

**MUSIC AS SOCIAL COMMENTARY: A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF EEDRIS
ABDUKAREEM AND FALZ SONGS.**

BY

Victory Omosigho OGIEVA (Miss)

ART2100289

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

OCTOBER, 2025

**MUSIC AS SOCIAL COMMENTARY: A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF EEDRIS
ABDUKAREEM AND FALZ SONGS.**

BY

Victory Omosigho OGIEVA (Miss)

ART2100289

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
LITERATURE, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY AS A
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF B.A
DEGREE IN ARTS**

OCTOBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project titled: MUSIC AS SOCIAL COMMENTARY: A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF EEDRIS ABDUKAREEM AND FALZ SONGS, was carried out by Victory Omosigho OGIEVA (Miss) of the Department of English and Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Edo state, with Matriculation number ART2100289.

Kalu-Bazuaye, Ugonma U (Mrs)

(Project Supervisor)

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty for His grace and strength, and to my family for their love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God Almighty for His grace, wisdom, and strength throughout the course of this research. My heartfelt appreciation goes to Mrs. Kalu-Bazuaye Ugonma U, my supervisor, for her guidance during this study. I owe special thanks to Mrs. Florence Osaguona Okpalaku, whose encouragement, support, and dedication greatly influenced the successful completion of this work. I am deeply grateful to my parents, Mr. Osaro Ogieva and Mrs. Rita Ogieva, for their love, prayers, and unwavering support. I also appreciate all the lecturers in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, for their academic contributions, and my friends for their understanding and motivation throughout this journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	i
CERTIFICATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Purpose of Study	1
1.2 Scope of Study	1
1.3 Methodology	1
1.4 Theoretical Background	2
1.5 Review of Related Scholarship/Justification of Study	5
1.6 Justification of Study	8
1.7 Thesis Statement	9
 CHAPTER TWO: POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND IRRESPONSIBILITY	
2.0 Introduction	10
2.1 Analysis	11
 CHAPTER THREE: MORAL DEGENERATION	
3.0 Introduction	33
3.1 Analysis	33
 CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION	
Works Cited	67

ABSTRACT

Music in Nigeria has long served as more than entertainment, it functions as a vehicle for resistance, awareness, and social reflection. This study explores how Nigerian Musicians as Eedris Abudakareem and Falz use their music as platforms for social commentary. Through a literary analysis of selected songs: Abdukareem's "Country Hard", "Tell Ur Papa", "Jaja jaga" by , and Falz " E no finish " , "Talk" "Wehdone Sir", and "This Is Nigeria" . The research investigates how these critique issues such as corruption, bad governance, poverty, inequality and youth disillusionment .This study situates Nigerian popular music within the broader framework of literature and cultural resistance, highlighting its role in shaping public consciousness and challenging societal norms.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Nigerian popular music as a form of social commentary, using a literary lens to analyze how Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz who are popular activist articulate literary social critique in their music. The study seeks to demonstrate how music functions not only as an entertainment purpose but also as a medium of socio-political engagement and resistance.

1.2 Scope of Study

This study is limited to a literary analysis of ten songs: Eedris Abdulkareem's "Jaja Jaja" "Emilokan" "Tell Ur Papa", "Country Hard", "Mr Lecturer" and Falz "E No Finish", "Confirm" "Talk", "Wehdone Sir" "This Is Nigeria". These songs were selected based on their overt socio-political content and popularity within Nigeria pop culture. This study focuses on lyrical themes, literary devices, and socio-political context excluding music commercialization.

1.3 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, specifically literary textual analysis, to examine how Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz employ music as a form of social commentary within the context of Nigeria popular culture. Since the focus of the research is on interpreting the lyrical content of selected songs as literary texts, a qualitative approach is

most appropriate, as it allows for an in depth exploration of language themes, and stylistics elements that reflect social realities without relying on numerical data. The primary data for this study consists of selected songs of two popular artist, Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz . The lyrics of these selected songs serve as the core text for analysis. The study engages in line by line examination of the lyrics to identify recurring themes such as corruption, bad governance, and social injustice. Special attention is paid to the literary use of language.

The qualitative methodology is suitable for this study as it pays attention to close reading of texts .This method was used to carry out a systematic and organized analysis of how music contributes to public discourse in Nigeria.

1.4 Theoretical Background

This study adopts New Formalism as its theoretical framework. New Formalism is a contemporary literary theory that emphasizes the form, structure, and aesthetic strategies of a text, while remaining sensitive to its historical and ideological contexts. It challenges the binary thinking that has often separated aesthetics from politics, or close reading from cultural analysis.

New Formalism began to re-emerge in the late 1980s and 1990s as a reaction to the dominance of New Historicism, post structuralism, and cultural studies in literary criticism. Although it draws on earlier approaches such as Russian Formalism and New Criticism, New Formalism repositions form as a dynamic site of meaning-making, deeply shaped by historical and cultural pressures. New Formalism introduced a positive critical approach that

seeks to relate the formal structures of literature to its historical, political, and social contexts. This stands in contrast to earlier formalist theories, which viewed the integrity of a literary work's form as a defense against ideology and the monotony of everyday experience. Some new formalists maintain that an awareness of literary form is essential to critical thought. The movement's first major advocate was Susan J. [Haphram 128].

The theory has been significantly advanced by scholars such as Susan Wolfson, Marjorie Levinson, Heather Dubrow, Verena Theile, and Linda Tredennick. While these scholars did not originate the movement, their worksparticularly in the volume *New Formalisms and Literary Theory* have helped define and expand New Formalism as a coherent and relevant critical method for the 21st century.

As Heather Dubrow notes in the Foreword to that volume, New Formalism should not be seen as merely a return to the past, but as a process of "sifting and winnowing" prior traditions to build meaningful bridges between form and ideology (Dubrow xv). Similarly, Verena Theile affirms that New Formalism "recognizes the form literature has taken and the aesthetics it has appropriated," reading these not in isolation but in relation to their cultural and political moments (Theile 8).

The key principles of New Formalism revolve around a renewed appreciation for literary form and its connection to meaning and ideology. At its core is close reading, which emphasizes detailed analysis of a text's diction, metaphor, syntax, rhythm, and structure. New Formalists assert that form is not neutral or apolitical; rather, it serves as a site where

ideological meanings are constructed and reflected. The approach also advocates for an integration of aesthetic and cultural inquiry, resisting rigid divisions between form and context. In this way, it allows critics to appreciate the artistry of texts while still engaging with their cultural significance. Additionally, New Formalism underscores attention to craft and technique, recognizing the deliberate strategies authors use to shape meaning. Finally, the theory has strong pedagogical relevance, as many of its proponents argue for the importance of teaching literature through formal analysis in academic settings, bridging scholarship and classroom practice.

This hybrid approach enables a reading of literature that is both aesthetically attentive and politically informed, resisting the extremes of purely formalist or purely historicist methodologies.

By applying New Formalism, the study will:

Conduct close readings of selected song lyrics, focusing on how form and style construct meaning. Explore how the structure and language of these lyrics reflect or resist broader cultural and political realities. Demonstrate that Nigerian music lyrics are not just forms of entertainment, but crafted literary texts engaged in meaningful social commentary. In this way, the study uses New Formalism to bridge literary analysis and socio-political critique.

However, scholars like Dubrow argue that New Formalism's strength lies in its ability to reengage with the craft of literature without ignoring its cultural work. She insists that the

movement avoids the "Oedipal murders" of previous methods by carefully "extricating and extracting" useful tools from earlier criticism (Dubrow xv). Theile and Tredennick also show that formalist analysis can coexist with social justice-oriented pedagogy and theory. This study will apply New Formalism by: Analyzing the formal devices such as rhythm, rhyme, tone, metaphor, and irony in the selected lyrics. Investigating how these devices shape the meaning and reception of the songs. Connecting the formal analysis to the social and political themes in Abdulkareem's and Falz's work. Emphasizing how each artist uses form not only to entertain but to provoke, criticize, and educate.

1.5 Review of Related Scholarship/Justification of Study

Review of Related Literature

In *A History of African Popular Culture*, Karin Barber argues that African popular culture arises from the lived experiences of ordinary people traders, farmers, and the unemployed and reflects their struggles and resilience. She emphasizes that cultural forms such as songs, jokes, and performances are shaped by and respond to historical events. Barber challenges reductive media portrayals of Africa, foregrounding the "inventiveness and creativity" of people navigating everyday life. Her insistence that popular genres serve as interpretations of social realities "from within and from below" (Barber 1-3) validates the analysis of Nigerian music as a serious site of social critique and resistance.

Asenye traces the development of Nigerian pop music from the 1960s cultural renaissance following independence to the contemporary global success of "Naija music." Artists like

Fela Kuti, King Sunny Ade, and Ebenezer Obey laid the foundations by blending traditional sounds with Western influences. The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a new fusion of genres hip hop, R&B, dancehall culminating in today's Nigerian pop, which expresses both local and global identities (Asenye 42). This historical evolution highlights the role of music in reflecting social change and responding to cultural shifts.

Nwokolo supports this trajectory by noting how post-independence African bandleaders merged indigenous folk tunes with Western styles, leading to the emergence of African popular music in the 1960s. He credits this blend as central to African musical nationalism and international appeal (Nwokolo 54). These views contextualize Nigerian popular music as a hybrid genre with deep cultural and historical roots.

Anyekwelu adds that Nigerian popular music is not merely for entertainment; it serves as a medium for social commentary, education, and political reflection. By incorporating English, indigenous languages, and Pidgin, Nigerian artists reach a grassroots audience and address pressing national issues (Anyekwelu 300). This multilingual strategy aligns with how musicians like Falz use language as a tool for mass engagement and critique.

Kotarba and Vannini approach popular music through a sociological lens, arguing that music reflects and shapes social life. Drawing from symbolic interactionism, they assert that people use music to perform identities and construct meaning (Kotarba and Vannini 2–3). Their method, which they term “ethnographic tourism,” involves analyzing familiar musical practices as though they were foreign, encouraging deeper sociological inspection (xv). They

further argue that popular music interacts with major institutions such as family, religion, and politics, making it a valuable resource for understanding societal dynamics (5–6). This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to this study’s focus on Nigerian hip hop as social commentary. Kotarba and Vannini’s insights justify treating songs by artists like Falz and Eedris Abdulkareem as cultural texts engaged in broader conversations about power, identity, and resistance .

