

Exploring the melodies of opportunity: do nepo babies pursue music out of genuine passion or is it a matter of engaging in musicpreneurship?

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Abstract

Purpose – In recent years, a number of privileged individuals have entered the music industry in Zimbabwe, either as performers or entrepreneurs. The economic challenges in the country may have prompted these individuals to invest in music as a means of diversifying their income or exploring new business opportunities. To determine whether their interest in music is driven by entrepreneurship or genuine passion, a scholarly examination was deemed necessary.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews was used as the data collection technique. Narrative analysis was conducted on a sample of musicology students in Gweru, Zimbabwe.

Findings – The findings revealed the nepo babies' interest in music is driven by legacy continuation – the responsibility to carry on with the name of the parent – harsh economic conditions, capitalizing on Internet and digital opportunities and mechanisms for psychological satisfaction during hardships.

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Originality/value – Although there is a wide range of literature on musicpreneurship, there are gaps in studies that have examined whether a nepo baby's interest in music is motivated by musicpreneurship or a genuine passion for it. Therefore, the aim of this research is to contribute to the existing body of literature on African musicpreneurship, with a specific focus on Zimbabwe.

Keywords Musicpreneurship, Nepotism, Entrepreneurs, Legacy, Hardships

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced music industry, the concept of musicpreneurship has emerged as a powerful force (Muhammad, Khan, Shah, & Ali 2021). Musicpreneurship combines the worlds of music and entrepreneurship, representing a significant shift in how musicians approach their careers and the business side of music (Nytech, 2020). As traditional record deals and sources of income become less reliable, musicpreneurship empowers artists to take control of their futures by establishing and running music-focused businesses (Ratten, 2023). This shift is not only reshaping the music landscape but also providing a lifeline to musicians seeking sustainability and artistic independence (Toscher & Morris Bjørnø, 2019). It encourages artists to break away from traditional industry models and fosters an environment where innovation thrives. By embracing musicpreneurship, musicians are inspired to think creatively and develop innovative strategies to generate income from their artistry (Muhammad *et al.*, 2021; de Reizabal & Benito Gómez, 2020).

The impact of music entrepreneurship extends beyond individual careers; it can rejuvenate the entire music ecosystem (Mcpherson & Dumbreck, 2016). When musicians can earn money from their creative work, they have the freedom to dedicate more time and resources to their craft, leading to a constant flow of new and captivating music. This ongoing innovation not only keeps the industry vibrant and meaningful but also enhances the musical landscape for audiences worldwide (White, 2016). Music entrepreneurship thrives on collaboration, with musicians, industry professionals and entrepreneurial minds joining forces to generate new ideas, partnerships and business ventures (Everts, Hitters, & Berkers, 2022). By engaging in music-based entrepreneurship, artists not only create opportunities for themselves but also pave the way for others in the industry (Canziani & Welsh, 2021). This is particularly important in an industry that has experienced substantial job losses, providing a glimmer of hope and economic revitalization (Weber, Zhen, & Arias, 2023).

Despite some progress in the field of music, there is a lack of research on music entrepreneurship and “nepo babies” (Muhammad *et al.*, 2021; Toscher & Morris Bjørnø, 2019; Ávila, Davel, & Elias, 2023; Munnely, 2020; Hietanen & Ruismäki, 2021). Nepo babies are children born into families with a musical legacy. According to social learning theory, these children may be more inclined to develop an interest in music due to the influence of their parents or family members who are already involved in the music industry (Cilliers, 2021). Nepo babies may observe their parents' musical pursuits, perceive them as successful or admirable and choose to engage in music entrepreneurship to carry on their family's artistic legacy. Given this background, it is important to determine whether musical talent is simply inherited from a musician parent or whether these children pursue music entrepreneurship as a survival strategy in the Zimbabwean setting, where there are economic challenges.

Children of music legends may have a natural talent for music due to their upbringing and exposure to music from a young age. However, this alone does not guarantee success in the music industry. It takes hard work, dedication and entrepreneurship to make a career out of music. Inheriting the talent of a parent can play a role in a child's music career, as they may have learned techniques or styles from their parent. However, it's important for them to develop their own unique sound. Success in the music industry for children of music legends depends on their natural talent, hard work, dedication, entrepreneurship and individual creativity. This research examines whether a nepo baby's interest in music is driven by music entrepreneurship or true passion.

The following sections discuss the research gaps, research context, theoretical lens, literature review, methodology, data analysis, findings, discussion, implications, limitations and future research directions.

