

# THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN POP MUSIC ON THE YOUTHS OF OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE

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## Abstract

This study examined the influence of foreign music on the lifestyle of Nigerian youths in Ogbomoso, Oyo State. The main objectives of the study are to examine the moral influence of foreign music content on the lifestyle of Ogbomosho youths. Data for this work was obtained via oral interviews and bibliography. The research design of this study is the descriptive research design. Findings revealed that most Nigerian youths listen to foreign music more than indigenous music which in turn exerts greater influence on the life pattern of Nigerian youths. Findings from this study revealed both positive and negative influence of foreign pop music on the lifestyle of youths in Ogbomoso, Oyo State are overt. This paper adds to literature on the influence of foreign music among Nigerian youths and provides basis for further research on the influence of foreign music on Nigerian youths.

**Key words:** Foreign music, Nigerian youths, lifestyle, morality, Ogbomoso.

## Introduction

Pop music is generally considered as mass culture music due to its popularity and level of acceptance by the general public. Pop is a branch of music that appeals to the mass audience; it is very popular in the media, club houses, and other social event centres. Pop music in Nigeria employs simple melodic lines that are easily committed to memory. Its texts are often rooted in the popular and cultural trend of the present society, traditional music and often found in church music.

Oxford advance learner's dictionary (2006), described pop music as modern music that is popular, especially with young people, and usually consists of simple tunes with strong beats. Onyeji (2002) described it as music that is readily comprehensible to the public. Best (2004), explained that popular music is produced and is sold to a broad audience who are the main consumers of such products. Implicitly, pop music is public oriented, it targets the public and addresses mundane issues of within the society, thus, the life span of each pop music released is very short. As newly released songs addresses issues at hand, previous songs becomes old fashioned and are slowly withdrawn from the public space. Pop music genre mutates as the

society changes. It encompasses itself with lots of commercial benefits and media for the empowerment and benefits of common people, especially those with little or no academic backgrounds.

The advent of foreign music genres such as Hip-hop, Reggae, Rock and Roll, Rhythm & Blues, Rap and Jazz in Nigeria has been a welcome development given that it created a massive and unappealing change in the life style of youths. Much of the American originated music has an evolving, inter-connected and evolutionary background. Wright (2014) noted that *Rock* music has its root from mid 1950s and was used as a protest and rebellion directed towards the established musical and social orders. It was derived from Rhythm& Blues otherwise referred to as *RnB* which also was developed from Blues—a branch of popular African-American music which originated in the United States of America in 1940s.

According to Wright (2014), the term was originally used by record companies to describe recordings marketed to Urban African Americans at a time when Rock and Jazz musics were in vogue. *RnB* in the 1950s became attributed to Blues, Rock and Roll, Gospel and Soul music. In terms of structure, the author explained that *RnB* combines twelve bar blues with a strong beat and accents on beats 2 and 4 of the bars engaged in frank, earthy and explicitly sexual lyrics with an intense, vibrant and highly distinctive character.

Conversely, Leadership Newspaper, (28<sup>th</sup> August, 2014) highlighted that foreign pop music and culture especially American hip-hop, in a lot of ways, is negatively affecting the perception and reactions of Nigerian youths to their indigenous cultural elements including music, language, dress mode, greeting and values. The author pointed out that Shawn Corey Carter known professionally as Jay-Z, an American rapper and businessman, and one of the best-selling musicians in recent times, having sold more than 50 million albums, is a great influence on young Nigerians youths as they frequently cite Jay-Z and other foreign artists as their favourite. This is an indication of the dominance of American music on African culture, music and lifestyle.

In support of this claim, Adeolu (2011) pointed out that American music has provided a blueprint for the rest of the world to appreciate and copy. In various parts of Africa, it is overt that American music is copied and consequently new cultural identities and formations that manifest in music. The author stressed that foreign music culture has affected the way many people, both young and old are beginning to see themselves and subsequently feel inferior to their counterparts in foreign countries. This results in an imitation of the dress code, speech and other ways of life of these foreign musicians. The author highlighted that in Nigeria, a large number of female contemporary musicians

wish to imitate American female musicians like Beyonce, Rihanna, Jenifer Lopez, and Nicky Minaj, who wear skimpy clothes that expose their entire bodies without taking into consideration the Nigerian society in which they belong.

