

## **Tanzanian Popular Songs Ignoring Undesirable Modern Female Beauty Norms: Analyzing Dudu Baya's *Nakupenda Tu* and Picco's *Kikongwe***

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses how Tanzanian popular songs, specifically *bongo flava* songs, ignore and provide some criticisms to undesirable modern female beauty norms, mostly the Western beauty standards that have obsessed most women in the Tanzanian society. Such norms include women changing their body parts appearance and 'reducing' their ages in order to be perceived beautiful. The article analyzed some song lyrics and found that despite the majority of Tanzanian popular musicians being celebrating such female beauty norms through their songs, some artists have gone against this tendency; including Dudu Baya through his song *Nakupenda Tu* (I Just Love You) and Picco through his song *Kikongwe* (An Old Woman). 'Objectification', 'learned helplessness', and 'double standard of aging' theories were used to analyze the two songs.

### **Ikisiri**

*Makala hii inajadili jinsi nyimbo maarufu za Kitanzania, hasa za bongo flava, zinaavyokosoa desturi za Kimagharibi zisizofaa kuhusu urembo wa wanawake. Desturi hizo zinajumuisha wanawake kubadili mwonekano wa sehemu za miili yao na kupunguza umri wao ili waonekane warembo. Makala hii imechambua mashairi ya nyimbo na kubaini kuwa japokuwa wanamuziki wengi wamekuwa wakiunga mkono desturi hizo tajwa kupitia nyimbo zao, wachache; akiwemo Dudu Baya kupitia wimbo wake *Nakupenda Tu* na Picco kupitia wimbo wake *Kikongwe* hawakufuata mwelekeo huo. Uchambuzi wa nyimbo hizi mbili umefanyika kwa kufuata nadharia za 'pingamizi la kijinsia', 'hisia ya kutokuwa na uwezo', na 'kutohamini uzee'.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

'Women beauty' in Tanzania, as in several other places in the world<sup>2</sup>, has basically been valued on the basis of sexual attractiveness; mainly through women's physical

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<sup>2</sup> See Azoulay (2009) to see how universal this tendency has been.

appearances<sup>3</sup>. Women, especially in urban areas, were valued for their bodies' appearance and sexual appeal over other qualities such as intelligence and different skills, family care, level of hardworking, and natural appearance; qualities which were highly valued and included in 'women beauty' in the past old times (Majani, 2013). Majani reports that features such as curvy body shape and lighter skin have been a measure of women beauty and social value (*ibid*). In addition to those features, a woman has been considered to be at the peak of beauty in her mid-thirties; just before early signs of facial and body aging start to appear to her (Muiruri, 2019). The beauty perception has gone further; that a woman who is perceived beautiful in the sense of sexual attractiveness through physical appearances, is believed to succeed in life; economically, in school/college/university, to win the affections of desirable partner, to easily acquire employment or leadership positions, and more likely to obtain more customers when establish her own business. Business adverts, music videos, films, and beauty contests have heightened the enthusiasm of facial and body attractiveness to females. Famous people, television presenters, showbiz newspapers, and beauty magazines have also promoted that perception of 'women beauty' and have made those women who do not live in that perception to feel they are not up-to-date.

Female beauty in Tanzania was influenced by business and fashion; largely through the media (Saad, 2010). Modern mainstream female beauty norms were largely heightened by female beauty judgements from the 'Western' countries<sup>4</sup> whose women were obsessed with physical beauty. In those countries, women were thus spending a lot on body appearance through cosmetics, clothing fashion, or even surgeries. In the countries, some women also were resisting to old age by trying to maintain young appearance. The old women's engagement with the perceived beauty practices has been done to avoid the social 'jeopardies' of looking old (Clarke, 2011).

History shows that physical beauty has been an objective sought by women since the beginning of civilization (Ehlinger-Martin, Anny, Taïeb and Azoulay, 2015). Social comparison has been a reason for women aim to acquire such beauty. This situation has been due to the fact that as women interact with other women, they compare themselves with others in order to evaluate their own capabilities that may generate social power or opportunities (Kim and Lee, 2018). Social competition is another reason for women to focus on acquiring such beauty. Social competition means holding a leading position through interactive behaviours with social competitors in order to acquire limited resources (*ibid*). Thus, inscribing femininity beauty in the female body has been highly intended by women and societies have accepted it and expressed various ways on how women should look more feminine

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<sup>3</sup> This model is also referred as 'feminine beauty ideal', - a socially constructed notion that perceive physical attractiveness to be one of women's most important assets, and something that women should strive to achieve and maintain.

