

Analyses of Dynamics of Censorship of Music in East Africa: The Case of Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority and Kenya Film and Classification Board

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ABSTRACT

This was a case study of censorship of music in East Africa (EA) that used desktop research methodology to retrieve openly available online resources to do a qualitative content analyses of restrictions in two East Africa countries (Tanzania and Kenya). The study was guided by two specific objectives: to examine the dynamics of censorship of music by Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) between January 2018 and March 2023; and to assess the dynamics of censorship of music by Kenya Film and Classification Board (KFCB) between January 2018 and March 2023. The study found out that between 2018 and 2023, twenty-two songs comprising of fifteen Bongo Flavas in Tanzania and seven Gengetones in Kenya were censored for contravening ‘acceptable’ cultural values and consequentially deemed as harmful to children or citizenry in East Africa. Further, the study established that government regulators or public uproar initiated censorship of music that was considered vulgar, obscene, pornographic, blasphemous or that glorified sexual violence including rape, paedophilia and objectification of women. The study recommends that government leaders should carry out awareness campaigns and also mainstream national values and aspirations of their countries so as to groom creative artists to remain focused as they exercise their freedom of expression.

Keywords: Music Censorship; Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority; Kenya Film and Classification Board; Child Protection; National Values; East Africa Music.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The earliest case of music censorship dates back to 1735 when Publisher John Peter Zenger was under legal pressure for printing anti-British government lyrics from a recent ballad (IEYL, 2021). Fortunately, as IEYL adds, for Zenger, the New York Court acquitted him for publishing the lyrics using the First Amendment as a strong defence against censorship. The next known historical music censorship was in 1935 when Legendary Lucille Bogan made a song titled Shave Em Dry which created huge controversy and was censored (Stone, 2022). In the 1950s and 1960s, the idea of music censorship re-emerged due to fear that emergence of the rhythm and blues (R&B) that were enjoyed and dominated by the African American and “considered the devil’s music” (Stone, 2022) due to explicit and vulgar lyrics would corrupt and conservative older whites feared these songs would promote immoral behaviour of white youths (1950’s Censorship, n.d.). In the same period, there was fear about the impact of rock music that was believed to encourage teens to use drugs and anti-drug groups were formed to lobby for banning of this music (Montelli and McGuire, 2022).

Additionally, on the global landscape, Snapes (2019) compiled a list of 20 songs spanning from creations of 1965 to those of 2013 in The Guardian article titled “The greatest of all banned songs” and in her intro described them as “foul-mouthed, orgiastic outings deemed too scandalous for public consumption.” In

Europe, BBC on its website lists “16 songs banned by the BBC.” In Asia, Reuters (2019) did a list of 85 censored songs titled “85 ‘vulgar’ English-language pop songs banned from daylight broadcasting as Indonesia’s West Java cracks down on ‘adult’ lyrics.” According to Stone (2022), in the new millennium, a list of 150 songs was sent to radio stations in the wake of the terrorist attack on 9/11 and even though the songs were not banned, the DJs were asked to consider not playing the songs on the list. Other issues such as blasphemy have made censorship be done in the global landscape e.g. Lady Gaga’s hit called Judas was deemed offensive to Christianity in Lebanon and thus censored (“Lady Gaga”, 2011). Morrison (2015:1) observed that “sex, violence, drugs, politics, religion and just plain loud noise have all been grounds for music censorship.”

In Africa, according to (Onyango-Obbo, 2018), Zodwa Wabantu ‘a saucy South African dancer who famously performs sans underwear’ has had her shows banned in Zimbabwe and Zambia. In Uganda, the government censored *Freedom* by Bobi Wine a musician and rising opposition leader for criticising the political order; also Lucky Otim, had his song *Mac Onywalo Buru* (Fire Produces Ash) banned and *Ensolo Yange* (My Animal), by the audacious Jemimah Kansiime, known by her stage name Panadol wa Basajja (Painkiller for Men). In Rwanda, Urban Boyz’s 2014 hit *Ancilla* was censored for being “too westernised.” In Kenya the Kenya Film and Classification Board CEO Dr. Ezekiel Mutua is relentlessly against obscene content that is undermining the country’s moral foundations and has censored music by the hugely popular Sauti Sol (*Nishike*), Noti Flow (*Birthday Cake*), Chris Kaiga (*Pombe Bangi*), Mustapha (*Dodoma*) banning them from radio and or TV. Additionally, a Google search of songs banned in Africa shows a list of “Top 10 African music videos that were banned” (Sireben, 2021). Evolving genres of hip-hop, such as Bongo Flava and Gengetones in East Africa have continued to talk explicitly about sex, drugs and violence and have therefore been condemned by governments and conservative citizenry with several attracting censorship (Rutenge, 2016; Koech 2021; Kasyoka, 2022).

Therefore, “music censorship has always been around the industry and continues to dominate the industry, even today; but with the expansion of the industry and times changing the course of music censorship also evolved (Stone, 2022). Obscene lyrics, which can incite violence and cultivate harmful thoughts and behaviour such as sexual prevision, drugs and substance abuse, suicide, mass shootings, gender violence among minors and the youth especially come under the radar of global reasons for music censorship. With time, the right to Freedom of Expression has continued to be fought for the world over and although artistic freedom has increased over the years, censorship continues to persist (Korpe, 2015; “Importance of Artist”, n.d.). As such, Music has been continually censored by actors, states, religious leaders, radio stations, companies, parents, and the artists themselves and although censorship is common in autocratic societies and societies where legal security is low, it is also an issue in more democratic societies (Kirkegaard and Otterbeck, 2017).

This is because although the liberal minded often think of censorship as bad for culture, still many would probably agree that it is reasonable to censor agitating hate music and as such this take on censorship relates to strategies for protecting children from potentially scary and traumatizing cultural products, measures taken to avoid conflicting or harmful activities, and, ultimately, to secure so-called social peace or to respect the rights of others (Kirkegaard and Otterbeck, 2017). This is why, presumably, *advocates* of freedom of expression argue that “instead of censoring the artist’s decisions in creating art works, it is possible to allow the artist to experiment with their own creativity whilst also preventing any controversy or issues with the public.... take into consideration of who could feel offended by certain artworks, and prevent them from viewing it. Instead of censoring artistic freedom, censoring the viewership of that particular art piece is an option (“Importance of Artist”, n.d.).”

This proposed classification of music, alongside other artistic works, is one of the core reasons for instituting laws and policies as well as bodies to oversee the creative arts industry by most nations across the

globe so as to promote artistic freedom responsibly within the confines of widely acceptable values and norms for purposes of child protection and peaceful societal co-existence. This study reviews two bodies (TCRA and KFCB) in two East Africa countries (Kenya and Tanzania) that regulate music and other artistic as well as media content.

Besides banning music, TCRA has been relentless in carrying out its content regulation function (TCRA, 2022). For instance, in January 2021 Wasafi TV was given a six month ban by TCRA and asked to issue a public apology for allegedly violating broadcast regulations during a live show when according to “TCRA Acting Director Johannes Kalungule ... the offence was committed on January 1 when the station aired singer Gigy Money dancing at the Tumewasha festival while scantily dressed (Osoro, 2021).” Just before this, three months earlier its sister station, Wasafi FM, was banned for seven days (September 12-18, 2012) for also violating communication regulations through airing offensive language. The TCRA director at that time, “James Kilaba, said the station allegedly committed the infringement on August 1 and August 4, 2020 on two programs, ‘Switch’ and ‘Mashamsham’ (Osoro, 2021)”. In the neighbourhood of Tanzania, from 2015 to 2021, KFCB was under the leadership of Dr. Ezekiel Mutua, who came to be popularly known as Kenya’s moral policeman for the no-nonsense manner in which he censored music, film and other creative works in the country (Withnall, 2016; BBC, 2019; Ambani, 2022). According to BBC (2019), “Kenya has a traditional and socially conservative culture, but this has been challenged in recent years by some in the younger generation.” However, Dr. Mutua “argues that central to his work is the protection of children from harmful content such as nudity, foul language, obscenity and violence”; although “critics accuse the moral cop of overreaching his authority ... Dr. Mutua says his decisions are based on the law and he has to apply the law (BBC, 2019).”

