



## Moral Themes and Ethical Teachings in Selected Urhobo Traditional Songs of Sally Young and Okpan Arhibo

Etaoghene Paul POLO<sup>1</sup> & Temabor Peace ONYENYE (Ph.D.)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1606-0273>

<sup>2</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0003-9649-8981>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Philosophy, University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Music, University of Delta Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria

Received: 10.05.2026 | Accepted: 15.06.2026 | Published: 16.06.2026

\*Corresponding Author: Etaoghene Paul POLO

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.20721352](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20721352)

### Abstract

### Original Research Article

Music occupies a significant position in African societies as a medium for preserving indigenous knowledge, transmitting cultural values, and promoting communal consciousness. Among the Urhobo people of Delta State, Nigeria, traditional musicians have historically served as social commentators and custodians of moral and cultural heritage. Despite the cultural importance of Urhobo music, limited scholarly attention has been given to the ethical teachings embedded in it. This study therefore examines the moral themes and ethical teachings in selected songs of Chief Daniel Iriferi [Sally Young] and Joseph Odjevwedje [Okpan Arhibo]. Adopting a qualitative textual and interpretative approach, the study analyses *Ono Vwakpo* and *No Basket for Rotten Mango* as Urhobo cultural music containing reflections on human existence, social responsibility, marriage, and moral conduct. The findings reveal that the selected songs function beyond entertainment by serving as instruments of ethical instruction and social commentary. While Sally Young's *Ono Vwakpo* reflects on the transient nature of life and encourages meaningful living, Okpan Arhibo's *No Basket for Rotten Mango* emphasises the sanctity of marriage, responsible relationships, and adherence to communal moral expectations. The study further demonstrates that through metaphor, indigenous language, and cultural symbolism, both musicians preserve and transmit important ethical values. The study concludes that Urhobo traditional music represents a valuable repository of indigenous moral philosophy and communal knowledge. It recommends sustained documentation and scholarly engagement with indigenous music as important resources for preserving African cultural and ethical traditions.

**Keywords:** Urhobo Traditional Music, Indigenous Knowledge, Moral Philosophy, Ethical Teachings, Sally Young, Okpan Arhibo, African Oral Traditions.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

### Introduction

Music has always occupied a significant position within African societies, where it performs functions that extend beyond mere

entertainment. Traditional music serves as a medium through which communities preserve historical experiences, communicate philosophical ideas, transmit indigenous knowledge, and reinforce accepted standards of



social conduct. Within the African worldview, artistic expressions such as songs, folktales, proverbs, and performances are important cultural instruments through which societies educate their members and sustain collective identities. This explains why traditional musicians are often regarded not simply as performers but as historians, moral commentators, social critics, and custodians of communal wisdom.

The educational and ethical dimensions of indigenous artistic expressions are particularly evident within African systems of knowledge. African philosophy recognises that knowledge is not solely an individual possession but a collective heritage that is generated, preserved, and transmitted through communal interactions and cultural practices. According to Polo and Olanrewaju (2025), African epistemological traditions emphasise group knowledge and communal identity, where values, beliefs, and practical wisdom are preserved through shared experiences and transmitted across generations. Such knowledge frequently exists within oral traditions, including myths, folktales, proverbs, rituals, and musical performances. Consequently, indigenous music should be understood as an important repository of communal knowledge and a medium through which societies communicate ethical expectations.

Among the Urhobo people of Delta State, Nigeria, music remains one of the most important channels through which cultural values, social experiences, and indigenous philosophies are preserved and transmitted. Urhobo traditional music is deeply connected to everyday life and often addresses themes relating to morality, human relationships, communal responsibility, leadership, social justice, marriage, death, and the consequences of individual actions. Through songs, musicians communicate societal expectations, praise virtuous conduct, condemn undesirable behaviour, and encourage attitudes that promote communal harmony.