1.1 Research gaps

There is a lack of studies exploring whether nepo babies' interest in music is driven by musicpreneurship or a true passion for it, despite the potential to shed light on this phenomenon. Further academic research is needed in this area. Most academic writing on this topic is based on data from countries such as Europe, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Pakistan. For example, [de Reizabal and Benito Gómez \(2020\)](#) examined the state of entrepreneurship among classical musicians in Europe. Additionally, [Everts *et al.* \(2022\)](#) explored the working lives of early-career musicians following technological innovations in the music industry in the Netherlands. Furthermore, [Everts and Haynes \(2021\)](#) investigated the relationship between the conditions of national music industries and the strategies used by musicians to navigate their careers as entrepreneurs. Moreover, [Muhammad *et al.* \(2021\)](#) investigated the challenges faced by a specific group of social entrepreneurs known as musicpreneurs and explored the opportunities available to them.

Limited evidence exists in studies conducted in Africa regarding the motivation behind nepo babies' interest in music, whether it is driven by music entrepreneurship or a genuine passion for the art. As a result, little is known about this topic in developing regions, particularly African countries. Therefore, it is important to investigate this gap in knowledge, especially in neglected contexts. Local African scholars have conducted studies in various contexts to shed light on this issue. For example, [Kilu, Sanda, Afun and Alacovska \(2022\)](#) conducted a study titled "The dysfunctional systems of creative entrepreneurship in Ghana" to enhance our understanding of creative industries in Ghana and contribute to the theorization of dysfunctional systems in creative entrepreneurship. [Schneidermann \(2020\)](#) examined the relationship between popular music and politics in Uganda, specifically how musicians engaged with general election campaigns in 2011, 2016 and beyond. [Chinyowa \(2022\)](#) explored the potential of integrating arts education and the emerging creative industries to promote sustainable development in South Africa. Additionally, [Ngeh and Pelican \(2022\)](#) investigated innovative approaches to music and future-shaping by youth in demanding African contexts.

Based on international and local studies, there is a lack of research focused on whether the interest in music among nepo babies is driven by musicpreneurship or a genuine passion for it. It is important to note that this novel study contributes new theoretical and practical knowledge, leading to a new research direction in this field. Previous studies have explored the nature and scope of musicpreneurship and the reasons for its existence. However, there has been no direct research assessing how nepo babies' interest in music is influenced by musicpreneurship or true passion, particularly in an African context like Zimbabwe. This study aims to fill this population gap, as musicpreneurship and nepo babies are still emerging concepts in developed countries and emerging African economies. Therefore, this article contributes to closing the gap by examining a sample of musicology students from a developing country context.

2. Theoretical lens

Several research theories can be used to investigate whether nepo or nepotism babies are genuinely interested in music or if their involvement is primarily motivated by musicpreneurship. The social learning theory, resource dependence theory (RDT) and self-determination theory (SDT) are all relevant theoretical frameworks for this study. The

current theories (social learning theory, RDT and SDT) were used to guide research questions by giving direction and help identify which variables to interoperate, measure and conceptualize. They were used to assisting and helping make sense of findings through establishing context for understanding relationships between variables. Further to this, the theories were applied with an aim of building knowledge, as with new data, they tend to be modified, supported or refuted, leading to a newer line of thinking and knowledge acquisition in a particular field of study. In addition, the theories were meant for use of providing framework for analysis, predicting outcomes and be a context for a structured analysis (breaking down intricate systems into manageable components) of complex phenomena. Theories applied in this study provide a firm foundation for scientific inquiry and the advancement of communication among the scholarly community.

2.1 Social learning theory (SCT)

[Bandura \(1977\)](#) introduced the social cognitive theory (SCT), which focuses on learning in social settings and highlights the importance of observation in shaping learners' behavior. This theory, also known as social learning theory, suggests that individuals can acquire new behaviors by observing and imitating others ([Maziriri, Nyagadza, Mapuranga, & Maramura, 2022](#)). It emphasizes that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social environment and can occur through observation or direct instruction, without the need for motor reproduction or direct reinforcement ([Cilliers, 2021](#)). By combining behavioral and cognitive learning theories, social learning theory offers a comprehensive model that can explain a wide range of real-world learning experiences ([Maziriri et al., 2022](#)). This theory is grounded in the idea that learning is a cognitive process within a social context rather than solely a behavioral process ([Maziriri et al., 2022](#)).

The social learning theory suggests that nepo babies may develop an interest in music through observation and imitation of influential figures in their environment, such as their musical parents. This theory also recognizes the importance of societal expectations and cultural influences in shaping the interests and choices of Nepo babies in musicpreneurship versus true passion for music.

