

## **Violence and Popular Music in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Youth music culture is relatively a new phenomenon in Nigeria, but the rise of hip hop/rap threatens the survival of other genres of popular music targeted at youth audience, such as rhythm and blues (R&B), reggae, afro-beat and yo-pop. Innocuous as youth music may seem to adult Nigerians, it may contain elements with potential to provoke or aggravate violence. To determine what this newly discovered culture could reveal about violence in the system, and particularly among youth, a group of youth were asked to assess popular music with bias to violence. The premise is that music could reveal the mindset of its composers and consumers. In a descriptive study, essays written by undergraduate students were analyzed to ascertain whether youth music contains elements of violence in title, lyric, beat, narrative and video presentation; and whether violent music elicits aggression from the consumers. Violence in society can be restrained by taking cognizance of potential causes of violence, and managing situations that can engender violence. This can be done by examining various aspects of community life, events, communication and language use. This study of music violence reveals that artistes, by being accepted by their youth audience, do influence their consumers' behaviours through their music.

**Keywords:** behaviour, hip hop, music, society, violence, youth

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## 奈及利亞流行音樂中的暴力問題研究

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### 摘要

在奈及利亞，青年音樂文化相對來說是一種新的現象。然而，嘻哈和饒舌音樂的崛起，對於其他目標同為年輕人族群的流行音樂類別而言，是可能帶來威脅的。青年流行音樂對於成年的奈及利亞人來說看似無害，但卻可能含有煽動或激發暴力的潛在因素。以音樂能呈現出作曲家及消費者的心態為前提，為了找出這個此一音樂新潮流是否為社會和特定年輕族群帶來暴力影響，本文請一群青年為內容傾向暴力的流行音樂作出量化評估。大學生撰寫的文章指出，青年流行音樂裡的歌名、歌詞、節奏、故事和影音的呈現，除了涵蓋暴力因素，還引發消費者之侵略性行為。透過了解造成潛在暴力的原因和掌控引發暴力的情勢，社會暴力可以控制；要達成目的，社群生活、周遭事物、溝通和語言使用的種種面向均需要受到檢視。本文對暴力音樂的研究結果顯示，透過青年接受，藝術家們著實能藉著音樂影響消費者的行為。

**關鍵詞：**行為、嘻哈、音樂、社會、暴力、青年

## Introduction

It is difficult to contemplate a world without music, rhythms for dance and pleasurable distraction. However, music lends itself to diverse message embodiment and communication and may influence its consumers' behaviour. Thus, music could be used by political and social movements to achieve particular goals. Bob Marley and Fela Anikulapo Kuti became legends because of their political conscience music – music that attacked government or the highly placed in society who oppressed or ignored the masses. In the era of mass consumerism, composers and producers of youth music explore the entertainment features of music to a great gain. The portrayal and celebration of aberrations and the absurd have much appeal; but also impacts consumers and the society at large negatively. Music may, in fact, constitute a young person's first teacher on some critical life issues, such as sexuality, sexual behaviours and criminal adventurism.

Hip hop took Nigeria's music industry by a storm, with tracks hitting the airwaves faster than youth could compose their lyrics. It is important that society pays attention to what youth are listening to, especially where the music scene may be developing faster than other aspects of urban culture, since youth easily access the sound waves of the global popular (Dolby, 1999). This article is concerned with how violence-laden music engenders violence. The significance of this study stems from the fact that the global popular, embedded in Nigerian youth music, holds much appeal for the youth in pristine Nigerian society where the general concern of the population is how to meet basic human needs. The society and security management may lack the capacity to contain consequences associated with youth music elsewhere. Already, at the present, murders are committed with little hope of finding their perpetrators, even when those killed are key national figures; and criminal acts are often tolerated as "acts of God." Allowing the system to heat up beyond its present level through youth aggression may be more than a developing nation can accommodate and ensure that peace and development coexist.

