

S/exploitation, Self-Sexploitation and Self-Expression in Nigerian Music: Lyrics and Body Designs in the Videos of Yemi Alade

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Abstract

Some videos produced in the Nigerian entertainment industry are lush in the objectification and s/exploitation of the female body, which is common with hip-hop music superstars. This has continued to attract scholarly attention in feminism and media studies. In spite of the backlash, some Nigerian female music superstars have also adopted this trend in their music video productions. This article focuses on a Nigerian female hip-hop music star, Yemi Alade, with specific reference to two of her videos, *Ferrari* (2016) and *Shake* (2019), as uploaded on *YouTube* on 25 March 2016 and 20 November 2019 respectively. Adopting the Theory of Visual Pleasure as proposed by Laura Mulvey's (1973), the study employs ethnography and netnography methods of data collection. By ethnography the visual content of the selected videos were adopted as data, while through netnography, selected comments by *YouTube* viewers were captured as data, and for analysis. Among other things, we observed that Alade's fans were divided along different ideologies in her

demonstration of objectification and s/exploitation, while many ignored the import of these projections. Many expressed discomforts at the messages and visuals of the videos, while others find pleasure and satisfaction in them. The study reveals that the import of objectification and s/exploitation is detrimental mostly to women, while it delivers profiteering to the artiste-producer.

Keywords: Body design, Objectification, Nigerian hip-hop, Self-s/exploitation, S/exploitation.

Introduction

The Nigerian entertainment industry contributes significantly to the growth of the creative sector of the country. Apart from the crude oil, products of the Nigerian entertainment industry are reckoned as one of her strongest exports in the global market. Thus, Akaniro avers that "Nigeria's media and entertainment industry is one of the fastest growing creative industries in the world" (par.1). Advancements in media technology have equally engendered the exponential growth and development of the entertainment industry in the aspects of production processes and distribution, especially for products in video formats. This, which opens the industry to a competitive and global space, has also continued to influence production style and content in return.

Notably, the evolution of modern Nigerian music genres is largely stimulated by colonial and postcolonial influences. Ngobili claims that all emergent genres, such as highlife, Afro-pop, Afro-reggae, Afro-juju and the Nigerian hip-hop style have developed from a fusion of western music aesthetics and local components (par.2). Observably, the Nigerian hip-hop is a popular genre that continues to witness an influx of talents that yield quite a large number of superstars. The technological possibilities of mediatized recorded production and live performance, which are convenient and cost effective have revolutionized hip-hop music productions and performances in Nigeria. Hip-hop music superstars, such as Davido, Wizkid, Burna Boy, Tekno, Kizz Daniels, among others, have exploited possibilities in media technology to attain and sustain successful status in the industry. Yardsticks for success in this regard have been calculated in terms of their social network influence, outcome of album reviews, ambassadorial deals, awards and recognitions. Quite some female hip-hop music artistes have also, attained for themselves, such

degree of success. These female superstars include, Yemi Alade, Tiwa Savage, Asa, Ayar Starr, Temi, Simi, Teni, and among others.

It is noteworthy to observe that the Nigerian hip-hop music genre seems to undermine the core aesthetic values of Nigerian music which were esteemed and highly promoted at the evolution and development of the industry. The music content, which is central to the message communicated, now takes a less significant place in most Nigerian hip-hop music productions. For instance, the thematic preoccupation of a typical Nigerian music served to stimulate awareness towards a valued moralistic, nationalistic, political and social consciousness. However, the present day Nigerian hip-hop music deals in subject matters of sex and objectification of female body, glamour and materialism, love and heartbreak, among others. Music video productions such as *Bum Bum* by Timaya, *Story for the gods* by Olamide, *In my bed* by WizKid and *Jasi* by Banky W are some of the most common points of reference regarding the objectification of women.

In the aforementioned songs, the male superstars demeaned womanhood in various ways and portray them as objects designed for male pleasure, through the lyrical and spectacles content of videos. In the name of video-making, hired female dancers and models are costumed to objectify and exploit the woman body. The spectacles of dance, isolated movements and dramatic actions are also employed to stimulate sexual impulses for enhanced interest and increased patronage of spectators. Such media strategy in sexual exploitation of viewers' patronage has been described as sexploitation by the male superstar/producer. This trend is also common in Nigerian music videos produced by some female hip-hop music superstars. It is no longer injustice perpetuated by males alone, Nigerian female producer-artistes, in the name of self-expression also exploit objectification of the woman's body and enable sexual stimulations by self-portrait and hired dancer/models. This trend in the Nigerian media space is noticeable in the works of Yemi Alade, Tiwa Savage. Ayar Starr, Niniola, Seyi Shay and others. The focus of this article is the music videos of Yemi Alade that tend to engender "self-sexploitation" under the pretext of self-expression.

