

**The impact of music on the spiritual growth of Christians: A cross-sectional case study of
Munuki Payam, South Sudan.**

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Abstract.

Background.

Music has historically served as a vital medium for worship, emotional healing, and theological expression in African Christian contexts. This study investigates the role of music in personal and communal spiritual development among Christians in Munuki Payam, Juba, South Sudan.

Methodology.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 182 respondents selected from ten churches. Data were collected using questionnaires and key informant interviews. Respondents included church members, choir members, youth leaders, and pastors. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while interview responses provided qualitative insights.

Results.

The majority of the participants 56% were aged between 18 and 45 years, and females constituted 57.1%. 64.3% of participants engage with music daily, and 100% agreed that music positively impacts spiritual growth. Hymns were the most preferred style (45.1%), followed by contemporary gospel and local worship songs. Emotional healing (33%) emerged as the most cited spiritual benefit, with music also enhancing meditation, Bible study, and discipleship. Communally, 90% of respondents reported that music is always part of worship services, and 92.3% felt united through music. Local worship songs were identified as the strongest unifier (50%), underscoring the cultural and linguistic resonance of indigenous music. The study also highlighted key challenges, including a lack of trained musicians (40%), limited access to instruments (35%), and disagreements over musical styles (20%).

Conclusion.

Spiritual development can be greatly accelerated by listening to music. It strengthens personal dedication, aids in emotional recovery, and promotes meditation and prayer.

Recommendation.

Church Leaders should invest in structured training programs for choir members and worship leaders. Such training should equip them with both musical skills and theological understanding to enable them to lead worship that is spiritually enriching.

Keywords: Music, Spiritual Growth, Christian Worship, Munuki Payam, South Sudan

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Background.

Music has long been a cornerstone of Christian worship, serving as a vital medium for expressing devotion, participating in communal praise, and deepening one's relationship with God. In African contexts, particularly in South Sudan, music transcends artistic boundaries to become a spiritual discipline that shapes both personal and collective religious experiences. Churches in Munuki Payam, a densely populated and ethnically diverse area of Juba, frequently incorporate vibrant musical performances into their worship services. These range from traditional hymns and indigenous praise songs to contemporary gospel

music, all of which are believed to significantly influence congregants' spiritual development (Assendelft Worship Collective, 2022).

Despite the centrality of music in worship, there is a noticeable lack of empirical research on its specific impact on spiritual growth in South Sudan. While anecdotal evidence suggests that music enhances emotional connection with God, fosters unity among believers, and supports discipleship, these claims remain largely undocumented. This gap is particularly concerning given the diversity of worship styles and denominational practices in Munuki Payam. Without a clear understanding of how

music contributes to spiritual formation, churches may struggle to design effective worship experiences and discipleship programs that resonate with their congregants (Karonwi, 2016).

Globally, studies have shown that music can significantly influence spiritual engagement. For example, a Pew Research Center survey found that 82% of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa consider music an essential part of their worship experience, with many citing it as a source of emotional healing and spiritual strength (Pew Research Center, 2010). However, such data is rarely localized, and there is limited insight into how specific musical genres—such as hymns, contemporary gospel, or indigenous worship songs—affect spiritual participation in South Sudanese churches. Do certain styles resonate more deeply with congregants? Are some genres more effective in promoting unity or facilitating prayer and meditation? These questions remain unanswered in the context of Munuki Payam.

Moreover, the strategic use of music by church leaders is another area that lacks scholarly attention. It is unclear whether pastors and worship leaders in Munuki Payam view music as a deliberate tool for transformation and discipleship or simply as a traditional component of worship. Understanding their perceptions is critical, especially in a post-conflict society like South Sudan, where churches often serve as spaces for healing, reconciliation, and community rebuilding. Music, when purposefully integrated, can offer spiritual comfort and foster resilience among individuals affected by trauma and displacement (Afriklens, 2021).

Churches also face practical challenges in maximizing the spiritual potential of music. These include a lack of trained musicians, limited access to instruments and sound equipment, and disagreements over musical styles that may reflect generational or denominational divides. Without addressing these barriers, congregations may miss opportunities to fully harness music's capacity to nurture faith, promote emotional well-being, and build cohesive worship communities.

This study seeks to fill these critical gaps by investigating the role of music in the spiritual development of Christians in Munuki Payam. It explores how different musical styles influence personal spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible study, and emotional healing, and assesses their impact on communal worship and unity. Additionally, it examined how church leaders and congregants perceive music as a tool for discipleship and transformation. By documenting these insights, the research aims to provide practical guidance for worship planning, leadership training, and faith-formation initiatives in South Sudanese churches.