<sup>4</sup>These countries include USA, Japan, South Korea, France, Germany and the UK (Young, 2017).

so as to emphasize female beauty. Women have internalized this perception and practice it; something that has led to women 'self-objectification' (Starr, 2019) and other individuals, specifically men, 'objectifying' women (Bartky, 1990).

'Objectification' is a notion that is dominant in feminist theories. It can simply be defined as seeing and/or treating a person, usually a woman, *as an object* (Nussbaum, 1995). In the case of the current study, the focus is mainly on sexual objectification. In this situation, women are objectified through three features: 'instrumentality' feature (*ibid*) and 'reduction to body' and 'reduction to appearance' feature (Langton, 2009). 'Instrumentality' feature deals with women being treated as a tool for the objectifier's [man's] purposes - women being beautified for men's usages [sexual desires] (Bartky (1990). 'Reduction to body' feature is the treatment of women as identified with their body [attractiveness], or body parts and 'reduction to appearance' feature is the treatment of women primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses (Nussbaum, 1995).

According to Haslanger (1993), for a man to objectify a woman, a man should *view and treat* a woman as an object for the satisfaction of *his* desire; and a man should believe and desire that a woman has properties by nature to satisfy his desire. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) explain that the main means of objectification is the 'objectifying gaze' which refers to men's sexual staring, contemplation, suggestions or comments on women's physical appearance. Several Tanzanian songs such as 'She Got a Gwan' by Albert Mangwea, 'Mpenzi Chocolate' by Mzee Yusuf, 'Una' by Professor Jay, 'Mrembo' by Matonya, and 'Namba Nane' by Daz Baba, among others, objectify Tanzanian women, as we will see later. Objectification has led to several negative psychological consequences to women. For example, has led women to see themselves as less human and less moral (Nussbaum, 1995). Objectification Theory also proposes primary and secondary consequences of objectification to women. Secondary consequences include a kind of self-consciousness in the sense that women always check or reorganize their clothes or appearance to confirm that they are 'presentable'. Primary consequences are associated with sexual abuse such as rape and sexual harassment. Though the above scholars only discuss about the effects of objectifying women, there are also effects of neglecting or isolating women who did not possess the then perceived beauty features, something that the current study focuses on.

The perception of judging female beauty through physical appearance is more heightened in 'modern times' due to globalization effects (Mwakibete, 2019). Due to globalization and free market economy, Western cultures; including Western female beauty perceptions, flow freely in Tanzania. Tanzanian women who adapt the foreign female beauty perceptions are seen more modern while those who do not meet the foreign standards of female beauty receive less social value hence, this causes a reduction in their self-esteem (*ibid*). In addition to this disadvantage from the female beauty standards, several women use harmful cosmetics and practice some

undesirable procedures to achieve such standards. To understand well these situations, one has to know first the meanings and connection between female and beauty norms.

## **2.0 The Concepts ‘Beauty’, ‘Female Beauty’ and ‘Female Beauty Norms’**

Beauty is a term that refers to agreeable social qualities, possession of exquisiteness and appealing power (Diller, 2011). Traditionally, woman or female beauty has been a reflection of social and aesthetic values of a woman (Mairuri, 2019). Some female beauty features may be common in several societies or individuals but beauty is also not universal. Female beauty may be physically or not physically interpreted (Saad, 2010). Muiruri (2019) explains that traditionally, woman beauty is a deep complex term hence she warns that using this term to refer only to physical attraction from woman body parts such as face, legs, hips, lips etc. is misusing it. She explains that most important qualities of female beauty are good behaviour, life vision, and natural exquisiteness. She adds that the beauty is not only about physical appearance but also spiritual (*ibid*). Female beauty norms are regulations that guide people’s thoughts, language, behaviours, practices, and perspectives on female beauty (Kim and Lee, 2018).

Studies in recent years have shown that a huge number of African men prefer dense bodied women while those in the Western world like lean ones (Ngugi, 2017). These perceptions are said to be developed from cultural basis. For example, men in most African societies, attach some myths to women with dense bodies. These myths include men considering such women being healthier and more fertile, more matured and motherly, stronger and forbearing. In addition to that, African men have been raised in societies that glorify big bodies hence, they have been encultured that ‘big is beautiful’ (*ibid*). On the contrary, men in the Western world, for instance in the United Kingdom and United States of America, prefer slim ladies because they perceive them attractive from associating slim body size with youngness, fitness, appealing, fertility, and a lower risk of diseases (Zolfagharifard, 2015). Western countries have developed different terms to refer to the appearance of women they like. In Japan, for example among other countries, feminine beauty is referred as ‘*cutismo*’, which means childlike; slim, stunning, innocent, simple, and weak [undoubtedly with a need of protection from men] (Condry, 2006). Other Western countries also refer to ladies with such features as *linda* in Spain, ‘cute’, ‘gorgeous’, or ‘pretty’ in USA and UK, among other countries (*ibid*). References specifically to female face possessing such beauty features in Western view, terms such as ‘pretty’ and ‘cute’ are used. In Tanzania, men also use terms such as ‘*amejazia*’ or ‘*ameumbika*’ [she is dense or she is well created] and ‘*pisi kali*’ [a good piece/part/thing] to refer to women with the bodies they like. References specifically to female face possessing such beauty features in Tanzanian view, terms such as ‘*msumari*’ and ‘*kisura*’ [a nail and good face, respectively] are used. Let us now see how several Tanzanian popular songs such as ‘*Namba Nane*’ [number eight] by Daz