Egere explores how music, while primarily an entertainment tool, has consistently served as a medium for protesting societal injustice. Citing examples such as Kendrick Lamar’s *Alright* and jazz music’s historical role in African American resistance, Egere argues that music functions as an advocacy tool. Nigerian artists, similarly, have used their platforms not just to protest societal ills but also to sensitize the masses on civic responsibility and governance (Egere 201). This perspective positions musicians as cultural activists, echoing the work of Abdulkareem and Falz.

Layefa et al. provide a more cautionary view, observing that the adoption of African-American hip hop styles has sometimes led to a “bastardization” of youth lifestyles in Nigeria. According to them, the lyrical content of many popular songs glorifies anti-social behavior, including rape, drug use, and violence (Layefa et al. 38). While this critique is valid, it underscores the importance of examining those artists who resist this trend using music to challenge rather than reproduce social decay.

Bamigbade's linguistic study of Falz's *This Is Nigeria* reveals that the artist's deliberate use of code-mixing and everyday speech is a strategic choice to enhance audience connection. Falz avoids technical legal jargon, despite being a lawyer, and instead uses Pidgin and accessible language to address issues like corruption, religious hypocrisy, and social inequality (Bamigbade 8). This linguistic sensitivity reflects a broader communicative strategy aimed at reaching a mass audience across class and educational lines.

Ebele also argues that popular music, being commercially driven, often prioritizes themes that attract attention even when they are obscene or controversial. However, when handled responsibly, these themes can become vehicles for reflecting on societal decay (Ebele 60). The challenge, then, lies in balancing commercial success with social responsibility.

1.6 Justification of Study

While existing scholarship affirms the role of African popular music as a vehicle for cultural expression and resistance, certain gaps remain. First, most studies either focus on the historical evolution or the commercial influence of Nigerian music but offer limited close readings of specific song lyrics as literary texts—especially within the hip hop genre. Additionally, although theorists like Barber acknowledge the socio-political potential of popular culture, their discussions remain largely abstract and not applied to concrete Nigerian examples like Falz and Eedris Abdulkareem.

There is also a notable gap in how language use, particularly Pidgin and code-switching, functions as a rhetorical strategy for political engagement and mass mobilization. While

Bamigbade touches on this, few studies deeply analyze how linguistic choices shape message delivery and audiences reach in Nigerian protest music.

This study seeks to bridge these gaps by conducting a literary analysis of selected songs by Falz and Eedris Abdulkareem, treating their lyrics as texts that offer profound insight into contemporary Nigerian society. By applying theories from popular culture and sociolinguistics, the research contributes new knowledge on how Nigerian artists use music not only to entertain but also to critique, mobilize, and educate.

1.7 Thesis Statement

This study demonstrates that social commentary is portrayed in Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz songs through their critique of political corruption and moral degeneration.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND IRRESPONSIBILITY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines how political corruption and irresponsibility are represented in the songs of Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz. Both artists highlight the failures of Nigerian leaders, misuse of public office, and the impact of corruption on the nation.

Afrobeat, pioneered in the late 1960s by Fela Anikulapo Kuti, provides the background to their style of music. Fela fused highlife, jazz, funk, and African rhythms to create a genre that reflected the Nigerian experience and exposed issues of governance and accountability. His legacy influenced later musicians, including Eedris and Falz, who extend his tradition of critiquing irresponsible leadership.

A notable feature of Afrobeat and Nigerian popular music is the use of Nigerian Pidgin , often mixed with Standard English and indigenous languages. This linguistic blend makes the message accessible across ethnic and social boundaries. Both Eedris and Falz use this strategy effectively, ensuring their lyrics connect with everyday realities while addressing political corruption.

Eedris Abdulkareem, a pioneering figure in Nigerian hip-hop, rose to prominence in the early 2000s with his controversial hit “Jaga Jaga”, which condemned the decay caused by corruption in Nigeria. Known for his blunt and confrontational style, he has remained one of the most outspoken artists against irresponsible leadership.

Falz (Folarin Falana), a younger contemporary artist, is both a lawyer and musician. Emerging in the 2010s, he has become known for blending humor, satire, and social critique in his songs. In *E No Finish*, he reflects on the unending cycle of corruption and irresponsibility in governance, positioning himself as a modern voice continuing the Afrobeat tradition of political critique.

Together, the works of Eedris and Falz provide an incite into the persistent problem of political corruption and irresponsibility in Nigeria.

2.1 Analysis

DATA ONE: Analysis of “*Jaga Jaga*” by Eedris Abdulkareem

“*Jaga Jaga*” is one of the most iconic Nigerian protest songs, released in 2004 by Eedris Abdulkareem. The phrase “*jaga jaga*” is a Nigerian Pidgin expression meaning “in a state of chaos or disorder.” In the song, Eedris paints a vivid picture of Nigeria’s socio-political and economic decay, highlighting issues such as corruption, poverty, insecurity, unemployment, and the suffering of ordinary citizens. The song resonated widely with the masses, though it sparked controversy when President Olusegun Obasanjo publicly criticized it for portraying Nigeria negatively. Despite the backlash, “*Jaga Jaga*” remains a cultural landmark and a bold musical statement that uses satire, repetition, and imagery to call out the failings of leadership in Nigeria.

Theme of Political Killings and Corruption in “Jaga Jaga”

One of the issues raised by Eedris Abdulkareem in “Jaga Jaga” is political killings, especially in verse one. Eedris makes use of rhetorical question to illustrate political killings and corruption, Eedris asks question that do not necessarily needs answer, asking which armrobber does not want money or enjoyment which the artist calls “jolly” making use of neologism Here, he paints the image of an armed robber who breaks into a house, but instead of stealing money, valuables, or even harming the family, he goes straight to the bedside and takes the person’s life. Eedris explains that no ordinary robber behaves this way, since the primary motive of robbery is usually material gain. Rather, he reveals that this so-called armrobber is in fact a political assassin, carrying out killings orchestrated by the political system.

“ Which arm robber nor want money

Na Which armrobber nor want jolly

Na political armrobber be that

Na wetin dey kill Nigeria oo”

The excerpt above demonstrates Eedris Abdulkareem’s use of rhetorical questions to expose the reality of political killings. He challenges the audience by pointing out that there is no ordinary armed robber who does not desire money, valuables, or material gain. Through this device, Eedris emphasizes that the so-called robber he describes is not a conventional

criminal but rather a political assassin acting under the influence of corrupt powers. His use of rhetorical questioning effectively underscores this truth, drawing the listener's attention to the hidden dangers within Nigeria's political system.

“ If you see Keyama bia bia

Dem lock am for jail

For Abuja, Kingsley Agbe

Himself dey for there”

The excerpt above illustrates how the Nigerian government employs the police to carry out the improper arrest of activists, the artist makes use of allusion to make reference to renowned activist such as Festus Keyamo and Kingsley Agbe who without due process or any form of judicial ruling faced indiscriminate arrest. The artist allusion to those renowned activist symbolizes in general how individuals who stands for truth and demands change are trampled upon by the government. These arrests are not made in the interest of justice but are instead deliberate attempts to silence dissenting voices. What makes this section striking is the boldness of Eedris Abdulkareem's delivery. In calling out the names of those who were unjustly detained, He demonstrates both courage and defiance, directly challenging a corrupt system that seeks to suppress truth. Through this bold vocal stance, Eedris exposes the abuse of judicial power and the misuse of state authority to silence activism. His lyrics in Jaga Jaga

thus function as a critique of the government's tactics of intimidation, revealing how the state weaponizes the police against its citizens rather than protecting them.

“Nigeria jaja

Everything scatta scatta

Poor man dey suffa suffa

Gbosa gbosa gun shot in ah the air”

The chorus of Jaga Jaga which starts the song gives an imagery of the state of Nigeria by which Eedris use of imagery in the chorus vividly captures the chaos that defines Nigeria's socio-political landscape. Through the deliberate use of repetition and alliteration in pidgin phrases such as “jaga jaga” and “scatta scatta”, “suffa suffa” and the use of in “gbosa gbosa”, the song reinforces the sense of disorder and instability pervading the nation. This insistent repetition of the chorus mirrors the unending cycle of corruption and unrest in Nigerian society. Abdulkareem's strategic use of code-switching, particularly his incorporation of Yoruba alongside English and Nigerian Pidgin, grounds the song in the local linguistic reality of his audience. Moreover, the phrase “gbosa gbosa” functions as onomatopoeia, mimicking the sound of gunshots or explosions, thereby evoking the violence and chaos that plague the nation. Alliterated phrases such as “scatta scatta” “suffa suffa” also shows the artistic use of sibilance to also reflect the instability in the nation. The chorus is repeated multiple times throughout the song for emphasis, a deliberate artistic choice that engraves the sense of

disorder in the listener's mind. In this way, Abdulkareem deliberately carves the chorus as the heartbeat of the song, ensuring that its message of instability and corruption resonates long after the music ends.

In "Jaga Jaga", Eedris Abdulkareem also makes use of historical allusion to explore corruption.

“where Charles Taylor he dey live big life

buy estate for Calabar,

that Liberia mafia for Nigeria,

Nigeria jaga jaga.”

This line is highly symbolic, as it directly historically alludes to an incidence that happened in Nigeria, this line of the song points to the theme of corruption and criminal infiltration in Nigeria. By pointing to Charles Taylor, a Liberian warlord notorious for corruption and violence, Eedris emphasizes how Nigeria has become a haven for questionable wealth and illicit activities. The image of Taylor “buying estate for Calabar” suggests that even foreign figures associated with exploitation and conflict find refuge and luxury within Nigeria's corrupt systems. This reinforces Eedris' central argument that Nigeria is in disarray (“jaga jaga”), where corruption flourishes unchecked, the powerful live lavishly, and ordinary citizens suffer the consequences.

Altogether, “Jaga Jaga” becomes a mirror reflecting Nigeria’s state of decay where corruption, insecurity, poverty, and social inequality thrive. Through blunt lyrics and unfiltered commentary, Eedris Abdulkareem captures the disillusionment of ordinary Nigerians, painting a vivid picture of a society where the rich indulge while the masses languish. The repetition of the chorus, “Nigeria jaga jaga,” is not merely a refrain but a verdict, leaving listeners with an unforgettable reminder of a nation adrift in chaos.