The author observed that men are not left out as they put on the clothing that do not correspond with the Nigerian weather. Olamide for example, usually has a mix of western and local outlook in his dressing and this goes a long way to influence the lifestyle of his fans. Many Nigerian artistes as mentioned earlier strive to perform their composed songs and in addition dress like foreign entertainers at the expense of their own cultural values and modes of expression. Song lyrics are usually replete with words and expressions quite alien to the conservative society they belong. Although technology has enhanced acceptability of otherwise strange phenomenon, many Nigerians frown at the continued denudation of indigenous culture.

### **The Origin, Geographical Location and Climatic Condition of Ogbomoso**

According to Moye (1997), the geographical location that is known today as Ogbomoso had been in existence since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century when the then neighbouring settlements, Oke-eleerin, Osupa and Ijeru, all fused together. The author revealed that the name, *Ogbomoso* was coined from the heroic acts of Shoun Ogunlola who volunteered to fight and eventually conquered, by beheading the notorious Elemosho, who used to invade the above mentioned settlements, dispossessing them of valuables and farm produces. Shoun Ogunlola was then nicknamed *Ogbori Elemosho*, literally meaning he beheaded Elemosho. This name was later corrupted to *Ogbomosho* which the entire settlements in the neighbourhood adopted. The town is dominated chiefly by Yoruba descents and the major language spoken there is also Yoruba. Although, other languages including Hausa and English are also spoken there in minute proportions. Ogbomosho is divided into five local governments namely: Ogbomosho North, Ogbomosho South, Oriire, OgoOluwa and Surulere local government areas.

Moye (1997) observed that Ogbomoso occupies an approximate location of 8°7' and 10°3' north of the equator and 415° and 534° east of the prime meridian, it is 104km North East of Ibadan (capital of Oyo state) and 58km North West of Oshogbo capital of Osun state and is the second largest city after Ibadan in both Oyo and Osun States. The author highlighted that it is situated on the important federal trunk, a road popularly known as the Ibadan–Ilorin road, which bisects the city into almost two equal halves and is the major link road between the Northern and Southern parts of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria.

According to Appadurai (1996), Ogbomosho is a fast developing city, with a steady increase in the population. Recording the increase in population of Ogbomosho, the author stated that in 1925, the population was estimated at about 3000 (three thousand), while in 1949, the census recorded was 64,000 (sixty four thousand) and in 1952, the figure grew to 123,000 (one hundred and twenty-three thousand). The population of Ogbomosho according to the 1963 census was put at 251,647 (two hundred and fifty-one thousand, six hundred and forty-seven). However, the results from the 1991 census which stated 108,692 (one hundred and eight thousand, six hundred and ninety two, provokes disturbing and controversial thoughts especially with the fact that the interval between the conduct of both censuses was about thirty years. The Leadership Newspaper, (28<sup>th</sup> August, 2014) states that the present population of Ogbomosho is targeted to be about 7,500,000 (seven million, five hundred thousand people).

Moye (1997) revealed that Ogbomosho has become a highly commercial centre as the indigenes are found to be engaged in cottage and handcraft industries such as dyeing, narrow-loom weaving, blacksmithing, hunting and small scale farming. However, some are civil servants and teachers. Ogbomosho proudly houses many institutional, industrial, religious, educational, agricultural and commercial establishments and this has led to the rapid growth of the city. It serves as the Zonal headquarters to several Oyo state ministries and parastatals as well as the seat of the Ladokun Akintola University of technology.

Farming is the main occupation of the people of Ogbomosho and this is due to the arable land that characterise the place. However, subsistence farming is a major feature around the township except for the outskirts, which is used as major farm sites. There are lots of tobacco plantation as well as cocoa, yams and cassava. Farmers in Ogbomosho are also into goat and sheep rearing.