This moral and educational role of Urhobo music has been recognised by several scholars. Okafor and Onyenye (2026) argue that Urhobo traditional musicians function as custodians of indigenous knowledge, historical memory, cultural identity, and communal values. Their study demonstrates that the songs of notable Urhobo musicians preserve the Urhobo language, document social realities, reinforce cultural beliefs, and provide moral guidance for members of society. Similarly, Onyenye (2024) observes that the musical works of Urhobo musicians often incorporate folklore, proverbs, satire, and idiomatic expressions that communicate cultural knowledge and social lessons. These features reveal that indigenous musical performances operate as informal educational spaces where societal values are continuously negotiated and transmitted.

Despite the important cultural role played by Urhobo traditional musicians, much scholarly attention has focused on the historical development, documentation, and performance practices of indigenous music, while comparatively fewer studies have undertaken detailed philosophical and ethical examinations of the moral teachings embedded within specific musical texts. Existing works have successfully documented the contributions of major musicians such as Daniel Iriferi [Sally Young] and Joseph Odjevwedje [Okpan Arhibo], highlighting their roles in preserving Urhobo heritage and cultural consciousness (Okafor and Onyenye, 2026). However, there remains a need to move beyond documentation of their careers to a deeper examination of how their lyrical compositions function as vehicles for ethical instruction and moral reflection.

This study addresses this gap by examining the moral themes and ethical teachings contained in selected songs by Chief Daniel Iriferi, popularly known as Sally Young, and Joseph Odjevwedje, popularly known as Okpan Arhibo. The selected songs, *Ono Vwakpo* and *No Basket for Rotten Mango*, are analysed as cultural songs that communicate important reflections concerning human existence,

responsibility, social behaviour, marriage, and the consequences of moral choices.

The study adopts a qualitative textual and interpretative approach, paying close attention to the meanings embedded within the songs, the cultural symbols employed by the musicians, and the ethical lessons communicated through their lyrics. The argument advanced is that these musical works represent more than artistic entertainment; they constitute forms of indigenous moral philosophy through which the Urhobo people preserve communal values, transmit ethical knowledge, and guide individual behaviour.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach employing textual and interpretative analysis as its principal method of inquiry. This approach is considered appropriate because the study is concerned with examining the ethical meanings, philosophical reflections, and cultural values embedded within selected Urhobo musical texts. Rather than treating music merely as an artistic or entertainment product, the study approaches traditional songs as cultural works that contain indigenous knowledge, communal experiences, and moral instructions.

The study specifically focuses on two selected musical compositions: *Ono Vwakpo* by Chief Daniel Iriferi [Sally Young] and *No Basket for Rotten Mango* by Joseph Odjevwedje (Okpan Arhibo). These songs were purposively selected due to their explicit engagement with moral questions relating to human existence, social responsibility, marriage, interpersonal relationships, and acceptable conduct within Urhobo society. The purposive selection of the songs is justified by the fact that they represent significant examples of how Urhobo traditional musicians utilise artistic expression to address social issues and communicate ethical teachings.

Data for the study were obtained from the lyrical contents of the selected songs, supported by available audio-visual recordings and relevant scholarly literature on Urhobo music, African

indigenous knowledge systems, and African philosophy. The songs were carefully listened to, transcribed, translated where necessary, and subjected to critical textual examination in order to identify recurring ethical themes, cultural symbols, metaphors, and philosophical ideas. The analysis involved identifying recurring ethical themes, symbolic expressions, and cultural meanings within the lyrics and interpreting them within the wider framework of Urhobo social values and African indigenous epistemology.

The analytical framework of the study is informed by the African conception of knowledge as a communal and culturally transmitted phenomenon. As Polo and Olanrewaju (2025) argue, knowledge within many African traditions is preserved and sustained through collective practices, oral traditions, and shared social experiences. Consequently, indigenous music constitutes an important repository of communal wisdom through which societies communicate values, preserve historical memory, and shape moral consciousness. This perspective provides a suitable framework for interpreting the ethical significance of the selected songs.

The analysis is therefore centred on understanding how language, metaphor, symbolism, and narrative structures within the songs communicate moral principles and social expectations. Particular attention is paid to the ways the musicians employ everyday experiences and familiar cultural imagery to discuss broader issues concerning human mortality, responsible living, sexual morality, marriage, and communal responsibility.

