



AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (AJIRI)

ISSN: 2833-2237 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2 (2022)



PUBLISHED BY: E-PALLI, DELAWARE, USA

Documenting Nigeria's Hip hop Music Evolution in Nollywood: an Examination of Tunde Kelani's Campus Queen

Wale Adedeji^{1*}

Article Information

Received: August 13, 2022

Accepted: August 23, 2022

Published: August 30, 2022

Keywords

*Nollywood, Hip hop, Music
documentation, Popular Music,
Popular Culture, Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

It has been established that the Nigerian music industry has grown tremendously in recent times through the popularity and dynamism of the Hip hop genre, which has positioned itself as the mainstream music presently. Likewise the Nigerian film industry now referred to as Nollywood is credited as the fastest growing film industry and rated the third largest film industry in the world after Hollywood and India's Bollywood and currently accounts for an estimated N 853.9 billion (\$7.2 billion) or 1.42 percent of Nigeria's GDP. This paper establishes the interface between popular music culture (hip hop) and Nollywood through the notion of documentation with a highlight of how Hip hop music is being documented in Nollywood formative years either consciously or un-consciously. The paper adopts a qualitative research method with an in-depth analysis of music in the movie-Campus Queen. The research concluded that a piece of recorded music can be considered a document while the existence of Hip hop music in Campus Queen attested to the fact, thus making Nollywood a veritable source to assess and analyse popular music genre.

INTRODUCTION

It is an incontestable fact that, there exists synergy between music and drama, and by extension with the audio-visual format of dramatic presentation which is the film medium. The seamless relationship between music, theatre and performance especially within the African cultural practise has been documented through various research and scholarly outputs in terms of literature (Omojola, 1989; Somade, 1999; Dosunmu, 2005). In the African traditional performance sphere music and dramatic presentation can always be viewed as a single entity which also include the art of dance. In the Yoruba culture nearly all dramatic enactment is always embedded or riddled in music and dance which explains why the word music has no single linguistic translation in the Yoruba language "but rather different words describing a variety of activities through which music is performed. We have words like *orin*' (songs) '*orin kiko*' (singing) *ijò-jjó*' (dancing) '*eré*' (play or act), '*seré*' (to entertain) and *eré-sise*' (performance). All these words describe a compendium of performances which encompasses various acts ranging from instrumental performance, oral poetry and singing to dancing". (Adedeji, 2010). This further establishes the seamless synergy between music and the totality of theatrical performance.

The traditional presentation of dramatic narratives to the audience through stage (live) presentation has been happening for centuries, while music has been playing functional and complimentary roles in these performances over the years. The advent of audio-visual technology in the form of video camera created a new vista for dramatists and playwrights to start writing specifically for the screen in which actors now perform for the camera in different locations, after which the recordings are now put together at post-production stage through editing. The final product is now referred to as

a movie (film) that can be screened for the audience at the cinema, placed on movie streaming platform online or packaged in other physical media like DVD, VCD, or Blu-ray for home viewing.

In the same vein, it should be noted that the importance of music in film production cannot be over-emphasised as the role music has played over the years in stage play production continued in its audio-visual counterpart- the film in a more sophisticated manner. However, for the record the role of music in films can either be functional or technical and in the simplest term music can be used in movies to serve the following purposes among others: (i) To depict moods, (ii) To establish a location or place, (iii) To establish a particular historical period (past or future), (iv) For transitional purposes, (v) Pre-figuring / to run commentaries, (vi) To create special effects, (vii) To introduce a particular character (Sylvanus & Obiocha, 2017; Makhu, 2010).