Moye (1997) stressed that the architectural and housing system found in Ogbomosho is characterized by "*Agboole*" (court yard system) which is found in most typical traditional Yoruba homes. The return of many Yoruba ex-slaves from Brazil had a significant influence on their Architecture. These returnees were skilled artisans and their Architectural contributions were in the traditional classical buildings and baroque plaster work with decorative mouldings and well decorated balcony grilles.

According to the author, based on the geographical location of Ogbomosho, the climate could be described as less humid and hotter than it is in the

greater part of Southern part of the country. Although the effect of the scorching harmattan wind is strongly felt during the dry season, the average humidity is about 50% during the dry season.

In terms of vegetation, the author explained that Ogbomosho, falls within the tropical rain forest belt and woodland savannah and this is responsible for the relatively high humidity and also a little change in temperature during the dry season. It is characterized by evergreen trees and grass land with the major soil type being red laterite. The climate of Ogbomosho according to Moye (1997) is divided into three seasons namely the long rainy season, short dry season and short rainy season. The long rainy season starts in March and lasts till the end of July, with a peak period in June characterised by thick cloudy conditions and excessive wetness. The short dry season is experienced in August for about three to four weeks, referred to as *August break* and generally observed in the last two weeks of August.

The short rainy season is a brief wet period which follows the *August break* from early September to mid-October, with a peak period at end of September. The rain is not usually as heavy as those in the long rainy season. The two periods of rainfall intensity in Ogbomosho gives the double maxima phenomenon of the rainy season characteristics of southern Nigeria. Lastly, the Long Dry Season is a period that starts from late October and lasts until early March with peak dry conditions between early December and late February. The period witnesses the prevailing influences of the dry and dusty North-East wind, as well as the harmattan conditions.

### **Yoruba Musical Culture**

Music is an age long practice and overtime is constantly evolving and developing like other arts. There are several definitions of music by different authors. However, most scholars agree that music is the art and science of composing, combining, arranging and producing sensible sounds. Music deals with sound and this infers that the raw materials in music are sounds of various heights and depths, otherwise called pitches. Like the fine artist uses colours of various kinds, to create artistic impression, musicians also use sounds of various heights and depths to create musical expressions. Sounds arranged in logical manner to form what is called music. Therefore, music is a combination of sounds that are organized and meaningful, occurring in a prescribed span of time and characterised by pitch (es).

Afolabi (2012) explained that sounds are to music as cloth materials are is to a dress and Just as seamstresses cut and shape fabric to create a dress, so also composers manipulate and form sounds to create a musical composition or

piece. The author stressed that music stimulates, soothes or ploughs the mind, serving as a language and cultural identity.

Through the ages, music has one important role or another to play in human cultural heritage globally. Mr, Yekini Ayegbajeje (personal communication August 5, 2023) explained that in the pre-colonial era prior to the introduction of modern technologies and cinemas, televisions, radios or computers in Ogbomoso, moonlight games and age-grade or age-group activities constituted recreation, entertainment and relaxation for the indigenes of Ogbomoso at occasions such as ritual worship, initiation, puberty rite, chieftaincy or title taking, festivals, celebrations of life and funeral.

There are four major families of Yoruba drums and their use is dependent on the context or genre where they are played. The *dundun* (talking drum) which imitates the sound of the human voice, is the most common and is present in many Yoruba musical, non-musical and extra musical traditions, such as *Sakara*, *Apala*, and *Jùjú*. Euba, cited in Omojola (2014) stressed that the *Sakara* drum popular among the Yoruba is a major threat to the position of the *dundun* drum players, who are being regarded as the superstars of Yoruba music.

