



Reinforcing or Challenging Stereotypes: Women's Portrayal in Music Videos by Selected Nigerian Female Musicians

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Abstract

Sexual objectification has been a recipe for desire and commercialization in music videos. The consumption of music videos garnished with sexual objectification of women by men has effects on the perception of music video viewers and the self-objectification of female artists. This study examines female musicians' (Tiwa Savage, Simi, Yemi Alade, Niniola, and Teni) portrayal of women in their music videos in Nigeria, as an opportunity to challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes. A mixed-methods research, including content analysis and observation, was employed to study 16 music videos purposively. Findings from the study revealed that female musicians/artists are also contributing to the objectification of women, presenting them as sexual and pleasing objects in their music videos. Hence, the portrayal of women in these selected videos is not significantly different from that of their male counterparts. It was expected that these female musicians would exercise moderation on themselves and their backup dancers, who are mostly women, especially in terms of dressing, sexually expressive gestures, and movement of women's body parts, which is common in most of the music videos.

Keywords: Women's Portrayal, Sexual Objectification, Female Artists, Female Musicians, Objectification Theory

Paper Type: Research paper

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Received: 17/07/2025; Received in Revised From 11/08/2025; Accepted: 29/04/2026; Available Online: 30/04/2026

Cite this document: Moses, Jude Melea, and Rahila Jibrin. 2026. "Reinforcing or Challenging Stereotypes: Women's Portrayal in Music Videos by Selected Nigerian Female Musicians." *The Journal of Society and Media* 10(1):180-201. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v10n1.p180-201>.



INTRODUCTION

Music videos have become an important part of the entertainment industry, such that every musician strives to complement their audio release with video production. Different genres of music videos have been developed with the advancement in technology. These music videos, in various formats, lengths, and contents, that integrate music with imagery have influenced societies in distinctive ways. The societal influences of music videos are shaped by commercialization and the desire of music artists to build fan reservoirs. Aside from using the power of the mass media, such as television, DVD, and internet-based videos to reach their audience, musicians have capitalized on certain talents and portrayals to achieve their desires.

It is noticeable that several talents are showcased in these videos and are portrayed differently. Estes-Wynne (2019) noted that the music industry has never treated women kindly. The industry wants them to look pretty and dress a certain way, to sing songs about love and nothing else. They want them to act a certain way, and if they do not, it becomes much harder for their voices or their music to be heard. Wallis (2010), in his analysis of gender roles in music videos, revealed that the stereotypical reinforcement notion that women are objectified as sex objects and men are portrayed to be aggressive, which means that different roles are assigned for both males and females in music video clips. No matter what the lyrics of the music are or what action is done in the music video, there is always a sexual undertone in the presentation of the image of the woman, especially by male producers, directors, and artists.

Men have been in the top echelon of the showbiz of music and music video around the world. Nigeria, the giant of Africa, has the most vibrant music industry in Africa. Götting (2021) noted that Nigeria's music revenue grew from \$26 million in 2014 to \$34 million in 2018, and by 2023, the revenue is expected to amount to \$44 million. The report shows a continuous yearly growth in Nigeria's music revenue. The men-dominated music industry in Nigeria includes popular genres such as indigenous, Pop, R&B, Fuji, Juju, Apala, Highlife, Waka, and Gospel but to mention a few. With the advancement in information and communication technology powered by the internet, the platform has opened a bigger opportunity for more women to be music artists, producers, and directors. The democratization of the ICT has allowed female artists to change the mostly seen portrayal of women in music videos as sex objects, which has gone a long way to influence the way people, in general, see women, how women see themselves, and how men view other women.

