

Original Article

Platformed Genre Identity in Tanzanian Popular Music: A Comparative Content Analysis of Singeli and Bongo Flava Instagram Biographies

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Abstract - This article examines how the sampled Singeli and Bongo Flava profiles present genre, professional, and cultural identities in Instagram biographies. Forty public professional profiles archived on 6 July 2026 are analyzed through comparative content analysis that combines structured descriptive coding with thematic interpretation. Explicit genre naming is concentrated among Singeli profiles, whereas Bongo Flava profiles communicate music identity indirectly through professional roles and institutional positioning. Singeli profiles display more direct booking and telephone access and more frequent neighborhood and mixed-language references, while Bongo Flava profiles more often present specialist, executive, and multi-role vocabularies. The article conceptualizes the Instagram biography as a compressed music-cultural paratext through which genre histories, cultural rootedness, professional accessibility, and claims to artistic authority become publicly legible. The findings illustrate the analytical value of profile biographies for studying platformed genre identity in African popular music while remaining bounded to a purposive, single-date corpus.

Keywords - Bongo Flava, Digital Self-Presentation, Instagram Biographies, Platformed Genre Identity, Singeli.

1. Introduction

The platformization of cultural production has reorganized how musicians build careers and communicate identity. [1] On Instagram, the biography, a compact field of a few lines, has become a dense professional paratext: in Genette's sense, a threshold apparatus that frames a work for its publics, [2,3] here framing the account before any recording is heard. For musicians who depend on discoverability and booking, the biography is a strategic surface on which genre, locality, professional role and commercial accessibility are made legible at a glance. [4,5] The interface adds its own signals, a verification badge, a platform-generated category, an external-link field and contact functions, which frame the authored text without being authored on the account. [6] What an account can mobilize in a biography is shaped both by these affordances and by the industrial conditions of the genre field in which it operates.

Across Africa, digital platforms are central to the circulation of popular music and to the entrepreneurial labor through which artists pursue recognition and cross-border visibility. These dynamics are not uniform: the continent is not a single music market, infrastructures differ sharply, and the interplay between local cultural identity and standardized platform formats takes genre-specific forms. [7] How a given genre field equips its accounts to present themselves online is therefore an empirical question.

In Tanzania, Dar es Salaam is a major center of popular-music production, Kiswahili is a primary medium of cultural communication, and music has long been entangled with the making of national culture. [8] Two genres offer an instructive comparison. Bongo Flava, a Swahili urban-pop and hip-hop lineage consolidated from the late 1990s, is comparatively institutionalized, with established labels, media organizations, and commercial infrastructures. [9–11] Singeli, a fast-tempo, MC-driven dance music that emerged in working-class Dar es Salaam neighborhoods in the mid-2000s, moved from street circulation toward national and international recognition more recently, and its legitimation is

still in progress. [12, 13] Comparing the two fields allows the analysis to ask how genre history and institutional development become observable in public self-presentation, a question on which comparative evidence remains limited. Rather than treating Instagram biographies merely as branding texts, this study reads them as compressed music-cultural documents through which genre histories, artistic roles, infrastructural conditions and evolving claims to musical authority become publicly legible.

Bongo Flava developed from the localization of hip-hop and urban popular music that reached Tanzania from the late 1980s, as the constraints of the ujamaa era eased. [14,15] A decisive tendency was the shift toward Kiswahili, which broadened domestic audiences and enabled social commentary in an accessible idiom, with artists positioned as a *kioo cha jamii*, a mirror of society. [10,11,16,17] The music incorporated rhythm and blues, Afro-pop and dance influences. It moved through successive phases, from early pioneers and popularizers to commercial breakthrough figures and transnational stars supported by labels, media organizations and artist-led enterprises. [9,18] The genre is best understood as a field built through distinct waves of artists and institutions, not the creation of a single founder.

Singeli emerged in Dar es Salaam neighborhoods such as Tandale, drawing on ngoma, the electronic street style *mchiriku*, and rapid sampled reworkings associated with *taarab*, with MCs performing over very fast tempos at block parties and in neighborhood studios. [12,13] Producer collectives and neighborhood venues were central to its early circulation; the music later gained national and international visibility while its legitimacy and institutionalization remained contested, including public moral debate about its lyrics and performance culture. [19] These neighborhood origins are treated as a cultural resource, and references to street belonging are read as positioning claims rather than evidence of marginality.