Background to the Nigerian Film Industry (Nollywood)

Nollywood is the term popularly used in reference to the Nigerian film industry, and the connotation became widely used through the media from the 1990s when the home video films became popular. These films called home videos made on VHS tapes and later the VCD became the norms as popularised through films like *Living in Bondage* (1992). It should be noted that the Nigerian Film industry was in existence before the advent of "Nollywood" having evolved from the Travelling theatre era as popularised by the likes of Hubert Ogunde, Moses Olaiya, Oyin Adejobi, Ade Love Afolayan among other theatre practitioners. The prefix travelling is as a result of the modus-operandi of these groups as they move from one town or city to another and used various technical devises in creating performance venues at palace courtyards, market squares, football pitches, town halls

¹ Department of Performing and Film Arts Elizade University Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State, Nigeria.

* Corresponding author's e-mail: walemanblackbeat@gmail.com

etc for the presentation of their dramatic pieces (Barber et al., 1997; Clark, 1980; Jeyifo, 1984).

The travelling theatre troupes metamorphosed into television productions in the 1960s after the advent of the television in Nigeria in 1959 situated in Ibadan, the then capital city of the Western Region of Nigeria. Among popular travelling theatre group with television drama of that period which traversing from the 1970s through the early 1990s include Ogunde Theatre, Oyin Adejebi Theatre, Awada Kerikeri Group, Ajimajasan Theatre and many more. The television drama era evolved into film production as being popularised by Hubert Ogunde in Films like *Aye* (1980), *Jayesinmi* (1981) *Aropin Nteniyani* (1982). The early era of film making in Nigeria witnessed production of celluloid films which involves huge budgets, technical personnel sourced abroad and also post production of the film abroad. Therefore only a few among myriads of theatre troupes were able to venture into film making at this period.

Economic downturn also took a swipe on the theatre industry during the military regime as most television stations witnessed a cut in their subventions and could no longer sustain drama productions while celluloid film production also became a huge economic risks for those that have been into it. The need to find a conduit for getting their creative art to the audience when the television is no longer feasible while going back to travelling era is un-fashionable and retrogressive, gave birth to the home video (film) industry through one of its earliest release by Isola Ogunshola Group titled *Aje Ni Iya Mi* (1989) through an electronics dealer at Alaba Market in Lagos who dubbed the finished movie on a retinue of his unsold blank VHS tapes. The economic potential this portends through the sales of the VHS tapes encouraged the trader to commission those already in the industry for a movie which he financed and produced, and now used his trading and marketing capabilities to prepare a distributing network in Lagos and the Eastern part of Nigeria for the video. This birthed the release of *Living in Bondage* by Kenneth Nnebue in 1992. The success of *Living in Bondage* signalled a new phase in the Nigerian film industry in terms of home video and its continuous productivity translated to what is now called Nollywood.

Background to Nigerian Hip hop Music Scene

Nigeria has a rich music culture ranging from Folk/traditional music, Art Music to the Popular Music genre. Among the popular music style in Nigeria are, Highlife, Juju, Fuji, Afrobeat, Gospel and Hip hop which has gradually become the mainstream popular music in Nigeria at the moment based on the genres popularity and youth appeal. The music takes its cue from its American counterpart –an African-American originated music culture which evolved and originated from The Bronx, New York. The Nigerian Hip hop scene have gone through various stages, formation and reformation traversing the formative developmental to the consolidatory stages. As expected of a borrowed

culture (though hip hop has been traced to its African roots /nexus in Yoruba chants and oral poetry), the genre started as an imitation of its American counterparts in terms sounds and cipher during that era when its players were struggling for recognition in the Nigerian popular music sphere.

At that earlier stage of Nigeria's Hip hop the audience perceived the style as foreign and non-comprehensible while the genre suffered from minimal radio play. One of the major means the players at that time devised in sustaining the genre to ensure its popularity was to infuse local content into it through the use of Nigerian languages in which Yoruba language played a major role through code-switching. Secondly they employed music syncretism by combining the sounds and flavour of already established popular music styles like highlife and fuji to create a unique hip hop sub-genre the called Afro hip hop (Adedeji, 2017). While describing his type of music in 2008, hip hop artiste Sound Sultan shed more light on this while corroborating the Africanity in Nigerian Hip Hop:

Afro-hip hop plays more on the 'afro' part, if you look at hip hop out there it's an African thing as most of the people doing hip hop are blacks (and they are originally from here) so hip hop has to do with the black culture. In Nigeria you have to represent where you are coming from and the 'afro' defines Africa, in a nut shell it qualifies the hip hop here in Africa by putting a lot of African content in it (personal interview 2008).

