Sexual Objectification in Online Nigeria Pop Music Videos

Chinelo Ifeoma Arugu & Walter C. Ihejirika

Abstract

Music videos have been implicated in the dissemination of sexually provocative dance styles, gestures and nudity. The prevalence of the internet has further aggravated the situation, with a myriad of music video websites. Online Nigerian pop music videos have further been named as a media that gains attention from viewers by featuring sexually objectifying content. This study set out to identify elements of sexual objectification in online Nigerian music videos. The study adopted the content analysis research design. 50 online Nigerian pop music video was purposively chosen from a population of top 100 online Nigerian pop music videos from 2014-2018. The instrument for data collection was the code sheet. Data obtained revealed that sexual objectification elements abound in online Nigerian pop music videos. Sexual objectification was evident through stomach, chest/cleavage, upper thigh, and buttocks revelation in shots and that female body parts were often on display. The study also revealed that sexual objectification patterns come in the form of sexual gestures. Females are predominantly seen to carry out self-touching. Touching was predominant among the males. The study recommended that stakeholders in the industry should practice self regulation. There should be a conscious effort to produce Nigeria pop music videos the do not sexually objectify either gender.

Keywords: Sexual Objectification, Online Nigerian Pop Music Video, Gender

Introduction

There is a general assumption that in contemporary times one can hardly watch any media content aimed at gaining viewers' attention without a form of sexual objectification (Mulvey, 2012) and the catch phrase, ''sex sells'' is gaining more grounds. This is predicated on the assumption that by appealing to human sense and feeling, interest would be gained. And a recent study has shown that there is a significant relationship between consuming sexually objectifying media, internalizing the message, self-objectification, and body surveillance (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2012). Very conspicuous among the media is music videos that have been identified as having a sturdy visual accentuation over beauty ideals, unforgivably presenting females who demonstrate the ideals by dressing, dance and position seductively against the male folk. Nevertheless, sexual objectification is not an exclusive of the feminine gender as there are equally masculine instances were music superstars like Flavour appear topless at the admiration of ladies.

Sexual objectification goes beyond the cloths, dance, it also involves other sexual suggestive gestures like licking of the lips, fingers, self-touching, projection of the tongue or even undressing; the smacking of parts of the body, which often is accompanied by an inspection or an assessment of the body. In these scenes camera shots are close-up on the body part being accentuated, to draw complete attention of the audience. On the other hand, male artistes are seen groping their genital area, revealing their chest or going shirtless and wearing tight fitted clothes that reveal their muscularity. A typical example is the music video of a popular Nigeria artiste, Yung L, where he literally used a woman as a trampoline. The female model in this video was dressed in bikini lying down at the beach and he, fully dressed in T-shirt and jeans. In another scene he used nude women who used their hands to cover their breast as props posing around him while he was fully dressed in a suit (Peters, 2018). The images in the video portray a classic case of sexual objectification. Interestingly, it had over 137,000 views on YouTube as at the time this research was conducted, with lots of positive comments from viewers. A lot of persons named it "the video of the year 2018", some suggested that the director deserves accolades because the concept was 100% original. There is an increasing spate of females being projected as objects of sex through the exposition of their body parts, the use of stereotypical comments, postures, etc. at the expense of the worth of the objectified

personality. This is experienced in music videos, movies, video games as well as print media (Vandenbosch, Vervloessem & Eggermont, 2013; Frisby & Aubrey, 2012; Downs & Smith, 2010).

These popular music videos often contain substantially high amount of sexual content and sexual objectification, with explicit and derogatory lyrics like *ashawo*, meaning prostitute; *pinopino*, words used to describe female sex worker. Through the online platforms, various artistes find opportunity to reach out to large audiences with their productions. Thus, room for rapid socialization is widened to even influence different classes of viewers with the constructed reality. Part of the present socialization realities within the global community is the prevalence of sexual objectification. The question then is: what are those elements in online Nigerian music videos that can be classified as sexually objection and how are each gender sexual objectified in the videos.

