

Quality Issues and the Ban on Selected Musical Video Broadcasting in Nigeria: A Defence for National Broadcasting Commission

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Abstract

This paper investigates the recurrent music ban on musical video broadcasting and the issues of quality of musical contents that have warranted such a phenomenon by the National Broadcasting Commission in Nigeria. The major contention was the justification or otherwise of the ban. The paper employed observational and analytical methodologies to examine the causes of the bans on musical videos in Nigeria by NBC, the reactions of the affected artistes and their fans and the negative effects of erotic lyrics, nudity and suggestive dance steps by minors, lady-dancers and the musicians on the youths and other categories of musical video audiences. The paper submits that the NBC's gestures are commendable and should be sustained while quality assurance efforts should be intensified through promotion of quality musical videos produced more for the purpose of entertainment than education or information. The paper also calls for collaborative efforts among all stakeholders in the music industry to achieve quality in the musical videos produced for general public consumption. This paper encourages musicians to invite creativity into the musical industry in Nigeria by coming out with songs and performances that reflect the cultural values of the country rather than mere entertainment songs and acts that have a greater tendency to corrupt younger minds.

Key words: Quality Assurance, Musical Video, Broadcasting.

Introduction

The falling standards experienced in the world of arts and the humanities have raised concerns for systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention. Quality Assurance includes management of the quality of raw materials that are produced for consumption by the consumers. The quality of every product and service is designed to meet the needs of the target population; however some products offer dysfunctional effects that constitute more harm than good to the consumers.

In Nigeria, the National Broadcasting Commission reportedly banned a number of new music videos from being broadcast anywhere in the country in 2013 (Ohai, 2013). The banned musical videos include:

- i) Tillman ft vector in *Koma Roll*
- ii) Wande Coal – *Go Low*
- iii) D’Prince – *Take Banana*
- iv) Flavour – *Shake*
- v) Goldie - *Ski Bobo*
- vi) Chuddy K – *Brazilian Hair*
- vii) Timaya - *Shake Your Bum Bum*
- viii) Psquare – *Alingo*

The musical videos were said to be banned because of the quality and contents of the songs and videos respectively. Tillman’s *Koma Roll* was accused of erotic contents and suggestive dance steps, Wande Coal’s *Go Low* contained scenes of nudity in the video while D’Prince’s *Take Banana* contained erotic, vulgar words and suggestive dance styles. Flavour’s *Shake* contained vulgar and suggestive dance steps, Goldie’s *Ski Bobo* featured a minor with

suggestive and immoral dance steps while Chuddy J's *Brazilian Hair* was banned for featuring children and ladies with suggestive and erotic dance steps. Timaya's *Shake Your Bum Bum* was banned for containing erotic and suggestive dance steps with vulgar Lyrics while Psquare's *Alingo* was accused of containing erotic scenes at the end of the musical videos.

As a major regulatory body, the NBC keeps close watch on the contents of music videos and audio CDs broadcast by Nigerian television and radio stations. In the past, the body had officially kick out Afrobeat musician, Femi Kuti's wave making song *Bang Bang Bang* and Konga's *Baby Konga* from the air space. Quite recently, the commission, in addition to the above list, had to flex its muscles when DJ Zeez's *Body Language* fell short of its expectations. The irony of the quality assurance checks is that the NBC does not regulate what is broadcast on cable channels such as MTV Base, Soundcity, Trace and Channel O, as well as internet platforms like YouTube and Vimeo.

The basic quality assurance questions begging for answers include: should the NBC uphold and continue to exert ban on musical videos with questionable contents at the expense of the entertainment values of the viewing publics? If musical videos are checked by NBC to ensure quality assurance on Nigerian television stations, who regulates the broadcast of the same musical videos on cable channels that are mostly watched today without restrictions? Do the musical videos so qualified as 'unfit' for the Nigerian airwaves contain any entertainment, informative or edutainment values to deserve pardon?

The thrust of this paper is to defend and justify the actions of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission's incessant ban on musical videos in Nigeria with a view to promote quality assurance. The objective of this paper is to justify the ban of Musical Video Broadcasting in NBC's quality assurance plans.

