



Music sampling and purchase intention in a developing African economy: An evaluation of the impact of consumer attitude and perceived value

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study investigates whether purchase intention is impacted by music sampling in piracy-prone emerging African markets and identifies the role of premium streaming perceived value as a driver in this relationship.

Methods: The research employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and the Hayes Process approach to analyze a conceptual model based on survey data of 1000 Nigerian music consumers.

Results: The findings indicate that music sampling and consumer attitude positively impact purchase intention, with consumer attitude partially mediating the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention. Notably, higher levels of premium streaming perceived value optimize this mediation effect, enhancing the impact on purchase intention.

Implications: The research theoretically extends the Value-Based Adoption Model (VAM) to digital music streaming in emerging economies, demonstrating how premium perceived value mediates sampling-purchase intention relationships. For managers, the research suggests that a value management strategy for music streaming can stimulate purchase intention even in piracy-prone African markets. Hence, value-based pricing in line with local purchasing power and value-focusing marketing can successfully counteract "free mentality" behaviors, offering sustainable growth opportunities for music-streaming firms in emerging African economies.

Keywords: Purchase intention, Streaming perceived value, Music sampling, Developing African economies, Consumer attitude

JEL Classification: M3, N77, O55

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1 INTRODUCTION

A theoretical perspective that assesses sampling and utility maximization suggests that the impact of music sampling on purchase intentions may be insufficient when consumers

choose among various online consumption platforms (Bhattacharjee et al., 2006; Danaher, Smith, and Telang, 2013). This perception suggests that sampling could stimulate piracy intentions, primarily due to the effects of low income and the costs of streaming (Coyle et al., 2009; Aguiar and Waldfogel, 2018; Barata & Coelho, 2021). This assertion



is likely because piracy is more prevalent in low-income African economies, where antipiracy measures are ineffective compared to developed countries (Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023). Contrary to this assumption, Wlömert and Papies (2016) posit that streaming services enable the increasing ease of music sampling and stimulate consumers' purchase intention. This view implies that the attitude toward paying for music increases as music sampling, facilitated by streaming technology, reveals some value additions. Explicitly, it suggests that even when antipiracy measures are ineffective, the consumer's perception of music streaming value (Pobee, 2021) can still reasonably influence purchase intention. However, Zeithaml (1988), followed by Lee and Lin (2019), defines "perceived value" as a consumer's total perception of online content services, considering its benefits and the required sacrifices to acquire and use the service. On this note, Pobee (2021), Wang et al. (2013), and Barata and Coelho (2021) conclude that consumers who perceive a high value in online services are more inclined to online products or services than those who perceive a low value.

Because the antipiracy measure is ineffective in most developing economies (Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023), it is anticipated that the tendency to subscribe to piracy behavior can be high during music sampling. To prevent such behavior, consumers must discover a value that supersedes the benefits associated with piracy. The conception is that after sampling, the willingness to pay for music can be triggered by what a 'perceived value' offers the consumers. For example, if a consumer chooses to download a music track illegally, the initial satisfaction gained might diminish after repeated listening. Meanwhile, if the consumer opts for premium streaming, he or she gains access to the exclusive feature of music curation. This feature, which offers a diverse music collection, ensures prolonged satisfaction. Along this line, the convenience associated with premium streaming is unparalleled, especially when compared to the stress induced by music piracy and downloads. Thus, with premium streaming, consumers can effortlessly discover new songs suggested to them, enhancing their listening experience. Moreover, benefits like access and exclusivity, ownership and offline usage, and non-advertising interference (Kim et al., 2017) traceable to premium streaming can be perceived as superior satisfaction by consumers. Given that premium music streaming can offer a superior value, the perceived value can positively affect purchase intention (Kim et al., 2007; Lu & Hsiao, 2010; Barata & Coelho, 2021; Chang et al., 2021; Pobee, 2021).

Against this background, numerous past studies, such as those conducted by Kim et al. (2017), Wlömert and Papies (2016), Lin et al. (2013), Chang et al. (2021), and Barata and Coelho (2021), have consistently shown a positive correlation between the perceived value of music and the intention to make purchases. According to their findings, when consumers perceive high value in the music or its services, they will likely want to pay for it. Various factors, including the quality of the music, the price of the music, and personal preferences, could influence this perceived value. Most of these studies have been conducted primarily within the context of developed economies and Asian markets. - Despite that, studies examining how this domain is - ,

influenced by music sampling is relatively scarce. Moreover, such evidence is virtually non-existent in developing African markets. Even in a related study conducted by Adewumi et al. (2023), the extent to which the perceived value impacts the influence of music sampling on purchase intention is not addressed. To this end, the current study fills a gap by investigating how perceived value plays a role in the association between music sampling and purchase intention in a developing African market context.

Given that the market conditions in developing economies are characterized by low purchasing power, it is plausible that low income and cost effects make piracy intentions to prevail (Coyle et al., 2009; Barata & Coelho, 2021; Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi and Maguraushe, 2023). As such, we anticipate an investigation based on a framework of two interconnected constructs to verify this conjecture. First, we intend a connection between music sampling and purchase intention and verify whether consumer attitude mediates the association. Second, we aim to test whether the perceived value of music streaming significantly moderates the mediation effect. The assumption is that the degree to which consumers perceive the value associated with premium streaming could potentially increase purchases after music sampling. Thus, the purpose is to establish whether music sampling enhances purchase intention in emerging African markets and whether what is perceived as a value in music streaming is a significant factor. Doing so, we use the following research questions to drive the analysis toward our objective: How does music purchase intention activate in developing African markets? Is the purchase intention effect of music sampling optimal? If not, does the value perceived of premium streaming improve purchase intention?

