



Music and Cultural Exchange: Exploring Davido's Contributions to Borderless Music

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Abstract

This article explores the music of Davido, a Nigerian Afrobeats artist, through the lens of borderless music and cultural exchange. The concept of borderless music reflects how sound, identity, and audience engagement transcend physical and cultural boundaries. The study explores the way the sound, visual aesthetics, and collaborations of Davido, all combine to reflect a deliberate fusion of local and global influences that help in the creation of a musical identity that transcends cultural boundaries without erasing its Nigerian roots. Being a qualitative endeavour, the study employs a purposive sampling technique to select six Davido's songs - "Fall," "If," "Assurance," "Blow My Mind," "Fem," and "Holy Ground". These songs serve as case studies for understanding how borderless music functions in practice. It analyses lyrical content, sonic structure, and digital platform performance to trace how Davido navigates global music circuits. The findings reveal that Davido's success stems not only from musical innovation but also from strategic positioning within a transnational music economy shaped by digital access and audience-driven visibility. Generally, the paper argues that the music of Davido exemplifies how contemporary African artists are actively reshaping global music narratives by participating in the production of music that is both culturally grounded and globally accessible.

Introduction

The contemporary global music landscape is increasingly characterised by a borderless reach that is facilitated by digital technologies and evolving patterns of cultural consumption. Within this musical landscape, Afrobeats, which originates from West Africa, has become a significant cultural force, as it resonates with global audiences. This paper examines the roles of Afrobeats in fostering cultural exchange and the realisation of borderless music. It focuses on the contributions of Davido, a prominent Nigerian Afrobeats artist, to musical and cultural exchange across ethnic, national and geographical borders. In doing so, it examines the characteristics of Afrobeats, probes the musical hybridity and agency of Davido in cultural projection, and also examines the broader impacts of his music on the borderlessness of music.

The idea of borderlessness, as explored in this context, describes the erosion of traditional, cultural, and geographic boundaries in the production, circulation, and reception of music. This borderlessness, in music, is primarily driven by the proliferation of digital platforms that enable African artists to bypass conventional industry gatekeepers, thereby engaging directly with global audiences. As observed by Lobato (2019), the rise of digital distribution platforms has contributed immensely to the restructuring of the international media landscape, causing hierarchical disruptions within this



ecosystem. This disruption has democratised music creation, distribution, and consumption, allowing content from the Global South that had been disadvantaged, to reach transnational consumers without mediation by traditional gatekeepers. The international collaborations and hybrid sonic palette of the music of Davido are examples of this digital disruption. The strategic partnerships and the creation of new sounds are evident in how cultural products now circulate in a fluid, de-territorialised environment. Krady (2006), for instance, argued that global media flows increasingly produce cultural hybridisation or ongoing mixing, where identity and representation are co-produced through transcultural encounters. The borderlessness evident in the music of Davido not only enhances cultural exchange but also complicates traditional narratives of cultural imperialism and authenticity. This, therefore, positions Afrobeats as a dynamic participant in the negotiation of global modernity, especially concerning music.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to investigate the impact of Davido's music on the globalisation of Afrobeats. The decision to use a case study was guided by the need to look closely at the career of an artist whose work is rooted in the Nigerian musical culture, but reaches far beyond it, and transcends the borders of Africa. The analysis focuses on six purposively selected Davido's songs that convey cultural meaning and have significant international visibility - "Fall," "If," "Assurance," "Holy Ground," "Fem," and "Blow My Mind". These songs were analysed for their sound, lyrics and themes. Music videos, publicly accessible interviews, and public performances are included to understand how Davido presents himself as an artist at the crossroads of local identity and global sound. To support the analysis, existing literature on Afrobeats, cultural hybridity, and African popular music is employed to connect Davido's musical, visual, and strategic choices with wider conversations about global music exchange.