Musicological Appraisal and Analysis of Two of the Banned Musical Video

P-square's Alingo

P-square's lyrics open with one of the musicians' reaction to a lady's dance movement. The song is single greater hits for p-square recorded in 2012. The song is an Afropop genre. The music became popular due to its somewhat controversial dance steps which makes it quite complicated for a lot of people to copy. However the dance steps of the musicians and some ladies in the video suggest sexual activities.

In the rhythm, the musical lines suggest that the dance moves sends them (p-square) crazy and makes them "bark like bingo", thus "the way that she's dancing" she's getting higher.

She's makin' me bark like a bingo
& I come dey try 2 dey sing eh
& d way dat she's dancin'
I don dey, I don dey, I don dey
She's makin me bark like a bingo
& I come dey try 2 dey sing oh
& d way dat she's dacin' I don dey...

The chorus describes P-square's feelings as the girls "move their wings" "bursting my brain" "whining and grinding face to face". In verse two, the P-square says he likes the way the ladies in the video dance but the dances all depict sexual activity. The verse reads:

Ey ey ey ey, p-square we back again
Ey ey ey ey, this girl dey craze oh
She come dey do like say she bless o
She whinin' and grindin' and whinin' and burn dis place oh
She no dey play oh
Na face to face oh
As she dey go low, go low

The erotic video pictures made the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) to place a ban on the music video stating "erotic dance scene at the end of the musical video". P-square reacts to the ban thus: "we heard about the ban, but when they (NBC) ban a particular song, they

are indeed helping to promote that song...if they ban a song from being broadcast on Nigerian stations, will they stop Channel O, Sound City and other cable networks from playing the same song? It's not possible."

Timaya's "Shake your bum bum"

Timaya's music video "Shake your bum bum" is a true reflection of eroticism while the musical rhythm and dance steps by the choreographers suggest sexual activities. The opening of the song is a call on the dancing ladies to shake their bum bum (their bottom) irrespective of their sizes or a place of origin because the act gives him pleasure and causes an arousal of his libido.

In verse 1, the Timaya expresses his sexual attractiveness that makes ladies to call his phone without relenting, following her on twitter and calling for a relationship. Timaya expresses positive responds on the condition that the lady shakes her "bum bum". This implies that shaking of a lady's "bum bum" as in the musical video is a way of attracting men's attention. The extract reads:

Onor nor nor this girl she are calling my phone number ye onor nor nor nor
 This girl she don't let me go
 May be then she follow me for twitter
 Then say she want make I ping her ha
 She want me to answer
 Every thing she want make I ring her
 But if you shake your bum bum (shake up your bum bum your bum bum)
 Baby shake up your bum bum bum bum, bum bum yeyeye

In verse 2, Timaya confesses that he is reacting positively to the way the lady "rolls" her "behind" which can cause him "to go blind". In verse 3, Timaya reveals that even though his body is there, his mind is imagining he will "give it" to the lady since he knows what the lady want. All these are depicted in the musical video. He concludes in verse 4 that he likes the way he makes love to the lady and likes the way the lady screams dances and jumps up during love

making. He calls it “kerewa” which is the kind of dance that makes men want to collect the lady’s numbers. The verse reads:

Everybody wanna dance hey hein wanna dance hey
shake up your bum bum cause your bum bum this song is on your bum bum listing up now the
way that you want it, I want it too the way that you love it, am loving it too the way that you
screaming, dancing and jumping baby girl me I be they want you too
See as she don they dance kerewa
She don they put man for big whahala
See anything way she are dancing her dancing the men go want collect her number

The demonstrations in the video are exact demonstrations of the rhythm which suggest sexual act, which certainly invited the NBC’s hammer.

Reactions to the Ban of Selected Musical Video Broadcasting in Nigeria

The first school of thought views the ban of musical videos as a right step in the right direction because of the negative contents they have. Based on the social learning theory of Albert Bandura, Dorothea Ross and Sheila Ross, scholars in this school of thought are convinced that sexually related content in musical videos created for adults also reach the children and corrupt them easily. The sexually related words and images within the context of the musical videos carry meanings which may be less interesting than the mode of expression. These words and images certainly have negative effects on the viewing and listening audience.

