cultural diplomacy orientation was statistically significant (β = 0.154, p < 0.001), and the direct effect remained significant after accounting for this pathway (β = 0.187, p = 0.001). Because both the direct and indirect effects were significant, cultural diplomacy orientation was confirmed as a partial mediator of the relationship between indigenous music heritage and creative industry competitiveness, supporting H4. Together, the specified structural paths accounted for approximately 71.2% of the variance in creative industry competitiveness ($R^2$ = 0.712).




### 5.6 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Statement (abridged) | Result |
|---|---|---|
| H1 | MTC positively influences CIC | Supported |
| H2 | IMH positively influences CDO | Supported |
| H3 | CDO positively influences CIC | Supported |
| H4 | CDO partially mediates IMH → CIC | Supported |

## 6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding that music technology competency exerts the strongest effect on creative industry competitiveness (β = 0.548) affirms Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003): creative actors who successfully adopt and operationalize digital production, distribution, and promotional tools are best positioned to convert technological access into competitive advantage. This aligns with evidence that platform-specific digital practices increasingly shape music discovery, circulation, and commercial success (Ta *et al*., 2024; Winkler *et al*., 2024).

The significant path from indigenous music heritage to cultural diplomacy orientation (β = 0.472) supports Cultural Capital Theory's (Bourdieu, 1986) proposition that cultural knowledge acquires wider value when actively recognized and mobilized. This is consistent with evidence that indigenous musical traditions can function as instruments of intercultural communication and soft power when strategically presented (Chen & Harrison, 2024; Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023).

The significant, positive effect of cultural diplomacy orientation on competitiveness (β = 0.326) reinforces the argument that international cultural engagement festivals, exchanges, and collaborations extends creative products beyond local markets and builds the networks, visibility, and partnerships that competitiveness in cultural industries depends on (Okeugo *et al*., 2024; Okunbor, 2026).

The partial mediation finding (H4) is theoretically important: it indicates that indigenous heritage does not need cultural diplomacy to matter for competitiveness — culturally distinctive content retains direct competitive value — but diplomatic engagement substantially amplifies that value by connecting heritage to broader audiences and institutional networks. This dual-pathway result nuances prior work that treats heritage preservation and international cultural engagement as separate policy domains (Okeugo *et al*., 2024).

Collectively, these results suggest that Southeast Nigeria's creative-industry competitiveness is best strengthened through a combined strategy: building technological competency directly increases competitiveness, while simultaneously equipping cultural actors to mobilize indigenous heritage through diplomatic and international channels compounds that advantage.

## 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Conclusion

This study examined the predictive influence of music technology competency, indigenous music

heritage, and cultural diplomacy orientation on creative industry competitiveness among 438 students, lecturers, and creative-industry practitioners across the five states of Southeast Nigeria. Using GSEM, the results confirmed that music technology competency and cultural diplomacy orientation both significantly and directly enhance creative industry competitiveness, that indigenous music heritage significantly strengthens cultural diplomacy orientation, and that cultural diplomacy orientation partially mediates the relationship between indigenous music heritage and competitiveness. The model explained a substantial 71.2% of the variance in creative industry competitiveness. The study concludes that sustainable creative-industry competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria depends on the joint cultivation of digital technological capability and culturally rooted diplomatic engagement, rather than on either dimension in isolation.

### 7.2 Recommendations

1. Higher-education institutions and creative-training bodies should expand access to digital music production, distribution, and promotion training to strengthen music technology competency among students and practitioners.
2. Curriculum developers should formally integrate indigenous musical knowledge, performance practice, and documentation into higher-education creative-arts curricula, given its role as a foundation for cultural diplomacy and differentiation.
3. Cultural agencies and government bodies should expand funding and institutional support for music festivals, cultural exchange programmes, and international collaborations, which this study identifies as key channels connecting heritage to competitiveness.
4. Creative-industry associations should develop structured pathways (mentorship, grants, showcases) that help practitioners combine indigenous content with digital production and international exposure simultaneously, rather than treating these as separate initiatives.
5. Future researchers should extend this model to other Nigerian regions and other creative subsectors (film, fashion, visual arts) to test the generalizability of the technology–heritage–diplomacy–competitiveness pathway.