DATA TWO: “EMILOKAN” BY EEDRIS ABDUKAREEM

Eedris Abdulkareem’s “Emilokan” is a politically charged yet literary song that confronts the Nigerian elite and their unrelenting grip on power. The title, a Yoruba phrase meaning “It is my turn”, became a slogan of entitlement during Nigeria’s 2023 general elections. Abdulkareem reclaims the phrase as a satirical weapon, exposing the arrogance, selfishness, and greed that dominate the country’s political landscape. Through sharp social commentary, direct allusions to political leaders, and the use of literary devices such as satire, repetition, and code-switching, the artist critiques a system where leadership is treated as a personal inheritance rather than a responsibility to the people. In this way, “Emilokan” serves as both a reflection of Nigeria’s contemporary political reality and a voice of resistance against its entrenched culture of corruption.

Theme of Godfatherism in “Emilokan”

“ paddy paddy government”

One of the predominant issues raised in “Emilokan” is godfatherism, a political culture that continues to hinder Nigeria’s democratic growth. In the song, Abdulkareem makes use of allusions to references the relationship between Bola Ahmed Tinubu and former President Muhammadu Buhari, highlighting Tinubu’s claim that he played a decisive role in helping Buhari secure presidential power. By insisting that it is now his “turn” to rule, Tinubu embodies the entitlement mentality that characterizes Nigeria’s godfather politics. Abdulkareem employs satire in mocking this sense of entitlement, reducing the slogan “Emilokan” to a symbol of selfish ambition rather than service. The artist also makes use of alliteration and repetition in the line “ paddy paddy government” Through this, Abdulkareem critiques how power-brokering not only erodes democratic principles but also fuels corruption and perpetuates a cycle of selfish leadership. Thus, Emilokan becomes a sharp commentary on political patronage, revealing how personal ambition and the culture of political godfathers override the will and welfare of the Nigerian people.

Theme of Blame Shifting in “Emilokan”

“ Tinubu government blame Buhari

Buhari government blame Jonathan”

The artist makes use of allusion to express one of the issues raised in “Emilokan” which is blame-shifting, a recurring feature of Nigerian politics. Abdulkareem observes that successive governments often evade accountability by transferring responsibility for

underdevelopment, poverty, and corruption to their predecessors. For instance, he notes how Tinubu's government placed blame on Buhari, while Buhari himself had earlier shifted blame to Goodluck Jonathan. In this cycle, no administration is willing to accept culpability for the nation's declining state, thereby perpetuating a culture of excuses rather than solutions. Abdulkareem further raises a rhetorical question directed at Tinubu: if Buhari was indeed incompetent, why then did Tinubu support him in attaining the presidency? This sharp questioning exposes the irony of political alliances built on convenience rather than principle. Through this theme of blame-shifting, "Emilokan" critiques the refusal of Nigerian leaders to take responsibility and warns of the worsening consequences if such attitudes persist.

“ Emefiele printed 22 trillion

Within eight years under Buhari government

6 million dollars for election observers

Dem say somebody forge Buhari signature

Na lie buhari sign that document”

Another striking example of blame-shifting in “Emilokan” is seen in the above excerpt, Abdulkareem's makes an allusion to former President Muhammadu Buhari's claim that his signature was forged in relation to the controversial printing of ₦22 trillion. Rather than accepting responsibility for the scandal, Buhari attempted to distance himself from the matter,

presenting himself as a victim of forgery. This defense, Abdulkareem argues, is nothing more than a tactic of evasion.

Abdulkareem's allusional treatment of blame-shifting in "Emilokan" underscores the failure of Nigerian leaders to accept responsibility for the nation's persistent crises. By exposing how successive governments from Jonathan to Buhari, and from Buhari to Tinubu have all passed the burden of accountability onto one another, Abdulkareem highlights a destructive cycle of excuses that prevents meaningful progress. His use of satire sharpens the critique, showing that until leaders confront their own failures, Nigeria will remain trapped in corruption, poverty, and underdevelopment.

"kidnapping don turn lucrative business

Imagine say na your grandchildren dem kidnap

By now your soildiers for don scatta Nigeria

How common man wan get money for ransom

Wen dem kidnap him wife and children"

Eedris also laments the common man which is a symbolism for the poor masses suffer insecurity as kidnapping has now become a lucrative business in Nigeria, thriving under the watch of those in power. He portrays it not just as a criminal act but as a symptom of failed governance, where insecurity festers because the ruling class shows little concern for the

masses. According to him, if it were the president's grandchildren who had been kidnapped, the military and security agencies would have scattered the entire nation in search of them. This biting comparison exposes the selfishness of the political elite, who protect their own interests while ordinary Nigerians continue to live in fear. By highlighting this, Eedris draws attention to the inequality in state response to crises, showing that the lives of the poor are undervalued compared to those of the privileged.

Through "Emilokan" Eedris Abdulkareem lays bare the contradictions of Nigeria's ruling class under Tinubu. From the unchecked rise of kidnapping as a lucrative trade to the unbearable hardship caused by subsidy removal, the song exposes the government's misplaced priorities and indifference to the plight of ordinary Nigerians. By juxtaposing the suffering of the masses with the comfort of the political elite, Eedris highlights the widening gap between leaders and the led. He makes it clear that if the victims of kidnapping were the grandchildren of the president or other big politicians, the military would have scattered the country in search of them, but because it is the poor who suffer, their lives are treated as expendable. This reflects a culture of blame-shifting, where those in power push responsibility away from themselves and blame citizens for laziness or insecurity, while ignoring their duty to protect and provide for the people. In this way, Emilokan becomes a scathing reminder of failed leadership and the need for accountability in a nation where survival has become a daily struggle.

DATA THREE: “TELL UR PAPA” by EEDRIS ABDUKAREEM

Eedris Abdulkareem’s “Tell ur Papa” is a satirical song that critiques corruption, nepotism, and the misuse of political power in Nigeria. The track is particularly directed at Seyi Tinubu, who publicly claimed that his father, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has been the best president of Nigeria. Abdulkareem challenges this assertion by exposing the failures, corruption, and hardships associated with the current administration. In the song, he pointedly repeats phrases like “tell your papa, Seyi”, using irony and mockery to confront the glorification of a controversial political legacy. Through this bold address, Abdulkareem highlights how political families attempt to rewrite narratives of leadership while the suffering of ordinary Nigerians tells a different story.

Theme of Subjugation of Human Right in “Tell Ur Papa”

“ if people dey protest,

Use soildiers suppress them”

Another prominent issue raised by Eedris Abdulkareem in “Tell Your Papa” is the subduing of the people’s rights. The artist use of satire and verbal irony(what the artsist means is different from what is said) to encourage the government to suppress the people anytime they protest since the government is fond of trampling on the people’s right to protest highlights how authorities often respond to citizens’ grievances not with dialogue or reform, but with suppression. He emphasizes that whenever people attempt to speak up or protest, the system

prioritizes control and intimidation over justice, illustrating a deliberate strategy to stifle dissent. Abdulkareem's lyrics expose the ways in which political power is used to silence ordinary Nigerians, denying them the basic right to express their frustrations and participate meaningfully in governance. Through this satirical critique, the song underscores the tension between citizens' demands for accountability and a government willing to protect its own interests at the expense of civil liberties.

Theme of Economic Hardship in "Tell ur Papa"

One of the key issues raised in "Tell Your Papa" by Eedris Abdulkareem is the economic hardship faced by Nigerians. The artist vividly paints a picture of hunger and depression in the excerpt below;

“ To buy food na luxury
electricity na luxury”

The artist use of 'luxury' is to give an hyperbolic statement that notes how people, overwhelmed by poverty as basic necessities becomes unaffordable.

“Tell your papa Seyi

tell your papa country hard.

Tell your papa Seyi,

tell your papa people they die.

Tell your papa Seyi,

this one don't pass jaga jaga.

Jaga jaga,

nyama nyama,

wuru, ugoro,

magu magu”

The chorus reinforces these themes by turning the hardships into a rhythmic, almost chant-like statement of social reality. Through repetition of phrases which are anaphoric such as “Tell Ur Papa” and “Jaga Jaga”, Abdulkareem emphasizes the relentlessness of these struggles. The chorus also employs alliteration, especially in sequences like “jaga jaga, nama nyama”, creating a tension-filled rhythm that mirrors societal disorder. Words such as “jaga jaga”, “nyama nyama”, and “magu magu” function as onomatopoeia, evoking chaos, disturbance, and turmoil. By repeating this chorus multiple times throughout the song, Abdulkareem not only engrains the message of suffering in the listener’s mind but also mirrors the continuous and pervasive nature of economic hardship and instability in Nigeria.

Ultimately, through both the lyrics and the chorus, Abdulkareem connects the daily struggles of Nigerians directly to systemic corruption and mismanagement, showing how political greed and abuse of power exacerbate poverty and prevent meaningful economic progress.

In “Tell Ur Papa”, Eedris also addresses the controversial removal of fuel subsidy by Tinubu. From the very first day of his administration, he made it clear that subsidy must go, regardless of the people’s readiness for such a harsh policy. Eedris highlights this insensitivity, pointing out how the government imposes suffering on citizens without proper cushioning measures.

He drives the point home with a direct sarcastic challenge in the lyrics: “Removal of subsidy, a bold step they call it. How much your papa don save since he removed the subsidy?” Here, sarcasm and ridicule are used to question the credibility of the government’s narrative. If subsidy removal was truly a “bold step” toward progress, then why has it only resulted in unbearable hardship for the masses? By framing the critique as a rhetorical question, Eedris exposes the hollowness of government promises and the lack of transparency in how national funds are handled.

This attack on subsidy removal ties back to his wider criticism of corruption and mismanagement of resources in the song. Just as he condemns leaders for squandering billions on frivolous allowances while citizens go hungry, here too he challenges them for masking policies of exploitation under lofty language like “a bold step.

THEME OF INSECURITY in “TELL UR PAPA”

“ Seyi try travel by road without your security

Make you feel the pain of fellow Nigerians”

Another important theme Eedris Abdulkareem emphasizes in “Tell Ur Papa” is the insecurity faced by ordinary Nigerians. He openly challenges Seyi to travel by road without the usual convoy of security details, instead of constantly flying in private jets. By making this challenge, Eedris points out that politicians are shielded from the realities of insecurity because they rarely experience it firsthand. They are disconnected from the harsh experiences of kidnappings, armed robbery, and banditry that Nigerians endure daily while traveling on unsafe highways.