Five bodies of scholarship inform the study. Research on digital self-presentation shows how public personas are curated within interface constraints, and how micro-celebrity and personal-branding practices convert attention into professional value; [4–6,20,21] compressed profile fields concentrate this work by demanding that an identity be stated in a few lines, a compression also documented for Instagram biographies in adjacent professional fields such as sports journalism. [22] Scholarship on platformization situates such performances within the political economy and affordances of platforms, whose verification systems, category labels and link architectures frame account identity independently of the words on the profile. [1]

Genre theory clarifies that genres are social worlds with symbolic boundaries, legitimacy struggles and authenticity claims, traveling through recognizable trajectories of institutionalization: [23–25] naming a genre, claiming authority within it or leaving it unnamed are forms of boundary work rather than neutral description. The paratext concept, extended from print culture to digital media, connects these strands: profile fields mediate how a cultural producer is approached, [2] so the Instagram biography can be read as a music-cultural micro-paratext. Finally, Tanzanian popular-music scholarship documents the histories, languages, industries and cultural politics of the national field [8,9] with a developed Bongo Flava literature [10,11,14–16,18] and a smaller, recent Singeli literature. [12,13,19]

These literatures rarely meet: digital self-presentation studies seldom address African genre fields, genre scholarship seldom examines compressed platform texts, and Tanzanian music research has treated the two genres largely in isolation, concentrating on lyrics, industry and reception rather than profile paratexts. The gap is therefore precise: existing scholarship has not sufficiently compared how accounts associated with differently institutionalized Tanzanian genre fields use the compressed textual space of Instagram biographies to communicate genre belonging, professional identity, cultural location and commercial accessibility. This study addresses that gap with a bounded comparative design; it does not claim that no previous research exists on the constituent topics.

The general objective is to examine how genre-field context, platform affordances, and digital self-presentation resources are associated with the construction of platformed genre identity in the Instagram biographies of sampled Singeli and Bongo Flava musicians. Three specific objectives follow: (1) to identify the genre, professional, cultural, institutional, and commercial self-presentation resources used in sampled Singeli and Bongo Flava Instagram biographies; (2) to compare the positioning strategies through which the sampled accounts communicate genre authority, professional identity,

cultural rootedness, institutional affiliation, and commercial accessibility; and (3) to interpret how the contrasting historical and institutional contexts of Singeli and Bongo Flava, together with Instagram's profile affordances, shape the observable construction of platformed genre identity. Throughout, display names, verification badges, platform categories, and external links are treated as separate contextual profile-header characteristics rather than as authored biography content. Three research questions follow:

- RQ1: What genre, professional, cultural, institutional, and commercial self-presentation resources are visible in the Instagram biographies of sampled Singeli and Bongo Flava accounts?
- RQ2: How do the two sampled groups differ in their genre signaling, professional positioning, cultural rootedness, institutional affiliation, and commercial accessibility?
- RQ3: How can the observed differences be interpreted through the theorized pathway linking genre-field context, Instagram's platform affordances, digital self-presentation resources, positioning strategies, and platformed genre identity?

The design is exploratory, descriptive, and interpretive, and no hypotheses are tested.

2. Integrated Theoretical Framework

The analysis is guided by an integrated framework that links four perspectives into a single explanatory pathway. Each perspective contributes a distinct level of explanation and carries a limitation that motivates the next. A concluding integration specifies how they operate together to account for the construction of platformed genre identity.

2.1. Self-Presentation Theory

Self-presentation theory frames the Instagram biography as a site where the profile selectively presents identity for an imagined audience: [26] identity is curated and staged rather than disclosed, and the biography's few lines require strategic compression, so that genre terms, professional roles, cultural and linguistic references, institutional affiliations and contact information operate as selected identity resources. Work on micro-celebrity, self-branding and idealized profile self-presentation shows how such curation converts attention into professional value and how profile fields are staged for prospective audiences [4–6,20,27] including in African platform contexts. [21] The perspective, however, is actor-centered: it addresses individual selection but not the collective genre boundaries within which choices become meaningful, the field-level institutional development that shapes available positions, or the platform architecture that fixes what can be shown. Accounting for the collective and institutional meaning of genre therefore requires genre theory.

2.2. Genre Theory

Genre theory treats genres as social fields of classification, membership, authenticity, legitimacy and authority, moving through recognizable trajectories of institutionalization; [23] within such fields, naming a genre, claiming authority over it, or leaving it unnamed are forms of boundary work rather than neutral description, [24,25] and macrogenre labels can overstate the coherence of internally differentiated fields. [7,25] Singeli and Bongo Flava occupy contrasting historical and institutional positions, a recently consolidated neighborhood-rooted field and a more institutionalized commercial field, which shape the legitimacy and authority claims available in each field. Genre theory nonetheless does not sufficiently explain individual identity curation, the compression of meanings into a few lines of profile text, or Instagram's technical and commercial architecture. Explaining that architecture requires a platformization perspective.

2.3. Platformization Perspective

The platformization perspective explains how Instagram supplies a standardized profile architecture that enables and constrains identity display: [1,28] biography character limits, the verification system, profile-category labels, external-link fields, and contact functions structure what is visible and help account for the shared platform grammar observed across profiles. [6] Platform actors also exercise curatorial and organizational power over how cultural work circulates and is made visible. [29,30] The perspective is culturally underdetermined, however: it does not explain the specific meanings of Singeli, Bongo Flava, Kiswahili, locality, neighborhood authority, or genre legitimacy, and it does

not on its own explain account agency. Connecting individual selection, collective genre meaning and platform structure requires a paratextual perspective.