2.2 Resource dependence theory (RDT)

RDT, developed by [Pfeffer and Salancik \(1978\)](#), is a framework that explores how organizations adjust their behavior strategically in response to their reliance on external resources. The theory proposes that organizations depend on a variety of resources, including financial capital, information, technology and human expertise, to function effectively ([Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978](#); [Salancik, Pfeffer, & Kelly, 1978](#)). The availability, control and allocation of resources significantly influence organizational behavior and decision-making. By researching the motivations of nepotism babies in music, the RDT can help understand how these individuals rely on external resources. This theory is relevant for understanding whether a nepotism baby's interest in music is driven by entrepreneurship or a true passion, especially in the context of economic hardships and inheritance. Individuals adapt their behavior and pursue entrepreneurial activities in response to resource constraints and dependencies. In the case of nepotism babies, economic hardships in Zimbabwe may create a pressing need for financial stability and independence. Engaging in music entrepreneurship, leveraging inherited talents and family connections, can be a strategic response to these economic challenges. By embracing music entrepreneurship, nepotism babies can use resources and networks left by their parents to build their own careers and overcome financial limitations.

2.3 Self-determination theory (SDT)

The SDT is a psychological framework that aims to understand the motivation and factors that drive human behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Developed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, SDT proposes that individuals have innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness and that fulfilling these needs leads to greater motivation and well-being (Ryan, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

According to the SDT, autonomy refers to the need for individuals to have a sense of choice, independence and control over their own actions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Competence refers to the need to feel effective and capable in one's activities, while relatedness pertains to the need for meaningful connections with others and a sense of belonging (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The theory suggests that when these three needs are fulfilled, individuals are more likely to exhibit intrinsic motivation, which is driven by internal factors such as personal interest, enjoyment and a genuine desire to engage in an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2017). On the other hand, when these needs are thwarted or unmet, individuals may rely more on extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external factors like rewards, social approval or avoiding punishment (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

When applying the SDT to research on a nepo baby's interest in music, it's important to consider the factors influencing their motivation. If the baby feels autonomy and has opportunities to develop competence, their interest is likely driven by genuine passion. However, if their interest is fueled by external pressures or expectations from their family's music entrepreneurship, their motivation may be more extrinsic. In these cases, their engagement with music may be driven by factors other than personal interest or genuine passion.

3. A brief overview of the literature

This section centers on exploring literature on nepotism, nepo babies and musicpreneurship.

3.1 Nepotism

The term nepotism originated from Pope Sixtus IV's (1471–1484) granting of favors to his family, particularly his nephews (Jain, Srivastava, & Sullivan, 2022). Historically, a sharp distinction was made between nepotism and cronyism, with nepotism referring only to favors granted to relatives and cronyism referring only to favors granted to friends. Today, the terms are often used interchangeably (Jones, 2012), with widely used measurements of nepotism referring to favors granted to both family and friends (Abdalla, Maghrabi, & Raggad, 1998). According to Powell (2023), nepotism is favoritism, but definitions vary in terms of who is favored and how they are favored. Narrow definitions of nepotism include only relatives, while broader definitions include friends (Powell, 2023). In this paper, we define nepotism as the preferential treatment and opportunities given to individuals based on their familial connections, rather than solely on their talent or passion for music.

3.2 Nepotism babies

Nepo babies, also known as “nepotism babies,” are individuals born into influential and powerful families in certain industries who receive preferential treatment or opportunities due to their family connections (Crump, 2022). The prevalence of nepo babies in Bollywood has been widely discussed in recent years (Bohra, Sharma, & Sharma, 2021). According to Bohra *et al.* (2021), star kids have an advantage because their family members have been part of the entertainment world. Nepotism has also been observed in various industries in the United States of America, including politics, finance and the media. An article in the Daily

Targum in 2022 highlighted the issue of nepotism in Hollywood, stating that “Nepotism in Hollywood can’t be stopped, but privileged celebrities need to acknowledge it” (Wilkinson, 2022). The term “nepotism baby,” or its shortened version “nepo baby,” refers to the children of celebrities who are following in their parents’ footsteps and pursuing careers in the spotlight (Laws, Morgan, Meyerowitz, & Pantony, 2022). The hashtag “#nepotismbaby” on social media has been used to mock celebrities born into successful families rather than being self-made (Crump, 2022; Laws *et al.*, 2022). Of particular interest in this study are nepo babies, a group of infants born to Zimbabwean families known for their musical talents. They are believed to have innate musical abilities passed down through generations, but the extent to which this is true remains unclear. This study aims to investigate whether musical talent is genuinely inheritable among nepo babies or if it is a matter of engaging in music entrepreneurship.