Methodology.

Research Design.

Using a mixed-methods cross-sectional case study design, the research combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. Exploring the complex role of music in spiritual development was a good fit for this methodology, which enables statistical analysis of patterns and a deeper understanding of individual and group experiences.

Quantitative Component: Information from a large sample of churchgoers was gathered using structured questionnaires.

Qualitative Component: To obtain complex viewpoints, semi-structured interviews with pastors, choir directors, and youth leaders were undertaken.

This triangulation offers a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied and strengthens the validity of the results.

Study Area.

The study was carried out in Juba, Central Equatoria State, South Sudan, in the heavily populated metropolitan region of Munuki Payam. There were several different Christian denominations in Munuki, such as the Sudan Pentecostal Church, Evangelical, Catholic, and Anglican churches. Because of its thriving worship culture, the region was a perfect place to investigate the spiritual effects of music.

Target Population.

Regular churchgoers, choir members and worship leaders, pastors and church elders, and young leaders engaged in music ministry were among the target demographics. These bands were chosen because they actively support or have an impact on their congregations' spiritual development and musical worship traditions.

Sampling Techniques.

Quantitative Sampling.

Survey respondents were chosen using a stratified random sample technique. To guarantee representation across traditions, churches were grouped, and respondents were chosen at random from each stratum. Sample Size of ten churches, with 200 responders.

Qualitative Sampling.

Key informants were chosen for interviews using a purposive sampling technique. Those with leadership positions or specific expertise in music ministry were among them.

There were 20 participants in total, including youth leaders, choir leaders, and pastors.

Data Collection Instruments.

Questionnaire.

Church members were given a structured questionnaire. It contains closed-ended inquiries that are in line with the goals of the study:

- Views on collective worship and unity.
- Perceived influence on individual spiritual practices.
- Type and frequency of music participation.
- Obstacles and suggestions for music ministry.

Interview Guide.

Church leaders were interviewed in a semi-structured manner. Among the subjects covered are:

- The function of music in teaching and discipleship.
- The spiritual results of musical worship are observed.
- Cultural significance and theological issues.
- Methods for increasing the spiritual impact of music

Observation.

During worship sessions, non-participant observation was utilized to record musical styles, congregational reactions, and spiritual ambiance.

Data Analysis.

Quantitative Data.

Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, cross-tabulations, and frequencies, were used to assess survey responses. It was possible to find patterns and correlations by using statistical tools like Excel or SPSS.

Qualitative Data.

Thematic analysis was used to examine interview transcripts. A deeper understanding of the spiritual function of music was revealed through the identification, coding, and interpretation of key themes. Themes could include

leadership techniques, cultural resonance, religious depth, and emotional involvement.

Validity and Reliability.

To guarantee validity, a pilot test with a small sample was carried out to improve the questionnaire, and instruments were examined by theological and research methodological specialists.

In order to guarantee dependability, standard operating procedures were adhered to when gathering data. Throughout the qualitative analysis, consistent coding techniques were used.

Ethical Considerations.

A key component of this research was ethical integrity. The actions listed below were implemented:

- **Informed Consent:** Each participant was informed about their rights and the goal of the study.
- **Confidentiality:** All answers were kept private and anonymous.
- **Voluntary Participation:** There were no consequences if participants decided to stop at any moment.
- **Permission:** Local research organizations and church authorities were consulted for approval.

RESULTS.

The information gathered from respondents in Munuki Payam was presented and examined in this chapter. The results are arranged according to the study's three main goals: (1) to investigate how music can improve individual spiritual practices; (2) to evaluate how various musical genres affect group worship and unity; and (3) to ascertain how church leaders and members view music as a means of spiritual development. Structured questionnaires and key informant interviews were used to gather data, and theme coding and descriptive statistics were used for analysis.

Response rate.

Table 1 Response rate

Instruments	Targeted	Conducted/Returned	Percentage
Questionnaires	200	182	91 %
Interview guides	20	19	95 %
Total	220	201	91 %

Source: Primary data (2025)

Table 1 shows that out of 220 questionnaires distributed, 182 were returned, giving a response rate of 91%. In addition, out of 20 interviews, 19 were conducted, giving a response rate of 95%. “The overall response rate was 99% which is above the recommended two-thirds (61%) response rate” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2023).

Demographic Profile of Respondents.

The poll was completed by 182 people, who were selected from ten churches in Munuki Payam. The following is the breakdown of demographics:

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents.

