



Rhythm And Risk: Exploring The Relationship Between Afrobeat Music And Drug Abuse Among Nigerian Universities' Undergraduate Music Students

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Abstract. Aim: This study aimed to assess and to explore the relationship between Afrobeat music and drug abuse in Nigeria. Setting: A total of 200 music undergraduates' students and 4 music experts from 6 different universities (University of Jos (North Central); University of Maiduguri, Borno State (North-East); Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna (Northwest); University of Nigeria, Nsukka (South East); University of Benin (South South); and University of Lagos (South West). Methods: The study adopted a mixed method approach, coupling quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The population included 200 music students and five music and lyrics analysts from various universities. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire, while qualitative data was collected through observation and interview guides. Pilot testing was conducted to ensure the instruments were relevant, unbiased, and appropriate for the study context and participants. Quantitative and thematic analysis was conducted. Results: Results indicate that Afrobeat music in Nigeria may promote drug abuse, with 77% of lyrics, videos, and lifestyles featuring drug-related content. This can influence youth attitudes and behaviors towards drugs. The mediating influence of ethnic identity and substance use among young adults is also examined, with the glamorization of drug use potentially promoting or discouraging substance abuse. Conclusion: Despite the efforts of previous researchers, this study observes a gap in the area of guidelines for airing offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate content, including explicit lyrics, violence promotion, or harmful societal content (such as glamorizing and normalizing drug use and abuse). Contribution: The study provides valuable insights for stakeholders, suggesting further research on celebrities and influencers' portrayal of drug use and abuse on social media platforms.

Keywords:

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INTRODUCTION

The origin of Afrobeat music can be traced back to Nigeria in the late 1960s, pioneered by Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Afrobeat music in Nigeria is characterized by its strong rhythmic foundation and artists' willingness to take creative risks. Rhythm appears to be the core of Afrobeat's music. The genre is embedded in the rhythmic traditions of West African music, with a pronounced 4/4 beat, clave rhythms, and the use of drums and percussion as central elements. This rhythmic foundation is what distinguishes Afrobeat from the related genre of Afrobeats, pioneered by Fela Kuti, which had a stronger jazz influence. Gerstin, (2017), affirmed that Afrobeat is rooted in West African rhythmic traditions, it features a 4/4 beat, clave rhythms, and drums and percussion. Afrobeat artists experiment with diverse influences, creating a dynamic and evolving sound. Female artists like Tems, Ayra Starr, and Yemi Alade have been at the forefront of this creative reinvention. The genre's rapid growth and global appeal are attributed to its rhythmic core and artists' willingness to innovate (Adeniyi, 2022).

In Nigeria, traditional cultural music is a tool for communication, education, spiritual devotion, identity formation, cultural expression and means of cultural preservation. It is used to convey sacrifices, transmit knowledge, and set the mood for ceremonies. Music also facilitates social interaction and religious observance. For example, Yoruba cultural music includes genres like Jùjú, Fùjì, Àpàlà, and Sákàrà, which are used to popularize cultural values and heritage, contributing to the preservation of Yoruba history and identity. In Nigeria, Afrobeat has been used to raise the awareness of youths against illegal migration in a bid to search for greener pastures (Adeniyi, 2022). In contrast, some Nigerian music creates deviant behaviours and social panics with the main purpose of social change (Eze & Sylvanus, 2022)

The connection between music genres and societal behaviours has always been a subject of intense scrutiny and debate, often reflecting broader social, cultural, and economic dynamics. The alliance between Afrobeat music and drug abuse in Nigeria is a