2.4. Paratextual Perspective

The paratextual perspective, extended from print culture to social-network sites [2,3], treats the biography as a threshold through which an account is framed before the music is encountered. It connects the other three levels: it registers the selected resources, carries the collective meanings of genre, and is shaped by platform structure, which allows the biography to be read as a music-cultural micro-paratext. The perspective cannot, on its own, adjudicate the meanings behind the configuration, the hierarchies of genre legitimacy, or platform governance; it functions as an integrative bridge rather than a replacement theory that supersedes the other three.

2.5. Theoretical Integration

Integrated, the four perspectives specify an explanatory pathway. Genre-field history and institutional development define the available identity repertoire and the legitimacy and authority positions an account can occupy; platform-supplied architecture enables and constrains the profile fields through which identity becomes visible; the observable account configuration then communicates self-presentation resources such as genre wording, professional roles, language, locality, institutional affiliations, contact information, links, promotion and emoji's; these resources are organized into positioning strategies such as explicit genre authority, implicit musical identity, cultural rootedness, professional differentiation, institutional affiliation and commercial accessibility. The resulting profile configuration constitutes observable platformed genre identity.

The perspectives divide the theoretical labor: self-presentation theory addresses individual selection; genre theory explains collective meaning, legitimacy and boundary work; the platformization perspective explains the infrastructural conditions of visibility; and the paratextual perspective explains the biography as a compressed threshold text that binds the three. Recent scholarship situates this pathway within platformed music labor and audience connection, [31] the use of social media by emerging African musicians to organize visibility and career development, [32] the curatorial and organizational power of music platforms, [29,30] and the continuing mediation of genre and musical identity in networked services. [33, 34]

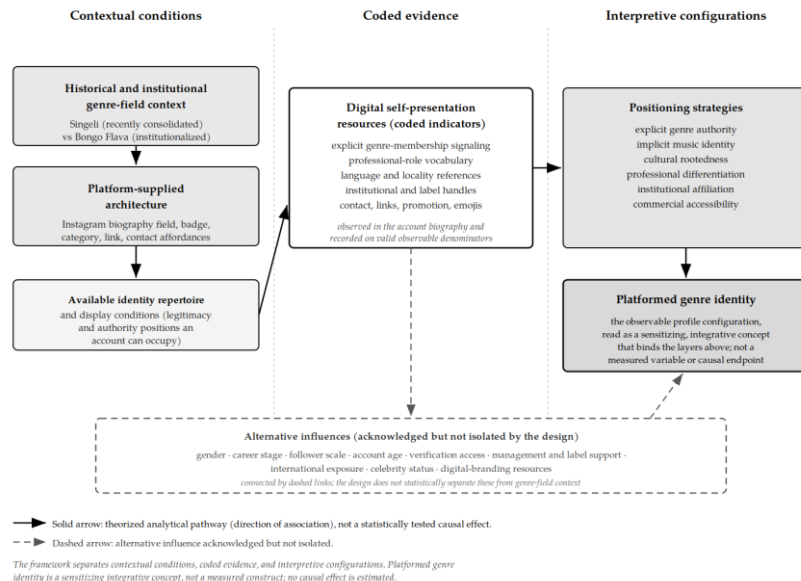


Fig. 1 Integrated Theoretical Pathway for the Construction of Platformed Genre Identity. Solid Arrows Indicate the Hypothesized Direction of Association, While Dashed Connectors Identify Acknowledged But Unisolated Alternative Influences. Platformed Genre Identity is treated as a Sensitizing Integrative Concept Rather than a Measured Causal Endpoint—Source: Author's Construction

Figure 1 presents this pathway schematically. The framework separates contextual conditions, coded evidence, and interpretive configurations. Solid arrows represent a theorized analytical pathway linking genre-field context and platform architecture, through self-presentation resources and positioning strategies, to observable platformed genre identity. At the same time, a dashed box gathers alternative influences that the design acknowledges but does not isolate. Platformed genre identity is defined as a sensitizing, integrative concept rather than a measured construct. Every element shown in the figure is defined theoretically in this section, operationalized as coded indicators in the methods, and reported in the findings. The arrows denote a hypothesized direction of association, and the present purposive, cross-sectional content analysis does not statistically test causal effects; no claim is made that genre affiliation caused the observed differences in biography.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Design

The study employed a comparative content analysis combining structured descriptive coding with qualitative thematic interpretation. It is exploratory, descriptive, and interpretive; no significance tests are conducted, no hypotheses are tested, and no causal or population claims are made.

3.2. Sampling frame and purposive selection

The corpus comprised forty public professional Instagram profiles, twenty per genre, archived as screenshots on 6 July 2026. The candidate pool was assembled from accounts publicly associated with each genre in Tanzanian music coverage, prior scholarship, and public genre discourse. The exact size of the initial candidate pool was not recorded in the available project materials and is therefore not stated to avoid an unsupported figure. From the identified accounts, twenty per genre were retained to balance comparative breadth against the depth of case-level evidence handling per profile. The sample is purposive and exploratory, and no claim is made that it statistically represents all Singeli or Bongo Flava musicians.

