

CLOUT CHASING, NIGERIAN POPULAR MUSICIANS AND THE SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

This is an analysis of the relationship between Nigerian musicians and society. The study delves into the concept of "clout chasing," where artists seek social prestige and acknowledgment through controversial actions and conduct. The effects of this phenomenon are explored in the context of Nigeria's popular music industry, where artists often resort to sensationalism to gain popularity. By raising important questions about the role of popular musicians in the shaping of cultural norms and values as well as their responsibility to their audiences, this research effectually highlights the impact of clout chasing on both musicians and society as a whole. The researchers' insights are supported by examples from the history of the Nigerian music industry. Valuable insights are offered into the complex dynamics between music artists and the society in Nigeria's vibrant music scene. This paper therefore highlights the negative effects of clout chasing on the Nigerian popular musicians and the society. Using the survey research design, data was gathered through observations literatures and internet. The significance of this paper is to provide justifiable guidelines to every popular musician that will aid them to embrace ingenuity in carrying out their craft and pushing their brands. This research recommends a periodical re-orientation for Nigerian popular musicians' to improve their artistry. The study encourages readers to reflect on the influence of popular culture on social attitudes and behaviours.

Key words – Popular Music; Clout; Social Media; Society.

INTRODUCTION

Some scholars opine that music began as a primeval form of communication which was compelled by the desire to promptly execute communal labour and also effectually perform religious ceremonies. In the words of Nzewi (1992):

When music sounds, the heart pulsates. The blood races, emotions burst and movements erupt, the sound of music upsets some, and the meaning of music pleases some. When music sounds, nerves calm, emotion sublimates and movement floats....Music can therefore be viewed as the effect or art of arranging, combining certain sounds which can be most ably produced by the voice or instruments. Music is a processed art that features pleasing sounds in rhythm as it varies in forms and idioms. Furthermore, music can be described as a systematic combination of sounds used to express thoughts and feelings. It is that creation from human ability whose raw materials, rhythm, and tone, awaken the sense of beauty in humanity (Pg.2).

Over time music as an art has witnessed several changes ensuing from the interaction of several cultures, which has led to social resemblances. Sociologically the concept of music is defined by society, and it is concerned with the organized ways in which people behave towards one another when they listen, produce, and reproduce those sounds that they perceive as music. It is evident that social change is bound to take place whenever and wherever different cultures interact and this is referred to as globalization. According to Idolor (2005):

Globalization is the interconnectivity of the activities of people irrespective of distance, race, and regional boundaries brought about by dramatic shifts in the movement of people, culture, technology, trade in goods and services, facilitated by improved Information and Communication Technology, Transportation, political and socio-cultural co-operation and applied technological developments; turning the world into a "Global village."

Musical hybrids such as the classical (art music) and popular music types in Nigeria are the resultant effects of the interaction between the European and Nigerian traditional musical cultures (Okafor, 2004). As an art, music penetrates every human society in one way or the other. Thus, fuelled by the quest to effectively represent and

express the feelings that emanate from the human mind to the outside realm without compromise, various media have been developed over time for this reason and one of the most effective of these vehicles is popular music.

Background of the Study

Musical genres as seen in diverse styles of renditions that have developed from artistic manipulations and fusions of musical activities of distant cultures, times, and practices are referred to as popular music. The development of popular music is made possible by borrowing musical ideas from folk, classical/art, and even musical interpretations of non-musical events like politics, humanities, and science (Onwuegbuna 2009, Pg. 93). The popular musician is often engaged in the act of extemporaneity which is a chief characteristic of popular music because the popular music medium gives you the needed room to express yourself without restraints and constraints. As a result of this, a considerable number of Nigerian popular musicians have become entangled in unconditional means towards the advertising of their artistry.

In the Nigerian popular music scene, the concept of "clout chasing" has become increasingly widespread currently. Many musicians are now more focused on gaining fame and recognition through controversial actions rather than producing quality music. This trend has led to a decline in the overall quality of music being produced, as artists prioritize shock value over musical talent. This phenomenon has had a significant impact on both the music industry and society as a whole.

In striving to gain popularity by increasing their social media following, many popular musicians have resorted to controversial tactics such as fighting with other artists, engaging in public stunts, and flaunting their wealth on social media to gain attention. While this may result in short-term accomplishment, it often comes at the cost of artistic integrity and genuine talent. This obsession with clout-chasing has created a culture of materialism and shallowness within Nigerian society. Young people are now more concerned with appearing successful than working hard to attain their goals. While chasing clout may bring temporary benefits, it ultimately weakens the true value of music and perpetuates unsafe societal norms. It is time for Nigerian popular musicians to focus on creating meaningful art that reverberates with audiences rather than simply seeking authentication through social media likes and followership.