In spite of the evident execution of their statutory obligations, no scholarly study has been done to critique the dynamics of censorship of music by these two bodies that are seemingly aggressive in their duty as mandated.

Statement of the Problem

Music censorship is a global issue that is done even in the most democratic societies like America and Britain. It is either detested or embraced by publics across the globe depending on their perception of how censorship impacts on their freedom of expression, human rights, peaceful co-existence in society or protection of children and young people. These views are highly depended on national or international norms and values that individuals are aware of based on their exposure and experiences (Foley and Lahr, 2011; Bello & Garcia, 2021). As such, the way Asians, Africans or Australians will view a particular incidence of censorship will likely be quite different from the way Americans or Europeans will view the same censorship. Even within Africa, for instance, the views of people in the North, South, East and West would vary a lot, and even closer still views of people in one East African Nation could vary from those of people in a neighbouring nation.

As such, it is vital to do research to understand dynamics of censorship among particular groups so as to compare or contrast them with those of others in pursuit of understanding why things are done in particular ways in particular places. This is the knowledge that this study sought to unearth, having established that there was a glaring gap in scholarly literature with regard to the issue music censorship in Africa. Background literature for this study revealed that out of a list of “Top 10 African music videos that were banned” between 2010 and 2016 (Sireben, 2021), three hits were from Nigeria, three from Tanzania, two from Kenya, one from Rwanda and one from Uganda.

This means that seven of the ten banned songs were from four East Africa Community Countries (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda). Therefore, the researcher purposively decided to study the two East Africa countries with the highest number of censored songs (Kenya and Tanzania) as per this list as there was

hardly any other consolidated list of censored music in Africa or scholarly analyses available on the open web.

As already established in the background section, TCRA and KFCB in fulfilling their mandate, have over the years censored publicly available music in their countries leading to either public support or public uproar in noticeable ways. Definitely, in execution of their functions they review and classify music before its release to the public, but in this era of digital media explosion, they have suffered challenges of compliance from artists who have been able to release their music through channels that are not necessarily mainstream (Rutenge, 2016). Other times, new artists are seemingly ignorant of the regulatory landscape in their countries and they just think that it is okay to make and release any artistic expression freely only for them to face wrath from their fans or regulators when the released content is found offensive (Muendo, 2016; “Tanzania Bans”, 2018). However, no scholarly study that has been done to examine how and why music censorship is done in East Africa. The purpose of this paper was, therefore, to collate openly available online data on the cases of music censorship in Kenya and Tanzania and thereafter do a scholarly analysis so as to fill up the dearth of literature on dynamics of music censorship in East Africa.

Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following two specific objectives:

1. To examine the dynamics of censorship of music by Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) between January 2018 and March 2023.
2. To assess the dynamics of censorship of music by Kenya Film and Classification Board (KFCB) between January 2018 and March 2023.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gate keeping Theory

The study was guided by the Gate keeping Theory that was propagated by Kurt Lewin in 1943. According to this theory, the gatekeeper (in this case TCRA and KFCB) decides what information should move through the information “gate” (be broadcasted, exhibited, distributed or possessed) into the social system (Tanzanian/Kenyan publics) and what information should be restricted (censored). Gatekeepers use categorical criteria to filter content for dissemination including personal preferences, professional experience, legal guidelines and social influences and during this process that involves critical decision-making, the gatekeeper removes unwanted, insensible, and controversial information (Shoemaker and Johnson, 2017). This theory has had most of its tenets applied in this study by looking at how TCRA and KFCB (the two statutory gatekeepers) regulate music so as to allow its movement through the publicly accessible media channels (information gate) to their citizenry (social system) and censor that which they deem unsuitable (restrict) using enacted programming codes or regulations (categorical criteria). The dynamics of gate keeping by these two bodies have been analysed by examining the content of the censored music and by reviewing what the artists as well as the publics in the two nations had to say about every censorship ordeal and any rejoinders given by the regulators.

Literature Review on Regulation of Music Content in East Africa

Tanzania’s Regulatory Landscape

Baraza la Sanaa La Taifa (BASATA – National Arts Council) was founded under the National Arts Council Act No. 23 of 1984 to serve as a facilitator and promoter of Tanzanian creative arts and music (www.basata.go.tz). BAMUTA, the National Music Council, founded in 1974 was merged into BASATA in

1984. BASATA facilitates the production and consumption of good art works and services and its core values are the promoting and developing an authentic Tanzanian art tradition, upholding professionalism and excellence and promoting creativity and inattentiveness in the arts (Gazemba, 2014). BASATA goes through Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) to regulate the media and creative industry in Tanzania because the latter is in charge of executing industry regulation.

According to the establishing Act No. 12 of 2003, TCRA is in charge of: Protecting the interest of consumers; enhancing public knowledge, awareness and understanding of the regulated sectors; and taking into account the need to protect and preserve the environment. The revised Electronic and Postal Communications Act, CAP. 306 R.E. 2017, further provides the main functions of TCRA to include: regulating content related matters with its Part III requiring broadcasters to ensure that all their programmes and presentations protect children and project Tanzanian cultural values and identity by ensuring content observes good taste and decency; upholds public morality; does not incite or perpetuate hatred against or vilify any group of persons in society. As such they should not broadcast content that contains the use of offensive language, including profanity and blasphemy; or presents sexual matters in an explicit and offensive manner; or is indecent, obscene, false, menacing or otherwise offensive in character. Additionally, TCRA in July 2018 developed The Electronic and Postal Communications (Radio and Television Broadcasting Content) Regulations of 2018 giving 64 regulations for the creative industry, amove that many artists opined as stifling in their growth. According to “BASATA stiffens stand” (2018) these regulations warned that should any registered artiste violate any of the 64 regulations and the subsequent acts, they shall be liable to fines between Sh1 million and Sh3 million or risk being slapped with a ban six months ban, de-registration or a lifetime ban as the council might deem necessary and suitable depending on the gravity of the offense committed.. “BASATA stiffens stand” goes ahead to illustrate evoking of this Act with the restriction of Diamond from travelling to the French Island of Mayotte without a Permit in 2018.”

Clearly, Tanzania has a regulatory Council, Authority, Act and Regulations governing its creative industry and positioned leaders have evoked certain laws and regulations from time to time to censor music in the country. This study thematically sought to analyse the dynamics that ensued from such restrictions.

Kenya’s Regulatory Landscape

Sessional Paper no. 8 of 2013 provides broad guidelines to Kenya’s government, non-state actors and citizens to develop action plans to mainstream National Values and Principles of Governance as provided for in Article 10 of the Constitution, into their daily lives, and ultimately ensure that the shared values become a way of life for the people of Kenya (KIPPRA, 2013). Whereas this policy recognizes that the paramount value-carrier and value-driver is the individual, it also recognizes other value-carriers and value-drivers to include media, arts, music and entertainment among others and assigns each of them a specific and distinct part to play in cultivating awareness, involvement, commitment and ownership of shared national values. Further, while “the policy requires parents and guardians to create a conducive environment in families for positive socialization and expects parents to mentor and nurture their children into ...members of the society who uphold national values,” it also states that “on its part, the state will take deliberate steps to protect the family against negative and harmful cultural influences and practices such as ... pornography (section 2.0.1, pp.9).” It is in this breadth that the state has sought to strengthen the capacity of institutions that help to socialize Kenyan Children to ensure the outcomes of the policy are achieved.