Some of the major songs that established Afro-Hip hop on the mainstream music scene among others were "Sakomo" by Remedies (1998), "Shake Bodi by Trybesmen (1999) and "So Di" by Baba Dee (2002).

OBJECTIVE, METHOD AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Music and its relationship with film or cinema has always being an object of interest to scholars and in most cases researchers within Nollywood studies have been keen in examining the expected function of music and sound in film, the technicality of producing music for films and in some instances the use of movie soundtracks for identity formulation in Nigerian home videos (Sylvanus & Obiocha, 2017; Sylvanus, 2018; Marku, 2010) This work however has a specific focus on interrogating hip hop music against the backdrop of Nollywood through the concept of documentation.

The objective is to establish the existence, actuality and the state of hip hop music at the era when Campus Queen movie was produced. By this credence and notion, it becomes glaring that through Nollywood the Nigerian Hip hop music genre is being documented for posterity while the evolution and development of Nigerian hip hop can be read and cited.

The work employed the qualitative research method as the work is textual based and qualitative in nature. Primary source of data used is the original movie of Campus Queen with a critical audio-visual content analysis while

secondary sources also includes the bibliography method in which relevant literature about the subject matter was gathered physically through journal papers, books and digitally through online sources.

This paper is premised within the document theory based on the definition of a document as proposed by Briet (1951/2006) and as advanced by Lund (2009). The conventional dictionary described and defined document in two ways as a noun being a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record and as a verb being a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record. In the simplest explanation, document is a proof to the existence of something or phenomenon while Breit (1951/2006) asserted that “a document is evidence in support of a fact” and goes further to explain that a star, a pebble rolled by a torrent or any living animal cannot be regarded as document but if photographs or catalogue of stars or stones are made available in the museum while that of animals are catalogued and shown in the zoo, they become documents.

Buckland (2013) also asserted that documents are concerned with evidence and evidence implies facts, although the meaning is constructed in the mind of the observer, even where facts are concerned. However, he believes that documents can have multiple aspects and divided it into four among which we have the Media types or aspects which denotes various types of expressions like texts, images, numbers, diagrams, art, music and dance, under which the primary discussion of this research can be situated.

Lund (2009) explained further that the ascribed meaning to the concept of document emanated and evolved from its Latin predecessor “documentum” denoting something held in hand or a piece of written evidence that primarily relates to a model, lecture or teaching which also makes an oral lecture or any form of instruction a document. He also provided a “complementary” theory of documents, positing that documents have three simultaneous, inseparable, and complementary aspect which are: the technical and technological aspects of documents, the social roles of documents as well as the mental or intellectual aspects which denotes the relationship between an individual and a document. It is not imperative that a single document possess all the three features to be regarded as one but his argument is that a document can be viewed simultaneously as a physical, social, and mental (intellectual) phenomenon.

In the vein of the discussion hitherto, this work situates and conceptualise the Hip hop music used in the film *Campus Queen* as documents and engaged in its content analysis as such. The specific music piece in the film is a proof of evidence that hip hop music exists at that moment in the history of Nigerian popular music culture and its isolation and examination in the movie as objective of this research is a proof in support of that fact.

The Movie *Campus Queen* and Hip-hop Music Documentation

The movie was written by the prolific literati- Akinwumi Isola while it was directed and produced by Tunde Kelani for Mainframe Productions. The movie centres on youth activities within the university campus during the military regime and emphasised the importance engagement in meaningful and positive activities by youths in their spare time. According to the storyline, there were two major associations or “posse” within the City University campus, one is Neo-liberal in principle –The Silverline Movement whose major objective is to fight for justice and seek redress for oppressed residents of the university community using any means necessary with a highlight of their affinity for music and dance productions on campus.