By adopting this methodological approach, the study moves beyond a descriptive appreciation of Urhobo music to a philosophical examination of the ethical ideas contained within its lyrical compositions. It demonstrates that traditional musical performances can function as important sites of moral education, cultural preservation, and indigenous knowledge transmission.

## **Daniel Iriferi [Sally Young] and Joseph Odjevwedje [Okpan Arhibo] as Custodians of Urhobo Cultural Values**

### **Daniel Iriferi [Sally Young] (1933-2024)**

Daniel Iriferi, professionally known as Sally Young, occupies a prominent place in the history of Urhobo indigenous music and Nigerian highlife tradition. Born in 1933 in Abraka, present-day Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, he developed into one of the most celebrated Urhobo musicians whose career, which extended over several decades, played an important role in the growth, preservation, and wider recognition of Urhobo musical heritage (Punch Newspaper, 2024).

Sally Young's journey into professional music was not without obstacles. Like several early African musicians who pursued artistic careers during periods when music was often not considered a respectable occupation, he faced opposition from sections of his community. Nevertheless, his determination to pursue his musical ambitions led him to leave his hometown and settle in Benin City, where he found greater opportunities to refine his artistic skills and establish his reputation as a performer (Blogger.com, n.d.).

His rise to fame began in the 1960s and continued throughout the subsequent decades, making him a household name among audiences within and outside Urhobo communities. His music was distinguished by a unique vocal delivery, captivating performances, and a creative combination of indigenous Urhobo musical traditions with modern highlife elements. This musical approach enabled him to reach a diverse audience while maintaining a strong connection with his cultural identity (Okafor and Onyenye, 2026).

A notable characteristic of Sally Young's artistic style was his strategic combination of the Urhobo language with Nigerian Pidgin English. This bilingual approach expanded the reach of his music beyond native Urhobo speakers and reflected broader developments within Nigerian

popular music. Songs such as *We Must Live* demonstrate his ability to communicate indigenous experiences and social messages to a wider audience (Okafor and Onyenye, 2026).

The period surrounding the Nigerian Civil War represented a significant phase in Sally Young's musical output. Through his compositions, he commented on social conditions, captured collective experiences, and addressed issues that affected both the Urhobo people and the Nigerian nation more generally. Consequently, his music remains an important source for understanding aspects of social change, historical consciousness, and cultural experiences in Nigeria (SoundWela, 2025, Okafor and Onyenye, 2026).

Beyond his achievements as an entertainer, Sally Young's contribution to the preservation of Urhobo culture was substantial. His songs promoted communal identity, safeguarded aspects of Urhobo oral traditions, and reinforced indigenous values passed from one generation to another. His contribution remains an essential part of the larger history of Nigerian indigenous music.

His influence extended beyond his lifetime, as many younger musicians have continued to perform and reinterpret his works. His songs remain common features at cultural celebrations, social occasions, and live-band performances, illustrating their continuing relevance within contemporary society. Sally Young died on 11 February 2024 at the age of ninety-one, bringing to an end a remarkable musical career. However, his artistic contributions continue to survive through his recordings and the lasting influence he has had on Urhobo music and cultural expression (Okafor and Onyenye, 2026).

### **Joseph Odjevwedje [Okpan Arhibo] (1947-2022)**

Joseph Odjevwedje, popularly known as Okpan Arhibo, was among the most productive and influential musicians in the development of

modern Urhobo traditional music. Born in Delta State in 1947, he established himself as a significant cultural figure through his extensive musical output, distinctive performance style, and sustained commitment to promoting Urhobo traditions and identity (Akorherhe, Udi, and Okpeki, 2023).

Before becoming a full-time musician, Okpan Arhibo was employed as a driver at the Delta Steel Company in Ovwian-Aladja. His passion for music later influenced his decision to leave paid employment and devote himself entirely to performing and recording, a choice that eventually resulted in a long and successful musical career.