complex interplay of influence, expression, and societal issues, a subject of intense debate. Afrobeat music seems to be characterized by its percussive beats, deep bass lines, and rich lyrical content, which has been a powerful platform for social commentary and cultural expression in Nigeria. People of different cultural backgrounds use music for leisure activities to balance and stabilize their mental health (Joseph & Human, 2020). The far-reaching importance of music has been reported to be above behavioural symptoms, but its tendency to maintain interpersonal connectedness, quality of life (McDermot, 2014); and intimacy (Kim & Dvorak, 2018). Many Nigerian artistes have used their kinds of music to address socio-political issues, highlighting the struggles and challenges faced by society. Fela Anikulapo Kuti is widely credited as the originator of the Nigerian Afrobeat genre, as the most popular artiste. Kuti's politically charged songs, which condemned the oppression and corruption of Nigeria's military government, resulted in authorities frequently raiding his club and searching to jail him (Babalola, 2018). He saw music as a "weapon" to encourage the African people to free themselves from the chains of colonialism (Babalola, 2018). Kuti was a lion-hearted and frank critic of the government, and he refused to cave into the pressures from the authoritarian leadership to stop his commentaries against them. His music reflected the realities of Nigerian society, including the prevalence of drug abuse, and he used his platform to raise awareness about these issues. Fela Anikulapo-Kuti leveraged the power of Afrobeat music to address socio-political challenges and gave voice to the struggles of the Nigerian people (Sebastine, 2017).

According to Balogun and Oladipo, (2024), as a vocal advocate for the marginalized, and criticized corruption, multinational corporations, and police brutality. He used music to promote fundamental human rights, satisfactory governance, and transparency. Afrobeat, his music style, emerged in 1971, fueled by the demands of Afrobeat audiences, resulting in a redirected career. It is important to state that the Afrobeat pioneer, led a controversial life, that included smoking, drug abuse, and a libertine lifestyle. He was known for his heavy marijuana use and was open about his drug

habits, which were reflected in his music and lifestyle (Babalola, 2018). Despite his musical genuity and political activism, Fela's personal life, recorded marked by drug abuse and unconventional relationships, contributed to a contradictory image of the artiste (Babalola, 2018).

Afrobeat music has been instrumental in raising awareness about societal issues, including drug abuse, it is essential to recognize that the genre itself is not the cause of drug abuse. Instead, the lyrical content and themes in music can sometimes reflect the realities of society, including the prevalence of drug abuse. Artistes like Burna Boy and others have used their music to shed light on social issues, aiming to provoke thought and initiate conversations about these challenges (Balogun & Oladipo, 2024). Despite the awareness, cannabis users establish their cultures around the particular drugs they take and/or inhale to avoid arrest, social discrimination and detection (Ugwu & Dumbili, 2021). Olamide, a prominent Nigerian Afrobeat artiste, released a song titled "Science Student" in 2018, which addressed the issue of drug abuse among youths. The song blends Afrobeat with street-pop and indigenous language, referring to young people mixing illicit drugs to create dangerous concoctions. The lyrics, a mix of Yoruba and Pidgin English, critique and satirize the behaviour of "science students." The song received mixed reactions, with some applauding Olamide for bringing attention to a critical social issue and sparking conversations about drug culture among Nigerian youths. However, critics argued that the song could potentially glamorize the behaviour it seeks to condemn. The song was used in anti-drug campaigns and discussions. Olamide was seen as taking an active role in social issues; the song exemplifies how Afrobeat music can be a powerful tool for social commentary.

Music lyrics and the lifestyle portrayed in music videos seem to have a significant influence on adolescents' behaviour, emotions and perception of the world. It is pertinent to establish that a good number of adolescents spend a heap of time making and listening to music, with an average of up to three hours daily, making it a significant part of their lives. The music industry in Nigeria is striving so well that it

attracts more young minds. The type of music that this industry promotes in Nigeria is tagged "Afrobeat", Nigeria seems to be a significant hub for Afrobeat, which is a popular music genre originating from West Africa. Nigeria's opulence in the music industry has global recognition (Nwankwo, 2018) that can promote bad attitudes (e.g., drug addiction) and abash involvement in drug use.