VanDyke (2011) noted that previous research has demonstrated that women are objectified and sexualized in music videos. Based on the empirical position that women, over time, have been portrayed as sex objects by male artists for promotion and commercialization, knowledge and population gaps exist in women's portrayal of women in selected music videos in Nigeria. Building on the theory of objectification, this study draws empirical conclusions about how female artists in Nigeria portray women in their music videos.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has one of the most vibrant music industries in Africa and globally. Sex portrayal in music videos is an indispensable part of music video culture in all genres of music videos in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Apuke and Jigem (2019) posit that most studies on the portrayal and objectification of women in music videos have been conducted in the United States. The researchers identified apparent knowledge and population gaps on how female musicians in Nigeria portray women in their music videos. Ali and Qamar (2020) focused on male sexualisation in music videos; McKenna (2006) focused on audience interpretations of the representation of women in music videos by women artists; Gunarathne and Rajendram (2020) studies the representation of women in Iraq's music videos with a key focus on Ashawari, Wassane Heene and Cleopatra & Aubrey Hopper and Mbure (2011) focused on the effects of sexual objectification of female artists in music videos on male undergraduates' sexual beliefs. Previous studies focused on women as sex objects and men as dominant characters, hence creating knowledge and population gaps on how African female musicians portray women in their music videos, an opportunity for them to change the narratives. This study draws an empirical conclusion not on how men portray and perceive women in music videos in Nigeria, but on how women (female musicians) portray and perceive women in their music videos.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine the character roles of women in the selected music videos. ii.
To identify the dress codes of women in the selected music videos.
- iii. To examine the expressive gestures employed in the selected music videos. iv.
To examine the presentation of women's body parts.

Nigerian Music Industry

The Nigerian music industry has witnessed unprecedented growth in revenue, quality of production, and the number of artists in the last ten years in Africa and globally. Like the story of the blind men and the elephant, the concept of music has been understood differently. Epperson (2022) noted that music is an art concerned with the combination of vocal or instrumental sounds for the beauty of form, or emotional expression, usually in line with cultural standards of rhythm, melody, and harmony. Epperson's definition of music is generic. Ludwig van Beethoven sees music as a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Leonard Cohen sees music as the emotional life of most people. Most definitions of music given by these musicians transcend the concept of music as art and having a soul of its own. The Nigerian Music industry has been able to create a soul of its own in Africa and beyond. The *Vanguard Newspaper* of May 26, 2022, posits that Nigerian music is one of the most acceptable genres of music in the world today.

The Nigerian Tribune Online reported on April 30, 2022, that Nigeria, with a population of over 201 million citizens, has over 109.2 million internet users, with 43 million active users of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. This large population has a positive impact on music video views across the entertainment industry. The growth of Nigerian music shows 30 percent of Nigerian alternative music being streamed in the US, and about 40 percent of Afropop streaming in the US, UK, and France. The Nigerian music industry leverages information and communication technologies powered by the internet to connect artists to fans and artists to labels (vice-versa). The Nigerian music industry with celebrated male artists such as Davido, Wizkid, Don Jazzy, Burnaboy and female artists such as Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, Simi, Teni, and Seyi Shay, but a few have increased both local and international collaboration in the last few years. Aside from the international collaboration of Nigerian artists like Wizkid Featuring Justin Bieber in *Essence* and Tiwa Savage featuring Brandy in *Somebody's Son*, 2021 had its fair share of international collaborations.

The music industry in Nigeria is growing in all areas, including the use of ICT, collaborations, fans, and acceptability. Adedeji (2016) shared the reason for the success of the music industry in Nigeria, quoting the words of an award-winning producer/artist ID Cabasa, "our music is sounding better and it's up to international standard, likewise in lyrics and content, we are growing in terms of acceptance...[and] in Africa we are the best, [while] in terms of the music

video we are growing". Music videos have been an important complement to music making. Since the commercialisation of music video in the 1980s, there has been a continuous array of commentary and analysis regarding its contents and forms. In Nigeria, like most countries, the desire of artists is not just to have a music track or song in MP3 format but to complete such a track with a music video.

