

## **Dearth of sound cultural values among students in tertiary institutions: The case of uncensored music and artistes**

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### ***Abstract***

*Tertiary institution constitutes a conglomeration of peoples of varying ethical backgrounds, a place where a high level of independence is maintained between the teachers and the taught or even among students themselves, a place where cultural values suffer at the altar of modernism and imitation. At tertiary institution level, students who are at their prime are faced with a lot of challenges ranging from peer group's exuberance to false self-esteem. They go after popular role models at the detriment of sound moral backgrounds. These challenges and up-comings are either properly handled to harvest positive life style and fulfilment or poorly handled leading to an unfulfilled devastating life style in later years. This paper is a critical examination of the impact of uncensored music and artistes in the propagation of sound cultural values among students in tertiary institutions. The information for the work centres on the song texts and erotic film shows by some music artistes and producers who they see as models. Anchoring on the theory of cultivation which propounds that people easily yield to what they view, it was observed that the deficiency in the propagation of sound cultural values in tertiary institutions stems partly from individual student's backgrounds, peer-group's influence and partly from imitating popular artistes as role models.*

**Keywords:** peer group, juvenile exuberance, culture, censorship, cultural values

### **Introduction**

Music making in any traditional setup in Africa is geared towards enhancing societal values. That's why it is specifically event oriented. Its functional and utilitarian commitment is what sustains its longevity. It is a belief in traditional African society that music moulds the young minds through inculcation of right attitudes and values which follow them to adulthood. All these are made manifest during social activities, religious/ritual activities and other cultural events. Emphasising on this, Idamoyibo (2012) asserts that, "Nigeria was known for strong intellectual, industry, sincerity, honesty, religiosity, accountability and morality, which were all inculcated into him/her from infancy to maturity through musical activities during moonlight games, folktales and circumcision rites" (p. 96). He further argues that,

the knowledge of values and industry imparted through musical communication, in various occasions, normally covers all facets of culture, including human behaviour and human development, meaningful and acceptable civilisation, socio-moral standards, religious tenets, history, institutions, trade...(which) often based on the fundamentals of the immediate environment, in order to enhance healthy intellectual and economic growth and overall development of the society (p. 97).

It is pertinent to observe that music making in traditional societies is mainly centred on child training and nurturing. Through group commitment in the creation and re-creation of music the outcome becomes generally acceptable having undergone communal censorship. It does not mean that vulgarism is totally absent in folk music, the use is restricted to adults who employ them for corrective measures (and casting aspersions on the offenders in various communities) and in the language that can be understood by them. This is where musicians enjoy some form of liberty in the use of song texts. The contrast is the case in this modern time; young musicians have abused the liberty that music offers in the use of language. What are now trendy include, vulgarism in the use of words, nudity, erotic and seductive jelly-like body movements and lots more, all in the name of music making. It becomes worrisome that most young people clamour for such performances with reckless abandon. Some of the examples are given in this work.

### **Theoretical frame work**

This study hinges on the theory of cultivation as propounded by George Garbner and Larry Grossin 1976 (Akere, A.O. and Ologundudu, R.P., 2018). This theory reveals that people gradually yield to, accept, accumulate and live in accordance with what they view. This theory according to Akere, A. O. et al talks basically about the effects of media on viewers. By all indications, the type of exposures people views on screen and off screen has much to tell about their behaviours in real life. Akere, A.O. et at affirm that,

the theory shows how TV has become the foundation of the most widely shared messages and images...proposes that the

cultivation of viewers is based on views already in existence in our environment which is taken by the media to represent them in different packaging to audience. They viewer is mostly at times unaware of the level at which they absorb the media...the theory suggests that the media has a significant impact on the believe (sic) and attitude of the society (p. 190)

Most musicians portray themselves in different ways, while some are acceptable others are unacceptable, the youths or students who are the target audience are always very eager to imitate them. In our society today the type of song texts or lyrics, dance styles and nude exposures on TV and social media from some of the music artistes are what teenagers in tertiary institutions are out for and such are regarded as the in-thing. In the 80s such Reggae stars as Bobby Marley, Luky Dube and others went on dread locks, today such hair style is what most boys in their teens go by. May be they feel that making music with decent hair-cut would demean their identity or make them less popular. Worst still, they might think that moving on tattered jeans and indiscriminate chewing of gums while walking on the way would make them look more rugged and belonging. In campuses such adherents would even go as far as taking drugs – tramadol, marijuana and related drugs to keep soaring higher and damn the consequences. For such people, they are law breakers and can easily fall victim of cult and drug addiction. For them, observance of cultural values and school ethics is by the way.