The second school of thought holds everything against the ban of musical videos in Nigeria. It is a school of thought that supports edutainment as an avenue for using entertainment to educate the audience. To this school of thought, the use of nudity, erotic and suggestive dance steps are entertainment images behind the real message of the musicals. The musical videos have their original messages and stories which nevertheless cannot be overlooked by what may be considered as the ‘distortions’ of erotic visuals. When the NBC banned over eight musical videos from being broadcast on the Nigerian airwaves in early 2013, the trend triggered different reactions from the musicians and the general public.

The spokesman for Psquare, Bayo Adetu, described the ban as “as unnecessary and unjustifiable action”. Psquare, Wande Coal, Timaya, Flavour, D’Prince, Chuddy K and Tillaman who were all affected artistes condemned the action. The Acting Public Relations Officer of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, Maimuna Jimada, said the commission was not aware of the ban and was not in charge of banning musical videos. She explained that the commission was solely responsible for ensuring that the musical videos and audios made for the public consumption were safe (Abiodun). Thus, if a music video or audio has content that is not suitable for broadcast, such video and audio are tagged “not to be put on air”. Ordinarily, Mrs. Jimada also explained that if a video is tagged as not to be aired, its producers could still reproduce them with better content for broadcast.

Corroborating the commission’s stance, the Deputy Director and Head of Corporate Affairs, National Films and Video Censors Board, Mr. Yunusa Tanko, disclosed that the board was unaware of such ban, and was in charge of censoring the content of musical video. He however complained that the artistes fail to bring their works to the board for proper check before broadcast. While media survey indicates that some of the artistes were calling for dialogue between the NBC and stakeholders in the entertainment sector, another survey indicated that most musical video fans were not happy about the ban (Abiodun).

Issues of Quality in Nigerian Musical Videos

Quality assurance refers to the processes and procedures that systematically monitor different aspects of service process or facility to detect correct and ensure that quality standards are being met (Bucki, 1999). The quality of any material refers to the substance and characteristics that define such work. Music is naturally characterized by form and content. In Nigerian Musical Videos, issues emanate from the content of the material. As outlined earlier, the basic issues that have emanated from Nigerian musical video include;

- i) Issue of erotic content in words and pictures
- ii) Issue of nudity
- iii) Issue of suggestive dance steps
- iv) Issue of featuring minors with immoral dance steps
- v) Issue of vulgar lyrics

The contents of Nigerian musical videos ordinarily would not pose any threat but the perceived tendency to corrupt the viewing audience has made it an issue. The audiences are at the receiving end and the theory of Social Learning by Bandura states that “the audiences learn and derive knowledge from what they view on television and film” (Ike, 2005: 201). If this theory is assumed to hold water, the content of most Nigerian musical videos that are banned can constitute social vices in the society and corrupt the morals of the audience, especially children who are often considered as the future of tomorrow.

Some theories of edutainment do not perceive entertainment materials as being intended to corrupt the audience but primarily to educate, inform and entertain the audience through a single work of art. The theory of edutainment has been supported by scholars in the humanities. With regards the Social Learning Theory, music, when wrongly interpreted and appreciated will lead to erroneous conclusions and adoptions (Doki, 2006). In support of the edutainment theory, and with reference to the ban of musical video in Nigeria, Doki writes;

Most interjections into lyrical submissions are aesthetics meant to garnish the song. We must be careful in wholistically analyzing the total world of song to be able to fashion out meaning and sense in such song. Zule-zo for instance combines acting, dance and music to blend harmony and this, create some unique and fascinating pictures that must be explained in unison simultaneously. Misconception it was, that caused the ban on Zule-zo when they first sang “Kelewa”. The Nigerian Broadcasting Cooperation claimed the demonstration by Zule-zo of how the woman was made love to was pornographic (Doki, 2006:8).

The author in the above paragraph wrote a conclusion in defense of Zule-zo’s song “Ikpongo Tswar” and opined that a curious listener of Zule-zo’s Kelewa” should rather busy his

or herself with the theme of the song which is unfaithfulness by an adulterous woman, and not the contextual display of the act. To the author, the act of unfaithfulness by an adulterous woman is shameful and must be condemned, which is what the music track was concerned with. The contextual display in the content of the song “Kelewa” is mere aesthetics and should be appreciated as such.

