

## **Sexual Objectification in Music Videos on Self-Perception among Lead City University Female Undergraduates**

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### **Abstract**

*The constant barrage of images in today's world can significantly impact how people view themselves, particularly for young women exposed to media saturated with unrealistic beauty standards. Exposure to sexual objectifying content in music videos may not only influence the way these women think and feel about their bodies but may actually cause them to perceive their bodies differently. The study examined the influence of sexual objectification in music videos on self-perception among Lead City University female undergraduates. Feminist Theory and Social Cognitive theory provided the theoretical framework for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted, and 370 respondents were randomly selected to form the sample. A self-structured questionnaire was used to gather the data. The collected data were presented and analysed using descriptive and linear regression. The results obtained revealed that majority of the respondents (68.1%) agree that there are various forms of sexual objectification such as women shown in revealing clothing, camera angles in music videos focusing on women's bodies rather than their faces and women in music videos being portrayed in sexually suggestive poses. The study revealed that majority (76.6%) of the respondents perceive themselves moderately, they think very well of themselves, but in moderation, a balanced self-perception. The study*

*recommends incorporating value lessons in course units in academic majors like Theatre and Arts, to educate potential producers in the industry on proper treatment and portrayal of women.*

**Keywords:** Body image, Female undergraduates, Music videos, Self-perception, Sexual objectification

**Word Count:** 232

## **Introduction**

The intricate interplay of beliefs and evaluations individuals hold about themselves plays a pivotal role in shaping personal identity and well-being, particularly among female undergraduates navigating the complexities of higher education (Palenzuela-Luis, Duarte-Clíments, Gómez-Salgado, Rodríguez-Gómez, & Sánchez-Gómez, 2022). Self-perception involves how individuals understand, assess, and interpret themselves and their experiences. It includes various facets such as beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours.

This self-awareness is fundamental in forming one's identity, self-esteem, and social interactions (Harris & Orth, 2020). Central to this self-concept are perceptions of body image, self-worth, and social roles, all of which can be significantly influenced by external media portrayals. In popular culture, music videos often perpetuate sexual objectification, portraying women primarily as objects of physical appeal rather than multifaceted individuals and this phenomenon raises compelling concerns about its impact on the self-perception of female undergraduates (Danthinne, Giorgianni & Rodgers, 2020).

Exposure to sexually objectifying content in music videos may not only impact how women think and feel about their bodies, but could also lead them to view their bodies in a different light. This is especially significant, as these changes in self-perception may heighten negative

comparisons and intensify unfavourable self-evaluations between their own appearance and societal beauty standards (Saeed & Al, 2021). Objectifying content conveys the message that women are valued mainly for their physical appearance, positioning them as sexual objects. When women internalise these cultural ideals, they may come to anticipate being judged based on such gender-stereotyped standards, leading to self-objectification, viewing themselves primarily as bodies to be observed and assessed by others (Danthinne, Giorgianni & Rodgers, 2020).

Exposure to objectifying media could impact women's ideal or perceived body size, or both. Alternatively, it might simply heighten awareness of the differences between these two perceptions without actually altering them (Rounsefell, Gibson, McLean, Blair, Molenaar, Brennan, Truby & McCaffrey, 2020). The constant barrage of images in today's world can significantly impact how people view themselves, particularly for young women exposed to media saturated with unrealistic beauty standards where individuals internalise the external gaze and begin to view themselves primarily through the lens of appearance and this self-objectification can lead to negative consequences for body image and self-esteem (Calogero, 2012). Sexual objectification is referred to as the visual fragmentation or dismemberment of a woman's body into an assemblage of body parts or the perception of a woman as a docile and dormant body that appeals sexually to the onlooker who ignores the personality behind the body while valuing and understanding the body part(s) or the body as the essence and total representation of the being in focus (Calogero, 2012). It can also be referred to as the treatment of women as objects or commodities that can be used, manipulated, or consumed for the benefit or pleasure of others, especially men (Oberiri & Lingbuin, 2019).

Seeing another person as an object, or as less than fully human, essentially denies that individual's mental capacities and moral worth.