Yemi Alade has shot 51 music videos. We have employed purposive sampling technique in selecting two of the videos; *Ferari* (2016) and *Shake* (2019), which are available on YouTube. Our selection was based on the preponderance of the subjects of scholarly inquiry in the selected music videos. The objective of this study is to examine the videos

through the lenses of objectification of the woman's body and s/exploitation in the name of self-expression, as employed by Yemi Alade. The study investigates the dimensions of objectification and s/exploitation in the selected videos, and establishes its peculiarity as self-sexploitation, rather than self-expression.

Conceptual Clarifications

The concepts of objectification of women, s/exploitation of women and self-expression as a third wave of feminism are clarified accordingly:

i. Body design

In this research, we have conceptualized body design as a two-means approach by the music video artistes, which are in terms of "design of/on" and "design with" the body. The former alludes to the adornment of the human body with costumes, accessories and body painting for performance. This establishes that visual appearance of an artiste in video is not meant to be by accident, but through a purposefulness of a design process to engender the communication of a message and feeling. Other considerations also are "fitness" and "suitability" for the human body. Salem affirms that in the process of "design of/on" the body- "the understanding of the body and how it is used to design is often confined by the body standard spatial and structural characteristics" (par.12). Therefore, the artiste's structural features, and the choice to either emphasize or underplay structural projections would depend on the intent for body design.

In the same vein, "design with" the body does serve the intent of the artiste. Thus, "design with" in body design describes the kinaesthetic use of the human body in space to communicate feelings that are capable of engendering audience empathy and participation (Bakare "Costumes in Igogo" 407; "Extreme Make-up and Costume Designs" 48; "Costumes in Ekiti West" 170). Ihidero sums all of these expressions as 'body dramaturgy' (24); that is, the story the stories the body tells given the manifestations of bodily arts such as tattoos, tribal marks and any other deliberate or accidental body design (25). It is the purpose of all visual and performing arts presentations to lead the viewers' feelings through the design in space, and music video artistes exploit this intent through body movements and dance. Bakare corroborates this when he notes that the elements of dance designs consist in the use of "line, space, mass and coherence" (29). These are well-marshalled into patterns by a

choreographer, who serves as intent orchestrator, by altering “the direction, levels, size and pathway of movement” (Aldis par.6). Ultimately, the purpose of is to employ body design as means of evoking feelings of the viewer. Hence, Babcock states thus- “within the world of physical expression, dance allow for kinaesthetic empathy between viewers and performer(s) and could create a bridge between our internal experiences and the experiences of others” (par.2). The findings of this study will hinge on this concept of body design, which is regarded as a means for the music video artiste to intentional communicate feelings.

ii. Objectification of women

The objectification of the women body is a multifaceted and intricate issue which has enjoyed quite some rich academic explorations. It is a prejudiced evaluation of womanhood that condescends her being to mere object, and in very concrete terms. It is the act of dissecting the female body physique as mere trade commodities by revealing sensitive parts to attract viewers and spectators (Omoera and Okwuowulu 14). According to Bakare et al, this prejudice is propelled by the long-standing patriarchal systems and gender disparities that engender the commodification of the woman's body as strategy for media advertisement (15622). The same concept is being exploited in sports entertainment events, where rings girls as applicable in boxing and wrestling competitions, cheerleaders, and the female athletes are employed to exploit the objectification of the woman’s body. The sole objective of the events and media content producers is to project the preferred body anatomy (body part/object) of the hired models as points of attraction for increased patronage to both men and women spectators and viewers.

In effect, objectification subjects men to impressions of the “acclaimed’ ideal female anatomy, and reinforces archetypes of desirable ideal body features and appearance in women. Thus, it predisposes women as an object for man’s pleasure. In addition, Rodger and Stacy assert that “one of the most pervasive themes of contemporary media is the theme that an attractive appearance and sexy body are among the most important goals young people, especially women, can achieve” (420). The import of this is the observable growing interest in plastic surgery, as effort towards redesigning body anatomy to fit into the paradigms of acclaimed media models. Frisby corroborates that:

Women have been subjected to the pressure of adhering to a multitude of Inconsistent beauty standards, leading them to

resort to cosmetic interventions and surgical procedures to attain physical attributes deemed desirable, which Inevitably lose their appeal as new bodily traits become fashionable and idealized By society. (476)