Figure 1: The *Campus Queen* Poster (BellaNaija.com)

The Silverliners has Ladele as their arrowhead, a charismatic, calculative and intelligent student with a lot of creative output played by Lanre Fasasi (Sound Sultan). The other club called the Heavy Weights is an un-registered association of lads headed by Toks (Segun Adedija) a spoilt brat with a lot of money to throw around whose major aim is to claim supremacy on campus by using his gang to control most economic activities in City University through extortion, force and violence. Their modus-operandi and activities are shrouded in secrecy and cultish they oppress, extort fellow students and terrorise them into submission through blackmail, rape and often murder to exert their supremacy to ultimately control campus politics and economy.

Two major players were caught in the web of these activities of the two clubs, we have Banke (Serah Mbaka)-a young female Law student with an inquisitive mind who renounced her allegiance to the Heavyweight and teamed up with the Silver Lines Movement, after discovering that her childhood friend Toks tries to pimp her out to get money for the Heavy Weights club he is presiding on. On the other hand we have the military governor of the state (Tope Idowu) accused of corruption and being surrounded with associates whose major aim is to enrich themselves by diverting state's money into imaginary projects through the support of the governor who is also helping himself with the loot. The governor got himself immersed in Banke's dangerous game which has the

coatings of a love entanglement when the latter agreed to assist the Silver Liners in taking down the corrupt military governor. Little did ‘The Governor.’ know that Banke was performing a little ‘experiment’ with him by playing along in exploiting the affection he showered on her as regular visitor to his guest house while she rather snoops for incriminating documents on the governor to authenticate Silverliners’ claim of his corrupt practises.

Analysis of Music in Campus Queen

While the narratives of Campus Queen is youth driven, the film maker also employed the use of a youth driven emergent music culture of that period- Hip hop to complement the movie and establish a commendable sonic aesthetics. For the record the original soundtrack inclusive of the theme song was written and produced by Lanre Fasasi (Sound Sultan) who at that time was an upcoming Hip hop artiste and all the songs were also performed by hip hop artistes featuring Sound Sultan, ElDee (Trybesmen) Faze (Plantashun Boyz) and EshTv, Da Natives, Shaded Thots, Spyder and CeCe. The analysis and discussion are hereby arranged thus:

Hip hop as Document and its Existence Established through the Soundtracks

Having established the theoretical base for this work earlier based on the documentation theory and concept, the major focus in analysing the film media of Campus Queen is in establishing that the Hip hop music featured in the film is a document and the film established the existence of hip hop music in Nigeria in the early 2000s when the film was produced. Every other aspect of hip hop music being examined is an offshoot of this basis and major postulation.

Glocalization Trend in Hip hop Established through Yoruba Language

The Hip hop music genre has become a global phenomenon with its evolution in Bronx with its influence and spread across the continents of the world. Youths are naturally drawn into hip hop music through exposure to global media via satellite television and cultural exchange and travels facilitated by what we now refer to as globalisation. Globalisation is the interconnectivity of people and activities at the highest level notwithstanding the distance or regional boundaries indicating the possibility of looking at the same thing at the same time in a synchronised manner irrespective of the difference in location (Adedeji, 2011). However, there has been an argument of hegemonic undertone in the globalisation phenomenon as there is a possibility of cultural domination. In recent times the concept of ‘glocalization’ has come up whereby one can be global and still be local at the same time. According to Britannica “glocalization [is the] the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic system”. Hence it is a way of subscribing to a global trend or

concept while stamping your own cultural identity unto it through appropriations and other means.