The *Sakara* drum plays a ceremonial role in royal settings, weddings and *oriki* recitation. It is predominantly found in Muslim-related traditions such as *Sakara*, *Were* and *Fuji* music. On the other hand, *gbedu* (literally large drum) is used by secret fraternities and formalities in royal settings. Akuba drums (a trio of smaller conga-like drums related to the *gbedu*) are typically used in some traditional and indigenous music afrobeat. The fourth major family of Yoruba drums is the *batá* family which is played in sacred rituals and lately is found in several Yoruba popular music genres including *Fuji*, *Juju*, *Sakara* and *Apala*. Afolabi (2012) explained that, *Bata* music among the Yoruba of southwest Nigeria, is characterised mainly by polyrhythmic drumming patterns, call-and-response and repetitive structures. These features are prevalent from the earliest forms of *Bata* music.

Within the ambit of each drum family, are different sizes of drums which invariably dictate their respective roles. The lead drum in each family is called *iyá*, while the supporting drums are termed *omele*. Yoruba drumming exemplifies West-African cross-rhythms and is considered to be one of the most advanced drumming traditions in the world. Generally, improvisation is restricted to master drummers. Other instruments found in Yoruba music include the *goje* (string instrument), *sekere* (gourd rattle), *agidigbo* (thumb piano) and *agogo* (bell).

### **An Overview on the influence of Foreign Pop Music in Nigeria**

Generally, the use of music spans various purposes, events and occasions. These include socio-economic, political, occupational, recreational, ritual and educational events. John (2023) established that music is a prevalent, ubiquitous and inseparable from daily social and socio-economic activities in African traditional society. The growth of foreign music in Nigeria to some people is a welcome phenomenon. Most people believe it has created a massive and an unappealing change in the life of the youths, because it is gradually dragging Nigerian culture into extinction. According to Jibola Dabo (personal interview, 2023), the whole world emulates America in a lot of ways and Nigeria is no exception. This influence is evident in a number of areas including the movie industry, dressing and lifestyle, especially among Nigerian youths.

### **Current Trends of Musical Culture in Ogbomoso**

It is a general assumption that the wide acceptability of Nigerian hip-hop music is based either wholly or partly on the artistes' incorporation of local popular features including language and musical instruments in their songs and production of the music respectively. This assumption is based on the fact that many of the award winning singers and artistes of contemporary hip-hop music exhibit mixtures of different languages, including the standard or Queen's English, pidgin English, Yoruba, Igbo and other local dialects.

The inclusion of the various languages allows for engagement of social dialogue between the artiste and his audience. It allows for expression of inner thoughts and philosophies in such a way that is easily comprehended and acknowledged by their fans. The inclusion of music multilingualism in the performance of hip-hop appears to have provided the youth with much needed impetus to embrace the made – in – Nigeria music particularly and product in general. So central is the phenomenon to the increasing acceptance of the Nigerian hip-hop that even the unlettered and some adults are not left out in the frenzy created by the music.

Multilingualism in naija hip-hop music is pivotal to the growth of the music industry. With the emergence of musicians that sing multilingual music, the music industry grew bigger. Public buying CDs grew more compared to when “older musicians” who sang in just one language that were in vogue. Different Nigerian languages include Pidgin English, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and Standard English motivates a lot of young people to listen to hip-hop music. As a result of this multilingualism in Nigerian hip hop, more albums are now produced by musicians.



**Figure 1: DundunPlayers**



**Figure 2: Dundun Players and drum market**



**Figure 3: Bata Players**



**Figure 4: Omeleako**



**Figure 5: Iya Ilubata**

The languages used today by the Nigerian musicians are the major tools in music which has been able to project the Nigerian culture and people. This increases patronage and allows for wider embrace and acceptance especially among Nigerians. The fusion of Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa, with English and especially Pidgin English have been able to expand the level of marketability and patronage for Nigerian music generally and the hip-hop especially. Jibola Dabo (personal interview, 2023) explained that the use of different languages in Nigeria and even the universal language Pidgin English by hip-hop artistes, serves in capturing the interest of the people, making it comprehensible for both local market women and commercial bus conductors to sing along.