One such institution is the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) that was established in 1998 under Films and Stage Plays Act Cap 222 and mandated to regulate the creation, broadcasting, distribution, exhibition and possession of films and broadcast content in the country with a view to promote national values, cultural aspirations and protect children from inappropriate content (Kenya Law, 2012). Section 12 (2) of the Act states that “No film or class of film shall be distributed, exhibited or broadcast, either publicly

or privately, unless the Board has examined it and issued a certificate of approval in respect thereof.” Further, the Board is empowered by Kenya Information and Communications Act, Cap 411A and through the Kenya Communication (Broadcasting) regulations 2009 to ensure content which has scenes or language intended for adults are not aired during the watershed period (5a.m. to 10 p.m.).”

KFCB, therefore, in executing its mandate borrows heavily from the ‘The Programming Code for Broadcasting Services in Kenya, 3rd Edition (March 2019)’ created and operationalized by The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) as required of it by the Kenya Information and Communications Amendment Act. Therefore, among the ways in which KFCB executes its core mandate is to ensure compliance to the Programming Code which stipulates that all publicly aired content are examined and classified before they air. During this classification, the board does gate keeping and can allow or restrict consumption of content based on the Film Classification Guidelines that are divided into six thematic areas namely: Violence and Crime; Sex, Obscenity and Nudity; Occult and Horror; Drugs, Alcohol and other Harmful Substances; Religion and Community; and Propaganda for War; hate speech and incitement (KFCB, 2021). According to KFCB, three factors are considered during classification: Context and the overall theme of the content; Possible impact that the content might have on the audience, especially young ones; and Frequency and intensity of classifiable elements observed in a film. The Board can restrict or ban films that are deemed to contain materials that erode the moral fabric of society; undermine national interest and/or stability or create disharmony among various racial and religious groups; or that may offend common decency or which may be undesirable in the public interest (KFCB, 2021).

KFCB has over the years censored various content but besides media reports, no scholarly study has been done to examine the dynamics of KFCB in executing its mandate. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap by assessing censorship of music content in by KFCB.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative content analyses research that embraced the case study design to study music censored by TCRA and KFCB. Desktop research methodology was used to retrieve openly available online resources whose content conformed to the study objectives. A content analyses code was used to manually analyse retrieved materials thematically and chronologically. Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) introduced thematic analysis as an independent approach that focuses on qualitative aspects of data rather than quantitative aspects. This approach helped the researcher to systematically analyse obtained content by examining who says what, to whom, and with what effect (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Desktop review method was cost-effective for the researcher, was less time consuming and utilised already available data to fill up the dearth of scholarly literature on evaluation of censorship of entertainment content in East Africa. During data collection, the researcher used the Google Search Engine to search the Internet using search terminologies that comprised of phrases or truncated sentences drawn from the independent and dependent variables and that were combined in several ways with use of synonyms in certain instances as outlined in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Online Search Terms and Content Analyses Code

Key Search Terms for Google Search Engine	Content Analyses Code
<i>Objective 1</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BASATA/TCRA Mandate and Functions • Censorship of music in Tanzania • Music banned in Tanzania • BASATA/TCRA bans music/song 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music description – song title, artist/s name/s, genre, lyrics/video, time censored • Initiators of censorship and implementers of censorship • Reason/s for censorship

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- Harmful music in Tanzania
 - National/cultural values in Tanzania
 - Obscene/vulgar/explicit music in Tanzania
 - BASATA/TCRA CEO/Boss in action
 - Type and extent of censorship
 - Any other penalties, fines, conditions or ultimatums imposed
 - Reactions from the artists, producers, the general public, or other regulators following the censorship

Objective 2

- KFCB Mandate and Functions
- Censorship of music in Kenya
- Music banned in Kenya
- KFCB bans music/song
- Harmful music in Kenya
- National/cultural values in Kenya
- Obscene/vulgar/explicit music in Kenya
- KFCB CEO/Moral Policeman in Action
- Apologies/adherence to the censorship

To limit the scope of the study, final documents upon which content analysis was done were purposively chosen (by scanning the abstract) from ‘only the first page of the Google Search returns’. Except for corroboration purposes, only published online media content was analysed including news, features, opinions or reviews from e-newspapers, e-magazines, media websites or social media e.g. blogs and twitter. Additionally, in the event that several write-ups on the same censored music were retrieved, those from mainstream media were preferred for analyses over those from sensational media sites. The researcher determined this purposively using her media literacy skills and being an active consumer of East African online media content. Further, only music banned in the last five years (January 2018 to March 2023) was analysed as the researcher deemed that the most recent period to assess the issue. Interestingly, hardly did any search return results with music banned earlier than 2018 in both countries. A total of 22 banned songs, fifteen from Tanzania and seven from Kenya, were accessed and analysed. Chronological thematic qualitative analyses was used in presentation and discussion of the study findings. All the online resources that were finally retrieved from Google and analysed are in the list of references at the end of this study.

DATA ANALYSES AND PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section thematically, and chronologically as much as possible, presents analyses of music that was censored in Tanzania and Kenya from January 2018 to March 2023. The section uses the word censorship or its synonyms, banning/restriction. For each censorship incidence, the researcher described the song in terms of its name, genre and artist; the time of ban; reason for banning; statements of what the ban entailed from mandated regulatory bodies; any available reactions from producers, artists, fans, or general public following the ban; any actions following the ban e.g. pulling down of the song by online sites such as YouTube or Google; any remix and relaunch of the song; as well as any lifting of ban or any apologies from artist. The descriptions depended on written content that was found on open access online resources using various combinations of the key search terms that are highlighted in Table 1.1. Songs censored in each country were analysed separately to allow deeper insights.

Censored Music in Tanzania from January 2018 to March 2023

Censorship of 13 songs at a go in March 2018

In March 2018, following a list from BASATA, TCRA banned 13 songs done by 10 different musicians on grounds that they were against the country's norms and values ("TCRA bans", 2018; Daily Monitor, 2018). Although the thirteen were songs of different genres including Bongo Flava (Hip Hop), traditional fusion (Singeli), rhythm and blues (R&B) ("TCRA bans", 2018), most of the prohibited songs were Bongo Flava which is indigenous Hip Hop of Tanzania and as listed by "Tanzania bans" (2018) they included Hallelujah and Waka Waka by Tanzanian pop star Diamond Platnumz; Pale Kati Patamu and Maku Makuz by Ney wa Mitego, Chura and Nimevurugwa by Snura, Hainaga Ushemeji by Manifongo, I'm Sorry JK by Nikki Mbishi, Kibamia by Roma Mkatoliki, Tema Mate Tumchape by Madee, Uzuri Wako by Jux, Nampa Papa by Gigy Money and Nampaga by Barnaba. Undoubtedly, "ten local Bongo flavor musicians faced the major blow" when "TCRA announced the ban of some of their music" ("TCRA bans", 2018).

Several of these songs have "sexually explicit" lyrics and videos (Lichtenstein, 2019) which is considered obscene among most Tanzanians. "The said records have lyrics which violate ethics of regulations of broadcasting services (content) 2005," TCRA said in a statement to media at the time of banning the 13 hits and the ban came after the late President John Magufuli in December 2017 complained about obscene music videos becoming prevalent in the country ("Tanzania bans", 2018).