In this instance, the blossoming trend of glocalisation in Nigerian hip hop was recorded and documented in Campus Queen movie through the pattern of the music featured in the movie which thrives on the appropriation existing Nigerian music styles like highlife and Yoruba folklore and the use of code-switching dominated by the Yoruba language. As observed ‘the ... [Nigerian hip hop] has passed through different phases, the most notable being the use of indigenous languages in place of African-American “Ebonics” rapping. This has, in no small measure, stamped hip-hop on Nigeria’s music landscape, especially with its appropriation of well-known musical styles such as highlife and fuji, thereby “Nigerianizing” the genre. (Adedeji, 2013). This trend created a hybrid music a Nigerian sub-genre of hip hop which was to later take the Nigerian hip hop scene to the world stage based on its own unique peculiarities.

Documentation of Hip hop Fashion and ‘Street Look’

Hip hop is regarded as a culture and a way of life which transcends the music. Hip hop heads over the years have constantly define and re-define the elements and pillars to this culture which includes; MC (cypher/rap), D-J, Street Arts (graffiti), Break dancing (B-boys and B-girls), Street knowledge and of course Street fashion (the street look). The legendary Hip hop group Run-DMC has been credited for establishing and projecting hip hop’s trademark “street” look with their adoption of Adidas tracksuits and lace less shell-toed sneakers as their signature gear in their hey-days.

This was actually documented in their 1985 hit song. “My Adidas.” which led to a formal endorsement deal (the first of its kind) between Adidas and Run-DMC. (Guzman, 2019). Hip hop culture and the sportswear world ultimately fostered a strong bond with collaborations between artists and major brand while rappers have also creatively influence urban street wears by establishing their couture and dictating fashion trend through spotting their gears in their videos. The rappers Jay Z’s Rocawear and Puff Daddy’s Sean John couture readily come to mind here.

The Campus Queen movie presented an ample documentation of the fashion trend surrounding the hip hop culture of the early 2000s through the youthful characters that featured and also performed music in the film. The fashion sense that characterised the late 1990s was predominantly in the form of baggy jeans, oversized t-shirts, flat bill baseball caps and do-rags/ bandana, sports jerseys, sneakers and boots. This style became the trademark of many rappers like Wu-Tang Clan, Snoop Dogg, Dr Dre and Naughty by Nature with this fashion sense spilling over to the early 2000s when the Campus Queen was produced. This fashion trend was adequately portrayed by Ladele (Sound Sultan) and other characters who were hip hop artistes like Faze and EshTv performing music within the movie.



Figure 2: EshTv (Left) and Sound Sultan (Right) sporting Hip hop fashion of the early 2000s (Screenshot from the movie Campus Queen –Youtube.com)

Documentation of Socio-Political Consciousness in Nigeria's Hip hop

One of the strong points of Rap/Hip hop culture when it started in the Bronx is the consciousness of the message as the genre stood as a tool to resist oppression and marginalization of the African-American community both politically and economically. Majority of the music performed in the movie supported the political undertone of the film. The song “Ojeeje” decried the endless journey of the Nigerian youths into the world of un-certainties where un-employment is on the increase and cost of living not affordable for the so called working class. In ‘Never mind it’ the youth presented the scenario of the country falling while the populace has no choice but relocate abroad. It also delves into the complicity of our leaders in crude oil theft with foreign explorer which has in no small measure contributed to impoverishing the nation- in short, they emphasised that while the masses go hungry without food the Governor's belly is protruding with over-feeding!

“Gen Gen” is another classic song in Campus Queen which satirises the political history of Nigeria by putting her major players-the military and the civilian cohorts on the spot. In this particular soundtrack Nigeria's political history and its arrowheads were likened to actors on the stage of the country's political platform with an admonishment to the people to be wary of political lies in the transitional period. In Campus Queen the consciousness of hip hop in its formative years was well documented and it is interesting to note that the principal actor in producing these songs –Sound Sultan cut his teeth on the Nigerian hip hop scene in years to follow as one of Nigeria's renown conscious rappers with recognition transcending the country to the global stage until his demise in July of 2021.