Recently, violence in Nigeria took a new turn, from an ethnic crisis in (urban) Jos in the middle belt that lasted for some years, causing dislocation and relocation of families that had established themselves there for decades, to terrorism in the northern part of the country. Hundreds of thousands have been killed by the Boko Haram group since 2009. It is noteworthy that these crises perpetrated with the youth have proven more intractable than a militant uprising in the Niger Delta. Decades of structural and exploitative violence in the Niger Delta that led to environmental devastation of communities attracted the ire of able-bodied youth who employed sophisticated weaponry in guerrilla warfare that gravely undermined the nation's economic stronghold. Despite the return of peace in the area, the Niger Delta crisis bequeathed the nation a new type of violence – widespread kidnapping for huge ransom. It became very attractive to youth across the nation, degenerating into a seemingly intractable social malady in parts of the country. However, peace and national development have been subjected to indiscriminate terrorism by Boko Haram, which have bombed gatherings and churches in states in the northern part of the country, and the United Nations building in the country's capital. It almost undermined the nation's electoral process in 2011, and has cast a shadow of doubt on the necessity for a national youth service programme designed for increased interaction and peaceful coexistence among the diverse peoples of Nigeria.

The potential for violence in society should be understood so that violence can be restrained through regulations, education and responsible governance. This researcher felt that popular music may be one of the areas youth's perceptions of society are expressed; and that if there is going to be any violent reaction, popular culture of the day will not

only presage it, it will contribute to it. If youth discourse is analyzed, their line of thinking can be deciphered and appropriate measures taken to address their needs and/or forestall aggression. Youth music may present a potential source of violence or of violence escalation in urban communities. Thus, youth were requested to assess youth music with bias to violence content and its tendency to engender violence. This article is derived from information given in undergraduate students' essays on youth music and violence.

## **Literature Review**

### **Violence in Society**

Violence is a social reality. According to the American Psychological Association, "violence refers to immediate or chronic situations that result in injury to the psychological, social, or physical well-being of individuals or groups" (Jipguep and Sanders-Phillips, 2003, p.379). In associating violence with development, Galtung (1990) contends that if peace is a necessity for development, diverse forms of violence must be confronted by peace and development scholars. Violence is "avoidable insults to basic human needs ... lowering the real level of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible" (Galtung 1990, p.292). Thus, Sylvain (2007) observes that neglect is a form of violence and Galtung (p.292) that "threats of violence are also violence" (Galtung, 1990, p.292).

Galtung's (1990) treatise on "cultural violence" graphically illustrates how direct and structural violence threaten the individual's/group's potential somatic and mental realizations, albeit, with concentration on the "oppressor authority." But there are potent violent acts from below that confront individuals in society, for example, poor living conditions can lead to and heighten conflict, crime and violence in urban communities (Winton, 2004). Direct or physical violence is a tool that states or individuals employ to make a point or to dominate the weak. From the home to the community, and across national boundaries physical violence pose a threat to the individual's well being. Galtung linked different types of direct violence to various needs that they undermine – survival needs (killing), well-being needs (e.g. maiming), identity needs (e.g. desocialization) and freedom (e.g. repression). And one form of violence may be accompanied by another, for example resource exploitation usually involves physical violence in addition to structural violence (le Billon, 1996).

Due to institutionalized political injustice and ethnocentrism, elitism, racism and colonialism, the people of South Sudan faced several years of civil wars which led to the death of millions (Hanzich, 2011). For the living, "both institutions and social frameworks inhibit the population from achieving basic human needs" (Hanzich, p.38), a situation that leads to other direct violence, such as early deaths and poor physical and mental health (van der Wusten, 2005). In the United States gang wars, drive-by shootings, sniper attacks, and widespread sexual and other physical abuses constitute daily life-threatening community violence in many low-income inner-cities (Jipgued & Sander-Phillips, 2003). By implication, the individual can be under threat of violence from institutionalized order and from those within an "oppressed" community. According to Winton (2004, p.165) "the often challenging economic, social and political environment of many cities increases the rate, intensity and impact of violence there." And whereas physical aggression to a person is easily understood as violence, structural violence and cultural violence are invisible.