To answer the specific research questions, we build on Kim et al.'s (2007) theory of value-based adoption model (VAM) and use Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyze a framework based on survey data of 1000 young music consumers in Nigeria. The VAM has been considered a valuable tool for understanding consumer behavior. By focusing on perceived value, the model provides insights into the factors that motivate consumers to adopt new products and services. Its application to various contexts includes understanding the acceptance of the Internet of Things (IoT) smart home services (Kim et al., 2017), consumers' participation in automobile recalls for environmental defects (Huang, 2022), and the adoption of paid entertainment services (Hutami & Bernadetta, 2022).

As such, the current study contributes to the literature and offers theoretical and managerial implications for business managers; thus, the strategic management of the perceived value of music streaming can help predict risk and investment opportunities associated with music streaming retailing in developing African markets. In particular, these investment opportunities are valuable in the context of how music sampling can affect purchase intention in developing African economies.

After the introduction, Section 2 offers an overview of Nigeria's copyright-related industry and piracy. Section 3 presents the theoretical background, development of hypotheses, and conceptual framework, followed by the research method in Section 4. Section 5 provides the analysis and results, while Section 6 concludes by discussing these results, outlines the study's implications, and presents

concluding remarks after identifying the limitations and suggestions for further research.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE COPYRIGHT-RELATED INDUSTRY AND PIRACY IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian entertainment sector, estimated at \$3.6 billion in 2016, was valued at \$6.4 billion in 2021 and would reach a music revenue of \$73 million at a 3.4% annual growth (Kenechi, 2021). Piracy negates such prospects where unlawful downloading and uploading have an annual loss value of about N10.5 trillion (International Trade Administration, 2023). Even though it is highly popular globally, the sector's income is way below its possible value. Copyright grants owners the absolute rights to reproduce, adapt, distribute, and publicly perform creative work for specific durations (Copyright Alliance, 2021), safeguarding ideas' expression, not the ideas themselves (Rich, 2013). Piracy, defined as the illegal reproduction and distribution of copyrighted material, constitutes a violation of copyright (Sterling, 1988), directly affecting musical works sold without a license (Nwogu, 2015).

In 2012, the piracy rate of copyright in Nigeria was 83% (Olubanwo & Oguntuase, 2019), with losses amounting to approximately N81 billion (Nwogu, 2015). Pirates use pirate websites ironically to receive greater exposure since limited high-quality streamers and high poverty levels restrict subscriptions (Kenechi, 2021; Adedeji, 2023). It comes at the expense of earning revenue for a larger audience. In response, Nigeria's senate enacted legislation in 2022 to align copyright laws with international best practices, mandating economic sanctions and jail time for violations (International Trade Administration, 2023). The Nigerian Copyright Commission implements the Copyright Act and pursues offences; however, piracy still strongly impacts the music industry and cultural economy (Olubanwo & Oguntuase, 2019; Adedeji, 2023; International Trade Administration, 2023). As such, Adewumi et al. (2023) suggest stringent enforcement and harsh penalties to reduce economic losses.

3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

3.1. Value-Based Adoption Model (VAM)

The term "value" has been defined in various ways by scholars, each reflecting a different context but all revolving around the same core concept. Such definitions include consumption value (Sheth et al., 1991), acquisition and transaction value (Thaler, 1985), service and customer value (Woodruff, 1997), consumer value (Holbrook, 1999), and perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988). In this context, "value" is a significant concept in economic analysis. It is grounded in theories of exchange, utility, and the value of work, extending its reach to fields like marketing, accounting, and finance. Its roots can also be traced to psychology and social psychology (Kim et al., 2007). While it is essential to model a product's perceived value based on its price, this approach is not exhaustive. The reason is that consumers often consider factors beyond price, such as the product's perceived quality (Kim et al., 2007). Simplistic trade-off models fail to capture the complexity of the decision-making process and do not

adequately represent perceived benefits and sacrifices (Kim et al., 2007). To address these limitations, Kim et al. (2007) proposed the theory of VAM. They demonstrated that the VAM was particularly effective in explaining consumer adoption of mobile internet.

Adopting the theory of VAM (Kim et al., 2007), the present study recognizes that it can serve as a sound theoretical framework for its conceptual model. The VAM is grounded on the idea that perceived value of a product or service is the fundamental driver of consumer behavior; it is the overall assessment of a product's satisfaction (perceived benefits) against its cost implications (perceived costs). Accordingly, perceived benefits refer to the advantages or gains consumers believe they will obtain from using a product or service. Perceived costs refer to the sacrifices consumers believe they will make to use a product or service. The authors formulated the concept of online service adoption, or purchase intention, around maximizing value. This concept hinged on two critical perceptions: (i) benefits, equivalent to the utility and pleasure gained from the services, and (ii) cost, which assesses whether the expense involved in utilizing the streaming technology is considered affordable or costly concerning its corresponding benefits (Kim et al., 2007). Thus, the VAM suggests a significant relationship between the value perceived by customers and their decision to adopt a particular technology. In other words, if customers perceive that the benefits of using a product or service outweigh the costs, they are more likely to adopt it (Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2018; Pobe, 2021; Huang, 2022). In this regard, we apply the VAM theory to understand how music sampling influences music purchase intention and how consumer attitude mediates the relationship.