Baba, ‘*Nampenda Yeye*’ [I love her] by Mh. Temba, and ‘*She Got a Gwan*’ [she has everything] by Mangwea, among others, praise the Western female beauty standards. In song *Namba Nane*, Daz Baba sings lyrics such as:

1. *Ana sura matata na macho yanayoita* [She has stunning face and attractive eyes...]
2. *Alivyumbika anabebeka kama gitaa* [Her well created body makes it easy to carry her like a guitar]
3. *Akitembea anatingisha* [When she walks, she shakes her behind]

Such lyrics objectify women through ‘*reduction to body*’ and ‘*reduction to appearance*’ features and ‘objectifying gaze’. In song *Nampenda Yeye*, Temba sings:

1. Chuchu ziwa konzi [Her nipples are pointed],
2. Usoni no pimpos [Her face has no pimples],
3. Macho yanaita [Her eyes are very attractive...]

In song *She Got a Gwan*, Mangwea sings:

1. Ndefu yake shingo [Her neck is long],
2. Mwendo wa maringo [Her walk is embellished],
3. Ameumbika [She is well created].

Lyrics of these three songs more idolize modern Western female beauty perceptions over traditional Tanzanian ones.

Principally, aging to women in Tanzania, as in several other parts of the world, is negatively perceived in relation to modern female beauty. On the contrary, female youthfulness is associated with self-sufficiency, well-being, femininity, productivity, and sexual attractiveness (Gullette, 2003). Hence, some old women are denying aging process as they are struggling to get noticed and valued as ‘still young’. This struggle is heightened by the modern female beauty perception and the fact that women are vulnerable to sociocultural pressures of appearing young (*ibid*). These pressures from the modern mainstream perception on female beauty have made some old women not being satisfied with their appearances hence, they suffer from aging anxiety and low self-esteem. This makes them thinking of youth appearance possibilities and specifically make them into purchasing anti-aging products mainly of uplifting breasts and of eliminating wrinkled skin in order to appear younger (Muisse and Desmarais, 2010). The female’s struggle to appear young can be seen to several Tanzanian women, especially famous ones such as actresses and musicians, who use to reduce their ages (Abdallah, 2020). That fact can also be heard in Tanzanian songs ‘*Mwisho Chalinze*’ by Babu Ft Dogo Niga and ‘*Nakula Ujana*’ by Nay wa Mitego, among other songs. These songs adore youthfulness and mock oldness (Clarke, 2012). This situation goes along with the

Double Standard of Aging Theory (Sontag, 1997) where older women are devalued and socially ‘invisible’ due to the perceived nature of female attractiveness, that female beauty quality is perceived to ‘diminish with time’ (Clarke, 2011).

During the current study, many Tanzanian women were saying ‘*uzee mwisho Chalinze*<sup>5</sup>, *mjini kila mtu baby*’ [old age status ends at Chalinze, in town everyone is young]<sup>6</sup>. This perception developed a norm which has some negative effects to older women because it directs them into using some risk anti-aging products in order to change their appearances. From the above review, one can note that female beauty is attached to female physical attractiveness, and physical attractiveness of females is associated with female youngness (Clarke, 2012). According to structural framework of Human Beauty Value (HBV), women feel defensive emotions (such as envy, shame, depression, anxiety, and self-criticism) when they feel inferior during upward social comparison<sup>7</sup>, and these emotions become a driver for increasing social competition hence, leads into women’s pursuit of different beauty standards (Kim and Lee, 2018).