3.3. Inclusion, exclusion, and official-account verification

Inclusion required documented public association with the relevant genre, an official account, and public accessibility at capture without login barriers. An account was treated as official where its identity was supported by verification, cross-linking from official channels, recognized label or management pages, established media coverage, or consistent identity across multiple public sources; biography professionalism was not itself used as proof of account legitimacy. Evidently unofficial fan pages, private accounts, inaccessible profiles, and duplicate accounts were excluded; where duplicates existed, the account displaying official markers was retained, and no profiles were replaced after capture. Account inactivity was not an exclusion criterion, because the analysis concerns the standing profile header rather than posting behavior.

3.4. Genre-membership assignment

Genre membership was assigned from documented public genre association in Tanzanian music coverage, prior scholarship and public genre discourse, and was not determined from biography wording, since the omission of genre identity was itself analytically relevant; profiles that did not name the genre were retained, with the absence of a label coded as a substantive value. Biography wording alone was not treated as sufficient evidence of genre membership, and no verification source was fabricated. Where a profile's own biography signaled the genre, this signaling was recorded as a study outcome rather than used to determine group assignment.

3.5. Unit of analysis and evidence layers

The account biography constituted the primary unit of content analysis. Display names, verification badges, platform-generated categories, and external-link fields were recorded separately as contextual profile-header characteristics and were not merged with the biography text. Five evidence layers were kept distinct: display name; account biography; platform-generated metadata; external-link field; and derived analytical variables. Because platform categories and display names belong to separate header layers, they were not counted as authored role or genre resources.

3.6. Operational coding, absent and truncated biographies, and valid denominators

Coding followed an operational codebook combining deductive categories with inductive refinements. Role, identity, commercial and genre variables were coded as binary indicators, with overlap permitted; genre signaling was coded as a single mutually exclusive category. Values were 1 (visibly present), 0 (visibly absent and observable) or NA (not determinable). Evidence availability (biography present, absent or truncated) was recorded separately from genre-signaling content, and the no-biography state is reported as a profile-configuration category rather than a signaling strategy. For truncated biographies, a feature was coded 1 only when it was visibly present, and NA when the unseen text below the platform expander could change an absence-dependent conclusion; a truncated biography was not assigned to a mutually exclusive genre-signaling or biography-language category unless the visible text fully supported that classification. Frequencies use valid observable denominators throughout, so denominators vary by variable, and every NA case is documented in the denominator and missingness register.

3.7. Temporally separated intra-coder recoding

A single coder carried out coding. To check coding consistency, a temporally separated intra-coder recoding of all forty profiles was completed: after a temporal separation, the same coder recoded the entire corpus using the same codebook, with the profile-authored text, visual-metadata, and external-link modules handled separately and paired observations excluded whenever either round was not determinable. Raw percentage agreement across all determinable authored-feature cells was 99.5% (743 of 747 cells); the four borderline discrepancies were documented individually and adjudicated to a single final code. Because the study used one coder, this is reported as intra-coder consistency using raw agreement only; it is not described as independent or inter-coder coding, and no chance-corrected coefficient is computed or claimed.

3.8. Analysis

Frequencies and percentages were calculated on valid observable denominators and reported to one decimal place. Qualitative interpretation identified representative examples and counterexamples. No significance tests were conducted, and no causal claims are made; the design supports only descriptive comparison and interpretation.

3.9. Ethics

The study relied on passive observation of publicly accessible professional profiles, without interaction, private communication, access to private messages, intervention or deception. Telephone numbers, WhatsApp numbers and full email addresses were masked and coded only as presence; coded identifiers are used in reporting, and raw screenshots are retained securely rather than released. Quoted biography text is reproduced only where analytically necessary; because it derives from public professional profiles, exact quotations remain potentially searchable, and coded identifiers reduce casual identifiability without rendering the material anonymous. This residual identification risk is acknowledged as a considered trade-off in the study of public professional self-presentation. The research procedures were designed in accordance with institutional research-governance requirements applicable to the study of public online material; no formal ethics-approval or exemption number is claimed.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Sample and Observability

All twenty Bongo Flava profiles carried an authored biography, as did eighteen of the twenty Singeli profiles; two Singeli profiles (SG06, SG07) presented only a category and a link, and three biographies were truncated on screen (BF16, BF19, SG19). Verification badges, treated as a contextual platform status rather than an indicator of musical quality, were observed more frequently among the sampled Bongo Flava profiles (19 of 20, 95.0%) than the sampled Singeli profiles (6 of 20, 30.0%), with none unclear. External music, video-platform, or aggregator links appeared in twenty of twenty Bongo Flava profiles (100.0%) and nineteen of twenty Singeli profiles (95.0%); these were video-platform or aggregator destinations rather than direct digital-streaming-platform links, BF01 displaying a video-platform link and BF14 a smart-link or aggregator. A visible platform category appeared on 18 of 20 Bongo Flava profiles (90.0%) and 16 of 20 Singeli profiles (80.0%); on BF01 and BF18, the biography began directly with authored text, and no separate category line was displayed. **Table 1** summarizes these contextual features.