The ban required artists to edit their songs and forward them for examination (Milimo, 2018). However, according to Milimo (2018), Kibamia's artist refused to edit his song and the government extended censorship in all his other songs: "We have decided to ban Roma Mkatoliki's song Kibamia and all his other songs. For a period of six months his songs with not be played on radio and TV." Ney wa Mitego promised to work on his songs and ensure they met the required threshold (Milimo, 2018). Others were outraged by the ban and in one case as reported by Ilado (2018), "Diamond Platnumz publicly lambasted the government during a Times FM interview on Monday demanding that the deputy minister explain why his songs 'Hallelujah' and 'Waka Waka' had been banned. On the song Waka Waka featuring American rapper Rick Ross, BASATA CEO, Godfrey Mngereza cited nudity as the reason for the song's ban, which according to him is contrary to the country's culture and traditions; On Hallelujah which features Jamaican group Morgan Heritage, he said it was blacklisted because it discriminated on a religious basis as the word 'Hallelujah' has some meaning in some religions and so there were queries with regards to touching the religion of others." The singer said the government ought to have notified the artists before announcing the ban while threatening to go live abroad claiming that the ban did not bother him since the songs were enjoying airplay outside Tanzania. The altercation caused a social media buzz and critics said the Tanzanian government tends to employ double standards, as international music videos containing nudity continued to enjoy undisrupted airplay on mainstream media while local artists' songs were banned.

Censorship of Mwanza in November 2018

In November, 2018, BASATA banned another song titled Mwanza, done by Diamond and Rayvanny, barely a week after its release due to "explicit sexual content" (Onyago-Obbo, 2018) and so "for allegedly having vulgar lyrics and promoting immorality among the youth" (Ngigi, 2018). BASATA boss "declined Diamond's request for the song to be allowed to air after the watershed period (Matiko, 2018)". BASATA further commented that Diamond "is a popular figure, hence he should set better standards for the youth who look up to him (Nyambura, 2018)."

Superficially in this song, Diamond and Rayvanny are singing the praises of one bus-stage called Nyegezi in Mwanza Town in Tanzania but in the refrain of the song (Eh nyege nyege, Kwetu mwanza nyegezi, Hmm nyege nyege, Nishushe mwanza nyegezi, Eh nyege nyege, Kwetu mwanza nyegezi, Hmm nyege nyege, Nishushe mwanza nyegezi) and at close examination of the rest of the lyrics, the artists are describing the urgent desire for sex (Nyege in Sheng means ‘horny’) and move ahead to describe the act of sex in coded language. However, as Sheng is widely spoken in Tanzania, this description is rather too explicit and Ngwiri (2018) said that the song “is cluttered with unprintable hogwash.” Saying that although he is “dead set against any form of government censorship, some things can be too much.”

Upset by the ban, the artists disregarded the government regulation and replayed Mwanza a month after its ban in Mwanza Town, upon which they were additionally banned as individuals from doing shows in or out of Tanzania indefinitely (BBC, 2018; Ngigi, 2018). Also, the two artists and the WBC Wasafi record label were slapped with a hefty fine of a fine of 9 million Tanzanian shillings (\$3,924) as BASATA claimed that the artists were aware of the country’s strict laws around morality before they produced the record. (Matiko, 2018; Durosomo, 2018).

Following a meeting to discuss this matter between the artists and the regulator, **Godfrey Mngereza** head of BASATA said, “This song isn’t good at all.... We even asked Rayvanny in the meeting if he can sing the lyrics of the song before his parents and his answer was no. This is a clear indication that even in the singer’s eyes, the song goes against the morals (*Matiko, 2018*.)” Mngereza was assertive that given the artist’s popularity and star status, the lyrics would negatively impact youth listeners (Durosomo, 2018). Later, Diamond who is lauded for popularising “bongo flava” as Tanzania’s hip hop, apologized and the travelling bans were lifted.

Censorship of Mtasubiri in May 2022

However, relentless, in May 2022, TCRA again banned another song Mtasubiri by Diamond featuring Zuchu from all mainstream media for having a blasphemous and disrespectful church scene as highlighted by some clergy in the country (“Diamond’s banned Mtasubiri”, 2022; Kejitan, 2022). According to TCRA, the scene in question was the cast of Zuchu singing in a church choir before a phone call from Diamond prompts her to leave in a hurry to pursue other things. Diamond was directed to edit out that part of the video for it to be played on mainstream media again. At the time of the ban the one month old song at the time had received over 10 million views (Kejitan, 2022).

That was Diamond’s fourth song to be banned and the two artists replied to it as discrimination of artistes signed under WCB Wasafi Label, an entity owned by Diamond. Zuchu, through social media said further said that Basata’s and TCRA’s decision was **‘the beginning of the end of Tanzania’s music industry’** and added that such unfair decisions by authorities are the ones that keep WCB Wasafi artists from participating in Tanzanian Music Awards, which are organized by BASATA (Maganda, 2022). In a rejoinder, BASATA and TCRA refuted this claim maintaining that they were only executing their mandate and functions which were way broader than the rare occurrences of banning songs (Kejitan, 2022; “Diamond’s banned Mtasubiri”, 2022).

Censored Music in Kenya from January 2018 to March 2023

Censorship of Kwangwaru in March 2019

In March 2019, KFCB CEO Dr. Ezekiel Mutua banned Kwangwaru “a popular but rather obscene song by Tanzania musicians Diamond Platinumz and Harmonize from the school environments in the country saying that it was going to great lengths in compromising the desired morals of the society. Ali (2018) posited that Tanzania artists had resorted into sexist and vulgar language and as much as their songs seemed to suit their target audience, some of their hits had started raising alarm and government officials had taken note of

excesses. He illustrated his argument using some lyrics in *Kwangwaru* such as ‘*Weka mate niteleze kama nyokapangoni*’, which loosely translates to ‘using lubricant to smoothen sexual intercourse’; In the same track, Diamond sings ‘*Nipatie vya kitandani mpaka kwenye kiti*’ which is equivalent to ‘We can comfortably have sex on a chair.’ *Kwangwaru* video also shows young girls twerking and scenes of sex simulation.

The explicit lyrics and video moves must have informed Dr. Mutua, who on banning the song said the music was unsuitable for mixed settings of parents with their children. He warned that music and performances promoting immorality undermine Kenya’s values and laws and therefore according to him, “Dances and discos must be regulated to ensure foreign artists do not flock to Kenya to erode our values, cultures, and tradition (Agoro, 2019; Maina, 2019).” Dr. Mutua further warned, “It will not be business as usual, foreign musicians who are coming to undermine our cultures and values.... Why do they perform music that has been banned in their countries to Kenya? (Agoro, 2019).”

Censorship of Takataka in April 2019

In April 2019, KFCB again completely banned another Gengetone, *Takataka*, a song by Alvin aka Alvindo that was never submitted to the Board for classification before its release and its content was deemed highly offensive to women (Orido, 2019). Dr. Mutua described the song as primitive and abusive to “our sensibilities as a people and cannot be condoned.... The song *Takataka* is characterised by crude language that objectifies women and glorifies hurting them as normal reaction to rejection of overtures by men(Orido, 2019).” As translated by Kerongo (2019) the lyrics potentially glorified gender violence against women as the first verse of the song says: “Unakataa kua dem Yangu, Naenda kwa Mrogi nakurogaunakufana nakujaa kwa mazishi yako, kukula na Kukunywa, na kukula nikucheke ukizikwa (You refuse to be my bae, I go to a witch doctor who hexes you. You die. I will come to your funeral and eat, drink and be merry. I will laugh at you as you are buried).”

Censorship of this particular song going by KFCB’s statement meant that “the song should not be performed live or broadcasted anywhere within the Republic of Kenya. No DJ should play the song either on a broadcast station or in any entertainment joints” and other than live performers, TV and radio, the restraint was also extended to social media and online platforms (Orido, 2019; Kerongo, 2019). The Board further noted that there had been too many spousal deaths in the recent past and such kind of music and content had encouraged this kind of violence which could be backed by observations that prior to the ban, the viral hit had been playing for over three months since it was produced in January 2019 (Kerongo, 2019; Orido, 2019). Alvin was further summoned by the Board and given a two-week ultimatum to appear before it failure to which legal action would be taken against him and also warned that he risked cancellation of his membership with the three Content Management Organizations including the Music Copyright Society of Kenya, Kenya Association of Music Producers and Performing Rights Society of Kenya.

