

Body Shaming, Beauty Pressures and Yoruba Popular Music: Implications for Adolescents' Mental Health and Well-being in Nigeria

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Abstract

Body shaming, an act of abusing or shaming the body of a person, is often evident in how people interact with one another, and it is expressed in their art, especially music. What constitutes body shaming differs significantly across age groups and generations. Existing studies on the phenomenon of body shaming have paid little or no attention to the dynamism of body shaming and its perceived effects in relation to Yoruba popular music in Nigeria. This study

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therefore investigated the dynamics of body shaming as exemplified in selected Yoruba popular music with a view to examining what constitutes body shaming and its effects on youths' and adolescents' mental health well-being. The study adopted ethnographic research design with qualitative approach, using In-depth interviews and key informant interviews to elicit responses from respondents. Music tracks– “*Pxy Drip*” by Naira Marley and “*Omo pupa*” by Victor Olaiya– also constituted the data. Data were content analysed. The findings revealed that some texts of popular music constitute one of the channels through which body shaming is promoted. There is a generational divide in the perception of body shaming, with younger audiences demonstrating heightened sensitivity to body-related lyrics. Resultant effects of body shaming, especially in contemporary times include harmful body enhancement, depression, low self-esteem, and anxiety, among others. The paper argues that repeated exposure to lyrics of contemporary popular music that promote body shaming can contribute to self-consciousness and internalised beauty pressures, which can trigger mental health disorders among adolescents. It is, therefore, imperative for stakeholders to censor the contents of music that are being released for public consumption because of the negative effects such music may have on youths.

Keywords: Body Shaming, Yoruba Popular Music, Contemporary Societal Expectation, Youths' Mental Wellbeing

Introduction

Although there is an ongoing debate among the people in Nigeria about what exactly constitutes body shaming and when a remark crosses the line, this phenomenon has long permeated Nigerian popular culture, particularly within the music scene. What is now labelled as body shaming has been a common thread in music and everyday conversations for years, often going

unchallenged. Yet in modern times, especially among young people, it has evolved into a serious issue, leading to adverse outcomes such as depression, suicide, and body modification surgeries. The language we use to describe bodies is inherently fluid and context-dependent. Sometimes, such descriptions can serve as genuine praise, celebrating beauty and individuality. However, this same dynamic language can just as easily be weaponised as a tool for body shaming, reinforcing harmful standards and contributing to negative self-perceptions. This inherent dynamism in the concept of body shaming, where the same language may be used both positively and negatively, demands further scholarly inquiry.

Throughout history, music has served as a potent means of conveying cultural values, societal concerns, and individual experiences. Music in Nigeria acts as a cohesive power that surpasses social and economic boundaries, bringing together the country's varied ethnic groups and cultural legacy (Peralta, 2021). It functions as a means of communication that goes beyond the limitations of language and culture. Music, with its diverse range of sounds, rhythms, and melodies, has the power to evoke emotions and tell stories. It is present everywhere and has the ability to deeply connect people, while also reflecting the vast array of human experiences (Nilson and Thorell, 2018). Music, spanning from classical symphonies to contemporary pop songs, has been empirically demonstrated to possess the ability to motivate, elevate, and bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and ideologies (Chinazo and Okpokwasili, 2022).

In genres such as Fuji and Apala, prominent artistes like Obesere and Haruna Ishola have contributed to a narrative that often portrays women as objects to be consumed. Such representations underscore a broader cultural trend where women's physical forms are routinely commodified, reflecting systemic issues that extend beyond any single musical style. This pervasive objectification calls for a deeper scholarly inquiry into its implications on societal perceptions of gender, identity, and beauty within Nigerian popular culture. Lyrics frequently centred on physical characteristics, wherein women were reduced to their sexual allure and anatomical features, reinforced a limited and impractical ideal of attractiveness, which played a role in making body shaming and the exclusion of various body types more accepted and common (Miller, 2021). Nigerian

popular music has a broad and diverse reach, playing a vital role in influencing cultural norms and values (Tara, 2023). The repercussions of body shaming in music are extensive, often provoking negative reactions as people continue to look for ways to meet up with the unachievable beauty standards after they are said to have been body-shamed. Popular musicians hold significant influence over the self-perception and body image of many young Nigerians, so when they make negative comments on a particular type of body shape. Those who have such a shape will look for ways to enhance their body, and sometimes it is through such means as body modification surgery.