Theorising Borderless Music

Borderlessness, in music, reflects the growing transnational flow of sound, identity, and audience engagement, powered by the digital era. It encompasses the global popularity of specific genres and artists, and the breakdown of rigid geographical and cultural boundaries in the creation, distribution, and reception of music. It emphasises how artists root their music in local content, while maintaining resonance with the global soundscape. Borderlessness is often shaped by digital platforms that facilitate instantaneous and far-reaching circulation of content, especially as traditional middlemen are bypassed by democratisation (Stokes, 2004; Lobato, 2019). This framework provides an essential insight for understanding the musical career of Davido, especially given that his work exemplifies the way Nigerian artists strategically navigate and reshape the global musical landscape through a blend of indigenous sonic identities with global pop idioms. The strategies that culminate in the realisation of borderlessness in music include multilingual lyricism, which some refer to as code-mixing, international collaborations, and visual storytelling through music videos. All of these are evident in the music of Davido, even as he positions himself as a cultural intermediary who speaks to the Nigerian and global soundscape, simultaneously.

Within the context of this study, borderless music helps to understand the music of Davido as a deliberate project in cultural mobility, as well as one that embraces the Nigerian roots drawn from his Nigerian musical culture and global reach. His use of Yoruba, pidgin, and English lyrics, his partnerships with American and Caribbean artists, and his visibility on platforms like Spotify and YouTube all demonstrate the mechanics of borderless music. All of these factors enable him to bypass traditional gatekeeping structures of the global soundscape, as he participates in a dynamic, platform-driven model of music exchange where popularity is co-determined by audience reception,



algorithmic exposure, and cultural relatability. The theory of borderless music further invites attention to how identity is performed and reimagined in music that crosses borders without losing cultural specificity. Although there is the possibility of global recognition posing a threat to authenticity, this framework encourages viewing artists like Davido as curators of hybrid sounds that reflect the complexities of contemporary African life. In this context, borderless music is not just a stylistic label—it is an epistemological lens that helps us understand the strategic ways African artists engage with global cultural flows while maintaining artistic autonomy and cultural rootedness.

Afrobeats: A Global Sound Facilitating Cultural Exchange

This section examines Afrobeats as a global sound, highlighting its role in facilitating cultural exchange. It defines Afrobeats in terms of its sonic identity, evolution, nomenclature, and its global rise.

Afrobeats: Sonic Identity, Evolution, and Nomenclature

To aid a robust understanding of the significant role of the music of Davido in the development of borderless music, it is essential first to situate his work within the broader context of Afrobeats. Emerging in Nigeria during the 1960s and 1970s, the genre is linked to the Afrobeat of Fela, who is widely known to have pioneered it. It represents a distinct musical and cultural phenomenon, mainly as it served as a potent fusion of indigenous Nigerian styles such as Fuji and highlife, with American jazz and funk influences (Okeibunor & Aniehie, 2025). As pioneered by Fela, the genre was often characterised by defining identities like large ensembles, extended instrumental improvisations, and complex jazz-infused rhythms on the one hand. On the other hand, it was characterised by a strong socio-political commentary, given Fela Kuti's famous usage of his music as a "weapon" against injustice and governmental corruption (Okeibunor & Aniehie, 2025; Yusif, 2024; Asenye & Mandor, 2023).

In contrast to the music of Fela Kuti, Afrobeats (often with an 's') as an umbrella term gained prominence in the 2000s and 2010s. It describes a diverse array of popular music styles that emanated primarily from West Africa, particularly Nigeria and Ghana. It also emanates from the diaspora, especially in the UK, as a result of human mobility and migration. In contrast to the Afrobeat of Fela, the contemporary idea of Afrobeats integrates genres like hiplife, jùjú, highlife, and azonto, among others, forming a fusion of musical styles (Okeibunor & Aniehie, 2025; Yusif, 2024; Asenye & Mandor, 2023). In terms of sound quality and characteristics, Afrobeats is noted for its prominent, often digitally produced drum rhythms, which frequently incorporate rhythmic motifs with deep roots in West African and African diasporic musical traditions (Okeibunor & Aniehie, 2025). Vocally, it is common to hear West African-accented English, Pidgin English, and local languages like Yoruba and Igbo, interwoven in Afropop, creating a linguistic tapestry that is both locally authentic and internationally accessible (Asenye & Mandor, 2023). The genre draws from a wide range of influences, such as British house music, hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, and various African musical forms like Highlife and Juju. According to Asenye and Mandor (2023), this fusion results in a sound that is inherently hybrid and adaptable.

