

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INFLUENCE OF POPULAR MUSIC LYRICS AND VIDEOS ON YOUTH'S SOCIAL LIFE: NIGERIA IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Music happens to be a central culture among youths; it plays an important role in their socialization. Youths today are negatively impacted by the messages that some genres of music are sending out through its lyrical content and music videos because of its explicit increase in song references to sex, violence, suicides, murders, sexual stereotype, substance abuse etc. In some cases, lyrics communicate potentially harmful health messages, such lyrics are of special concern in today's environment because it poses unprecedented threats to the health and well-being of the Nigerian youths. Youths experience music through diverse settings and situations, alone or shared with friends. The effect of music on youth's social interaction, attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and particularly their behaviour is of paramount concerns because these music lyrics have a big impact when illustrated in music videos in some certain types of popular music. Youth's exposure to these types of music could be associated with certain behaviours. Therefore, to this end, this paper tends to examine the influence of popular music lyrics and videos has on youths and also raises questions regarding the extent our present-day popular music has influenced the social life of Nigerian youths. This survey study employed interviews, internet research, library research, the paper adopted both primary and secondary means of data collection. The data collected were analyzed using the simple percentage method. With the evidence portrayed in this paper, parents need to take a stand regarding music lyrics and music videos.

Keywords: Youths, Socialization, Popular music, Lyrics and Videos

Introduction

Music can make or mar a youth, it is a powerful medium. While that power can be beneficial, it can also have a harmful influence. Listening to popular music is considered by society to be a part of growing up. Popular music is present almost everywhere, and it is easily available through the radio, various recordings, the internet, and new technologies and it's important to understand its influence on today's youths. The effect that popular music has on youth's behaviour and emotions is of paramount concern. Popular music provides its consumers' entertainment and distraction from problems and easily serves the youths as a way to relieve tension and boredom. Some studies have reported that youths use popular music to deal with loneliness and to take control of their emotional status or mood. Popular music also can provide a background for romance and serve as the basis for stabling relationships in diverse settings. Youth's preference for popular music helps them to achieve group identity and integration into the youth's culture. Many Nigerian youths expressed that they preferred these songs or another because their lyrics were a reflection of their feelings. In the present-day society, however, conditions are so much changed that young people can find opportunities for sex-gratification-if they so wish- with very little danger of detection.

Different genres of music, whether it is hip-hop, rap, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, jazz, heavy metal etc, but much of popular (pop) music aimed at youths contains drug, violence, and sexual overtones. Popular music does not appear to have massive negative effects, but it does seem to be dangerous for youths because young people are most vulnerable during the adolescent stage of life when the developmental changes are especially dramatic (Ojukwu & Esimone, 2014). And an average Nigerian youth watches and listens to popular music approximately 2 to 3 hours every day (Roberts, 2009). The behavioural pattern among youths today indicates that the level of morality is at an all-time low (Ojukwu & Esimone, 2014). This is linked to the influence of popular music particularly rock & roll, rap, hip-hop, R & B, with its increase in explicit lyrics and music videos have on youths. There is no doubt that youths are swayed and shaped by music (Frison, 2015). It has been observed that when youths continue to watch and listen to different kinds of popular music which ordinarily should inculcate in them the traditional values and norms of the society, they end up exposing them to inordinate desires and a lot of abnormal behaviour which they are perceptive being moulded to think and act that way. Today, a lot of popular music abounds with degrading sexual, drug, violence, substance abuse messages and youths who listens and watch these popular music are more likely to copy or emulate what they hear or see.