Alvin responded to the ban by saying, “This is the best joke I have seen today (Orido, 2019; Kerongo, 2019).” He then added that, “In fact they don’t even know what the artists go through just to produce even a single audio track!! Anyways we shall continue to produce music regardless of what they do or say. Art is art and no one can stop it....” Prominent Kenyan artist, Karuga Kimani aka KrG the Don who had helped Alvindo boost his music career, unhappy with the ban responded in a tweet asking, “Where were you when Alvindo was doing manual jobs at Burma Market? Since you wanna spoil his career do you have an idea of what he should be doing to pay his bills?” adding that he would soon release a remix of the *Takataka* (Kerongo, 2019).

According to Orido (2019) at the time of the ban, a man aged 28 then hacked his girlfriend aged 25 to death in broad daylight in Eldoret, an act that shocked the nation; and the press release by Kenya Film Classification Board accused Alvindo of having “an aggressive and sadistic attitude that sought to not only

incite men who face rejection by suitors, but also justifies hatred and hard feelings that come with possible rejection.” “Art is the mirror of society but art must also set the right agenda by ensuring that content promotes moral responsibility at all times,” asserted the KFCB statement emphasizing that obscenity, gender violence and degradation of women must not be portrayed as a way of life.

Censorship of Tetema and Wamlambezi in August 2019

On 27th August 2019, KFCB CEO Dr Ezekiel Mutua, popularly referred to as Kenya’s moral policeman, banned public performance of two songs: Tetema, a Bongo Flava hit by Tanzanian singers Rayvanny and Diamond Platnumz and Wamlambezi, a Gengetone hit by the Sailors band comprising of five young men. Wamlambezi was Sailors’ first hit and it made the group rise to fame especially among Kenyan youths in April 2019, as the phrase ‘Wamlambezi, Wamnyonyezi’ went viral in the country. Wangare (2020) highlights that “the group consists of five multi-talented members (Michael – Miracle Boy, Shalkido – African Boy, Alexander Ikuro Wanjiku – Lexxy Yung, Qoqosjuma and Masilver) “that bring the zest that elevates the Kenyan music platform.” The Gengetone stars always tuck into their performances with gusto” no wonder the decision to ban Wamlambezi alongside Diamond’s Tetema, “was bound to draw emotive reaction, given the popularity of the two songs in both Kenya and Tanzania (“Ban of Diamond’s”, 2019).”

During the ban, Dr Mutua decreed that the decision was informed by the fact the lyrics of “both the songs are pure pornography despite the fact that their lyrics are coded” and were therefore “dirty and unsuitable for mixed company (Asamba, 2019).” According to BBC (2019), “The lyrics for Wamlambezi are in Sheng, a slang used by young people across Kenya, and have metaphors alluding to oral sex.... The song... is so popular that the words “wamlambezi” and “wamnyonyezi” – a corruption of words meaning “lick” and “suck” – have become commonplace greetings among many young people. The video, which has been viewed nearly 5 million times on YouTube, also features lewd dance moves.” However, according to “Ban of Diamond’s” (2019), on the contrary BASATA felt that “Kenya’s moral policeman’s directive was ill advised and Tanzania regulators said they were surprised with Dr Mutua’s decision to ban the song by Tanzanian singers insisting song was not pornographic as stated by the CEO of KFCB. Basata’s boss Godfrey Mngereza said the body vets all the songs in the country as per law before they are released and as such Tetema was cleared as good for public consumption and that is why it was not banned in Tanzania.” Nonetheless, not wavering his decree, Dr Mutua, said that the lyrics of Tetema, and Wamlambezi could only be played in night clubs and bars, where the audience was strictly adult (“Ban of Diamond’s”, 2019; Asamba, 2019). Since Wamlambezi had gained huge popularity across several audience demographics in Kenya, during the ban Dr. Mutua added that, “It’s embarrassing to see even national leaders singing and dancing to the obscenity in public. The lyrics are dirty and not suitable for public consumption, especially children, (“Ban of Diamond’s”, 2019; Asamba, 2019).”

The ban brought on board intense online reactions and, as cited by further by “Ban of Diamond’s” (2019): NancyM on Twitter questioned the timing of the ban when she asked, “Where have these guys been, these songs have been on air for several months now and it is only now that we are waking up.” However, she added “that there are several titles by Diamond Platnumz and his WCB crew that does not qualify to be played in family environment because of the explicit lyrics and raunchy videos.” A youth by the name Kanyi wrote, “I am a youth very young but in support... the people singing are too young to be displaying such content and disgrace. As a society we should not allow such type of music to be played all over. It’s an insult to our values as a society and an exposure to immoral content.” This showed that the coded language was understandable as unsuitable in a family environment in view of Kenyan cultural values and norms.

According to Maina (2019), “Reacting to the restriction, Fr. Emmanuel Chimombo, a Nairobi-based Malawian priest who Coordinates the Pastoral Department of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), who has just overseen the publication of a manual on

safeguarding children in the Eastern Africa region has hailed the move saying, “I applaud and congratulate the bold step taken by the CEO of Kenya Film and Classification Board... In fact, this is the direction that all members of society (Families, Church, Government, Community groups, Institutions and even media people, etc.) should take to safeguard children.” Further, observing that music shapes and influences behavior, Fr. Chimombo described the songs as having the ability to “do more harm than good to the developing minds of children and even the entire society as far as morals are concerned.” Similarly, as further reported by Maina (2019): the President of the Union of Catholic African Press (UCAP), George Sunguh who also is a Mombasa-based Catholic journalist opined that “when it starts with those young ones in kindergarten, they might not understand the implication but it will be instilled in their minds... When I started understanding the music and I saw a YouTube version of it and working in a neighborhood I saw kindergarten kids singing and dancing to the same, I said, ‘now we are in danger.’” He went on to explain the effects that such content could have on children if exposed to them saying, “They will grow with it... At a certain stage gyrating sexual overtone dances in public will be no big deal because they did that when they were young and nothing happened... Corruption of the mind is the corruption of the society.”

Additionally, Maina (2019) added that his interview with Dr. Mutua explained that the restricted songs “are not illegal; they are just not suitable for children... If artistes do not wish to have their content restricted, then let it be suitable for all ages... Content with scenes or language meant for adult audiences should not be aired during the watershed period (5 am-10 pm)” and he concluded that “The decision by KFCB is in line with the call to action of October 2017 Rome Declaration, which called on various stakeholders in the welfare of children to ensure that children do not have access to adult content.”

Kenya’s restriction on performance of the songs notwithstanding, the two songs have continued to enjoy high play in Tanzania and outside the country as well as within permitted entertainment zones in Kenya (“Ban of Diamond’s”, 2019). In November 2021, Rayvanny got the opportunity to perform the remixed version of the song Mama Tetema alongside Colombian Superstar Maluma at the MTV European Music Awards in Hungary (“Rayvanny”, 2021). As such Tanzania never ever restricted Tetema and currently the song has over 73 million views. Following MTV performance, Rayvanny appreciated his government saying, “It feels so good when your government supports your works, thanks a lot to the ministry of Culture, Arts and Sports (“Rayvanny”, 2021).