Generally, life-expectancy of those exposed to structural violence is lower than that of members of other groups in the same geopolitical entity, as Eckermann (1999) discovered of Aboriginal Australians. Structural violence manifests in privileged access to

necessary goods for the achievement of the good life. Meyer (1998) lists seven “real goods” identified by Mortimer Adler for achieving happy or good life, including the goods of the body, economic goods, political goods, social goods, goods of personal association, goods of the mind and goods of character.

But cultural values come into play on how people are treated by those who have or exercise the power to inflict direct or structural violence. Cultural violence is based on an ideology that accepts that some people are placed higher than others in society, and that this privileged position warrants undue advantage of the one over the others. A society’s belief on the relationships between people creates a foundation for determining whether direct and structural violence are acceptable norms. For example, if women are inferior to men then the husband makes the laws for the family and determines how family income is to be spent (structural violence), and he may choose to abuse his wife physically or verbally – patriarchal dominance contributes to domestic violence (Held, 1997; Michalski, 2005). In an African family setting, the husband should have the choicest piece of meat in the pot, and children may go without. Similarly, in a society like Nigeria many accept that the rich may live in choice areas, and their children attend good schools, while the poor can live in ghettos and their children attend poorly provided for public schools. The latter set of children struggles to achieve their life ambitions and many cannot. Eckermann (1999) observes that systemic frustration characterizes aboriginal education.

Structural violence brings about psychological hurt and thereby alienation, repression and deprivation. It also triggers off urban violence, poverty, inequality and exclusion (Winton, 2004). Further, Bowen, Gwiasda and Brown (2006) observe that forces outside the community give rise to violence, especially policies and values that induce structural and cultural violence. When a people fail to recognize and negotiate the principles and practice that arrange power structure and access to necessary goods, other violence could occur. For example, Madriz (2001) suggests that terrorist acts perpetrated by people of the Arab world in non-Arab countries spring from violence within the Arab world itself as well as direct and invisible violence from outside the Arab world. For the individual, “material deprivation and exclusion from educational and cultural networks open up ways for more immediate identification and make demands to consume [drugs] more pressing” (De Castro, 2006, p.180; Eckermann, 1999 also).

Experience shows that, unattended to or poorly handled, one type of violence reproduces itself and other kinds of violence. Galtung (1990) establishes in his work that the three types of violence are so connected that: “Violence can start at any corner in the direct-structural-cultural violence triangle and is easily transmitted to the other corners.” Thus, Weinstock and Riedner (1999, p.7) observe that: “The potential for conflict becomes most acute ... when internal inconsistencies exist, when ... unexamined assumptions and contradictions – discrepancies between principles and practices – structure responses in the absence of understanding and communication.” In line with this argument, Sugrue and Goodman (2007) attribute civil disorder of the 1960s in suburban north (America) in part to the failure of the local government to address the grievances of African Americans and militant rhetoric of self-determination among suburban youth. The inherent potency of the second factor, militant rhetoric, is often ignored. Hamm (2004, p.326) observes that language is one of the factors that give meaning to terrorist subcultures, noting that “White power rock exposes these youths to the raw and vitriolic language of racial and ethnic hatred.”

### **Violence and Popular Music**

Music, as other types of popular culture, lends itself to the articulation of all types of violence, verbally and visually – in fact, it provides a window for “seeing” diverse forms

of violence in society. As Adams and Fuller (2006, p. 952) observe: “Music is a powerful art form that has the potential to be influential, particularly when it is supported by a structural system and cultural ideologies.” Hip hop provides youth in a society a means of self-expression, and particularly, for expressing frustrations experienced in that system – usually social injustice deriving from structural and cultural violence, such as marginalization, brutality, truncated opportunity and oppression (Adams & Fuller, 2006, Bennett, 2001). Writing about Brazil, De Castro (2006, p. 194) avers that “musical expression has become the ample, and perhaps the sole, cultural means whereby poor youth can voice and express the silent and perverse conditions to which they are subjected.” Music becomes a means of creating emotional and social bond.