### **3.0 Tanzanian Women ‘Striving’ towards Appearing ‘Beautiful’ and ‘Young’**

Several Tanzanian women have been undergoing some procedures in striving towards the modern mainstream beauty. These procedures are known as Self-development Human Beauty Values (SdHBV) - process of improving beauty through constant individual’s or management’s efforts (Kim and Lee, 2018). In this process, women try to improve their beauty through personal skills or mainstream procedures (*ibid*). These procedures however, have psychological and physical negative effects. In order to explain the effects, the current study uses ‘Learned Helplessness Theory’. This theory explains a situation when someone goes into pain, suffering, or discomfort without a helpful or encouraging way to escape it (Ackerman, 2020). Someone’s realization of being out of control of such situation is the thinking, feeling, and or acting of being helpless. The phenomenon is called learned helplessness because it is not an inborn character. Ackerman states that no one is born believing that s/he has no control over what happens to him/her. It is a learned behaviour, conditioned through experiences in which someone either really has no control over his/her circumstances or simply perceives that he/she has no control (*ibid*). Understanding this theory is helpful towards removing or reducing negative mindset of women in relation to female beauty issues thus, to achieve the positive one. In the case of the current study, women who do not possess the modern female beauty ideals, develop a sense of their age and or body concern from which they

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<sup>5</sup> Chalinze is the main gate for many interior Tanzanian regions into the main coastal economic city - Dar es Salaam.

<sup>6</sup> This translation and of song lyrics in this study were done by the researcher.

<sup>7</sup> Upward social comparison occurs when people compare themselves to other people who are better than they are, this is contrary to downward comparison; when people compare themselves to those who are less proficient than they are (Kim and Lee, 2018).

create a feeling of helplessness where some remain in the feeling while others attempt to deny their age and to change their physical appearances. Below here are some of procedures, (or as Bartky (1990) calls them 'women punitive practices towards beauty' - due to their negative effects), that a number of Tanzanian women have been undergoing in order to achieve the modern mainstream beauty standards.

The first practice is breast, hip, thigh, and butt enlargements. Women have been undergoing this procedure to increase their attractiveness. This procedure includes silicone implants, applied creams, fat transfer injections, procedures which are dangerous as they can lead into allergic reactions, breathing problems, cancer, gangrene (rotting of butt and leg muscles), lumps/granuloma (muscles tumor), or even death. Other products which contain steroid supplements may lead to 'osteoporosis' (bone weaknesses), kidney failure, and blood pressure (Makwetta, 2012).

Another practice is skin bleaching, a practice which is a psychological effect to several dark-skinned people, mainly Africans, largely resulted from racial inferiority effects from colonialism and slave trade (Shine, 2017a). Skin bleaching involves application of creams, gels, soaps, or household products such as toothpaste, bleach, washing powder, or battery acid to lighten the skin (*ibid*). Women have been practicing skin bleaching due to the perception explained earlier that lighter skin is among the features which determine more women beauty and social value. However, the skin bleaching products are said to have side effects due to hydroquinone, mercury, triethanolamine, petrolatum, and parabens ingredients in them (Shine, 2017a). Such effects include thinking loss, reduction in fertility, kidney and liver diseases (*ibid*).

In other cases, women have also been drawing tattoos and different paintings on their bodies for aesthetics purposes. It was noted that some materials that women use in body decorations can lead into allergic reactions, bacteria, or Hepatitis B infections (Maina, 2019). Some other decorations, like tattoo, are permanent hence, lead to psychological problems when some women want to remove them (*ibid*). Several women also do ear and nose piercing where some women face skin reactions from the metal materials that are used to make ear and nose rings (Majani, 2013).

Lipstick is also another beauty product that has been used by women in Tanzania to achieve the then female beauty standards. Besides having a perceived beauty advantage, research show that several lipsticks (about a third of those which have been in the market) contain 'lead' mineral in large quantity which exceeds the safe agreed amount for human health (Majani, 2013). Other harmful ingredients in lip sticks include butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), coal tar (petroleum) and aluminum (lakes color). These ingredients can enter women's bodies through swallowing and can lead to cancer, kidney disease, mood swing, headache, nausea,

and cheilitis. Also, pregnant women who use the products put their fetus at risk of cerebral palsy and mental problems (*ibid*).