Censorship of Tarimbo in November 2019

In November 2019, following an uproar from Kenyan netizens, KFCB banned Tarimbo, a song by Ethic Entertainment group that glorified rape through its explicit visuals and lewd lyrics that objectified women as toys of sexual pleasure; the song could not be tolerated by both fans and haters of Gengetones as well as by fellow artists with many enraged and positing that the emergence of Gengetones had outrightly come to contravene Kenya’s cultural values by encouraging immorality, violence and abuse of drugs among young people through raw lyrics and overt videos (Opondo, 2019; The Sauce, 2019). Examination of the first verse and refrain of Tarimbo Lyrics that are in Sheng (a dominant slang in Kenyan slums that understood by many youth across the nation) confirms the nationwide anger even before KFCB’s censorship. It went, “Bas bas jo kama ana maringo, Mi hupenda chapa na tarimbo, Mi huchapa chapa na nakanyaga, Namwaga bila ata permission, Mmmh, Bila hata permission, Mmmh, Bila hata permission, Mi huchapa chapa na nakanyaga, Namwaga bila hata permission” which Obiero (2020) translated to mean that “if a guy doesn’t like the character of a girl, then the guy should beat her and have unprotected sex with her even if she does not consent to it.” The song goes on to say all kinds of naughty things done to sleep with a girl such as spiking drinks with drugs or wearing a mask and raping her. On Tweeter @marieamash alarmingly pointed that, “Hii nayo apana (This one is a no). You are telling your audience its okay to drug and rape women! No...No way... I’m a huge fan but hii apana (this one, no).”

The huge social media uproar and high controversy made it hit a million views within the first week of release (Opondo, 2019). Kenyan moral police, Dr. Mutua, heeded the call by Kenyans and banned it from being played anywhere in the country, including night clubs. He further added that he had contacted Google to pull down the song from YouTube and called for the arrest of the group by the Director of Criminal Investigations (The Sauce, 2019; Nziwa, 2019). A tweet from Dr. Mutua on 9th November 2019 confirmed that You-Tube had completely deleted the song and the channel owner served the first warning as he thanked Google for their support in cleaning the digital space and making it safe for children.

Thereafter, Ethic Entertainment group (four young male Gengetone artists by stage names of Reckless, Swat [mtoto wa Eunice], Sesks and Zilla apologised for releasing such lyrics and promised not to release another song that would go against set rules, saying that they were “truly remorseful for any dolor (distress) caused by the lyrics to our single, and for every single person that was triggered to a displeasing memory or emotion by it (“Ethic Apologizes”, 2019).” The song continued to receive massive criticisms from different quarters as it was considered to promote sexual violence against women (Nziwa, 2019). On Tweeter, @BravinYuri wrote, “What people should understand is that, Tarimbo wasn’t banned because it’s vulgar... The issue is the lyrics. The chorus is Rapey... It’s very obvious... Tarimbo was banned because it encourages sexual violence.”

Censorship of Soko in April 2020

Seemingly the ban of Tarimbo did not deter artistic expression by the Ethic Entertainment group because half a year after, they produced Soko another “despicable” hit that was condemned for promoting this time not only rape but also prostitution and paedophilia by KFCB as it banned it in April 2020 and pursued its deletion from YouTube (Morris, 2020; Ngina, 2020; Mwaura, 2020). Further, KFCB asked the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) to pursue the matter adding that they might have to shut down studios that allow the production of such content (Ngina, 2020). Before its ban, its audio had been released for two months earlier but within 3 days of production of its video, Kenyans went into an online uproar unable to take in the lewd lyrics any more (Ngina, 2020). In one of the verses, Seska, described a baby’s vagina in a manner that made Kenyans feel that he was encouraging child rape (Morris, 2020).

As Ngina reports, one Twitter user identified as Wanga said, “This group, Ethic Entertainment need to be stopped. They’re obsessed with rape, paedophilia, prostitution & immorality in the name of entertainment. If you’re of a sane mind you’ll avoid their ... music & Ban your kids from listening to these Ezekiel Mutua Do us a favour.” His sentiments were echoed by Mitch Kitoi who said, “Seriously people! We cannot constrain Ethic to good family music when we entertained their vulgar music at the beginning. We made them, now we reject them?? We should have rejected the whole “Gengetone” music from the beginning.” Njeri Migwi, an activist and Director of *Usikimie* an NGO that deals with Victims of Gender based violence and rape victims, called upon the government to bring down the song immediately in order to protect children as Kenya is a country against paedophilia; whereas MC Sharon, an artist, insisted that it was no longer about artists being rape apologists after promoting their vulgar songs in the name of art, but artists should be responsible enough to ... think about the rights of children ... and paedophilia is a deviant behavior that should not be normalized by art (Morris, 2020).

The KFCB boss who was furious at the perversion propagated by the song and wondered, “Do these perverted producers have children? How does a sane adult try to normalize rape, prostitution or paedophilia in the name of Gengetone hits? The video Soko by Ethic is despicable immorality that should be condemned by all right thinking people.... We have gotten in touch with Google who owns YouTube. We want that channel suspended. That video is disgusting. It’s promoting child abuse and paedophilia, we cannot condone it (Anyango, 2020)”.

Ethic artists at first responded saying that people interpret lyrics differently. However, as reported by Morris (2020) they eventually bowed in to pressure and apologized saying, "... It has come to our attention that our recently released Soko video has unintentionally promoted Paedophilic culture. We are therefore sending out sincere apologies to all our fans and viewers at large...." In a rejoinder, Dr. Mutua, through his Twitter handle, said the apology was insufficient and said that the Ethic group would have to face the full force of the law as provided for the Film and Stage Plays Act, Cap 222. He gave them an ultimatum directing that they delete all versions of the offensive song, present themselves to KFCB offices and pay a fine of Kes.100,000= or face a five-year jail term (Kejitan, 2020). To this, Ethic, as reported by Morris (2020), said, "... We have made sure the video has been taken down, it's inaccessible and we shall not further upload it.... Over and above we sincerely apologize and we are working to release better music content in the future." Later, Dr. Mutua celebrated when YouTube indeed pulled down Ethic's 'immoral' video a day after KFCB filed the request (Mwaura, 2020).

Censorship of Utawezana in April 2020

Again, in April 2020, the KFCB CEO Dr. Mutua restricted the song Utawezana, a production of 1st April 2020 by Femi One and Mejja, two artists known for their rapping prowess noting that Utawezana should be banned from media as it was obscene and promoted sexual perversion. While referring to the artists as perverts who should be ashamed of themselves and he lamented that "media houses promoting such crap too are a disgrace ("Dr Ezekiel Mutua", 2020)." He called it 'moral foolishness' saying it was 'shallow, bizarre sexual perversion' in the guise of creativity (Nyambura 2020; Siele, 2020; Lennie, 2020). The CEO added that "It's worse when mainstream media begins to glorify such dirty content by giving the creators airtime on TV and radio" (Siele, 2020). Further, he cautioned that "KFCB board would blacklist artists creating such content and share their names with ministries and government agencies to ensure that they never contract them (Mutua, 2020)" and referred to them as "enemies of the people and should not benefit from government funds (Nyambura, 2020)."

According to People Daily (2020), the song done in sheng and in a story telling manner has the two artistes talk about sex in a playful manner with Mejja aka Okonkwo trying to seduce Femi in a bid to try get into the 'cookie jar' but she questions his ability to perform the act because of his pot-belly (Refrain: Okonkwo na kitambi utawezana? (Nitawezana) Nikikupea utawezana? (Nitawezana)). When she finally agrees to sleep with him she asks that he keeps it a top secret but further warns that if his 'manhood' is small he should not go over. The song ends with some 'sweet nothings' and description of some sex position. *Utawezana* inspired a viral Twitter hashtag "#*UtawezanaChallenge* which particularly blew up on Tiktok, with Kenyans recording themselves singing and dancing along to the song. Notably, a journalism student by the name **Azziad Nasenya** emerged as the undisputed star of the challenge with her videos going viral. Her newfound fame earned her thousands of new online followers and saw her invited to various media houses including *Citizen*, *NTV* and *KTN* to take part in various show (Siele, 2020)."