However, hip hop attracts admiration as well as criticism. “Detractors have criticized most rap music as a boastful promotion of violence and misogyny; others have admired it as an inventive manipulation of cultural idioms and credit many rappers with an acute social and political awareness” (*The Columbia Encyclopedia* 2009, p. 40560). Niang’s (2010) observation substantiates this assertion: “Bboys (hip hop performers or fans) have tried to use their rising popularity to influence Senegalese society, its culture and even politics ... they sometimes dare to break certain social and political taboos.” Apparently, some musicians transmute from mere musicians into, perhaps, “the chosen ones” (Galtung, 1990) or voice of the people; and “consumers of this music, in turn, seek to reconstruct themselves from their ordinary realities to something wider, something that enlarges them as people” (Hamm, 2004, p. 327). Thus, music can have strong impact on its consumers. White power rock music conveys “raw and vitriolic language of racial and ethnic hatred” (p. 326) and “such powerful emotions that youths began to link musical messages to their focal concerns about white male hegemony” (p. 327).

Music with violent content not only makes consumers more aggressive but also increases “the prevalence of symptoms of psychological trauma, and other psychological and behavioral sequelae” (Jipguep and Sanders-Phillips, 2003, p. 379), since violent media creates an image of a world replete with violence. Expectedly, consumption and effect of media violence will vary with individuals. Jipguep and Sanders-Phillips avow that poor and working class children in the US would engage in much television viewership since it is the most available non-school extracurricular activity, while Slater, Henry, Swaim and Anderson (2003) found that violent youth seek out violent media. Consequently, a positive relationship exists between media violence consumption and aggressive behaviour, more so in youth and communities predisposed to violence (Jipguep and Sanders-Phillips; Slater et al.). Specifically, Bennett (2001) and Brian Primack (Nauert, 2009) found similar evidence as Jipguep and Sanders-Phillips:

... that adolescents who had greater exposure to rap music videos were 3 times more likely to have hit a teacher; more than 2.5 times as likely to have been arrested; 2 times as likely to have had multiple sexual partners; and more than 1.5 times as likely to have acquired a new sexually transmitted disease, used drugs, and used alcohol over the 12-month follow-up period (p. 387).

In the celebration of social taboos on sex hip hop denigrates the female gender, placing her as an object to be used, abused and discarded – an ideology that is common in society (Adams and Fuller, 2006). Adams and Fuller further observe that misogyny, the hatred or disdain for women, emerged in rap music in late 1980s. They described its manifestation thus:

Misogyny in gansta rap is the promotion, glamorization, support, humorization, justification, or normalization of oppressive ideas about women. In this genre of rap music, women ... are reduced to mere objects -

objects that are only good for sex and abuse and are ultimately a burden to men (p. 940).

Adams and Fuller (2006) opine that such a message passed across on a particular set of women could have implication for all personalities of the female gender. Moreover, young women could grow up acting out what celebrated artistes are singing believing that it is what is expected of a woman (Basu, 2008). According to Biran (2003, p. 496), "when we are exposed to images that leave no room for imagination, reality becomes chaotic and undifferentiated." Incidentally, misogyny seems to sell: "Since its emergence in rap, misogyny has become a constant feature in the works of several artistes" (Adams and Fuller, 2006, p. 939).

It is safe to conclude then that some musicians promote violence in society through their lyrics, beats and videos. Violence in this paper is not limited to physical bodily harm; and even though particular songs may not portray any physical violence, their messages can convey or mediate violence. The rest of this work discusses violent features in Nigerian youth music and their consequences from the perspective of third year undergraduate students.