Many Tanzanian women also prefer to wear false hair products (FHPs); including a range of products such as full and partial wigs, weaves, toupees, toppers, extensions, eyelashes, and eyebrows (Mwingira, 2019). FHPs are made from human hair, synthetic fibres, or a combination of both (Fisher, 2020). With regards to head hair, women apply artificial hair integrations, which are commonly known as hair extensions or hair weaves. Hair extensions have been done to add length and fullness to the hair by clipping, gluing, or sewing fake hair on natural one (Fisher, 2020). Most Tanzanian women prefer 'Brazilian hair' and 'Peruvian hair' brands (Mwingira, 2019). However synthetic extensions, especially wigs, are unhealthy since they do not allow the skin on the scalp to breathe. This leads to very warm and moist scalp which offers grounds for bacteria and fungus to breed on women's heads. In addition to that, women are not in position to wash the head daily hence they develop dirt that builds up from sweat. More to that, some women have allergic reactions and some have experienced itchy scalp skin from such practices (*ibid*). Wearing wigs also can lead to hair loss, dandruff, hair breakage, and headaches due to 'hypoxia' (lack of oxygen in head skin and hair root tissues) (Fisher, 2020). Several Tanzanian women have also been applying *relaxer*; a type of lotion or cream generally used by people with very curly *hair* to straighten *hair* by chemically 'relaxing' the natural curls. *Relaxer* has been used by most African women from racial inferiority from colonialism hence the women want to look like their colonial masters who have straight *hair*, in order to be valued like the then colonizers (Wise et. al, 2012). However, many hair relaxers contain 'Lye' chemical (Sodium hydroxide/Caustic soda), calcium hydroxide, guanidine carbonate, thioglycolic acid salts and monobutyl phthalate; materials which cause several diseases to women, including heart diseases, burning of head skin, and loss of memory, among other problems (*ibid*). Some Tanzanian women have also been doing eyelash extensions; semi-permanent lashes that are glued on top of natural lashes of a woman in order to transform woman's face to look more impressive, attractive or aesthetically pleasing. It has been believed that the woman's look after eyelash extensions does not only make a woman's face more attractive, but also expresses overall woman's good health status. However, temporary fake eyelashes/false eyelashes/semi-permanent artificial eyelashes have several side effects to women. Among them is blindness from formaldehyde toxins, eye lids problems, eye itchiness from eyelashes glue, bacteria, virus, and parasite infections, traction alopecia (loss of original eyelashes), and endotropion (inaccurate eyelashes growth), among other problems (*ibid*).

The desire of appearing 'tall' (equal or more than five feet seven inches) has made women wear high heels (shoes that are referred in Swahili - *viatu vya mchuchumio*) (Shine, 2017c). High heels put women feet at an angle thus, pull feet muscles and joints out of alignment. High heels may also distract legs bones and



muscles, whist, and backbone (*ibid*). Women who spend lots of time in high heels experience low back, neck and shoulder pain because such shoes disrupt the natural form of their bodies. Women may also face ‘arthritis’; a disease that causes painful inflammation and stiffness of human body joints (Bucciarelli, 2019).

Women also like to wear tight heels, dresses, and specific belts which are worn for decoration and to show body ‘curvy’ shapes respectively. These practices are said to have health risks to women; tight dresses and belts affect blood flow and tight heels cause ‘hammer toe’ - a foot condition in which toes have abnormal bend in the middle joint (Fletcher, 2017). Other risks to Tanzanian women are from certain perfumes and eyeglasses which are mostly used by young girls, especially secondary and university students without professional advices. Some perfumes have harmful ingredients which can affect nervous system, and wearing unprescribed eyeglasses can *damage eyes* (Shine, 2017b).

Several Tanzanian women also prefer to put on artificial nails (Dausen, 2019). However, the practice has several risks to women such as causing infection from injuries due to nails which are too long or stiff, or when those nails are applied with unsanitary tools. Other problems include allergic reaction to components of artificial nails or nail glues. Chemicals such as resins and formaldehyde that are used to apply the nails are also unhealthy as it had been shown, can result in complete natural nails loss by destruction of the nail matrix and to cause cancer (Kramer, 2012). Allergic reactions have also been reported with acrylic nails, resulting in serious inflammation and thinning of the nail beds. Also, a poisonous and illegal substance called MMA (Methyl Methacrylate) in the nail pastes can cause serious damage to the lungs (*ibid*).

Some old women have been undergoing dangerous cosmetic procedures such as botulinum toxin injections, dermal fillers, laser and light therapies, chemical peels, microdermabrasion, and mesotherapy in order to expand muscles, restore lost skin volume, repair and regenerate damaged skin, improve the skin appearance, renew skin tone and texture, and to rejuvenate and tighten skin, respectively (Majani, 2013). However, some products have negative outcomes such as redness, allergic reactions such as irritation or even cancer (*ibid*).

#### **4.0 Songs against the then Mainstream Modern Female Beauty Perceptions**

In the globalization era, there is either adapting or resisting to cultures brought by it (Santos, 2006). Tanzanian government, through Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA), has made efforts to restrict women from using harmful cosmetics (Shine, 2017a). In another case, some people criticized the then mainstream female beauty norms, by saying ‘beauty is in the eyes of the beholder’ or ‘some women have inner beauty’; proverbs which posit a subjective interpretation of female physical attractiveness (Yu and Shepard, 1998). Music as a platform for positive social change in Tanzania has also been necessary to help women avoiding the effects of globalization (Moisala and Diamond, 2000).