3.2. Purchase Intention

According to Aguiar (2017), it is essential to examine how consumers react to music streaming as an alternate way of consumption to gain a deeper understanding of the recorded music industry. The rise of internet technology has significantly shifted consumers towards online music listening, transforming how we experience music. Thus, understanding what determines online music purchase intention is crucial for the music business. In this attempt, Kim et al.'s (2007) theory of VAM can be beneficial. Based on value maximization, the theory is pivoted on two beliefs: (i) benefits, tantamount to the usefulness and enjoyment derived from the services, and (ii) cost, explaining whether the fee associated with using the streaming technology is perceived to be cheap or expensive relative to its associated benefits. Kim et al. (2007) compared the relationship between benefits and sacrifices to explain adoption intention using perceived value as a mediator. Accordingly, perceived value positively influences adoption intention and mediates its antecedents. In their model, ease of use and usefulness were used as the direct antecedents of adoption intention, and thus, the theory of VAM communicates that users or consumers weigh the impact of the sacrifices (costs) before deciding on the benefits (usefulness). In this fashion, Chang et al. (2021) found that perceived value substantially influences consumers' intention to subscribe to premium music streaming. Since music streaming is an online service, we build on the logic of VAM as a theoretical basis to conceive music purchase intention in this study and interpret the

perceived value as the expected benefits associated with premium streaming.

3.3. Music Sampling and Purchase Intention

An interesting observation regarding the purchase intention of music streaming is that consumers seem to be influenced by the possibility of sampling a piece of musical work before deciding whether to pay (Adewumi et al., 2023). The reason is that sampling allows them to anticipate the product's cost-benefit analysis to ascertain the best quality and know if it delivers optimum value (Dewan & Ramaprasad, 2012; Wlömert and Papies, 2016; Adewumi et al., 2023). For example, music curation makes various music collections available for listening in the music streaming models. However, it is essential to sample the collections to know if the curation contains musical works that can maximize listening satisfaction. Based on Kim et al.'s (2007) VAM theory, supposing consumers identify that the cost of streaming a variety of music collections delivers maximum benefits (satisfaction), Aguiar and Waldfogel (2018), Chang et al. (2021) and Huang (2022) posit that there is a likelihood they will be willing to pay. Besides music curation, Aguiar (2017) contends that freemium streaming platforms allow consumers to learn about new music releases but mostly deny them the full benefits that premium streaming can offer. To this end, while freemium service platforms provide avenues for music sampling (Wlömert & Papies, 2016), the benefit or value that a consumer mostly expects is associated with premium streaming.

According to Kim et al. (2007), premium streaming enables music consumers to have non-advertising interference. They can enjoy continuous play, access, exclusivity, and new releases because they pay for streaming. Moreover, with premium streaming, consumers enjoy ownership and offline usage, where they can download music on their devices and listen afterwards without the internet. Since music streaming is perceived as a less expensive product than other music purchases (Gopal et al., 2006), the highlighted benefits may outweigh the streaming cost because of perceived value (Wang et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2021; Huang, 2022). Applying the theory of VAM, if consumers in a developing economy like Nigeria perceive the cost of streaming as affordable and are satisfied with the highlighted benefits of premium streaming, they would be more likely to pay for streaming. Based on this, Adewumi et al. (2023) suggest that music sampling could stimulate this willingness to pay for streaming services. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H1: Music sampling and purchase intention have a significant positive relationship

3.4. Music Sampling and Consumer Attitude

Following the notion in hypothesis 1, it must be noted that social networking enabled by music sampling can further pave the way for information opportunities regarding a piece of music that can be included in consumers' playlists. We position this argument on the supplementing element of value-maximization in Kim et al.'s (2007) theory of VAM, the free mentality dimension introduced by Lin et al. (2013). Accordingly, the free mentality dimension signals that the free elements of music sampling can highly enable how consumers perceive paying for music (Lin et al., 2013). It stipulates a belief that online services should be free. The

dynamics of this concept enable free features like blog creation, customized music list creation, and social network building with people of similar habits that allow information sharing and offer value that attracts consumers toward paying for music (Lin et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2018). In this context, the free mentality dimension of advertising is implied as it introduces musical content to potential customers, anticipating that they will later upgrade to premium streaming. Given that music sampling provides an avenue for advertisement and social interaction that stimulates attitudes toward purchase intention, we state the following hypothesis:

H2: A significant positive relationship exists between music sampling and consumer attitude