## Methodology

This descriptive study of youth music and violence in Nigeria is based on data derived from 31 third year undergraduate students' essays on the subject matter. Although the immediate objective of the essay was to test students' competences in developmental writing, the topic was deliberately chosen for two reasons: to encourage productive writing – students write with greater ease on topics that they are familiar with. Secondly, the students were to act as the researcher's observers on the subject of music and violence in Nigeria since they belong to the age and social groups that consume youth music. This data generation procedure had the added advantage of eliminating bias in observation, as the students were not told that their writing would be subjected to a study on youth music.

The students were aware of the music scene through party attendance, and/or being active or passive audience in their university hostels and neighbourhoods (during the holidays). In the Nigerian environment, music is usually "in the air," there being little or no restrictions to musical sounds emanating from buildings or apartments. Moreover, companies, beverage and mobile telephony providers in particular, take advantage of popularity of musicians to promote their products through music events. Such music events are often aired on television.

Four major themes deducible from, and employed in analysing, the students' essays on youth music and violence include: a) perception of what music was/is, b) violent elements in youth music, c) manifestations of violence in music, and d) consequences of violent-engendering music content.

## Discussion of Findings

### *What music is*

In students' assessment, the recent phenomenon of youth music is quite different from what the society had been conversant with. Generally, they assess the messages of old time (adult) music as more acceptable and beneficial to society than the current "invasion," which however, is characterized by the vibrancy youth prefer to the rhythm adults "wriggle" to. Table 1 gives further details.

**Table1:** What music is: a comparison between old school and youth music

<i>Description</i>	<i>Old school (e.g. Highlife)</i>	<i>Youth music (particularly Hip hop)</i>
Entertainment (means of)	Yes	Yes
Exercise (means of)	Yes	Yes
Relaxation	Yes	?
Nourishment to the soul	Yes	No
Means of education	Yes	No
Moral education	Yes	No (Lust, sex, money)
Content	Sense. Value-laden	Sense and senselessness
Cathartic	No	Yes
Criticism of government	Advisory	Adversarial
Manifest goals of artistes	Entertainment and education	Short-cut to fame and fortune

The above summary shows that youth music is clearly distinct from earlier popular music. Hip hop has provided youth a means with which to express their frustrations with a system that does not provide for its youth, cannot stem poverty but permits wanton corruption and embezzlement. However, as in many other contexts (Niang, 2010), after a while, hip hop artistes take licence of their popularity to exuberate in youthful impulses. A student observes that youth musicians encourage their consumers to satisfy today's desires and impulses with no regard for the future.

### **Music elements suggestive of violence**

Violence in music is largely a new introduction in Nigeria, and is evident in or suggested by these features:

1. Song titles, e.g.: *Kolomental* [Madness], *o4kasibe* [It dashed in pieces "there"], *Bumper to Bumper*, and *Shayo* [Drink to a stupor]
2. Song lyrics:
  - a) Message – promotion of aberrant sexuality, drug use, alcohol, fraud and violence against government, e.g. *Elewon* [Drive them – politicians] and *Flog the politicians*
  - b) Direct use of obscene language
  - c) Use of non-taboo words obscenely, e.g. Manchester as "man chester"
  - d) Coinage of new words and phrases – use of coded language.
  - e) Use of violent words, e.g. *orie*, *o fokasibe* [your head dashed in pieces]
3. Violent beat: e.g. *o4kasibe* starts with a very loud and violent beat.
4. Video – e.g. deranged and normal-looking people acting insanely in *Kolomental*.
5. General presentation of music: glamorization of social taboos and violence.

Further, when youth sing about their perception of society, especially with reference to governance, they render it in a violent fashion, unlike old-style melodies which advise and give education about life.

