

## **Implication of objectification of women in Nigerian dance video: A study of Timaya's *Bum Bum***

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### **Abstract**

*Globalization and continuous influences from the new media and satellite television have impacted on Nigerian artistes' choice of imaging in their musical videos which affects the image of Nigerian women both nationally and globally as an object for trade, cancelling the African tradition which respects and treasures a woman. This work examines the high level of objectification of women in Nigerian musical dance video. A content analysis is done on the musical video Bum Bum by Timaya, a Nigerian artiste. Findings of this examination reveal that some of the women in Nigerian musical videos care more about money-making and fame rather than the act of dancing as a profession. Consequently, the lamentation for moral civility is of no consequence to these dancers. The recommendation in this work is that for female dancers to be less objectified they must always see and carry their bodies as priceless treasure; they should avoid dehumanizing themselves by accepting anyhow dance musical video all in the name of money; and Nigeria censorship board should organize seminars to re-sensitize some female professional dancers against their being objectified to mitigate the accompanying negative implications. In conclusion, this work reawakens the masses consciousness to understand that beyond aesthetics in musical video, women are being presented in bad light. By this, a positive change is anticipated.*

**Keywords:** *Dance, communication, objectification, social implications*

## **Introduction**

The communicative interpretative essence of dance has gone beyond the current perception of entertainment and exhibition of creative skills into a serious communicative tool. It is the ability of dance to reflect serious societal issues that makes dance and the dancer's body agents for corrective propaganda. At this point, what matters in dance both in its form and style are its socio-environmental usefulness and not solely its aesthetics. Aesthetics though affects the masses' psyche towards appreciating the dance performance or videos they watch, popularizing performance remains a reference point. Ikike Ufford maintains that "Dance is art because its movements are overdue, presented and appreciated by man." (105). In Nigeria, what differentiates musical videos from the western videos is the creative dance styles. The creative impulse of the various dance styles in Nigeria's musical videos always emerge out of boiling societal issues which awaken the consciousness of the audience in either seeking for redress or remaining mere passive followers. Akas Nicholas states that,

Dance is unique art form that has several means of communication based on the choreographer's choreographic style. It is choreographic style of any choreographer that positively showcases the information he/she wants to pass across to the viewing audience. (24)

The value and effectiveness of dance in society are widely accepted based on its negative or positive information dissemination ability. It is the choreographic dance styles of Nigeria's musical artists that differentiate them from each other and also serve as a trade mark in their performances. The required creative input in their various styles of dancing makes them employ every available means to achieve the following: money, popularity, stardom and endorsements. In order to give their video the required standard, some of them make use of flashy women, some make use of expensive cars, some make use of locations and also of expensive costumes. In situations like this, the artist's major aim is for aesthetics, while the communicative aspect centers on three sources such as cultural background, environmental issues and creative ability of the choreographer. From these sources the audience understands what motivated the artist's creativity both in originality, choice of costume, dancers, title of song and location selection for the shooting of the dance video film. According to Langer as cited by Emoruwa Felix, "dance is always within the context of what it expresses, what it creates and how it relates to the other arts, to the artists and to actual world (4)". Faith Jude (in an interview) concurred that,

The two major things that attract the audiences to newly released musical videos are the musical sound beat and the type of flashy women and their various captivating dance styles. New musical videos in Nigeria's context can only be classified poor or low rated only when the aesthetic

rudiments are not creatively managed to objectify women.

The negative objectification of women in Nigeria's musical video presents them as mere robotic tool that has no say to either be or not. This misconception on women has poorly presented them to the society as scandalous preyed upon by men.

### **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework of this paper centered on sexual objectification theory. The sexual objectification theory, according to Barbara Fredrickson, presents women as "an object merely for sexual pleasure and as an object for use" (23). This theory in patriarchal society especially in the entertainment could not be measured with men when it has to do with display of nudity during dance performances on musical videos. This is because based on the sexual objectification theory, the male believed strongly that there are gender differences between man and woman, were the men still and will always stand as superiors. The superiority of men over women can be measured based on the ideological backups on the reason(s) while they are being objectified in dance musical videos, such as; a. For the female dancers through their nudified body receive media visibility and acceptability, b. To be recognized by their fans as a role model. C. To be separated from mere professional video dancers to extremist professional dancers. Based on the aforementioned, women nudified appearance in musical dance videos according Miller Gina presents them as 'Sexual object for fetishistic fantasies and

disregarding the person's personality'' (234). Frederickson and Roberts as cited by Miller observes that 'Nudifying women in musical dance videos present their body as commercial tool for business were a woman as a person is being objectified while her personality is deemphasized'' (34).