Statement of Problem
In recent times, there has been increased access to online Nigerian music videos. This increased access can unquestionably be attributed to the proliferation and availability of mobile devices and Internet access to a teeming population of young people. On this basis, it can be said that online music videos have gained significantly higher viewership and followership among youths who have unfettered access to the internet. Music videos have been observed to be one of the most vital aspects of budding cultural forms in contemporary popular culture. From its inception, Dearn (2013) observes that most popular music video themes are relationship, love, and sexuality. A superficial observation and examination of lyrics reveals that this is no different from the themes permeating Nigerian Online videos. This could be due to the fact that music videos are usually designed for the consumption of young people. Hence, this could account for the argument that sexual objectification is believed to be majorly observed in media's common presentation of women's bodies and interpersonal comments or gazes at women's bodies. There are indications that in the music industry where sexual objectification is a norm, sexual objectifications like ample skin exposure, self-touching of sexual body parts, close-up shots of individual body parts, and sexual dance abound. The exposure to sexual objectification has been linked in the self objectification, low self esteem and can derail efforts to promote cultural values, teach responsible sex behaviour, preserve the dignity of people, especially women and support feminism.

No known study has ascertained the presence of elements and patterns of sexual objectification in online Nigerian pop music videos. It is therefore of import to identify and understand the elements of sexual objectification in online Nigerian pop music videos.

Research Questions

1. What are the elements of sexual objectification present in online Nigeria pop music videos?

2. How are males and females objectified in online Nigeria pop music videos?

Theoretical framework
Objectification Theory
Objectification Theory was propounded by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) to explain how female bodies, from the earliest age, are observed, perceived and remarked upon by other persons. Prior to their theorization, McKinley and Hyde (1996) had raised attention to the issue of objectification of body consciousness as regards the female folk. These studies drew from the principles that permeate feminism to discover that the sexualization of women has adverse effect on their health and wellbeing. Thus, objectification theory holds that whether by direct experience or an indirect encounter of others, sexual objectification in the media correlates to numerous psychological outcomes such as sexual dysfunction, depression, internalization of outsider's perception of objectification, that is, self-objectification, eating disorder, etc.

According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), young ladies and middle aged women easily learn of sexual attractiveness as the basis of being feminine for which they ought to make an effort to become through experienced and viewed sexual objectification. Objectification theory is an empirical construction for appreciating the means

by which sexual objectification fosters real experiences and psychological health issues for females. Accordingly, the portrayal and designation of an individual's body or parts of it as a commodity for utilization by other people is described as sexual objectification. According to Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) "the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use (or consumption by) others" (p. 174). Sexual objectification refers to the act of watching or using or estimating a human being as a thing, that is, as an object that has value only as long as the physical and sexual attractiveness is decipherable and obtainable. Moradi (2010) and Zurbriggen (2013) have extended the scope of the concept to say that sexual objectification could also be shot of sexual nature because it also connotes the social force of creating, nurturing and presenting a delectable appearance. Thus, objectification theory is germane to this study in that it correlates the direct experience or an indirect encounter of sexual objectification in the media a trigger to numerous psychological outcomes such as sexual dysfunction, depression, internalization of outsider's perception of objectification that is, self-objectification, eating disorder, etc. The theory provides as a yard stick for measuring what qualifies as sexual objectification experiences.

Conceptual Framework
The Concept of Music videos
Music videos have been observed to be one of the most vital aspects of budding cultural forms in contemporary popular culture (Frith, Goodwin & Grossberg 1993). Ever since the inception of Music Television (MTV) in 1981, music videos have made mini movies that have received as much prominence as the music itself. The visual effects in most videos are very captivating, the visuals plane tends to dominate our attention right away, as Frith, Goodwin & Grossberg (1993) puts it "the song is seen, the image is irresistible" (p: 26).

Proctor (2003) "Music is a lot like alcohol and drugs. It can be very influencing and destructive when misused. It can distort one's emotions, reasoning, judgment, perspective and behaviour Peer pressure only makes it worse" (p.1). Dearn (2013) observed that most popular music are about relationship, especially love, and sexuality, there is constant reinforcing of the need for young people to be in a relationship and what kind of relationship they should be in, the attitude of each gender when in a relationship and what that relationship should look like. An example of this is Davido's song "assurance" where he gives his girlfriend Chioma "life time insurance" and promises her designer clothes and dollars, this being a picture of what a relationship should be, being able to afford an expensive lifestyle. The power of these music videos cannot be overemphasized or at worst neglected; this led the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to raised alarm over the content of Davido's popular music "Fan Mi" that showcased illegal drugs and guns. The NDLEA opined that the music video could encourage youth, young adults to engage in drug trafficking (Guardian). Therefore, as access to the internet increases, it increases the access to on line music videos, this means children's consumption of pop music will get more difficult to supervise than previous generation Cayari (2010).