### *Manifestations of violence in youth music*

All forms of violence are manifested or song about in youth music. Some artistes have used their songs to draw attention to social ills in society, particularly structural violence. African China is credited with bringing to public consciousness youth's awareness of, and concern about corruption in government, poor provision of social amenities, maltreatment of the poor, and denial of a voice for the poor while the rich receive preferential treatment. However, African China's and Timaya's choice of word in some of the lyrics is perceived as capable of instigating violence.

African China (on neglect of the youth)  
 Our government bad oh!  
 They no want give ghetto man job  
 If ghetto man no get job my brother  
 how he go take survive

Timaya (on direct violence in the Niger Delta)  
 They rape our girls  
 And make us homeless o *chai*  
 Them kill our mama *iyó*  
 Them kill our papa *iyó*  
 Them make children orphans and homeless

P-square (Paul and Peter) elucidate government's insensitivity to the plight of the people in their songs titled *Why e be say* [Why is it that]. In *Stand up* they sang "Them are faking, accumulating. Debating, money deprecating. Manipulating to hold us down, but nobody can stop us now." Consequently, another artiste, Junglist, recommends: *Flog politicians* – part of the lyric (translated) says: "We shall flog the politicians. We shall tell them that we don't want their dirty messages (i.e. vain promises)."

Some students opine that such lyrics can start a social upheaval or fuel one. Lagbaja's (adult musician) *Suru lere* [patience has its reward] is preferred as it advocates cooperation between the government and the governed. However, a few other students are unapologetic, noting that violence in music is a reaction to violence in society, and that music only documents societal violence. This view of violence in music may not be supported by other evidence in the study. Violence manifests in renditions promoting easy and quick money, drug and alcohol abuse, expression of enmity and invitation to violent acts, and sexuality and misogyny (not started but exacerbated by youth).

Despite hunger and poverty in Nigerian, the society has a culture of ostentation. Thus, mental poverty and ostentation drive wealth accumulation, unending corruption and embezzlement at every level in the system. Moreover, the public rarely raises eyebrows about one's sources of fortune. It is therefore not surprising that the youth want easy and quick means of acquiring wealth to live "the life" constructed from music videos, peer associations and imagined lifestyles of artistes. Fraud, corruption and cybercrime sung about and portrayed in music videos show how to make quick and easy money. Consequently, it was observed that *Yahoozee* (by Olu Maintain), which gives a vivid picture of what is gained through cybercrime, increased the incidence of cybercrime. Students infer that the line: "If I hammer, first thing *na* Hummer (jeep)" [meaning: "If I make a hit, the first thing I will buy is a Hummer jeep"] made youth crazy about getting money by any means. Similarly, other lines in *Yahoozee* support indolence among youth, suggesting that some are born to harvest the labour of others for revelry.

Further, Internet fraud may come to be viewed as a normal practice by young music consumers, since it is promoted by their icons. Kelly Hansome's *Maga don pay* [the fraud victim has paid] is explicit in its message on how patience on the Internet by the criminal would yield result eventually. The messages in these song lyrics contradict youth musicians' criticism of corruption and other social vices that are associated with structural violence.

Music violence becomes particularly problematic when drugs, sex and fraud are associated with success in life, and modelled for young people to emulate. Bigiano's *Shayo* encourages drinking to a stupor in parties, insisting that "to attend my party you must *shayo*" [get drunk]. As a result, various forms of direct violence, particularly fighting and rapes were witnessed after youths acted in line with the lyric's demand. Some other musicians celebrate the drug habit, for example, Jogodo. Students wondered why 9ice, who claims that he does not take drug or alcohol, nicely celebrates drug habit in *Ganja* [marijuana]. Students believe that, at the least, these song lyrics would create identity problems for young ones, some of who would indulge in drug and alcohol habits

in order to belong. At some parties those that do not take drug and alcohol are mocked; and some young women feel it a pride to date a guy that “is happening” [drinks a lot].