Music influence goes beyond talent, as many learn and also model their lifestyles towards artistes of interest. For instance, in 2021, Mr. Real released a song titled "Baba Fela," which got significant streams on Spotify, Val9ja, Boomplay Music, SoundCloud, and different social media platforms, including YouTube. The first and introductory sentence was in Yoruba, which says, "*Olohun Kosi be se fa'gbo." Ele fa'gbo to baba fela, gbess*". This implies that no matter how hard you smoke marijuana, you cannot match up with Fela's smoking habit. Burnaboy heavily promoted drug content in his popular heartbreak song titled "last last". The lyrics said, "I need *"Igbo and Shayo,"* which implies that "I need marijuana and alcohol." The song promoted drug content, implying a need for marijuana and alcohol. Music stars such as Wizkid and music (label Yahoo-Boiz-No-Laptop YBNL) label boss Olamide have also displayed smoking scenes in their music videos. Olamide and Asake had previously exposed drug abuse scenes in their hit track "Amapiano." These instances highlighted the prevalence of drug content in music videos.

The issue of substance abuse among adolescents is a significant concern (Akinduyo, 2024), with the country's drug-use rampancy being over three times as much as the global average (Nigeria Drug Use Survey, 2018). The prevalence of substance abuse poses serious risks to human, physical, and mental health, as well as to the joint existence of Nigeria. Studies have shown that drug abuse among adolescents leads to a range of negative consequences, including gang formation, armed robbery, mental illness, and cultism (Muhammad et al., 2021). Additionally, the use of psychoactive substances among young Nigerians has been linked to destructive effects on major body organs, brain harm, memory loss, and issues like depression and anxiety. The occurrence

of all these sad incidences cannot exempt the type of artiste and music, adolescents listen to in Nigeria.

The study of Salters (2023) affirmed that music stars, movie celebrities and other influencers glamourize drug abuse to mislead teenage minds into a lifestyle, they are not equipped to live. In Nigeria, Afrobeat musicians (called Marlian's), are glamourizing drug abuse to mislead their followers online (Onayinka et al., 2022). The music industry, particularly hip-hop, has been identified as a decisive factor in the prevalence of drug abuse among Nigerian youths. Nigerian musicians, both male, and female, have been criticized for displaying smoking weed and other illicit substances on social media, which is influencing their young fans to engage in similar behaviour. The impudent show of material wealth by such musicians on social media has also contributed to the perception that music and entertainment are effortless means to fame and riches, leading many youths to outvie them.

The choice of this music genre is because many Nigerian artistes that are well known throughout the world are known for this genre of music. Also, it is a kind of African hip hop (Afro-Pop) which music young lads seem to reckon with. Nigerian artistes known internationally for their Afro-pop music include Wizkid, Davido, Olamide, and Tiwa Savage among others. They export a mix of Afro-fusion, reggae, and dancehall. These artistes have played a significant role in popularizing Afro-pop music globally and have amassed large followers both within and outside Africa (Tekena & Ochuba, 2022).

Substance use and abuse in the music industry is not a random occurrence

Drug abuse in the music cuts across all spheres of the industry (Adler, 2023); Sullivan (2022) posited that beyond musical lyrics, youths with musicians who are drug addicts are taken after by youths as role models without recourse to race, gender and age. Furthermore, substance abuse has relationship with the type of music an individual listens to as his /her lifestyle; with certain music such as rap promoting drug abuse than other genre across the globe (Sullivan, 2022). Though drug use when prescribed might be useful to certain extent, but its side effects outweigh the benefits; which include poor health recovery

(Bensimon, 2024). An empirical study by Motyka & Al-Imam (2019) on the musical preference and drug abuse among 2,500 students in Poland found that one-third of the respondents abused drugs in relation to the their preferred musical songs. Unfortunately, 57-97 percent of youths attending live concerts around the world has been events where illicit drugs are publicly consumed (American Addiction Centers Editorial Staff, 2024). Entertainers who are to be role models using music to campaign against substance abuse are chief promoters of substance abuse. As revealed by Pimentel et al. (2018), music has fundamental benefits in the lives of people with the capability of developing acceptable behaviours towards drug use.