The concept of body shaming is not new in Nigerian society. Body shaming (*èébú ara* among the Yorùbá) can be used as a tool for correction or as an instrument to ridicule unacceptable human behaviour, but the perception of body shaming has changed over the years. In recent times, many devastating effects of body shaming have been observed among youths. The pervasive nature of Nigerian popular music that promotes and may contribute to body shaming necessitates a comprehensive examination and analysis. This paper examined the perceived effects of body shaming as it is expressed in the content of purposively selected Yorùbá popular music in Nigeria.

Social Status and Body Shaming among the Yorùbá in Nigeria: The Role of Music

In Yoruba culture, as in many other cultures, social status is defined by the economic scale and influence of an individual in the society. Bascom (1951) posits that:

within the major strata or levels of the social structure (among the Yorùbá), individual differences are recognised, and distinguished by special terms. In a pecuniary society where economic differences are important, it is not surprising that some of these terms refer to differences in economic status. At the upper end of the economic scale are the “wealthy man” (*Ọlórọ*) and the “rich man” (*Ọlólá*) or “man of money” (*olówó*). ...A lazy person (*Ọlẹ*) is criticised and insulted, and Yoruba children are deliberately taught to be industrious. Although the importance of industry is recognised, however,

the amount of property an individual accumulates is not thought to depend simply on how hard he works (Bascom, 1951:491-492).

On many occasions, physical appearance is often linked to perceptions of social status, and popular music frequently reinforces these associations. Some songs portray a “desirable” body as a symbol of wealth, success, or belonging to a certain social class. This is particularly evident in lyrics that glorify curvaceous women, fair skin, or slim physiques, presenting them as markers of affluence and desirability. Conversely, bodies that deviate from these ideals are often subjected to ridicule, reinforcing societal hierarchies, which are often expressed in popular Nigerian music.

In one of the interviews in Ibadan, a male respondent highlighted this trend, stating: *“If a woman is fat, she is called lazy. If she is slim, they say she is not eating well. Either way, people will talk.”* This reflects the impossibility of meeting social expectations, as body-related criticisms exist on both ends of the spectrum. A female participant further elaborated during one of the interview sessions on how body shaming extends beyond beauty to economic status: *“If you are big and rich, they call it enjoyment body. But if you are big and poor, they call you careless and greedy.”* This underscores the class-based distinctions in body shaming, where physical appearance is interpreted differently depending on an individual’s wealth or perceived success.

A key informant who is also a Yorùbá language expert provided cultural insight into this phenomenon, explaining: *“Even things of honour, such as wealth and knowledge, can bring insult. The same body type that is praised in one context can be mocked in another.”* This suggests that body-related commentary in Yoruba culture is not only about beauty standards but also serves as a broader mechanism for reinforcing social structures. The relationship between social status and body image is also evident in the way skin tone is discussed in music. An interviewee noted: *“Songs always praise fair-skinned women like they are more valuable. If you are dark, they assume you are struggling.”* This aligns with Colourism Theory, where lighter skin is often associated with privilege, reinforcing exclusionary beauty standards that disadvantage darker-skinned individuals. Additionally, men experience social status-related body shaming in a different manner.

As one male respondent pointed out: *“Men are not really judged by their looks. It is about what you have. If you are broke, they will shame you before they shame your body.”* This indicates that while women’s worth is often measured by physical beauty, men’s status is more commonly assessed based on financial success.

A Yoruba anthropologist emphasised the role of music in shaping these perceptions: *“Music reflects what people admire and what they mock. If society values wealth, beauty, and success, songs will amplify those things. If society looks down on poverty or certain body types, songs reinforce these perceptions as well.”* This highlights the cyclical nature of body shaming in popular music, where existing social biases are both reflected in and reinforced by musical narratives. Overall, Yoruba popular music plays a significant role in linking body image to social status. While certain body types are celebrated as symbols of success, others are ridiculed, reinforcing societal inequalities. The responses from interviewees suggest that these portrayals are not just about aesthetics but are deeply tied to economic and social hierarchies, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and others within the broader cultural landscape.