Women may come to view their bodies not as an expression of their true self, but rather as sexual objects (Mahon & Hevey, 2021). This harmful mindset can lead to ongoing issues like low self-esteem and depression. In almost every music genre, countless music videos feature scantily dressed women whose sole purpose is to serve as eye candy or to appeal to men (Mundy, 2024).

This is a troubling issue in the media entertainment industry, as the way music artists depict women in their videos can shape how women are perceived and treated. These videos often imply that it is acceptable to view and treat women as sexual objects (Bordoloi & Srimathi, 2021). In many music videos, women's role is often limited to dancing, appearing provocative, and implying sexual interest in men. Movies, music videos, and television often emphasise women as sexual objects rather than as individuals, which can negatively impact society. This portrayal helps create social stereotypes for both men and women, potentially leading to unhealthy social behaviours and physical habits (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008).

The issue is especially widespread because as sexually explicit content featuring women becomes more prevalent in the media, people tend to accept it as reality. Consequently, the media has the power to influence society's perceptions of what is considered ideal (Danthinne, Giorgianni & Rodgers, 2020). The notion is that the representation of women in contemporary music videos, particularly in Nigerian music videos, could contribute to the negative perceptions of the female gender. It is important to concentrate on women specifically, not as an expression of bias, but because research in this area has often focused on females. Some examples of such music videos are: Koroba by Tiwa Savage, Bounce by Ruger, Rush by Ayra Starr, Calm Down by Rema, Bum Bum by Timaya, Pawon by Olamide, Looking Yansh by Flavour, Declan Rice by Odumodublvck. This focus arises from the recognition that women are the most objectified gender in both society and media

(Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). The common perspective is that objectification involves two parties: the one doing the objectifying and the one being objectified. Typically, the subject directs an objectifying gaze at a woman (the object), who is unable to escape this gaze, as it is pervasive and ever-present (Gutiérrez & Ubani, 2023). Sexual objectification is not only when a woman is shown naked or scantily clad, or when women are made to perform suggestive gestures in view of arousing the heterosexual male audiences. The phenomenon is more complex than is often construed.

This is so as it may involve camera position, camera movement, picture composition, montage, stereotypes and social structures, among others. Objectification is evident in a media product (say a film, an audio-visual/print advert or a musical video) when emphasis is made not on the personality of the actors (who are part of the production), but on their bodies or body parts. In such context, the bodies of these actors are evasively presented as objects of desire and our source of sexual pleasure for the potential audience. For example, when camera angle or movement is made to focus principally on the natural graces and the sexuality of a female character in a film scene or in a film sequence, thereby presenting these parts of her body as sources of sexual pleasure for the voyeur, sexual objectification is made evident (Peterman, 2024).

The term "male gaze," introduced by a feminist film theorist, describes the objectification and devaluation of women in media from a heterosexual male perspective. This concept has deep roots in art, film, and advertising, and it reinforces damaging gender stereotypes while restricting female empowerment and self-expression (Man, 2024). The masculine gaze effects have a significant impact on society, typically manifesting as cultural attitudes and actions. It reinforces conventional gender norms, body image problems, and unattainable beauty standards. Women experience pressure to conform to the fanciful caricatures of themselves, either directly or indirectly. This ultimately

causes a number of problems that have long-lasting effects on the psychology of society as a whole as well as the mental health of those who are exposed to the particular representations (Magazine, 2023).

Exposure to the male gaze in media can have detrimental effects on women's self-perception, self-esteem, and mental health, leading to problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and tendencies toward self-harm (Man, 2024). Moreover, the active approach is reinforced by emphasising the male gaze, which perpetuates the notion that men benefit from the power imbalances between genders and sustains sexism in countless situations. Numerous facets of gender inequity stem from the portrayal of women as inheriting the passive position. This contributes to the emergence of various forms of gender discrimination and the ongoing perpetuation of sexism across a wide range of areas (Magazine, 2023). This viewpoint extends beyond merely observing women; it includes male-dominated cultural norms and patriarchal ideologies that influence our understanding of reality. This kind of gaze frequently turns women from active, sentient people with agency into passive objects of desire. It marginalises women's agency and viewpoints while continuing to objectify and sexualise them. This means that women are frequently represented as submissive, dependent, and just existing for the pleasure or affirmation of men.