The term "Afrobeats" is indicative of its global journey. The popularisation of the term came as a convenient label to package the diverse West African sounds for listeners who might be unfamiliar with the uniqueness of each subgenre. It is important to note that the globalised Afrobeat of Fela influences the use of the term "Afrobeats" to describe the genre. This external categorisation, while instrumental in facilitating the entry of the music into international markets, has also been critiqued for potentially oversimplifying a complex musical landscape. At times, this categorisation leads to inaccurate labelling of various African popular music genres under a single banner by Western media



and audiences (Okeibunor & Aniehie, 2025; Asenye & Mandor, 2023). This reflects a broader dynamic in global cultural exchange where Western commercial and media interests can significantly influence the framing and marketing of cultural products from the Global South. Since such processes can obscure local nuances or the agency of artists in self-definition, the risk may not be something to worry about for artists, if the genre continues to gain influence on the global stage and results in more revenues for them.

A more significant distinction between Fela's Afrobeats and contemporary Afrobeat is the ideological difference evident in the thematic content. While the Afrobeat of Fela Kuti was renowned for its political activism, scholars like Yusuf (2024) and Asenye and Mandor (2023) have noted the focus of contemporary Afrobeats on themes like lifestyle, celebration, love, money, and aspiration, often avoiding direct political critique. This thematic shift away from the characteristic feature of the music of Fela can be interpreted in two ways. One, it is an evolution in artistic priorities. Second, it is a strategic adaptation to the demands of the global music market, where apolitical or universally relatable themes tend to achieve broader international appeal and commercial viability. This adaptation, while commercially promising, may have negative implications for the nature of cultural exchange, as it portrays Africans as being less concerned about socio-political issues affecting them. This is due to its presentation of a facet of contemporary African culture that is often more focused on entertainment and less on overt socio-political engagement than its Afrobeat predecessor was.

The Global Ascent of Afrobeats as a Cultural Phenomenon

Afrobeats, as a music genre, has seen an extraordinary rise on the global stage in recent times, rising from the late 2010s. Within a few years, what began as a cultural sound from West African urban centres has gained widespread recognition across Europe, the Americas, and beyond, within a few years. Available evidence points to the reality of this ascent. For instance, Spotify, in a 2023 release, reported that there was a 550% increase in Afrobeats streams between 2017 and 2022. Within this period, Afrobeats had billions of cumulative streams across various platforms (Spotify, 2023). Through this significant growth, Afrobeats has become widely acknowledged as one of the most important cultural exports from Africa to the world. Apart from attaining popularity, the genre is increasingly recognised to be a potent vehicle for cultural diplomacy and the projection of soft power, especially as it has its origin in the Global South, which is considered disadvantaged in global power relations. Emphasising the role of Afrobeats in shaping global cultural trends, Ndineyi (2024) reveals how Afrobeats contributes to the rediscovery of African pride through its promotion of cross-cultural understanding. Institutional recognition has also increased due to the expanding global presence of Afrobeats, and this has resulted in the perception of Africa as a dynamic cultural contributor to the worldwide soundscape. This has led to the introduction of a dedicated African music category at the Grammy Awards. As noted by Enos (2023), the establishment of this award signals the established presence of Afrobeats within the global music landscape.