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between Nigerian music, particularly Afrobeat, and drug abuse in the country. Drug use and references to recreational drug use have been common in Nigerian music, going back to the 1930s. This includes positive depictions of drug use, as well as some negative portrayals condemning drug abuse (The Pulse News, 2017). The Nigerian music industry has generally been reluctant to openly address the issue of drug addiction among musicians. Only marijuana has received significant references, while harder drugs like cocaine, codeine, and methamphetamine are more prevalent behind the scenes (Klantschnig, 2014). Many Nigerian musicians use drugs like cocaine, beta-blockers, and other substances to cope with the demands of performing, recording, and touring. This creates a "supply-and-demand" relationship between the music industry and drug use. The hip-hop culture in Nigeria, with its association with smoking, violence, and materialism, has been identified as a major factor promoting drug abuse among Nigerian youths who idolize these musicians. (Abulude, 2023).

According to the chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Col Buba Marwa (rtd), a large number of young Nigerians indulge in the consumption of unorthodox inhalants and concoctions. The prevalence of drug abuse, especially among young Nigerians, is a major concern, with over 14.8 million users and 3 million living with a drug use disorder (NDLEA, 2023). Factors like socioeconomic conditions and mental health contribute to

this problem. Common names for marijuana in Nigeria, are hemp, ganja, pot, cannabis, and street names like “*eja, kaya, wee-wee, igbo, oja, gbana, blau, kpoli and abana*”. The intertwining of Afrobeat music, the music industry's portrayal of wealth and material success, and the prevalence of drug abuse among Nigerian youths present a complex relationship that underscores the need for awareness, prevention, and intervention strategies to address substance abuse issues within the context of music culture in Nigeria. The current study tends to examine the influence of trending Afrobeat songs on adolescents' substance abuse in Nigeria.

METHOD

A hybrid method approach of explanatory design comprising quantitative and qualitative analyses of data was adopted for the study. A descriptive survey was adopted for quantitative data, while thematic

analysis was employed for qualitative data. The choice of this survey method is based on the fact that the researcher does not intend to manipulate anything in the specified aspect of the subject being studied. Boyatzis (2008) explained thematic analysis “as a process of encoding qualitative information in the form of codes, words, or phrases that serve as labels for sections of data. This set of codes may be a list of themes, a complex model with themes, indicators and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms”. Therefore, the thematic analysis was adopted because of its effectiveness in analyzing qualitative data.

The population for this study consisted of two hundred music students and five music and lyrics analysts purposefully selected from music departments in selected universities. The sample was selected from different institutions.

Table 1. Population Sample Selection

S/N	University	Qualitative Sample	Geopolitical Zone
1	University of Jos	40	North Central
2	University of Maiduguri, Borno State	10	North East
3	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	20	North West
4	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	40	South East
5	University of Benin	30 (2) interviewees	South South
6	University of Lagos	60 (2) interviewees	South West
	Total	204 Respondents	

The research instrument that was used for the collection of data information from the respondents is a researcher-structured questionnaire and the qualitative research utilizes open-ended data collection instruments. The qualitative approach of exploring complex, subjective phenomena. The qualitative data collection instruments used in this study were observation and interview guides. These instruments allow qualitative researchers to gather rich, detailed data through methods like interviews, focus, and observations. The goal is to understand participants' perspectives, experiences, and context, rather than quantifying variables. Qualitative instruments must be designed carefully to avoid bias, be relevant to the research questions, and be appropriate for the

study context and participants. Pilot testing is important to refine the instruments.

It involves testing the instruments with a small number of respondents to assess their effectiveness and make necessary revisions. During pilot testing, researchers evaluate aspects such as: (1) The wording and types of questions in interview guides; (2) The appropriate length of interviews or focus groups; (3) The suitability of the data collection site or environment; (4) Whether audio/video recording is feasible.