Speaking on the influence of popular music, particularly, music with explicit lyrics and videos on youth's social life, the society seems to have recorded lots of moral decadence among youths because of our present-day popular music and we cannot overlook the impact most of these songs have not only on the youths but the society at large. Gone are the days when morality used to be virtues. Today is the exact opposite. We now live in a decadent society when morality is overboard. Unfortunately, our society that was once upright with moral values can today appear to be this morally ill because contemporary popular musicians compose songs that reduce the norms and values, morals and the ethical foundation of the country. Their songs give praises to immoral act such as illicit sex, fraud, clubbing, nude and indecent dressing, etc, in their music videos. These have affected the lives of some individuals especially the youth who model their lives after such musicians and their music. Any society that is not morally sound is bound to witness all sorts of social menace. As with popular music, the perception and the effect of music videos messages are important because research has reported that exposure to violence, sexual messages, sexual stereotypes, and use of substances abuse in music videos might produce significant changes in behaviours and attitudes of young viewers, but the same time, music is important to youths identity and helps the youth to define important social and socio-cultural boundaries, same as it gives the society social life and cultural identity, (Ekong, 2008 & Ibekwe, 2008). Music is generally simple but the message of the words could be deep and profound, that is why what we see and hear in music influences our attitude, thoughts and behaviours. Also, the vulgar elements in some certain genres of popular music combined with its other ones have had such vulgarizing effects, that we now have the misfortune to live in a vulgar and blatant age. Therefore, this paper seeks to find out how popular music lyrics and videos influence youths social behaviour and to establish youth's culture towards popular music.

Definitions of Terms

Influence

Influence is the capacity or power of persons or things to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviours, opinions, of another. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines "Influence as the power to affect the way someone or something develops, behaves, or thinks, without using direct force or orders. It is a big force in changing the development of fluctuating things such as to conduct, thoughts or decisions, just like the pervasive influence that popular music lyrics and videos has on Nigerian youths.

Social Life

According to Wikipedia "Social life may refer to an individual's interpersonal relationships with people within their immediate surroundings or the general public".

Popular Music

Popular music (pop music), as distinct from folk or classical/art music is the totality of music with diverse styles that have developed from artistic manipulations and fusions of musical activities of distant cultures, times and practices. Popular music borrows from folk, classical/art and even musical interpretations of non-musical events like politics, humanities, and science. While the classical is the art of the composer, popular music, on the other hand, remains the art of the performer. This characteristic difference defines the extent of the eclecticism of popular music sounds. It is "not driven by any significant ambition except profit and commercial reward..." and it is "provided from on high (by record companies, radio programmers, and concert promoters) rather than being made from below.... Pop is not a do-it-yourself music but is professionally produced and packaged" (Frith, 2001:95-96). Some of the artistic forms under the name, popular music include highlife, juju, soukuos, Afrobeat, funk, reggae, rock, hip hop, rhythm and blues, disco, calypso, soul, gospel, native blues, makossa, and various forms of minstrelsy. The consumption of popular music depends very little on language, knowledge, education, or sophistication; it draws its consumers from youth and the progressives who share the common grounds of habit, taste, lifestyle, ideology, and similar experiences that cut across cultural locales.

Definitions According to Specifics

Besides the foregoing general definition of popular music, scholarship in the musical phenomenon allows for sectional approaches in defining pop music. This compartmentalization is necessary for the delimitation of interests in the study areas to allow the scholar to carry out intensive research in the specific aspect of popular music studies of his/her choice. Four possible specific approaches to defining pop music may be identified as follows: Stylistic definition, Sociological definition, Process-based definition, and Theory-based definition.

Stylistic Definition

In this approach, each popular musical genre or sub-genre is regarded as a style in itself. The consideration of such artistic forms as highlife, reggae, rock, blues, disco, calypso, jazz, funk, soul, gospel, juju, makossa, morna, soukous, taarab, benga, jiti, rumba, mbaqanga, etc. as pop music styles follows this line of the stylistic definition of popular music. Pen (1992) explores this approach when he writes that “styles such as ragtime, blues, jazz, rock, and country were neither African nor European, but a fusion of the two” (P.272). It follows, therefore, that the styles of popular music include many rock, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, country, dance, and operatic pop. In the same vein, Waterman (2012) lists styles of popular music in early Western Europe as jazz, film music, musicals, country-and-western music, soul, and rock. Agawu (2003) also recognizes the Nigerian juju, fuji, and Afrobeat, and the Zairean soukous or rumba, the Cameroonian makossa, and the South African mbube as styles of recorded African popular music. While Ekwueme (2004) adds ikwokirikwo or native blues as a style of interethnic pop, Okafor (2005) lists apala, sakara, akuko n'egwu, and dadakuada as some traditional derivatives of contemporary Nigerian styles of popular music.