There are still many Nigerian popular musicians nevertheless who remain committed to creating meaningful and impactful music that reverberates with their audience. These artists use their platform to address important social issues and promote positive messages, rather than simply seeking attention for personal gain. Overall, while there is a clear divide between those who chase clout and those who prioritize artistic integrity, Nigerian society needs to support and uplift musicians who use their talents for positive change rather than just seeking fame.

Purpose of the study

The trust of this paper was to highlight the impact of clout chasing on both musicians and the Nigerian society as a whole by raising important questions about the role of popular musicians in the shaping of cultural norms and values as well as their responsibility to their audiences.

General objectives of the study

- To understand the concept of clout chasing
- To determine why Nigerian popular musicians clout chase
- To ascertain the undesirable and constructive roles of clout chasing
- To evaluate the influence of the social media in clout chasing activities

Scope of the study

With precise instances of artists who have used and are employing clout-chasing strategies to further their careers and the implications on Nigerian society in mind, this research will look at the notion of clout chasing and its impact on prominent musicians within the Nigerian community.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study relies on the fact that it–

1. Effectively captures the essence of clout chasing and highlights its negative impact on individuals and society as a whole.
2. Successfully argues that the pursuit of influence promotes superficiality and self-centered behaviour, leading to a culture of narcissism and deception.
3. Serves as an emphatic reminder of the danger of giving priority to popularity over authenticity in today's social media landscape.

4. Encourages readers to reflect on their online behaviours and consider the effects of seeking influence at all costs.

The Social Media

The human species' use of technology began with the conversion of natural resources into simple tools to control fire and increase the available sources of food. Also the invention of the wheel helped humans to travel in and around their environment. Developments in historic times, including the printing press, the telephone, and the Internet, have lessened physical barriers to communication and allowed humans to interact freely on a global scale. Technology has helped develop more advanced economies (including today's global economy) and has allowed the rise of a leisure class. Innovations now seem to appear at a rate that increases geometrically, without respect to geographical limits or political systems. These innovations tend to transform traditional cultural systems, frequently with unexpected social consequences. Thus, technology can be conceived as a creative process as its various implementations influence the values of a society. In the developing world, the internet has led to solutions and services even more forward thinking than those in advanced nations, further highlighting the transformative nature of these networks and their capacity to incite change to promote the kind of development countries like Nigeria need (Encarta, 2009).

Within Africa, social media practices have materialized in unmatched capacities. The social media have led to revolutions, encouraged, demanded and even monitored activities/events. Social Media continues to expand and change with new applications appearing every day. Its indefinable nature communicates its capacity to transform how we engage, sell, buy, create, entertain and live in the digital age. The functions of social media have and continue to transform into that which was never anticipated. Most founders of social networks are surprised with the diverse and amazing ways users are able to engage and utilize their platforms. The beauty of invention within social media- capacity and opportunities are infinite. Young adults have savoured the internet and social media platforms since its inception.

Social networking is a technology that allows two-way communication and interaction between specific individuals and/or organizations in an online environment. Many of these social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook and Twitter, YouTube, WHATSAPP, Tiktok etc. help people engage in activities which include: sharing content like photos, videos and stories with others remixing online content such as music and videos together to make "artistic creations" blogging and commenting on others' blogs and online purchasing. All of these activities over recent years in Nigeria have steadily maintained an unprecedented rise since 2008. The social media have been a vehicle through which individuals promote their, products, and or services through online social channels, tapping into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels. Marketers have utilized various means to maintain the brand loyalty of their customers. One of the recent means is the social media marketing. Customers prefer to share technological-related, funny contents and a wide range of entertainment materials on social media platforms. Promoters/producers and performers of popular music in Nigeria have been able to come in terms with the simple fact that to stay competitive in today's fast moving business landscape, one requires a solid social media strategy, hence, their doggedness in the social media arena.

The contemporary and trending technological advancement in the area of music production and dissemination have provided huge grounds for human capital development. Youths and adults alike have become gainfully employed for the purpose of processing, packaging promoting and distributing or marketing the talents of various artistes by the reason of these technological advancements which the popular music industries leans on for survival. The availability of popular music contents can now be accessed at just a click not to mention the fact that consumers can now easily keep updates from the popular music medium of their choice (Okafor, 2009). By reason of the upsurge in the social media platforms, popular musicians have gained more momentum. Recent years have brought significant growth in access to web technology. Today, the capabilities of social media are influencing entertainment in ways previously unseen. In recent years, the Social Media have become profoundly implanted in the daily affairs of the average Nigerian young and old alike, having been taken up by a wide range of individuals and institutions in all walks of life.