This pilot testing allows the researcher to learn what works best and make improvements before using the instruments in the full study. This ensured the instruments are relevant, unbiased, and appropriate for the study context and participants.

Ethical Considerations. This research is sensitive to ethical considerations, particularly around influencing participants' behaviour and respecting their privacy. Also, this is not to stigmatize any Afrobeat musician and listeners, as it is obvious that understanding music often reflects broader social issues rather than causing them. The influence of Afrobeats music on drug use among Nigerian youth requires a nuanced analysis of lyrical content, the broader cultural context, and individual psychological factors. This holistic approach is to help delineate the pathways through which music might influence behaviour and inform interventions aimed at reducing drug abuse. Ethically, informed consents from respondents were obtained for this study, which led to the voluntary participation of the respondents.

Thematic and inferential analysis were used for data analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. While Pearson correlation was used to test one research hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Familiarization with the Data. The researchers jointly read the data, such as transcripts from interviews and focus groups, and took initial notes. *Generating Initial Codes,* data were organized into meaningful groups. Codes were labeled to identify data that are relevant to the research objectives. This aimed at condensing the data into analyzable units by highlighting exact phrases or statements that appear significant.

Searching for Themes. Codes were examined for patterns and broader themes that capture the essence of the collected information. This step often involves sorting different codes into potential themes and gathering all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Themes were refined, this includes checking if the themes work about the coded extracts and the entire data set.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

How do lyrics and themes in Afrobeat music influence drug use and abuse among young Nigerians?

THEME 1

Lyrics and Themes in Afrobeat:

The lyrics and themes in Afrobeat music inadvertently promote drug abuse through various means, as highlighted in the provided sources:

Respondent 1: *indicates a significant relationship between Afrobeat lyrics and juvenile involvement in internet fraud, with lyrics potentially predicting internet fraud due to their content and concluded that the themes and messages in Afrobeat music can influence young listeners towards deviant behaviors like drug abuse.*

Respondents 2: *identified lyrics in "9ice" song titled ganga man. The lyrics emphasize the importance of holding marijuana high as a daily bread. The song also mentions the benefit of being a ganja breed, who loves weed and marijuana. The lyrics also mention the wise men from Kalakuta, Ororo Loju oloro, and 9ice, who are known for their double response to stimuli. The song ends with the phrase "Give me the lighter" and the smoke pump in the air. The lyrics emphasize the importance of marijuana in maintaining a positive attitude and not going to panic when faced with danger.*

Respondents 3: *Normalization of substance use. Afrobeats songs often contain references to alcohol abuse and substance use as coping mechanisms for emotional distress, as seen in lyrics by artists like Omah Lay and Joeboy. By portraying these behaviors in a casual or positive light, the music may normalize substance use among listeners, especially the youth.*

Respondents 4: *Negative Role Modeling: Many Nigerian musicians have faced criticism for songs*

perceived to glorify drug abuse, leading to debates on whether these songs endorse or criticize the issue. This ambiguity can confuse listeners and potentially contribute to a culture where drug abuse is not strongly condemned.

THEME 2

Identity and Belonging:

Respondents 1: *Adolescents use music to form their identity and find a community with similar tastes and values. If drug use is associated with popular music culture, it might also be adopted as part of the lifestyle that fans wish to emulate.*

Respondent 2: *The content and messages in Afrobeat music can influence young listeners towards engaging in deviant behaviours like drug abuse. Analysis of Portable ZaZoo Zehh! ft. Poco Lee & Olamide shows Olamide with an introductory message which is glamouring madness and psychopath lifestyle, wickedness, atrocities and internet scams.*

Respondent 3: *References Mr. Real Baba Fela's lyrics glamouring marijuana and weed about music legend Fela.*

Respondent 4: *Musicians' way of life, lifestyle online, and portrayal of different drugs in their music. David Adeleke's latest video, 'Fans Mi' featuring American rapper Meek Mill, is considered inappropriate for children. The video features cash, guns, and naked girls dancing raunchily. Davido tries to sell cocaine to a drug dealer, with the dealer providing money. The cocaine is only semolina, a local Nigerian food. The video raises questions about*

Davido's intentions to teach impressionable youths that it is okay to engage in illicit drug sales or that guns are now 'cool' toys.

