PERSPECTIVES OF MUSICOLOGISTS ON ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH DESIGN IN MUSIC STUDIES

ALADE, Bukola Olajumoke
Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan
Mobile: +2348030571453
E-mail: acadasty@gmail.com

Abstract
There are several research designs involved in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results for any particular study in different disciplines. This depends on the focus of the researcher and the problem being investigated. Ethnographic research is obviously a qualitative research approach that focuses on captive audience upon which findings are discussed in line with research problem. Be as it may, there are different schools of thoughts about the strength and weakness of ethnographic research approach in addressing contemporary problems. This study thus investigated the perspectives of musicologists on ethnographic research design in music studies. Four research questions guided the study, and data were collected through in-depth interview on one-on-one basis. Relevant information for the study was collected from ethnomusicologists. It was found out that there are inadequacies and challenges in ethnographic research approach in music studies which include problem of accessibility to research locations and organisation of interview sessions with the informants. Also, the extent of generalisation of findings remain a crucial debate among scholars in the field and allied disciplines. The study concluded that ethnographic research approach provides opportunity for gaining direct entrance to culture of people where fieldwork is carried out, and to observe studies under research in real life settings for valid and reliable judgment as well as viable and quality contributions to knowledge.

Key words: Ethnographic, Musicologists, Music Studies, Research.

Introduction

Music holds important position in every human culture in which it shapes people's experiences and serves as a mode of cultural expression. Musical performances are thus essential in notable cultural occasions and sustains specific cultural identities. In order to carry out any study on music and music-related phenomenon of a society or group in a community therefore, ethnographic research approach provides a researcher/investigator channel through which the cultural world of such group or communities can be understood. This research approach delves into how they feel, think, read meanings into their behaviours, interactions and beliefs. Ethnography is one of the qualitative research methods that aims at better understanding of culture, by involving in collection of non-numerical data in cultural setting of the study participants, and allows researcher to reside with the community, participate in their daily activities for a short or and long period of time, and later analyse the non-numerical data for documentation. Ethnography is one of the major designs to qualitative research, it is a research methodology that deals with studying and describing a culture of a group or groups of individuals (Draper, 2015; Sharma & Sarkar, 2019). The wide spread criticisms of the limited scope and participants involved in ethnographic research approach among other reasons, despite being a qualitative and valuable methodological approach calls for the need to explore the perspectives of the experts in the field.

Review of Related Literature

Scholars in their intellectual discourse have viewed ethnography from their philosophical perspectives. For instance, Creswell and Creswell (2018) defined ethnography as a design of inquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behaviours, language, and actions of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a period of time. Ethnography is a qualitative research method that involves the researchers immersing themselves in a particular culture or group to understand their way of life (Adhikari, 2023). Brewer (2003) viewed ethnography as the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally. The features pointed to in the above definitions of ethnography include a prolong period of time that might be involved, carrying out the study in a natural setting, data collection through fieldwork, dependance on participant observation, researcher immersing in a culture under study, studying of people's actions, interactions and beliefs, and thematic documentation of findings. The reseachers perspectives in litrature viewed ethnography from their various disciplinary experiences, and these provide the justification for their relative thoughts.

Furthermore, ethnography is not just a method (of collecting data), it is also seen as a way of thinking (Atkinson, 2017); a logic of inquire (Green et. al., 2012), as well as a research philosophy (Anderson-Leritt, 2006). It is a means of understanding a particular culture through emic and etic perspectives. The emic perspective is a characteristic of ethnographic research in which the focus is based on how members of studied culture view their culture, while etic is a focus on a particular culture, and this gives room for objectivity. Ethnographic research uses several methods of data collection which include focus groups discussion, in-depth interview, observations (participant and non-

participant), and descriptive survey interactions among others. Skukanskaite (2023) opined that studies that simply use methods derived from ethnography but do not encompass ethnographic goals and logic are not ethnographic studies. She further emphasised that methods are tools for collecting and analysing data which can be used in different ways across divers of research designs.

In an ethnographic study, the researcher must be a participant observer (except in a situation whereby it is not possible or convenient to be a participant observer), he or she must be fully immersed into the culture under study, spent a long period of time or about a year or more (because ethnographic research is a long-term research method that takes a long period of time to complete). Ethnography is a research method that involves the researchers immersing themselves in a particular culture or group to understand their way of life (Adhikari, 2023). That is why ethnographic study should be carried out in a natural setting. Ethnographic researcher aims to observe a situation which is unique, original and natural (Sharma & Sarkar, 2019). In addition, ethnographic researchers are expected to find out the norms and essential cultural meanings of the belief practices of group of people whose culture is being studied. He or she aims at observing real live situation in its cultural context. Ethnographic researcher is to have the understanding of how people being studied behave in a particular way.