Technology has on its own widens the scope of social media. Students in tertiary institutions now pay more attention to their

phone than to academics; they watch assorted video clips in their phones, commit academic fraud through the use of hearing aids connected to Bluetooth in their phones, contrary to the ethics of exams and values expected of them. All these create problems in tertiary institutions. According to an internet source,

It is common among people that so much love to be like one person i.e. when someone is like taken as a role model, particularly among the musicians and artists (sic). This set of people while on stage will want to look unique and in the process turn themselves to lunatics and due to the rate at which they love them, whatever their respective role models do, either positive or negative...they will also imitate, (assessed 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019)

Nevertheless, there are musicians who through their music inculcate cultural values and build the nation. These are musicians who through their music satirize persons of questionable characters, criticize bad government and other constituted authorities. They act as watch dogs to the happenings in society. Adedeji and Omosilade submit that, “apart from Orlando Owoh, musicians who have actively fought bad governance in Nigeria include Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Timi Osunkoya, Niyi Adedokun, and Hubert Ogunde...” (p. 69). Others include those who keep history and are regarded as chief custodians of their various communities. Such musicians are, Ozoemene Nwa Nsugbe, Emeka Morocco Mmaduka, Afam Ogbuotobe, Odenigbo Ogidi and so on. In the words of Adedeji and Omosilade (2012), “another prominent role of music (by

musicians) is the socio-cultural function, which entails the instilling of discipline and promotion of ethical behaviours among members” of a community (p. 69). In that line up are such musicians as Gentleman Mike Ejeagha, Chief Celestine Ukwu, Chief Osita Osadebe and so on. That is the reason why different functional music exists indifferent traditional African societies. Akpabot in Udoh (2012) infers that two categories of songs predominate in Annang society which includes praise song and songs of scandal. And for the fact that the people have strong concern for good morals, purity, and justice, they use obscenities and deride someone in song or use praise song to encourage good behaviour. The function is not different in Igbo culture. Okafor (2005) identifies similar case among the Oyi people of Anambra state where people that are involved in stealing or waywardness are derided with songs during fishing festival. These normally make them leave the community out of shame. Music of this nature is composed to discourage other intending culprits. The irony of it all is that the younger generations (within tertiary institution level) are no more interested in some of these renditions and that’s where the problem lies.

### **Methodology**

This study employs qualitative research procedure by critically analysing some song texts and still pictures by some artistes that are devoid of cultural values but rather provoke indecency and sexual demeanour that are against societal accepted norms. Such artistes whose song texts are studied include – Chinedu Okoli aka Flavour, Obumneme Ali popularly called ‘Smash’ and Nwachukwu Ozioko also known as ‘Vast’ the business name of the duo is “Bracket”. These artistes have been discussed by the author in one of her works and their songs are found relevant to

the subject of this discussion. The content of their music are analysed to portray the meaning in relation to the expected cultural values.

### **Flavour's music**

His real name is Chinedu Okoli. He is a native of Umunze in Orumba Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. He grew up in Enugu State from where his musical talent started manifesting. He began as a drummer in a local church in Enugu and through the help of their resident pastor; he was introduced to Chris I.Ordor who trained him on the basics of music. Flavour is widely known even beyond Africa. Some of his hits include- "Nwa baby" (Ashawo Remix), "Uplifted", "Adamma" and "Oyi Remix", "Shake shake" and so on. The texts of the last example go thus;

#### ***Shake-shake***

Mr. Flavour on the microphone.

When you see a woman wey sabi shake am, you go know.

Are you ready now? Baby girl show them

*Kpuchie, jaa-yee, kpuchie, jaa-yee* (Close, open wide)

*Akiri-kata nwata di mma aaa, baby you so fine, akiri-kata nwata di mma, baby you so fresh. Akiri-kata nwata di mma aaa, baby you so sweet. Akiri-kata nwata di mma aaa, baby you so fine.*

*Ukwu salambara na-adi mma n'obi ooo!, shake ma'Oh! Shake ma' oh!... (2x)*

*Shake, shake, shake Ukwu, shake e, shake ukwu, akiri-kata pampam, shake ukwu, akiri-kata pampam. shake ukwu...(2x)*

*Ukwu gi oh! Ukwu gi oh! Baby m-ooo! Baby, shake ooo... (Your waist ooo! Baby, shake your waist ooo!)*