Visual media content in music videos has lasting impacts on the lives of most lovers of music. With more than 100 music videos produced professionally and Do It Yourself (DIY), a new dawn in the production of music videos in Nigeria started in the early 1990s. Obioha (2022) said that to revolutionise the Nigerian Music video, *Super Sound* anchor, Cally Ikpe on NTA2 Channel 5 Lagos, encouraged quality and aesthetics in Nigerian Music videos. This saw the movement from playing only trending Western music videos in Nigeria to the creation of *Da New Live Beats*, in 1995, where American and Nigerian content were abundantly played side-by-side and live performances. Years down the line, the 2020s music video production in Nigeria has capitalized more on professionalism and international collaborations. Aside from just watching your favourite dance steps; Shaku-Shaku, Zanku, or Kpakujemu, or the latest trending fashion, the Nigerian music video industry has been fully dominated by men. That is since music videos have narrative and performances, the men-dominated directors and artists are tasked to set the tone for the video's look and feel; the set and settings, choreography, camera shots and angles, customs, dance moves, etc. these visual elements have an effect on the viewer. Role play in music videos is very important several studies have shown that women are portrayed as sexual objects by men artists (e.g. Urbina 1999; McKenna, 2006; Mbure 2011 & Gunarathne and Rajendram 2020). A dearth of knowledge exists on how women artists portray women in their music videos in Nigeria.

Gender Role, Women in the Music Industry in Nigeria

Men have dominated all areas of the music industry in Nigeria. Estes-Wynne (2019) posits that there are more male performers, producers, songwriters, studio engineers, etc. Amebo (2020) further posits that a 2020 study conducted by USC's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative for Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Chart found that women make up only about 2 percent of producers globally. Without any data from Nigeria and the rest of the continent – Africa. This clearly indicates that role-play in the music industry in Nigeria is still male-dominated. Producers, songwriters, and performers like, Tiwa Savage, Simi, Dunnie, Bloody Civilian, and Milakeyz etc are making

impacts in the music industry. Despite few women making impacts in different music roles, the gap between male roles and female roles is wide. The music industry in Nigeria has been dominated by men off-stage and female music producers are considered a novelty. Simi, one of the few Nigerian female producers and singer-songwriters Simi tweeted;

“To be honest, some of the things I’ve experienced—specifically as a woman— in this industry. They will try to pit you against other women; try to redefine your value, try to get in your head, and remodel your self-esteem. And I have even had it easier than many. It comes from all sides. That’s why I am with any woman who is winning in this industry—because [there are a lot of hurdles]. Women can hardly get away with the kinds of things many men in the same industry get away with on a [regular basis].”

This culture of male dominance in the off-stage role in play in the music industry in Nigeria has contributed to the portrayal of women in music videos. these roles have affected the portrayal in music videos in the country and the perception of music viewers' gender roles.

Portrayal is an indispensable music video culture. The antecedents of music production, direction, and performance have been dominated by men. This has given male artists, producers, and directors the power to decide on ‘role play’ in music videos. The set and setting, the kinds of shots, the storyline and most importantly, how men and women are portrayed. Several studies have shown male artists portraying women as objects of pleasure. With more women in Nigeria venturing into music in Nigeria a knowledge gap exists on how female artists portray women in their music videos.

Arugu and Ihejirika (2019) conducted a study on sexual objectification in online Nigerian pop music videos. The study aimed to identify elements of sexual objectification in online Nigerian music videos. A quantitative content analysis research method was employed by the researchers. 50 online Nigerian pop music videos were purposively chosen from a population of the top 100 online Nigerian pop music videos from 2014-2018. A coding sheet was used as the instrument of data collection. Findings from the study revealed the presence of sexual objectification elements in online Nigerian pop music videos. Sexual objectification was evident through the stomach, chest/cleavage, upper thigh, and buttocks revelation in shots and the female body parts were often on display. The study also revealed that sexual objectification patterns come

in the form of sexual gestures – women in the sampled music videos were seen to carry out self-touching which was predominantly seen among male artists. This supports the argument of most feminists who believe that when men are in charge, they reduce women to their physical appearances instead of their individuality.