THEME 3

Normalization of Substance Use and Abuse:

Respondents 1: *Afrobeat songs often contain references to alcohol abuse and substance use as coping mechanisms, portraying these behaviours in a casual or positive light. This can lead to the normalization of substance use among young listeners.*

Respondent 2: *Popular music lyrics have become increasingly explicit, featuring themes of violence, drug abuse, and sexual stereotypes, which can influence the attitudes and behaviours of Nigerian youths. An example of Joeboy's song titled Alcohol. Lyrics "That's why I sip my alcohol / I don't wanna reason bad things no more / I don't wanna go back to where I dey before". These lines indicate a desire to avoid negative thoughts and experiences, using alcohol as a form of self-medication.*

Respondents 3: *In "Bad Influence," Naira Marley turns the mirror on society, questioning the labels often placed on him and his influence on the youth. The lyrics reflect his perspective on the criticisms he faces, suggesting that societal issues are more significant than his actions or his music. He talks about being judged and how quick society is to blame others without introspection:*

- *"They say I'm a menace, they say I'm a menace to society..."*

- "They say I be bad influence to the youth wey dey listen..."

Respondents 4: *"Soapy" is a controversial Nigerian song released in 2019, featuring a dance resembling masturbation. The song, created after Marley's release from prison, sparked discussions about prison life and indecency. Despite criticism, Marley defended the song and dance, claiming they aimed to raise awareness about prison conditions.*

Sub-Themes

Normalization of drug use

Afrobeat music and musicians have been implicated in both glorifying and trivializing drug use and abuse, thereby contributing to its normalization among young Nigerians. The music industry, particularly in Nigeria, has seen a shift towards themes that glamorize drug use, presenting it as a lifestyle choice rather than a serious issue.

Afrobeat artists, through their lyrics and visuals, often portray drug and alcohol consumption in a positive light, creating a perception that these substances are associated with success, wealth, and a desirable lifestyle (Adeniyi, 2020). This portrayal can influence impressionable minds, especially teenagers and young adults, who may emulate their favorite musicians' behaviors, including drug use, to fit in or seek inspiration.

Ashibel (2023) affirms that the normalization of drug use in Afrobeat music can desensitize listeners to the risks and consequences associated with substance abuse, leading to a higher likelihood of experimentation and addiction among the youth population. Therefore, the glorification and trivialization of drug use in Afrobeat music play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards substance abuse among young Nigerians, highlighting the need for awareness and responsible messaging within the music industry to address this concerning trend.

On April 26, 2024, Bella Shmurda, born Akinbiyi Abiola Ahmed, a Nigerian singer known for his unique afrobeat sound, released an extended play (EP) with five tracks, two of them (*Loner and My Brother*) in homage to his late friend (Mohbad). The lyrics of the song titled "My Brother" highlight the essence of life, the hustle of it, and the pain it brings, yet a few lines, such as "You go follow smoke cigar when I switch Benson" was used to normalize smoking.

Cultural Identity and Belonging:

Afrobeat music, while serving as a medium for expressing cultural identity and a sense of belonging, can also inadvertently influence drug use as a form of rebellion or status symbol among young Nigerians. afrobeat artists, through their music, portray various aspects of Nigerian society, including the allure of material wealth, fame, and the pursuit of happiness amidst challenges, which can resonate with listeners seeking avenues for self-expression and identity formation (Adeniyi, 2020).

In this context, the glorification of drug use in some afrobeat music can be perceived as a form of rebellion against societal norms or a symbol of status and success, especially among impressionable young individuals who look up to these musicians as role models. The association of drug use with wealth, confidence, and a carefree lifestyle in some music videos and lyrics can create a perception that substance abuse is a way to rebel against authority or to attain a certain social status within their peer groups.