Several songs defy, in some way, the then mainstream modern female beauty perceptions and practices. Song ‘*Marina*’ for example by Congolese musician Samba Mapangala, has lyrics: ‘*uzuri wa mwanamke siyo urembo ni tabia*’ [the beauty of woman is not found on her physical appearance but her behaviour]. Music group Sauti Sol from Kenya also have a song ‘*Suzanna*’ which contain lyrics: ‘*mwanamke tabia shepu ni majaliwa*’ [what makes a woman is her behaviour, body shape is God’s will]. One can note that both songs’ messages insist on good behaviour to women instead of physical appearance.

In Tanzania, there are similar songs, including ‘*Nikusaidieje*’ by Professor Jay, ‘*Go Down*’ by Chege and Temba, and ‘*Wanga*’ by Meja Kunta. Professor Jay in the song complains about a woman who is obsessed with modern undesirable female practices which distorts her from her natural beauty and behaviours. Chege in his song warns “his lover” from entertaining modern undesirable female behaviours and practices which he afraid may ruin their relationship. Meja Kunta in the song *Wanga* mentions undesirable female beauty practices of hip and butt enlargements by using dangerous chemicals. He sings ‘*unajifanya una chura<sup>8</sup> kumbe la Kichina*’ (you feel proud of your big butt but it is a fake one). Kunta here uses ‘oxymoronic<sup>9</sup> tactic’ in addressing undesirable female beauty practice. Besides the songs above and others which I have not mentioned here, I have reached into picking two songs; ‘*Nakupenda Tu*’ by Godfrey Tumaini alias Dudu Baya and ‘*Kikongwe*’ by Amani Mohammed alias Picco, as my case study through thematic analysis. In the process, I first listened to popular Tanzanian songs which have female beauty themes and later I categorized those which praise against those which defy modern female beauty ideals, then I reviewed them and identify meanings in them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The two songs were selected for analysis because in their main theme, these songs ignore the modern female beauty perceptions, which is the focus of my study.

#### **4.1 The Song *Nakupenda Tu* Ignoring Modern Female Beauty Standards**

In this song, Dudu Baya sings about unnamed young woman whom the musician addresses that does not possess the modern female beauty features, but the musician just ignores that situation and loves the woman. The lyrics<sup>10</sup> of this song go as follows:

##### **Verse 1**

I love you honey, I love you the way you are. Your cheeks look like a rough package, Your chest like a bridge, your stomach like rat’s

<sup>8</sup>*Chura* was a famous slang in Tanzania during the current study which was referring to female’s big butts.

<sup>9</sup>Oxymoron is a figure of speech in which deceptively contradictory terms appear in conjunction. In Kunta’s song video we see big female behind being admired by men despite being fake.

<sup>10</sup> Are originally in Kiswahili but we translated them into English.

pregnancy. Your chin like leper's hand, your hair is so rough like ghost, if you go to cut it in a hair salon, hair cut machines fail to cut it. What makes me love you most is your face look in the morning, it looks like of someone's who is popped a boil or someone's who just licked a lime. Your hands are rough like those of a stone grinder. Your head is irregular, your ears look like a sieve. But I cannot leave you, you will be mine forever. Say what you want I will give you. Although you do not have a curvy shape, I like your behaviour; that is what matters to me. You are respectful, funny, humble, gentle, and generous. My relatives have rejected me because I am with you, but I cannot leave you.

### Verse 2

Although my mother does not like you, she says I have married a ghost. She wants me to leave you before you conceive and provide her bad looking grandchildren. She is not God to criticize people's looks. Among all the people, you are very important to me. If I was a car, you would have been my very important and valuable spare part. I am in hard time when I kiss you because your tongue is sharp like a bush knife. Your body is like a luggage. What makes me happy is that although your legs have scales, you do not tear apart the mattress when you wake up from bed in the morning. Let us kiss each other to make them envy. I have made a final decision that I cannot leave you. I am a Sukuma man, I like when you cook for me a Sukuma food. Do not listen to them what they talk about me. I like you like an apple. You are so tough to the extent when you scratch your body it releases dust. If you spit, your saliva hits the ground and bounce back up. Although my sisters have refused to call you sister-in-law, you will remain my wife.

### The Chorus

I just love you the way you are, your teeth are like warthog's, I just love you the way you are, your nose is like fist, I just love you the way you are.

In this song, one can see that the musician acknowledges that the woman he sings to, does not possess some features which would fit with modern female beauty standards. Although the woman in the song lacks those features, the musician likes her the way she is thus, ignoring those beauty standards. Dudu Baya values the woman in this song and does not objectify her. Specifically, the musician avoids '*reduction to body*' when he sings 'although you do not have a curvy shape, I like your behaviour; that is what matters'. To him, body attractiveness, or body parts of

this woman is not his focus in loving her. Instead, the musician praises this woman for being respectful, funny, humble, gentle, and generous; which are traditional standards of judging Tanzanian women as ‘well-mannered and beautiful’.