*Jaa-yee, kpuchi-e, jaa-yee... (Open and Close)*

This music is presented with no regard to female integrity. The images the dancers are presenting to the audience are contradictory to societal values. The summary of Flavour's message in this excerpt includes -looking at a beautiful woman shaking her waist (precisely the buttocks), opening them and closing them. One then wonders whether a beautiful woman is basically and naturally identified by the way she opens and closes her private parts or by being modest. Such renditions are what most present generation youths clamour for, and that goes on to expose the level of moral decadence in society. This is where culture transfers have a damaging effect on some culture...especially where vulgarism is frowned at, let alone coming from younger sects. Obviously inter-cultural hybridization does not apply in all situations. Although, going by ethical relativism theory, morality is relative to the norms of one's culture. That is, whether an action is right or wrong depends on the moral norms of the society in which it is practiced. Otherwise, there are no universal moral standards that can be universally applied to all people at all times. Nevertheless, each society has a code of conduct that guides its citizenry. In this case, the target population is unfortunately not well represented adjudging the fundamental moral stipulations of the Country Nigeria and Igbo in particular. (Ibekwe, 2016: 175-178)

### **Bracket's music**

Bracket represents a Nigeria Afropop and R&B music duo in the persons of Obumneme Ali popularly called 'Smash' and Nwachukwu Ozioko also known as 'Vast'. Both of them grew up in Nsukka of Enugu State. While Vast has diploma and a degree in Mass Communication from the Institute of Management and Technology Enugu and University of Nigeria Nsukka

respectively, Smash has a diploma in Social Works and a degree in Psychology from University of Nigeria Nsukka. The duo belongs to the later generation of musicians. According to Wikipedia account, their history of origin has several stories and allegations. They have many albums to their credit some of which include Yori-Yori, Happy Day, Ada Owerri, Muah muah and so on. Taking a look from one of their songs, Muah muah, the texts follow thus:

### **Chorus**

Because the way you just dey dance dey make me do you muah muah

Because the way you just dey laugh dey make me do you muah muah

Again do you muah muah, do you muah muah

Ahuh do you muah muah, do you muah muah

When I still dey for club, I see you fine girl

You come dey give me hug. Dey hug me well well

My friends dey talk to me, but I no see them

Because the way you just dey dance dey make me do you muah muah

Until you waka pass my side oo

Na girl I know say you dey my mind oo... et

The above excerpt from cultural perspective and interpretation has no creditable message to the masses other than expression of illicit desires and sexuality represented by some untranslatable slangs ‘muah- muah’ interspersed with heavy sonic applications. There is no gain saying the fact that all these point towards excessive and undue demonstration of juvenile

exuberance which has no positive contribution to nation building. (Ibekwe, 2016: 175-178)

These two examples of music are enjoyed as well as rated high as trendy hits on debut because that is the type of music their fans want to hear. Most musicians and producers are after monetary gain they will make and not what damage their music will cause. If the board in charge of Censorship are up and doing, there may be some music that should be thoroughly screened and edited before they could appear on stage.

### **Censorship and its implications**

Censor, according to Hornby (2005) “is a person whose job is to examine books, films/movies etc and remove parts which are considered to be offensive, immoral or a political threat” (p. 226). Music Censorship is an act of removing or editing some lyrics of songs or even refusal to put on air some musical contents which are adjudged not proper for public consumption. While some people are in support of music censorship because it helps in maintaining societal moral traditions, norms, and cultural values, others see the act as a detractor and a means of repressing people’s freedom to creativity.

Some artistes the researcher interacted with maintained that since music is the most viable means of reaching out to the masses they should be allowed to optimise whichever style they deem fit, lest their product would not sell. That they would do anything within their disposal to entertain, inspire and satisfy their fans in order to continue enjoying their patronage.

Discussing on the need for censorship, Crystal Ayres, (2015) stressed that Music can highly influence young children and adults alike and regulating it can provide balance. It helps keep the number of suicide attempts down (as some of the acts can be

imitated by youths), limits the exposure of people to sex, drugs and violence (as well as) cuts the power of record producers to come up with immoral song just to make money.