Relationship between Cultural Norms and Contemporary Societal Expectations

The relationship between cultural norms and contemporary societal expectations plays a critical role in shaping body image representation in Nigerian popular music. Sessions of interviews with participants provide a deep insight into how Yoruba culture historically engages with body commentary, both in praise and in mockery, through a practice known as *èébú ara* (body-related insults). Reflections from these interviews highlight the long-standing tradition of using language to evaluate, critique, and sometimes ridicule physical features, a practice that has seamlessly transitioned into the narratives of contemporary Nigerian music. One of the interviewees asserts that in Yoruba society, *“There is no one born in any Yoruba society that would not have experience or have knowledge of insult.”* This statement underscores how deeply ingrained body commentary is in Yoruba culture, suggesting that music, as a reflection of societal values, naturally perpetuates these themes. The normalisation of

èébú ara in everyday discourse provides a historical foundation for why body-focused lyrics in popular music are so prevalent today. In songs such as Naira Marley's Pxy Drip and Haruna Ishola's Soyoyo, for instance, the focus on physical attributes, particularly women's bodies, aligns with the Yoruba tradition of using descriptive language to define identity and desirability.

Furthermore, it was discovered from the comments of a participant, how body commentary begins from infancy, stating, *"Even when a child is being praised, the child is still being abused."* This observation suggests that the Yoruba language does not always distinguish between praise and ridicule in its treatment of body image. For example, he cites how a light-skinned child might be called *"Aséwo"* (a reference to the assumption that fair-skinned women are often perceived as promiscuous). This cultural association between skin tone and morality persists in popular music, as seen in Victor Olaiya's *"Omo Pupa"* and Haruna Ishola's *"Soyoyo"*, both of which glorify fair skin as a marker of beauty. This preference reflects broader societal expectations influenced by colonial legacies, modern media, and economic shifts, reinforcing the idea that lighter skin is more desirable. The interview also explores how nearly every body part can be subjected to commentary in Yoruba culture, with common insults such as *"Abi ẹ o ri ori rẹ kangba kangba"* (someone with a large forehead may be said to have a deformed head). This confirms that everything can be an insult, illustrating how Yoruba language has historically used physical descriptions as a means of social commentary. This tradition translates into music, where artists continuously highlight specific body features in their lyrics, thus emphasising the transactional nature of desirability, in which women's value is tied to their conformity with societal beauty standards. This mirrors the Yoruba cultural practice where physical features are openly discussed and judged, often in a way that reinforces gendered expectations. A key takeaway from the interview is how Yoruba cultural norms have shaped the way body image is perceived in modern music. An interviewee observed that, *"If one stays in a quality Yoruba society and not one adulterated with Westernised ideologies, one must have had experiences of èébú ara."* This suggests that the transition from traditional oral culture to contemporary music has not fundamentally changed the Yoruba approach

to body image—it has simply adapted to new media. While Yoruba oral traditions used music and proverbs to discuss physical attributes, contemporary Nigerian artistes employ lyrics and visual aesthetics to reinforce similar ideals.

Perceived Effects of Contents of Body Shaming in Selected Nigerian Popular Music

Victor Olaiya's "Omo Pupa"

The composition follows a binary form and is set in the key of G major, with an introductory I–V7 chord progression, followed by a harmonic structure of I–V7–I–IV–V–I. The tonality remains major, and the melody predominantly moves in conjunct motion, adhering to the pentatonic scale, which enhances its fluidity and accessibility. The piece is structured in a simple quadruple meter (4/4 or common time), maintaining a steady rhythmic foundation at 87 BPM. Thematically, the song explores the composer's aesthetic preference for a particular skin tone, celebrating beauty while subtly reflecting societal perceptions of complexion within the African cultural context.

OMO PUPA

VICTOR OLAIYA

$\text{♩} = 87$
Chorus

O mo pupa O O mo pupale mi nfe O mo pupao jo wo

ko feranmi - o O mo pupa O O mo pupale minfe O mo pupao jo wo

ko fe ran mi - o Tinba deLon don Mawa fowoo ko ran se O

mo pupao jo wo ko - b'o kode o Ti nba deLon don Mawa

f'owo ko ran se O mo pupao jo wo ko b'o - kode o e.t.c.

LYRICS:

QmQ pupa o

QmQ pupa l'emi nfç

QmQ pupa o

JqWq ko fçran mi o

QmQ pupa o

QmQ pupa l'emi nfç

QmQ pupa o

JqWq ko fçran mi o

O light-skinned lady

I want a light-skinned lady

O light-skinned lady

Please, love me

O light-skinned lady

I want a light-skinned lady

O light-skinned lady

Please, love me

<i>Ti mba de London</i>	When I get to London
<i>Mawa f'owo okọ ransẹ</i>	I would send you ticket money
<i>Qmọ pupa o</i>	O light-skinned lady
<i>Jọwọ ko b'okọ de o</i>	Please, make sure you join the flight