Under 18	32	17.6
18–30	53	29.1
31–45	49	26.9
46–60	30	16.5
Above 60	18	9.9
Total	182	100.0
Male	78	42.9
Female	104	57.1
Total	182	100.0
Member	110	60.4
Choir Member	36	19.8
Pastor	18	9.9
Youth Leader	18	9.9
Total	182	100.0

Source: Primary data (2025)

The majority of respondents (56%) were between 18 and 45 years, indicating a youthful and potentially active population. The under-18 group (17.6%) suggests strong youth engagement in church activities. Only 9.9% are above 60, which may reflect lower participation among older adults or demographic realities in the area. Females make up the majority of respondents, which is consistent with trends in church participation, where women often play more active roles in community and religious life. This gender balance may influence the types of programs and outreach strategies churches prioritize. Pentecostal churches have the

highest representation (29.7%), suggesting strong growth or engagement in that denomination within Munuki Payam. The distribution was fairly balanced across denominations, which supports interdenominational collaboration and comparative analysis. Most respondents were general members (60.4%), providing a broad community perspective. Choir members (19.8%) and youth leaders (9.9%) reflect active participation in church programs. Pastors (9.9%) offer leadership insights, though their smaller number may limit representation of clergy views.

Role of Music in Personal Spiritual Practices. Frequency of Music Engagement.

Table 3: Frequency of music engagement.

Frequency of music engagement	Frequency	%
Daily	117	64.3
Weekly	41	22.5
Occasionally	18	9.9
Rarely	5	2.7
Never	1	0.5
Total	182	100.0

Source: Primary data (2025)

A significant majority (64.3%) engage with music daily, indicating that music is deeply embedded in their spiritual routines. Only 3.2% rarely or never engage with music, suggesting near-universal relevance of music in personal

devotion. This high frequency reflects music's role as a daily spiritual tool, not just a ceremonial or occasional practice. The finding that 64.3% of respondents engage with music daily reflects music's deep integration into personal spiritual routines.

Preferred Music Styles for Personal Devotion.

Table 4 Preferred music styles for personal devotion

Preferred Music styles for personal devotion	Frequency	%
Hymns	82	45.1
Contemporary Gospel	55	30.2
Local Worship Songs	36	19.8
Instrumental	9	4.9
Total	182	100.0

Source: Primary data (2025)

Hymns were the preferred style (45.1%), showing a strong connection to traditional and structured worship. Contemporary Gospel (30.2%) and Local Worship Songs (19.8%) reflect a blend of modern and culturally rooted

expressions of faith. The low preference for instrumental music suggests that lyrical content is important for spiritual engagement.

Impact on Personal Spiritual Growth.

Table 5 Impact on personal spiritual growth.

Impact on personal spiritual growth	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	142	78.0
Agree	40	22.0
Neutral	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	182	100.0

Source: Primary data (2025)

100% of respondents agree that music positively impacts their spiritual growth. The overwhelming majority (78%) strongly agree, highlighting music as a powerful and

transformative spiritual tool. This consensus underscores music's role in deepening faith, emotional connection, and personal reflection.

Spiritual Practices influenced by Music

Table 6: Spiritual Practices influenced by music

Spiritual Practices influenced by Music	Frequency	%
Prayer	15	8.2
Bible Study	40	22.0
Meditation	49	26.9
Fasting	18	9.9
Emotional Healing	60	33.0
Total	182	100.0

Source: Primary data (2025)

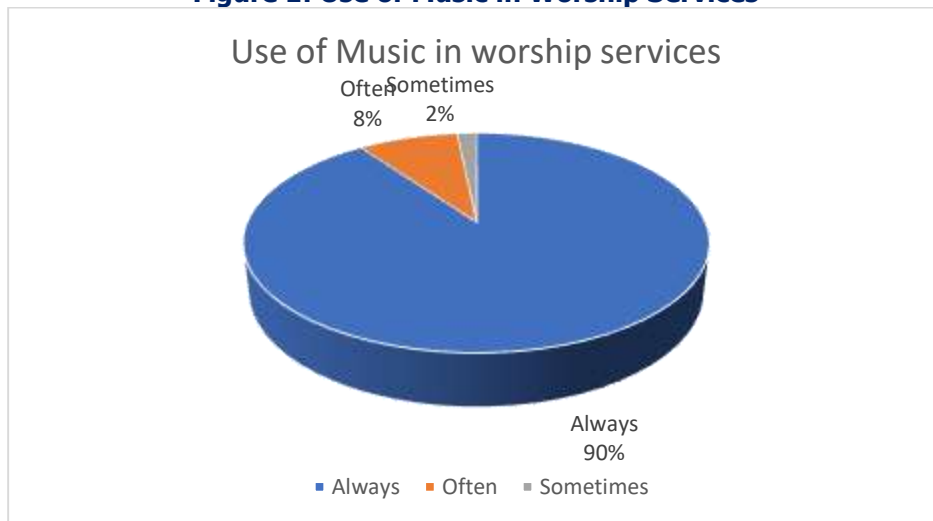
Emotional healing (33%) was the most cited spiritual benefit, showing music’s therapeutic and restorative power. Meditation (26.9%) and Bible study (22%) were also strongly influenced, suggesting that music enhances focus and scriptural engagement. Lower influence on prayer (8.2%) and fasting (9.9%) may indicate that these practices were less dependent on musical stimulation.