3.3 Musicpreneurship

According to Rangadhithya and Ramanujam (2022), musicpreneurs are musicians, producers, composers or individuals in the music industry who approach their careers with a proactive and business-minded mindset. Musicpreneurship combines music with entrepreneurship, viewing music as both an artistic endeavor and a financial operation (Kubacki & Croft, 2011; Schwetter, 2019). Musicpreneurship involves applying entrepreneurial principles and tactics to various aspects of the music industry to generate income, create opportunities and achieve long-term success. Ensign (2023, p. 156) argues that musicpreneurship reflects the evolving landscape of the music industry, where artists and professionals are taking a more proactive approach to structuring their careers and using business principles to achieve their goals. This means that musicpreneurs must find a balance between creative expression and financial sustainability.

Musicpreneurs often achieve this balance by diversifying their income streams through engaging in a variety of activities beyond traditional musical performances (Rangadhithya & Ramanujam, 2022). Income diversification can take various forms, including teaching music lessons, producing and selling music, licensing compositions for films and commercials, organizing events and more. Therefore, Sanders, Phillips and Williams (2022) argue that musicpreneurship aims to create sustainable careers by enabling musicians to generate multiple income streams and adapt to changing market demands.

Musicpreneurs focus on creating a strong brand identity and effectively marketing their music and services for long-term success. This involves building an online presence, using social media, creating visually appealing content and engaging with fans. They also prioritize building and maintaining a strong network within the music industry through collaborations, partnerships and connections. Embracing innovation and new technologies is essential for reaching a wider audience. Musicpreneurs must also stay open to learning about new trends, technology and business tactics to remain competitive. Adopting an entrepreneurial attitude, which includes skills such as adaptability, risk-taking, problem-solving and a willingness to explore new prospects, is required for success in music entrepreneurship. This mentality enables musicpreneurs to make informed decisions that contribute to their financial stability and success in the dynamic and ever-changing music industry.

4. Methodology

The study used an interpretivist research philosophy and a qualitative approach, conducting semi-structured interviews with students at Midlands State University in Gweru, Zimbabwe. This approach aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied (Pheko,

2014). Additionally, incorporating narrative inquiry through participant stories helped collect data and understand lived experiences (Blustein, Kozan, & Connors-Kellgren, 2013; Chinyamurindi, 2016a). Narratives also helped understand the sequence of events and actions that impact individuals (Czarniawska, 2004). The research is based on exploring meaning through participant reflections (Chinyamurindi, 2016a, b).

4.1 Sample

During a six-month data collection period, 20 students were recruited for the study using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method. It has been suggested that qualitative studies should have a minimum sample size of at least 12 to achieve data saturation (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Therefore, a sample size of 20 was considered adequate for the qualitative analysis in this study. Convenience sampling was chosen for its cost and time advantages, which were important due to the academic nature of the project and time constraints within the academic community. Convenience sampling involves collecting data from individuals who are willing to participate and easily accessible to the researcher. The researchers used specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to select participants.

- (1) Participants had to be students of Midlands State University.
- (2) Participants were required to have acquired knowledge on the topic of musicpreneurship through a lecture in one of the entrepreneurship modules offered by the Faculty of Business Sciences at Midlands State University.

The interviews were conducted at the university premises, specifically in the participants' auditoriums and lecture halls, to ensure their comfort and familiarity with the environment. Each participant's interview was scheduled at their convenience and availability, with durations ranging from 45 minutes to 2 hours. Data collection took place over a six-month period, from January 2023 to June 2023. Prior consent was obtained from the participants to record the interviews, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities. Table 1 presents an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants.

4.2 Data collection method: semi-structured interviews

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, a common method in qualitative research (Sobuce, 2012; Lord, 2009). The interviews aimed to gather information on how individuals navigate their daily activities (Thompson *et al.*, 2012). Conducted with students, the interviews followed a semi-structured format, focusing on specific areas of interest while allowing for flexibility in the discussion (Ncanywa, 2014). Maziriri and Madinga (2015) noted that this type of interview includes predetermined questions to gather expected information and open-ended questions to elicit unexpected insights. The format also allowed for additional questions as needed. To ensure accuracy, all interviews were recorded and later transcribed and cross-checked with the audio recordings. In total, 20 interviews were conducted.