The above submission justifies the theory of edutainment against the social learning theory. The Edutainment theory is based on a solid blend of core communication theories and fundamental entertainment pedagogy that guides the development of all interpretive programming. Infact, the social learning theory is a departure from the edutainment theory. It posits that people learn by observing others and the consequences of their behaviour. If the persons so choose, they then emulate the behaviour by rehearsing the action, taking action and comparing their experiences to the experiences of others, and then adopting the new behaviour. However, the theory of Reasoned Action dwells on the effect that one (an audience) should perceive before adopting behaviour.

The concept of eroticism relates to the wider meanings and connotations of the term, in that it clearly situates eroticism as a form of pleasure drawing on sexual sources but detached not only from the primary reproductive purpose of sex but from its more socialized functions such as creating relationships. Eroticism implies a conscious and deliberate concern with the subsidiary aspects of the sexual drive. Eroticism is often associated with heightening pleasures. Eroticism, put simply is a tool for human sex drive (libido). Nudity on the other hand is qualified as either exposed buttocks, or genitalia or general lack of clothing. Suggestive dance steps include movements of the body that depict sexual activity.

Considering the nature of eroticism, nudity and suggestive dance steps, it is evident to state that the selected societies in Africa like the Nigerian society consider acts that depict, promote or suggest sexual activities as inimical to the values of their people. To this end, the inclusion of eroticism, nudity and suggestive dance steps constitute an issue that is capable of inviting bans on musical videos in a country like Nigeria. The ban of musical videos for featuring minors with immoral dance steps and vulgar lyrics appears to be an action that expresses concern for children and adolescents who are considered a future generation. To the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), it is a step in a right direction targeted at safeguarding the Nigerian values.

Negative Effects of Corrupt Musical Video Watching on Youth Behaviour

Nigerian youths today spend more time watching videos than doing anything else. The watching of music videos has a great impact on the behaviour of teens in many ways on a daily basis. The effects of this are mostly negative. The negative effects of video watching and listening on teens are: the indecent way they dress and view their bodies, their language and accepted words and the way they want to try to live their lives (Lopez, 2012).

The extensive watching of videos has greatly affected the demeanor of dressing in female and male teens. For example, teenage girls flaunt around their bosoms with rumps hanging out of their clothing just because it is in the music videos, so they portray the same body image thinking that this is the trend. In addition, teenage males strut around with their pants sagging below their derriere and wear many chains around their necks trying to resemble a rap artiste. Music videos obviously give young male teens the illusion that having this particular image will bring them women galore.

Secondly, music video watching affects teens' language and their acceptance of it. As it is today, girls are accepting being called a "bitch" (a female dog) by the same or opposite sex because they see video women shaking and groaning in the video while being called that. The teenage girls little understand that the world bitch belittles them (which it does), so they smile while hearing someone say, "yeah, that's my bitch". Furthermore, music videos give male teens the impression that it is okay to disrespect women by calling them out of their name, because when the artist does it in the video, women don't object to it.

Thirdly, suggestive dance steps, nudity and erotic words and images do incite young men and women into sexual acts. It reveals to them the motion picture of sexual activity and creates an urge for sex in the youths, especially those who are feeble.

Finally, the use of minors in musical videos is only problematic when they are given roles of undertaking erotic and suggestive dance steps. First it corrupts the child in question and second, it portrays the child as a model to other children who will certainly emulate what they see and hear. Children copy what they see and hear faster than the adults and they easily become inclined to such things. Survey of children's parties in Calabar, Cross River State between 2004 and 2005 indicated that children easily sang and dance Zule-zo's *Kelewa* music with ease – a song that was later banned from broadcasting due to erotic lyrics and suggestive dance steps. In America, more than one-thousand scientific studies and reviews conclude that significant exposure to musical video images and erotic lyrical content increase the risk of vulgar behavior in certain children and adolescents (American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Public Education, 2013:342).