Interview Insights

Key informants emphasized that music often serves as a spiritual anchor during personal struggles. One pastor noted: “When words fail, music speaks. Many of our members find healing through songs that speak to their pain and hope.”

**Impact of Musical Styles on Communal Worship and Unity.
 Use of Music in Worship Services.**

Figure 1: Use of Music in Worship Services



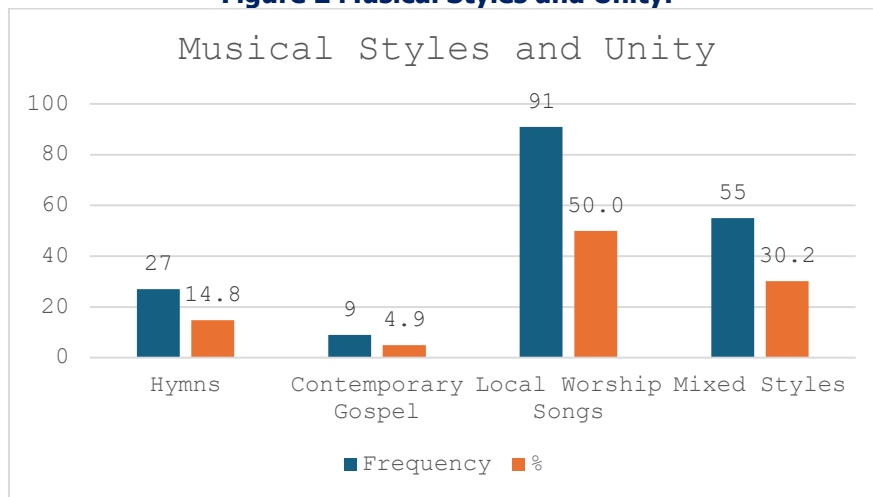
Source: Primary data (2025)

90% of respondents indicated that music was always part of their church services, 8% said it was often used, and 2% said it was occasionally. Music was a core component of worship, with 90% of respondents confirming its constant presence. This reflects music’s role not just as an enhancement, but as an essential spiritual and communal practice in church services.

This aligns closely with findings from the Pew Research Center (2010), which reported that over 85% of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa consider music a central element of worship. In Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, music is often the most prominent feature of the service, used to invoke the Holy Spirit and foster communal participation. Both studies affirm that music was not merely decorative but essential to worship structure and spiritual engagement.

Musical Styles and Unity.

Figure 2 Musical Styles and Unity.



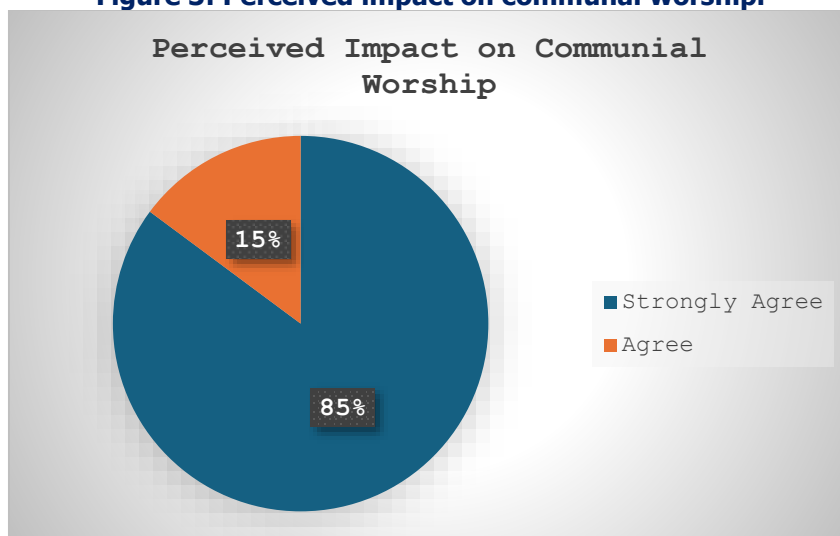
Source: Primary data (2025)