Dynamics of Sexual Objectification
The concept of sexual objectification is one that its application is common in the contemporary society owing to the spate of socialization taking hold on cultures. And rightly so, Nussbaum (1995) believes that the concept is common. But the use of the word itself may not be well known to many people though its meaning is a common reality. The basic is objectification. There is the argument that one can be easily objectified. This is because to objectify is the viewing of something as an object to satisfy one's desire (Haslanger, 2002), that is, such a thing has the nature to be desired of. Roberts (2002) outlined the procedural nature of sexual objectification to be such that begins from the messages the environment communicates to its people from the society through socialization, media, and advertisements, non-verbal signs through gaze, Physical gestures, pestering and unsolicited touch and in some extreme cases rape.

Going by the submission, it then implies that sexual objectification varies in degree and the accomplishment of each phase could lead to the account of the previous step. However, it is not out of place to say that it is not statutory, that it must follow the steps so outlined. For instance, concerning the sexualization in words, Kirby

(2016) observes that the description of women's breast as "melons" is in itself sexual objectification. This takes the body parts as mere things that are for specific use. There are indications that in the entertainment industry where sexual objectification is a norm, female artists are more prone to objectify themselves than it would be for the male counterparts to objectify the opposite sex in audio-visual music (Aubrey & Frisby, 2011). The researchers found out that nearly ninety-two percent of the sample audio-visual music of female artists bore one or more of the sexual objectifications like ample skin exposure, self-touching of sexual body parts, close-up shots of individual body parts, and sexual dance. An integral part of this experience was expressed in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, "Three Essays on Sexuality" in which he situated "Scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a curious and controlling gaze".

Oluruntoba-Oju (2007) and Nwafor (2013) strongly believe that objectification plays out in male gaze of visuals. In this wise, male viewers go beyond appreciation of females to the point of seductive sexual desire by their emotional gaze. A superficial observation and examination of lyrics reveal similar themes permeate Nigerian Online videos. It is not hard to assume that music videos are usually designed for young people who are open to these human factors. Hence, this could account for the argument that sexual objectification is mostly observed in the media's presentation of female body parts, interpersonal comments and gazes.**Sexual**

Objectification and Gender

Gender is the state of being male and female with socially constructed role which includes the physical ability, the attribute and characteristics of man and woman, as such each gender has given roles that are attributed to them (Macnamara, 2006; Cherry, 2014) Berger (1972) "women are depicted in a quite different was from men- not because the feminine is different from the masculine, but because the ''ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him"(p.64) In other words women are the ones on displayed, being surveyed while almost always the men are the surveyors. This goes to prove that there are distinct gender roles in the process of sexual objectification.

Methodology

The study adopted content analysis as research design. The design was chosen due to its efficiency in analyzing data from music videos which contains non-text based notions. The population consists of top 100 online Nigerian pop music videos from 2014-2018, with 20 videos each year, as recorded by Naijavibes.com, an online music data analytical site using statistics from various online music streaming platforms, social media and top African entertainment sites. From this population a sample of 50 videos were purposively selected, based on the content category, as such each video selected must contain at least 3 of the content category, also videos that trended for more than one year were equally eliminated. Two coders proficient in Igbo and Yoruba languages were employed due to the use of these languages in most of the music videos. The units of analysis were: Gender: male and female, after an emergent coding; as proposed by (Wimmer and Domininck, 2011). The content categories include: body revelation, sexual gesture, sexual lyrics and dance styles and each category consists of indicators. The indicators for body revelation were: back, chest, stomach, thigh and buttocks. The indicators for sexual gestures were: licking of lips, sticking out of tongue, biting of tongue, touching, self touching, blinking of the eyes and seductive gaze. The indicators for sexual dance styles were: grinding. Shimmying of the chest/breast and twerking. The indicators for sexual lyrics were: reference to male body parts, reference to female body parts and reference to sex. Two coders proficient in Igbo and Yoruba languages were employed due to the use of these languages in most of the music videos. In other to calculate inter-coder reliability the study used Holsti (1969) method: $R = 2M / NI + N2$