### **Culture and cultural values**

The definition of culture has provided variegated discusses predicated on what actually constitutes a culture of a people. The fact that culture dynamism with its encroaching forces does not allow people's way of life retain its primordial status, and also the rate at which the so called cultural or societal values succumb to trendy forces left much to be desired in this present time. All These left one to wonder whether there still remain an autochthonous reminiscence or debris of what could be regarded as culture and its attainable values in this modern time, In Oguejiofor (2016), culture is defined as "the complex whole of man's acquisition of knowledge, morals, belief, art, custom, technology, tradition and skill ...which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation" (p. 16). In his submission, he decries that the way we are living now is quite different from what was transmitted by our ancestors. That led to what he calls "real culture and ideal culture". What was transmitted was the real culture while what is prevalent is ideal culture. According to him, two things are obvious about culture, firstly: - that actual culture always influences the life of its members very deeply... secondly, that culture is always dynamic. (By implication) "what we are living now is a new reality, since most of our cultures have changed so many aspects of their gab" (p. 17).

Similarly, Ella in Idamoyibo (2012), lamented the loss of socio-cultural values which includes, "respect for elders, chastity, dignity of labour, patriotism, hospitality, courage, self-reliance, love and promotion for place of origin..." (p. 101) However,

when we talk of cultural values especially in tertiary institutions, what readily comes to mind is the students' attitudes to school ethics, language, mode of dressing, manner of eating, respect to elders and constituted authorities, and their general moral conducts. How students react and attach meanings to all these cultural values in the face of changing time is a very serious challenge in almost every institution of higher learning today. Tertiary institutions are places where different types of life styles are in vogue. While some are acceptable, others are obnoxious and unacceptable. Whatever that is in vogue in one institution is also applicable to the other.

The area students are most vulnerable is in their manner of dressing. They forgot that one is addressed by the way one dressed. An incident was recorded in a social media which should serve as a deterrent to others:

A 300 level female student was raped in the school environment at night. When the culprit was arrested and questioned, he defended himself, saying it's not my fault that I raped her, she wanted it herself. I was sitting and reading on my own when she entered the class, she wore net singlet revealing the red bra she wore. Even her bra could not cover the breast, her skimpy black skirt was a sharpshooter and I'm sure she deliberately wore white panties to expose herself well. She bends right in front of me so I got the signal that was what led me to have a carnal knowledge of her". (indecent dressing among youths: internet sources, assessed 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019)

Majority of university students are involved in this ‘dress to kill models’ or what they term trendy outfit. Males are not exempted from this ill. Most boys go on sagging, low waist, hot bosom and so on. When interacted orally with some parents who pleaded anonymous, on these dressing issues of our children, thus are some of their reactions:

First parent (woman): “I am not in the school with my child, how can I know what she wears in the school?”

Second parent (woman): “children of nowadays are something else, the dresses they wear in the school are different from the ones they wear at home. The problem is that most of us (parents) are too busy to pay unexpected visit to our children at school to see what they look like out there. If we are up to our responsibilities, things will be better”.

Third parent (man): “they cannot wear such nonsense in my house, the school authority should know what to do to curb such madness called dressing among students”

Truly, some parents do not have time for their children the moment they left their houses, in some cases, parents are instrumental to what their children wear. Some parents dress indecently and likewise their children. So whether in school or out of school they still appear indecent. Youths are very good at imitating what they see especially from social media and role models, parents inclusive.

Some universities have started reacting to these unaccepted trends by enforcing some laws to checkmate these excesses while others are still quiet about it. For instance, in a Special Bulletin published by the Public Affairs Directorate, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Vol 10, No 17 on

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, the management made the following pronouncements on dress code. The statement runs thus,

This is to inform all staff, students and visitors that the Management of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria has warned that the following modes of dressing will no longer be tolerated on the University Campuses:

1. Short and skimpy dresses eg body hug, ‘show me your chest’ ‘spaghetti’ wears and dresses exposing sensitive parts
2. Tight shorts and skirts that are above the knees (except for sporting purposes)
3. Tattered jeans and jeans with holes
4. Transparent and see-through dresses
5. Tight fittings eg jeans, skirts, hip stars, patra, lactra, etc that reveals the contour of the body
6. Under-wear clothing, such as singlet worn publicly
7. Unkept appearances, such as bushy hair and beards
8. Dressing that make it impossible to wear laboratory coats during practicals, or participate actively in practicals
9. Long and tight skirts which are slit in front or at the sides, which reveals sensitive parts as the wearer moves on
10. Wearing T-shirts with obscene captions
11. Shirts without buttons or not properly buttoned, leaving the wearer bare chested
12. Wearing of earrings by male students
13. Plaiting or weaving of hair by male students
14. Wearing of coloured eye glasses in the classrooms (except on medical grounds)
15. Wearing of bathroom slippers to classrooms (except on medical grounds)
16. Wearing of trousers that stop between knee and ankle.