4.3 Strategies to ensure data quality and reporting

Stringent guidelines were adhered to in order to guarantee the quality and accuracy of the data and subsequent reporting. To begin with, an interview guide was meticulously crafted and thoroughly examined by experts. It was then tested in a pilot study during the validation process. Additionally, the data collection phase spanned a duration of six months, providing ample time for precise transcription and thoughtful reflections by the researchers.

Participant number	Pseudo-name	Age	Participant's degree programme	Year of study
1	Takudzwa	23	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	4th
2	Sipho	19	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
3	Rumbidzai	21	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	2nd
4	Nomsa	18	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
5	Tatenda	25	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	4th
6	Tendai	22	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
7	Simbarashe	24	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	3rd
8	Nkosi	18	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
9	Rufaro	26	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	4th
10	Chipo	22	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	2nd
11	Nyarai	28	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	4th
12	Kudzai	19	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
13	Tafadzwa	23	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	3rd
14	Jabulani	23	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	3rd
15	Takunda	24	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	4th
16	Nyasha	18	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
17	Shamiso	19	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	1st
18	Farai	20	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	2nd
19	Anotida	24	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	4th
20	Tinashe	25	Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology	3rd

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 1.
The participants' demographic characteristics

4.4 Ensuring the quality and rigor of the research

The quality and rigor of the research were maintained through various methods. Peer-debriefing and member checking were utilized by the authors throughout the research planning, execution and dissemination (Treharne and Riggs, 2015). Additionally, the authors followed the recommendations of Johnson *et al.* (2020) by applying reflexivity and safeguarding against potential biases. To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, the researchers also adhered to the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was achieved by accurately reflecting the findings and the phenomenon under investigation in accordance with reality. In terms of

transferability, the comprehensive data and results serve as a basis for future research to conduct similar studies.

4.5 Narrative analysis

The interviews were transcribed and exported into QSR International's Nvivo version 11, a data analysis and management software package that is useful for handling large amounts of text, graphic, audio and video data. Following recommendations from the literature, markers were utilized to plot each story. These markers included orientation, abstract, what happened, evaluation and coda, as outlined by Labov (1972). This structure, which has been employed in previous studies (LaPointe, 2010), also aided in identifying significant portions of the text that may require further investigation. Through narrative interviews, participants were able to provide valuable insights into determining whether a nepo baby's interest in music is driven by musicpreneurship or a genuine passion for the art. The theories in the current study were used to provide a framework for analysis of the five narratives, predict outcomes and be a context for a structured analysis (breaking down intricate systems into manageable components) of complex phenomena.

4.6 Determination of the main narratives

The researchers used NVivo software to analyze data from semi-structured interviews. They initially used a deductive approach based on existing literature but later switched to an inductive approach to allow for new codes to emerge. The researchers documented and organized the codes into narratives, which aligned with the literature review. Figure 1 shows the coding scheme that led to the study's findings, which revealed the educational benefits of drop shipping.

5. Findings

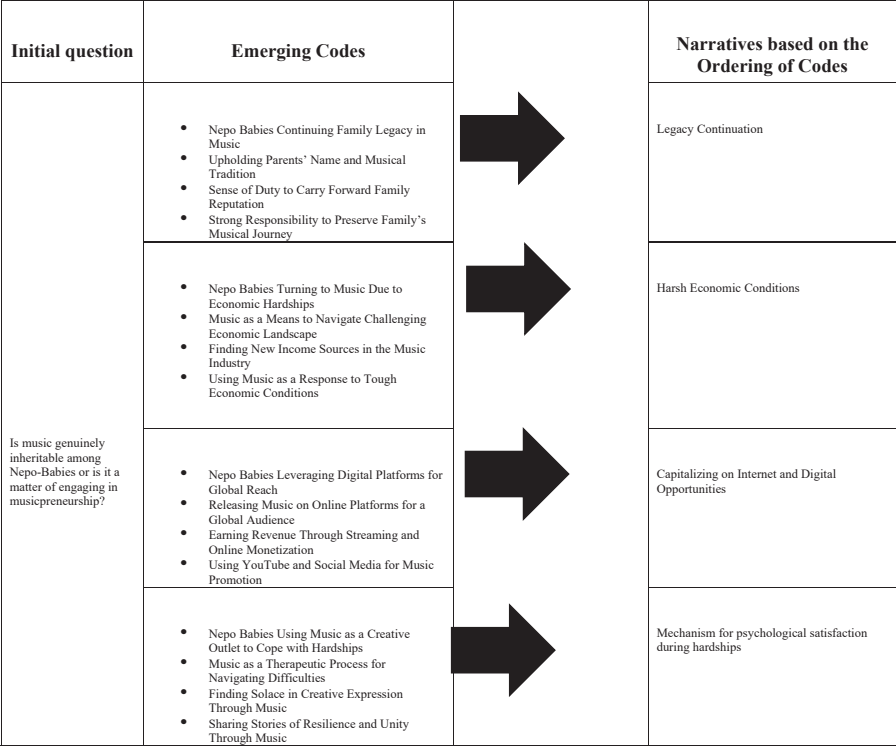
Data analysis revealed five narratives that shed light on the motivations driving nepo babies' participation in the music industry. These narratives include upholding a family legacy, pursuing entrepreneurial ventures, responding to economic conditions, utilizing the internet and digital platforms and using music as a coping mechanism. In the following sections, we will explore these findings with relevant quotes and anecdotes.