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, “the top cosmetics surgeries are breast augmentation, liposuction, nose reshaping, eyelid surgery, tummy tuck, and facelift” (n.pag.), this is notwithstanding the risk that comes with the procedure. The human socialization is being shaped by portrayals in media, which sets standards of the ideal. Rodgers and Stacey remark that media productions which highlight the objectification of females only buttress that sexual attraction is the core of the woman’s beauty (212). Therefore, as the female strives to meet up with the acclaimed standards, they also strengthen male’s position that the prime value for women hinges on appearance for sexual appeal.

iii. Exploitation of women

The connection between objectification and sexploitation is that of means to an end. The former often results in the later. When Bakare et al. state that “objectification frequently entails treating women’s bodies as just sexual objects that exist for the enjoyment of others” (15617), they infer that revealed “objects” of the woman anatomy for purposes of attraction in the name of ideal sexy appearance are employed to stimulate sexual impulses. Though magnitude of impulsive engagement of spectators might not be too significant, but its intent, for enjoyment, is the same as pornography. Thus, sexploitation exploits the attention and interest of the audience on a product or media production, by exploiting the body and display of the female for the se sexual pleasure of viewers. This is the trade and stock of most media contents that explore the philosophy of “sex sells”. According to World Heritage Encyclopaedia, the “Sex sells’ philosophy was employed first in the advertisement of Tobacco with the image of a “naked maiden” in 1871 (qtd. in Jurberg par. 1).

However, scholars have established that the effects of sexploitation on male and female alike; strengthening certain gender stereotypes that portray men as promiscuous and dominant, while women are the objects to be chased, who therefore must submissive. In this regard, King et al note thus: music videos have gained notoriety for portraying women in a sexually Suggestive manner, often through their attire, physical appearance, or actions. Male artists often utilise female

models in their music videos as a means of catering to the heterosexual needs and lustful desires of the male folk (31). Scholars in feminist media have expressed concern regarding the media's excessive emphasis on the physical appearance of the female's actions of men towards them. The female models are hired by male Artistes-producers for portrayals as mere objects of sexual pleasure and instant gratification. Sexploitation is typified in musical artistes who employ song lyrics and the spectacles in music videos to exploit the objectification of the women's body for the stimulation of spectators/viewers sexual pleasure as economic gains strategy.

iv. Self-expression and feminism

Feminism, which concerns the struggle of women towards liberation from genders, stereotypes that subject them to oppression, "is part of a larger consciousness of oppression along with racism, ageism, classism, ableism and sexual orientation (Rampton par.1). According to Eze, feminism is rooted in the ideology of "social, economic and political inequalities between the sexes which need to be changed, but they fundamentally disagree in their analysis why this situation has come and how far it should be altered" (13). Thus, Miles notes that the first wave highlighted the suffrage of women and the clamour for basic rights as men, the second wave concerned was of equality, the third wave vied towards control over sexuality while the fourth wave focused on the subject of harassment (par.2).

At its phases of development, self-expression and the liberation from socially and politically imposed stereotypes have been the nexus of feminism, which consists in the quest for self-recognition, self-actualization and self-definition among others. To attain self-identity that eradicates the social constructions or cultural structures that define the feminine gender is the core of feminism. To this end, Wood observes that "self-expression pertains to the capacity to communicate one's thoughts and feelings genuinely and openly, devoid of apprehension regarding criticism or retaliation" (15). Thus, the context of self-expression in this study narrows to some self-conceited branding of one's self especially with regards to appearance and the body presentation. Hence, Anderson states that "self in feminism is pivotal to questions about personal identity, the body, sociality and agencies that feminism must address" (par.1). As part of their human rights, women can give reign to self-expression as they deem fit, without recourse to norms or values. Nwagbara hints on the fact

that radical feminism disdains the idea that “the woman’s body is not just a product of biological processes, but a socially and culturally constructed entity that is influenced by prevailing societal norms and expectations” (31). Thus, it maintains that women reserve the right to whatever appearance they find comfortable. Therefore, the radical feminist instigates freedom to adopt alternative perspective of self, for self-expression and as a means for confronting the stereotype models of patriarchy.

Theoretical Fortification: Theory of Visual Pleasure

This study hinges on the Theory of Visual Pleasure (TVP) which was propounded by Laura Mulvey in 1973, and published in 1975. It presupposes that the cinema employs its plot, characters, spectacles and shot mechanisms for male gaze to stimulate visual pleasure (Mulvey 12). Mulvey’s theory is premised on the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud which considers cinematic practice as a political weapon that advances patriarchal order (Mulvey 803). Notably, the typical video production assigns a critical role to the female, which consigns them to serve purposes that drive the male impulses in sensual manners, and not otherwise. Mulvey argues that “traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen” (809). That the cinema female player serves to motivate the male players erotically, which stimulate similar behaviours in spectators, consigns her to device for visual pleasure.