In music studies, Curran and Radhakrishnan (2021) opined that ethnographic research provides an important lens through which distinct cultural worlds are understood. The study of music of a group in a cultural context is known as ethnomusicology. Ethnographic music research is a kind of research in which the study of music is carried out within cultural and social context. The etymology of the word 'ethnomusicology' literally means the branch of knowledge that deals with the music of people(s) (Victor, 2014). Ethnographic music research makes use of all the methods and instruments of data collection in ethnographic research. In carrying out musical ethnography, the researcher must plan for the study to be carried out which include meeting with the group or group of people that will be involved in the study, followed by performance, recording, interviewing, note taking, transcription and translation of musical data, analysis and reporting of the findings. In carrying out a rigorous and extensive ethnographic research in music, there are helpful guides to pre-field investigation, fieldwork, post-field investigation as well as documentation. All these add to the qualitative values of ethnographic research in music studies.

On research design in music studies, this involves a process through which research questions are being answered by means of data collection, putting in mind necessary ethical considerations, while on the other hand, research methods in music studies ranges from pre-field investigation design, fieldwork investigation design, post-field investigation design, data organisation design, data analysis, report of findings and documentation. In the case of research methodology in ethnographic approach in music studies, it is the method used in the process of data collection. This includes: participant observation, non-participant observation, in-depth interview, focus group interview/discussion, and secondary sources. Sources of data for ethnographic research usually come from primary data sources, that is interviews, observations or case studies and/or secondary data sources which include documents, historical materials as well as domestic materials. The researcher is expected to state clearly the type of data collected from either primary or secondary source of data collection, and explain when

and how they were found or discovered. He/she should made known the people involved in the interview.

Data collection is followed by data transcription and documentation. It involves transcription of musical data, translation and interpretation of events. Data collected are organised, this includes grouping (of data collected in line with the time or period, date, context and what led to the events that produced the data), and interpretation of the musical data, by playing songs many times so as to figure out the musical elements (which form structural analysis). The music is transcribed or notated while editing through the use of music software such as Finale, MuseScore, Subelius or any available music software. This is followed by translation of the collected data for analysis, and documentation. According to Owoaje et al (2019), research is not complete until the reports has been properly written and documented. Musical data on the field is expected to be notated on music software for proper documentation while videos and audio recordings are properly kept all for future references.

After documentation, the next stage is data presentation and analysis of both music and non-music data collected, which is done as contextual analysis and structural analysis. The former analysis is done by analysing the data in line with respondents/participants cultural practices, beliefs, social and economic factors, language, historical background, worldviews and philosophy. Structural analysis of music data is often done in line with its components, connection of the parts involved, and its arrangement or organisation. These may be in terms of musical elements such as texture, harmony, intervals, scale, rhythm, metre, form (plan), tone quality and cadences. Also, validation of data is very important in music studies. This is done for authenticity and truthfulness of documented data and findings. This includes internal and external data validity. Under internal validity, experts in the field do the validation, and the researcher is expected to be unbiased in his/her report. External validity on the other hand, refers to the extent to which research results are validated in line with the findings of other research, this may be unpublished or published research findings.

In sum, ethnographic research, using ethnography as a methodology has indeed gained recognition, adoption and adaptation in different fields of knowledge, music studies inclusive, and a lot of studies as evidenced in the available literature have been carried out in various field of study using ethnography as methodology. Despite its wide application in research literature, the contemporary criticisms of its limitation in geographical scope and participants' size among others informed this empirical investigation.

The study examined the perspectives of musicologists on ethnographic research design in music studies. Precisely, the study sought to:

i. establish the effectiveness of ethnographic research design in solving research problems in music studies,

ii. examine the broadness of ethnographic research design in music studies.

iii. identify the challenges attached to ethnographic research design in music studies,

iv. find out the inadequacies of ethnographic research design in music studies.

The following research questions were answered in this study.

i. Does ethnographic research design effectively answer research problems in music studies?

ii. Is the ethnographic research design in music studies adequately broadminded?

iii. Are there challenges in ethnographic research design in music studies?

iv. What are the inadequacies of ethnographic research design in music studies?