Victor Olaiya's *Qmọ Pupa* exemplifies how Yoruba popular music has historically engaged with themes of beauty and desirability, particularly in relation to skin tone. The lyrics explicitly express a preference for light-skinned women, as seen in the repeated lines "*Qmọ pupa l'emi nfẹ*" (I want a light-skinned woman). While the song is framed as a romantic expression, its emphasis on a specific skin tone reflects broader societal attitudes toward beauty, which have been critically examined in the interviews. One interviewee provided historical context on how Yoruba cultural norms have shaped ideals of beauty, stating, "*Yoruba rarely ascribe beauty to a man. Yes, they may see an individual having very moderate features... but they rarely express beauty for men. Beauty is tailored to women, usually tailored to women.*" This perspective is relevant to *Qmọ pupa*, as the song not only reinforces a particular standard of beauty but also exemplifies how beauty discussions in Yoruba music are overwhelmingly centred on women. While men may be judged by their financial status or social standing, women's worth is frequently linked to their physical appearance, particularly in terms of complexion.

Furthermore, the commercial and global influences on Yoruba beauty standards were explored in the interviews. One respondent noted, "*Globalisation as a thing has its positive and negative sides. It depends on where we are coming from. But I think it's adding more impact, especially on our youth.*" This observation aligns with the themes in "*Qmọ pupa*" as the song's lyrics reference "*Ti m ba dé London, ma wa f'owo okọ ransẹ*" (When I get to London, I will send money for a light-skinned woman). This line suggests the preference for light-skinned women by the musician who was ready to spend anything to have her around him. Another key theme raised in the interviews is the role of music in shaping societal expectations. One participant stated, "Music is the voice of the community. So once an activity has been expressed in music, it becomes a voice of the community." *Qmọ pupa*, by repeatedly reinforcing a preference for light-

skinned women, contributes to the normalisation of this standard within Yoruba society. While some may interpret the song as an individual's personal preference, its cultural impact extends beyond the singer's intentions, as repeated exposure to such messages influences collective perceptions of beauty.

Naira Marley's PXY Drip

Pxy Drip is an Afrobeats track structured in binary form. The song is set in the key of C minor, with a chord progression of A flat major – G minor – B flat major – C minor, creating a rich harmonic foundation. The melodic delivery is characterised by Sprechgesang, a blend of speech-like intonation and rhythmic singing, which enhances the track's conversational and street-style appeal. The production heavily relies on artificial soundscapes, crafted through Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs), which contribute to the track's modern, electronically driven aesthetic. Thematically, the song fixates on the physical attributes of a woman, particularly her bosom, adopting an objectifying lens in its lyrical narrative

PXY DRIP
Subtitle
NIRA MARLEY

Intro

Love that pu say grip Make that pu say drip Bounce pon di cocky and do da da

8

Whine your body and go down low What's that Just like that I di bazu ka I digbangban

12

Chorus

I di gbongbon I di gbangban I di ke re ke re I di fakia Won fe mo I di

16

Ti moshey like I di wonde le ri I di won wa i di Bumbum large bumbumfat

20

bam bam looking like full de tached bam bam looking like house no flat

24

bam bam loo king like cash ma dam!

LYRICS:

*Love that pussy grip
Make that pussy drip
Bounce pon di cocky and do dada
Whine your body and go down low
What's that?
Just like that
Idi bazuka
Idi gbangban
Idi gbongbon
Idi gbangban*

Idi kerekere
Idi fakia
Wonfe mo idi
Ti moshey like idi
Won de le ri idi
Won wa idi
Bum bum large
Bum bum fat
Bum bum looking like full detached
Bum bum looking like house no flat
Bum bum looking like cash madam

Naira Marley's Pxy Drip exemplifies the explicit objectification of women's bodies in contemporary popular music, particularly through its fixation on the female backside. The lyrics, which repeatedly reference different Yoruba slang terms for buttocks "*Idi gbangban, idi gbongbon, idi kerekere, idi fakia*" construct a narrative in which a woman's physicality is the central theme. This aligns with concerns raised in the interviews, where participants discussed how modern music prioritises women's bodies as objects of entertainment, often reducing them to their physical features rather than acknowledging them as individuals.

One participant highlighted the impact of such representations on women's self-perception, stating, "*There was the notion that if you have a nice body, most likely, you are a slut... I so badly wanted to have a flat ass.*" This testimony underscores how repeated exposure to lyrics that obsess over body size can contribute to self-consciousness and internalised beauty pressures. Pxy Drip not only glorifies a specific body type, "Bum bum large, bum bum fat", but also constructs a hierarchy of desirability based solely on physical attributes. This reinforces unrealistic expectations about women's appearances, influencing both personal self-image and social interactions.