In her analysis, visual pleasure manifests in the forms of “scopophilia”, which describes the use of another person as mere visual item for stimulating sexual impulse, and “Narcissism and the constitution of ego”; a feeling of identifying with the visual object” (Mulvey 808). While the male spectator exploits visual pleasure through scopophilic expression, the female tends towards narcissism and the constitution of ego. With the infant experience, Jacques Lacan illustrates how the narcissism and the constitution of ego in the female spectator arise, thus:

...The moment when a child recognizes its own image in the mirror is crucial for the constitution of the ego[...] The mirror phase occurs at a time when a child's physical ambitions outstrips his motor capacity, with the result that his recognition of himself is joyous in that he imagines his mirror image to be more complete, more perfect than he experiences his own body[...] There is an extraneous similarity between

screen and mirror (the framing of the human form in its surrounding; for instance), the cinema has structures of fascination that are Strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing that ego. (qtd. in Mulvey 806)

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figures, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Women displayed as sexual objects, is The Leitmotif of erotic spectacle... (Mulvey 809). The Theory of Visual Pleasure (TVP) posits that the typical screen production is created to engender sensual pleasures in spectator and to reinforce patriarchal models.

Methodology

This study is ethnographic research which employs the qualitative methods for data collection and analysis, and primary data for the study were collected through the visual ethnography and netnography techniques. Scot and Lisa-jo remark that the visual ethnography can be adopted for research data collection via three forms: “visual things as data”, “visual tools to collect data”, and “visual ways to record field notes as data” (720). This study employs the first form; “visual things as data”, and the selected music videos of Yemi Alade are the visual items data for the research. On the other hand, “netnography”, as developed by Robert Kozinets, is a tool for harnessing and analysing technologically mediated communications within specific online network forums (Kozinets qtd. in Bowler 1272). In this circumstance, comments and interactions with the selected music videos by the YouTube viewers served as netnographic data forms for this study. In the face of numerous of comments, this research was guided by Bowler remark that it is the objectives of study that direct the selection of material content to be harnessed from the ensued online comments (1272).

The study population is 3,700 viewers’ comments, consisting of 2,400 viewers who commented on *Ferrari* music video, and 1,300 viewers who made comments on *Shake* music video, both on Alade’s YouTube channel. The nonprobability sampling technique of purposive sampling

was employed to select relatively small sample of comments from the available lots. This required the researchers to peruse all available comments, and select the few that serve the purpose of the study as reflected in their shared experiences. A total of 672 comments were collated and categorised by themes by shared sentiments, and only a hand full that represent each category that expresses the objective of the study is presented herein. From these numbers of comment, only 22 comments that share the experiences which reflect in other the most (in our judgment) were presented in the Table 2. These tables consist of 13 comments from *Ferrari* and 9 comments from *Shake* respectively. The comments were chosen because they provide useful data that support the objectives of the study. The data provided were further explicated, and processed by content analysis

Data presentation and Discussion

A Brief on Yemi Alade

She was born in Abia State, Nigeria, as Yemi Eberechi Alade. Yemi bagged a first degree in Geography from a Nigerian university, but was always committed to song writing and singing. In 2009, she contested and won the star prize at the Peak Talent show. Thereafter, she signed up with Effizzie music group record label where she accomplished the production of her songs and videos. As at the time of this research, Yemi Alade has released a total of 58 songs, and made 51 music videos. These songs are contained in her five albums releases, which are *King of Queens* (2015), *Mama Africa* (2016), *Black Magic* (2017), *Woman of Steel* (2019) and *Empress* (2020). Remarkably, Yemi Alade exploits her language skills to give flavour and strengthen the wide spread of her music through the fusion of national to languages such as Yoruba, Igbo and Pidgin with English. She also does a reproduction of her recent songs in international languages, such French, Portuguese and Swahili. She has a significantly strong social media influence with 17.4 million followers on Instagram and 2.21 million subscribers on YouTube.

About the Selected Music Videos

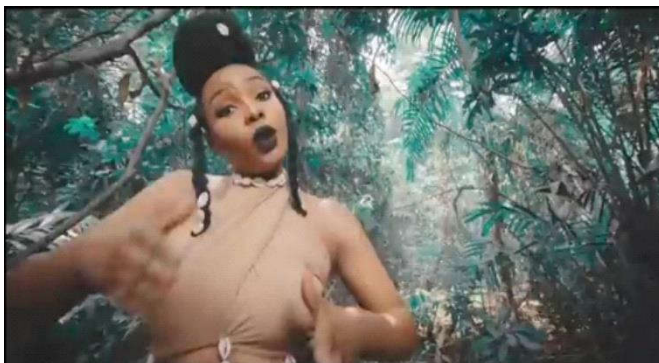
i) *Ferrari*

Ferrari is the 3rd single released from Alade's 2nd album which was released in 2016. The music is highlife in genre, and was produced by DJ.