Emerging as a prominent musical figure during the 1970s, Okpan Arhibo became widely admired for his energetic performances, rhythmic compositions, and ability to merge traditional Urhobo musical forms with contemporary sounds. This balance between cultural preservation and musical innovation contributed greatly to his popularity among both Urhobo and non-Urhobo audiences (Okafor and Onyenye, 2026).

Another important feature of his music was his frequent movement between the Urhobo language and Nigerian Pidgin English. This code-switching strategy made his messages accessible to a wider audience while simultaneously preserving indigenous linguistic expressions and cultural meanings. His songs often engaged with everyday social realities, addressing issues relating to interpersonal relationships, communal responsibilities, ethical behaviour, and the consequences of individual actions (Akorherhe, Udi, and Okpeki, 2023).

With a musical catalogue exceeding two hundred albums, Okpan Arhibo remains one of the most prolific figures in Urhobo music. Popular works such as *Konojuwe* and *Urhobo Makosa* contributed significantly to his widespread recognition and strengthened the position of Urhobo indigenous music within Nigeria's broader musical landscape.

In his later years, he battled kidney-

related health challenges, and members of the public, including admirers from the Urhobo community, made efforts to support his medical treatment. Despite these interventions, he passed away in 2022 at the age of seventy-five (The Nation, 2022). Although his death represented a major loss to the Urhobo music community, his legacy remains visible through his extensive recordings and the influence his musical philosophy continues to have on younger generations of performers (Okafor and Onyenye, 2026).

Okpan Arhibo's career demonstrates the enduring role of indigenous musicians as custodians of cultural memory and social values. Through his songs, he preserved the Urhobo language, communicated indigenous knowledge, and addressed social and moral concerns in ways that resonated with ordinary people. His body of work therefore remains an important resource for understanding the relationship between music, morality, and cultural continuity within Urhobo society.

### Ethical Reflections in Chief Daniel Iriferi's *Ono Vwakpo*

The song *Ono Vwakpo* by Chief Daniel Iriferi, popularly known as Sally Young, represents one of the profound philosophical reflections contained within Urhobo indigenous musical traditions. The central question raised in the song concerns the transient nature of human existence and the reality that no individual possesses permanent ownership of life, material wealth, or worldly achievements. Through a reflective and cautionary lyrical approach, Sally Young reminds listeners that human beings enter the world empty-handed and will ultimately depart without taking any earthly possessions along with them.

This philosophical message resonates with broader African and religious understandings of human mortality and the temporary nature of material existence. The song echoes the age-long reflection on the vanity of excessive attachment to worldly possessions and

encourages individuals to pursue lives characterised by moral responsibility, humility, and meaningful relationships. By emphasising that wealth, status, and social achievements cannot accompany humans beyond death, Sally Young redirects attention toward the importance of character and the legacies individuals leave behind within their communities.

A significant aspect of the song is Sally Young's use of historical references to notable Nigerian figures such as Sir Ahmadu Bello and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, whose deaths are presented as reminders that social status, political authority, and historical prominence do not exempt individuals from the universal experience of death. The musician also includes himself within this reflection, acknowledging his own mortality and demonstrating the belief that every human being is subject to the same natural limitations.

Within the framework of Urhobo indigenous philosophy, the song functions as a moral lesson that encourages self-examination and responsible living. Rather than merely entertaining listeners, *Ono Vwakpo* serves as a repository of communal wisdom, transmitting ideas about humility, accountability, and the impermanence of human life. The song therefore demonstrates the role of indigenous musicians as philosophers and educators who employ artistic expression to communicate existential reflections and ethical principles.

The educational significance of *Ono Vwakpo* can further be understood within the broader African conception of knowledge transmission, where music, oral narratives, and performance traditions function as important channels for preserving philosophical thought and cultural values (Polo and Olanrewaju, 2025). Through repetition, performance, and communal participation, such songs become instruments through which societies continually remind their members about acceptable values and the responsibilities attached to human existence.