This sharp confrontation exposes the class divide between the rulers and the ruled. While ordinary citizens live in constant fear, the political elite enjoy excessive comfort and protection. Abdulkareem’s sarcasm here is also biting he knows Seyi would never dare such a journey, yet he makes the challenge to reveal how far removed leaders are from the suffering of the masses. By doing so, the song becomes not just a complaint about insecurity, but a call for accountability and a demand that leaders should feel the pain of those they claim to govern.

Eedris Abdulkareem’s “Tell Ur Papa” ends as a piercing commentary on the deep economic hardship and mismanagement of national resources in Nigeria. By pointing out the reckless spending of public funds, the rising insecurity, and the sudden removal of fuel subsidy, he exposes the insensitivity of the ruling class to the struggles of ordinary citizens. His repetition of phrases like “food na luxury, electricity luxury, hunger dey, anger dey” underlines the severity of daily suffering and the widening gap between leaders and the

masses. Beyond economic hardship, the song also highlights the subjugation of human rights through unchecked political decisions and military intimidation, showing how ordinary Nigerians are left voiceless in the face of government excesses. Through his blunt and sarcastic tone, Eedris amplifies the frustrations of Nigerians who feel neglected and betrayed, making the song not only a cry of anger but also a mirror of the lived realities of the people.

DATA FOUR: “COUNTRY HARD” by EEDRIS ABDUKAREEM

Eedris Abdulkareem’s “Country Hard” is a satirical and hard-hitting song that addresses the struggles and hardships faced by Nigerians under poor governance. The track emphasizes that “music doesn’t lie”, highlighting how songs reflect the realities of life and offer a form of truth as people try to survive amid poverty and systemic failure. Abdulkareem blends sarcasm and encouragement, using vivid imagery and rhythmic repetition to both critique societal ills and inspire resilience among listeners. Through this combination, the song becomes not only a mirror of Nigeria’s challenges but also a source of awareness and motivation for those enduring them.

Satiric Expression in “Country Hard”

One of the major features of “Country Hard” by Eedris Abdulkareem is sarcasm, which he uses to underscore the grim realities of Nigeria while engaging the listener. Abdulkareem delivers a sarcastic commentary on the nation’s condition, describing it as a “republic of suffering and smiling” and a “number one capital for poverty”. He points out that Nigeria

gained independence in 1960, yet ordinary citizens have seen little improvement, highlighting the failures of successive governments. By emphasizing “most corrupt and bad leadership” through a sarcastic tone, Abdulkareem elongates the mockery, allowing the listener to both recognize the absurdity of the situation and reflect critically on the state of governance.

The sarcasm continues throughout the song, particularly in lines such as “Our money don’t grow wings, it don fly like laba laba laba laba,” humorously illustrating how resources seem to vanish despite citizens’ efforts. This sustained sarcasm not only critiques economic mismanagement and unfulfilled promises but also functions as a subtle form of encouragement, motivating listeners to be aware, resilient, and reflective in the face of hardship. By blending sarcasm with empowerment, Abdulkareem transforms *Country Hard* into a song that both entertains and educates, encouraging Nigerians to confront societal challenges with insight and determination.

Another example of sarcasm in “*Country Hard*” is Abdulkareem’s comment that “Most Oga at the top don’t get certificates.” Here, Oga symbolizes corrupt politicians who hold high office without the qualifications or competence to govern effectively. Abdulkareem contrasts these unqualified leaders with highly educated individuals, such as professors, who are compelled to work under them, highlighting the absurdity and injustice of the system. This is a sharp use of irony, as those with actual knowledge and expertise are subordinated to individuals lacking the credentials to lead. By presenting this contradiction sarcastically, Abdulkareem critiques the disconnect between merit and power in Nigeria, making listeners

question how illiteracy and incompetence are allowed to dominate governance while undermining the contributions of educated citizens.

“country hard but we go overcome

Forget your sorrow

For we go overcome

Ojoro don dey oo ojoro don dey”

In “Country Hard”, Eedris Abdulkareem does not only dwell on the failures of corrupt leadership and the suffering of the masses, he also provides a voice of encouragement and resilience. The chorus, “Country hard, but we go overcome. Forget your sorrow, for we go overcome. We go overcome,” functions as both a lamentation and a rallying cry. Repeated several times throughout the song, it carries a message of hope that despite the biting hardship, the people must not give in to despair. The repetition intensifies the emotional weight of the line, almost like an anthem of survival for ordinary Nigerians. Here, Abdulkareem acknowledges the severity of the economic and political crisis, yet he simultaneously reassures the masses of their ability to withstand and eventually triumph over these challenges. This dual approach sarcasm toward the government and encouragement toward the people creates a balance that makes the song more than just a criticism of leadership; it becomes a motivational piece that strengthens the collective spirit of endurance.

“dem say u be lazy youth

Election time dem go use you”

Another striking concern in “Country Hard” comes when Eedris Abdulkareem responds to President Buhari’s infamous claim that Nigerian youths are lazy. By shifting the blame for unemployment from government failure to the supposed laziness of the youth, Buhari attempts to push responsibility away from himself and his administration. Abdulkareem exposes this rhetorical trick as a deliberate distortion of reality, since the real problem lies in corruption, mismanagement of resources, and lack of opportunities created by the leaders.

At this point, Eedris cleverly redirects the accusation back to the politicians themselves. While they label the youths as “lazy,” they are the same ones who exploit these so-called lazy youths during elections using them for campaigns, rallies, and sometimes even violence. This contradiction forms the heart of the blend-shifting: leaders project failure onto the people, yet depend on them to maintain political power. Through lines like “they say you be lazy youth, when in actual fact na you them dey use,” Abdulkareem unmasks this hypocrisy.

Eedris Abdulkareem’s “Country Hard” is not only a song of lamentation but also one of encouragement. While he sarcastically ridicules the government’s corruption, mismanagement, and neglect of the people, he still reassures the masses with hope for survival. The chorus of the song, “Country hard, but we go overcome. Forget your sorrow, we go overcome” is repeated throughout the song, functions like a rallying chant. It acknowledges the people’s pain while at the same time urging them not to give in to despair. This repetition serves both a poetic and political purpose. Literarily, it reinforces the theme of

perseverance amidst suffering it becomes a subtle call to resilience, reminding Nigerians that their strength lies in endurance and unity despite the hardships imposed by corrupt leaders. In this way, Abdulkareem balances satire with solidarity, turning the song into both a critique of power and a source of motivation for the oppressed.

DATA FIVE: “E NO FINISH” by FALZ

Falz’s “E No Finish” is a satirical and socially conscious song that examines the persistent issues of corruption, greed, and systemic inefficiency in Nigeria. Through witty lyrics, storytelling, and clever wordplay, Falz highlights the ways in which public resources are mismanaged and ordinary citizens continue to suffer. The song blends humor, irony, and critique, making it both entertaining and thought-provoking, while emphasizing that the cycle of corruption and injustice in Nigeria seems never-ending as reflected in the title, “E No Finish”.

Unending Cycle of Corruption in “E No Finish”

“ Baba Fela talk am

But e no finish e no finish e no finish oh oh

When he go finish

Say Baba Fela talk am

But e no finish e no finish e no finish oh oh

My brother wen e go finish”

Throughout the song, the phrase “E No Finish” is repeated countless times, reinforcing the idea that corruption, poverty, unemployment, and societal neglect are part of a continuous, unbroken cycle of hardship. The repetition creates a rhythmic insistence, mirroring the relentlessness of these problems.

In “E No Finish”, Falz makes allusion to Fela, a renowned music activist who through his song comments on standing issues in Nigeria, Falz makes use of sharp metaphors such as “animals” and “thieves” to represent the corrupt nature of Nigerian Leaders.. He also metaphorically compares politicians as “greedy motherfuckers” metaphorically portraying them as the root of the nation’s persistent problems, while contrasting them with ordinary citizens who continue to struggle. Falz explicitly distances himself from singing a “love song,” choosing instead to shout about pressing societal issues, demonstrating the urgency and seriousness of the matters at hand. Throughout the song, the phrase “E No Finish” is repeated countless times , which is the artist deliberate use of epimone in reinforcing the idea that corruption, poverty, unemployment, and societal neglect are part of a continuous, unbroken cycle of hardship. The repetition creates a rhythmic insistence, mirroring the relentlessness of these problems. Falz also frequently references Fela Kuti, using allusion to position him as a model of resistance and to connect contemporary struggles to a long-standing tradition of social critique in Nigerian music. Through these techniques metaphor, repetition, and allusion the song vividly portrays Nigeria as a nation where systemic failures

and human suffering persist endlessly, making *E No Finish* both a compelling social critique and a reflection on the enduring hardships faced by ordinary Nigerians.

Falz's *E No Finish* captures the painful reality of Nigeria's cyclical crises, where corruption, unemployment, nepotism, insecurity, and poverty persist from one generation to the next. By constantly repeating the phrase "E no finish", he emphasizes the continuity of suffering a haunting reminder that the same problems Fela Kuti denounced decades ago are still alive today. The song paints the Nigerian experience as a vicious circle in which leaders loot, citizens endure, and nothing truly changes.

What makes Falz's critique powerful is the blend of satire, metaphor, and repetition. Referring to politicians as "greedy motherfuckers" and "thieves" is more than insult; it is a metaphorical unmasking of their character as political robbers who steal the nation's wealth. By invoking Fela as both inspiration and witness, Falz positions himself within a long-standing tradition of musical resistance. This invocation reaches its most emotional point when Falz declares: "sometimes I look and say, Fela, if you dey, come and see you." In this line, he directly appeals to Fela, almost as if calling on a spiritual father of protest to return and witness the fact that, decades later, the same struggles persist unchanged.

The song is therefore both a lament and a protest anthem. It expresses frustration at an unending cycle of suffering while also demanding that listeners confront the truth of Nigeria's present condition. The repeated refrain "E no finish" becomes a tragic chorus of continuity, while the call to Fela underscores how deeply rooted and painfully unending Nigeria's problems remain.