Conclusion

Quality assurance has remained a contemporary concern in most disciplines and the arts are not an exception. Practice in the work of arts demands immediate attention, not because standards are falling per se, but because of the dysfunctional roles they play in the society. Artistes, musical performers and singers must come together with all stakeholders in the musical industry to chart a way forward for achieving quality assurance. The incessant ban on broadcast of some musical videos in Nigeria by the National Broadcasting Commission is real. The ban has been occasioned by factors ranging inclusion of erotic lyrics and nudity to the use of minors and suggestive dance steps that are capable of corrupting the values and moral standing of the audience. This study establishes that there exist a strong influence of musical contents and lyrical context on the behaviour of the children, youths and other categories of audience even though such dysfunctional effects may not be intended by the musicians who are at the heart of the event.

This study therefore confirms the efficacy of Bandura, Ross and Ross's Social Learning Theory at the expense of other edutainment theories. The reactions of the artistes who condemn the ban of their musical videos from broadcast on Nigerian television and radio stations should be expected. This is certainly because the Nigerian musicians whose works are banned by the NBC do not believe that their erotic lyrics and suggestive dance steps with females as well as nudity factors corrupt the values of the viewing and listening audience. Most times, they expect that the theme of their musicals and the meanings embedded in the oral expressions should be cherished the more. The fact remains that there is more to what the eye sees and what the ear hears than what the mind thinks as far as music videos are concerned. Musical lyrics may not intend to offend the moral taste of the audience, yet the images thereof may do worse.

The NBC's actions are not out of place as far as this paper considers quality of the contents of Nigerian musical videos as issues to be given attention. The NBC is a regulatory body saddled with the responsibility of preventing "corrupt" musical videos from going on air on Nigerian Television and Radio Stations. If the relevance of the NBC was nothing to write home about, the commission would not have been in existence. Whereas the ban on selected musical video broadcasting may question the quality of works of musicians in the country and their intention thereof, the ban on broadcast of such works on television and radio stations in the country would invite a respectable measure of sanity in the moral standing of the Nigerian children, youths and other categories of audience.

It is the humble submission of this paper that the ban on broadcast of musical videos with nudity and suggestive dance steps on the Nigerian airwaves is quite commendable and should be sustained. The grievances expressed by the affected musicians and their fans over the banned musical video broadcasting should be addressed with caution. The freedom to broadcast such musical videos on satellite stations is an opportunity for the artistes to reach out to their fans because such platforms cannot be controlled by NBC. However, parents should intensify their policing strategies to keep watch over what musical videos their children are exposed to in order to stop them from the ones that can corrupt them. The NBC and National Film and Video Censorship Board (NFVCB) should work together with the Nigerian artistes to avoid production of "provocative" musical videos.

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Appendixes



Figure I: Excerpt from Timaya's *Shake Your Bum Bum*



Figure II: Excerpt from Tillaman's *Koma Roll*

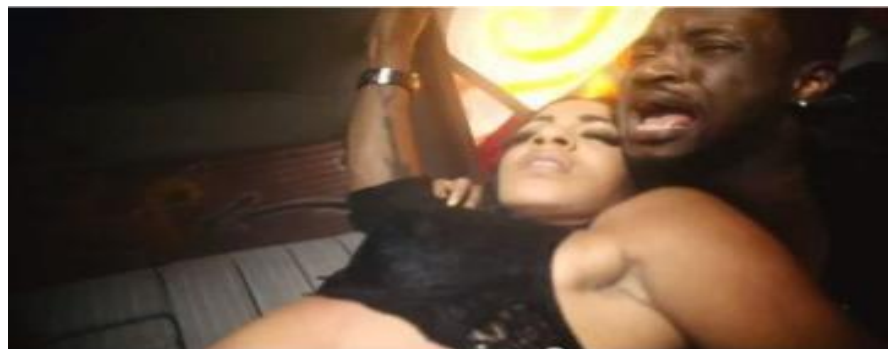


Figure III: Excerpt from PSquare's *Alingo*



Figure IV: Excerpt from Flavour's *Shake*



Figure V: Excerpt from Wande Coal's *Go Down Low*



Figure VI: Chuddy's *Brazilian Hair*