Table 1: Sample, observability, and contextual profile-header characteristics (n = 20 per group)

Characteristic	Bongo Flava	Singeli	Total
Authored biography present	20/20 (100.0%)	18/20 (90.0%)	38/40 (95.0%)
No authored biography	0/20 (0.0%)	2/20 (10.0%)	2/40 (5.0%)
Truncated biography on screen	2/20 (10.0%)	1/20 (5.0%)	3/40 (7.5%)
Verified badge (contextual)	19/20 (95.0%)	6/20 (30.0%)	25/40 (62.5%)
External music, video-platform or aggregator link	20/20 (100.0%)	19/20 (95.0%)	39/40 (97.5%)
Platform category visible	18/20 (90.0%)	16/20 (80.0%)	34/40 (85.0%)

4.2. Genre Signaling

Table 2 reports genre signaling among the biographies whose visible text supported classification; biography availability is reported in Table 1. No explicit Bongo Flava label was observed in the sampled biographies. All 18 determinable Bongo Flava biographies communicated a music identity implicitly (18 of 18, 100.0%), and the 2 truncated Bongo Flava biographies (BF16, BF19) were left unclassified for genre signaling because their full texts were not visible. Among the seventeen determinable Singeli biographies, two asserted explicit genre authority (2 of 17, 11.8%), as in King of Singeli (SG02) and Singeli icon (SG17); eight named the genre without an authority claim (8 of 17, 47.1%); six signaled a music identity implicitly (6 of 17, 35.3%); and one carried no music identity in the authored text (1 of 17, 5.9%). Ten of the seventeen determinable Singeli biographies therefore named the genre (58.8%), equivalent to ten of twenty sampled Singeli profiles (50.0%). The two profiles without an authored biography and the one truncated Singeli biography (SG19) are reported under observability in Table 1 rather than assigned a signaling category. No ordinal genre-signaling score is reported.

Table 2: Genre Signaling Among Biographies with Classifiable Visible Text

Genre-signal category	Bongo Flava	Singeli
Explicit genre authority	0/18 (0.0%)	2/17 (11.8%)
Explicit genre naming without authority	0/18 (0.0%)	8/17 (47.1%)
Implicit music identity	18/18 (100.0%)	6/17 (35.3%)
No music identity in authored text	0/18 (0.0%)	1/17 (5.9%)

Note: Denominators vary because biographies that were absent, truncated, or otherwise indeterminable were excluded from absence-dependent calculations. Full case-level decisions are documented in the denominator register.

4.3. Professional-Role Construction

Professional-role vocabularies diverged. Generic music-role terms in the authored biography were more frequent among the sampled Singeli profiles (12 of 17 observable, 70.6%) than the sampled Bongo Flava profiles (8 of 19, 42.1%). Specialist role terms such as singer, songwriter or rapper appeared in five Bongo Flava profiles and no Singeli profile; multiple creative roles were more common among Bongo Flava profiles (6 of 20, 30.0%) than Singeli profiles (1 of 17, 5.9%); executive or ownership language appeared in six Bongo Flava profiles and no Singeli profile; and brand ambassadorship appeared only among the sampled Bongo Flava profiles. These patterns describe an uneven distribution of professional vocabularies, not evidence that one group is more professional. Because platform categories are recorded as a separate header layer, only role terms authored in the biography are counted here. **Table 3** reports the details.

Table 3: Professional-role Construction

Professional-role feature	Bongo Flava	Singeli
Generic music role	8/19 (42.1%)	12/17 (70.6%)
Specialist music role (singer, songwriter, rapper)	5/19 (26.3%)	0/17 (0.0%)
Multiple creative roles	6/20 (30.0%)	1/17 (5.9%)
Executive or ownership role	6/19 (31.6%)	0/17 (0.0%)
Event or performance role	2/18 (11.1%)	2/17 (11.8%)
Non-music entrepreneurial role	2/19 (10.5%)	1/18 (5.6%)
Brand ambassadorship	3/18 (16.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)

Note: Denominators vary because biographies that were absent, truncated, or otherwise indeterminable were excluded from absence-dependent calculations. Full case-level decisions are documented in the denominator register.

4.4. Institutional and Commercial Positioning

Record-label or collective handles were somewhat more common among the sampled Bongo Flava profiles (7 of 18, 38.9%) than the sampled Singeli profiles (5 of 17, 29.4%), while direct commercial accessibility was more visible among Singeli profiles: booking invitations appeared in 10 of 17 Singeli profiles (58.8%) versus 6 of 19 Bongo Flava profiles (31.6%), and a telephone contact in 7 of 18 Singeli profiles (38.9%) versus 1 of 18 Bongo Flava profiles (5.6%). Email presence was similar (7 of 19, 36.8%; 7 of 17, 41.2%), and any public contact infrastructure was present in 12 of 18 Singeli profiles (66.7%) and 8 of 19 Bongo Flava profiles (42.1%). **Table 4** reports these features.