$2(5400)/5435 + 5435 = 10600/10870$. $R = 0.98$

Results
Table 1 Frequency of body revelation in online Nigerian pop music videos

	Body revelation	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
1.	Back	26 (15.57%)	141 (84.43%)	167
2	Stomach	15 (2.21%)	665 (97.79%)	680
3	Chest/Cleavage	48 (7.82%)	566 (92.18%)	614
4	Upper thigh	0 (0%)	1163 (100%)	1,163
5	Buttocks	0 (0%)	161 (100%)	161
	Total	**89**	**2696**	**2785**

Data presented in table 1 concerns body revelation in online Nigerian music videos. From the data, it is evident that from a total of 2,785 occurrences of body revelation, female body parts were revealed 2,696 times, while 89 occurrences accounted for male body revelation In terms of revelation of back, data shows a significantly higher revelation was done by females than males. It is also clear from the data that stomach, chest/cleavage, upper thigh, and buttocks revelation was also very high from the female folk in comparison to the male. Nigerian online videos were massively characterized by body revelation.

Table 2 Frequency of Sexual gestures in online Nigerian pop music videos.

	Sexual gestures	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
1	Licking of the lips	28(**80**%)	7 (20%)	35
2	Sticking out of the tongue	65 (76.47%)	20(23.5%)	85
3	Biting of the lips	61 (88.41%)	8(11.59%)	69
4	Touching	109 (40.67%)	159(59.33%)	268
5	Self touching	21 (5.53%)	359(94.47%)	380
6	Blinking of the eyes	0 (0%)	30(100%)	30
7	Seductive gazes	35(14%)	215(86%)	250
	Total	319	798	1,117

Sexual gestures also occurred significantly in the Nigerian online music videos examined. Table 2 shows that Nigerian online music videos were characterized by several acts of sexual gestures. For the female, self-touching was the most evident sexual gesture. Data also shows that out of 1,117 sexual gestures, female performers accounted for 798 of these sexual gestures, while the male were 319. Data also shows self touching was predominately done by female. From the male perspective, touching was the most significant sexual gesture noticed. Sticking out the tongue and biting of lips were also noticed in the data analyzed.

Table 3   Frequency of sexual dance styles in online Nigerian pop music videos

Dance styles	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Twerking	6 (1.6%)	369 (98.4%)	375
Grinding	139 (36.48%)	242 (63.52%)	381
Shimmying of the breast	3 (3.1%)	94 (96.9%)	97
Total	148 (17.35%)	705(82.65%)	853

Table 3 shows that different acts of sexual objectification were evident in dance styles in online Nigerian music videos. This aspect was dominated by the female folk as most of the acts were noticeably displayed by females. This was followed by grinding. The females also shimmied their breasts in the music videos that were examined.

 Table 4   Frequency of sexual objectifying lyrics in online Nigerian pop music videos

	Lyrics	Freq	%
1	Reference to sexual acts	200	29.41
2	Reference to body parts	285	41.91
3	Reference to individuals as objects	65	9.56
4.	Reference to sexual demands/prowess	130	19.12
	Total	680	100

As presented in table 4, videos examined revealed that lyrics in online Nigerian videos made explicit references to sexual objectification. Reference to body parts was the most significant. The lyrics examined also made explicit reference to sexual acts. Data also points to lyrics to making reference to the sexual prowess.

Research question 1: What are the elements of sexual objectification present in online Nigeria pop music videos?
An analysis of the content of online Nigerian music videos has revealed several elements of sexual objectification. Data obtained from the coding sheet and presented in table 2, reveals that the revelation of certain body parts in Nigerian online videos was a prime example of sexual objectification. Nigerian online videos are replete with body revelation as elements of sexual objectification. Data obtained also made it clear that there was a higher level of body revelation by females than males. In terms of revelation of back, data shows a significantly higher revelation was done by females than males. Data obtained showed that stomach, chest/cleavage, upper thigh, and buttocks revelation was also very high from the female folk in comparison to the male. Nigerian online videos were massively characterized by body revelation. Sexual gestures featured significantly in the Nigerian online music videos examined. Data shows that Nigerian online music videos were characterized by several acts of sexual gestures. For the female, self-touching was the most evident sexual gesture. Data also shows that seductive gazes were evident in online Nigerian videos that were analysed. From the male perspective, touching was the most significant sexual gesture noticed. Sticking out the tongue and biting of lips were also noticed in the data analysed. With respect to sexual gestures, data showed different acts of sexual objectification were evident in dance styles in online Nigerian music videos. This aspect was dominated by the female folk as most of the acts were noticeably displayed by females. Twerking had the highest occurrence followed by grinding. The females also shimmied their breasts in the music videos that were examined.