Sociological Definition

Economics, politics, religion, mass communication, human relations, linguistics, philosophy, and other branches of the social life of man are scientifically studied to appreciate the nature and development of society and social behaviour. Musicologists and other scholars, who tilt toward this approach in their studies of popular music, often come out with a sociological definition of the musical phenomenon.

Asserting his authority in popular music studies, Frith (1982) states, "It is music made to have certain social effects, whether those effects are commercial, physical or sociological" (p. 144). Manuel (2006), in his book, *Popular Music of the Non-Western World*, defines popular music as music created with the mass media in mind and reproduced on a large-scale basis as a salable commodity for wide public consumption. Waterman (2012b) defines popular music as the modern commercial music aimed at the general public and the youth market in particular. He states further that the music is shaped by social, economic, and technological forces and linked to the social identity of its performers and audiences. Okafor's (2005) definition of popular music is:

Music that deals with familiar themes and issues of the moment. It is understood and accepted by a lot of people. . . as a topical reflection of their sentiments and current view . . . [It] is a very strong economic force-it has created industries, makes millionaires, circulates money, and aided by the power of the media and electronic industry, reaches and affects millions around the world (pp.327-328).

Process-based Definition

The procedural steps, parameters, and personnel involved in producing popular music provide the basis for the process-based approach of defining pop. The process of ideation, organization, production, presentation, and appreciation are constant in the creation of pop

tunes and songs. Such parameters as computer music software, electronic equipment, musical instruments and all kinds of sound effects are also sequentially applied in producing popular music. Studio music producers, composer-arrangers, songwriters, artists, and repertoire managers, audio engineers, studio sessions-men, vocalists, and their likes are the personnel that manipulate the processes of producing popular music. In the area of popular music production (organization of the recording industry, the composition of sounds, and consumption of the music), scholars like Keith Negus and Simon Frith have applied the process-based approach to popular music definition. Further entries of similar definitions are made in the electronic form of Encyclopedia Britannica. While Negus (1997) expresses the process thus:

Technologies for producing and reproducing sounds and images have decisively influenced how popular music has been composed, communicated, and consumed throughout the twentieth century, and have been central to the development of global entertainment industry (p. 20).

This technological sophistication has brought about a radical change in music compositional techniques. The application of computer digital synthesis tools for creative purposes in the process popular music production has helped in defining popular music as those genres that are created, produced, and performed with the aid of modern technological tools like the synthesizer, the computer, the amplifier, the mixer, etc.

In Encyclopedia Britannica (2014), the entry on popular music definition reads: Unlike traditional folk music, popular music is written by known individuals, usually professionals, and does not evolve through the process of oral transmission . . . New techniques have made possible high-fidelity production of sound and its widespread and rapid dissemination through radio, phonograph, tape recorder, and television. Besides, some of the instruments used in popular music have incorporated electronic amplification as well as sound production.

To Simon Frith (1982), Pop is not a do-it-yourself music but is professionally produced and packaged. It is “provided from on high (by record companies, radio programmers and concert promoters) rather than being made from below”.

Theory-based Definition

The theory is a scientific supposition explaining a phenomenon based on principles that are independent of the phenomenon. It covers the entire sphere of speculative thought; a systematic analysis and generation of universal principles regarding a phenomenon. Theory, therefore, is a collection of results designed to illustrate the principles of a subject. In defining popular music along the lines of the Theory of Music, scholars are looking at those elements of musical sound and/ or song that are universal, which are revealed in, and are peculiar to the pop phenomenon. Such elements as scales, mode, tempo, tonality, intervals, melody, rhythm, metre, texture, form, timbre, intensity, etc. are analyzed to ascertain their particular usage in pop musical expression. Regarding this fact, different scholars have come

up with various definitions of popular music that are theory-based.

Wicke and Mayer (1982) reveal that the sound event of popular music generates its fascination from the sonic, musical, and visual packaging of the finished musical product. In the treatment of the sonic elements, rhythm is designed to excite metric stimulation for bodily responses, reveal the formal structure of the piece, simulate the passage of time, and betray the changes in emotional feelings of the performers. Melody is structured for psychical compensation of stress, presentation of emotional conflicts, and revelation of the socio-cultural tilt of the piece. Chordal arrangements are used to direct and control the attention of the audience, and further consolidate the formal structure. In the production proper, sonic synthesis is employed to guarantee the use-value of the piece. It is also used to express the personal artistry of the producer, for stimulation of human/animal/plastic emotions, and expression of aesthetics.