Beyond the media, the male gaze has an impact on how women view other women and themselves. It extends far beyond individual women; it permeates society as a whole. The male gaze contributes to structural inequalities and fosters negative gender stereotypes by giving women false and objectifying portrayals. It brings about a culture in which women are constantly judged based on their appearance, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. This not only impacts women's mental health but also restricts their opportunities for personal development. Furthermore, the male gaze normalises toxic masculinity

by upholding patriarchal ideologies that prioritise men's desires over women's autonomy. This is exemplified by men staring at women, which objectifies them and reduces them to mere objects of desire. It is crucial for individuals to acknowledge the harmful consequences of such behaviour and to actively confront it (Man, 2024).

Martha Nussbaum, a contemporary philosopher, identified seven dimensions of objectification: instrumentality (treating someone as a tool for one's own purposes); denial of autonomy (lacking self-determination or autonomy); inertness (being devoid of agency or activity); fungibility (being interchangeable with others of the same kind); violability (having boundaries that lack integrity and can be violated); ownership (being capable of being owned or traded); denial of subjectivity (viewing the person's feelings or experiences as unimportant or irrelevant) (Santonniccolo, Trombetta, Paradiso, Rollè & Roller, 2023). Sexual objectification is even made more evident when the images of women sexuality have nothing to do with the message the film, music director or the author of the media product wants to portray in that given instance (Endong & Emike, 2023). Reducing individuals to categories and labels can strip away their complexity, freedom, and humanity. This process of sexualisation is often harmful; for example, consistently portraying women in a sexualised manner can depict them as underachievers and inferior (McKee, Attwood, Smith, Mercer & Paasonen, 2021). Entertainment is a significant component of media content that captures audience attention and fulfills various aspirations. This includes a range of media formats such as music videos, dramas, talk shows, current affairs, documentaries, and more, all designed to entertain viewers. Importantly, mediated entertainment serves multiple purposes, aiming not only to amuse and engage individuals but also to provide various cognitive benefits.

For this reason, people show that they actively choose the kinds of media content that they are entertained with. This selecting process

incorporates a variety of goals, including escape from an unpleasant environment, mood change, and time-killing purposes. In this context, music stands out as one of the most popular and favoured forms of entertainment, consistently capturing significant attention (Qamar, Pasha & Ali, 2021). Music videos have long been a powerful medium for artistic expression, entertainment, and cultural commentary (Oberiri & Lingbuin, 2019).

An increasing trend of sexual objectification is evident in music content, especially in motion pictures, consumer culture, and music videos. Such media often depict women as sexual objects, frequently alongside unrealistic portrayals (Qamar, Pasha & Ali, 2021). These depictions play a major role in shaping societal norms and influencing personal perceptions. The representation of women in music videos has come under scrutiny, especially concerning their objectification (Oberiri & Lingbuin, 2019).

Moreover, society has come to accept the half-naked, sexualised, and instrumentalised depictions of women as normal and socially acceptable, as reinforced by media portrayals and content (Levy, 2019). A music video is a short film that combines a song with visual imagery, created for marketing or artistic purposes (Gutiérrez & Ubani, 2023). Music videos can evoke strong, automatic cognitive effects in viewers, often leading to stereotypical behaviour. They can also contribute to the normalisation of gender violence and reinforce gender stereotypes in both girls and boys (Peterman, 2024).

Music videos are a key part of the media, as they captivate young audiences by reflecting various aspects of contemporary culture. Through audio-visual effects, they showcase trending lifestyles, dances, music, and language, which enhances their appeal to youth. Often featuring themes of sex and love that emphasise sexuality, these videos expose young viewers who are the primary audience to sexually

objectifying elements that can encourage observational behaviors like self-objectification (Arugu, Ihejirika & Nwachukwu, 2021). Music videos offer some of the most striking examples of the sexualisation of women (Sánchez-Vizcaíno, Cancelas Ouviña & Fonseca-Mora, 2023). Music videos can lead both men and women to adopt an objectifying gaze, and exposure to such content can have harmful effects on women (Karsay, Matthes, Platzer & Plinke, 2017). One issue may be that the music industry is largely male-dominated (Wang, 2021). Music videos can alter the criteria by which women are assessed and influence how they perceive themselves (Karsay, Matthes, Platzer & Plinke, 2017).