5.1 Narrative one- legacy continuation – responsibility to carry on with the name

This narrative delves into the idea that individuals born into musical families in the music industry often feel a duty to preserve their family's musical heritage. They see it as their responsibility to uphold their parents' legacy and continue their family's tradition in the music industry. This is as a result of the fact that legacy continuation is supported by the social learning theory, emphasizing that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social environment and can occur through observation or direct instruction, without the need for motor reproduction or direct reinforcement (Cilliers, 2021). By combining behavioral and cognitive learning theories, social learning theory offers a comprehensive model that can explain a wide range of real-world learning experiences (Maziriri *et al.*, 2022). Due to this, the study therefore, under the legacy narrative, highlights the concept that these individuals, referred to as "nepo babies," feel a strong obligation to maintain their family's esteemed reputation and carry on their impressive achievements in the music field. This perception is evident in the following direct quotes:

Nepo babies often feel a strong responsibility to carry on with their family's legacy in the music industry. It's like a duty for them to uphold their parents' name and continue their musical journey. [Nomsa]

Figure 1.
Coding scheme



Source(s): Table by authors

Another participant elucidated that:aa:

For nepo babies, it's about upholding the family name. They want to make their parents proud and continue the musical legacy that has been passed down to them. [Sipho]

Additionally:

The pressure to carry on the family name can be immense for Nepo babies. They may feel obligated to pursue a career in music even if their true passion lies elsewhere. [Takudzwa]

Also:

In Zimbabwean society, there's a strong emphasis on family and continuity. Some Nepo babies see entering the music industry as a way of fulfilling their duty and ensuring the family's legacy lives on. [Rumbidzai]

5.2 Narrative two- harsh economic conditions

This narrative explores the economic challenges facing Zimbabwe and how they may affect the involvement of young musicians in the music industry. The social learning theory suggests that Nepo babies may develop an interest in music through observation and imitation of influential figures in their environment, such as their musical parents. Therefore, the current study

suggests that the difficult economic conditions in the country may lead nepo babies to pursue music as a way to achieve financial stability or additional sources of income. The narrative emphasizes the impact of economic struggles on their decision to pursue a career in music entrepreneurship. These ideas are summarized in the following comments:

In a country facing economic hardships like ours, nepo babies turn to music entrepreneurship as a means of finding new income sources. It's a way for them to navigate the challenging economic landscape. [Chipo]

The issue of economic hardships was highlighted strongly by the following participant:

The economic hardships in Zimbabwe have pushed some nepo babies to explore opportunities in the music industry. It's not just about passion; it's about survival and creating a stable financial foundation. [Jabulani]

Additionally:

Economic hardships can be a driving force behind Nepo babies' involvement in the music industry. It provides them with a means to diversify their income streams and find new business opportunities in a challenging economy. [Rufaro]

This was supported by another participant, who stated:

The tough economic conditions in Zimbabwe make it necessary for everyone to find innovative ways to make a living. Nepo babies are no exception, and they usually turn to music entrepreneurship to secure their financial future. [Nyarai]

5.3 Narrative three – capitalizing on internet and digital opportunities

This narrative explores the growing internet accessibility in Zimbabwe and its impact on musicians known as “nepo babies.” With platforms like YouTube and Facebook, these musicians can now reach a global audience from home. In line with the RDT, people depend on a variety of resources, including financial capital, information, technology and human expertise (for musicpreneurship), to function effectively (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Salancik *et al.*, 1978). However, this opportunity also brings challenges. To stand out online, they need musicpreneurial skills, such as marketing and monetization. They must navigate the competitive digital space, engage with fans and strategically promote their music for recognition and success. These ideas are succinctly summarized in the following comments:

The internet has opened up new possibilities for nepo babies within the music industry in Zimbabwe. Through platforms like YouTube and Facebook, they can now reach a global audience from their homes. [Faraí]