### **Influence of Foreign Pop Music on Youths in Ogbomoso**

Jibola Dabo (2023) revealed that the introduction of foreign pop music in Ogbomoso is gradually driving the cherished culture into oblivion in the sense that, Ogbomoso youths prefer listening to foreign musicians than local artistes. Even in performance, it is very rare to see artistes performing pure and undiluted indigenous music such as *Apala*, *Waka* and, *Dadakuada* with local instruments on stage, rather hybrid or modernised juju with PSR 1000 (keyboard), saxophone, trumpet, guitars and computers and guitar.

Jibola Dabo revealed that western Pop music has boosted the entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance and development amongst youths in Ogbomoso. It played a vital role in individual capacity building via provision of employment, poverty alleviation and contribution to national economy. In the case of Ogbomoso, the respondent revealed that the production and consumption of pop music is more prevalent amongst the youth, between 15 and 45 years of age.

The respondent explained that these developments have placed an average Ogbomoso youth on the verge of believing that he/she possesses some artistic qualities especially in pop music. Seeing the financial success and fame that come with pop music, a large number of youths in Ogbomoso are now emulating it unnecessarily for the economic gain. Ironically, this music genre that is now the dream of most youths in Ogbomoso was earlier regarded as inferior and music for the common school drop-out, because it does not require any form of study compared to Art music. Pop music controls the highest music related business in Nigeria and also around the world. Appadurai (1996), referred to pop music as a worldwide phenomenon, because of its overriding influence on the music scene in Nigeria and global music too.

Jibola Dabo (personal interview, 2023) further revealed that in Ogbomoso, most pop musicians are not products of formal academic music institutions. These musicians learnt music by rote from church choirs, while others grew from being members of traditional music groups. The respondent pointed out that the rate of unemployment is alarming, and more employed people are losing their jobs because modern computer technology has taken over their jobs. Hence, Pop music becomes a source of employment to the unemployed youths in Ogbomoso.

Jibola Dabo revealed that positive influence of foreign pop music on youth in Ogbomoso includes the promotion of unity and self-confidence among them. It synergises different cultures, beliefs, backgrounds and age grades together. This is evident in that both young and old come together to produce and perform music. Thereby improving social interactions, economic skills and networking. The respondent further identified that listening and performing pop music helps build boldness, confidence and ability to express oneself publicly, thereby exposing hidden talent or skill and bringing dreams and ambitions to reality.

Other influence of foreign pop music on youth in Ogbomoso especially with regards to their lifestyle according to the respondent is that it exposes them to crime and crime related activities. These include gangsterism, robbery, rape and pornography among other defiant acts. These acts are evident in the music and videos produced and performed by some artistes which directly or indirectly promote violence thereby misleading the youths especially teenagers.

Furthermore, the respondent explained that some artists have been involved in some criminal activities, these acts have consequently influenced the youths in Ogbomoso through the lyrical contents of the music and videos. Also, according to the respondent, pop music exposed youth in Ogbomoso to sexual activities. Particularly, *RnB* music is the most related to the feelings of grief, love and pride as its lyrics and theme is usually based on sex and love. The respondent explained that it changed the self-perception and esteem of young people, thereby promoting sexual immorality especially the women.

## **Conclusion**

This paper examined the influence of foreign pop music on the youths of Ogbomoso town, in Oyo State. The findings of the study revealed that, youths in Ogbomoso derive pleasure in listening to foreign pop music to the detriment of indigenous/ traditional music, such that foreign pop music has become integral part of an average Ogbomoso youth and influenced significantly their

social and cultural life.

Pop music is gradually eroding the traditional music of Ogbomoso, which portend danger to the traditional life of the Ogbomoso people. Youths in Ogbomosho have embraced a lifestyle that is in conformity with those of the global pop music artists; thereby, neglecting the norms and cultural values that epitomise Ogbomoso people's uniqueness among the Yoruba race. The study thus, reiterates the benefits of traditional music, and the need to sustain them. The traditional musical instruments are still very therapeutic, especially, Yoruba talking drums, which are very rich in tone colour. It is pertinent, that youths in Ogbomoso participate in activities that will ensure the development and sustainability of the traditional music by listening to traditional music capable of modelling better character and essential values of them.

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### **Interviews**

JibolaDabo (personal interview, 2023)