The negative implication of deemphasizing a woman's personality commercially through musical dance videos which is the thrust of this paper must be address, because it affects some women psychologically, morally and culturally. Unger R.K as cited by Miller opines that 'based on the commercial misrepresentation of women they consciously or unconsciously start viewing themselves as objects and start dissect their appearances to what is the culture's standard of being attractive or professional'' (130)

### **Nigerian artist and their presentation of women on Nigeria video dance**

The presentation of women culturally and socially in Nigeria's musical video is very heart breaking, dehumanizing and highly misinforming. The current acceptance of women in musical video presents them as mere sexy tool and free commercial commodity at any given time without any objection. The belief in Nigeria's musical videos is that the audience cum market acceptance of any videos depends solely on the following the picture quality of the camera, the aesthetics of the location, expensive costumes and Jewelries of the musician and most importantly the sexist women used in the video. It is always addressed as a low standard musical video to shoot without using women, not just using them but allowing them to expose the necessary parts of their body such as breasts, hips and legs.

Swami Viren, as cited by Berberick Stephanie, maintained that “In patriarchal societies the roles and privileges accorded to women are inferior to those assigned to men and as such sexism plays a central role in the continuing oppression of women” (2). The ability of the women to accept to expose the sensitive parts of their body in musical videos all in the name of dancing based on current Nigerian mentality and beyond, gives them fame, more money and a call for more jobs. This barbaric act cum perception about women on musical videos exposes them to a lot of social crisis in the country such as rape, robbery, beating and abuse of human rights. Gina miller suggested that,

When women are sexually objectified on musical videos they always experiences shame, anxiety, peak motivational status, awareness of internal bodily states and always encouragement of their children to support the patriarchal order (24).

The poor misrepresentations of women in some musical videos (Bam Bam in study) at times reduce them to lesser beings and professional beggars who can do anything for money and fame. Akas observes that the current ugly situation of every country’s economy has really exposed women to use what they have to get what they want, thereby unmasking the masked unique potency of an ideal woman. (27).

In the days of our primordial parents what makes a woman unique and admirable is her ability to dress decently, homely and not to allowing any man have canal knowledge of her until her bride price is paid. But the present negative objectification

of women on musical videos debunks the above, and rather makes women seen as aesthetic commercial visual attraction and satisfaction in videos. This inhuman act on women in musical videos by Nigerian standard is totally against the country's cultural belief system and ideology, but acculturation of other people's culture (western) really influenced Nigerian artists, thus making them deemphasize the Africa cosmology where women are respected, adored and cherished.

### **Forms of women objectification**

The varieties in women objectification present them as toys and slaves in the man's world. Here, women are subjected to total obedience, passive observer and experimental object whether suitable or not. It is the total denial of a woman's right, freedom and privacy in her social life and status that gave rise to the selected forms in women negative objectification. The selected forms of objectification towards women, according to Nussbaum Martha, deemphasize and belittle womanhood especially in pornography films and nudified musical videos where a woman's identity and pride are left at the mercy of a man's world just to toy with, all in the name of wanting to meet with necessary bills such as: house rent, feeding, clothing and training of children. Women psycho-social egos have really suffered and kept on suffering in any patriarchal society based on the classified forms of objectifications such as:

- a) Instrumentality: This is where women are used as objectifiers, either as selling object or mere attractive objects.
- b) Inertness: This is where women in musical videos are treated as inactive, aside from the nudified dance performance.

- c) **Fungibility:** This is where at times women in some musical videos are compared with some objects like flower, toilets, orange, money and tissues all these are symbolically humiliating to the unique gender called womanhood.
- d) **Ownership:** This is where the total freedom and right of choice in womanhood is always violated. The Nigerian male artistes sees female as their own and who will be modeled towards making their videos good and acceptable. So, in order to achieve what they want, they always go for women who can or will not object to doing anything for them.