It is essential to mention that the global trajectory of Afrobeats is driven by the digital revolution, through the rise of platforms like Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. These digital platforms recalibrate the landscape of music distribution and discovery (Sofola, 2025; Behari-Leak, 2020; Nnanyelugo et al., 2019). They have democratised access to musical content that allows artists to connect directly with global audiences. This way, they also bypass traditional industry gatekeepers. The borderless nature of these platforms means that Afrobeats can be directly encountered and consumed by listeners worldwide. In addition, algorithmic recommendations play essential roles in prioritising user preference over geographical origin (Behari-Leak, 2020). This digital ecosystem has, therefore, played a significant role in the proliferation of Afrobeats and has enabled artists, especially



those from Nigeria and Ghana, to achieve mainstream success on an unprecedented scale. The use of Afrobeats songs as basis for solo instrumental performances and recordings by local (Owoaje & Sofola, 2019) and international instrumental solo artists like Brendan Ross, which are available on streaming platforms, also contributes to the genre's global success. As mentioned earlier, it should be noted that this process involves a tension between maintaining cultural authenticity and the commercial pressure of catering to diverse international markets. This implies a continuous negotiation as Afrobeats artists navigate this terrain for their sound and image – an essential consideration in the understanding of the works of Davido.

A profile of Davido

Professionally known as Davido, David Adedeji Adeleke was born on November 21, 1992, in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a Nigerian songwriter, singer, and producer who, although born in Atlanta, was raised in the vibrant atmosphere of Lagos. His musical career, which began from his membership of KB International and later metamorphosed into his rise as a solo artist, makes him stand out as a central figure in the global popularisation of Afrobeats. He has collaborated with internationally recognised artists like Nicki Minaj, Tiwa Savage, Lil Baby, and Nas. Being an innovative artist, Davido blends genres like highlife, amapiano, and dancehall with Afrobeat, facilitating cultural exchange through music (Platinumlist, 2023). He has to his credit five studio albums – *Omo Baba Olowo* (2012), *A Good Time* (2019), *A Better Time* (2020), *Timeless* (2023), and *Five* (2025). He also has an Extended Play – *Son of Mercy* (2016), alongside over 100 singles, which include collaborations and lead tracks. To concretise his musical profile, Davido studied music at Babcock University, Ilishan, Nigeria, graduating in July 2015 as a member of the inaugural class of one person. As an entrepreneur, Davido has to his credit a record label by the name Davido Music Worldwide. His career exemplifies how an artist can leverage personal background, musical innovation, strategic collaborations, and global platforms to contribute to the development of borderless music. This robust musical voyage contributes to a broad understanding of the influence of Yoruba musical heritage on the musical career of Davido.

Musical Hybridity and Cultural Fusion in the works of Davido

The lived experiences of Davido have immensely contributed to his musical journey. For someone who was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States, and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, he embodies a bicultural identity. This dual heritage has contributed to his capacity for creating cultural fusion. Having experienced and navigated both Western and Nigerian cultural environments from a young age contributes to his ability to intuitively synthesise diverse musical heritage that is more organic than being a mere commercial strategy. This has culminated in his musical fusion, which is characterised by a blend of Afrobeats with hip-hop, R&B, pop, and dancehall, all underpinned by distinctly Nigerian rhythms and melodic sensibilities (Fuller-Shafer, 2024; Kameir, 2023; Nnanyelugo et al., 2019). Davido is known to frequently incorporate Nigerian Pidgin English and the Yoruba language into his lyrics. This is while also integrating elements of Igbo culture, such as language and other cultural artefacts, in his music videos. All of these make his music recognisably Nigerian, yet accessible to a global audience (Adewale, 2024). This approach is emphasised by his longtime collaborator and producer, Shizzi (Oluwaseyi Akorede), who emphasised Davido's creative strategies in an interview with Rawiya Kameir of Damilare's Blog. According to him, "I take from here, from South Africa, from America. I like to take sounds from different places and bring them together, to be able to sell to people all over the world" (Kameir, 2023).