Also:

Nepo babies in Zimbabwe usually release their music on various online platforms, such as Spotify, Apple Music, and SoundCloud. With a global reach, they earn revenue from streaming royalties based on the number of plays their songs receive. [Tinashe]

Another participant mentioned that:

YouTube is a powerful platform being used by Nepo babies to share their music videos and gain a substantial audience. Nepo babies monetize their YouTube channels through advertisements that appear on their videos. They earn revenue based on the number of views and ad clicks their videos receive. [Shamiso]

This was supported by another participant, who stated:

There are Nepo babies who have a significant following on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. They do this to attract sponsorships and brand collaborations. These nepo babies would then promote products or services through sponsored posts, earning money for the promotional efforts. [Anotida]

5.4 Narrative four – mechanism for psychological satisfaction during hardships

In Zimbabwe, young musicians use music to cope with societal hardships, expressing resilience, hope and unity. Musicpreneurship is about more than making money; it's about finding purpose and strength in creative pursuits during tough times. This narrative explores how societal hardships in Zimbabwe have led some young musicians to turn to music as a mechanism for psychological satisfaction. This links well with the SDT developed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, which proposes that individuals have innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and that fulfilling these needs leads to greater motivation and well-being (Ryan, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000). This means narrative five explores how societal hardships in Zimbabwe have led some young musicians to turn to music as a mechanism for psychological satisfaction. These ideas are summarized in the following comments:

Life in Zimbabwe is filled with hardships, and sometimes it's overwhelming. As musicians, nepo babies turn to music as a coping mechanism. Musicpreneurship allows them to channel their emotions and experiences into their art. It becomes a therapeutic process, helping them to navigate through the difficulties and find solace in their creative expression. [Shamiso]

Another participant mentioned that:

I've seen that some of the nepo-babies within the music industry struggle with the challenges of everyday life in Zimbabwe. Musicpreneurship has given them a sense of purpose and hope during tough times. Through their music, they share stories of resilience and unity, and it inspires others to keep pushing forward despite the hardships we face. [Anotida]

This was supported by another participant, who stated:

In a country where it's easy to feel hopeless, musicpreneurship becomes a way to rise above the hardships. It helps nepo babies to cope with the struggles by giving them a platform to voice their frustrations, dreams, and aspirations. Music becomes not just a form of art but also a source of strength and motivation for nepo-babies and their communities. [Kudzai]

6. Discussion

This study has identified several themes that offer valuable insights into the motivations and circumstances driving music entrepreneurship among nepo babies. One prominent theme is the idea of "legacy continuation," suggesting that nepo babies feel a responsibility to carry on their family name through their involvement in music. This supports previous findings on the importance of intergenerational family legacies in the music industry (Muhammad *et al.*, 2021; Grácio, 2016; Roper & Duffett, 2018; Scripp & Gilbert, 2019). Interestingly, the maintenance of family legacies by nepo babies in the music industry aligns with the core tenet of social learning theory, which proposes that new behaviors can be learned by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1977; Maziriri *et al.*, 2022). This theory asserts that learning is a cognitive process that occurs in a social context and can occur solely through observation or direct instruction, even without motor reproduction or direct reinforcement (Cilliers, 2021).

As a result, nepo babies learn music skills from their forefathers and also learn how their forefathers maintained music careers from one generation to another.

The current study identified “harsh economic conditions” as a key theme, indicating that difficult economic circumstances in Zimbabwe are driving nepo babies to invest in music as a means of achieving financial stability. Previous empirical studies have also shown that poor economic conditions lead individuals to pursue music entrepreneurship (Muhammad *et al.*, 2021; Ramsak, 2015). Furthermore, the theme of “high unemployment rate” suggests that the lack of stable employment opportunities in Zimbabwe is creating financial hardships for nepo babies in the music industry. Simply pursuing music out of passion may not be enough to sustain them economically. Music entrepreneurship becomes a necessity for these musicians, providing them with a way to use their musical talents to earn a living and support themselves financially. This is consistent with previous studies that found musicpreneurs engage in the industry to eradicate poverty, promote self-employment and diversify income sources (DeLeon & Brown, 2023; Muhammad *et al.*, 2021).

The narrative of “capitalizing on the internet and digital opportunities” suggests that, with the expanding Internet access in Zimbabwe, musicians now have the chance to reach a global audience through online platforms like YouTube and Facebook. The adoption of digital and social media technologies has transformed the business activities of musicpreneurs (Kiresci, 2023; Psomadaki, Matsiola, Dimoulas, & Kalliris, 2022; Ruiz-Resto, 2023).