### **The implications of objectification of women in Nigeria dance musical videos**

The objectification of women in Nigeria musical videos based on sexual objectification theory which is the theoretical framework of this paper exposes women to some many negative implications which are totally against the cultural norms and human rights. The psychological tortures of the negative implications on women in Nigeria musical dance videos have really made some women to face all kinds of shame, humiliation and societal rejections. Berberick maintain that ‘Objectification of women based on social implication promotes the treatment of them as inhuman playthings.’(7). He went further to present sociological implications of objectifying women in musical videos (especially in Nigeria) such as ; a) Low self-esteem, b) Depression, c) Sexual Assault, d) Drug Addict, e) Harassment, f) All sorts of ill act such as lesbianism and gayism.

When the entire aforementioned are not well checkmated women value in Nigeria musical dance videos will always be in

the hands of men (Artiste) gabblers, were the highest bidder acquires a new toy or specimen for inhuman experiment.

### **The objectification of women in Timaya's musical video *Bam Bam*: A brief insight**

This song featuring Sean Paul was produced in 2014 by Timaya. The song really dehumanized the value of a woman by presenting a woman as mere sex tool, prostitute and object that can be acquired once one has money, fame and cars. In the musical video the artiste (Timaya) negatively presents the adoring beauty of woman based only on her sexually appealing body and also as a sex addicted object, who can do anything just to get whatever she desires. But in order to back up his claims through the musical video, he displayed highly nudified female dancers exposing various sensitive parts of their body, and their dance styles portraying sex positions depicting eagerness to have sex. To showcase high level gender inequality in patriarch society, the two artists (Timaya and Sean Paul), based on gender objectification, generally costume wise, male artistes were fully costumed that no part of their body was exposed, while female dancers exposed every part of their body. In line with the working theory, Nigeria's musical video presents women irrationally as commercial selling object, class ability of the artist(s) to acquire the objects (women) and the ability of the artist to manipulate the objects in his videos. It is this poor presentation of women in musical videos based on sexual objectification theory that ignited the empirical study of this research paper. In order to understand and evaluate the negative implications of women objectification, Timaya's musical video *Bum Bum* would be analyzed on these classified sub-heads:

- (a) The language
- (b) The visual Elements
- (c) Movements

## The language

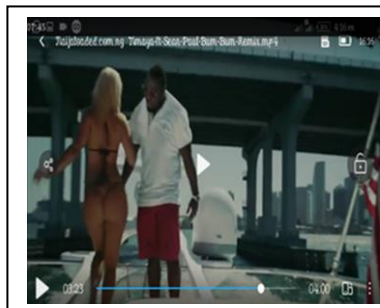
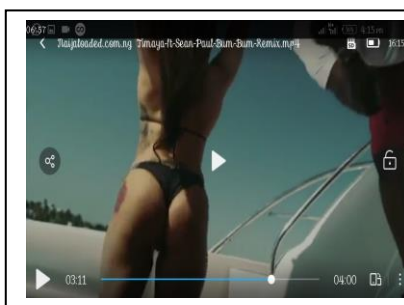


Plate 1: Pictorial presentation of the verses and chorus of the song

Verses: The way you wine it dey make me down low(x2)

Chorus: All the ladies shake up your Bum Bum

Verse: All my ladies shake up your Bum Bum. E no matter where you are from just keep shaking it.

Chorus: Just keep shaking your Bum Bum, am still on the Bum Bum.

Verse: My mama no dey here, I will give it to you, how and where you want it.

Verse: This girl calling me on phone

Shey dey follow me for facebook

She dey follow me for twitter

She dey call me all night, wanting me to pick her calls. She is begging for it.

Chorus: Just keep shaking your Bum Bum, am still on the Bum Bum.

The above chorus and verses in the song is vulgar and also debased the body part of a woman (*the BumBum*) as a sex social tool. One can argue that men also have *BumBum*, then why emphatic stress on the women's *Bumbum* by the artiste (Timaya). This simply shows beyond the generalized function of the Anus which is for densification, women's anus as being objectified becomes a sex social market were once your rich, popular and handsome as a man you can have access to it. But which is not true. Naturally, the anus (or *Bumbum*) of a woman should not be objectified openly because of mere aesthetics and choreographic style in the musical dance video. Rather it should have been praise (if there is need for such) based on been an essential place where the act of procreation and child delivery takes place, while the act of having sex morally wise should only be for people who are legally married and not the other way round as be presented by the artist.

### **The body**

The body of a woman in African context is far beyond sex tool or sexual satisfying object, though it is admirable but its usefulness makes it unique. This paper earlier argued that some of the style, form and content displayed in Nigeria musical dance videos are borrowed culture and not Africa's ideal culture. But the women used were white women all through.