Away from Nigeria, Ali and Qamar (2020) conducted a study on Male Sexualisation in Music Videos: A Critical Analysis under Nussbaum's Perspective of Objectification. Using the Objectification Perspective proposed by Martha Nussbaum and Rae Langton, the study aimed at examining male objectification in selected music videos. A content analysis was used by the researchers. Ali and Qamar selected Pop and Hip-hop songs from the top 100 of the Billboard Charts from January 2018 to December 2018. The findings indicated that 79.3% of the videos contained objectified portrayals of men, and that Hip-hop contained higher (59.7%) objectified portrayals of male sexuality than Pop music videos (40.2%). The study concluded that the male body was portrayed as sexually pleasant, lacking integrity, and portrayed as satisfying the desire of women just like how men see a woman's body in a music video.

Focusing on the portrayal of women, Gunarathne and Rajendram (2020) conducted a study on the representation of women in Iraj's music videos with special reference to Ashawari, Wassane Heene, and Cleopatra. The study aimed at a re-examination of the portrayal of women in Iraj's music videos with a focus on the bodies and sexuality of women. Content analysis was used by the researchers to sample three music videos produced by Iraj. The findings from the study showed that sexual imagery is a common feature of music videos. Furthermore, Iraj portrayed women characters in a stereotypical way through character roles and using different camera shots, movements, and angles.

Similarly, Hintz (2020) content analyzed the representations of women's bisexuality in American popular music from 2008 to 2018. The study aimed to close the empirical gap on the representations of women's bisexuality in American popular music. Content analysis was used to sample artists in the Top 40 Year-End Artists archives from Billboard's official lists from the years 2008-2018. The study revealed singles portrayed women/women narratives into the following three categories: 1) behavioral bisexuality, 2) stereotypes of bisexual women, or 3) romantic scenes of same-sex female attraction. Regarding gender expression, the study revealed that representations of bisexual women have been scarce and often negative.

To examine audience interpretations of the representation of women in music videos by women artists, McKenna (2006) focused on filling a methodological gap through the use of a qualitative survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on how young women perceive femininity in music videos. Six focus group discussions were conducted using 49 college students (43 young women and 6 young men) in their early 20s. Three music videos: Lindsay Lohan's "Over," Destiny's Child's "Soldier," and Jennifer Lopez's "Get Right" were reviewed by the college students. The findings from the study reaffirmed previous critical scholarship on the content of music videos that women are presented as sex objects and objectified body parts in music videos. Those portrayals of women function as unrealistic masculine fantasies, and the videos contain narratives that are about cultural expectations for femininity.

Urbina (1999) conducted a similar study on the representations of women in music videos. The study aimed at exploring participants' perceptions of music video representations of women using pre-test (survey), treatment (educational video), and post-test (survey) approaches. The study revealed that before viewing the educational videos, participants were already highly aware of the negative portrayals of women in music videos. They stressed that most of the respondents did not believe that the portrayals were actually characteristic of women. Furthermore, the study revealed that the majority of the respondents did not believe that music videos influenced their beliefs. Plus, some reported that the messages in country western and rhythm and blues videos portrayed women in a less stereotypical, more active, and independent light. However, the study concluded that the overall consensus was that most representations of women in music videos were demeaning.

Similarly, VanDyke (2011) conducted a study on race, body, and sexuality in music videos. The focus of the study was to examine whether the bodies and sexuality of women in music videos were portrayed differently based on their race. Content analysis was employed by the researcher to sample 47 R&B/Hip-Hop, and Pop music videos gathered from the YouTube online collection using the Billboard music charts of 2009 and 2010. The study revealed that black women are more sexualized than white women, and both races of women are much thinner than average. However, contrary to previous studies, the study had more Black than White male and female characters. The implications of these results, as noted in the study, include the idea that Black women may internalise video messages about beauty and sexuality, and that Black men and White individuals may form inaccurate and harmful ideas of Black femininity because of music video images.