Lastly, the narrative of “Mechanism for psychological satisfaction during hardships” suggests that the difficult circumstances in Zimbabwe have led some nepo babies to turn to music as a coping mechanism. Music entrepreneurship, in this context, becomes a way for these artists to express their emotions, experiences and resilience through their music. It provides them with a sense of purpose and strength during tough times and allows them to inspire others by sharing stories of hope and unity through their creative endeavors (DeLeon & Brown, 2023; Muhammad *et al.*, 2021; Ramsak, 2015; Scripp & Gilbert, 2019).

7. Evaluation of the research question

The research sought to explore the question: “Do nepo babies pursue music out of genuine passion or is it a matter of engaging in musicpreneurship?” Based on the narratives, it can be concluded that nepo babies engage in music primarily for economic reasons rather than a true passion for the art. The data collected did not show signs of genuine passion among these individuals. This trend is particularly notable in Zimbabwe, where nepo babies seem to prioritize financial opportunities over artistic fulfillment. Their involvement in the music industry appears to be driven more by the need to address economic challenges than a deep love for music. This indicates that their motivation stems more from the potential for financial gain than a genuine passion for music.

8. Implications of the study

We aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the findings contribute to existing literature and their potential applications in real-world contexts. The theoretical implications will explore how concepts such as social learning theory, RDT and SDT shed light on the motivations of nepo babies in the music industry. The practical implications will address the specific support mechanisms and resources needed to empower these individuals in their musical pursuits. Lastly, the policy implications will highlight actionable recommendations for the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation in Zimbabwe, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive environment for aspiring musicians. Together, these sections will demonstrate the multifaceted impact of the research findings. The following sections will focus on the theoretical, practical and policy implications of the study.

9. Theoretical implications

The research findings highlight several theoretical implications that deepen our understanding of the motivations behind a nepo baby's interest in music. Drawing on social learning theory, it becomes evident that family heritage plays a significant role in shaping these aspirations. Nepo babies may feel a strong sense of responsibility to continue their family's artistic traditions, which influences their engagement with music. Additionally, the concept of musicpreneurship can be analyzed through RDT, suggesting that these individuals leverage their familial connections to navigate economic challenges in the industry. Furthermore, the passion for music, as explained by SDT, emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and personal fulfillment, underscoring how personal interests drive their career paths. Overall, the implications contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between individual aspirations, cultural context, economic factors and the influence of family heritage in shaping the musicpreneurship pursuits of nepo babies.

10. Practical implications

From a practical standpoint, the study underscores the need for tailored support and mentorship programs designed to assist nepo babies in their musical endeavors. By focusing on legacy continuation and nurturing their passion for music, these initiatives can significantly impact their development. Addressing the economic hardships in Zimbabwe is also critical, as it creates a more conducive environment for aspiring musicians. Additionally, providing resources for digital literacy and mental health support for individuals in the music industry is essential for fostering sustainable careers. The research suggests specific policy initiatives for the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation in Zimbabwe, including the establishment of programs that connect music with entrepreneurship. These could offer valuable training and mentorship opportunities for young musicians. Finally, implementing financial assistance programs and initiatives aimed at preserving artistic legacies would further cultivate a thriving music industry in Zimbabwe, ultimately empowering nepo babies in their musical pursuits.

11. Policy implications

The research findings also present important policy implications for the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation in Zimbabwe. To foster a vibrant music industry, the ministry could develop comprehensive support systems that bridge the gap between music and entrepreneurship. This includes creating training programs and mentorship opportunities tailored to aspiring musicians, focusing on both artistic development and business acumen. Furthermore, the ministry should consider initiatives that preserve artistic legacies, such as funding for projects that celebrate family histories in music. Additionally, financial assistance programs could be established to alleviate the economic barriers faced by young musicians, ensuring they have access to the resources necessary for their growth. By prioritizing these initiatives, policymakers can create an environment that not only supports individual aspirations but also contributes to a thriving and inclusive music industry in Zimbabwe.

12. Limitations and future research directions

The limitation of this qualitative study is its small sample size, as it was conducted among only 20 students studying for the Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Music Business, Musicology and Technology at a single university in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.

The findings may not be representative of the broader population and may not reflect the diverse range of perspectives that exist. To address this limitation, future research could involve expanding the sample size to include a larger and more diverse group of participants from different universities and regions in Zimbabwe. Additionally, considering the perspectives of industry professionals and stakeholders would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the motivations and career choices of nepo babies in the music industry.

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