Sexual objectification elements abound in online Nigerian Music videos. Data has proven and described these elements. As mostly seen in female video vixens as they are referred to, objectification was evident through stomach, chest/cleavage, upper thigh, and buttocks revelation in shots. Objectification was also evident from the male perspective. This was seen through sexual gestures of which touching was the most significant sexual gesture noticed. Sticking out the tongue and biting of lips were sexual gestures identified by the study. Dance styles in online Nigerian music videos also revealed elements of sexual objectification. Twerking grinding, and shimmying of the breasts were found. Ronen, S. (2010) describes grinding as dirty dancing and argues that the name may differ across regions however; the sexualized nature of the dance cannot be over emphasized.

Research question 2: What are the patterns of sexual objectification in online Nigeria pop music videos?
Data obtained highlights the various patterns of sexual objectification of males and females in online Nigerian videos. As the data obtained have shown, one of the patterns of sexual objectification in online music videos is sexual gestures. Self- touching was predominant sexual gesture noticed among females. Another pattern was seductive gazes. From the male perspective, touching was the most significant sexual gesture noticed. Sticking out the tongue and biting of lips were also noticed in the data analysed.

The study has ascertained that sexual objectification patterns come in the form of sexual gestures. Females are predominantly seen to carry out self-touching. Touching was predominant among the males. This finding corroborates existing literature. Oluruntoba-Oju (2007) and Nwafor (2013) strongly believe that objectification plays out in male gaze of visuals. In this wise, male viewers go beyond appreciation of females to the point of

seductive sexual desire by their emotional gaze. A superficial observation and examination of lyrics reveal similar themes permeate Nigerian Online videos. It is not hard to assume that music videos are usually designed for young people who are open to these human factors. Hence, this could account for the argument that sexual objectification is mostly observed in the media's presentation of female body parts, interpersonal comments and gazes, this is in line with Aubrey & Frisby, 2011.

Discussion of Findings

Body revelation seems to be a way of expressing these parts of the body that make us look more appealing, sexy and desirable, however it has been pointed out that women are more identified and associated with their bodies than men they are most often valued based on how they look. (Bordo 1993, Barky 1990) this invaluably means that in the music industry where sexual objectification is common, the brandishing of ample skin exposure, self-touching of sexual body parts, close-up shots of individual body parts, and sexual dance may not cease. Although it has been noted sexual objectifying exhibition can often be measured as an act of empowerment for females, who so they say have taken empowering act for a female who has taken possession over their bodies and are exercising their right to sexual agency(Dworkin, 2009). This development in sociocultural practice that emphasizes sexualization an equating sexiness to beauty or attractiveness is a disturbing phenomenon (APA, 2007).

Conclusion

Online Music videos are seen as a source of entertainment to young people. These young people now have unfettered access to mobile phones and handheld devices leading to increased accessibility to online music videos. The study has established that there are various elements of sexual objectification in Nigerian Online music videos. These elements are peculiar to both the male and female gender. The patterns of sexual objectification in online music videos have also been established. It can be concluded from the study that these patterns are also gender specific.

Recommendations

1. There should be a conscious effort by all industry stakeholders to practice self–regulation and produce Nigeria music pop music videos that those not sexual objectify either gender.

2. Online Nigerian pop music videos should be rated and warning labels clearly stated before the video plays or is downloaded.

3. Media literacy should be encouraged amongst the younger generation who watch music videos and industry stake holders with a view to educating them on about the potential harm of these sexual contents.

4. Researchers and industry stakeholders should shed more light on sexual objectification contents and its potential to trigger other harmful sexual practices.

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Chinelo Ifeoma Arugu is of the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, neloarugu@gmail.com, +2348069060068
Walter C. Ihejirika of the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, wihejirika@yahoo.com., +2348034903041