Regarding repetition as an element of theory, Middleton (1990) argues that "while repetition is a feature of all music of any sort, a high level of repetition may be the specific mark of 'popular' enabling an inclusive rather than exclusive audience" (p. 139). Attempting a comparative analysis between classical and popular music however, Fred Lerdahl (1992) reveals that pop can be identified by its lack of structural complexity and depth. Negus (1992) implies that popular music; generally, maintain a basic song structure, instrumentation, lyrics, and vocal performance. Some, however, would reveal very specific musical changes, chord patterns, melodic modifications, bass lines, and lyrical changes. The basic song structure is often the ABACB form. Agawu (2003) discloses that popular music is based on distinctive and danceable beat, singable, and easily remembered/memorized melodies, simple languages, and relevant themes.

Describing the South African Zulu maskanda ethnic pop style, Coplan (2002) writes about the Penta- and hexatonic scales, staggered linear melodic polyphonies, thumping rhythms, stamping dances, antiphonal singing, back-up choruses, and other stylistic features, to betray the theory-based approach to defining the maskanda genre. Pop songs, generally, have a standard format. They are simple, memorable, and emotionally appealing to large audiences. The elements found in popular music include smooth, romantic vocal styles, strong grooves, backbeats, call-and-response texture, emotional intensity, and poetic themes.

From the aforementioned, therefore, a theory-based definition of popular music can be said to be: Those musical compositions that combine words, tunes, and often, dance rhythms; and performed basically for entertainment__ though laced with socio-cultural contents. With various definitions, the writer tries to channel the Nigerian youth's approach to popular music in Nigeria.

Popular Music in Nigeria

The earliest styles of Nigerian popular music were palm-wine and highlife, which spread in the 1920s among Nigeria and nearby countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana. In Nigeria, palm became the primary basis for Juju, a genre that dominated popular music for

many years. During this time, a few other styles such as Apala, derived from traditional Yoruba music, also found a more limited audience. By the 1960s, Cuban, American and other styles of imported music were enjoying a large following, and musicians started to incorporate these influences into Juju. The result was a profusion of new styles in the last few decades of the 20th century, including Waka music, Yo-pop and Afrobeat. Popular music in Nigeria can be categorized into three periods: the traditional period (early times till mid-19th century); the Post-Western influence period (mid-19th century till 1960); and the contemporary popular music (1960 till present).

Traditional period

Music was employed in traditional societies for communal celebrations/social events, religious/ritual purposes and leisure/entertainment. The various forms of traditional music served as the popular music of early times.

Post-Western Influence

In the mid-19th century, the Anglican Church established several Churches around the country which employed congregation hymns in worship. The hymns became popular themes in Nigerian society especially when Priest Josiah Ransome-Kuti (Grandfather of Fela Kuti) began to compose hymns in the Yoruba language. One of the earliest and most revolutionary forms of popular music which cut across ethnic boundaries was palm wine guitar music and another is highlife. A fusion of Latin and Caribbean music with African traditional vocals which emerged in the 1920s, it spread across southern Nigeria with early stars like IrewoledeDenge, Ayinde Bakare etc.

Highlife music was the musical lingua franca of Anglophone West Africa from the 1940s onwards. In Nigeria, a plethora stars emerged: Bobby Benson, Ishola Willie Payne, E.C. Arinze etc. Other forms of popular music in this era include rock and roll, soul, R&B and jazz, imports from the USA.

Contemporary Popular Music

This period witnessed the search for indigenous musical identity, with highlife continuing its trajectory. Several other indigenous styles were formed such as Juju Music, Afrobeat, Afrofunk, Fuji Music and the influence of American and some European superstars gave birth to some lineup of soul, pop and R&B acts. The advent of dancehall and reggae saw the emergence of more contemporary popular music like hip-hop, rap; this became the biggest musical phenomenon in Nigeria. This new popular music paradigm gave the artists opportunities to express their art in local languages, using indigenous genres, such as highlife and even decal. Contemporary popular music plays an important role in shaping the youth's social life and this depends on their choice of popular music and also their approaches towards their choices.