Several of Davido's key works serve as compelling case studies of his contribution to globalising Afrobeats through musical hybridity. An analysis of his most impactful songs reveals how universal themes are interwoven with specific Nigerian cultural narratives, creating a product that resonates



both locally and internationally. For instance, his 2017 single "Fall" became a global anthem and a clear example of Davido's international appeal, after it became the longest-charting Nigerian song in Billboard history. This significant milestone is a demonstration of its sustained success outside of Africa (Durosomo, 2019). The vibrant music video of the song was also pivotal to its sustained success. It presents a modern, cosmopolitan vision of Nigeria that challenged stereotypical representations of the African continent. Its combination of accessible lyrics and infectious rhythms artistically captured the essence of Afrobeats for a worldwide audience. Its rhythmic framework, built on the syncopated highlife timeline, which is also characteristic of Afrobeats as shown below, combined with its use of highlife guitar patterns and a codemix of English and Nigerian pidgin, constitutes a fusion of indigenous Nigerian musical character with global genres like R&B and Dancehall in its vocalisation and overall outlook.



Syncopated highlife timeline as evident in Davido's "Fall"

Additionally, Davido's single "If" (2017) explores romantic commitment, as he employs a simple melodic chorus. Despite its simplicity, however, its lyrical content has prompted deeper critical analysis. The song's prominent line, "30 billion for the account" (stemming from the description of Davido's fan base as 30 BG), has been interpreted to frame love as being dependent on a man's financial standing (Nnanyelugo et al., 2019). According to this perspective, the song reflects evolving societal values in contemporary Nigeria, where material wealth is increasingly linked to romantic relationships. However, this is not limited to Davido and the Nigerian context. It is rather a common feature of Afropop and its related genres like Hip-hop and Dancehall, indicating that Davido employed the theme to align with the thematic content of popular related global styles, in what looks like a clarification of his stance in "If", Davido's "Assurance" (2018) evolved beyond a musical track, as it became a major cultural event in Nigeria. It was dedicated to his then-partner, with its message powerfully amplifying reward for commitment. Davido demonstrated this as he gifted his partner a Porsche car. This moment captured widespread media and public attention and contributed to concretising the song's narrative. Although the interpretations of "30 billion for the account" in his song "If" had been criticised for framing love as being dependent on a man's financial standing, "Assurance" came in as clarity, implying gratification for loyalty, especially in romantic relationships. This event blurs the lines between Davido's personal life and his music, emphasising how real-life experiences of an artist can contribute to their musical output. Sofola (2025; 2023) has also explored this phenomenon as a valid creative device in contemporary African art music composition, particularly in respect of the vocal compositions of Seun Owoaje, exploring how real-life experiences can become a concrete creative device.

Apart from these song tracks, several of Davido's albums also demonstrate his devotion to cultural fusion. As an example, his 2019 album - *A Good Time*, was a collaboration with some of the biggest names in the global music industry, such as Chris Brown, Summer Walker, Gunna and Popcaan. The album reinforces the borderlessness of music as it combines Afrobeats with world pop and R&B. His more recent album, *Timeless*, which came out in 2023, followed this trend, as it blends the South African Amapiano sound with dancehall and the Nigerian highlife. This fusion invokes a cross-cultural musical identity that speaks to the global soundscape. Through these works, the music of Davido acts as a site for cultural exchange, where universal desires for love and success are



communicated through a distinct Nigerian lens, allowing global audiences to connect with overarching emotions while engaging with specific cultural expressions.

Davido's International Collaborations as Bridges for Cultural Exchange

International collaborations are a cornerstone of Afrobeats' global strategy, and Davido has adeptly utilised such partnerships to expand his reach and foster cross-cultural musical dialogues (Serres, 2025; Behari-Leak, 2020; Nnanyelugo et al., 2019). These collaborations play significant roles. Apart from helping to introduce artists to new fanbases and markets, they also result in the creation of innovative hybrid sounds that blend diverse musical traditions. These partnerships contribute to the realisation of borderless music, which is characteristic of the music of Davido.