The commercialisation of objectification in music was also discussed in the interviews, with one interviewee recalling how mainstream media amplifies such messages: "*There is something about passive learning that I think the media has sat down on. Whether you put conscious*

effort or not, with repetition... you will know the song, you will know the lyrics." This aligns with Pxy Drip, where the catchy, repetitive phrasing ensures that its objectifying message becomes ingrained in listeners' minds. The song's reliance on simple, direct references to women's bodies makes it easily memorable, further entrenching the normalisation of body-based commentary in Nigerian pop culture.

One interviewee also raised concerns about how contemporary artistes deliberately push boundaries for attention, stating, *"It is not the artistes; they know what they are doing... It is our own perception that matters, but they intentionally put it out there because they know how it will be received."* This is evident in Pxy Drip, where the explicit language and relentless repetition of body-related slang cater to an audience that has become desensitised to such portrayals. The song's commercial success is partly rooted in its ability to provoke reactions, capitalising on the shock value of its objectifying lyrics.

The Emotional Impact and Social Consequences of Body-Shaming Content

The interviews revealed that Yoruba popular music has the capacity to evoke strong emotional responses, including feelings of shame, embarrassment, and insecurity, which may contribute to negative body image perceptions and, in extreme cases, body dysmorphia. A distinct generational divide emerged, with younger respondents demonstrating heightened sensitivity to body-shaming content, whereas older participants exhibited greater emotional resilience. This contrast suggests a potential sociocultural shift in the reception and interpretation of body-shaming narratives within contemporary Yoruba popular music. Furthermore, it indicates a possible evolution in psychological resilience across different age groups, particularly in response to media representations that reinforce somatic anxieties and perceived bodily inadequacies.

A clinical psychologist provided insight into the long-term effects of body shaming through a case study of a former patient. She recounted:

I had a patient last year, a woman who, during her primary school years, was frequently called 'ugly' and 'fat' by her peers. This experience led her to avoid friendships with other

girls, as she found that boys were less critical of her appearance. Even her teacher failed to offer support, possibly because she was not considered academically exceptional. Over time, these experiences deeply affected her self-esteem. During psychotherapy, I encouraged her to focus on her positive attributes, pointing out, for instance, her well-aligned and strikingly white dentition, which complemented her skin tone. I asked if she had ever noticed this about herself. I also drew attention to her well-formed legs, an observation that initially surprised her. These aspects of her physicality had been overshadowed by years of negative reinforcement. The psychological toll of body shaming had manifested in low self-esteem, social withdrawal, and even disordered eating. She had internalised the criticisms she faced as a child, which continued to affect her well into adulthood. Although I left before her discharge, I am hopeful that subsequent therapy sessions helped her rebuild her confidence.

This case study underscores the profound psychological consequences of body shaming, particularly when it occurs during formative years. It highlights how negative comments about one's physical appearance, even when made casually, can contribute to long-term emotional distress, social isolation, and disordered behaviours.

A younger respondent, a 29-year-old male, shared his personal experience with body shaming:

I didn't even realise I was being body-shamed until I got to university. In secondary school, I played football, and whenever we checked shoe sizes, I always had the biggest size— sometimes 46. People would joke, '*Ese e tobiju!*' (Your feet are too big!) or '*Owo e tobiju!*' (Your hands are too big!). At first, it felt like harmless teasing, but eventually, it started to affect me. In my first year of university, I even started drinking Lipton tea every day, hoping to lose weight and reduce my size. But instead, I ended up looking weak and unhealthy. By my second year, I started playing football

again, but because my family was poor, I had to borrow football shoes. Every time I asked for a pair, people would mock my foot size. It got to a point where I became self-conscious about revealing my shoe size. Later, I started noticing how body shaming wasn't just about being too fat or too slim—it extended to all body types. People would say things like, 'You can measure a man's penis by how big his thumb is.' This made me even more self-conscious, wondering whether my body proportions were excessive. However, by my third year, I began to accept myself. Ironically, my large hands became an asset when I was selected as the faculty goalkeeper. What was once a source of insecurity became a strength.

This account highlights how body shaming can lead to harmful behaviours, such as extreme dieting, and how social perceptions of body image can influence self-worth. It also illustrates how, over time, individuals may develop resilience by reframing their insecurities into strengths.