By singing that he accepts the appearance of the woman’s body parts despite being not good, Dudu Baya avoids ‘reduction to a woman’s appearances’. He openly acknowledges that the woman is perceived not beautiful [according to the modern beauty standards] but the musician does not treat her according to how she appears or how she would be perceived in the modern society. The musician ignores all these for his interests of loving the woman in the song.

After listening to this song, one can predict that the song gives comfort to women who probably are not perceived positively by majority of people in the modern society. Without a doubt by the musician ignoring those negative perceptions to traditional women beauty in Tanzania, that corrects the society from such judgements to females and also gives women no reason to change their appearances in search of such perceived beauty. This song also encourages women in avoiding undesirable female beauty practices that were discussed earlier in this study. The woman in the song seems to overcome the learned Helplessness Theory because despite lacking the perceived mainstream female beauty features, she decided to appear as she is without changing herself. This shows that apart from the musician ignoring the undesirable female beauty norms, the female character in the song has also succeeded to evade undesirable female beauty practices.

When I interviewed Dudu Baya (on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021) about inspirations of this song, he said:

I observed that in the streets and in many songs, we always hear beautiful women being praised and admired by men. So, I asked myself what about those who are not perceived beautiful? Are they not supposed to be loved? Then after that I got a unique idea for my song.

#### **4.2 Picco Avoiding Judging Woman’s Beauty on the Basis of Age in Song *Kikongwe***

In this song, Picco sings about an old woman who is referred in the song as *kikongwe* – a term which means ‘old woman’. *Kikongwe*, as some other old women in Tanzania, Africa, and the world, is perceived not possessing the modern female beauty features (Ohene, 2021). The lyrics of this song go as follows:

##### **Verse 1**

Granny sometimes I like your poses, you really make me go mad.  
Your eyes are full of tears and eye boogers but I lick them. Your

mouth stinks tobacco, a mixture of snuff and *gongo*<sup>11</sup> but I deep kiss it.

#### Verse 2

Although people mock you for your mouth like a pickaxe, I don't like young girls because 'they fly like a crown'. I have knocked on your door to become your lover. I love you old woman, I just love you granny. Do you understand baby? Do you understand what I say granny?

#### Verse 3

You are not hurried in life but we slowly get ahead. Let us go mam, let us move. Your kiss makes me go crazy, it is an old person's kiss.

#### Verse 4

Some people say my granny is very skinny. Some others say she is very thin to the extent that her ribs can be seen clearly. Young girls laugh at her saying her skin is wrinkled. But I love her, my fellow mates also like her, even my studio producer likes her.

#### The Chorus

I just go well with my granny. People are so surprised to see I am in love with a granny. I just love you old woman, I love you granny. Although people mock you for your mouth like a pickaxe, although people mock you on your body like a toy, I just love you old woman, I love you granny.

In this song, Picco describes an old woman who does not possess the modern female beauty standards due to her old age. Lyrics showing his lack of possession are 'your eyes are full of tears and eye boogers, your mouth stinks tobacco, a mixture of snuff and *gongo*'. Picco expresses that despite this old woman not possessing the modern female beauty features, he is in love with the woman the way she is thus, he ignores the modern female beauty judgements. Picco's tendency is also against the fact that there had been complains that when some elderly men get more money, they would leave their old wives at home and go after young girls whom they perceive to be more beautiful (Hallman et al, 2017).

When Picco sings 'people are surprised to see I love an old woman' he depicts devaluation of old women by the society; that the society perceives such women less attractive and that such social judgement to the women was a common norm in the society. Besides other people being surprised, the old woman as the subject was also surprised seeing Picco loves her despite being old and lacking the modern female beauty features. One can see the old woman being surprised when

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<sup>11</sup>*Gongo* is a traditional home-brewed spirit from Tanzania which is illegal due to its perceived dangerous ingredients and inconstant high alcohol content to its users.

she asks two questions to the musician in the song. The first question from *kikongwe* to Picco before the first verse of the song was - *umenipendea nini mjukuu wangu?* (What made you love me my grandson?). Her second question to the musician before the second verse of the song was - *kwani vijana wenzio huwaoni?* (Don't you see your age mates?). These two questions show that *kikongwe* internalized the modern female beauty norms that an 'aged' woman is 'excluded', 'ignored' or 'not admired' due to aging body which lacks modern female beauty features. This internalization by this woman is known as 'social exclusion' (Clarke, 2012). The internalization portrays that the woman once experienced learned Helplessness Theory explained earlier as she thought she could no longer be loved and that is why she was surprised to see Picco loves her in the song.