The social media have become a vehicle to publicize stunts and clouts. In the Nigerian popular music scene, the concept of "chasing clout" has become increasingly widespread in currently. Many musicians are now more focused on gaining fame and recognition through controversial actions rather than producing quality music. This trend has led to a decline in the overall quality of music being produced, as artists prioritize shock value over musical talent. This phenomenon has had a significant impact on both the music industry and society as a whole. As a result of this, a considerable number of Nigerian popular musicians have become entangled in unconditional means towards the advertising of their artistry.

Clout Chasing -

The concept of "clout" encompasses influence, power, and social status. Clout chasing in the society is a big influence on a person's capacity to decide, influence others, and change things. Clout can be derived from various sources such as wealth, social connections, expertise, or leadership positions. Clout is important because it shapes social dynamics and power structures by influencing decisions about decisions, opportunities, and resources. Clout plays a pivotal role in career advancement, political influence, and understanding social hierarchies and dynamics. In today's digital era, the concept of clout chasing has become increasingly popular and important in society. Clout chasing refers to the act of seeking attention, reputation or validation via social media platforms by any necessary means. This includes engaging in controversial behaviours, exploiting personal relationships or even spreading false information. The importance of clout chase lies in its impact on the mental health and well-being of individuals. The constant need to be validated and approved by others can lead to an imbalance and a low self-esteem. Furthermore, sincerity and sincere relationships with others are frequently sacrificed in the quest to attain power. Clout chasing also contributes to the continuation of a shallow and materialistic society where popularity and following are used to gauge success rather than personal development or deep connections.

In the words of Okafor (2019) popular music because of its transient form is easily replaced by new musical idioms. This accounts for its economic viability as it has created multibillion entertainment empires and industries aided by the power of the media, electronic industry and ultimately the social media space. The progenitors of Nigerian popular music such as Haruna Ishola (Apala), Bobby Benson (Highlife), Raskimono (Reggae), Fela (Afro Beat) to name a few became successful in their carriers while creating authentic artistry. There is a need for people to keep their quest for influence, choosing honesty and morality over the infamous celebrity lifestyle. By putting value, followers and opinions first, rather than true connections and meaningful content, individuals risk losing touch with their true self and perpetuating this cycle of validation-seeking behaviour.

Working towards achieving fame and earning recognition is not a wrong desire but the focus on clout chasing for the sole aim of achieving fame have made artistes channel their creativity wrongly into gimmicks or controversies to generate online traffic especially, thereby sacrificing their authenticity for trends rather than pushing boundaries in the process. As proven, clout chasing exposes the artiste to a toxic entertainment environment that pressures them into unhealthy competition in order to stay relevant. The resultant effects of such exposures include but are not limited to burnout, mental health issues all of which will hinder artistic growth. It is imperative for artistes not to lose sight of what truly matters which in this case is creating an authentic and impactful art, devoid of superficial measures but tending towards genuine creativity and innovation.

Moving forward in this study but not limited, here is how to identify Nigerian popular music artistes that engage in clout chasing - Their social media feeds feel like an endless loop of trending challenges, their posts are plastered with tons of hash tags (#) and tags of other bigger accounts - it's like a virtual "notice me", also their engagements are a one-way street; they live for the numbers but rarely give back quality response. Nigerian youth populace overtly referred to as "GEN Z" have embraced clout chasing in all ramifications as a result of following in the footsteps of their celebrity idols in a bid to trend online or gain popularity. The negative consequences resulting from clout chasing diminishes the artist's reputation and credibility while it may seem that the artiste is gaining visibility.

Some Nigerian musicians who have used clout-chasing tactics to further their careers -

Over the years some Nigerian popular musicians have employed clout-chasing tactics to further their acts, and while they seem to have made some form of progress the discovery of such antics have left them in the cold as their fan base have witnessed a steady decline. Also worthy of note is the fact that it is not all Nigerian popular musicians that have engaged in clout chasing that have witnessed decline in the love their fans express towards them, but this should not become a motivating force to sustain clout chasing.

Celebrities are starting to realise that they may need a lot more than their star power to turn the focus of the audience in their direction. They have managed to blur the lines between reality and falsehood all in the name of pushing their crafts. Rising sensation Portable and show promoter Kogbagidi caught the attention of netizens after a video of their exchange surfaced on social media. In the clip, an enraged Kogbagidi sent Portable out of his house for lashing out at Poco Lee in public. However, after the matter was settled and the two returned online again, it was revealed that everything was staged for publicity. Truly, Portable made another video calling on Nigerians to ignore the videos making the rounds online as all is well between him and the show promoter.