Consequently, *Ono Vwakpo* extends beyond musical entertainment to become a

philosophical discourse on life, death, human limitation, and moral consciousness. It preserves an important aspect of Urhobo worldview by demonstrating how indigenous musical expressions communicate complex ideas about existence in forms that are memorable, accessible, and culturally meaningful.



Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve7VdAtQ8jo>

### **Moral Symbolism in Okpan Arhibo's *No Basket for Rotten Mango***

The song *No Basket for Rotten Mango* by Joseph Odjevwedje, popularly known as Okpan Arhibo, addresses questions of morality, social responsibility, and the cultural expectations surrounding relationships and marriage within traditional Urhobo society. The song criticises the practice of prolonged cohabitation without formal recognition of marriage and advocates adherence to traditional processes that involve family approval, social responsibility, and communal acknowledgement of marital unions.

The metaphor of the "rotten mango" should be understood within the cultural and moral framework from which the song emerged. The image does not merely describe an individual but serves as a symbolic warning against behaviours perceived within traditional Urhobo society as violating accepted social and marital norms. Through this metaphorical expression, Okpan Arhibo communicates

broader concerns regarding dignity, responsibility, commitment, and the preservation of family values.

The song therefore reflects the traditional belief that marriage is not solely a private relationship between two individuals but a social institution involving families and communities. It emphasises the importance of fulfilling communal expectations regarding marriage rites, parental consent, and responsible family formation. In this regard, the song functions as a form of moral instruction intended to guide individuals toward behaviours considered socially honourable within the cultural context.

The use of everyday imagery, metaphor, and symbolic language demonstrates a common feature of African indigenous artistic communication, where ordinary objects and experiences are transformed into vehicles for conveying complex ethical and philosophical ideas. The metaphor of the mango provides a memorable means through which listeners are encouraged to reflect on personal choices and their social consequences.



**Source:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB9qSR-5CmE>

### **Analysis of Findings: Urhobo Music as Ethical Reflection, Indigenous Knowledge, and Social Commentary**

The analysis of the selected songs, *Ono Vwakpo* by Daniel Iriferi (Sally Young) and *No Basket for Rotten Mango* by Joseph Odjevwedje

(Okpan Arhibo), reveals that Urhobo indigenous music functions beyond entertainment to serve as a repository of communal knowledge, ethical instruction, philosophical reflection, and social commentary. The songs demonstrate the traditional role of indigenous musicians as custodians of cultural values who employ artistic expression to preserve communal wisdom, critique social behaviour, and transmit indigenous systems of knowledge across generations.

This broader understanding of indigenous artistic expression corresponds with African philosophical perspectives that consider knowledge not merely as an individual possession but as something generated, maintained, and transmitted through communal life. According to Polo and Olanrewaju (2025), African epistemological traditions recognise the communal nature of knowledge production, where values, experiences, and systems of understanding are preserved through collective practices and social interactions. Such knowledge does not always exist in written documents but is frequently embedded in oral traditions, rituals, narratives, proverbs, and artistic performances. Similarly, Finnegan (2012) observes that oral artistic forms in African societies function as important channels through which communities preserve historical experiences, social values, and systems of thought. Indigenous music therefore represents an important avenue through which cultural memories and ethical principles are maintained and communicated.

The place of music within indigenous knowledge systems is especially evident within African societies, where musicians often function as historians, philosophers, educators, and social commentators. Nketia (1974) argues that African music is closely connected with social life and frequently serves educational, religious, political, and moral functions. Accordingly, traditional music emerges from the cultural experiences of the people who create it and embodies their worldview, values, and social realities. This understanding is particularly applicable to Urhobo musical traditions, where songs have historically served as vehicles for

documenting communal experiences, preserving language, praising admirable conduct, condemning undesirable behaviour, and transmitting cultural knowledge to younger generations.

The philosophical orientation of Sally Young's *Ono Vwakpo* demonstrates how indigenous music communicates profound reflections on human existence and morality. The central concern of the song is the transient nature of life and the inability of human beings to possess worldly achievements permanently. Through references to notable historical figures and even to himself, Sally Young reminds listeners that death remains a universal human reality that transcends social status, wealth, and political influence. The song therefore advances a philosophy of humility, self-examination, and responsible living. It teaches that human dignity should not be measured solely by material possessions but by the moral legacy one leaves behind. In this respect, *Ono Vwakpo* reflects the role of traditional music as a medium for expressing indigenous philosophies concerning life, mortality, and communal responsibility.