50% felt that local worship songs best promote unity, 30.2% preferred mixed styles, 14.8% chose hymns, and 4.9% selected contemporary gospel. Local worship songs were seen as the strongest unifier, likely due to shared language, cultural resonance, and familiarity. Mixed styles appeal to a

broader audience, suggesting that diversity in music can also foster inclusivity. Traditional hymns and contemporary gospel were less associated with unity, possibly due to generational or denominational preferences.

Perceived Impact on Communal Worship.

Figure 3: Perceived impact on communal worship.



Source: Primary data (2025)

85% strongly agreed that music strengthens communal worship and unity, and 15% agreed that music strengthens communal worship and unity. 100% of respondents agree

that music strengthens communal worship and unity. The high rate of strong agreement (85%) underscores music's

emotional and spiritual power to bring people together during worship.

United together by Music.

Table 7: United together by music.

United together by music	Frequency	%
Yes	168	92.3
No	10	5.5
Not Sure	4	2.2
Total	182	100.0

Source: Primary data (2025)

92.3% agreed, 5.5% disagreed, and 2.2% were not sure. A vast majority (92.3%) feel united through music, confirming its role as a communal bridge across denominations, age groups, and roles. The small percentage of disagreement (5.5%) may reflect individual preferences or differing experiences with musical styles.

Interview Insights.

Choir leaders highlighted that music creates a shared emotional experience. One youth leader stated: “Music was the one thing that brings everyone together, young and old, educated and uneducated. It’s our common language.”

Perceptions of Music as a Tool for Spiritual Growth Effectiveness of Music in Discipleship.

Table 8: Effectiveness of music in discipleship.

Effectiveness of Music in Discipleship	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	137	75.3
Agree	36	19.8
Neutral	9	4.9
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	182	100.0

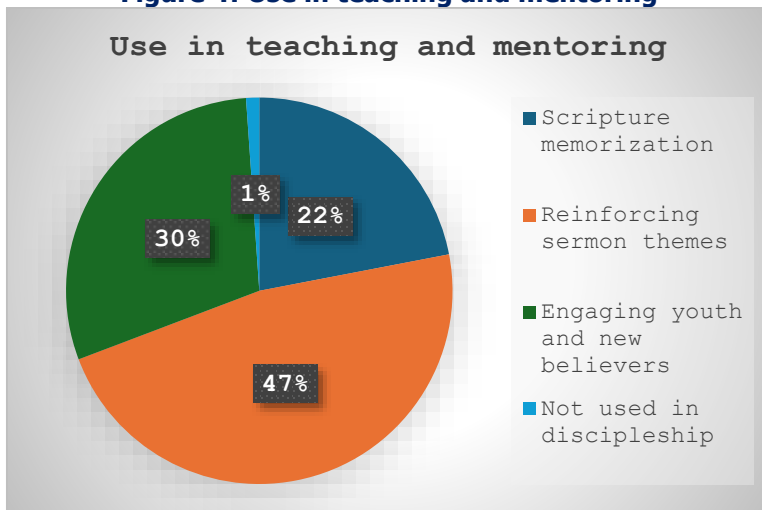
Source: Primary data (2025)

75.3% of respondents strongly agreed that music was an effective tool for spiritual growth, 19.8% agreed, while 4.9% were neutral or unsure. An overwhelming 95.1% of respondents agreed that music was an effective tool for spiritual growth and discipleship.

The high rate of strong agreement (75.3%) indicates deep conviction in music’s role in nurturing faith, teaching values, and reinforcing spiritual identity. The absence of disagreement suggests universal acceptance of music’s spiritual value across denominations and age groups.

Use in Teaching and Mentoring.