This implies that afrobeat music, while celebrating cultural identity and reflecting societal realities, can inadvertently contribute to the normalization of drug use among young Nigerians by portraying it as a form of rebellion, a status symbol, or a means of coping with challenges, highlighting the complex interplay between music, culture, and behaviors among the youth population.

Influence of Afrobeat Musicians:

Afrobeat musicians play a significant role as influencers and role models, potentially impacting drug use among their fans. The relationship between Nigerian music and hard drugs is complex, with drug

use being intertwined with the music industry. Musicians often use drugs to cope with depression, enhance performance, and boost creativity. The glamorization of drug use by popular musicians can influence their fans, especially the youth, to normalize substance abuse. This influence can either promote drug use by making it seem acceptable or discourage it by highlighting the negative consequences associated with addiction.

The case of Nigerian musicians like Majek Fashek and Runtown, who have struggled with drug addiction, sheds light on the darker side of substance abuse within the music industry. While some artists have openly discussed their battles with addiction, others continue to use drugs and even showcase them on social media, perpetuating a culture where drug use is normalized. The pressure to perform, coupled with the rock star lifestyle, can lead musicians to turn to drugs for energy and creativity, creating a cycle of substance abuse.

Recently Nigerian singer Solidstar openly discussed his struggles with drug addiction. According to the report of Taiwo Okanlawon for PM News, Solidstar was first introduced to the hard drug "ice" (crystal methamphetamine) in 2021 by a group of young boys. Solidstar has also previously spoken about nearly dying from a drug overdose in the past. The singer has publicly apologized for the negative impact his drug use had on others (PM News, 2024).

Afrobeat musicians, as influential figures, have the power to shape perceptions and behaviours related to drug use among their fans. By being mindful of the messages they convey and the behaviours they exhibit, musicians can either contribute to the

normalization of drug use or serve as positive role models advocating against substance abuse. Ultimately, the impact of musicians on drug use among their fans underscores the importance of responsible influence and the need to address the complex relationship between music, fame, and substance abuse.

Recently, the death of Nigerian afrobeat artist MohBad (Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba) and his association with the Marlian record label, founded by NairaMarley (whose real name is Azeez Adeshina Fashola, is a British-Nigerian singer), have been subjects of significant controversy and investigations. The Marlians, a group of Nigerian youth who were devoted fans of Nigerian afrobeat artist Naira Marley have faced backlash and controversy following the death of one of their signees, MohBad, in 2023.

The Marlians, known for their blind obedience to Marley and narcissism, have become a cultural phenomenon among Nigerian youth. The Marlians movement and Marlian Records have been accused of bullying, threats, and unethical behavior towards MohBad. the Marlians were the devoted fan base of Naira Marley, representing a cultural shift among Nigerian youth, but have since become embroiled in controversy and backlash due to the circumstances surrounding MohBad's death.

Hypothesis Testing

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant correlation between Afrobeat musicians' visual portrayal and normalization of drug use and abuse

Table 2: Correlation between Afrobeat’s music and drug abuse in Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std. D	Pearson r	Sig	Decision
Visual Portrayal	200	45.50	17.62			
Normalization of Drug Use	200	36.28	15.36	0.71	.002*	Rejected

Results from table 3 revealed that there is a significant correlation between Afrobeat musicians’ visual portrayal and normalization of drug use and abuse. The

result showed a strong positive correlation between the visual depiction of Afrobeat musicians and the normalization of drug use. The average score for the visual portrayal was

45.50, with a standard deviation of 17.62. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was 0.71, suggesting that as the score of visual portrayal increased, the normalization of drug use strongly increased. The p-value of .002 was less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant positive correlation. The results suggest that more stylized or glamorous visual portrayals of drugs by Afrobeat musicians in their musical videos, and social media posts are associated with higher levels of perceived normalization of drug use and abuse.