All these different attires and more are prevalent in all tertiary institutions. From the above restrictions and prohibition, it becomes glaring that the level of decadence in the mode of dressing in tertiary institutions is quite appalling. It is a canker worm in the fabrics of every tertiary institution not only in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. In most cases, all these are what they see some popular artistes put on and they become model to them. According to a source, “dresses that are meant as stage costumes for musicians and actresses are misconstrued by gullible female students as everyday wears. As a result of this, ladies dress half naked to school, all in the name of fashion.” (internet source) This practice does not portray societal norms and values especially of Igbo culture.

The formal language of communication has even changed hands with popular language of most musicians and other artistes, and this has now reared its head in the formal writing of most students who want to join the moving train. Some popular musicians commonly known as Rappers are very good at creating funny song texts to thrill their fans who are basically the youths. Respect to elders has fast given way in most tertiary institutions because, most students can only greet the teachers that are either teaching or supervising their project. If they have no business with whoever that is concerned, no greetings for such person. This type of attitude has no place in an ideal traditional society

### **The problems of dearth of cultural values among students in tertiary institutions**

Ordinarily, Tertiary Institution is supposed to be a positive training ground for students in both character and learning. Any student admitted into a university is supposed to have a vision, mission as well as target which should be accomplished within a

specified period of time, spanning four to five or six years depending on one's choice area of study.

Unfortunately, we found out that most students do not graduate as at when due or do not even graduate at all as a result of distractions and involvement in one type of offence or the other, ranging from exam malpractice, drug addiction, cult activities to all kinds of criminal acts which are punishable by law. For instance, Universities all over the country have rules guiding examination conduct. At Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, every examination offence has a corresponding penalty, ranging from suspension to expulsion. A student who is expelled from school has terminated his or her mission in tertiary institution because such a student can never gain admission elsewhere again in any other university within the country. A student who is convicted of drug addiction is legally dealt with and may end up in jail. In some cases, such a student ends up having brain problems which also ruins his/her academic career.

Cultism is a highly dreaded fraternity in universities. It is a threat to unsuspecting innocent students. In most cases, different factions of cult groups engage themselves in a bloody combat. The genesis of these vices stems from paying defiant ears to rules and regulations of the school and also not heeding to the cultural norms and values that mould one's character right from the home to the school. Greater percentages of those who fall victims or preys to most of these social ills do that at the detriment of their studies. Some at times graduate into more serious crimes such as armed robbery. Most yahoo boys that are duping people here and there are those who could not make it academically so they resort to internet robbery and when they are caught they spend better part of their time in jail. Some ladies who could not equally make

it as well may join prostitution or even robbery as the case may be. Many students have lost their lives in the process.

In some cases, such attitudes may escalate into some dangerous situations such as, frustration, depression and suicide scandal. It should be noted that people that are involved recently in suicide attempt are mostly youths who are faced with one type of life's challenges or the other. A student who remained resolute to his or her studies has no business with all those mentioned vices rather, he /she will graduate honourably and with integrity.

### **Conclusion**

Maintenance of cultural values in tertiary institutions should not be taken with levity. It should be a habit that starts from home before one enters into university because Igbo adage says, *adi amụ aka ekpe na nka* - translated literarily it means - one does not learn left handedness in old age. By implication, one's background is of utmost importance. If one is well rooted from home, that wind of imitation, juvenile exuberance forces or peer-group's malaise may not totally overtake one. If parents are up to their responsibilities in giving their children the right type of training before they enter higher institutions, a greater percentage would grow with it no matter what they see outside their environment, whether in videos, televisions and other social media. The school authorities should on their own part reinforce discipline and checkmate student's excesses through adequate enforcement of rules and regulations. Musicians should not place money above human dignity. They should abide by censorship law and produce music that is acceptable; any infringer should be made to face the wrath of law. Government should as a matter of urgency promulgate law guiding the productions and exhibition of music with devastating effects, as well as videos and

pornographic displays. Things should be done with cautions, moderations and or limitations to ensure proper value balance in our tertiary institutions.

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## Appendix

Samples of music clips







The above are some of the few still pictures presenting some of the artistes in their weird appearances. Some youths see them as models and want to be or dress like them. There are yet some pictures that are too bad to be pasted here yet the teenagers watch them in videos and cinemas and imitate them. There are many good ones no doubt, but the clamour for bad examples is always on the increase among the youths and this becomes a problem and calls for concern in our society and tertiary institutions precisely.

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