Some artistes actually promote aggression and enmity in their music. Eedris Abdulkareem satirizes Olusegun Obasanjo and Tuface in *Ko le ye won*, blaming the former president for giving to Tuface an award that he (Abdulkareem) deserved. In another song he accuses his producer of exploiting artistes under his label. Some musicians go further to include violent acts in their music, even killing and suicide. Youth are also invited to execute violent acts, for example Wande Coal’s call to youth to drive *Bumper to Bumper*. Faze’s *Kolomental* (video) that exhibits mad behaviours topped the charts. But the most notorious violence that sells is sex, especially when it degrades women.

Sexual immorality had the highest mention in students’ essays as a predominant form of violence, either on the psyche of the audience or directly on participants in musical acts – the victims are women. Starting from indecent dressing, students listed as forms of violence to women: negative portrayal of women, pornography, use of vulgar language, provocative dance steps, promotion of sex and lust, and the presentation of rape and violent sex as normal and acceptable practices. It is clear that students oppose the demeaning of women in society; that is, they are against misogyny.

Abdulkareem had won people’s admiration when he condemned lecturers that sexually exploit female students, but he also contributes to the genre celebrating sexual immorality. His use of foul language in *Oko Asewo* [the husband of prostitutes] promotes promiscuity in the mind of the simple, to the effect that rape can easily be perpetrated with impunity. Some other singers portray women as sex commodities or as property for a male to possess, manipulate and discard as deemed fit. An example is D’Banj who unconscionably sings about sex and promiscuity. In *Suddenly* he sings: “Late in the night she is bugging me. Late in the night she is \*\*\*\*ing me.” Students frown at this artiste’s suggestion that women are sex-starved animals. But Obesere (sings in vernacular) is more notorious and is extremely explicit on the erotic and sensual in lyrics and music videos. His songs appeal to commercial drivers (largely illiterate) who use his vocabulary in parks. Students find his lyrics chauvinistic and unfair to women; especially as they promote polygamy and promiscuity among the male folk while engendering gender discrimination.

On the other hand, Zule Zuu supports infidelity among women in *Kerewa*, and X-project’s *Lori ile* [On the floor] promotes unscrupulous sex. *Konga* by Oritse Femi was observed to have wrecked havoc in society with its promotion of indiscriminate sex, in fact, right on the party floor. A line in the song says anyone at the party who is not interested in indiscriminate sex should be sent out. But perhaps a more disturbing celebration of the sacredness in public is the report that a musician stationed a nude woman on stage during a concert, and in a true spirit of commodification, people came out and dropped money on her, and could touch the “statue.” As Langman (2003, p. 237) aptly puts it: “A woman is not a person but a pastiche of breasts and orifices to be penetrated, dominated and denigrated, thereby dramatizing masculinity as superior.” Misogyny in Nigerian music promotes all forms of violence – direct, in the form of rape; structural, by placing women on a pedestal lower than men’s; and cultural, by perpetrating cultural ideologies that demean women.

Students lament that some artistes do not see anything wrong with “their emotionally disturbing lyrics and dark melodies.” In eulogizing sex, alcoholism and drug habits artistes are celebrating (private) sensuality that is best jettisoned, repressed or controlled to ensure that youth’s personal drives are channelled into the development and advancement of the person and society. Consumers on their part tend to fall in love with artistes that exhibit violence and eulogize sex.

### Observed Music Mediated Violence

Constant access to music guaranteed by technological advancement (e.g. iPods and phones) means that youth can be connected with their own world and values and images contained in lyrics and music videos while distanced from reality and their immediate environment. The student-observers in the study found that youth emulate artistes who they see as role models in lifestyle, dressing, mode of talking, beliefs, etc. This is not unconnected with artistes' success, affluence and life style that reflect desired media images. A student believes that "youth take advantage of popular music to indulge in hedonistic behaviours, which ordinarily they would not have [done] without being externally influenced." It is disturbing that some young lovers go out of their ways to kill perceived trespassers.