Coublon. Its video, which spanned for 3 minutes 31 seconds was shot by Clarence Peters. The work was a media success having made a viewership of 11.3million as at the time of writing this research. The song blatantly communicates the commodification of the female body and personhood with vivid allusion to the items for exchange. The lyrics combine both the Nigerian Pidgin and English, with Yoruba language innuendoes. In structure, the lyrics open with an eight-line chorus, which is followed by a first verse and an adjoining vamp to the verse. This pattern is repeated, and to introduce the second verse, after that, the chorus repeats and runs through till the song ends.

Alade's lyrics in *Ferrari* demonstrates that materialism is a vital tool with which a man haggles for the love of a women, as demonstrated with the "if-clause" of condition, as exemplified in the demand for such items as *Ferrari* (an Italian luxury sport car) and a wage payment to retain the love. It is not just like the typical Nigerian hip-hop music that is lush in the uses of rhyme. The "Ferrari-salary" wordplay is not just another attempt at creating rhyme, but an unequivocal communication that commoditizes love. She employs the African saying which is interpreted as "the delightful taste of a dish speaks volume of sufficient funds", and sufficiency in this regard speaks of the excess. The lyric inhibits the male admire who will not wish or be able to spend a fortune on material concerns of a woman from coming close.

This disposition of Alade's lyrics is also established in the musical video that the Woman's bumpy chest ("front") and heavy buttock ("back") were the highlight points for the material demands. This body designs objectifies the woman body by commoditizing her femininity in concrete terms, with regards to feature's projection, shape and size.



Alade self-portrays breast protrusion as terms for material benefits from interested lovers



Sexploitation, in its close relation to objectification was deployed in the video. Alade, on her body, wore costumes that reveal her laps and thighs in the video, to the end of stimulating sexual pleasure.



Alade's right lap/thigh is exposed way more under her wares.

Other material needs that were captured in the materialistic demands includes real estate property in choice location, lifestyle and fashion that are the rave of the moment, vacation abroad and foreign. However, beyond the provocative lyrics and body designs, it is

noteworthy to state that the video provides aesthetically pleasing visuals alongside well-choreographed dances rhythmic composition of shots. The visuals were set across two locales; rural and urban. It shows her rural life with friends where they were scantily dressed and barefooted in a dusty environment; an agrarian society. The other side shows an urban modern environment where she is dressed as a city dweller in a planned-out. The visual distinction suggests that Alade in Ferrari demonstrate the lifestyle of the “wana-be” lady, who had the opportunity of leaving the village for an urbanized area, and seeks to exploit her femininity for merchandize and to attain as aspiring lifestyle. The video presents here more like an unrealistic opportunist and gold-digger than being a sophisticated lady, as her demand for Ferrari in the rural unplanned area that has no vehicular roads is merely unrealistic.

ii) *Shake*

The song *Shake* is the 3rd track in Alade’s 2019 album titled *Woman of steel*. However, the content of this song is as an oxymoron to the album’s title, which suggests toughness, resilience and enduring character traits. The song’s lyrics explore the fragility of the represented female character in the face of sensual feeling. The song features a male hip-hop celebrity who can act as the lover of the female character, which was enacted by Alade. The lyrics open with a first verse, and are followed by a chorus response from the male partner (Duncan Mighty). Then a bridge verse and a vamp ensue respectively before the second verse by the male artiste commenced. This is followed by another turn of chorus, bridge verse and a vamp, accordingly. The lyrical content and visual narratives provided in the music video exemplifies sexploitation and objectification of the woman’s body. A line in the lyrics personified the female character to the male lover as cake. She calls on him to come have a bite of the “cake”, which his money has furnished. She sets a sensual mood by employing her tongue seductively and by screaming (*Ah... Waw... Awn...”),* rhythmically in a manner that gives expression to sexual ecstasy. In response, the lover warns against being taunted in vein to register his readiness.

Shake is a narrative that demonstrates a female’s request for sexual encounter from her male partner as a matter of survival, with erotic signals that are provocatively strong. The message consigned a female’s reception of love to the possible sexually satisfying encounter with male partner. Against the risk of being perceived as a nudist, the visual narratives

revealed Alade's laps, navel and parts of her breasts under transparent and netlike wares.