Figure 4: Use in teaching and mentoring



Source: Primary data (2025)

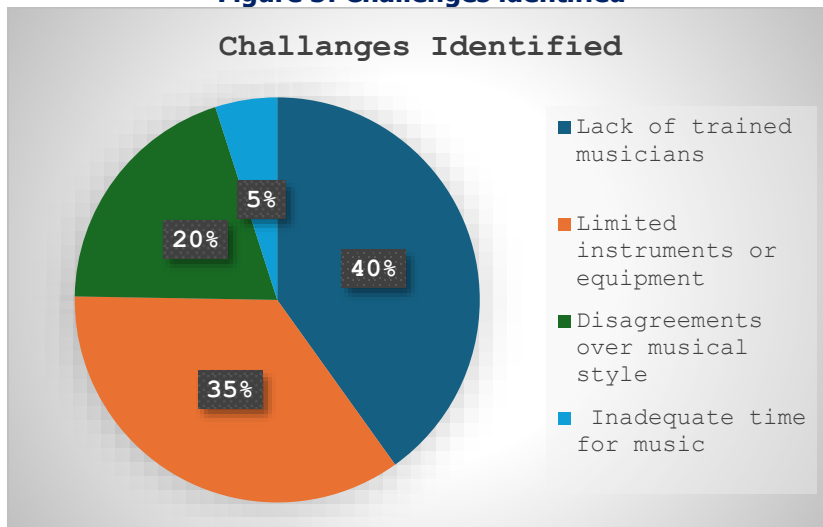
22% said music was used to reinforce sermon themes, 47% reported its use in reinforcing sermon themes, 30% noted its role in engaging youth and new believers, and 1% cited that it's not used in discipleship.

Nearly half (47%) recognize music as a strategic tool for reinforcing sermon themes, showing its integration into

teaching and worship. Its role in engaging youth and new believers (30%) highlights music's power to connect across generations and spiritual maturity levels. The minimal percentage (1%) reporting no use in discipleship suggests that music was widely embedded in mentoring practices.

Challenges Identified

Figure 5: Challenges identified



Source: Primary data (2025)

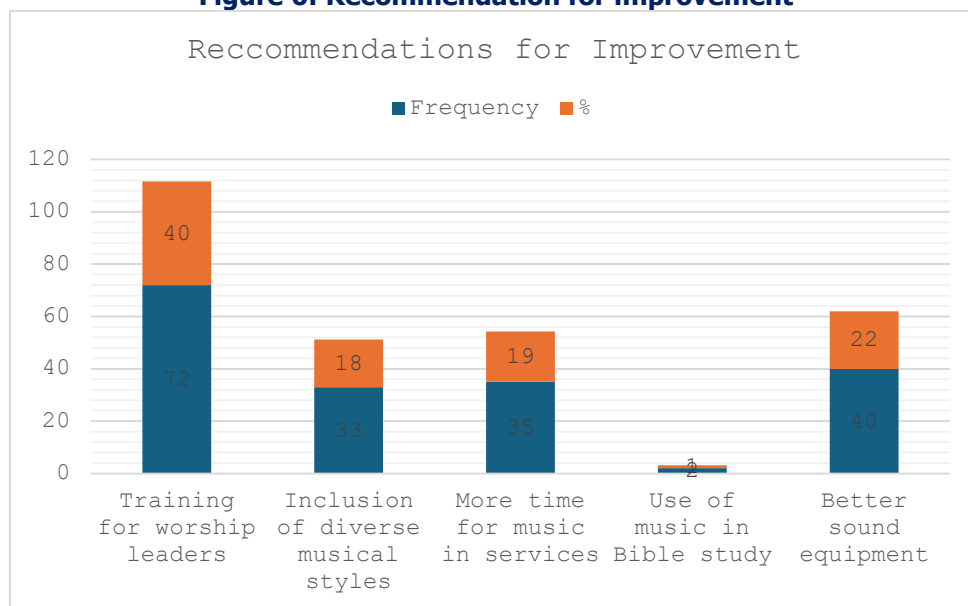
40% cited lack of trained musicians, 35% mentioned limited access to instruments or equipment, 20% pointed to disagreements over musical styles, and 5% cited inadequate time for music.

The top challenges were capacity-related: lack of trained musicians (40%) and limited instruments (35%) hinder effective music ministry. Style disagreements (20%) reflect generational or denominational tensions, which may affect

unity and participation. Time constraints (5%) suggest that music may be undervalued or squeezed out of packed service schedules.

Recommendations for Improvement

Figure 6: Recommendation for improvement



Source: Primary data (2025)

40% recommended training for worship leaders, 19% suggested more time for music in services, 18% advocated for inclusion of diverse musical styles, 22% advocated for better sound system, and 1% advocated for music in bible study.

The most common recommendation was training worship leaders (40%), pointing to a need for skill development and leadership capacity. Sound system upgrades (22%) and more time for music (19%) reflect practical needs for enhancing worship quality. Inclusion of diverse styles (18%) suggests a desire for musical variety that reflects cultural and generational diversity.

Interview Insights

Pastors emphasized the need for intentional use of music in discipleship. One remarked:

“Music should not just be emotional—it must be theological. We need songs that teach, convict, and inspire.”