CHAPTER THREE

MORAL DEGENERATION

3.0 Introduction

Moral degeneration in Nigeria reflects the steady collapse of values such as honesty, accountability, and dignity across different sectors of society. Unlike political corruption that targets those in power, moral decay spreads through everyday life, visible in practices like cultism, internet fraud, ritual killings, materialism, hypocrisy, and sexual exploitation. Music becomes a powerful avenue to address these issues, as artistes expose, criticize, and mock these vices through their songs. Both Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz employ their craft as social critics, using satire, metaphor, irony, and repetition to portray the extent of moral collapse while encouraging society to reflect and resist the normalization of immorality.

This chapter therefore examines selected songs by Eedris and Falz, focusing on how they highlight moral degeneration and use music as a tool of protest.

3.1 Analysis

DATA ONE: “MR LECTURER” by EEDRIS ABDUKAREEM

One of the most socially conscious songs by Eedris Abdulkareem is “Mr Lecturer”, a track that boldly confronts the decay within Nigeria’s educational system. Released in the early 2000s, the song narrates the abuse of power by lecturers in Nigerian universities, particularly their exploitation of female students. In the song, Eedris exposes how some lecturers demand sexual favors or money from students in exchange for good grades, turning

education a supposed tool of enlightenment and empowerment, into a marketplace of exploitation. By addressing this uncomfortable but familiar reality, the artiste places a spotlight on one of the most rampant forms of moral degeneration within Nigerian society.

The significance of “Mr Lecturer” lies not only in its lyrical content but also in its daring tone. At a time when such issues were rarely discussed publicly, Eedris used music as a tool of protest, giving voice to students especially female students who often suffered in silence. The song therefore goes beyond entertainment; it serves as an indictment of a failed moral system where those entrusted with knowledge and mentorship abuse their authority. Through satire, repetition, and bold direct address, Eedris makes “Mr Lecturer” both a critique and a call for change.

A unique feature of “Mr Lecturer” is its dialogue form, where Eedris Abdulkareem dramatizes the exchange between a corrupt lecturer and a vulnerable female student. Rather than presenting the message in a single narrative voice, the artiste assumes dual roles: that of the predatory lecturer demanding sexual favors and that of the powerless student who resists but eventually finds herself trapped in the system

“My name na sir, Olayemi Olatunji,

I will be taking you, sociology and history,

Any question don't hesitate to ask me, wait a minute girl,

Hey! You girl, stand up and tell me what's your name?

My name is Bimbo, Bimbo Owoyemi.

What's ya saying, whats ya saying?

Bimbo, Bimbo Owoyemi.

That's very good, very smooth and very nice,

Come and see me, immediately in my office.

Thank you class i'mma see you some other time, time, time”.

This dialogic approach transforms the song from a mere social commentary into a lived experience that listeners can visualize and relate to. It brings to life the predator–prey relationship within Nigerian universities, where lecturers exploit their position of authority to harass students, particularly women. The conversation also highlights the imbalance of power the lecturer holds the key to academic success, while the student struggles between moral integrity and academic survival. By framing the song as a dialogue, Eedris forces the audience to witness the ugliness of exploitation first-hand, making the song not only a protest against abuse but also an indictment of an entire educational system that allows such immorality to thrive.

In “Mr Lecturer”, Eedris Abdulkareem presents a narrative that exposes the decay within Nigeria’s educational system through the abuse of power by academic figures. The lecturer, who is meant to serve as a custodian of knowledge and an exemplar of integrity, instead uses his authority for exploitative purposes.

The lecturer begins by taking notice of a female student in his class and, rather than focusing on teaching or academic matters, he singles her out based on her beauty. His instruction to the class is brief and irresponsible; he asks for the girl's name, dismisses the class prematurely, and then calls her privately to his office. This highlights two forms of moral degeneration: first, his neglect of duty, as he abandons teaching altogether; and second, his abuse of authority, as he turns the academic space into a site for personal gratification.

“Excuse me sir, you said that you want to see me?”

You are here, sit down and feel relax

You fail my text, you fail my exam

So if you want to pass, you know wat to do

What to?”

Furthermore, the lecturer creates problems for the student where none existed. He deliberately fails her in tests and examinations, not because of academic incompetence, but as a coercive strategy to pressure her into submitting to his demands. This manipulative use of institutional power reflects a wider societal issue where authority figures exploit their positions to the detriment of those who are vulnerable. In this context, the lecturer weaponizes failure as a means of control, reducing education from a tool of empowerment into a channel of oppression.

The irresponsibility of the lecturer is evident in his conduct in the classroom. By dismissing the class abruptly after identifying the girl, he demonstrates how academic environments can

be hijacked by personal immorality. Rather than shaping the minds of students, he chooses to corrupt them, thereby undermining the very foundation of education. This action does not only highlight the moral decadence of one individual but also points to a systemic failure, where students are forced to navigate not just academic challenges but also the predatory behavior of those meant to guide them.

Sexual Exploitation as a Reflection of Societal Moral Degeneration

Another striking element in “Mr Lecturer” is the way Eedris Abdulkareem addresses the reality of sexual exploitation within Nigeria’s higher institutions. The lecturer in the song embodies the moral collapse of individuals in positions of trust who should nurture students but instead prey upon them. The act of deliberately failing the student until she yields to his advances reveals how sexual exploitation is normalized and sustained by systemic corruption.

This exploitation reflects a larger societal problem where morality is compromised for self-interest. The lecturer uses sex as a currency to trade academic success, turning education into a transactional affair rather than a merit-based process. In doing so, he corrupts not only the individual student but also the credibility of the entire academic system. The female student, instead of being assessed on her intellectual ability, is judged by her willingness to comply with the lecturer’s immoral demands.

Eedris uses this narrative to highlight how gender and power intersect in corrupt ways. Female students, often vulnerable within the patriarchal structure of Nigerian society, are

portrayed as victims of predatory lecturers who exploit their authority. The song critiques how these lecturers perpetuate a culture where women are objectified and stripped of dignity in educational spaces. It becomes clear that the rot in society is not only political or economic, but also moral, affecting everyday interactions in institutions where integrity should matter most.

By showcasing sexual exploitation as a symptom of moral degeneration, Eedris indicts both the individuals and the system that enables such practices to thrive. The lecturer's behavior does not occur in isolation; it reflects a society where abuse of authority is commonplace, and where those entrusted with responsibility fail to uphold ethical standards.

The Struggles of the Girl Child in the Educational World

In "Mr Lecturer", Eedris Abdulkareem vividly portrays the struggles of the girl child within the Nigerian educational system.

"oh my lord,can you save my soul"

The above excerpt which is apostrophic as the girl child directly asks if God can save her, despite how knowing that she will not get answer. The female student in the song becomes a symbol of many young women who face harassment and intimidation at the hands of lecturers. Rather than being nurtured academically, the girl child is reduced to an object of desire, forced into situations where her grades and future depend not on merit but on her willingness to submit to exploitation.

“ My lecturer wants to have sex with me

My HOD wanna get down on my feet”

This excerpt gives a vivid imagery of a wider reality where the girl child’s pursuit of education is frequently hindered by gender-based abuse of power. Instead of receiving support and encouragement, she is made to endure humiliation, fear, and manipulation from those who are supposed to guide her intellectual development.

“you fail my test, you fail my exam”

The preceding excerpt which is parallelistic as ”you fail” which is used to begin each phrase makes both structures rhythmic, this gives an imagery of the lecturer’s behavior deliberately failing her examinations, fabricating reasons to summon her to his office, and showing open irresponsibility in the classroom captures the systemic oppression that many young women encounter.

By centering the girl child in this narrative, Eedris underscores the moral degeneration within the educational system and, by extension, society at large. The song critiques how institutions meant to protect and uplift the girl child too often become spaces where her rights are violated. In exposing this injustice, “Mr Lecturer” gives voice to the silent struggles of countless female students who must navigate an unequal and unsafe learning environment.

Resilience of the Girl Child

Another striking theme that emerges in “Mr Lecturer” is the resilience of the victim. Unlike many cases where victims of sexual harassment in educational institutions are subdued by fear, shame, or pressure, the girl in Eedris Abdulkareem’s narrative stands out for her refusal to yield to the lecturer’s advances. She is portrayed as bold, unyielding, and determined not to be coerced into trading her body for academic grades. This resilience sets her apart as more than just a passive victim as she becomes a model of defiance and courage.

Her resistance is most powerfully captured in the chorus, which is repeated throughout the song as an anthem of encouragement:

“I am in school wannato keep my head up high ...,

I don’t give a damn if you fail me...”

The repetition of this line is deliberate; it reinforces her strength and refusal to be broken by oppression. In literary terms, the refrain functions as both a personal declaration of resilience and a universal call to other young women who may be in similar situations, it is also hyperbolic as the student will eventually care if she fails. It encourages them to resist intimidation and to uphold their dignity despite the pressures they face.

Through this portrayal, Abdulkareem not only highlights the prevalence of harassment in the educational sector but also empowers the girl child to rise above such challenges. By positioning resilience as the ultimate response, the song challenges the culture of silence and subjugation and instead celebrates courage, self-worth, and resistance.

“Mr Lecturer” is allegorical as the entire song represents moral decay in university system as a whole, the song exposes the moral degeneration within Nigeria’s educational system, where lecturers entrusted with shaping the future of students instead abuse their positions of authority for selfish, immoral gains. The song highlights the abuse of power, the struggles of the girl child in navigating an unsafe learning environment, and the irresponsibility of educators who exploit students. Yet, amidst this bleak reality, Abdulkareem emphasizes the resilience of the girl child, portraying a victim who refuses to be subdued. Her repeated affirmation of dignity and resistance serves as a rallying cry to others facing similar oppression. Through this, Abdulkareem not only critiques the rot within academia but also uses music as a platform of protest, exposing vice and empowering the marginalized to resist.

DATA TWO: “CONFIRM” by FALZ

Falz’s “Confirm” is a socially conscious track that interrogates the excessive materialism and moral decay in Nigerian society. At the heart of the song is his bold condemnation of internet fraud, popularly known as “Yahoo Yahoo,” which has become a normalized yet destructive practice among Nigerian youths. While many artists glamorize fraud and the fast lifestyle it funds, Falz sets himself apart by using satire and witty lyricism to expose the dangers of such practices. By framing Yahoo as not just a crime but a symptom of deeper moral degeneration, “Confirm:” becomes more than just entertainment it is a form of protest against the decay of values, the celebration of ill-gotten wealth, and the social contradictions that perpetuate Nigeria’s moral crisis.