The sexual objectification of women in music videos can be traced back to the emergence of Music Television (MTV) in the early 1980s, which popularised the genre of music television and increased the demand for visual and sexual appeal in music production and consumption (Peterman, 2024). Since then, music videos have become a dominant and influential form of media entertainment, especially among young people, who are exposed to various genres and cultures of music that often portray women as sexualised, submissive, and stereotypical objects for male pleasure and domination (Oberiri & Lingbuin, 2019).

Music videos play a significant role in disseminating social and cultural values. It is no surprise that people's views, habits, and beliefs are related to music videos, often in unfavourable ways. Research has shown that music videos can affect how women feel and think about their bodies. For instance, among female adolescents, music videos that emphasise physical beauty have been found to increase body dissatisfaction. Additional studies have identified a positive correlation between the time spent watching music videos and the emphasis on appearance and weight concerns among adolescent girls, as well as their desire to be thin. Other research suggests that consuming music videos may be positively linked to depressive symptoms and anxiety,

while also negatively impacting body esteem and confidence in traditionally male-dominated areas (Saeed & Ali, 2021).

The predominant picture in most music videos is that of a wealthy man in control of a group of half-naked women. This is illustrated in a way that suggests possessing and managing these ladies, as though they were incapable of thinking for themselves. As a result, the majority of music video clips nowadays use sensual pictures of women to advertise their films and indirectly support the idea that women should have slender bodies.

Women's images are commodified in music videos, as directors often find that using these images can boost sales. Typically, they focus on slender and partially nude women to attract viewers' attention. As such, it is believed that the film and music industries have a significant impact on how individuals perceive things. This suggests that music videos are a significant type of mass communication (Oberiri & Lingbuin, 2019).

The sexual objectification of women in music videos can have various effects on the self-perception of female undergraduates, who are a specific group of young women who are undergoing important developmental and transitional stages in their lives. Some of the effects can be negative, such as body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, eating disorders, depression, and anxiety, which can result from the internalisation of an observer's perspective of their bodies, leading to self-objectification (Qamar, Pasha & Ali, 2021).

Other effects can be positive, such as resistance, empowerment, and diversity, which can emerge from the development of media literacy skills, the creation of alternative or counter-narratives. Understanding the complex interplay between music videos, objectification, and young women's self-perception is crucial for developing interventions

and educational programs aimed at promoting healthier self-esteem. Therefore, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the sexual objectification of women in music videos has an influence on self-perception among female undergraduate students of Lead City University in today's media-saturated society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Music videos often present women in ways that prioritise physical appearance, sensuality, and appeal over individuality, intelligence, and personal achievements. These portrayals commonly embody the "male gaze," a concept where women are visually framed and evaluated from a male perspective, reducing them to objects of visual pleasure rather than acknowledging their full humanity and diversity. This perspective may not only limit the roles and characteristics assigned to women in media but may also promote a narrow and unrealistic standard of beauty and behaviour. Such representations, repeated across various music genres and platforms, may contribute to shaping societal norms and can have profound effects on viewers' perceptions, especially young women in formative stages of self-identity. For female undergraduates, a critical demographic in their development of self-concept and self-esteem, the impact of objectifying imagery may be particularly influential. Exposure to these portrayals may contribute to internalising societal expectations, leading to increased self-objectification and a distorted self-image. This distortion may, in turn, affect their mental health or social interactions. However, despite research on media's influence on self-perception and body image, there is an absence of research specifically focused on how exposure to sexual objectification in music videos influences self-perception among female undergraduates. This gap is particularly significant given that this demographic is at a critical developmental stage where self-identity and self-worth are actively being shaped. Consequently, it remains unclear to what extent exposure to sexually objectifying content may influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours regarding their own bodies and

self-image. Understanding this impact is crucial, as it may reveal unique psychological effects that differ from those observed in other age groups or demographics, thereby providing valuable insights for targeted interventions and media literacy efforts. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of sexual objectification in music videos on self-perception among Lead City University female undergraduates.

### **Research Questions**

The study answered three questions which are:

- i. What are the forms of sexual objectification in music videos?
- ii. To what extent are female undergraduates of Lead City University exposed to sexual objectification in music videos?
- iii. How do female undergraduates at Lead City University perceive themselves?