Apuke and Jigem (2019) conducted a review of existing studies on the portrayal and objectification of women in R&B/hip hop and pop music videos. A purposive method was used to select 62 articles out of 250 articles collected from July 2018 to October 2018. Data sources for the study included Web of Science Collection, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Google databases. The unit of analysis was the abstracts and conclusions of the retrieved studies. Findings from the study indicated that a large number of the reviewed studies used content analysis and objectification theory. Most of the studies reported that female artists are more sexually objectified, held to stricter appearance standards, and are more likely to demonstrate sexually alluring behaviour in music videos. This sexual objectification was more prominent in R&B/hip hop and pop videos than in country videos. Further studies by Ravijojla (2008) and Aubrey, Hopper & Mbure (2011) provided empirical insight into the effect of sexuality on college men and the portrayal of lesbian bodies in music videos.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on the theory of objectification and feminist theory. The theory of objectification proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts in 1997 justified the portrayal of women as 'sexual objects. Gunarathne and Rajendram (2020) noted that the theory of objectification provides an important framework for understanding, researching, and intervening to improve women's lives in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body and equates a woman's worth with her body's appearance and sexual functions. Several studies have concluded that the male-dominated music industry has commodified women's bodies as sexual objects without regard to their personality and dignity. This inequality is one of the key arguments in feminist theory. This was obvious in a 2020 study conducted by USC's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative for Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Chart which found that women make up only about 2 percent of producers globally. Hooks (2000) noted that the feminist theory is a belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes. And the goal of feminism is to challenge the systemic inequality women face on a daily basis, including in the music industry in Nigeria. The desire of Feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, Maya Angelou, and Mary Wollstonecraft is to create a better world where nobody is denied opportunity or respect as a result of their gender. That is, a woman can be a music producer, director, performer, and writer without opposition.

Calogero (2012) posits that sexual objectification plays out most obviously in two ways: (1) actual interpersonal encounters and (2) media encounters. The media encounter exists as prime-time television programs, sports programs, television commercials, cartoons, and animation, the Internet, music videos, music lyrics, video games, magazines and newspapers, cell phone applications, and billboards. Fredrickson and Roberts identified self-objectification as the first psychological consequence to emerge among girls and women as a result of living in a sexually objectifying cultural environment. That is because women are portrayed as sexual objects and hence, they tend to see themselves as such.

METHODS

This study employed content analysis and observation research methods to examine the portrayal of women by female musicians in Nigerian music videos. Both content analysis and non-participant observation were employed to ensure that the researchers collect data by watching and recording events and behaviours in the selected music videos as they are, without manipulation. A non-probability sampling technique was employed to purposively select five female musicians, who were: Tiwa Savage, Simi, Yemi Alade, Niniola and Teni. The choice of the music artists was based on their airplay, award nominations, awards, performances, hit songs, and features. 16 music videos were collected – two from each artist. These female music artists are some of the bests with a strong fan base around the world and have contributed to the growth of the music industry in Nigeria. The selected music videos were due to the interactions generated on their official YouTube videos: likes, comments, shares and the fact that these music videos are not features/collaborations, especially with male artists. The researchers downloaded official videos of these female artists on YouTube and saved them in folders bearing the names of the artists. The complete videos of these female artists were watched and observed through the lens of content categories. The researchers focused on the qualitative aspect of sexual objectivity. These 16 music videos were watched scene-by-scene before analysing the videos. Some content variables on the content categories were personally designed, some were modified and used from the works of Gunarathne and Rajendram, (2020) and Calogero (2012).

Table 1.