The study covered perspectives of ethnomusicologists in the Polytechnic of Ibadan and the University of Ibadan on their experiences in carrying out studies in music using ethnographic design. In all six ethnomusicologists were the study participants. The study is a quanlitative research. It presented and reported the data collected as they were collected in connection with the research questions concerning ethnographic research design in music studies. This qualitative approach is used in order to seek the relative opinions of the respondents as a justification for its relivance in music research, the belief of different schools of thoughts notwithstanding. In this regard, in-depth interview was conducted with each participant of the study.

The population of this study made up of ethnomusicologists in the Polytechnic of Ibadan and the University of Ibadan. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. The criteria for the purposive sampling were that the participants must be musicologists who have carried out research using ethnographic research method for at least four years and above. In all six respondents participated in the study.

The instrument used for the data collected was interview guide. The respondents were asked prob and prompt questions tailored along the research questions. The data collected were analysed using descriptive method of analysis. Participants in this study were required to have been carrying out research in music field using ethnographic research approach for at least four years. Qualitative research method was used for the study. The data collected were designed to get information useful in answering the research questions about the perspectives of musicologists on ethnographic research design in carrying out music studies. The data collected were examined using Braum and Clarke's (2013) six stages of thematic analysis. Having familiarised with the interview transcript, transcribing the data collected from the interviews conducted with the respondents, then, the responses were grouped in line with each research question. A comprehensive analysis of the themes was used to form and direct the description of the findings.

Limitation of the Study

The sample size and study population for the study were considered as part of the limitations of the study, as only six ethnomusicologists from the University of Ibadan and the Polytechnic of Ibadan were considered for this study. Thus, making some of the findings from the study not applicable to ethnomusicologists beyond African soil. This is because there are findings that are only applicable to African ethnomusicologists based on African cultural and belief systems. Another limitation to this study was the fact that a single instrument was used to generate data which is interview guide. Despite these limitations, the respondents were probed and prompted to answer explorative research questions.

Research Question 1

Does ethnographic research design effectively answer research problems in music studies?

The first research question tried to establish the effectiveness of ethnographic research design in solving research problems in music

studies. Based on this, the respondents who are ethnomusicologists explained in divers ways where the design is useful in solving research problems. It was found out that it helps especially, if it is a study of music within a particular society or culture which gives a researcher opportunity to immerse himself or herself into the culture of the community under study by participating in their daily activities. Through this, a researcher will understand their music better, having proper understanding of their culture, because of the nature of music which is a major aspect of people's culture, and there are many indicators that are embedded in music of a particular culture. For instance, their economy, marriage, education, value and lots more are encapsulated in their music. Therefore, before anyone understand music of a particular culture, such must understand their culture, because music actually speaks to the culture of people that produced it.

Furthermore, ethnographic research approach helps in checking out the cultural elements that surround a particular music, these cultural elements include: language, linguistic, belief, people's worldview as well as how music is used in a particular culture. It helps in getting firsthand information from the natives who are the custodians of the information needed in order to share their experiences directly. It also enables researcher to be eye-witness of situation to be studied despite what he or she might have read or heard. It permits participation, investigation, and exploration through interaction or personal observation. Ethnographic research design also enables a researcher to have in-depth knowledge of the study conducted especially in music studies.

Research Question 2

Is the ethnographic research design in music studies adequately broadminded?

The study gathered that ethnographic research design in music studies is usually adequately broadminded, but it has much to do with the researcher. When living with the study group, for example, there is opportunity of observing how they play their drums which may be different from how another society plays theirs, because the way a particular instrument is played in one culture might differ. It varies from one culture to another. Also, despite the structured questions, there is opportunity of probing a respondent further based on what he or she said. It helps in generating ideas for new questions or enquiry during conversations or as situations unfold. A question may lead to another question, an answer may lead to another probing question, a cue may lead to another interjection, and all these give a kind of holistic answer to what a researcher is looking for. Unlike quantitative approach when a researcher used structured questionnaire. For instance, a question that is directed to a music practitioner may go does, 'are you a musician?'. In quantitative approach, the answer is 'yes', but when using ethnographic research design, the respondent may be probed further to give detailed information about his career as a musician, which may include when he started his career, his experiences over the years and so on. It gives room for flexibility in probing respondents so far the questions are not rigid. This gives opportunity for further probing of respondent based on his or her response to questions asked. In case of key-informant interview, besides the key-informant, researcher can also meet someone who is knowledgeable in the area of study who can also be interjecting or serve as a source of information by providing additional information based on the study being carried out.