Discussion

The results suggest that Afrobeat music may inadvertently promote drug abuse in Nigeria. Drug references and depictions are common in popular music across various genres, with up to 77% of Afrobeat song lyrics, videos and the lifestyles of the artists containing drug-related content. The portrayal of drug use in popular music, including glamorization and normalization, can influence youth attitudes and behaviours towards drugs. This finding is affirmed by the study of Emeh, Abaroh and Ogana (2023), who found that the attention of the Nigerian youths is easily gotten by the actions of the celebrities and social media influences whom they often copy their lifestyles and believe their stories and by extension, heed to their advice.

The study explores the relationship between Afrobeat music and drug promotion, focusing on the influence of musicians' content, slang, and personae on youth involvement in cybercrime in Nigeria. It reported the complex networks and affiliations that drive Afrobeat to international prominence, including the influence of current artists. The study also examines the mediating influence of ethnic identity and substance use among young adults. As these young adults use music to form their identity and find a community with similar tastes and values. If drug use is associated with popular music culture, it might also be adopted as part of the lifestyle that fans wish to emulate. This finding corroborates with that of Ogunila (2023) who explores the connection between afrobeat music, the human soul, and personality formation through the influence of music.

The study established that Afrobeat music has been linked to glorifying and trivializing drug use, contributing to its normalization among young Nigerians. The genre often portrays drug and alcohol consumption positively, creating a perception of success and wealth. This can lead to a higher likelihood of experimentation and addiction among the youth population. The normalization of drug use in Afrobeat music can desensitize listeners to the risks and consequences of substance abuse, highlighting the need for awareness and responsible messaging within the music industry. This supports the work of Babalola (2018) that was on overlooking misogyny: a critical examination of Fela Anikulapokuti's music, lifestyle and legacy.

Afrobeat musicians, while expressing cultural identity and belonging, also normalize drug use among young Nigerians. These artists often portray Nigerian society's pursuit of material wealth, fame, and happiness, appealing to listeners seeking self-expression and identity formation in their music videos and social media posts. However, the glorified drug use in some music videos can be seen as a rebellion against societal norms or a symbol of success, highlighting the complex interplay between music, culture, and behaviors among the youth population. This study by Onanuga and Onanuga (2020) found that most linguistic studies on Nigerian hip-hop and afrobeat music is influential in the linguistic expression of sexuality and violence among Nigerian university students, despite the democratization of expressions within the Nigerian environment.

The discussion in this study affirmed that the glamorization of drug use by popular musicians can either promote or discourage substance abuse. This assertion was similar to that of Louka (2023), who established that media significantly influences public perceptions and behaviours, particularly concerning substance use. The widespread depiction of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco in both traditional and modern media has led to the stigmatization and glamorization of substance use disorders. Popular media can directly impact substance acquisition and use among younger populations.

The result from the quantitative; based on data analyzed showed a significant

correlation between afrobeat musicians' visual portrayal and normalization of drug use and abuse. This implies that the more stylized or glamorous visual portrayals of drugs by Afrobeat musicians in their musical videos, and social media posts are associated with higher levels of perceived normalization of drug use and abuse. The result provides direct evidence to support the claim that more stylized or glamorous visual portrayals of drugs by Afrobeat musicians are associated with higher levels of perceived normalization of drug use and abuse.

Studies have found that drug references and depictions are common in popular music lyrics and music videos across various genres, including rap, hip-hop, R&B, and rock (Motyka & Al-Imam, 2021). The prevalence of drug use portrayals is particularly high in rap and hip-hop music, with one study finding that 77% of rap song lyrics contained drug-related content (Primack, Dalton, Carroll, Agarwal & Fine, 2008).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Despite the efforts of previous researchers, this study observes a gap in the area of guidelines for airing offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate content, including explicit lyrics, violence promotion, or harmful societal content (such as glamourizing and normalizing drug use and abuse).

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