SN	Content Variable	Conceptualization
1	Character role of women	There are various character roles women played in the music videos such as seducer, lover, back-up singer, and back-up dancer.
2	Dress codes of women	These are the various dressing wears women wear in the music videos, such as shorts, short skirts, tight pants, transparent clothes, bra, and bikinis.
3	Nonverbal gestures	These are the various nonverbal gestures employed by female artists in music videos, such as sexy dance steps, kissing, tonguing, eye-rolling, lap sitting, tweaking, and pole dancing.
4	Presentation of women's body parts.	These are the various body parts of women presented in music videos, such as the belly, buttocks, thigh, and hips, breast, and cleavage.
5	Others	These are categories that did not fall under any of the abovementioned content categories.

Content Categories and Conceptualization

The table below shows a total of four female artists, including Tiwa save, Simi, Yemi Alade, Niniola, and Teni, who were purposively selected, and 16 music videos that were content analyzed. The table revealed the total number of views, likes, and comments as of July 10, 2025. Music videos by Yemi Alade (Jonny), Tiwa Savage (All Over), and Teni (Case) have the highest number of views during this period (Note: the "M" stands for millions and the "K" stands for thousand).

Table 2.

Values	Tiwa Savage				Simi			Yemi Alade				Niniola				Teni				
	All over	Koroba	You4Me	Pick up	Duduke	Ayo	Logba logba	Stranger	Jonny	Bum Bum	Amazing	Tomorrow	Omo Rapala	Koniyo	All eyes on	Case	Power	Lanke		
Views	92 M	20 M	2.4 M	8.8 M	81 M	15 M	7.3 M	1.9 M	17.4 M	5.3 M	1.3 M	10 M	1.1 M	3.3 M	2.5 M	3.4 M	6.0 M	28 M	1.1 M	1.5 M
Likes	29.9 k	19.4 k	48 k	49 k	51.3 k	91 k	51 k	32 k	82.7 K	3.1 k	10.5 k	52 k	7.3 k	18 k	8.8 k	1.3 k	2.9 k	12.2 K	1.6 k	8.2 k
Comments	9.7 k	4.3 k	1.3 k	2.3 k	18 k	4.3 k	1.4 k	1.5 k	30 k	7.3 k	40.7 k	2.8 k	3.7 k	82.1	3.1	4.7	1.0 k	5.2 k	5.4	3.3

Female artists and music videos

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character Role of Women

The findings from the Character Role of Women in the selected Nigerian music videos predominantly portray women as backup dancers and are depicted through a sexualized lens. One of the frequently observed roles is that of a *seducer*, which is seen across music videos of Teni (Case, Power Ranger, Lanke and No Days Off), Tiwa Savage (All Over, Koroba and Stamma), Yemi Alade (Jonny, Amazing Grace and Lipeka), and Niniola (Maradona and Omo Rapela). These

portrayals by female artists in their music videos prioritize women's physical appearance rather than individuality. The prevalence of women being portrayed by female artists in their music videos contributes to the objectification of women, where their values are tied to their physical attractiveness rather than their talents. These findings further support the arguments of McKenna (2006) and Gunarathne and Rajendram (2020) that music videos portray women as sex objects and objectify their body parts in music. These findings show that women, to a certain level, have accepted the idea that women's primary values lie in physical attractiveness and sexual appeal. This further suggests that women are often prioritized for the satisfaction of others, especially men, even among women themselves. The picture below is a screenshot from Niniola's video, Maradona:

Picture 2.



A screenshot from Niniola's music video, "Maradona" with women seducing their lovers

For instance, the music videos by Teni (Case) and Tiwa Savage (All Over) are examples of female music artists acting as seducers. These female artists employed both verbal and nonverbal communication techniques in these music videos. Teni's music video (Case), which was produced by Jaysynths and released in 2018 and the accompanying video in 2019, directed by Director K revolved around a lady doing all it takes for her to seduce or get the attention of her guy:

I slap police for your case o
 I go to war for your case o
 I go to court for your case
 I climb the bridge for your case o
 Enter water for your case o
 I punch judge for your case o
 Anything you want baby, get for you baby