Although, ethnographic research design is broadminded, but not broad enough to cater for solving all kinds of problems in music studies, one may think of combining other

research designs if need be to give room for mixed research.

Research Question 3

Are there challenges in ethnographic research design in music studies?

The interviewees captured in the study responded that ethnographic research design in music studies has a number of challenges ranging from finance, entry barrier, gender issues, religious barrier, language barrier, problem of timing, insincerity of the respondents, and issue of suspicion among others. Specifically, the challenges are enumerated viz:

Financial Involvement: This include travelling and movement from one place to another in collecting the needed data.

Entry Barrier: Acceptance of people in which their music is to be studied. A researcher may not be easily accepted, especially when the respondents see that the researcher is an elite. There may be initial withdrawal.

Suspicion Problem: People may not really trust the researcher because he has made his or her intention known, that is why it is not advisable to declare one's intention at first contact in some cases. When the researcher continuing living with them and participating in some activities, until the researcher is used to the people whose music is to be studied, it is not advisable to reveal researcher's intention, because they might read meanings and at the end suspicion may wade in.

Gender Barrier: If a field is male dominated, female researchers may feel withdrawn or may be denied access and vice versa. There may be situation whereby a particular gender is not allowed or deny access to where data supposed to be collected.

Culture/Religious Restriction: For instance, in Yorubaland, there are certain research that one cannot embark on if the researcher is not initiated, in which such may have to be exposed to metaphysical experiences.

Respondents' Insincerity: At times, respondents might not be sincere in their responses. This is as a result of believing that the information supposes not to be released to outsider or some certain people. This may lead to given brief information and not detailed. There is also possibility that people who are interviewed may exaggerate because of fading memories, responses may base on interest, make up and personal embellishment. If the researcher is not an expert, such may not be able to weigh and differentiate between the truth and false account. Also, someone with limited information may give a researcher wrong information or data.

Language Barrier: Even with the help of interpreter, information gathering on the field may not be adequate, based on the ability of the interpreter summarising a whole lot of information in few words while translating.

Financial Gratification Problem: Problem may surface at times if a key-informant guess or discover that a researcher will not pay him/her or give something in return after getting needed information. Once this is done, the researcher is likely not to get hundred percent unbiased data.

Restriction Problem: Unlike questionnaire in qualitative study, a researcher cannot distribute himself or herself into various places. It is restricted and it is not easily distributed because a researcher cannot be distributed to places. Even, with the help of field assistants, he or she is not the researcher,

they might not be able to conduct interview properly.

Inability to track people down: This is because the researcher house the questions, he is the one to ask questions, people can collect paper from a researcher, and take it home to fill and submit later in a quatlitative research approach, though, there may be peculiar problem with questionnaire as well, but people cannot take a researcher home or farm for interview.

Inconsistency: At times music performance observed by a researcher today may not be exactly the same another day when the same music is being performed, based on unforeseen circumstances or some other things beyond control.

At times, in focus group interview, some members may not want to give out detailed information because of the presence of may be the leader of the group or anyone that can be intimidating to a particular respondent. For example, in Yoruba culture, young people suppose not to talk when elderly ones are on seat. Sometimes some people are present but they would fail to give necessary information because they are afraid of somebody or are not supposed to talk based on their cultural belief, age or gender.

Other problems gathered in this study include; limitation in geographical scope and participants size, problem of researcher in meeting the time frame by the respondents in some cases, problem of having access to correct and adequate information because some have died, while some may not be available. Finally, ethnographic research design is time consuming. It requires a researcher to spend long period of time with study group in their cultural setting.

Research Question 4

What are the inadequacies of ethnographic research design in music studies?

Based on the interview conducted, the respondents confirmed that there are inadequacies in ethnographic research approach in music studies, as nothing is perfect on its own. The inadequacies are explained below:

Ethnographic research approach requires a researcher to be on the field and familiarise with the community or group of people whose music is to be studied, while doing this, he or she need to also familiarise with their culture. If care is not taking, it may influence a researcher to be biased. For instance, a researcher that need to go to a church to carry out a music study but along the lines he or she fall in love with the church or pastor, there is tendency for such to be biased.

Also, there are certain languages researcher may not be able to capture the same way the native speaker actually meant it, and this may affect the findings of the study. Misrepresentation of facts may also occur. What a respondent is saying orally might be difficult for the researcher to note or get correctly. For example, a researcher may take 'whole' in place of 'hoe' which will eventually lead to misrepresentation.

There is also issue of generalization of findings. Findings of a study carried out with a particular group cannot be generalised, which means, it might not be applicable to another society performing the same style of music.