### **Theoretical Review**

Many theories have been proposed in order to provide a solid foundation to understand the relevance in examining the different aspects of objectification of women. As a result, theories including Feminist Theory and Social Cognitive Theory were found to be suitable for comprehending objectification of women.

### **Feminist Theory**

The Feminist Theory emerged from the collective efforts of several scholars and activists who critically examined the intersection of media, gender, and social justice. Some key contributors to this theory are: Jonathan Beller, Katrina Brown, Patricia Ticineto Clough. These scholars, along with others like Dina Gadia, Cindy Gao, Marina Gržinić, Orit Halpern, Rosanna Irvine, Katie King, Deborah Levitt, Negar Mottahedeh, Roya Rastegar, Catherine Sameh, and Manuel Vason, have collectively shaped Feminist Media Theory. Their critical interventions bridge media studies and feminism, inviting engagement

with justice-oriented perspectives across various disciplines and communities (Beller; Brown & Ticineto Clough, 2018). Drawing from feminist perspectives, this theory examines how media representations contribute to gender inequality and objectification. The theory is a branch of media studies that applies feminist perspectives and critiques to the analysis and production of media texts, practices, and institutions. Feminist theory aims to challenge and transform the dominant and oppressive representations of women and other marginalized groups in media, as well as to promote and celebrate alternative and diverse forms of media expression and participation (Cham, Harp, Loke & Bachmann, 2018). Furthermore, Feminist Theory can suggest ways to resist and subvert the objectification of women in music videos, such as by developing media literacy skills, creating feminist media content, and engaging in media activism (Sue, 2007).

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Albert Bandura introduced Social Learning Theory in the 1960s, which later developed into Social Cognitive Theory in 1986. This theory proposes that learning occurs within a social framework through a dynamic interaction between an individual, their environment, and their behaviour. Social Cognitive Theory is unique in highlighting the influence of social factors alongside both external and internal reinforcement. It explores the various ways people acquire and retain behaviours, as well as the social contexts in which these behaviours are enacted (LaMorte, 2022). According to the theory, learning happens through imitation, modelling, and observation and is impacted by a variety of elements, including motivation, attention, attitudes, and emotions.

The theory takes into account the interaction between environmental and cognitive elements that affect learning. The theory proposes that individuals learn by observing the outcomes of others' actions.

Bandura's approach extends beyond behavioural theories, which argue that behaviours are learned solely through conditioning, and cognitive theories that consider factors like attention and memory. People observe behaviours directly through social interactions or indirectly via media. Actions that are rewarded are more likely to be copied, while those met with punishment tend to be avoided (Cherry, 2022). According to the Social Cognitive Theory, individuals learn by observing others. Female undergraduates can watch and internalise the behaviours, appearances, and attitudes of female artists portrayed in these videos. When women observe other women being objectified, reduced to their physical attributes and sexualised, they learn that such behaviour is acceptable or even desirable.

They may imitate the behaviours they see in music videos and if they witness objectification, they might internalise it as a norm, affecting their own self-perception. The Social Cognitive Theory emphasises attention, retention, and motivation as key factors in learning. Women pay attention to music videos, retain the images and messages, and are motivated to emulate what they see. Observational learning involves vicarious reinforcement, that is, learning from the consequences experienced by others. When artists receive praise, fame, or success for their objectified portrayal in music videos, it reinforces the idea that objectification leads to positive outcomes and women may seek similar reinforcement by conforming to these norms.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. This is because, the research design proved the most suitable for the study. The population of the study for the research study involved 4,987 female undergraduates of Lead City University, Ibadan. This data was gotten from the office of the Central Registration Unit of the university. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select 370 female students. This technique was employed because it enabled the

researcher to obtain a sample that best represented the entire population being studied. The sample was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Data was collected through a self-designed structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved through on-site paper and pen completion. In all, 370 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 354 copies were found to be valid for analysis.