Like most of the music videos, Teni, Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, and Niniola were able to achieve their roles as seducers of mostly men through first sexual movements where they use their body language, dance steps, and other physical expressions to convey their attraction and intimacy for their lovers. Second, these female music artists were also involved in flirtatious behaviors such as playful, teasing, and a call for one to enjoy life and be happy. Third, the atmosphere in these music videos, such as the settings, lighting, and the shooting, was also crafted and selected on purpose to convey a sexual or intimate ambiance. The implication of female artists portraying women as seducers in their music videos is not in any way different from the way male artists portray women in their music videos. This means that female artists, to an extent, have internalized themselves, especially their bodies as objects of sexual appeal among their audience, especially the men. Further findings also indicate that these female artists portrayed women as mostly backup dancers. Below is a screenshot from the music video *All Over* by Tiwa Savage:

Picture 2.



A screenshot from Tiwa Savage's music video, "All Over", with all women backup dancers

This further stressed the narrative where women are performers in the background, enhancing the main act (female artists). This finding contradicts the dominant narrative that male artists are always the primary performers while women as the secondary performers to a case where women are both the primary and secondary performers in the selected music videos. While some female artists, including *being picked up by Tiwa Savage*, had also had men as backup dancers,

they had modest dressing (without exposing their body parts) compared to backup female performers.

Dress Codes of Women

Findings indicated that “short skirts/blouses” and “short pants” are the commonly observed dress codes worn by women in the selected music videos. The findings also indicated that “Bras” are also relatively common among these female artists, with “Bikini” being the least common dress code among these artists. For instance, the screenshot from the music video “Bum Bum” by Yemi Alade shows both the main performer and the backup performers, who are women are putting on very short pants, exposing their thighs. The same dressing code is observed in most of the music videos, including “lanke by Teni” and “All Over” by Tiwa Savage:

Picture 3.



A screenshot from Teni's music video, “Lanke” with women putting on bras, pants and shorts

Picture 4.



A screenshot from Yemi Alade's music video, “Bum Bum” with women putting on shorts

In Nigeria, women's dressing is a reflection of culture, identity, and heritage across different ethnic groups. In northern Nigeria, for instance, women are known for their long garments, wrappers (Zani), and headscarves meant to cover all parts of their bodies. The Yoruba people of western Nigeria are known for their iro (wrapper) and buba (blouse) and they frequently use the

headscarf. Similarly, the women in southern Nigeria, including the Igbos, are known for the wrappers, blouses, headscarves, and bead-wearing. These are dress codes that are considered morally acceptable in the country, and not the ones in most of the music videos that expose the bodies of performers in various ways. The wearing of skimpy skirts or pants or a bra or a bikini, only about an inch longer than their pants, for social activities, is considered immodest. The implication of these findings could be tied to market demands and objectifications. The choices of these cloth codes by the female artists could be tied to the producers' desires and audience expectations. The consistency in putting on short pants, short skirts/blouses and bras could further suggest the prevailing trend or a successful formula in the music industry for female artists in the country. Putting on these short wears by these female artists and their other performers will further draw the attention of the viewers to specific body parts such as legs, buttocks, and other parts over the talent and the song's message, reducing these women to collections of desirable parts, instead of whole individual that encourages male gaze, inviting the consumption of women bodies as sexual.

Expressive Gestures

Findings on the non-verbal gestures employed by female artists in their music videos show that twerking and sexy dance steps are the most frequent gestures occurring across most of the videos, including music videos by Tiwa Savage ("Koroba" "Stamina" "Pick Up"), Yemi Alade ("Jonny," "Bum Bum," "Amazing Grace," "Lipeka"), Simi ("Ayo," "Logba Logba," "Stranger"), Niniola ("Maradona," "Omo Rapala," "Koniyo" "All Over"), and Teni ("lanke"). Findings also revealed the performers involved in caressing, tonguing, eye rolling/gazing and kissing/pecking. The music video, *Lanke* by Teni, below shows exposed body parts and women twerking:

Picture 5.