Discussion of Findings

The relevant data and information collected for this study revealed the effectiveness of ethnographic research approach in music studies as it gives a researcher opportunities of residing with the study group, so as to understand their culture which serves as means of getting relevant data needed for a

particular study, through which he or she will be able to observe, participate and understand the underlining cultural believe and other factors that led to the production of their music. This is in agreement with the position of McGranaham (2018), that ethnographic research is a full-based programme designed to identify and record the entirety of any given society's material and effective life. The research approach affords the opportunity to know the nitty gritty of what a researcher intends to investigate, and as well understand cultural principles that is embedded in the music of a particular community being studied. It was revealed that, for ethnographic research approach to be effective, a researcher needs to be immersed into the culture of the people for a considerable period of time having close interaction with them. This was supported by Cohen (1993), that ethnography involves a lengthy period of intimate study and residence with a particular group of people, understanding their language and employment, through observational techniques including face-to-face contact with the group and direct participation in some of their activities.

It was also revealed in the study that ethnographic research approach in music studies is broadminded, in that it requires exploration on research questions, and enables researcher to probe further on any given question or answer. It also gives room for probing so as to read meanings into the cultural system of the studied group. This is in line with Witehead (2005), when he viewed ethnography as a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems and a process of discovering, making inferences, and continuing inquires in an attempt to achieve emic validity.

On the challenges in ethnographic research approach in music studies, relevant information collected revealed that the research approach has a number of challenges faced by researchers. These include, timing, cultural conflict, entry barrier, gender barrier, suspicion problem, cultural or religious restriction, respondent insincerity, language barrier, restriction problem, problem of finance among others. Some of these problems are peculiar to the ethnomusicologists interviewed as influenced by African society. Adhikari (2023) supported that ethnographic research method is time-consuming and expensive.

Further in this study, it was found out that there are inadequacies in ethnographic research design in music studies, in that the approach can be biased in as much that the ethnographic researchers are human beings. Their findings may be as a result of their personal beliefs, experiences or familiarisation with a studied group. At times, findings cannot be generalised, this is because it cannot be applicable to another society performing the same genre of music. This affirmed the submission of Adhikari (2023), that sometimes generalisation of findings may be difficult, because each settings is unique and the findings of an ethnographic study may not be applicable to other settings. However, despite the inadequacies of ethnographic research design, it can be a strong tool for getting new knowledge in several areas of study.

Conclusion
The study has established that ethnographic research design in music studies is effective and broadminded, despite its challenges and inadequacies. It affords the opportunity to know the nitty gritty of what a particular researcher intends to find out, because music research in African society goes beyond mere observation. There are some nuances that a researcher would not understand until he understood what actually prompted the study group. The winkling of eyes, hand gesture or any other body language or non-verbal communication may mean different things to

different culture. It is when a researcher understands the way of life of his or her study group, then such can then understand what led to a particular music. In essence, culture gave birth to music.

Also, there are certain studies in music field in which ethnographic research design may not be the appropriate approach. Despite the fact that the design is broadminded, it does not mean that a researcher cannot employ other designs if need be, to make it a mixed research. In some situations, qualitative method may not be enough, there might be the need to introduce another method, so as to be able to get necessary information which may lead to mixed research. When considering multidisciplinary study, ethnographic method may not be enough. Different researchers from different fields of study will come up with different research designs to get a richer and fuller outcome or findings. Finally, ethnographic research design is broad but not broad enough to cater for all kinds of research in music studies in the age of multidisciplinary studies.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- The researchers using ethnographic research design, if possible, should not reveal his or her intention at the initial stage to avoid the problem of suspicion, and such can associate with the study group freely, participating in their daily activities so that the natives will give their acceptance having familiar to them.
- Ethnographic researchers should not be driven by their personal beliefs, experiences or familiarisation so as not to affect the report of their findings and avoiding being bias.
- Other researchers should try ethnographic research design, may be as mixed research, because it provides

the opportunities of getting direct information from the studied group in their cultural setting and gives room for explorative research questions.

- Based on the findings of the study, there are problem of cultural diversity and belief system that do not favour a particular gender class or outsider. So, African society should encourage and welcome ethnographic researchers in making their cultural heritage (which include music) available to the outside world through the outcome of research findings which will in turn lead to promotion of their cultural heritage.
- Ethnographic research design is time consuming and money demanding, therefore, government and philanthropists should give financial support in form of grants to ethnographic researchers in carrying out their research for further development in African continent.

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