Similarly, Okpan Arhibo's *No Basket for Rotten Mango* illustrates the use of metaphor, proverb, and symbolic language as tools for communicating social and ethical messages. As Onyenye (2024) observes, indigenous Urhobo musical texts frequently employ figurative expressions, satire, humour, and proverbial language to convey educational messages and preserve cultural knowledge. The metaphor of the "rotten mango" should therefore be understood within the cultural context from which the song emerged, reflecting traditional Urhobo expectations concerning responsible relationships, marriage, and family life. Rather than being interpreted merely as a literal judgement on individuals, the metaphor functions as a moral warning against actions perceived as violating communal expectations regarding commitment, responsibility, and social accountability.

The use of ordinary cultural symbols to communicate complex ethical ideas represents one of the defining features of African indigenous artistic traditions. Familiar objects

and experiences from everyday life become transformed into memorable philosophical lessons that can easily be understood and transmitted across generations. This artistic strategy allows musicians to communicate sophisticated reflections on human behaviour without relying on abstract theoretical language. Consequently, the moral teachings contained in *No Basket for Rotten Mango* illustrate how indigenous music functions as an informal educational institution within society.

The educational significance of these musical texts supports the idea that traditional musicians play significant roles in enlightening the public, providing moral guidance, and addressing social issues affecting individuals and communities. Through repeated performances during social gatherings, cultural ceremonies, and communal events, the ethical messages embedded in such songs become incorporated into collective social consciousness. Music therefore serves not only as entertainment but also as a mechanism for social regulation and the reinforcement of communal values.

Furthermore, both Sally Young and Okpan Arhibo demonstrate the position of the indigenous musician as a cultural intellectual whose responsibility extends beyond artistic performance. Through their songs, they interpret human experiences, preserve indigenous languages, question social excesses, and provide reflections on acceptable patterns of conduct. Their works therefore constitute important cultural archives that preserve the philosophical, historical, and ethical dimensions of Urhobo society.

The continued relevance of these songs also demonstrates the importance of documenting indigenous musical traditions in contemporary societies increasingly influenced by globalisation and cultural transformation. As cultural practices continue to change, traditional musical works remain valuable repositories of indigenous knowledge because they preserve local languages, philosophies, moral perspectives, and collective memories. The preservation and scholarly examination of songs such as *Ono Vwakpo* and *No Basket for Rotten Mango* therefore contribute significantly to the

safeguarding of Urhobo cultural heritage.

Consequently, the findings of this study establish that Urhobo traditional music functions as more than an aesthetic practice. Through existential reflections on the temporality of human life, as demonstrated in *Ono Vwakpo*, and social commentary on responsible relationships and communal morality, as demonstrated in *No Basket for Rotten Mango*, these musical texts reveal the capacity of indigenous artistic expressions to serve as mediums of ethical education, cultural preservation, and indigenous knowledge transmission across generations.

## Conclusion

This study examined the moral themes and ethical teachings embedded in selected Urhobo traditional songs by Chief Daniel Iriferi [Sally Young] and Joseph Odjevwedje (Okpan Arhibo), with particular attention to *Ono Vwakpo* and *No Basket for Rotten Mango*. Through qualitative textual and interpretative analysis, the study established that these musical compositions transcend their aesthetic and entertainment functions to serve as important repositories of indigenous knowledge, moral philosophy, and communal values.

The analysis of *Ono Vwakpo* reveals Sally Young's philosophical reflection on the temporary nature of human existence, the inevitability of death, and the need for humility and morally responsible living. By reminding listeners that material wealth, social status, and worldly accomplishments are ultimately transient, the song promotes ethical self-examination and encourages individuals to prioritise meaningful relationships, good character, and positive societal contributions.