Table 4: Institutional and commercial positioning

Institutional or commercial feature	Bongo Flava	Singeli
Record label or collective handle	7/18 (38.9%)	5/17 (29.4%)
Management affiliation named	0/18 (0.0%)	1/17 (5.9%)
Booking invitation	6/19 (31.6%)	10/17 (58.8%)
Email present (masked)	7/19 (36.8%)	7/17 (41.2%)
Phone present (masked)	1/18 (5.6%)	7/18 (38.9%)
Any public contact infrastructure	8/19 (42.1%)	12/18 (66.7%)
Business promotion	2/19 (10.5%)	2/18 (11.1%)
Release promotion	3/18 (16.7%)	5/17 (29.4%)

Note: Denominators vary because biographies that were absent, truncated, or otherwise indeterminable were excluded from absence-dependent calculations. Full case-level decisions are documented in the denominator register.

4.5. Language and Cultural Identity

Every determinable Bongo Flava biography was written in English only (18 of 18, 100.0%); among the seventeen determinable Singeli authored biographies, thirteen were English-only (76.5%) and four mixed Kiswahili and English (23.5%), with no Swahili-only biographies in either group. The three truncated biographies were not classified for biography language, because unseen text could change that classification. Swahili song titles and Swahili display names, which belong to a separate header layer, are not counted as biography-language mixing. Street and neighborhood identity, expressed through terms such as *sauti ya kitaa* (the voice of the street), *uswazi* and *mtoto wa uswahilini* (child of the Swahili urban quarter), appeared only among the sampled Singeli profiles (3 of 17, 17.6%). Tanzanian identity appeared in 6 of 18 Bongo Flava profiles (33.3%) and 8 of 17 Singeli profiles (47.1%); the national-flag emoji was more frequent among Singeli profiles (6 of 17, 35.3%) than Bongo Flava profiles (1 of 18, 5.6%), with a capture-limitation caveat for flag glyphs. Religious references appeared in one Bongo Flava and one Singeli profile. **Table 5** reports these features.

Table 5: Language and Cultural Identity

Feature	Bongo Flava	Singeli	Note
English-only biography	18/18 (100.0%)	13/17 (76.5%)	Determinable authored biographies
Mixed Kiswahili-English biography	0/18 (0.0%)	4/17 (23.5%)	No Swahili-only biographies
Tanzanian identity	6/18 (33.3%)	8/17 (47.1%)	Word Tanzania or national flag; capture-limited
East African identity	4/18 (22.2%)	5/17 (29.4%)	East Africa or E.Africa
Street or neighborhood identity	0/18 (0.0%)	3/17 (17.6%)	<i>kitaa</i> , <i>uswazi</i> , <i>uswahilini</i>
National flag emoji	1/18 (5.6%)	6/17 (35.3%)	Capture-limited for some glyphs
Religious reference	1/18 (5.6%)	1/17 (5.9%)	Scripture or divine attribution

Note: Denominators vary because biographies that were absent, truncated, or otherwise indeterminable were excluded from absence-dependent calculations. Full case-level decisions are documented in the denominator register.

4.6. Shared Platform Grammar

Beneath these divergences, the two fields shared a platform-native register: external music, video-platform, or aggregator links in nearly every profile; comparable emoji use across both groups; platform categories; verification badges and contact buttons supplied by the interface; and release promotion in both groups. This common grammar of links, emoji's, compact professional statements and contact affordances indicates a shared mode of platform presence within which culturally specific differences are expressed.

4.7. Internal Variation and Counterexamples

Internal variation complicates any simple binary. Several Singeli profiles displayed institutional and transnational features: SG09 presented a label affiliation and booking email; SG13 named a manager, promoted merchandise and claimed a worldwide reach; SG04, SG17 and SG20 stated label or collective affiliations. Conversely, several Bongo Flava profiles were minimal or release-focused, and one foregrounded religious identity through scripture references (BF18). One Singeli profile (SG19) was dominated by retail-shop promotion in its visible text rather than music identity, and hybrid profiles combined genre naming, locality and commercial accessibility (SG18) or ownership, royal metaphor and release promotion (BF12). **Table 6** presents representative extracts.

Table 6: Representative qualitative extracts

ID	Genre	Extract (contact details removed)	Theme	Cautious interpretation
SG02	Singeli	King of Singeli; Award-Winning Singeli Artist	Explicit genre authority	Claims leadership within the named genre
SG17	Singeli	Singeli icon; From East Africa, Tanzania	Explicit genre authority	Asserts iconic status within the genre
SG03	Singeli	SAUTI YA KITAA (the voice of the street); Singeli; Live music	Street rootedness	Positions the account as a voice of the neighborhood
SG18	Singeli	Singeli Music Artist; Wonder kid from the street	Locality and genre	Combines genre naming with neighborhood belonging
BF12	Bongo Flava	owner label handle; CEO; NEW ALBUM SOON	Ownership and persona	Foregrounds ownership and a royal persona
BF01	Bongo Flava	Musician, Owner; Ambassador	Executive and ambassadorial	Signals institutional standing and endorsements
BF18	Bongo Flava	Tanzanian; Musician; scripture references	Religious self-presentation	Explicit divine attribution without inferred belief