Alade reveals much on her chest and laps

Further, finger-licking, self-caressing, waist-tweaking, waist-grabbing, and a mimetic demonstration of down-in-bed sex enacted by one of the female model-dancers were string body designs employed to heightened sexual impulses in the music video.



Alade licks the finger in a seductive manner



Alade's dancers engage in waist grabbing and wiggling



Alade's dancer-models demonstrate sexual acts

With *Shake*, Alade demonstrated that the female's sensibility to issues of love is largely connected to the sexual satisfaction, which leaves them frail in the hands of a choice male lover. Apart from this notion of love which places premium on the lovers' bed-skill, which expediently objectifies womanhood as an item for sex, the sexual allusions in the music video are capable of providing satisfaction to gullible minds

Selected Viewers' Comments

Table 1: YouTube channel details on population of study and samples size

| Music Video | Viewers | Comments | Likes | Selected Comment |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| <i>Ferrari</i> (2016) | 11,423,628 | 2,4000 | 53,000 | 13 |
| <i>Shake</i> (2019) | 3,185,844 | 1,3000 | 29,000 | 9 |
| | | 3,700 Population | | 22 (Sample size) |

The total number of comments recorded for the two selected videos constitutes a study population of 3,700 comments, and we have selected only a handful of 22 comments for analysis from the lots. Notably, every statement, repeated statement, rephrased statement, emoticon and any other communication made in the comment field of the channel auto counts as comment. Hence, the 3,700 social media comments count from the two selected videos consist of repeated post, emoticons, comment of agreement or otherwise to another comments. Expectedly, subscribers to the channel and viewers of the videos mostly comprise of fans and media syndicates who are poised to make and stimulate positive remarks and reviews. However, comments that ensued from the channel include some remarks that were presented complimentarily, but agree with the objective of this study. It is from these comments that we collated 672, and sampled 22 for coding by themes in Table 2.

Table 2: Selected comments of viewers as categorized by the themes

| From Ferrari | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Comment | Details |
| Message discomfort | |
| Comment 1 | "Love her, but I don't like the wording of the song. Bad education for young women who will now think that men must buy everything for them". |
| Comment 2 | "Lol nice dancing and the song sounded good too. But the lyrics left me with a bad taste in my mouth. lol. Pretty women= cash? Lol of course they do". |
| Comment 3 | "Yemi Alade wants a Ferrari and salary from her husband and friends. Very materialistic." |
| Comment 4 | "I like Yemi Alade, but, the message of this music is plain STUPID!" |
| Comment 5 | "What a financially demanding message". |
| Judging the message | |
| Comment 6 | "That's why Johnny ran away". |
| 111 replies | |
| Comment 7 | "No wonder why Johnny run away, lol Johnny knew he wouldn't be able to buy you Ferrari or pay you Salary". |
| Comment 9 | "Yep I got now why Johnny can't handle any longer. With all those things he must give to you, he probably has to work a lot meanwhile you are going |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| | to do what? Don't put this GOLD DIGGER things in our sister mind especially after you ask to thank your God for what He give you. It will made them always dependent” |
| Comment 10 | “Only materialist girls will love this song. Johnny run run run run run!!!!!!!” |
| | “Gold digger sluts this is one of the anthems for them, they're full in America, seen them a lot, that's why I chose East Africa, West Africa sick mother fuker never had anything”. |
| Comment 11 | “You want a salary for being with a guy? You don't want a husband, you want a sugar daddy”. |
| Comment 12 | “if I pay you money, you no love me, what will I do you”. (Pidgin to English interpretation bellow) If I meet all these demands and don't get love afterwards, How may I deal with you |
| Defence and counter-defence | |
| Comment 12 | “Just to clear the air, I think we are missing the whole "Ferrari" message. She's just saying, "Sweetheart, think bigger, dream bigger, upgrade. I would love to drive a Ferrari". The message is not supposed to scare the guy but encourage him to dream bigger dreams. As a guy if you can't afford a Ferrari at the moment, set "Ferrari" goals and she will still love you. It's all about your prospects packaging and presentation. However, there's an exception to lackadaisical ladies”. 70 replies. |
| Comment 13 | “I'd venture that you're a lawyer by profession. (Are you?) Your ability to bend the truth is formidable. You could also make a devastating political speech writer or political strategist”. |
| From “Shake” | |
| Visual discomfort | |
| Comment 14 | “Such a beautiful woman. It's a shame she feels like she needs to flaunt her body to sell music. A true real Queen would never put on display for all to see. A |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| | true Queen reserves her body for the eyes of her King only and nobody else. She is his treasure”. |
| Comment 15 | “Why do we have to be dirty like the USA. Such shame. No more TV at home. I like the music but I don't want my daughter to be like you”. |
| Comment 16 | “I love you Yemi, however you need to lose weight, especially if you want to be constantly showing your body in your videos”. |
| Comment 17 | “Don't like, too much of nudity”. |
| Sexual Pleasure | |
| Comment 18 | “Her laps are a problem for those that have eyes”. |
| Comment 19 | “Wow her legs” |
| Comment 20 | “Yemi, your legs dey shake my boxers ooo”. |
| Comment 21 | “From Kenya..... I've watched it 7 times, my phone went low battery, got to recharge and get back to the lovely tune till my body shakes”. |
| Comment 22 | “Lol Yemi looks like she needs a good bangala in her with that self-caressing!” |