A screenshot from Teni's music video, "Lanke" with women exposing their body and twerking

These findings highlighted the prevalence of sensual and expressive gestures, tweaking and sexy dance steps among female artists, suggesting a significant emphasis on sexuality and physical expression in the music videos of these female Nigerian artists. This could imply that these gestures are employed to keep the "male gaze", attract attention, convey confidence or align with the desire of the producer or the popular cultural trends in the music industry. To support the visual sexual gestures with words, Niniola in her song further stressed that *Your ikebe super, na hin scatter my medulla*, which can be translated as *your big buttock/backside has blown my mind*, and the voice of a male performer from Teni's music video, Alanke: *...omo, them dey twerk oh* (they're twerking)! The choices of gestures by these female artists can influence viewers' perceptions of their music videos, personality, and core messages. While the prevalence of gestures such as twerking and sexy dance steps could reflect broader trends and demands within the music industry, which is male-dominated, to exhibit their level of boldness and dynamism in performance, these gestures tend to be considered immoral in traditional Nigerian settings. The different gestures employed by these female artists show that non-verbal cues are an integral part of how female artists convey messages, emotions, and their persona to their viewers.

Presentation of women's body parts

The findings on the presentation of women's body parts by the selected female artists indicated that exposed cleavages were frequently observed in the music videos, followed by the thighs and hips of the female performers. The study also observed the prevalence of exposed bellies among the performers. These female artists, Yemi Alade, Teni, Tiwa Savage, and Niniola, in the selected music videos exposed these body parts. For instance, Yemi Alade in the music video "

Amazing Grace ", appeared in two sets of attire first was in a suit without an inner, which left the cleavage showing, and in the second dress, it was a see-through material with an emphasized open cleavage, with part of the breast showing. Her back-ups are in open chest shirt, breast cleavages showing. The image below is a screenshot from Teni's music video *Lank*.

Picture 6.



A screenshot from Teni's music video, "Lanke" showing a woman exposing part of her breast and cleavage

The observed dominance of exposed cleavage, thighs/hips and belly, show the presentation of women's body parts among these female artists as significance theme in the selected music videos. This could indicate the normalisation of focusing of these women body parts to potentially influence societal perceptions of female attractiveness, or sensuality. These findings concur with the argument of Ozor and Onuoha (2018) that ladies, especially female music artists expose their body parts, include wearing tight and trousers generally known as "low waist" which make them to expose their buttocks, while the "show belle" expose all their stomachs and pubic hair. The presentation of these body parts by female music artists in their music videos tend to have several implications for sexual objectification of women. The frequent observation of exposed women's body parts such as cleavage, thighs/hips, and belly, rather than women as whole individuals, can contribute to the sexual objectification of women. These findings fragment a woman into individual parts, reducing her to a collection of desirable physical attributes. Not only is the repeated presentation women's body parts by female artists can further normalise the "gaze" that focuses on audience evaluation of women based on their physical attributes rather than their personality, intellect, or other latent qualities, it is reinforcing the self-objectification of women, where these women internalise this manifest perspective and start to see themselves primary in terms of their physical attractiveness to others. This can have negative consequences for mental health, body image, and self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

The study explores women's portrayal in music videos by selected Nigerian female musicians. Through the use of content analysis and observation, the foregoing discourse shows that female artists' music videos are not significantly different from their male counterparts in the portrayal of women. Female musicians are also found to contribute to the objectification of women, presenting them as sexual and pleasing objects in their music videos. This portrayal is not a far cry from that found in male artists' music videos. Based on these, this study concludes that female artists also depict women as sexual and pleasing objects. It was expected that female artists would exercise moderation in the portrayal of female backups, particularly concerning dressing and bodily movements, to avoid accentuating body contours, which is prevalent in most music videos.

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