3.5. Consumer Attitude and Purchase Intention

According to VAM theory, perceived benefits and sacrifices guide consumer attitudes toward paying for products (Kim et al., 2007). Benefits are the added value that enhances experience quality, while sacrifices represent what consumers give up regarding monetary and non-monetary factors like effort and time (Kim et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2017; Huang, 2022). On this note, Lin et al. (2013) and Chen et al. (2018) posit that "free mentality" can function as a perceived benefit. That said, expected outcomes drive behavioral attitude, with behavioral beliefs representing the anticipation of outcome achievement (Ajzen, 2020). However, customers' purchase intention is influenced by the service value relative to perceived cost (Wu and Wang, 2005; Shin, 2009; Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2018; Lee and Lin, 2019). In music streaming, the intention to pay for streaming services is a behavioural attitude demonstrating a trade-off between positive and negative attributes after sampling (Lu and Lin, 2012; Chen et al., 2018; Adewumi et al., 2023). This perception suggests that the attitude toward paying for music may be unmotivated, when consumers perceive sacrifices (cost, effort, time) as excessively high. Conversely, if streaming costs seem affordable, premium subscribers can access diverse music content, making payment worthwhile (Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2018). Therefore, we assume that:

H3: A significant positive relationship exists between consumer attitude and purchase intention

3.6. Mediating Role of Consumer Attitude

Studies have shown that when desirable consequences are expected, consumers possess a positive attitude toward performing a behavior (Vroom, 1964; Ajzen, 2020). In the current study, we classify the behavior performed by consumers during music sampling into whether they believe that paying for music is worthwhile or not. In a developing economy with low purchasing power like Nigeria, piracy behavior is expected to hinder their willingness to pay for music (Adedeji, 2023; International Trade Administration, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023). However, drawing on Kim et al.'s (2007) theory of VAM, the value offered by premium streaming is expected to influence consumer behavior toward desired consequences (Ajzen, 2020). The rationale is that it presents exclusive benefits, such as ease of use, continuous play, and customizing personal music playlists (Kim et al., 2007; Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2018). To this end, we extend our argument on the association between music sampling and purchase intention, as stated in

Hypothesis 1(H1). We assume that the strength of consumer attitudes could mediate the relationship between music sampling and purchase behavior. This perception suggests that the impact of music sampling on purchase decisions may be influenced by how greatly consumers value the music. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H4: The relationship between music sampling and purchase intention is significantly mediated by consumer attitude

3.7. The Moderating Role of Perceived Value

Previous research has shown that the free mentality dimension of value positively influences consumers' attitudes toward paying for music (Lin et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Dou (2004) and Barata & Coelho (2021) have also shown that the free mentality dimension negatively affects purchase intention. Based on these conflicting findings, we assume that if the free mentality dimension is enabled by freemium platforms where music sampling takes place, it is plausible that it may positively affect consumer attitudes toward paying for music in developed economies. The reason is that disposable income is presumed high in developed countries, and high income levels increase the chances and the capacity to buy new products (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). However, in developing economies, the negative effect of the free mentality on purchase intention found by Dou (2004) and Barata and Coelho (2021) may be apparent. This view pivots on Coyle et al. (2009), who note that music consumers with lower disposable income tend to pirate online content, and developing countries are characterized by low disposable income and purchasing power. Supposing consumer attitude mediates the association between music sampling and purchase intention (indirect effect of music sampling in the current work), piracy incidents in developing economies (e.g., Nigeria) (Adedeji, 2023) can weaken the mediation effect. A possible explanation can be traced to the weak antipiracy measures and punishment for piracy behavior in such economies (Peace et al., 2003; Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023).

While the affinity to subscribe to piracy behavior is prevalent in African economies (Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023), the perceived value of premium streaming can lessen such intention during music sampling (Pobee, 2021). The reason is that the emergence of streaming platforms offers a potential means to reverse widespread piracy while simultaneously building sustainable economic models for artists and music industry stakeholders (Röschenthaler, 2023; Adedeji & Röschenthaler, 2024). Moreover, premium music streaming can offer a superior value that positively affects purchase intention (Lu & Hsiao, 2010; Kim et al., 2007; Chang et al., 2021; Barata & Coelho, 2021; Pobee, 2021). In this context, consumers who perceive a high value in streamlining services are expected to adopt it than those who perceive a low value (Chang et al., 2021; Barata & Coelho, 2021; Pobee, 2021). Hence, supposing consumers tend to develop music purchase intention behavior during sampling, we follow the reasoning of Pobee (2021) and Barata and Coelho (2021); thus, a behavioural attitude towards purchase intention becomes higher at a higher perceived value for premium music streaming than at a lower one. As such, we argue that:

H5: The mediating role of consumer attitude in the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention is moderated by perceived value, and the moderated effect is optimum at higher levels than at lower levels

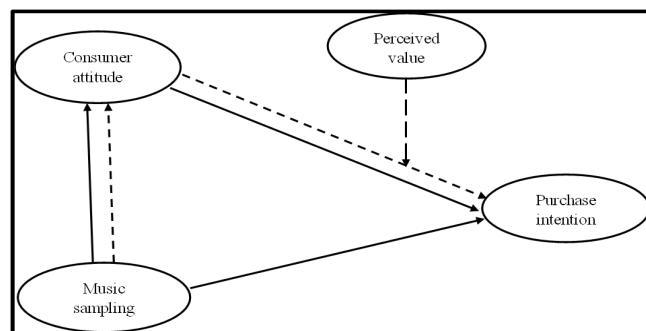


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3.8. Conceptual Framework

Based on the theory of VAM and the resulting hypotheses, we developed a visual representation of our framework to summarize the study context.