4.8. Discussion: Interpreting the Findings through the Integrated Pathway

The following discussion interprets each principal finding through the integrated pathway, moving from the observed result to the self-presentation resource it expresses, the positioning strategy it enacts, the genre-field context and platform condition that make it intelligible, an alternative explanation, and the design limitation. Consistent with that pathway, the interpretation reads the patterned differences between the two purposive groups as theorized relationships and not as statistically tested causal effects; the design isolates no genre-field effect and attributes no observed difference to genre affiliation as a cause.

4.9. Genre naming and symbolic authority

Ten of the seventeen determinable Singeli biographies named the genre, and two claimed authority within it, whereas no explicit Bongo Flava label was observed among the determinable Bongo Flava biographies. The concentration of explicit Singeli naming can be interpreted as consistent with active genre-boundary work, through which a recently consolidated field acquires recognized membership, legitimacy, and figureheads [12, 23]. Authority claims such as King of Singeli resemble the leadership positions of emerging genres. Conversely, one possible

interpretation of Bongo Flava non-mention is that it functions as a positioning practice within a more institutionalized field: membership may be presupposed, name recognition may reduce the need for a label, [10] and the compressed field may be allocated to differentiating claims. Alternative explanations include stylistic convention, peer imitation, celebrity status, and label-shaped branding conventions. The present design identifies the observable pattern, not its cause, and draws no inference about private intention.

4.10. Professional-role differentiation

Generic music-role terms were more frequent in the sampled Singeli biographies, while specialist roles, multiple creative roles, executive and ownership claims, and brand ambassadorship were concentrated among the sampled Bongo Flava profiles. These vocabularies can be read as different registers of professionalization: specialist and executive language is consistent with careers embedded in artist-led enterprises and label structures [9, 18] while generic role statements are consistent with performance-centered careers in a field whose institutional division of labor is still consolidating. Neither register is read as more professional. An alternative reading is that role vocabulary tracks career stage or ghost-written biography conventions rather than field position; the data cannot adjudicate.

4.11. Institutional and commercial accessibility

Label or collective handles were somewhat more common among the sampled Bongo Flava profiles, while booking invitations and telephone contact were more visible among the sampled Singeli profiles. Musicologically, direct booking and telephone access are consistent with a live-performance economy in which engagements are negotiated directly with MCs, DJs and performers, whereas institutional handles are consistent with a label-centered economy; [9] both are purposive modes of commercial availability, and direct telephone access is not read as lower professional status. Alternatively, the difference may track management arrangements rather than genre culture, since managed accounts may route contact through institutions; management resources were only partially observable.

4.12. Language and cultural rootedness

Street and neighborhood identity, as expressed in terms such as *sauti ya kita*, *uswazi*, and *mtoto wa uswahilini*, appeared only among the sampled Singeli profiles, and mixed Kiswahili-English biographies were confined to Singeli. These are culturally dense positioning resources asserting proximity to ordinary audiences and rootedness in the urban popular quarter, in a national context where language and music have long carried cultural politics; [8,11] locality here can be read as a claim to genre-constitutive authenticity, not as informality or deficit. The uniform English of the sampled Bongo Flava biographies may support wider readability and cross-border legibility, consistent with the genre's outward-looking commercial phase. [11] Biography language is not music language: an English-only biography does not indicate rejection of Kiswahili identity, since the music itself remains predominantly Kiswahili. Alternatively, language choice may follow perceived audience composition; audience data were not collected.

4.13. Shared platform grammar

External music, video-platform or aggregator links appeared in nearly every profile, emoji use was comparable, and both fields used categories, verification, contact affordances and release promotion. The findings suggest a shared platform grammar, used here as a descriptive shorthand rather than an established term, for the common repertoire of compressed profile text, links, categories, verification, emojis, release promotion, and booking and contact affordances within which genre-specific cultural and professional differences are articulated. This is consistent with shared affordances and shared dependence on platform infrastructure. [1,6, 28] The prevalence of video-platform and aggregator links rather than direct streaming-platform links is consistent with distribution practices oriented to video and multi-destination smart links. An alternative reading is diffusion of presentation norms among Tanzanian musicians independent of the platform; a single-platform design cannot separate interface effects from scene conventions.

4.14. Internal variation and counterexamples

Institutionally embedded Singeli profiles coexist with minimal or release-focused Bongo Flava profiles, an entrepreneurially displaced Singeli profile, and a scripture-centered Bongo Flava profile. This heterogeneity shows field-level tendencies unevenly realized across individual profiles and cautions against genre essentialism; it supports treating

genre positioning as a repertoire rather than a fixed type and indicates that Singeli's institutionalization is already underway within the corpus. That the sample included atypical cases cannot be ruled out, which is why no population claim is made.