Condemnation of Internet Fraud

“Nothing wey you wan talk

Nothing wey you fit explain

You no work but you wan chop

You wan score but you no get game

Rise up for me, rise up

Wise up, better change your plan

More hustle for the righteous

If you don't know, then you better confirm oh

Better confirm oh, better confirm oh

Better confirm

You can go with me if you never confirm oh

You never confirm oh, you better confirm oh

You better confirm”

In “Confirm”, Falz condemns the rising culture of internet fraud (Yahoo Yahoo) that many young Nigerians glorify as a legitimate hustle. He exposes the hollowness of this act by stating plainly that fraud is not hustling but outright stealing from another person’s savings. By emphasizing that one cannot truly “hammer” through deceit, Falz strips away the false glamour surrounding this illegal practice. His words echo with authority, reminding the audience that wealth gained through crime cannot be celebrated as genuine success.

Falz reinforces this point through irony. Fraudsters often boast of their sudden wealth as though it is the product of hard work, but Falz highlights the contradiction: their riches come from exploiting others, not from diligence or creativity. The irony deepens the shame of their actions, exposing the moral corruption behind what many treat as an achievement.

He reinforces his claim in stressing that “that is not hustling.” By repeating this declaration, Falz hammers home the message that real hustle involves effort, consistency, and honesty, not taking shortcuts through crime. His tone throughout the verse is not tentative but condemnatory, as he delivers a firm moral judgment.

Through this theme, Falz positions himself as a musical voice of conscience, challenging Nigerian youths to abandon internet fraud and embrace genuine work, even if success comes slowly.

“ stop explaining, don’t be lazy

No excuse you fit give

No be only una wey be victim of the system”

Another major point Falz addresses in Confirm is the excuse culture surrounding internet fraud. Many youths justify Yahoo Yahoo by pointing to the corruption and failures of the Nigerian system, arguing that the harsh conditions leave them with no other choice. Falz condemns this logic, insisting that they are not the only ones enduring a broken system. Millions of Nigerians are also struggling under the same poor governance, yet they choose

not to resort to crime. By saying this, Falz dismantles the idea that hardship is an automatic excuse for fraud.

He also critiques the unhealthy comparisons that drive many into internet fraud. Instead of focusing on their personal growth, youths begin to measure themselves against wealthy elites or children of privilege. This comparison creates pressure to acquire quick riches by any means necessary. Against this flawed reasoning, Falz offers a more grounded metaphor:

“sell plantain today, tomorrow buy plantation.”

With this line, he emphasizes that success is a gradual process small, honest beginnings eventually lead to bigger accomplishments.

“ Mi lo sope mo ‘re far a we ki lo ma womo Dangote”

To further discourage such comparisons, Falz even references himself in, by allusively referring to Dangote, acknowledging that he cannot compare himself to the billionaire, yet he remains committed to grinding steadily. This shows that every individual has their own journey, and comparing oneself to others is both illogical and destructive.

Another feature of literariness in Falz’s “Confirm” is the deliberate repetition of the phrase “ Better Confirm” throughout the song. This repetition is not meaningless; rather, it functions as a rhetorical device that urges the audience to reflect on their actions and choices. By constantly telling the youth to “Confirm”, Falz is pushing them to evaluate whether what they are doing ,especially indulging in fraud and quick money schemes is truly right. The refrain

becomes a way of saying, “Go and check, go and be sure.” Beyond discouraging fraud, the word also carries a deeper encouragement: Falz ties it to the idea that there is hope and reward for the righteous. In essence, he is reminding the youth that if they choose honesty and hard work, they can be confident they can confirm that better days lie ahead. This blending of challenge and encouragement makes the repetition powerful, serving both as a moral check and as a motivational chant. The insistence on “Confirm” is therefore a way of shifting the focus away from crime and back toward faith, resilience, and integrity.

Falz also condemns the excuses that many young people give for indulging in fraudulent practices, especially those tied to foreign activities and unhealthy comparisons. In the song, he criticizes the growing culture where individuals justify fraud by pointing to corruption in the system or the success of others. For Falz, this mindset is flawed, because everyone is running their own risk success does not come at the same pace for all. Some people may achieve wealth early through legitimate ventures, while others may take longer, but this difference in timing should not be used as an excuse for engaging in fraudulent activities.

He illustrates this point through imagery and metaphors. For example, the line “sell plantain today, tomorrow buy plantation” metaphorically emphasizes the value of gradual growth and hard work. It suggests that even small beginnings can lead to something big if pursued consistently, thereby encouraging patience rather than shortcuts. Similarly, when Falz makes allusion to Dangote, Nigeria’s richest man, he makes a self-reference to discourage

comparison. By admitting that he cannot compare himself to Dangote but is still “grinding,” Falz warns against using the achievements of others as a benchmark to justify fraud.

In essence, it is this constant habit of comparison that creates unnecessary pressure, pushing youths into cybercrime. Falz rejects this attitude and stresses that everyone has their own path, their own time, and their own race. The repeated reminders dismantle the culture of excuses and highlight the importance of self-discipline, resilience, and faith in legitimate work.

‘Confirm’ serves as Falz’s sharp condemnation of internet fraud and the culture of excuses surrounding it. Through repetition and he dismantles the justifications often given by those who indulge in “quick money” schemes, exposing them as weak and destructive. His use of the word “Confirm” is particularly striking, as it functions like a moral reminder, urging listeners to reflect on their choices and to test whether their path is truly right. By discouraging unhealthy comparisons, affirming the dignity of hard work, and rejecting fraudulent shortcuts, Falz positions the song as both a critique of moral degeneration and an encouragement toward integrity and resilience. The unrelenting tone of the song makes it clear that crime may look appealing in the short run, but true fulfillment lies in patience, discipline, and upright living.

DATA THREE: “TALK” by FALZ

Falz's "Talk", released in 2019 as part of his album *Moral Instruction*, is a bold piece of musical protest that mirrors the moral degeneration in Nigerian society. In this song, Falz employs satire and biting humor to criticize widespread corruption, reckless lifestyles, youth obsession with materialism, and the culture of silence in the face of injustice. The refrain "Na so dem dey do" serves as a repetitive reminder of societal decay, while the artist calls on citizens to "talk" and challenge the status quo. Through witty storytelling and commentary, Falz presents music as a mirror to society's flaws and a platform for reform.

MUSIC as PROTEST

One of the most prominent aspects of Falz's "Talk" is its criticism of internet fraud, popularly referred to as Yahoo Yahoo. The song is highly sarcastic, as Falz deliberately mimics the excuses and justifications often offered by those involved in fraudulent activities. For instance, he raps;

"since EFCC burst in we nor see u for club,

and you get legit work eh eh na wetin u talk,"

The above lines highlights the contradiction between claims of legitimate work and the previously flashy lifestyle associated with cybercrime. By echoing their own words, Falz exposes the hypocrisy and self-deception of these youths, showing that their justifications are weak and morally indefensible. The sarcastic tone throughout the song serves as both a critique and a warning: while the youths flaunt their supposed gains and try to normalize

dishonesty, Falz underscores the emptiness of such achievements and the inevitable consequences of choosing the easy path over honest labor.

“Na you talk am o, no be me talk am o” is repeated multiple times throughout the song, illustrating that Falz is not inventing accusations but rather holding the youths accountable for their own words. By echoing their statements, he exposes the hypocrisy and self-deception of these youths, showing that their justifications are weak and morally indefensible.

The sarcastic tone throughout the song serves as both critique and warning: while the youths flaunt their supposed gains and try to normalize dishonesty, Falz underscores the emptiness of such achievements and the inevitable consequences of choosing the easy path over honest labor. Furthermore, the repetition of ironic statements and rhetorical mimicry creates a didactic effect, prompting listeners to reflect on the broader societal implications of fraud. Through humor, ridicule, and pointed social commentary, Falz successfully uses “Talk” to encourage moral reflection and condemn reckless, unethical behavior, positioning music not just as entertainment, but as a tool for societal correction.

In “Talk” Falz makes extensive use of end rhymes to reinforce his critique of societal ills, including the commodification of the female body. The repeated rhyming of words at the end of lines is not merely a musical embellishment; it strengthens the rhetorical force of his social commentary. For example, in the lines

“instead may you work you dey find alhaji,

eh eh she dey find alhaji,
 you come turn your body to cash and carry,
 eh eh she don dey do cash and carry”,

The rhyming of “alhaji” and “carry” draws attention to the behavior being criticized. By rhyming these words, Falz links the pursuit of quick money through morally questionable means to the transformation of the female body into a commodity, making the critique more memorable and impactful.

The repetition of end rhymes also emphasizes sarcasm and moral judgement, giving weight to the condemnation of unethical behavior. Falz points out that instead of working legitimately, some individuals particularly young women in the song have turned their bodies into tools for economic gain, thereby participating in a commodified system. The end rhymes make this moral statement stand out, enhancing the listener’s understanding of the seriousness of the act. In the refrain “Na you talk am o, no be me talk am o”, the rhyming sound “am o” underscores the ironic tone, showing that the critique is based on the subjects’ own actions and words. This creates a layered effect where the rhyme reinforces both the message and the satirical commentary.

RELIGIOUS EXTORTION in “TALK”

Another important theme in “Talk” is Falz’s condemnation of religious extortion, specifically the misuse of funds by church leaders. The song critiques individuals who justify extravagant

spending under the guise of religion, highlighting the dissonance between the wealth of leaders and the economic struggles of their congregations. For instance, in the lines

“Three private jet you say you buy am for church,
eh eh you say u buy am for church,
but your congregation nor dey fly am of course,
eh eh dem nor dey fly am of course”,

Falz exposes the hypocrisy of claiming spiritual purpose while indulging in personal luxury.

The end rhymes in this excerpt “church” and “of course” plays a crucial role in reinforcing the critique. By rhyming the words at the end of successive lines, Falz makes the social condemnation both rhythmically engaging and memorable. The rhymes emphasize the stark contrast between the extravagance of the church leaders and the poverty of their followers, making the irony more prominent. The repeated rhyming also strengthens the sarcastic tone, as Falz implicitly mocks the absurdity of justifying personal indulgence as a religious act.