## **Results and Findings**

**Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents (N=354)**

| S/N | Variable       | Category   | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1   | Age Range      | 15 - 20    | 129       | 36.4       |
|     |                | 21 - 26    | 186       | 52.5       |
|     |                | 27 & above | 39        | 11         |
| 2   | Level of Study | 100        | 71        | 20.1       |
|     |                | 200        | 95        | 26.8       |
|     |                | 300        | 128       | 36.2       |
|     |                | 400        | 44        | 12.4       |
|     |                | 500        | 16        | 4.5        |

Findings revealed that in terms of the age range of the respondents, the table shows that 129 (36.4%) are within the age range of 15-20 years while 186 (52.5%) fall within the age bracket of 21-25 years making respondents within this age range majority. Furthermore, the table also revealed that only 39 (11%) of the respondents were 27 years and above. The level of study showed that 128 (36.2%) were third year (300 level) students making them the most participants, second year (200 level) students at 95 (28.8%). A total of 71 (20.1%) were first year (100 level) student while 44 (12.4) were fourth year (400 level) students and finally, 16 (4.5%) were 500 level students, making the last two levels the least respondents in the study.

**Research Question One:** What are the forms of sexual objectification in music videos?

**Table 2: Forms of sexual objectification seen in music videos by undergraduates of Lead City University (N=354)**

| S/N | Variable                                                                                                | SA              | A                | N               | D              | SD             | M       | Std. Dev |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|----------|
| 1   | Music videos often feature women in revealing clothing.                                                 | 80<br>22.6<br>% | 161<br>45.5<br>% | 77<br>21.8<br>% | 29<br>8.2<br>% | 7<br>2%        | 3.<br>8 | 1.0      |
| 2   | Women in music videos are frequently portrayed in sexually suggestive poses.                            | 87<br>24.6<br>% | 157<br>44.4<br>% | 68<br>19.2<br>% | 32<br>9%       | 10<br>2.8<br>% | 3.<br>9 | 1.0      |
| 3   | The camera angles in music videos often focus on women's bodies rather than their faces.                | 93<br>26.3<br>% | 138<br>39%       | 66<br>18.6<br>% | 46<br>13<br>%  | 11<br>3.1<br>% | 3.<br>7 | 1.1      |
| 4   | Music videos often depict women in ways that suggest their value is based on their physical appearance. | 86<br>24.3<br>% | 151<br>42.7<br>% | 62<br>17.5<br>% | 39<br>11<br>%  | 16<br>4.5<br>% | 3.<br>7 | 1.1      |
| 5   | Women in music videos are often shown performing sexualised dance moves.                                | 96<br>27.1<br>% | 138<br>39%       | 67<br>18.9<br>% | 35<br>9.9<br>% | 18<br>5.1<br>% | 3.<br>7 | 1.1      |

**Source:** Field Survey (2024) (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation)

Table one presents the forms of sexual objectification of women in music videos. The table revealed that on the form of sexual objectification where women are shown in revealing clothing, 241 (68.1%) of respondents agreed that music videos often portray women

in revealing clothing, 77 (21.8%) of the respondents could neither agree nor disagree whether women are indeed shown in music videos in revealing clothing, while 36 (10.2%) of the respondents did not agree that music videos often show women in revealing clothing as a form of sexual objectification. For sexually suggestive poses as a form of objectification, 244 (69%) respondents reported that women often make sexually suggestive poses in music videos, this means that majority of the respondents were exposed to this form of sexual objectification of women in music videos. 68 (19.2%) of respondents could not say whether or not they were exposed to this form of objectification. Finally, 42 (11.8%) of the respondents said they were not exposed to this form of sexual objectification of women in music videos. Another form of sexual objectification that was measured is the focus on women's bodies in music videos, which had 231(65.3%) respondents saying they were exposed to such form of objectification, making them the majority. Again, 66 (18.6%) of respondents did not know whether or not they were exposed to this form of objectification, while 57 (16.1%) said they were not exposed to this kind of objectification.

A further look at the analysis of the various forms of sexual objectification of women in music videos revealed that, on placing value on women based solely on physical appearance, 237 (67%) of respondents agreed that they were exposed to this kind of objectification, while 62 (17.5%) of the respondents could not take a stand as to whether they were exposed, and 55 (15.5%) of respondents said they were not exposed. In terms of showing women in music videos performing sexualised dance moves, 234 (66.1%) of respondents reported to have been exposed to it, while 67 (18.9%) could not tell whether they were indeed exposed or not to this form of objectification. 53 (15%) of the respondents said they were not at all exposed.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent are female undergraduates exposed to sexual objectification in music videos?