CONCLUSION

In the Nigerian cultural and creative industry, Nollywood -representing the movie sector and the music sector as projected by Hip hop are major forces driving the entertainment economy with output projecting the

country's image on the global platform. This research has established the alliance between both sectors in their formative years of the early 2000s. The synergy between film and music cannot be over-emphasised while the movie Campus Queen has proved the existence of a blossoming Hip hop music scene in Nigeria at the period of its production through the soundtracks featured in it. Consequent upon the observation of the researcher that there exists a perfect artistic and purposeful harmony between the narratives of the Campus Queen movie and the choice of music selected by the director to compliment it, which in no small measure contributed to the success of the film. It is highly recommended that Nollywood producers pay more attention to music accompaniment in their movies and take a cue from Campus Queen as the role of music in films are cogent towards ensuring the quality and success of a film production.

Declaration

(This research article is an offshoot of a presentation at the Association of Nigerian Musicologists Annual Conference- ANIM in August 2019 at LASU, Ojo, Lagos.)

REFERENCE

- Adedeji, A. (2010). Yoruba culture and its Influence on the Development of Modern Popular Music in Nigeria (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield), 52.
- Adedeji, W. (2011). Negotiating globalization through hybridization: Hip hop and the creation of cross-over culture in Nigerian popular music. *4th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS 4)*.
- Adedeji, W. (2013). African Popular Culture and the Path of Consciousness: Hip-hop and the Culture of Resistance in Nigeria. *Postcolonial Text*, 8(3 & 4).
- Adedeji, W. (2017). Nigerian Hip Hop and the Yoruba Influence: “Ruggeddy Baba” and the Negotiation of National Identity. *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2 (1), 34-42.
- Anonymous. (2013). Document Theory: An Introduction, pp 223-237 in: *Records, Archives and Memory: Selected Papers from the Conference and School on Records, Archives and Memory Studies, University of Zadar, Croatia, May*

2013. Ed. by Mirna Willer, Anne J. Gilliland and Marijana Tomić. Zadar.
- Barber, K., Collins, J., & Ricard, A. (1997). *West African Popular Theatre*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Buckland, M. (1997). What is a “document”? *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 48(9), 804-809. <http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~buckland/whatdoc.html>
- Briet, Suzanne. (1951/2006). *What is documentation?* translated and edited by Ronald E. Day and Laurent Martinet. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press. (Pp. 9-10).
- Britannica.com. (2022). Globalization, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/globalization>
- Baba Dee. (2002). ‘So Di’ *Unfinished Bizness* Dudu Heritage, Lagos.
- Clark, E. (1980). Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dosunmu, O. A. (2005). Dosunmu, O. A. (2005). *The Appropriation of Traditional Musical Practices in modern Yoruba drama: A case study of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).
- Guzman, J. (2019). History of Hip Hop Fashion. <https://www.afterglowatx.com/blog/2019/3/26/the-history-of-hip-hop-fashion-how-street-culture-became-fashions-biggest-influence>
- Jeyifo, B. (1984). *The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre of Nigeria*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine Publications.
- Kelani, T. (2002). *Campus Queen*, Mainframe Productions. Lagos. Nigeria.
- Lund, N. W. (2009). Document theory. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 43, 399-432.
- Makhu, A. M. (2010). Nigerian home video movies and enhanced Music Involvement. *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*, 5(1).
- Omojola, B. (1989). Meaning and Communication in Yorubá Music. *Ilorin Journal of Education*, 9, 111-117.
- Remedies. (1998). ‘Sakomo’, Peace Nigeria, Kennis Music, Lagos. 2006.
- Somade, A. (1999). Music in Contemporary Yoruba Theatre: A study of Duro Ladipo’s Oba Koso. (MA Dissertation, University of Ibadan).
- Sylvanus, E. P., & Obiocha, P. E-E. (2017). The Business of film music in mainstream Nollywood: competing without advantage, *Journal of Cultural Economy*.
- Sylvanus E. P. (2018). Performing ethnicity in Nollywood film music: the Power of Texted music. *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, 15 (1-2), 93-109.
- Trybesmen. (1999) ‘Shake Bodi’ *L.A.G. STYLE*, 1, Trybes Record Lagos. 1999.