Media effect of youth music on youth may be contestable, but there is no doubt that music consumption elicits observable particular behaviours among youth; for example, students found that when *Yahoozee* was popular cybercrime increased, but reduced after its popularity waned. Further, ritual killing, armed robbery and frauds (cybercrime and advanced fee fraud) are increasingly being perpetrated by youth. Nonetheless, the students recognize that the larger society is also culpable because as 9ice says in his virulent sermon, *Gongo Aso*, people will accept a rich person without asking questions about the source of his wealth. He therefore urges people to make money by all means – a situation that undermines the dignity in labour and the importance of developing respect for self and others.

### Summary and Conclusion

Students in this study note that in the past music was developed to nourish the soul, relax the mind and provide exercise for the body. In recent times, hip hop created a space for youth to be heard, but hip hop has become a means of celebrating social aberrations. Student-observers maintain that the messages in music erode the sense of judgement and limit thinking capabilities of adolescents. In identifying with media images and artistes' lifestyle, youth construct identities that are out of tune with the expectations of their family and community.

Should youth musicians take all the blame for the ills they are accused of foisting on society, considering "the uncertainty created in every facet of the socio-economic system: no food, no jobs after graduation," as a student says, and that social injustices persist? The question of hip hop violence and violence in society is analogous to the chicken and egg metaphor, not just in the sense of which came first but that violence in the one raises violence in the other. Galtung (1990) argues that structural and cultural violence lowers needs satisfaction below potential levels. By presenting the different forms of violence existing in the system in their songs, artistes raise youth consciousness on apparent causes of their inability to access public goods and have the good things of life. Subsequently adding to this awareness a desire to react among youth causes physical violence to escalate among youth and heightens violence in society. In addition, the celebration of the absurd and aberrations increases existing cultural violence, particularly misogyny.

Nonetheless, the evidence from this study suggests that most of the music misrepresent reality in the real sense. Apparently, profitability and marketability criteria "take precedence over quality, artistry, integrity and intellectual challenge" (Strinati, 2004, p. 3). Thus, what is projected to youth is not a true picture of society. High level of media violence inadvertently signals that violence is normal, glamorous and widespread in

society. It is noteworthy that popular genres that promote violence are borrowed from other cultures, and is inimical to the wellbeing of evolving urban communities in Nigeria, particularly considering that: “In a mass society, the individual is left more and more to his or her own devices, has fewer and fewer communities or institutions in which to find identity or values by which to live, and has less and less idea of the morally appropriate ways to live (Strinati, 2004, p. 6).

As advertisement messages are capable of creating a desire for a product or service, in similar ways, long hours of watching music videos and listening to popular music can engender the construction of undesirable perceptions of life in the minds of the young. To counter such views, the youth require the capacity to develop desirable concepts about life, negotiate their conceptions and conceptualize appropriate view of life that will guide them to contemplate options and choices. The importance of media literacy in such a process cannot be overemphasized. Moreover, it is improbable that a mind can be sufficiently developed in today’s modern world (and mass society) without adequate provision of books and literacy activities in the school and society. The role of appropriate literature as a medium that helps the individual to construct and negotiate identity is yet to be recognized and emphasized. Further, debate forums will encourage self-reflection by society and the individual.

What youth consume can be controlled through regulation of consumption, if not production. A student recommends proactive censorship to prevent unwholesome music and videos getting to young people. According to McFarland and Kimmons (2008) advisory warning labels on music was viewed by some as censorship, and led to public denouncement of some rappers, rejection of some musicians from performing in some cities, and importantly, self-censorship.

Further research is required to understand youth identity construction and behaviour, such as a survey of relation between consumption of youth music and youth lifestyle and behaviour; and identity construction among Nigerian youth and how this relates with their life aspirations.

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