Effects	Hypotheses
Direct effects	H1 – Music sampling and purchase intention have a significant positive relationship.
	H2 – A significant positive relationship exists between music sampling and consumer attitude.
	H3 – A significant positive relationship exists between consumer attitude and purchase intention.
Mediation effect	H4 – The relationship between music sampling and purchase intention is significantly mediated by consumer attitude.
Moderated Mediation effects	H5 – The mediating role of consumer attitude in the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention is moderated by perceived value.

Table 1. Summary of the hypothesized relationships

Figure 1 presents the study's conceptual framework and illustrates how perceived value moderates the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention in a developing economy. Following the hypotheses, the model in Figure 1 assumes that (i) there is a direct link between music sampling and purchase intention and between music sampling and consumer attitude, (ii) the consumer attitude mediates the direct link between music sampling and purchase intention, and (iii) the mediation effect is moderated by perceived value. While the short and long dash lines indicate indirect and moderating effects, the solid line indicates direct effects, as shown in Figure 1 above. Consequently, Table 1 summarizes the hypothesized relationships.

4 RESEARCH METHOD

4.1. Participants and Procedure

This study investigates the significance of perceived value in the association between music sampling and purchase intention of music streaming services in Nigeria. To do so, we explored the moderating role of perceived value on the mediation effect of consumer attitude in this association. We designed an online survey on Google Forms. We made the link available to the data collection agent - Glodaris Technologies Limited, to distribute to the target population selected using the convenience sampling method. We

considered this approach because it would facilitate data collection amongst readily available respondents (Jager et al., 2017) and has been adopted in similar studies (e.g. Echebiri & Amundsen, 2020). A total of 2000 respondents across Nigeria received the survey, out of which 1000 (N=1000) completed it, suggesting a completion rate of 50.0%. There were 494 males, representing 49.6%, and 504 females, representing 50.4%. Their ages range from 18 to 48, with a mean age of 29.2. Of those who completed the survey, 821 completed secondary school education, representing 82.1%.

4.2 Measurements

In the survey, we asked the participants to rate a Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Because we used latent variables that cannot be measured directly, we based the dimension of the respondents' perceptions on already existing measurement instruments. However, those not primarily developed for online music streaming but for online content were adapted to suit our study. We measured music sampling with three items adapted from Dou, 2004; Gopal et al., 2006; Lin et al., 2013; Wlömert and Papies, 2016. We also adopted four items from Lin et al. (2013) to measure consumer attitudes. Additionally, we measured purchase intention with three items adapted from Lin et al. (2013), and perceived value was measured with four items adapted from Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Dou (2004), Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2001), Lin et al. (2013), and Kim et al. (2017) based on desired expected outcomes for value. Details of the measures and items are presented in the Appendix.

5 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Data Analysis

SEM was used to test the theorized relationships for the constructs. The first step involved conducting a confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model. Next, we tested the structural part of the model. The mediation test was done using the Baron and Kenny (1986) and Zhao et al. (2010) approaches. Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure tested whether an independent variable construct affects the dependent variable construct through some mediators and has been applied in similar studies (e.g. Echebiri & Amundsen, 2021). The mediation test by Zhao et al. (2010) assesses how a third variable construct, the mediator, intervenes between independent and dependent variable constructs and tests whether the direct and indirect effects are statistically significant. The combination of these two tests (direct and indirect effects) determines whether and eventually what type of mediator effect exists. Testing of mediation hypotheses was conducted using the "medsem" package in Stata (Mehmetoglu, 2018), where Baron and Kenny's (1986) and Zhao et al. (2010) procedures are implemented with Monte Carlo replications set at 5000. According to Mehmet and Jakobsen (2017), Monte Carlo replication is an excellent alternative to bootstrapping, as it takes less time than other approaches. Previous studies have also implemented this approach (e.g., Echebiri et al., 2020). In the fourth and last step, we tested for moderated mediation using the Hayes model 14 process approach in SPSS (Hayes, 2015).

5.2. Measurement Model

We carefully examine the measurement model of our construct by conducting a thorough analysis of several parameters. These include the reliability, item loadings, convergent validity, factor reliability, and discriminant validity of the employed scales and the overall Goodness of Fit indices, as recommended in the existing literature (e.g., Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017). The evaluation of various Goodness-of-fit indices was based on several guidelines. The Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) would ideally be less than 0.1. Preferably, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be less than 0.1. Best practice suggests that the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should ideally be more than 0.9. The reliability of the indicator (item loading) should well exceed 0.4. The latent construct reliability, measured by Raykov's Reliability Coefficient (RRC), should ideally be more than 0.7. The Convergent validity, measured by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), should exceed 0.5. For Discriminant validity, all AVE values should ideally be larger than the squared correlations amongst the latent constructs. In this context, convergent and discriminant validity together constitute construct validity. As indicated in Table 2, the reliability of the indicators and the construct validity all followed the acceptance criteria. The goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model also fell within the commonly accepted thresholds, establishing a robust measurement model and basis for analyzing the structural model.