Summary of Key Findings

Music was deeply embedded in both personal and communal spiritual practices.

Local worship songs are most preferred and perceived as spiritually impactful.

Music fosters unity across diverse congregations and serves as a tool for healing and discipleship.

Churches face challenges related to training, resources, and style preferences, but see music as essential to spiritual growth.

Discussion of results

A significant majority (64.3%) engage with music daily, indicating that music is deeply embedded in their spiritual routines. Only 3.2% rarely or never engage with music, suggesting near-universal relevance of music in personal devotion. This high frequency reflects music’s role as a daily spiritual tool, not just a ceremonial or occasional practice.

The finding that 64.3% of respondents engage with music daily reflects music’s deep integration into personal spiritual routines. This is consistent with research by Assendelft Worship Collective, which emphasizes that African worship music was “more than just a genre, it was a profound expression of spirituality and cultural identity” and was often practiced daily as a form of prayer and connection to the divine. In contrast, studies in urban Kenyan churches show slightly lower daily engagement, with about 55% reporting daily use of music in personal devotion,

suggesting that Munuki Payam may have a more music-centric worship culture.

100% of respondents agree that music positively impacts their spiritual growth. The overwhelming majority (78%) strongly agree, highlighting music as a powerful and transformative spiritual tool. This consensus underscores music's role in deepening faith, emotional connection, and personal reflection.

The unanimous agreement (100%) that music positively impacts spiritual growth was echoed in Turkana Wildlife Safaris' findings, which describe African religious music as "a sacred act... a way to connect with ancestors, spirits, and deities," and a tool for emotional and spiritual transformation.

This level of consensus was rare in comparative studies. For example, a Ugandan study found 92% agreement, with some respondents expressing concern over the commercialization of worship music. Munuki's results suggest a more unified and spiritually grounded perception of music's role in faith formation.

Hymns were the preferred style (45.1%), showing a strong connection to traditional and structured worship. Contemporary Gospel (30.2%) and Local Worship Songs (19.8%) reflect a blend of modern and culturally rooted expressions of faith. The low preference for instrumental music suggests that lyrical content is important for spiritual engagement.

The preference for hymns (45.1%) in Munuki Payam aligns with historical patterns across African Christian communities, where hymns introduced during missionary eras remain foundational. AfrikLens notes that African gospel music evolved from European hymns, which were later infused with African rhythms and instruments to create a more culturally resonant worship experience.

However, in cities like Lagos and Nairobi, contemporary gospel often surpasses hymns in popularity, especially among youth congregations, indicating a generational shift in musical preferences. Munuki's strong hymn preference may reflect a more traditional or intergenerational worship structure.

75.3% of respondents strongly agreed that music was an effective tool for spiritual growth, 19.8% agreed, while 4.9% were neutral or unsure.

An overwhelming 95.1% of respondents agreed that music was an effective tool for spiritual growth and discipleship. The high rate of strong agreement (75.3%) indicates deep conviction in music's role in nurturing faith, teaching values, and reinforcing spiritual identity. The absence of disagreement suggests universal acceptance of music's spiritual value across denominations and age groups.

This aligns closely with Robert Webber's theological framework, which views music as a sacramental act that nurtures spiritual identity and connects worshippers to divine mystery (Webber, 2008). Similarly, a study by Adedeji (2005) in Nigerian churches found that over 90% of

respondents believed music was essential for teaching doctrine and reinforcing Christian values.

Both studies affirmed that music was not just inspirational; it was formative, shaping beliefs and behaviors across age groups and denominations.

22% said music was used to reinforce sermon themes, 47% reported its use in reinforcing sermon themes, 30% noted its role in engaging youth and new believers, and 1% cited that it's not used in discipleship.

Nearly half (47%) recognize music as a strategic tool for reinforcing sermon themes, showing its integration into teaching and worship. Its role in engaging youth and new believers (30%) highlights music's power to connect across generations and spiritual maturity levels. The minimal percentage (1%) reporting no use in discipleship suggests that music was widely embedded in mentoring practices.

This is consistent with findings from Nketia (1974), who emphasized that African worship music often serves as a didactic tool, embedding theological messages in culturally resonant melodies. In Ghanaian Pentecostal churches, Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) observed that music was used to bridge generational gaps, especially in youth ministries.

The Munuki data support the idea that music was a strategic teaching tool, especially effective in mentoring and youth engagement.