At another level, although the old woman in the song lacks the perceived female beauty features, Picco sees her possessing other advantages which probably made him love her. For example, when Picco sings 'you are not hurried in life but we slowly get ahead', this reminds the listener of the song that Picco acknowledges that young women prefer to live fast and luxurious life and are in hurry of life successes of which most of the times they do not achieve. Picco's words in the song suggest that this old woman is probably suitable for him because she, as other matured women, is 'patient' with life.

The song also shows that *kikongwe* 'accepted' her physical appearance and within such natural appearance, someone (Picco) loves her as she is in the song. This depicts that this old woman in the song overcame the learned Helplessness Theory because despite lacking the perceived modern female beauty features, she decided to live and appear as she is without changing herself. This expresses that both the musician and the main character in the song ignore undesirable female beauty perceptions. The musician is a good example by challenging the undesirable female beauty norms and the female character by remaining in her natural appearance.

When I interviewed Picco on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 about his song he explained the following:

This song was inspired by the lack of love to elderly women. The idea of the song started when I noted that our grandmothers were killed at home in the Lake Region, from traditional beliefs – referring them as witches. While that was in villages, in towns, elderly widows could not be remarried easily; may be from social, cultural, or religious basis. So I recalled that when I was young, my grandmother used to call me 'her fiancée', then I got the idea of the song.

Generally, the two songs praise spiritual values and personal attitudes of the female characters in them. Although the physical depictions of the women in the songs are not gentle, we see the musicians who sing the songs ignore the established modern female beauty norms, unlike their fellow musicians discussed earlier; who praise such norms. The other songs discussed earlier, that praise the undesirable

female beauty norms, were produced and released on air in the similar period of time (between 2003-2007) with the two case study songs thus, this shows that Dudu Baya and Picco ignore what their fellow musicians praise within the same time span.

In addition, although modern female beauty norms have been promoted through music and fashion industries, the media, and global culture at large during the release of these two songs, Dudu Baya and Picco ignore these forces. Each musician did the task in his unique way; Dudu Baya against socially devaluing women and Picco against exclusion of older women, both in terms of female beauty. On one level, these two musicians ignore modern female beauty norms, on the other, they used their unique idea of their songs to get listened to by the Tanzanian music audience. Through useful and unique song ideas in them, this made the songs hit on different media when they were released.

Although these musicians ignore the mentioned perception, they support ‘authentic human beauty value’ – AHBV, which insists on natural beauty. AHBV goes against harmful artificial decorations, cosmetics and surgeries that were explained earlier. The musicians’ idea and AHBV are useful to females feeling prestige without ‘fake beauty’. The two songs by these two musicians may also be used to alert women and the Tanzanian society at large from side effects of dangerous beauty practices.

Lastly, Kantian theory on beauty distinguishes two forms of beauty: the free and the adherent. In the Kantian conception, free beauty is related to the judgment of ‘taste’ and adherent to the concept of ‘perfection’ (Chignell, 2007). We see that the modern female beauty standards adhere to perceptions of some people but were ignored by some others possibly due to lacking perfection from the side effects of procedures towards achieving them. This leads us to conclude that some physical features may make women seen beautiful by some people but other people may perceive those features not making females beautiful at all while some people may perceive that those features make female attain ‘oxymoronic’ beauty. Here according to Kantian theory on beauty, female beauty is ‘subjective universal’ thus, we should expect to see judgments towards it to be subjective too. That is the case; as some people agree the modern female beauty perceptions while others ignore them as in the two songs above.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The two case study songs ignore using modern Western beauty standards in judging women beauty in Tanzania. After doing some sociological and psychological analyses in these songs, one may learn that by ignoring such standards, women may avoid risks of using beauty chemical substances and or surgeries which put their health in danger. Indirectly, the two songs lecture that people should not change their physical appearances or forge their ages because there are people who may value them equally regardless of their ages or perceived beauty. With regards to Kantian theory on beauty, ‘beauty taste’ of these two musicians in their songs stand

independently without being influenced by the mainstream female beauty norms, this is a good example the Tanzanian society may take. Besides supporting the standing view of the musicians, this study however, does not propose that women physical appearance does not matter. It advocates that women should care for their natural beauty while mark down the beauty standards which create negativity and discontent to their natural appearances. The study also recommends women to embrace their natural beauty since mainstream beauty judgements may change from time to time, place to place, and from individual to individual. The study also recommends Tanzanian popular artists to compose positive message lyrics because as years pass on, Tanzania is becoming more urbanized and westernized. In this case, musicians should critically debate undesirable perceptions and practices in favour of their positive contribution to their society.

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