**Table 3: Extent of exposure of undergraduate students of Lead City University, Ibadan to sexual objectification of women in music videos (N=354).**

| S/<br>N | Variable                                                                                                                  | SA              | A                | Mea<br>n | Std.<br>Dev |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| 1       | I am aware of objectification of women in music videos such as, the use of scantily clad women as background dancers.     | 80<br>22.6<br>% | 161<br>45.5<br>% | 3.8      | 1.0         |
| 2       | I think the objectification of women in music videos affects how women are treated in society.                            | 87<br>24.6<br>% | 157<br>44.4<br>% | 3.9      | 1.0         |
| 3       | I think unrealistic beauty standards are promoted in music videos.                                                        | 82<br>23.2<br>% | 156<br>44.1<br>% | 3.7      | 1.0         |
| 4       | I think music videos often portray women in an objectified manner.                                                        | 93<br>26.3<br>% | 138<br>39%       | 3.7      | 1.1         |
| 5       | I think the objectification of women in music videos is more prevalent in certain music genres (Hip hop, Afro Pop, Alte). | 96<br>27.1<br>% | 138<br>40.7<br>% | 3.7      | 1.1         |

**Source:** Field Survey (2024) (SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation)

A look at table 3 indicates that 80 (22.6%) of respondents are highly exposed (Strongly Agree) to the objectification of women in music videos such as, the use of scantily clad women as background dancers while 161 (45.5%) of the total respondents said they were moderately (Agree) exposed to this form of objectification. Again, 87 (24.6%) of respondents strongly agreed that they are highly exposed (Strongly Agree) to how the objectification of women in music videos affects how women are treated in society, while 157 (44.4%) stated that they were moderately exposed (Agree).

Furthermore, 82 (23.2%) of respondents say they were highly exposed (Strongly Agree) to the unrealistic beauty standards promoted in music videos while 156 (44.1%) say they were moderately exposed (Agree). The table also revealed that music videos often portraying women in an objectified manner saw 93 (26.3%) of respondents say they were highly exposed, while 138 (39%) of respondents agreed that they were moderately exposed. 96 (27.1%) of respondents said they were highly exposed (Strongly Agree) to objectification of women in music videos in certain music genres (Hip hop, Afro Pop, Alte). while 138 (40.7%) of respondents said they were moderately exposed (Agree) to it.

**Research Question Three:** How do female undergraduates at Lead City University perceive themselves?

**Table 4: How female undergraduates perceive themselves (N=354)**

| S/<br>N | Variab<br>le            | Categori<br>es | Frequen<br>cy | Percenta<br>ge (%) | Mean   | SD  |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|--------|-----|
|         | <b>Self- perception</b> |                |               |                    |        |     |
| 1       |                         | High           | 38            | 10.7               | >57.13 | 3.9 |

|   |       |          |     |      |                           |      |
|---|-------|----------|-----|------|---------------------------|------|
| 2 |       | Moderate | 271 | 76.6 | >39.42<br>-<br><57.1<br>3 | 2.6  |
| 3 |       | Low      | 45  | 12.7 | <39.41                    | 2.4  |
|   | Total |          | 354 | 100  | 48.27                     | 8.85 |

**Source: Field Study (2024)**

Table 4 shows an analysis of how Lead City University female undergraduate students perceive themselves. The results reveal that 38 (10.7%) of respondents perceive themselves highly, that is they think highly of themselves compared to the rest of the respondents. Furthermore, the results revealed that majority 271 (76.6%) of the respondents perceive themselves moderately, they do think highly of themselves, whilst in moderation. Finally, 45 (12.7%) of respondents exhibited low self-perception according the findings.

The implication is that these respondents think lowly of themselves and would be most susceptible to the influence of sexual objectification of women in music. Overall, Lead City University undergraduate students were found to have high self-perception, with just a fraction of students possessing low self-perception based on the field data. The implication is that sexual objectification of women in music videos did not significantly influence undergraduates' self-perception, those who had higher exposure to sexual objectification of women in music videos had higher self-perception.