However, according to Siele (2020) the song never caught the attention of KFCB until a short comedy video surfaced online in which a child referenced the song's steamy lyrics: "in the video a young girl asks his uncle for help with her homework. When the uncle asks what he will get in return, the young child stands up and puts her arms on her waist, before asking the question made popular by the song, "*Nikikupea utawezana? If I give it to you will you manage?*" leaving the uncle shocked." The KFCB Boss called for the arrest of the person who filmed the video featuring a minor (Siele, 2020). Additionally, Dr. Mutua revealed his fear that as Kenyans continued to normalize raunchy songs, children would imitate them and what they see and hear in music videos (Siele, 2020): "The work of art is to build societies, to inspire hope.... However, people are so obsessed with sex and immorality When you start normalizing these things, children easily pick them up and that is very dangerous.... The child in the video ... is being used to normalize this Utawezana nonsense and it is wrong... children imitate these things every day."

Kenyans reacted with some asking KFCB to X-rate the song and restricted it ‘for adults only’ as it was deemed a pure club banger (The People Daily, 2020). Others questioned the values being passed on by artists to youngsters in the nation but several others urged Dr. Mutua not to take action against creators of the comedy sketch video or the song creators (Siele, 2020).

DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS

Dynamics of Music Censorship in Tanzania between January 2018 and March 2022

Fifteen songs were censored in Tanzania between 2018 and March 2023. Most of these songs (13) were Bongo Flava and the other two were of Singeli and R & B genres which too are part of the Bongo Flava family, and all the fifteen were local productions to the country by mostly Tanzania bred artists except in some collabos. Bongo Flava rapidly emerged in Tanzania out of the streets of Dar es Salaam in early 1990s as Swahili hip-hop and it blends several genres such as hip-hop, R&B, rap, reggae, and traditional Tanzanian styles such as taarab and dansi; because “Bongo” translates to “brain or mind” but it is also slang for Dar es Salaam and “Flava” specifies the many different flavours of the music, Bongo Flava can be seen quite literally as a musical expression of the Tanzanian mind and is reflective of broader changes in Tanzania as a whole (Quade and Martin, 2005; Voice of Maasai, 2019). Today, Bongo Flava is the most popular style of music among young people in Tanzania, and has spread beyond the country’s borders, gaining similar popularity in Kenya and Uganda (Thomson Safaris, 2023).

A total of fourteen local artists were affected by the censorship. Whereas 13 artists were each affected by ban of one of their singles or songs they did in collabo with another, one of the most popular Bongo Flava artists in East Africa, Diamond Platnumz, alongside his collaborating artists had four of songs censored (Waka Waka, Hallelujah, Mwanza and Mtasubiri). The findings agreed with Quade and Martin (2005) who observed that Bongo Flava artists consider themselves as solo performers, but often perform or tour as a team, or invite each other to feature on a track. Further the findings were interpreted to mean that the regulator was keen to oversee adherence of the set standards regardless of who was involved or how many times they contravened industry regulations.

The study revealed that most music censorship of the five years period happened in 2018 (14 songs), thirteen in March at a go and the other seven months thereafter i.e. in November (Mwanza); and then the other one song (Mtasubiri) was banned three years after i.e. in May 2022. This shows that there came a period of silence of seven months (March 2018 – November 2018) after the first ban and three years period of silence (2019-2021) after the second ban. In 2023, Tanzania is yet to have any song publicly censored and seemingly, another season of silence and adherence to established regulations is ensuing following the 2022 ban. The researcher interpreted this to mean that following each ban, artists were indirectly reminded of their obligations in adhering to the industry regulations because they witnessed and therefore feared the consequences of contravening the set regulations. Definitely, their artistic freedom was limited.

Further, the study established that there were three main reasons for censorship of the songs: lack of adherence to Tanzania’s cultural norms and values arising especially from obscene lyrics and/or videos as was the case of the 13 songs that were banned as a blanket; vulgarity or immoral content as was in the case of Mwanza; and blasphemous or religiously offensive content as was the case of Mtasubiri and Hallelujah. Similar to one of these reasons, Lady Gaga’s song Judas was criticized by Catholic groups and was subsequently banned in Lebanon in April 2011 for being offensive to Christianity (“Lady Gaga”, 2011).

Following each ban, the study found out that most artists were shocked, enraged and accused the government of discrimination compared to foreign music streaming in the country and lack of proper communication with the artists before the ban. Further the study established that some artists went ahead to

disregard the restrictions, a move that led to heavier penalties through fines and/or banning the artists from performing in or out of the country or extending to their other songs (as was in the case of Diamond and Rayvanny when they replayed Mwanza; and Roma Mkatokili when he refused to edit Kibamia). Sometimes, the regulators summoned the artists for discussion in their office. Such stern moves caused affected artists to apologize and abide by BASATA/TCRA directives going forward. According to Ross (2019) every time music is censored, there are many heated discussions and debates, especially within the creative industries.

The study further established that Tanzania's music censorship ordeal began when the Late President John Magufuli in December 2017 lamented the rise in number of obscene videos in the country. His words sent BASATA into action as the council in March 2018 sent a list of 13 songs to TCRA for banning. In addition, the study found out that after the initial ban in March 2018, the regulation of the creative industry in Tanzania was tightened through introduction of new regulations: in July 2018 the council passed 64 regulations requiring all artists (artworks, music, film, theatre, and visual arts and crafts) to register themselves with Basata, to pay an initial registration fee and a yearly subscription, and to pass all their works to Basata for vetting and rating before they can be consumed (Komba, 2019). As such musical lyrics must be submitted and analysed before they can be played to the public and artists, Diamond Platnumz, had their songs banned for not submitting them or for 'unacceptable' content (Komba, 2019).

Finally, the study found out that although most of the bans of songs (14 of the 15), in Tanzania were initiated by leaders of BASATA and TCRA, audiences in the country were also keen on available music and they raised their voices whenever concerned thereby causing the regulator to take action (as was the case of Mtasubiri when some members of the clergy in Tanzania voiced out their concerns). This shows harmonious views between regulators and citizenry with regard to conserving certain norms and values of Tanzania.

Dynamics of music censorship in Kenya between January 2018 and March 2022

In total, seven songs were censored in Kenya in the stated five year period. Five of these songs were Gengetones whereas two were Bongo Flava. All the five Gengetones were local productions to the country by locally bred artists whereas the two Bongo Flava hits were productions of Tanzania's hip hop star, Diamond in collabo with two other Tanzanian artists. Diamond's hits are very popular in Kenya and the artist has visited the country for live performances severally. According to Storm (2020), "Gengetone evolved from Genge-rap, a musical style incredibly popular in the 2000s in Kenya. It blends rap with reggaeton and dancehall infusions resulting in a high-energy and dance-ready sound. The music is also characterized by its explicit lyrics and commentary ... usually rapped or sung in sheng... to code some of the raw things The explicit lyrics are to communicate to ... fans because they can relate and they themselves speak the same...." It became more prominent "when #PlayKeMusic trended, with deejays and media houses accused of playing Nigeria's Afro-beat and Tanzania's Bongo Flava instead of Kenyan music (Musyimi, 2020)."