Comments from viewers on the *YouTube* channel cover a diverse range of thoughts, and according to individual experiences. These comments, which were communicated as text and, or, as emoticons express opinions, counter opinions, commendations and criticism that arise from an array of subject matters such as production design, choreography and movement, cinematography, overall aesthetics and content of video narratives, as experienced by the viewer. The social space that ensues from the comments is interactive, and was replete by expressions in tantrums, controversies, subtle attacks and camaraderie. For this netnographic analysis, we have selected comments that reflect the objectives of this study.

From *Ferrari*, the first category of selected comments as drawn in Table 2 (comments 1 to 4), are expressions from male and female viewers that bother on the discomfort that arises from the visual narratives of the video. The comments challenge instead the message as the communication of wrong values, as it tends to indoctrinate female dependency and reliance on the male, in exchange for sex. More specifically, comment 4 expresses displeasure in the fact that the message communicates the value of materialism. The second category of selected comments (Comments 6–

12) was judgmental statements that ensue from their irritation to the message of materialism. Much of the statements made reference to the *Johnny*, a famous song in Alade's debut album; *King of Queen*, 2014. The music video, titled *Jonny*, was about her cheating lover (Johnny) that wanders away and tries out with Cynthia, Uche, and then Nene, whom he invariably wants to marry. These comments stress the fact that "her" materialistic tendencies justify why Johnny would leave her for another lady. When comment 6 (That's why Johnny ran away), surfaces, it garnered replies from 111 viewers who agree with the position.

Others, who judged the message, wrote unprintable words and abuses in as reaction to the content of the music video. In Comment 12, the viewer asked a critical question about a situation where the lover fulfils all materialistic demands but gets love from the love 'purchased'. The tone of the comment suggests that the violence will set in when there is a shortfall in expectation, having "paid" for it. The third category presents a passionate follower who defend Alade's message by explaining that it is only a show of ambitiousness that ought to challenge possible admirers, and stimulate them towards stretching themselves to capture a lover's ambition. This comment got 77 replies, which consists of viewers comments that supported and or disagree with the defence.

The comments selected provide insight on effects of objectification of women, in exchange for love, on the society, as exemplified in "Ferrari". First, materialism for love will generate pressure on the male folk, strain the union, and turn the woman into being over dependent and non-productive. Secondly, the effect of situation in "Ferrari" is a high expectation in the expression of love from the girl, and when the male folk doesn't get it, he may resort to domestic violence, or/and Cheating. This denigrates womanhood. From the music video "Shake", comments 14 - 17 were reactions of visual discomfort against the visual content that brands the video as an item for viewer's sexual gratification. Expressions, such as "shame", "dirty" and "nudity", were employed by viewers to communicate their experience of what Alade may mean for sexual release in the projection of nude and seductive visuals arising from inappropriate body designs. More specifically, Comment 14 substantiated that self-perceived beauty is to be protected and preserved, as should treasures, instead of having it as public display. Comment 15 expressed bewilderment in the fact that such lewd visuals are regular in the west media, and not African. The viewer was much more concerned with the issue of parental guardian, as she will not like her daughter to take Alade

as model, in spite of the melody of the music. It was Comment 16 that vied a bit into body shaming, because Alade revealed too much of “floppy” laps.

The later segment of the table, which consists in comments 19-22, were made by categories of viewers whose viewing experience speaks of sexual appreciation. Contrary to comments in the first segment from viewer who felt irritated, comments in the later segment established how the viewers have employed the music video as a means to an end; the end of sexual pleasure. The comments alluded to the lyrics, dramatic gestures, movement and other sexually provocative visual portrayals as points of interests, and without recourse to lack of privacy in the social media space. Viewers even made lewd statements to express their heart content. Such expressions in public space will in turn stem the interest of like minds that are otherwise passive. Resultantly, the video will gain more patronage and interest. This is suggested in a statement made in comment 14, thus- “It’s a shame she feels like she needs to flaunt her body to sell music...” The above statement from a viewer establishes the position of this study concerning sexploitation being the intent and purpose of enabling sexually provocative visuals in music video.