Emotional healing (33%) was the most cited spiritual benefit, showing music's therapeutic and restorative power. Meditation (26.9%) and Bible study (22%) were also strongly influenced, suggesting that music enhances focus and scriptural engagement. Lower influence on prayer (8.2%) and fasting (9.9%) may indicate that these practices were less dependent on musical stimulation.

The prominence of emotional healing (33%) as a music-influenced practice aligns with findings from Assendelft, which highlight music's therapeutic power in post-conflict African communities, where trauma and displacement are common.

Interestingly, meditation (26.9%) and Bible study (22%) also show strong influence, which agrees with AfrikLens' observation that African gospel music enhances scriptural engagement and reflection through lyrical depth and rhythmic immersion.

However, the low influence on prayer (8.2%) and fasting (9.9%) diverges from findings in Ethiopian Orthodox communities, where chant and liturgical music are integral to both practices. This suggests that in Munuki Payam, music may be more associated with emotional and cognitive aspects of spirituality than with ritual disciplines.

Conclusion.

Spiritual development can be greatly accelerated by listening to music. It strengthens personal dedication, aids in emotional recovery, and promotes meditation and prayer.

According to the majority of respondents, music deepened their spiritual journey and made them feel closer to God. Musical genres have an impact on togetherness and collective worship. The best songs for encouraging inclusivity and emotional involvement were those from local worship. By fostering a common spiritual experience among disparate congregations, music assisted in bridging generational and tribal differences. Congregants and church leaders view music as a tactical instrument for spiritual development. Though its promise was not always fully fulfilled because of issues including a shortage of skilled musicians, inadequate equipment, and stylistic conflicts, music was employed in mentorship, education, and youth initiatives. Although music arouses powerful emotions, its efficacy is contingent upon its lyrical content, doctrinal integrity, and deliberate application in discipleship.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to enhance the spiritual impact of music within Christian communities in Munuki Payam and similar contexts:

For Church Leaders

- Invest in structured training programs for choir members and worship leaders. Such training should equip them with both musical skills and theological understanding to enable them to lead worship that is spiritually enriching.
- Promote the use of diverse musical styles by integrating indigenous songs, contemporary gospel, and traditional hymns into worship. This approach will support the engagement of congregants across different age groups and cultural backgrounds.
- Incorporate music intentionally into discipleship programs. Music should be used to reinforce biblical teachings, support spiritual mentorship, and encourage youth involvement in faith formation.

For Worship Teams and Choirs

- Prioritize theological soundness and lyrical depth when selecting worship music. Songs used in worship should communicate accurate biblical teachings and meaningful spiritual insights.
- Foster inter-denominational collaboration. Joint worship events and musical exchanges can strengthen unity, mutual learning, and shared spiritual growth among Christian communities.

For Policy Makers and Faith-Based Organizations

- Support music ministry development by providing resources such as training materials, musical instruments, and sound equipment, especially to churches with limited capacity.
- Encourage the production, recording, and dissemination of culturally relevant Christian music. This includes promoting worship songs that reflect South Sudanese identity and resonate with local communities.

For Future Researchers

- Expand research to include other regions and rural communities to identify contextual differences and broader trends in the role of music in spiritual growth.
- Investigate the therapeutic and psychological impacts of worship music, particularly its contribution to emotional resilience and trauma recovery in post-conflict settings.

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List of abbreviations.

NIV: New International Version (Bible)
PT: Practical Theology
SM: Sacred Music
CM: Church Music
MM: Music Ministry
SP: Spiritual Practices
SF: Spiritual Formation
CWM: Contemporary Worship Music
IGW: Indigenous Gospel Worship
ML: Martin Luther
MLW: Modern Liturgical Worship
CC: Cultural Context
SPC: Sudan Pentecostal Churches
MP: Munuki Payam

SS: South Sudan
IGW: Indigenous Gospel Worship
OT: Old Testament
NT: New Testament
PRC: Pew Research Center
SM: Spiritual Mentoring
SF: Spiritual Formation
CG: Church Growth
PT: Pastoral Team
CL: Choir Leaders
YL: Youth Leaders
BI: Bible Study

Source of funding

The study was not funded

Conflict of interest.

There is no conflict of interest.

Availability of data.

Data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Author's contribution.

BOJA designed the study, conducted data collection, cleaned and analyzed data, drafted the manuscript, and Dr. Benson supervised all stages of the study from conceptualization of the topic to manuscript writing and submission.

Author's biography.

Benard Oliver James Abdalla is a student of a Bachelor's Degree in Theology & Leadership at Paideia International School of Leadership.

Dr. Benson is a research supervisor at Paideia International School of Leadership.

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