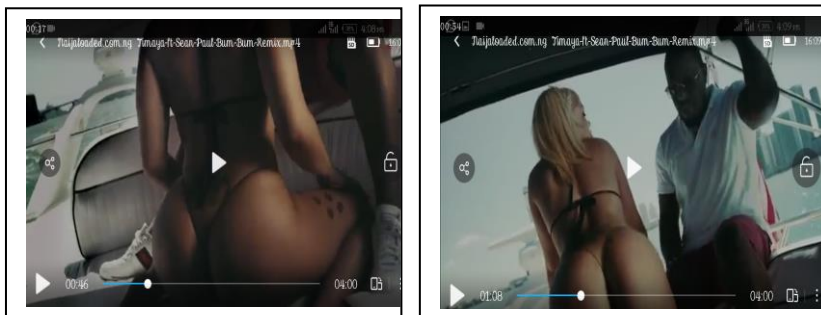


Plate 2: The Nudified body of the female dancers

This contextually shows that what is applicable elsewhere, may not be applicable in African culture (Nigeria). Based on the level of nudity displayed in their videos, it will be obscene and would be banned from been aired on television or any social media in Nigeria

### **The dance**

Though not all dance movements communicate but some special movements used by the choreographer as choreographic style can either be used to satirize or lampoon unforeseen situation. In the musical video (Bam Bam), the dance movement though is not of any emphatic pattern to serve as a corrective tool scholarly wise; rather the dance is only projecting woman as sex object that has no limitation on where the act can take place. The sexual exhibition of the dancer's movement ironically presents the woman's body as sex negotiating zone, sex adoring zone and sex actualizing zone. At this point, based on the dancer's erotic movement, a woman's body, using the musical video, can be seen as an essential sexual commodity. Theresa Ejiofor (a nurse in an

interview) observed that ‘the dancer’s body seizes to be ordinary once the audience can identify one or two intentions been passed across’.

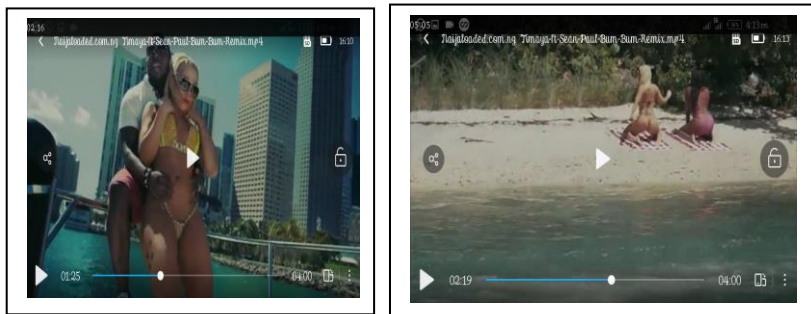
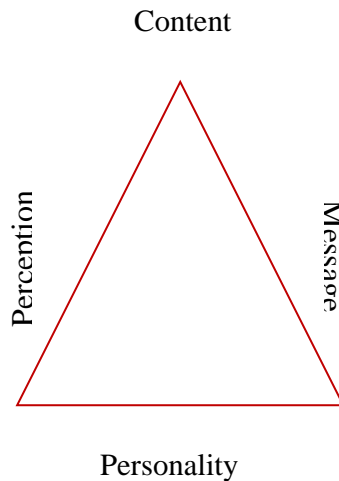


Plate 2: The nudified women and their dance style.

Also the dance movements in the musical video are westernized where civility in the choreographic style and costume is thrown to the wings, which is totally unethical. The beauty of dance in Africa is not in exhibition of nudity (only in some special cases) rather it is on the body flexibility and the ability of the dancers to externalize the choreographers internalized choreographic concept. Hence, contextualization of dance in musical video especially with women should be considered in this triangular thought.



### **Conclusion**

The current Nigerian artiste has really devalued our unique cultural values and started adapting totally to what is not ours. Nobody disproves adaptation or acculturation, but the negative ones should be deemphasized while positive ones should be promoted. In African content a woman is seen and appreciated as the engine room of any family or society. Such respect should be accorded to them both on musical videos, social media and in governance. An ideal African man respects a woman and such should be reflected in our musical videos. Nigeria's musical artists should and must always showcase the richest cultural values and uniqueness of a woman and not presenting the image of African women as sex tools, cheap commodities and lesser beings in the hands of men.

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