On the claim of self-expression, Alade stated in an interview that she finds her semi-naked performance displays comfortable for self-expression, and therefore extends this for self-branding because she understands that nudity of women is a significant part of the African women’s appearances at pre-colonial era. Matiko notes that from an interview on Silverbird Television, Alade responded to the concerns of fans who accused her of “showing too much flesh” “...I like being very comfortable and real with my fans. Not that I am trying to be sexy or expose myself because I just dress for myself and present myself to my fans the way I am. The original African woman is almost half-naked when she wants to dance. Remember in the past, when the women come out to dance they Are almost half naked’, she said (par. 6). Her claim of African women being nude or semi-nude in appearance, have been substantiated by scholars who establish that women nudity are values in pristine rituals to commemorate fertility, life and morality (Ashaoulu par.1). Admittedly, it is a significant feature of some cultural and festival celebrations, with examples in *Iria* practice of the Okirika ethnic group in Nigeria (Akasike par.3) and Reed dance of South African Zulu ethnic group (Amadi par.2) as well as the Swanti people of Swaziland (Assarsson par. 6). In these African celebrations, the half-naked appearances of women are communal

commemoration of virginity and fertility, and not to stimulate sexual feelings or visual satisfaction in the name of entertainment.

Further, the nakedness of women is also paraded in public space to enforce the sacredness of nudity as a tool for female protest (Daniels par.5; Akas par.1). The instances of this in Nigeria include the 2021 protest against land grabbing policy in Anambra State (Eeleke par.1), the women who went naked in Nassarawa State against acclaimed political injustice at the State House of Assembly in 2023 (Leonard 2), and that of half-naked women who protest against the 2023 general elections by wailing at the US embassy gate in Abuja (Nwchukwu 6), are paradigms of deviance by helpless women. It is believed that nakedness of women in protests spells doom of death on the oppressor. Again, Nudity in Africa is not a casual and entertainment appearance as Alade has often applied it. Under the guise of self-expression, Alade have deployed her videos for sexploitation, to sustain viewer's interest and patronage, which in turn, yields huge profiteering from online video watch hour. This study has classified such indulgence by a female, who employs her video, her body as well as other female dancer/models as for the portrait of sexploitation as "self-sexploitation."

Conclusion

The study examined the dimensions of objectification and sexploitation as deployed in the selected videos, and discovered that Alade objectified self, first, with two projectable feminine features; breasts and buttocks, and second with costume designs that represent womanhood as objects and commodities for the wooer to weigh and value in terms of materialistic commitments (*Ferrari, Salary, and the likes on the list*). This may rub-off on the ego of women whose physical features are not ordinarily protruded, and can impel a sense of body shaming, which tends to lure women into acquiring artificial body protrusions to enhance their public appearance through devices such as buttocks and breast pads, or resorting to plastic surgery. This extends Mulvey's concept of 'narcissism' and its effect of value depreciation. In the same token, objectification as expressed in this video can cause vain-minded men to place premium on the projection of feminine body features instead of placing value on the persons. Hence, when the features of projection dwindle, such men tend to place value in another with projected features. Such misplacement of value seems a possible cause of infidelity in the society. Apart from the rising spate of infidelity, the objectification of the woman body can stimulate sexual pleasure.

The dimension of sexploitation deployed in the video, *Shake*, explored both the lyrical language and body movement in space to exploit sexual pleasure of viewers through the acts of self-caressing, finger-licking, uncovered sensitive body parts, and the demonstration of sexual deed; all acts that give pleasure to a gazing vain-minded male. Mulvey's theory explains the import of male gaze on such acts in terms of 'scopophilia,' which provokes the male perceptions of female as object for sexual expressions. Such provocations can cause vain-minded male to lose his guard and crave to express himself via acts of harassment or rape of any female in sight. Notably, this brings huge risk to women. Given this, the study concluded that Alade's display of sexually provocative visuals is arguably not a mode of self-expression as she had claimed, but a means to underscore the objectification of women's body and to explore 'sexploiting' to attract the social media benefits of huge followership and views, which had worked for her. Alade's self-portrayal in objectification and sexploitation is an approach that seemed to put her leaps higher than her counterpart Nigerian male producer-artistes who exploit female dancers in music videos. It is this practice of self-portrayal that we have termed as self-sexploitation. This study recommends that both objectification and sexploitation of the women ought to be resisted by women and men alike. Its effect on women, and society at large, necessitates the need for music video contents to be censored before they are allowed into the public media space.

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