Nigerian Youth's choice of Popular Music

Nos	Popular Music Types	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Total
1	Highlife	3	10%	3
2	Reggae	3	10%	3
3	Afrobeat	12	40%	12
4	Rock	9	30%	9
6	Jazz	3	10%	3
7	Rock and roll	10	37%	10
8	Juju	6	20%	6
9	Rhythm & Blues (R&B)	18	60%	12
10	Rap	20	67%	18
11	Fuji	10	37%	20
12	Gospel pop	3	10%	3

From the above table, we can observe that the highest response was for rap music, followed by rhythm and blues. Most popular music especially rap, R&B, music composed over the years has its lyrical content suggesting erogenous innuendoes, as well as its visual aspect and this, stimulates some actions in the social life of youths because music is associated with the right hemisphere of the brain and this is regarded to be the centre of feelings. From all indication, listening to popular music has helped in shaping the lives of Nigerian youths, in their reasoning, actions, and interactions. Some of these music imposes detrimental health content on youths. This being the case because popular is the most consumed genre of music but as said that music is an integral part of the society which affects the daily lifestyle. Therefore, we will now see how popular music lyrics and videos influences youths social behaviour.

Popular Music Lyrics, Videos and Youths Social life

Popular Music Lyrics

For some years now, popular music lyrics have gone progressively explicit with words pointing to sexual, violent cues, sexual stereotype and drug abuse and this kind of lyrics bring upon the danger to the welfare and health of youths. Pre-marital sex, pregnancy, drug use, self-harm, sexually transmitted diseases, and violence all play a role in the lifestyle of Nigerian youth. If a youth is always exposed to lyrics that express violent themes, there is likelihood that he/she may exhibit various changes in attitudes and behaviour like being alone, getting depressed, exposure to liquor and illegal medicine. Some popular music lyrics and videos depict substance use as cool without demonstrating the contrary results as dependence.

Popular Music Videos

Popular music videos have a behavioural influence on youths, because 75% of popular music videos contain sexually, drug abuse, violence, and sexually stereotype explicit material or messages and these messages in songs can influence attitudes and behaviour of a

young individual, especially when these lyrics are acted out in a storytelling music videos, their impact is greater. The young individual will copy or emulate the musician or the acts, as social learning theory indicates that these messages may be internalized by youths and later expressed as behaviour, whether socially desirable or undesirable (Bandura, 1977). Some of this popular music depicts the males as the studs, while the females, the sexual objects in some musical videos, even in their lyrical content.

Some popular music lyrics have some positive influence on youths such as causing them happiness and making them more productive, helping them to relax when stressed, used as a therapy. Some popular music is used to find out how it affects the memory of a certain person (Bauerms, 2015). Listening to some popular music sometimes makes the youth agile because the body reacts to music is simple. The reaction is not determined by the person. Popular music of today's musicians is a clear abuse to human value to compare popular music of our legends since it does not promote human dignity. Sha (2006:132) confirms that among different types of music available, none seems to have such a big influence on a person's life as popular music. Therefore, in conclusion, parents and the society at large should be aware of the positive and negative influence of some popular music lyrics and videos on their youths.

Recommendation and Conclusion

Musicians of our present-day society sometimes do not wait to ponder in the lyrical content of their music, whether it will be good or ill to the youths and the society at large. The research found some light on the issue of the influence of popular music on youths view towards sex, violence, and illegal use of the drug. Youths continuous exposure to certain types of popular music, like rap, R&B, made some of the youth more tolerant when it comes to the violence towards women,, exposure to liquor, illegal drugs, suicide, premarital sex, stereotyping women as sexual subjects etc. The research also concluded that most lyrics of popular music do not consider the consequences of immoral behaviour.

Though there is an obvious negative effect, there are some positive effects to consider too. Popular music creates an avenue for social interaction among youths, it helps them exercise because they tend to dance or exercise with their music on, it stimulates some positive emotions, they relax with this popular music when stressed.

Given the findings presented in this research, it is recommended that parents should guide and be aware of the kind of popular music their youth listen to; also the society should provide a sufficient regulation which will have viewer's consideration for the music industry. Also, some labels and warnings should be put on the cover of songs before they are distributed into the market.

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