In contrast, an older respondent, aged 56, reflected on generational differences in sensitivity to body-related commentary:

When we were younger, we hardly noticed things like this. Nowadays, people are more sensitive, probably because of the digital era. Awareness is higher than before. Back then, we weren't overly mindful of comments about our bodies, but today, people are more conscious of their environment. What has never crossed your mind cannot have an impact on you.

This statement suggests that increased exposure to digital media and global beauty standards has heightened sensitivity to body image issues among younger generations. While previous generations may have encountered body-related teasing, they may not have internalised it to the same extent as younger individuals who are constantly exposed to body ideals through music, social media, and entertainment.

These findings indicate that body shaming in Yoruba popular music has tangible emotional and social consequences, particularly for younger individuals. While older generations may dismiss body-related commentary

as insignificant, younger individuals appear more susceptible to its effects, which can manifest as low self-esteem, disordered eating, or social withdrawal. The testimonies from respondents suggest that societal awareness of body image issues is increasing, influenced by media exposure and changing cultural attitudes. However, Yoruba popular music continues to reinforce certain body ideals, contributing to ongoing anxieties about physical appearance.

Conclusion

Body shaming is a deeply embedded phenomenon in Yoruba popular music, reflecting broader cultural attitudes toward physical appearance, gender norms, and social status. While some respondents perceive body-related commentary in music as harmless or reflective of cultural realities, others, particularly younger individuals, identify it as a significant contributor to body image concerns, low self-esteem, and emotional distress. This discussion synthesises the key themes that emerged from the interviews, drawing connections between cultural norms, contemporary societal expectations, and the evolving perception of body-shaming narratives in Yorùbá popular music.

Certain body types are portrayed in music as symbols of wealth and desirability, while others are ridiculed as indicators of lower social standing. This suggests that body shaming is not solely based on aesthetics but is also linked to class distinctions. The glorification of fair skin in songs such as “Qmọ pupa” further reinforces colourism, a phenomenon where lighter skin is associated with higher social status and desirability (Hunter, 2007). Music serves as a mirror of societal values, stating, “Music reflects what people admire and what they mock. If society values wealth, beauty, and success, songs will amplify those things. If society looks down on poverty or certain body types, songs will reinforce that too.” This perspective is supported by research on African popular music, which suggests that music not only reflects but also reinforces existing social hierarchies (Agawu, 2016). Moreover, body shaming in Yoruba popular music extends beyond aesthetics to include class distinctions, where body size, skin tone, and physical features are often used as symbols of social status. The generational contrast in how body-related lyrics are perceived indicates that sensitivity

to body image issues is increasing, particularly among younger audiences who are more engaged with digital media and global beauty standards.

Yoruba popular music was found to function as both a reflection and reinforcement of societal values, shaping how individuals perceive beauty, desirability, and self-worth. While some respondents interpreted body-related lyrics as harmless entertainment, others identified them as significant contributors to unrealistic beauty expectations and emotional distress. There is a complex relationship between Yoruba music, body image, and societal expectations. While body-related commentary has long been embedded in Yoruba oral traditions, its impact in contemporary music is influenced by media globalisation, evolving gender norms, and audience awareness. The objectification of women in music remains a major concern, reinforcing restrictive beauty standards that prioritise physical attributes over other qualities. The psychological consequences of body shaming are evident, with personal testimonies revealing how negative portrayals of physical appearance in music contribute to self-doubt, anxiety, and exclusion. These findings underscore the need for a more conscious approach to body representation in Yoruba popular music, ensuring that artistic expression does not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or reinforce societal pressures that affect individuals' self-esteem and well-being.

Body shaming in Yoruba popular music is deeply rooted in cultural traditions, yet evolving societal expectations shape its impact. While some individuals perceive body-related lyrics as harmless reflections of reality, others recognise their role in reinforcing harmful beauty standards, gender inequalities, and class distinctions. The younger generation, particularly adolescents, demonstrate a greater sensitivity to body-shaming messages, influenced by increased digital exposure and changing cultural norms. The psychological impact of body-related criticisms was also evident, with respondents sharing experiences of low self-esteem, disordered eating, and social withdrawal as a result of body shaming. Yoruba popular music serves as both a reflection and a reinforcement of cultural attitudes toward body image. While the tradition of *Eebu Ara* normalises body-related commentary, contemporary audiences are increasingly critical of its effects. There is therefore the need for greater awareness of the potential consequences of body shaming in music, as well as a broader discussion on promoting body

positivity and self-acceptance within Yoruba society, so as to promote positive mental health and well-being among Nigerians, especially adolescents and youths.

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