### **Review of Literature**

Existing literature decries the increase in objectification in the media and the society's silence, stating that the unchecked trend could hurt the youthful population and impact their self-worth through their self-perceptions (Arugu & Ihejirika, 2019). Hip hop music is increasingly

popular among Nigerian youths. This paper examined how undergraduate students perceive the portrayal of feminine identity in selected Nigerian hip hop music videos, with a focus on how the perception of this depiction influences female gender identity. The study collected data from two hundred open-ended copies of a questionnaire administered to students and six sessions of focus group discussions conducted among undergraduate students of Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State.

The study detailed how Nigerian hip hop music videos help to reinforce gender stereotypes by portraying women as sex objects, career women, materialistic, causes of family problems, and as individuals who are unfaithful in relationships. Findings of the study showed that the lyrics and scenes in these videos have negative implications for the perception of public self-concept of women and perception of feminine identity among Nigerian undergraduate students. (Ibanga, 2019). A study explored the themes of subjugation and objectification of women in Nigerian films produced in the 21st century, assessing whether the portrayal of women had evolved with the new millennium. The research aimed to investigate the extent of women's subjugation and objectification within Nollywood films during this period. Researchers focused on films released between 2000 and 2021 featuring women in leading or supporting roles, interviewing eleven film professionals and coding twenty-two films. The findings revealed that, while 21st-century Nigerian films did not significantly portray women as subservient, sexual objectification remained prevalent. Women were often depicted in ways that emphasized their physical appearance and sexual allure (Ejem, Nwokeocha, Abba-Father, Fab-Ukozor & Ibekwe, 2022).

A study examined how women are portrayed in Bangladeshi media and the societal views on their involvement in media. The researchers found that women are often depicted as commodities for commercial

purposes, with their attractiveness or glamour seen as the primary requirement for hiring. The informants noted that the media industry's lack of professionalism often overlooks women's intellectual contributions. Additionally, female models are predominantly evaluated based on their physical appearance rather than their qualifications. The research highlighted a notable occurrence of sexual harassment within the media industry. The findings revealed that older individuals tend to hold negative views regarding women's participation in media, while younger individuals have adapted their perceptions to align with contemporary media portrayals of women as sexual objects, though they often lack respect for the profession (Yeasmin, Heme, Mumu, Aktar, Nizam, Hossain & Shohel, 2024).

There is no significant influence of sexual objectification of women in music videos on self-perception among Lead City University female undergraduates. Results revealed that sexual objectification had no significant influence on self-perception. The implication is that sexual objectification of women in music videos did not significantly influence undergraduates' self-perception, those who had higher exposure to sexual objectification of women in music videos had higher self-perception. This result contradicts what is obtainable in existing literature, as many of the studies reviewed found sexual objectification to negatively impact self-perception. Undergraduate female students of Lead City University were found to be moderately exposed to the many forms of sexual objectification of women in music videos. Those who were exposed to sexual objectification of women in music videos had higher self-perception.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to find out the influence of sexual objectification in music videos on self-perception among Lead City University female undergraduates. The study found that sexual objectification of women in music videos was found to be alarmingly prevalent in different

forms, and majority of the respondents agreed that they were indeed exposed to the many forms as discussed previously. The results also showed the extent to which respondents were exposed to objectification, from highly exposed to moderate, with a few respondents stating they were not exposed or unable tell whether or not they were exposed. Undergraduate female students were seen to have high, moderate and low self-perception, with those in the moderate category being the majority. Sexual objectification was found to have significantly influence female undergraduate students' self-perception, whilst in a positive way. The more the exposure to objectification, the better was the self-perception of the respondents.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Objectification of women and its many forms has been seen to be very rife in music videos as seen in the results of the analysis. Although the result does not align with previous findings, there is need for more decent and dignified portrayal of women in not only music videos, but including movies, skits and other media as previous literature show it is harmful.
- ii. Using research to inform policy, this study findings can be used to educate the stakeholders involved in the formation policies that affect content creation. There has been dramatic increase in the number of content creators, many of whom are uninformed or uneducated and come up with contents without discretion. Using evidence-based approaches and research data to train these people could go a long way in sanitising the content that is available to the public for consumption.
- iii. Incorporating value lessons in course units in academic majors like Theatre and Arts, Music etc. could go a long way in educating potential producers in the industry on proper treatment and portrayal of women whenever they decide to produce any

content that features women, and strengthen in future actors a set of values that could help them protect the dignity of women while engaging in acting and content production.

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