4.15. Theoretical, Empirical and Musicological Contributions

Interpreted through the integrated pathway, the patterned differences observed between the two purposive groups reveal what no single perspective can capture alone. The value of the framework is integrative: it links the selected self-presentation resources to their positioning strategies, situates those strategies within contrasting genre-field contexts and shared platform conditions, and reads the resulting profile configuration as observable platformed genre identity. Treating the biography as a compressed music-cultural micro-paratext, [2,3] the account connects individual identity work, collective genre meaning and platform structure within one explanatory sequence, so that genre histories, artistic roles, infrastructural conditions and evolving claims to musical authority become publicly legible without recourse to untested causal inference.

Empirically, the study contributes a systematic comparative account of forty archived Tanzanian musicians' Instagram biographies, analyzed with valid observable denominators, a documented denominator register, and transparent treatment of missing and truncated evidence. Theoretically, it integrates self-presentation, genre boundary work, and platformization to analyze compressed public account identities. Musicologically, it offers evidence of how contrasting genre histories and forms of institutional development become visible through genre language, professional roles, locality and commercial access, positioning the Instagram biography as a music-cultural micro-paratext within Tanzanian popular-music studies. The musicological objects are genre identity, institutionalization, cultural positioning, and role construction; musical sound, form, composition, and performance technique are not analyzed. No causal effect of genre institutionalization is claimed.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how genre-field context, platform affordances and digital self-presentation resources are associated with the construction of platformed genre identity in sampled Singeli and Bongo Flava Instagram biographies. The biographies made genre, professional, cultural, institutional and commercial resources observable. The two purposive groups differed in patterned ways: the sampled Singeli profiles more often named the genre, asserted neighborhood rootedness and offered direct booking and telephone access, while the sampled Bongo Flava profiles more often used specialist, executive and ownership vocabularies and brand ambassadorship and were uniformly English and indirect about genre; both groups shared a platform-native register of links, emoji's and compact professional statements, and both were internally varied. These observable differences are interpreted through the integrated pathway, in which contrasting genre-field histories and Instagram's shared affordances condition the self-presentation resources and positioning strategies that together constitute platformed genre identity. The interpretations are theoretical: the purposive, cross-sectional design tests no causal effect and supports no generalization to all Singeli or Bongo Flava musicians. The contribution is to consolidate public genre belonging, artistic authority, professional identity, cultural location, institutional positioning and commercial orientation into platformed genre identity as a single integrative concept, and to show that the Instagram biography can be read as a compressed music-cultural micro-paratext; longitudinal, cross-platform and multimodal designs are the natural next step.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

The sample is purposive and non-representative, captured at a single date, and profiles are mutable. Three biographies were truncated, and two carried no authored text; the full text of BF16, BF19, and SG19 was not established; features hidden below the platform expander were coded NA rather than absent; and those biographies were not forced into a genre-signaling or biography-language category. Celebrity status, career stage, follower scale, gender, account age, management access, label support, international exposure, commercial partnerships, digital branding resources, and verification access are unequal across the sample; the observed distribution cannot isolate genre-field effects from these differences, and this competing explanation is central rather than peripheral. One researcher conducted coding; a temporally separated intra-coder recoding of all forty profiles was completed, yielding 99.5% raw agreement across

determinable authored-feature cells, with the four borderline discrepancies documented and adjudicated to a single final code. Raw agreement is reported rather than a chance-corrected coefficient, and the procedure is an intra-coder consistency check, not independent or inter-coder coding. National-flag-emoji and, in part, Tanzanian-identity counts are capture-dependent for small glyphs and are reported conservatively with that caveat. Genre membership was assigned from documented public genre association in Tanzanian music coverage, prior scholarship and public genre discourse, and was not inferred from biography wording; no external verification source was fabricated. The design prevents access to private account information, and exact quotations from public profiles remain searchable despite coded identifiers. The design is confined to Instagram and to biography and profile-header evidence, without posts, recordings, audience comments, or engagement. Future research could include interviews, captions, audio, and audience-reception data, extend the corpus across platforms and time, and situate additional Tanzanian and East African genres within the same comparative frame.

Data Availability

The redacted coded dataset, operational codebook, denominator and missingness register, sampling and genre-verification register, and intra-coder recoding record are available from the author on reasonable request, subject to institutional and journal requirements. Raw screenshots containing identifiable contact information are not publicly released.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Author Contributions

M.M.: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing, and project administration.

Ethical Considerations

The study examined publicly accessible professional profiles through passive observation without interaction, private communication, intervention, deception, or access to private content. Contact details were masked and coded only as presence, and raw screenshots were not publicly released. The research procedures were designed in accordance with institutional research-governance requirements applicable to the study of public online material; no formal ethics-approval or exemption number is claimed.

Generative-AI Use

Generative-AI tools were used to support editorial review, document organization, language refinement, and data-quality auditing. All coding decisions, source verification, interpretations, references, and final wording were reviewed and approved by the author. Generative-AI output was not treated as an academic source.

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