Like several other Afrobeats artists, Davido's discography is replete with collaborations that feature artists from across the globe. Notable examples of such international features include "Blow My Mind", which features American R&B star Chris Brown, "Holy Ground", which features Nicki Minaj, "Fans Mi", featuring Meek Mill, and "Risky", featuring Jamaican dancehall artist Popcaan. Artists usually use these partnerships to tap into different regional markets and musical sensibilities strategically. For instance, Davido's collaboration "Blow My Mind" was lauded for creating a unique sound through its blend of Nigerian beats with American R&B, appealing to listeners from both parts of the world. Such collaborations in the music industry are usually mutually beneficial to collaborating artists, as they offer them more exposure. This has contributed immensely to the global influence of Afrobeats, expanding its global fanbase (Behari-Leak, 2020). More significantly, these collaborations function as active intercultural dialogues. The resulting musical product is frequently a hybrid style that transcends the individual styles of the artists involved in the collaboration. This effectively results in a co-created borderless sound.

However, the selection of international collaborators and the sonic balance within these tracks are crucial. They can significantly influence the trajectory and global perception of Afrobeats, carrying both the potential for exciting, innovative fusions and the risk of cultural dilution if not carefully managed (Behari-Leak, 2020; Nnanyelugo et al., 2019). There is an ongoing consideration within the industry and among critics about whether such collaborations might sometimes impose Western stylistic preferences that could overshadow indigenous sounds in the pursuit of marketability and award-winning over undiluted authenticity (Nnanyelugo et al., 2019). It is important to note that each of these collaborations represents a point of negotiation that can either reinforce the distinctiveness of Afrobeats within a global framework or steer it towards a more generic "global pop" sound, often referred to as "world music". This can potentially impact its long-term cultural identity.

Davido's Agency in Constructing and Projecting 'Nigerianness' Globally

In addition to his musical output, Davido has been able to exercise a high degree of agency in the construction and representation of current conceptions of "Nigerianness" in the international arena. Alongside other top Afrobeats musicians, he has been instrumental in dispelling the negative stereotypes about Africa that have long been reinforced in Western media narratives (Serres, 2025). Rather than the reductive images that highlight poverty, conflict, or disease, Afrobeats artists tend to depict the themes of prosperity, creativity, vitality, resilience, peace, self-reliance, and modernity, thus glorifying the pride and cultural richness of Africa. Davido, like other Afropop artists, is commonly considered a cultural ambassador of Nigeria, particularly due to the success of his music on an international scale. His image in society also helps in redefining the way Nigeria and, by extension, Africa is viewed in the world. This is especially true of globalised, cosmopolitan places such as Dubai, where Afrobeats has taken root in luxury resorts and entertainment establishments, providing a sharp contrast to pathologising images of the African continent. He actively participates in the reformation



of cultural products, which contribute to reshaping global narratives and claiming a stake in global modernity. His actions in such spaces, like taking younger Nigerian artists on shopping sprees in Dubai, are reported in the media as lessons in aspirational success, contributing to an image of Nigerian identity that is globally mobile and successful (Serres, 2025).

One of the tools that Davido uses in his agency as a borderless musician is the skilful utilisation of international platforms. He has a massive audience on social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter/X, and communicates directly with his fans worldwide, shares and promotes his music, and shapes his image through these engagements (Nnanyelugo et al., 2019; Serres, 2025). His sold-out concert at the O2 arena in London and his performance at festivals like Coachella are high-profile concerts at international venues that further increase his reach and the visibility of the Nigerian musical culture. This considerable social media capital grants him a degree of autonomy in shaping his narrative, allowing for a more direct and arguably more authentic form of cultural representation. This way, he can avoid the traditional media gatekeepers who might have contributed to the stereotypes in the past. This direct interaction is characteristic of modern digital celebrity and an effective instrument of cultural exchange.