Construct	Item label	Indicator reliability	AVE	Internal consistent reliability	
				RRC	Cronbach's Alpha.
Rule of thumb		Loading > 0.7	> 0.5	0.7 – 0.95	0.7 – 0.95
Music Sampling	Msamp1	0.81	0.76	0.85	0.85
	Msamp2	0.79			
	Msamp3	0.82			
Consumer attitude	Conat1	0.88	0.83	0.93	0.93
	Conat2	0.87			
	Conat3	0.88			
	Conat4	0.88			
Purchase intention	Pint1	0.84	0.81	0.88	0.89
	Pint2	0.84			
	Pint3	0.86			
Perceived value	Perval1	0.82	0.68	0.86	0.85
	Perval2	0.81			
	Perval3	0.80			
	Perval4	0.61			

Table 2. Results of the measurement model

5.3. Structural Model

Table 3 shows the indices for the goodness-of-fit for the structural model, which are all well within the generally accepted thresholds. The hypothesized association between the sampling indicator and purchase intention was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.71$), supporting hypothesis 1 (H1). The Sampling indicator was found to have a positive statistical relationship with Consumer attitude ($\beta = 0.88$), confirming hypothesis 2 (H2). Additionally, it was found that consumer attitude had a statistically positive relationship with purchase intention ($\beta = 0.26$), validating hypothesis 3 (H3).

Model	χ^2	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Measurement model	316.09	0.06	0.98	0.97	0.03
Structural model	418.75	0.07	0.97	0.96	0.03
Fit criteria	-	< 0.1	< 0.9	< 0.9	< 0.1

Table 3. Results of the measurement model

5.4. Mediation Analysis

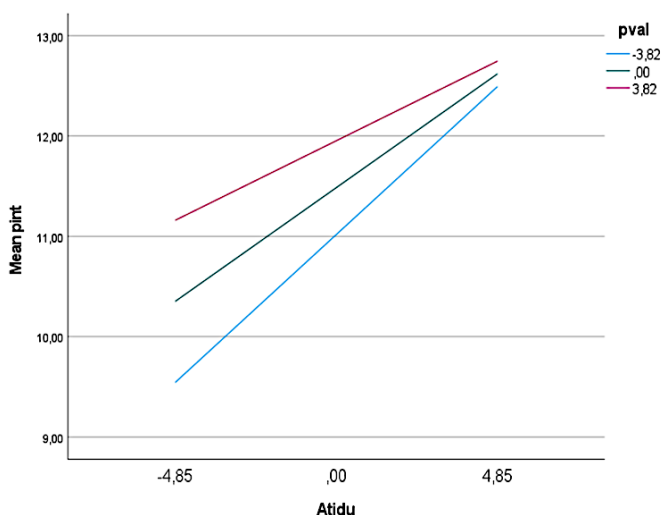
The mediation hypothesis (H4), which assumes that consumer attitude mediates the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention, was supported but with a partial mediation effect. The standardized, average indirect effect of music sampling on purchase intention was estimated at ($\beta_{indirect} = 0.23$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < 0.001$), and 99% confidence interval (CI) (0.15, 0.32). The ratio of indirect effect to total effect was ($\beta_{ratio} = 0.25$), indicating that consumer attitude mediates the positive association between music sampling and purchase intention by about 25%.

5.5. Moderated Mediation

For Hypothesis 5 (H5), our moderation analysis examines the indirect influence of the independent variable (Music sampling) on the dependent variable (Purchase intention) via a mediator (Consumer attitude). An additional variable (Perceived value) further moderates this indirect effect. The significant positive effects of the indirect influence of sampling on purchase intention facilitated by consumer attitude, which is then moderated by premium streaming perceived value, confirms hypothesis 5.

As shown in Table 4, the moderated mediation was significant with a negative coefficient ($\beta_{mm} = -0.02$). However, we visualize the result using graphical slope lines to probe the moderating effect further.

The visual effects in Figure 3 show that consumers' perceived value of premium streaming moves rightward from lower to higher levels along the slope lines as their attitudes toward purchase intention are increasingly positive. The slope confirms that the relationship optimizes at higher premium streaming perceived value levels. In this context, when perceived value is highest (3.82), consumer attitude toward purchase intention reaches 4.85 with approximately 12.7 purchase intentions. Conversely, at the lowest perceived value (-3.82), attitude falls to -4.85, with purchase intention around 9.5. When perceived value is neutral (0.00), purchase intention averages 11.5.



Pval=Perceived value, pint=purchase intention, Atidu=Consumer attitude

Figure 2. Slope lines of the moderating effect of premium streaming perceived value

Model		Coefficients	Std. Error	t	Significance
14	Constant				
	Music sampling	0.35	0.40	18.34	0.000
	Consumer attitude	0.23	0.03	10.88	0.000
	Perceived value	0.12	0.03	4.36	0.000
	Interaction	-0.02	0.00	-4.88	0.000

Table 4. Moderating effect of premium streaming perceived value

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Through VAM theory, this research examines how perceived value impacts the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention in developing African economies. Results show positive associations between music sampling, consumer attitude, and purchase intention, with attitude partially mediating the sampling-purchase relationship and perceived value moderating this effect. The findings suggest that positively activated attitudes strengthen how music sampling influences purchase intentions, and this effect optimizes at higher perceived premium streaming value levels.

