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**REVIEWER'S REPORT**

**Manuscript No.: IJAR-59483**

**Title: Esthétique musicale et plaidoyer social : la chanson « SoubaAlmari » comme critique du mariage précoce au Niger.**

**Recommendation:**
**Accept with Minor Revisions**.....

| Rating | Excel. | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Originality | ✓ | | | |
| Techn. Quality | | ✔ | | |
| Clarity | | ✔ | | |

**Reviewer Name: Faheem Abdul Muneeb**

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**Reviewer Comment:**

The manuscript examines the song « SoubaAlmari » by the musical group YANA as an artistic critique of early marriage in Niger. Its discussion of the story of Halima, the representation of domestic labour, the tragic ending, and the song's direct appeal to parents provides a useful basis for analysing how music communicates social criticism. The paper is generally well structured, moving from the theoretical framework and methodology to the textual analysis, discussion, and conclusion. A few specific revisions would, however, help clarify the evidence and strengthen the connection between the analysis and the claims made.

First, the most important issue concerns the methodology and the discussion of audience reception. Section 2 explains that the study is based primarily on a qualitative analysis of the song's lyrics. However, Section 4.2 introduces an additional empirical dimension, referring to informal exchanges, public activities, social media, and local contexts of dissemination. It also states that many listeners, particularly those aged 18–30, associate the song with increased awareness of the dangers of early marriage and includes a quotation from a participant. These observations go beyond the textual analysis

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described in the methodology. The authors should briefly clarify how these informal exchanges were conducted, where the observations took place, approximately how many people were involved, and how the quoted statement was obtained. If these details cannot be provided, Section 4.2 should be presented more cautiously as an illustrative observation rather than as evidence of a broader audience response. This clarification is particularly important because the paper itself acknowledges that the song's reception varies across social contexts.

Second, the analysis of the song's musical aesthetics in Section 3.4 should be brought into closer alignment with the stated research method. The authors argue that melody, rhythm, repetition, and the combination of musical and narrative elements strengthen emotional engagement and make the message memorable. These are relevant observations, but the methodology primarily describes an analysis of the lyrics, symbols, and narrative structure. The authors should either briefly explain how the musical features were examined or limit these claims to what can be established from the textual material. A detailed musical analysis is not necessary; a short clarification of the basis for these observations would be sufficient.

Third, the textual analysis would benefit from a few precise clarifications concerning the song's characters and quoted passages. In Section 3.2, the seventh-couplet quotation refers to the mother of "Limo", whereas the principal character is identified throughout the article as Halima. The authors should verify the original lyrics and clarify whether Limo is a different character, a variant of the name, or a transcription error. The quoted passages should also be checked against the original song to ensure that the wording and attribution to the relevant couplets are accurate and consistent. Since these passages constitute the primary evidence for the paper's interpretation, a brief note identifying the source of the lyrics and, where relevant, explaining their transcription or translation would improve the reliability of the analysis.

Fourth, some of the symbolic interpretations in Section 3.3 would be stronger if they were tied more directly to the quoted lines. The discussion interprets the pilon as a symbol of the imposition of domestic labour and the loss of childhood, while pregnancy and Halima's death are presented as expressions of structural violence. These interpretations are plausible and consistent with the article's central argument. However, the authors could explain more explicitly how the selected images support these meanings. For example, the passage describing Halima collecting firewood, drawing water, and performing household chores provides direct evidence for the discussion of her transformation into a domestic servant. The analysis could make this connection clearer before moving to the broader interpretation of gendered

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domination. Similarly, the discussion of pregnancy and death should distinguish between what the narrative explicitly depicts and the wider social meaning the authors draw from it.

Fifth, the theoretical framework is relevant to the subject, but its application could be made more consistent across the results and discussion. The paper introduces Pierre Bourdieu, John Dewey, Roland Barthes, and Paul Ricœur in Section 1, and subsequently draws on Émile Durkheim in Section 3.1. These perspectives help illuminate different dimensions of the song, but the transitions between them sometimes read as the addition of separate theoretical interpretations rather than as a connected analysis. The authors need not expand the theoretical framework or introduce further theorists. Instead, they could make the existing framework more coherent by briefly explaining which concept is being used to interpret each major finding: for instance, social constraint in the discussion of marriage as a social fact, narrative configuration in the analysis of the tragic plot, and symbolic meaning in the interpretation of the pilon and domestic work. This would improve the analytical continuity without requiring substantial restructuring.

Sixth, the contextual claim in Section 4.3 that Niger has one of the highest rates of early marriage in the world should be accompanied by a specific UNICEF source and the relevant year of the data. The manuscript currently mentions UNICEF without identifying the publication or providing a precise figure. Adding the source and date would allow readers to verify the claim and understand the statistical context in which the song is being analysed. The authors should also ensure that the wording of the claim corresponds to the population and age group covered by the cited statistic.

Finally, the references and presentation require a focused editorial check. Several works in the bibliography, including those by Cauvin, Chiron, Goeken, Greenberg, Guédou, Guiraud, and Rouget, do not appear to be cited directly in the main text. The authors should either connect these works to the discussion where relevant or remove references that were not used. The reference list and in-text citations should follow a consistent format. The manuscript would also benefit from proofreading for spacing, punctuation, and sentence construction. Examples include "auCouplet 6" in Section 3.3, "public.Cette" in Section 3.2, and "sociaux.C'est" in Section 4.1. In the abstract, the English keywords should also be revised for consistency and clarity; "early marriage," "Niger," "engaged music" or "socially engaged music," "youth," and "gender" would be more appropriate than the current hyphenated sequence.

Overall, the manuscript offers a coherent textual interpretation of « SoubaAlmari » and draws attention to the ways in which a tragic narrative, domestic imagery, and direct appeals to parents can be used to criticise early marriage. The paper does not require a major change in its structure or theoretical

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orientation. The principal revisions are to clarify the basis of the audience-reception claims, ensure that the analysis of musical features matches the method, verify the quoted lyrics and character names, and provide a precise source for the contextual statistic. Addressing these points would improve the manuscript's clarity and evidentiary consistency.

**Final Recommendation**

**Decision: Accepted with minor revisions.**