In another occasion, on November 15, 2023, fans of the upcoming hip-hop artist Oladipupo Oladimeji, known by his stage name Oladips, stumbled on a video on social media showing two friends wailing over his "dead body" and begging him to "come back". His management wrote a short statement afterward, confirming the 28-year-old singer had died. The statement read thus –*"We are saddened to inform the general public that Oladipupo Olabode Oladimeji, aka OLADIPS passed away yesterday, Nov'14th Tuesday evening, at exactly 10:14 pm. We are still in shock as we speak!"*The statement read in part. News of the supposed death triggered an outpour of grief on social media, coming soon after the death of another fast-rising artist, Mohbad, who died under controversial circumstances in September. News of Oladip's "resurrection" has caused immense relief but also angry reactions. Less than 24 hours after his alleged demise, Oladips's team released his new album, sparking speculation that the rapper might have orchestrated the publicity stunt to simulate his death. Reacting to this death hoax, veteran DJ Jimmy Jatt expressed that faking one's death to achieve stardom or fame is a misguided endeavour. He emphasized that while it is common for artistes to promote their work, deceiving the public with a death hoax is an unacceptable step. Furthermore the veteran DJ reflecting on these staged deaths, emphasized that the backlash from such ventures typically engulfs the artistes. Once the sensationalism of the stunt has captured the public's attention, they may quickly become critical and doubtful of future endeavours.

From feigning sickness to fabricating their demise, the pressure to capture attention for their new albums, EPs, or singles appears to be propelling young Nigerian popular musicians to false creative extremes. Over the years, artistes in Nigeria have employed various publicity stunts to amplify the visibility of their latest works, as the fear of dropping an album and falling short of expectations often drives them to the edge. Fame is the common denominator that unites Nigerian popular musicians The allure of being celebrated and rocking all shows within and without is too strong for them to ignore. Most Nigerian popular musicians would often restate that they are here for the fame, the attention, and the money. This may explain why young artistes are desperate to 'blow', as they say in local parlance. To them, an artiste must be popular whether through his music or publicity stunts. The aftermath of such stunts often casts a long shadow on the careers of celebrities who engage in the act of faking their deaths. While some may temporarily enjoy a surge in attention and curiosity, the toll it takes on their credibility and public trust can be irreparable. While a select few manage to navigate the storm and maintain a semblance of success, others find the journey far from smooth.

Controversial rapper Speed Darlington, known for his provocative lyrics and attention-grabbing persona, often engages in public feuds with other artists and celebrities to generate buzz around his music. While this strategy has helped him gain a significant online following, it has also alienated some fans who view his behaviour as immature and disrespectful. Burna Boy has been criticized for his confrontational attitude towards fans and fellow musicians, as well as his tendency to make inflammatory statements on social media. While Burna Boy's boldness may have helped him stand out in a crowded industry, it has also led to backlash from critics who accuse him of seeking attention at any cost. DAILY POST reports that the Nigerian music industry recently witnessed a social media war between Wizkid and Davido, Tekno and Kizz Daniel. Reacting, Omah Lay insinuated that his colleagues were chasing clout, saying that he hopes that their next songs make waves "after all this noise."

Effects of Clout Chasing on the Nigerian Society

In a society where success and popularity are often equated with wealth and status, individuals are willing to go to great lengths to gain recognition, even if it means compromising their integrity. A very clear consequence of clout chasing is the destruction of traditional values and morals. This constant quest for validation has led to a decline in genuine human connections and relationships, as individuals prioritize image over authenticity. Furthermore, clout chasing has exacerbated societal divisions by creating a culture of competition and one-upmanship. The dominance of clout chasing in Nigerian society has had far-reaching implications on both individual behaviour and societal norms. It is imperative that we address this issue and strive towards fostering a culture that values substance over superficiality.

Living with regrets about failed publicity stunts

While a handful may be fortunate enough to weather the storm, the majority cannot sustain the pressure and eventually cave in. The quest for fame through unconventional means becomes a double-edged sword, cutting through the fabric of their careers and leaving scars that are challenging to heal.

Recommendations

Artists and audiences must navigate a culture that values clout above all as the music industry continues to evolve. In an environment full of detrimental possibilities it can be challenging for both artists and audiences to promote authenticity and talent, however, artists must stay true to themselves and their craft. It is important for

artists to create music that is authentic and reflects their true artistic vision. Also audiences must seek out music that is genuine and showcases raw talent. By supporting artists who prioritize authenticity over clout, audiences can help shift the culture towards valuing true artistry.

Conclusion

In conclusion credibility and public trust can only be bought for a short while. On the other hand authenticities will help Nigerian popular artists to set themselves apart in a competitive industry. The audiences have the power to shape the cultural landscape by supporting genuine talent over superficial popularity. Together, artists and audiences can create a music industry that values artistry above all forms of clout.

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