The finding that music sampling positively affects purchase intention corroborates studies by Wlömert and Papies (2016) and Adewumi et al. (2023) and confirms our first hypothesis. During sampling, consumers typically develop the willingness to pay for interesting music, especially for new releases available only as snippets. However, attitudes toward piracy and perceived congruence between freemium and premium offerings emerge as influential elements in music purchasing decisions (Barata & Coelho, 2021). When freemium platforms offer sampling, consumers might not feel compelled to pay if they do not find the sampled music satisfactory. However, findings from our second hypothesis reveal a correlation between consumer attitudes and music sampling. The non-monetary advantages of digital streaming innovations, ease of use, content searchability, and social networking features stimulate positive attitudes toward paying for streaming. This perception aligns with Pobee (2021), Wang et al. (2013), and Lin et al. (2013), reinforcing the view that consumers appreciating the value of online services can develop positive attitudes toward music purchasing. Further supporting Chen et al. (2018), sampling platforms present musical content to potential customers, potentially prompting premium upgrades. Moreover, the results support Adewumi et al.'s (2023) assertion that sampling creates substitution effects enhancing purchase intention leading to premium subscriptions.

Hypothesis 3, positing a significant positive correlation between consumer attitude and purchase intention, was also validated. Our observation supports existing views that purchase intention stems from service value assessment relative to perceived cost (Wu & Wang, 2005; Shin, 2009; Aguiar & Waldfogel, 2018; Lee & Lin, 2019). It shows that if consumers perceive the cost of musical content as higher than expected satisfaction, their attitude toward paying may diminish. Nonetheless, if streaming services are relatively affordable (Gopal et al., 2006) and promote social networking (Lin et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2018), the satisfaction derived can compensate for costs and encourage positive consumer attitudes in Nigeria. Following Kim et al.'s (2007) VAM theory, strategically managing value-embedded

benefits is expected to enable effective revenue-generating strategies. When streaming costs appear low, gained utility encourages premium service adoption. This assumption aligns with Aguiar and Waldfogel's (2018) assertion that maximizing value makes music expenses worthwhile, indicating perceived value's crucial role in fostering positive attitudes toward music purchases in Nigeria.

For hypothesis 4, consumer attitude mediates the positive association between music sampling and purchase intention, with approximately 25% of this correlation mediated by attitude. The significant relationships suggest partial mediation, indicating that purchase intention's full potential through sampling may not materialize without positive attitudes toward music purchasing. Hence, two types of consumers emerge. Those believing paying for music is meaningful and those who do not. For non-payers, low purchasing power characterizing developing economies encourages piracy behavior in Nigeria (Nwogu, 2015; Olubanwo & Oguntuase, 2019; Adewumi et al., 2023), hampering willingness to pay (Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023). However, based on Kim et al.'s (2007) VAM theory, premium streaming's value stimulates consumer behavior toward a willingness to pay by presenting exclusive benefits. Our findings support Vroom (1964) and Ajzen (2020) that when expecting desirable consequences (premium streaming benefits), consumers develop positive behavioral attitudes toward purchase intention, suggesting the sampling-purchase association strengthens through activated positive attitudes.

Findings for hypothesis 5 first suggest consumers may maintain moderate purchase intention even without the influence of perceived value. This observation is likely due to the satisfaction derived during sampling and the reasonable income levels of the consumers. Thus, this purchase dynamic represents a break-even point in music purchase intention. Meanwhile, when consumers perceive premium services as valuable, positive attitudes develop, increasing purchase intentions to optimal levels. This assertion aligns with Pobe (2021), Chang et al. (2021) and Barata and Coelho (2021), suggesting that higher perceived value creates more favorable attitudes toward music purchases. Conversely, a trade-off occurs between derived satisfaction and premium streaming costs at the lowest perceived value level, negatively impacting consumer attitudes. The preceding reflects a reluctance to pay for music, potentially aggravated by limited income and prevalent piracy behavior in developing economies (Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023). This view is consistent with Barata and Coelho's (2021) observation that piracy behavior and perceived freemium-premium fit can negatively impact purchase intention. As such, Nigerian music consumers with limited disposable income may prefer freemium services over purchases due to economic constraints, supporting Coyle et al. (2009) that low income encourages piracy during sampling. Overall, the current finding indicates that the influence of music sampling on purchase intention increases with positively activated attitudes, and it is optimized at higher perceived value levels of premium streaming. This view reinforces Kim et al. (2007), Wang et al. (2013), Pobe (2021), Chang et al. (2021), and Barata and Coelho (2021), affirming that consumers perceiving higher value in online

services are more likely to pay for streaming than those perceiving lower value.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study makes significant theoretical contributions by extending the VAM theory to the context of music streaming services in emerging African economies, using Nigeria as a case. Evidence of an interrelation between purchase intention, music sampling, consumer attitudes, and perceived value is provided. It contributes to existing theoretical knowledge in many respects. First, this study addresses a necessary gap in the theory of experiential marketing. It empirically demonstrates how music sampling is an effective experiential marketing tool that affects consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions in digital music consumption. The study verifies that approximately 25% of the relationship between music sampling and purchase intention is mediated by consumer attitudes. It applies VAM theory outside its traditional applications to digital entertainment markets in emerging economies where economic constraints and piracy behavior are prevalent. Second, the research refines our theoretical understanding of consumer behavior in digital streaming environments. It highlights how the perceived value mediates sampling experiences and purchasing decisions. This observation is a critical advance in VAM theory that explicitly accounts for the contextual situation in emerging markets. This enhanced theoretical framework provides the explanatory power to comprehend why some consumer segments in developing nations remain committed to developing a willingness to pay for digital content. This capacity occurs under widespread piracy and economic limitations, remarkably when perceived value is optimal. Third, the study makes a theoretical contribution by identifying a point at which consumer attitudes change into higher purchase intentions. This finding provides a quantifiable method of understanding the effect of value perception on consumer behavior. The study builds on foundations established by Kim et al. (2007), Wang et al. (2013), and Barata and Coelho (2021). It builds a more comprehensive theoretical model combining concepts previously segregated: purchase intention, perceived value, attitude formation, and sampling effects. This integrated framework explains consumer behavior in digital music consumption in economically constrained environments and expands VAM theory and digital consumer behavior knowledge.