Additionally, the use of rhymes is seen, particularly in phrases like “you say you buy am for church” and “dem nor dey fly am of course”, to hammer home the moral lesson. This ensures that the audience cannot overlook the hypocrisy being exposed, while the rhyming links the critique musically, making it easier to recall and internalize. This combination of rhyme and repetition amplifies both the song’s didactic function and its social commentary, showing how poetic devices are used to deliver ethical messages in Nigerian popular music.

Moreover, the structural placement of rhymes in “Talk” contributes to the song’s persuasive power. The rhymes occur at strategic points where Falz highlights the societal and personal consequences of commodification, effectively linking musicality with meaning. The rhymed lines help organize the critique, guiding listeners through the moral argument while keeping them engaged. By pairing end rhymes with the condemnation of transforming one’s body into a source of income, Falz ensures that the ethical implications are not lost amidst the rhythm of the song. End rhymes also interact with repetition to enhance the memorability of the critique. The repeated rhyming of key phrases, especially in lines addressing body commodification, reinforces the seriousness of the moral warning. The listener is repeatedly reminded of the consequences of such behavior, and the rhyme makes the critique stick in the mind, amplifying both the social and didactic functions of the song.

Through this blend of end rhyme and thematic critique, Falz communicates a layered message: he exposes and condemns the commodification of the female body while simultaneously using poetic techniques to make the social critique engaging, rhythmic, and memorable. The rhymes are not mere ornamentation they are a deliberate tool that highlights immorality, encourages reflection, and enforces the moral stance of the song, showing how literary devices and social commentary can operate hand-in-hand in Nigerian popular music.

A striking aspect of “Talk” is how Falz ends the song with the phrase “Na me talk am o”, delivered confidently. Unlike the earlier repetitions that implied “na you talk am no be me talk am o”, this ending suggests that Falz purposely admits the truth of his critique and takes

ownership of the observations he has made throughout the song. It reflects his authority in addressing societal issues, showing that the commentary is intentional and grounded in reality.

Throughout the song, Falz critiques internet fraud (Yahoo Yahoo), commodification of the female body, and religious extortion, employing literary devices such as end rhymes and repetition to emphasize irony, hypocrisy, and moral failings. The repeated phrases and rhymes ensure that the social commentary is memorable, while the confident ending reinforces accountability, leaving the audience with a sense of reflection on the ethical and societal issues highlighted in the song.

DATA FOUR: “WEHDONE SIR” by EEDRIS ABDUKAREEM

“Wehdone Sir” by Falz is a literary and socially conscious song that addresses issues of moral degeneration and societal irresponsibility, particularly focusing on individuals who exploit systems for personal gain. The song blends storytelling and social commentary to highlight the consequences of corruption, laziness, and unethical behavior in contemporary Nigerian society.

HYPOCRITICAL LIVING in “WEHDONE SIR”

One of the most evident themes in “Wehdone Sir” is the exposure of fake life and hypocrisy in contemporary society. Falz critiques individuals who project wealth and success outwardly while struggling with basic responsibilities. This is clearly illustrated in the lines:

“ You dey pop bottle when you dey club,

but your rent dey hard you,
 you dey owe money since last year,
 But na brand new jeep you drive here”.

In this excerpt, Falz uses satire to highlight the contrast between appearance and reality. The juxtaposition of “popping bottles” in a club against being unable to pay rent effectively emphasizes the moral and social hypocrisy of prioritizing superficial displays of wealth over essential responsibilities. This exposes the tension between societal pressure to appear successful and the actual circumstances of these individuals.

Falz also uses repetition and parallelism subtly in the phrasing to highlight the consistency of hypocrisy. The excerpt below shows the artist use of parallelism;

“you dey pop bottle... you dey owe money... you dey pop zobo”

. By repeating the structure of “you dey...” he draws attention to the recurring behavior of flaunting wealth while neglecting duties, making the hypocrisy more pronounced. Through this critique, Falz not only comments on individual behavior but also reflects on societal values that reward appearances over substance. The literary techniques of repetition, and parallelism work together to make the critique vivid, relatable, and morally instructive for the audience.

CONDEMNATION OF INTERNET FRAUD

Another thematic preoccupation in “Wehdone Sir” is Falz’s condemnation of internet fraud (Yahoo Yahoo).

Falz satirically comments on internet fraud, the song criticizes individuals who present themselves as wealthy and successful while engaging in illegal activities online. This is evident in the excerpt:

“You dey form big boy like you dey chop bar,
meanwhile you are internet frauster,
according to your friends and your tight Gs,
you were finishing school in the 90s,
But we read it in the paper and the magazine,
That your present age is 19,
Excuse me I beg your pardon,
oh that this your story no dey add up,
and this your fabu e dey mad gon,
who am I to take action”.

The apparent confidence and lavish lifestyle of the subject are contrasted with the truth revealed by facts, such as the inconsistency between claimed age and reported age. By presenting these contradictions, Falz exposes the fraudulent persona that many internet scammers cultivate.

The song also employs direct address, speaking to the “internet fraudster” in the second person. This creates a confrontational tone that holds the subject accountable while engaging listeners directly.

RELIGIOUS DELUSION in “WEHDONE SIR”

Falz also critiques how Nigerians fall prey to religious foolishness and exploitation. He emphasizes this in lines such as:

"Your pastor dey holiday abroad,
but you still dey pray in the name of God,
make you see food oh make you no fade to dust,
man of God dey chop him dey robust,
in your small salary you will pay tithe,
fellowship in the day,
crusade for night,
so you are out here looking for more cheese,
but apostle getting on Forbes list."

In these lines, Falz highlights the stark contrast between the lavish lifestyles of religious leaders and the financial struggles of their congregation. The pastor holidaying abroad while believers struggle to meet basic needs underscores the moral and financial exploitation inherent in some religious practices.

The artist also makes use of satire, as he mockingly tells christians not to fade to dust whilst overwhelmed with religious delusion;

“fellowship in the day, crusade for night”

The above excerpt specifically emphasizes why many Christians remain poor as their time and limited resources are constantly tied up in church activities, leaving little opportunity for personal economic growth. This also reflects sacrificial imbalance, where devotion is manipulated for the material gain of leaders.

Falz use the lines “in your small salary you will pay tithe, fellowship in the day, crusade for night” to mirror the unending cycle of obligations placed on congregants. His sarcasm and irony in expressions like “make you see food oh make you no fade to dust” and “apostle getting on Forbes list” further mocks the absurdity of worshippers sacrificing while leaders thrive materially. Through juxtaposition, repetition, parallelism, and irony, Falz critiques religious exploitation and underscores how it contributes to the moral and economic challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians.

Through irony, direct address, and narrative detail, Falz effectively condemns the rise of internet fraud, showing how appearances of wealth often mask unethical actions, and illustrating the societal impact of this moral degeneration.

Falz also critiques how Nigerians fall prey to religious foolishness and exploitation. He emphasizes this in lines such as:

"Your pastor dey holiday abroad, but you still dey pray in the name of God, make you see food oh make you no fade to dust, man of God dey chop him dey robust, in your small salary you will pay tithe, fellowship in the day, crusade for night, so you are out here looking for more cheese, but apostle getting on Forbes list."

In these lines, Falz uses juxtaposition to highlight the stark contrast between the lavish lifestyles of religious leaders and the financial struggles of their congregants. The pastor "holidaying abroad" while believers struggle to meet basic needs underscores the moral and financial exploitation inherent in some religious practices.

The line "fellowship in the day, crusade for night" specifically emphasizes why many Christians remain poor: their time and limited resources are constantly tied up in church activities, leaving little opportunity for personal economic growth. This also reflects sacrificial imbalance, where devotion is manipulated for the material gain of leaders.

Falz employs repetition and parallelism in these lines "in your small salary you will pay tithe, fellowship in the day, crusade for night" to mirror the unending cycle of obligations placed on congregants. His sarcasm and irony in expressions like "make you see food oh make you no fade to dust" and "apostle getting on Forbes list" further mocks the absurdity of worshippers sacrificing while leaders thrive materially. Through juxtaposition, repetition, parallelism, and irony, Falz critiques religious exploitation and underscores how it contributes to the moral and economic challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians.

In “Wehdone Sir”, the repeated line, “Wehdone sir, wehdone sir, wehdone sir, tell am say wehdone sir,” serves as the chorus and follows each criticism that Falz directs at his targets. The repetition of this phrase performs multiple functions that enhance the song’s overall impact. It acts as a tool for emphasis and reinforcement. By repeatedly stating “Wehdone sir,” Falz ensures that his critiques are memorable, making the audience internalize the points he raises. The continuous recurrence of the chorus gives the song a sense of rhythm while simultaneously highlighting the gravity of the issues being addressed.

The chorus carries a strong sense of sarcasm and irony. While the phrase “wehdone sir” mimics a respectful acknowledgment, such as praising someone for a job well done, in the context of the song it is deeply ironic. Each iteration follows a criticism of hypocrisy, moral failings, or fraudulent behavior, making the line a vehicle for satirical commentary. This irony exposes the disconnect between the outward appearance of respect and the underlying condemnation of the targets’ actions. The chorus also serves an important role in organizing the song. By placing it after each critical observation, Falz creates a recognizable pattern that guides the listener through the various social and moral issues highlighted in the track. The repetition not only maintains musical cohesion but also ensures that each critique is punctuated effectively, allowing the message to resonate clearly.

The repeated chorus engages the audience in a participatory way. Listeners are invited to echo the phrase, reinforcing the song’s message and creating a collective acknowledgment of the issues being addressed. Through this combination of repetition, irony, and sarcasm, Falz

uses the chorus to amplify his social commentary, making it both musically engaging and thematically potent.

“Wehdone Sir” concludes with the line “we are still watching you from the high place,” which underscores the song’s central focus on accountability and moral scrutiny. Throughout the track, Falz critiques fake lifestyles, exposing individuals who project wealth and success while struggling financially or living dishonestly. He condemns internet fraud, highlighting those who exploit others through illegal online activities. The song also critiques religious exploitation, drawing attention to pastors and religious leaders who enrich themselves while their followers remain impoverished or overburdened with financial obligations. The repeated chorus, “Wehdone sir, wehdone sir, tell am say wehdone sir,” reinforces each critique, employing irony and sarcasm to underscore the disconnect between appearances and reality. Ending with the statement that “we are still watching you from the high place,” the song leaves the audience with a sense of vigilance, social reflection, and moral accountability, reminding listeners that unethical behavior does not go unnoticed.