### 7.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

As a cross-sectional study, causal claims should be interpreted with appropriate caution despite the use of structural modelling. The sample, while multistage and reasonably diverse, was drawn primarily from educational and cultural institutions and may under-represent independent or informal creative practitioners outside these settings. Future studies could employ longitudinal designs to track how technology adoption and diplomatic engagement jointly shape competitiveness over time, and could incorporate qualitative case studies of specific festivals or cultural-exchange programmes to enrich understanding of the mediation mechanism identified here.

**Appendix 'A'**

**Research Questionnaire**

**Music Technology, Indigenous Music Heritage, and Cultural Diplomacy: Predictors of Creative Industry Competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to collect data for an academic study examining how music technology competency, indigenous music heritage, and cultural diplomacy relate to creative industry competitiveness in Southeast Nigeria. You have been selected because of your involvement in music education, cultural activities, or creative practice. Your responses are strictly for academic research purposes and will be treated with full confidentiality and anonymity. There are no right or wrong answers please respond based on your honest perception and experience. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

**Instructions***: Please tick (✓) the option that best applies to you, or fill in the blank space provided.*

**Section A: Demographic Information**

**1. Gender:**
Male ( ) Female ( )

**2. Respondent Category:**
Student ( ) Lecturer ( ) Creative-industry practitioner ( )

**3. Institution/Setting Type:**
University ( ) College of Education ( ) Polytechnic ( ) Cultural institution ( )

**4. State:**
Abia ( ) Anambra ( ) Ebonyi ( ) Enugu ( ) Imo ( )

**5. Age Range:**
18–25 ( ) 26–35 ( ) 36–45 ( ) Above 45 ( )

**6. Years of Involvement in Music/Creative Activities:**
Less than 3 years ( ) 3–6 years ( ) 7–10 years ( ) Above 10 years ( )

**7. Primary Area of Creative/Musical Involvement:**
Music performance ( ) Music production/technology ( ) Cultural/heritage studies ( ) Creative entrepreneurship ( ) Others: _____

**8. Do you use digital tools (e.g., DAWs, Streaming Platforms, Social Media) in your Music-Related Activities?**
Yes ( ) No ( )

**9. Have You Participated in any Music Festival, Cultural Exchange, Or International Collaboration?**
Yes ( ) No ( )

***For Sections B–E below, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the scale: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.***

**Section B: Music Technology Competency (MTC)**

| No. | Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I am able to use digital tools (e.g., DAWs, recording software) to produce music. | | | | | |
| 2 | I can edit and mix music tracks using digital audio technology. | | | | | |
| 3 | I effectively use digital platforms (e.g., streaming services) to distribute music. | | | | | |
| 4 | I use social media and digital channels to promote my music/creative work. | | | | | |
| 5 | I am confident adopting new music technologies as they emerge. | | | | | |
| 6 | Digital tools have improved my ability to create and share creative content. | | | | | |

**Section C: Indigenous Music Heritage (IMH)**

| No. | Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I possess strong knowledge of indigenous musical traditions from my community. | | | | | |
| 2 | I actively engage in the practice or performance of traditional music forms. | | | | | |
| 3 | I value the preservation of indigenous musical instruments, rhythms, and practices. | | | | | |
| 4 | I incorporate indigenous musical elements into contemporary creative work. | | | | | |
| 5 | I have contributed to documenting or transmitting indigenous musical knowledge. | | | | | |
| 6 | Indigenous music heritage is an important part of my cultural identity. | | | | | |

**Section D: Cultural Diplomacy Orientation (CDO)**

| No. | Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I see music as a tool for promoting cross-cultural understanding. | | | | | |
| 2 | I actively participate in cultural exchanges, festivals, or international collaborations. | | | | | |
| 3 | I use music/cultural activities to represent and project my cultural identity to others. | | | | | |
| 4 | I believe indigenous music can strengthen relationships between different cultures. | | | | | |
| 5 | I am willing to engage with international audiences or institutions through music/culture. | | | | | |
| 6 | Cultural diplomacy initiatives have expanded my creative or professional network. | | | | | |

**Section E: Creative Industry Competitiveness (CIC)**

| No. | Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | My creative work has grown in reach or recognition over the past 2–3 years. | | | | | |
| 2 | I am able to differentiate my creative products from others in the market. | | | | | |
| 3 | I can reach audiences beyond my immediate local community. | | | | | |
| 4 | I adapt my creative practice to respond to changing market or audience demands. | | | | | |
| 5 | I consider my creative work competitive within the broader creative industry. | | | | | |
| 6 | I have opportunities for collaboration, showcasing, or market expansion. | | | | | |

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