6.2. Managerial Implications

The present study offers valuable insights into how music streaming services operate in emerging economies like Nigeria and other African countries. This way, it shows how music sampling influences purchase intention directly and indirectly through improved consumer attitudes, and offers unambiguous strategic guidance to managers. Streaming service providers ought to utilize music sampling as a fundamental marketing strategy while prioritizing increasing the perceived value of their products to have high conversion rates. The study indicates that if consumers feel a high value is attached to premium features beyond the free sampling options, their purchasing attitudes have considerably increased, with purchase intention scores rising at maximum perceived value levels. This finding suggests that managers

must segment high-end offerings with distinctive content, enhanced user experience, and social networking features – benefits worth paying for even in economically troubled and piracy-plagued markets. Moreover, the partial mediation role of consumer attitude is noteworthy since it suggests that streaming service providers must take advantage of positive attitudes toward paying for music rather than sampling being the only cause of conversions. Strategic pricing aligned with local buying power and education-based marketing focusing on artists' compensation can counteract the "free mentality" in such markets. Managers should also be aware that even consumers with negative perceived value assessments did show some level of purchase intent, reflecting a base market of paying consumers regardless of perceived premium value. This value creation and communication diversification strategy gives streaming platforms a blueprint for sustainable growth in emerging African markets where digital music consumption is evolving rapidly in the face of economic challenges.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the valuable contributions of our study, we acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, our study focuses primarily on purchase intention rather than consumers' actual purchase behavior. As such, the extent to which the perceived value of streaming influences revenue remains uncertain in our study. The present research should, therefore, be cautiously interpreted as we recognize a distinction between the intention to act and the actual behavior. However, the study represents a foundation for future research that includes consumer purchasing behavior to enhance understanding of perceived value. The second limitation is that the study is confined to the Nigerian market due to limited resources. While most developing African economies are characterized by low purchasing power, their purchasing power parity (PPP), which can impact purchase capacity, varies. Therefore, future research that includes more developing African markets for comparative studies could provide more generalizable evidence supporting our findings. Thirdly, our findings highlight the importance of perceived value in the context of a developing economy, paving the way for conclusions that can be generalized. However, reinforcing existing studies (Adedeji, 2023; Nyathi & Maguraushe, 2023), an effective copyright management strategy is essential to curb high levels of piracy behavior in these markets. As a result, future research exploring the impact of copyright management on our conceptual model could reveal fascinating insights.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

To sum up, this study offers significant theoretical and practical insights into digital music consumption in developing economies. First, it demonstrates that sampling positively affects consumers' attitudes and music purchase intentions in Nigeria, contradicting the assumption that limited purchasing power in developing economies would render sampling ineffective. Our results demonstrate that strategic management of perceived value in music sampling can result in the efficient adoption of streaming retail in emerging African markets. Second, it supports the idea that customers with greater perceived value have stronger purchase intentions towards premium streaming. This

evidence indicates that purchase intention may not be satisfied to the highest level if consumers cannot see sufficient value through sampling experiences. Consumer attitude's partial mediation emphasizes the requirement to construct positive perspectives towards paid music consumption versus mere sampling conversions. Grounded in VAM theory, we identified some threshold points at which purchase intentions arise from consumer attitudes, providing measurable feedback on the influence of value perception on consumer action. Such observations show that a value management strategy for music streaming can enhance digital music retailing, even in economically disadvantaged markets. Accordingly, it provides business managers with pragmatic recommendations for managing investment prospects and risk aversion in emerging digital music economies.

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Appendix. Variables and Measurement

Variables	Measurements	Sources
Purchase intention	I intend to use fee-based online music in the near future. I intend to pay for fee-based online music in the near future. I will use fee-based online music in the near future.	Lin et al. (2013).
Music sampling	Before I purchase music, I listen to a sample version. In a sample version, I get more information about music (such as artists, singers, etc). A sampling of music makes me discover that subscribing to music streaming services has added value.	Wlömert and Papies (2016); Gopal et al., (2006). Dou (2004); Lin et al. (2013); Wlömert and Papies (2016). Dou (2004); Lin et al. (2013).
Perceived value	Subscription service quickens finding latest released music. Subscription service allows me to customize my personal music playlists. Subscription service allows me to enjoy the continuous play of music without interference. At the current price, subscription services provide good value for music streaming.	Dou (2004); Lin et al. (2013) Dou (2004); Lin et al. (2013); Kim et al. (2017) Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2001)
Consumer attitude	Paying for listening to online music would be the right idea. Paying for listening to online music would be a good idea. Paying for listening to online music is for sure. I have a positive opinion about paying for online music.	Lin et al. (2013).

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