Similarly, *No Basket for Rotten Mango* demonstrates the capacity of Urhobo indigenous music to communicate social criticism through metaphor, symbolism, and proverbial expression. The song reflects traditional Urhobo perspectives on marriage, responsibility, and acceptable social conduct, illustrating how music functions as a medium through which communities regulate behaviour, preserve social

institutions, and transmit ethical expectations.

The study therefore concludes that Urhobo traditional musicians function not only as entertainers but also as indigenous philosophers, educators, historians, and custodians of cultural memory. Their musical texts preserve communal experiences and provide insights into the moral worldview of the society from which they emerge. In an era characterised by rapid cultural transformation and increasing global influences, the continued preservation and scholarly engagement with indigenous musical traditions remain essential for safeguarding African cultural heritage and ensuring the continuity of the ethical wisdom embedded within them.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a. **Systematic documentation and digital preservation:** There is a need for cultural institutions, researchers, and community organisations to intensify efforts toward the documentation, archiving, and digital preservation of Urhobo traditional music to prevent the loss of valuable indigenous knowledge contained in musical texts.
- b. **Increased scholarly engagement:** Scholars in philosophy, musicology, African studies, linguistics, and cultural studies should undertake further interdisciplinary research on indigenous musical traditions, particularly focusing on their ethical, philosophical, and epistemological dimensions.
- c. **Integration into educational and cultural programmes:** The moral and cultural teachings embedded in traditional songs should be incorporated into relevant educational, cultural, and community-based programmes as a means of promoting indigenous values and historical consciousness among younger generations.
- d. **Promotion of indigenous languages through music:** Since the philosophical

meanings contained in songs are closely connected to indigenous linguistic expressions, deliberate efforts should be made to encourage the use, teaching, and preservation of the Urhobo language and other African languages through musical and artistic platforms.

- e. Further comparative studies:** Future studies should expand the scope of research beyond the selected musicians and songs by comparing ethical themes across the works of other Urhobo musicians and indigenous musical traditions from different African communities.

## References

- Akporherhe, F., Udi, P. O., and Okpeki, P. I. (2023). Okpan Arhibo: The Minstrel and His Ethno-Music Poetry. *African Journal of Humanities & Contemporary Education Research* Vol. 10(1), pp.152-174. <https://afropolitanjournals.com> Retrieved 26th May, 2025.
- Blogger.com (n.d.). *Chief Sally Young: The King of Urhobo Highlife Music*. <https://ochukotonukari.blogspot.com> Retrieved 18th May 2025.
- Finnegan, R. (2012). *Oral literature in Africa*. Open Book Publishers.
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1974). *The music of Africa*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Okafor, E. J., & Onyenye, T. P. (2026). Music and culture: Documenting selected Urhobo traditional musicians. *Pacific International Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 2(1), 41-53.
- Onyenye, T. P. (2024). Indigenous music broadcast: A case study of Okpan Arhibo's tracks on Delta Rainbow Television, Warri, Nigeria. *The Abuja Communicator: A Journal of Culture and Media Arts*, 4(2), 170-178. <https://doi.org/10.70118/TACJ0013>
- Polo, E. P., & Olanrewaju, O. A. (2025). Epistemic identity and group knowledge in African philosophy. *Nnadiesube Journal of Philosophy*, 8(4), 41-47. <https://acjol.org/index.php/NJP/article/view/7763/7484>
- Punch Newspaper Online (2024). *Sally Young*. <https://punchmg.com> Retrieved 17th May 2025
- SoundWela (2025). *Chief Sally Young*. <https://soundwela.com.ng> Retrieved 18th May 2025.
- The Nation Newspaper (23rd March 2022). *Urhobo Music Maestro Okpan Arhibo Dies*. <https://thenationonlineng.net> Retrieved 23rd May 2025.
- YouTube (n.d.). *Chief Sally Young - Ono Vwako* (Music Video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve7VdAtQ8jo>
- YouTube (n.d.). Okpan Aribio - No Basket for Rotten Mango [Urhobo Music Video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB9qSR-5CmE>