The global ascent of Afrobeats, with Davido as one of its most prominent ambassadors, has had tangible impacts on cultural exchange, the perception of African creativity, and even, at times, socio-political discourse. While contemporary Afrobeats is generally characterised as less overtly political than Fela Kuti's Afrobeat, the genre and its leading figures can still acquire significant socio-political resonance, as powerfully demonstrated by Davido's single "FEM" during Nigeria's EndSARS protests in 2020, in which it functioned as a protest tool, especially in the demonstration of deviance by protesters (Owoaje & Sofola, 2021).

The onomatopoeia "FEM", which colloquially translates to shut up or keep quiet in the Nigerian context, was initially interpreted by most people as a diss track directed towards one of Davido's musical opponents. The song was, however, spontaneously and organically repurposed by protesters during the widespread EndSARS protests police brutality in Nigeria, notably as used to silence politicians, including an incident where it was played loudly when the Lagos State Governor tried to address protesters, who then sang along assertively. This episode is a vivid example of how powerful the social agency of music can be and how the audience can actively participate in the co-creation of meaning, no matter what the original meaning of the music was. The shift of the meaning of "FEM" as a personal conflict to a political statement was caused by the protesters and the pressing socio-political situation, rather than by the initial artistic vision of Davido.

The phenomenon of the FEM demonstrates that even music, which is not created as a protest material, can be transformed into an effective symbol of the socio-political movements led by the youth, because of the re-use of the musical content. As a youth icon, Davido and his music became a means of protest and unity, particularly because he was also a participant in the protest. This implies that the cultural impact of Afrobeats is not limited to entertainment but can, in certain conditions, trigger or express political feeling, especially when it touches on the complaints and desires of its primary audience. In this way, the role of Afrobeats in cultural exchange may, in some cases, include the exchange of political ideas and the expression of social criticism, which is triggered by the politically active youth audience and received by borderless audiences. Lastly, it is important to mention, that Afrobeats, due to its global success, is influencing other Nigerian genres like Fuji, Apala and contemporary gospel music, as they tend to appeal to the young listener demography whose preference for Afrobeats has become clear as day. The fuji music of Ajibola Pasuma, Adewale Ayuba and Wasiu Ayinde have



witnessed Afrobeats' influence. More recently, Wasiu Ayinde has collaborated with female Afrobeats artists to create new sounds that align with the musical taste of young people (Owoaje & Sofola, 2025).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolution of Afrobeats, which started from the revolutionary music of Fela Kuti to becoming an international phenomenon, has been quite impressive. As one of the main contributors to this evolution, Davido embodies the modern Afrobeats artist by incorporating diverse musical influences, embracing international collaborations, and presenting a contemporary image of Nigerian culture and, by extension, Africa, to the world. His music and image have helped to break down old stereotypes and establish a new story of African creativity, achievement and international movement. The ability of Afrobeats to cross boundaries, promote cross-cultural communication and even provoke socio-political discourse, as was the case with the unforeseen popularity of FEM, highlights its significance in the modern world. The work of Davido is not only musical, but a cultural change, an essential exchange that is defining worldviews and creating the bonds between people all over the world.

Considering the cultural and economic importance of Afrobeats as demonstrated by the efforts of Davido, policymakers and cultural institutions in Nigeria and the rest of Africa should endeavour to make more systematic investments in the creative industries. Governmental and private sector collaboration should also prioritise the development of music infrastructure in Nigeria, including copyright enforcement mechanisms, indigenised digital distribution platforms, and artist development programs. In addition, the inclusion of Afrobeats and other indigenous genres in educational curricula would help to foster early appreciation for cultural heritage and inspire future creators. On the international scale, cultural diplomacy policies must actively utilise successful Afrobeats artists as representatives of African soft power. Further cultural exchange and innovation can be achieved by institutional support in terms of grants, exchange programs, and international showcases. Given the strategic role of Afrobeats in rebranding Africa to the world, a policy-oriented approach will help to ensure that the cultural, social, and economic potential of the genre is fully utilised for both national development and transnational communication.

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