DATA FIVE: “THIS IS NIGERIA” by FALZ

“This is Nigeria” by Falz paints a stark picture of moral degeneration and social decay in Nigerian society. The song touches on issues such as crime, drug abuse, violence, corruption, materialism, and misplaced priorities. With its raw tone and satirical delivery, Falz mirrors the everyday struggles and vices that plague ordinary Nigerians, urging listeners to reflect on the consequences of these moral failings.

ABSURDISM in the SECURITY SYSTEM

One evident theme in “This is Nigeria” is Falz’s portrayal of Nigeria as an absurd society where normal standards are turned upside down. He illustrates this with the striking line,

“police station dey close by six, for security reasons oo.”

This line is deeply ironic because the very institution meant to provide safety is unable to secure itself, let alone protect the citizens. It highlights the failure of law enforcement in Nigeria, where the police are often underpaid, ill-equipped, and overwhelmed by insecurity. The absurdity lies in the contradiction: a police station, which should be a symbol of protection at all times, becomes vulnerable and shuts its doors by nightfall. This image is not only comical in its irony but also tragic, as it captures the sense of helplessness and mistrust that ordinary Nigerians feel toward the system. Through this, Falz critiques the dysfunction of institutions and how their failures contribute to the moral and social decay of the country.

IMPURITY in CHRISTAINITY

Another thematic preoccupation that Falz addresses in “This is Nigeria” is the exploitation and moral corruption within some religious institutions. The excerpt

“my brothers and sisters I want you to put your hands up
because your miracle is coming this week,
if you believe me, let me hear you say amen,
uh this is Nigeria oo, praise and worship we are singing now,

pastor put hand on the breast of his member, he is pulling the demon out...”

The excerpt captures the dual nature of religious practices in the country: on the one hand, religion provides hope and emotional upliftment, but on the other hand, it has become a site of manipulation and abuse.

Falz employs satire to criticize and dramatize a tone that is familiar to Nigerians: the language of prophecy and miracles. The pastor declares with confidence that “your miracle is coming this week,” a phrase that mirrors the everyday prosperity preaching. This form of religious expression thrives on creating expectations of sudden blessings, financial breakthroughs, and miraculous turnarounds, often with little emphasis on personal effort, responsibility, or accountability. By repeating the rhythm of church call-and-response “if you believe me, let me hear you say amen” Falz draws listeners into a scene that initially feels authentic. However, this authenticity is disrupted by the shocking revelation that follows.

The artist gives an imagery of a pastor placing his hands on the breasts of a female member under the guise of deliverance exposes the manipulation of religious authority. This image portray how spiritual leaders use their power to exploit vulnerable followers, particularly women, who are often made to believe that such acts are spiritual exercises necessary for their healing or liberation. Falz is not simply narrating an isolated event but pointing to a recurring societal issue where immoral practices are justified under the cloak of religion. This also ties into a wider culture of silence, where victims are often afraid to speak up, fearing stigmatization, disbelief, or spiritual condemnation.

The use of contrast is seen in this song is especially powerful: on one side, there is “praise and worship” which should symbolize holiness, reverence, and moral purity; on the other side, there is an act of sexual violation disguised as spiritual intervention. This sharp contrast exposes the deep hypocrisy and degeneration present in certain religious spaces. It also reflects a broader societal problem: the tendency to place religious leaders beyond accountability, even when they engage in exploitative behavior.

Falz employs satire and irony to make his critique both memorable and unsettling. By embedding the shocking act within the context of a regular worship service, he expects listeners to confront the uncomfortable reality that exploitation is often hidden in plain sight. The effect is that of disillusionment: what is supposed to be sacred is desecrated, what is supposed to be a refuge becomes a site of abuse, and what is supposed to be spiritual deliverance becomes a cover for moral corruption.

Ultimately, this excerpt reveals how religion, rather than serving solely as a moral compass, can also become a tool for oppression and manipulation in Nigeria. Falz does not condemn religion itself, but he condemns those who exploit it, exposing the gap between what is preached and what is practiced. His message is clear: the society cannot move forward when institutions that should foster morality are instead breeding grounds for exploitation, hypocrisy, and abuse.

The chorus of *This is Nigeria* is one of the most powerful tools Falz employs to reinforce his social commentary.

“This is Nigeria,
look how I’m living now,
look how I’m living now,
everybody be criminal”

The refrain is repeated after each major criticism in the song, and its placement functions as both a summary and a reminder of the abnormality of Nigeria’s social condition.

Falz makes use of repetition in this chorus, and the constant echoing of “look how I’m living now” creates a rhythm of frustration, almost like a lamentation, that underlines the helplessness of ordinary citizens. The phrase “everybody be criminal” extends beyond individual wrongdoing; it is an exaggerated generalization that highlights how corruption and survival tactics have become normalized in daily life. The ordinary Nigerian, forced to navigate a broken system, is pushed into acts that blur the line between legality and survival.

The chorus also employs hyperbole, as not literally everyone is a criminal. Instead, Falz uses the device to underscore the pervasiveness of moral decay and how deeply corruption has eaten into the social fabric. Even those who may not engage in outright crime often participate in or enable smaller forms of dishonesty, from bribery to cutting corners, making the exaggeration resonate with truth.

Through this chorus, Falz creates a refrain that is both catchy and haunting. It lingers in the listener’s mind, ensuring that the weight of his critique is not lost after each verse. More than

a musical hook, it becomes a thematic anchor that ties all the issues together, making the song not just a narrative of Nigeria's problems but a symbolic anthem of a nation in moral crisis.

Falz's "This is Nigeria" exposes the contradictions and failures in society through themes of insecurity, police inefficiency, and religious exploitation. The recurring chorus "This is Nigeria, look how I'm living now, everybody be criminal" ties these issues together, stressing how corruption and dishonesty have become normalized. By ending with this refrain, Falz leaves listeners with a reminder of a society trapped in dysfunction and moral decay.

.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This research examined Nigerian popular music as an important medium of social commentary, focusing on selected songs by Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz. Through close textual analysis of their lyrics, the study demonstrated that both artists use music not only for entertainment but also as a platform for confronting the social, political, and moral issues facing Nigeria. Their songs reveal that music, like literature, reflects human experience and can serve as a means of education, resistance, and reform.

Eedris Abdulkareem's songs such as Jaga Jaga, Country Hard, Emilokan, and Tell Your Papa explore the challenges of corruption, bad governance, unemployment, and economic hardship. His lyrics highlight the suffering of ordinary Nigerians and expose the failure of the ruling class to provide good leadership. In Mr. Lecturer, which was examined in Chapter Two, Eedris extends his criticism to corruption in the education system, exposing the exploitation and abuse of power among lecturers. The artist adopts a bold and realistic tone, portraying the frustrations of citizens while also encouraging them to question injustice and demand accountability. His works reveal his deep commitment to truth and social responsibility.

Falz, in songs like Talk, Wehdone Sir, Confirm, and This is Nigeria, also interrogates the moral and social contradictions of contemporary Nigeria. He criticizes corruption, hypocrisy, greed, and religious manipulation, showing how these vices contribute to the nation's decline. His approach combines humour, irony, and realism to mirror the everyday experiences of

Nigerians and expose the absurdities that have become normal in society. His songs present a picture of a people struggling to survive in a system where morality and justice are often compromised.

The research also drew attention in Chapter One to Falz's *E No Finish*, which illustrates the endless cycle of hardship and unfulfilled promises that characterize the Nigerian experience. It emphasizes the persistence of the problems discussed in later chapters, creating a thematic link across the entire study.

In conclusion, the study has shown that both Eedris Abdulkareem and Falz serve as voices of social awareness through their music. Their songs address pressing issues that affect the lives of Nigerians and offer critical reflections on governance, morality, and social behaviour. The analysis confirms that song lyrics possess literary qualities worthy of scholarly attention, as they employ creative language, narrative depth, and thematic focus to express complex realities. Nigerian popular music, therefore, stands as a legitimate form of literature—one that documents, questions, and seeks to transform society.

Works Cited

- Abdulkareem, Eedris. *Country Hard*. Lakreem Entertainment, 2020.
- Abdulkareem, Eedris. *Emi Lokan*. Lakreem Entertainment, 2022.
- Abdulkareem, Eedris. *Jaga Jaga*. Kennis Music, 2004.
- Abdulkareem, Eedris. *Mr. Lecturer*. Kennis Music, 2002.
- Abdulkareem, Eedris. *Tell Your Papa*. Lakreem Entertainment, 2021.
- Abrams, M. H., and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 11th ed., Cengage Learning, 2015.
- Anyekwelu, Joe. "Popular Music: A Satirical Weapon for the Fight Against Societal Ills." *Nsukka Journal of Music and Arts Research*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2018, pp. 293–301.
- Asenye, Charles M., and Florence Mandor. "Navigating the Balance Between Globalization and Cultural Authenticity in Nigerian Pop Music." *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*, vol. 16, 2023, pp. 41–50.
- Bamigbade, Oluwafemi Emmanuel. "A Pragmatic Analysis of the Song: 'This Is Nigeria' by Falz." *Abuja Journal of Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2021, p. 8.
- Barber, Karin. *A History of African Popular Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Ebele, Ojukwu. "Educational Implication of Social Media Influence of Popular Music on Nigerian Youth." *Nigerian Music Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2019, pp. 56–60.
- Egere, Emmanuel. "Protest and Activism in Selected Nigerian Songs." *NIU Journal of Humanities*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2019, pp. 201–210.
- Falz (Folarin Falana). *Confirm*. Bahd Guys Records, 2019.

Falz (Folarin Falana). E No Finish. Bahd Guys Records, 2019.

Falz (Folarin Falana).Talk. Bahd Guys Records, 2019.

Falz (Folarin Falana).This Is Nigeria. Bahd Guys Records, 2018.

Falz (Folarin Falana). Wehdone Sir. Bahd Guys Records, 2017.

Kotarba, Joseph A., and Phillip Vannini, editors. *Understanding Society through Popular Music*. Routledge, 2009.

Layefa, Ennagu, et al. "Nigerian Youth and Popular Music: The Media Literacy Imperative." *Abuard Journal of Humanities*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2016, pp. 33–34.

Nwokolo, Udoka Paul Timothy, et al. "Developments in Nigerian Popular Music and Social Media in Nigeria." *Icheke Journal of the Faculty of Humanities*, pp. 49–65.