The findings of this study revealed that most music censorship (five songs) in Kenya happened in 2019 (Kwangwaru in March 2019, Takataka in April 2019, Tetema and Wamlabez in August 2019, and Tarimbo in November 2019) and two (Soko and Utawezana) were banned the following year, six months later i.e. in April 2020. This shows that there was aggressive censorship in the country within a period of one year ranging from March 2019 to April 2020. This aligns to Musyimi (2020) who opined that "Gengetone was consumed more by Kenyans in 2019 compared to past years and before it, there were fewer complaints from Kenyan artists and fans about the music played in local media but Gengetone generated a lot of controversy because of its vulgar language, with critics saying it is encouraging immorality." Additionally, according to Storm (2020) the Gengetone movement was "seen by many as the defiant voice of a new generation that cares little for traditional Kenyan conservative values." After the 2019 bans, there was a period of silence of

about three years (April 2021 to March 2023) as Kenya is yet to have any other song publicly censored. The researcher interpreted this to mean that following the aggressive period of censorship artists were reminded to check their content and ensure that it was aligned to the industry; but more so the public uproar over the trends of Gengetones with some agitated Kenyans calling for banning of the producers (Manuwero, 2020) as the content of the songs in terms of local culture and national values was intolerable, could have caused artists to toe the line of adherence. Additionally, after 2020 Sailors group and Ethic Entertainment groups disintegrated for various reasons (Muli, 2022; Were, 2022) this could have led to less controversial Gengetones.

A total of twelve Kenyan artists and three Tanzanian artists were affected by the censorship. The twelve Kenyan artists were clustered in three different groups/collabo, were affected by the ban of the five Kenyan hits; five members were of Sailors group, four members of the Ethic Entertainment group, one was a single (Alvindo) and two i.e. Femi One and Mejj had done a collabo. The most affected by the censorship incidences were Alvindo and members of Ethic Entertainment that saw their viral hits (Takataka, Tarimbo and Soko) completely banned and pulled down from YouTube; Sailors had one hit Wamlambe restricted to be played in night clubs and bars only just like the hit Utawezana by Femi One and Mejja. The three Tanzanian artists had two of their songs censored with one of them, Diamond Platnuz, being in both songs (Kwangwaru by Diamond Platinumz and Harmonize; and Tetema by Rayvanny and Diamond Platnumz). The researcher found out that KFCB censored songs that contravened its regulations irrespective of whether the artists were from within or without the country and the censorship was either a complete ban or a restriction to certain audiences depending on the content of the song. This was analysed more in the paragraphs that follow.

Further, the study established that there were four main reasons for censorship of the songs in Kenya that were broadly directed by KFCB's its mandate that required it to ensure that content conforms to Kenya's culture, moral values and national aspirations as well as to protect children from exposure to harmful/adult content (KFCB, 2021): explicit or obscene content as was the case of Kwangwaru that was banned from being played in schools; pornographic content as was the case of Tetema and Wamlambe and wererestricted to night clubs and bars only respectively; vulgar or immoral content that could pervert children and young people as was in the case of Utawezana; glorifying of sexual violence or crimes including rape, prostitution, paedophilia and gender violence or dehumanization of women as was in the case of Takataka, Tarimbo and Soko that were completely banned and pulled down from YouTube. According to Ross (2019) "music has always been a target for censorship with many debates about appropriate use of language, religious references, violence, sexuality and civil rights being the main areas of contention." The four reasons for censorship in Kenya are clearly around themes of sexuality which shows the conservative norms and values of Kenyans when it comes to this area of life as argued by BBC (2019). However, three of the issues around sexuality (rape, paedophilia, and gender violence a) that informed total ban of three songs by Ethic Entertainment and pulling down of the same by Google's YouTube were because these were not just national values but rather matters of international values, laws and global regulations.

Additionally, the study found out that there are disparities when coded language is used in lyrics as was seen in the controversy of views between regulators in the two countries following the ban of Tetema; Tanzania's regulators insisted they had cleared the song for public performance as it used coded language but KFCB insisted the song was pornographic in spite of the coding and unsuitable for mixed setting performance. This attests to the fact that culture even within closer groups is dynamic and what content means in the cultural context of one nation can be totally different from what it means in a neighbouring nation. This agrees to Ross (2019) who when critiquing 'different countries, different rules' illustrated with this: "On 30 January 2019, Iranian band Askair, performed a concert in Tehran. Their music has now been banned by the Ministry of Culture because the band's female guitarist (Parsa), sang a solo at the end of a song. Under Iranian law, women are not allowed to sing on their own in front of men – and during major concerts in Iran, a member of the Ministry of Culture always attends to ensure these laws are being upheld."

Also, following each ban, the study found out that most artists got enraged and accused the government and audiences of misinterpretation of their music. However, KFCB Boss, who was dubbed Kenya's Moral Policeman was relentless in executing his mandate and he gave stern rejoinders, fines, ultimatum or calls to DCI to arrest defiant artists. They were summoned to KFCB offices to discuss the way forward in most occasions. Such firm moves saw all artists finally apologize and adhere to the restrictions. Further, the study further established that since 2015 when Dr. Mutua took leadership of KFCB, there was strict censorship of not only music but other forms of arts (films, advertisements, public exhibitions) that contravened the Film and Stage Plays Act, CAP 222; the broadcasting regulations of the country and he was sometimes accused of overstepping his mandate. However, until he exited office, he kept reminding Kenyans of the need to protect children and young people from harmful content advising artists that content does not have to be dirty to sell while cautioning them that dirty content would also be consumed by their children. He was ambitious in advocating responsible creativity that promotes Kenya's culture and national values (Mule, 2020). KFCB continues to insist the same even under its new leadership with several partnerships and parenting literacy programmes cited on their website (KFCB, 2023).

Finally, the study found out that although for four of the bans of songs (Kwangwaru, Utawezana, Tetema and Wamlambezi) the move was initiated by the KFCB CEO, Kenyan Citizens including netizens, human rights activists and the clergy were very keen on available music and they raised sent an uproar whenever an artist glorified heinous acts such as rape, paedophilia and sexual violence against women. That is why the ban of Takataka, Tarimbo and Soko were done following public uproars; such uproars were raised within less than a week of release of Tarimbo and Soko. This shows converging views between regulators and citizenry with regard to certain values and aspirations of Kenya as a nation. Rape, paedophilia, and gender violence are crimes that are internationally condemned and cannot be condoned anywhere in the world. For instance, UN Women (n.d.) on their website state that "violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, and the immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and mental consequences for women and girls can be devastating, including death." It was indeed a great shame for Ethic Entertainment to glorify these crimes through music and the same would have become national shame if total censorship of their three songs wasn't done.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This content analyses case study of East Africa thematically analysed dynamics of music censorship in two East Africa Countries (Kenya and Tanzania) by reviewing online resources published about censored music in Tanzania and Kenya (separately but chronologically under each country) to assess, as much as possible, the censored songs using song titles, artist names, genre of censored song and lyrics of the song; the reason for censorship as well as the type or extent of censorship; initiators and implementers of each censorship; reaction to the censorship; and outcome of the censorship. A total of twenty two censored songs were analysed and a total of twenty seven artists were involved with some receiving censorship across the two nations. Most of the banned music were Bongo Flavas and Gengetones; both are very popular indigenous hip-hop genres to Tanzania and Kenya respectively that arose from ghettos in the two nations and that tend to use explicit content albeit coded in Sheng, a slang that is understood by many citizenry in the two nations.

Following analyses of these cases, the study found out that normalizing street lifestyle to the mainstream cultures in the two nations through explicit music faced huge resistance not only from the older generation in leadership but also from the common people. Kenyan musicians were deemed more daring in exploring controversial themes compared to their Tanzanian counterparts since the Kenyan ones went beyond obscenity and vulgarity and delved into heinous matters of glorifying rape, prostitution, paedophilia and sexual/gender violence in Gengetones. Also, there was difference of opinion between authorities in the two countries regarding censorship of music with one feeling the content needed restriction to adults' only while the other felt that the song was okay for general performance. This shows there was some level of diversity of cultural norms and values between the two countries.

Secondly, the main reasons for banning the songs in the two nations were mainly focused on child and youth protection as well as on preservation of dominant national values. In line with this, most of the banned songs were condemned for being pornographic, obscene, vulgar, immoral, blasphemous/offensive to religion, or for promoting gender or sexual violence including rape, prostitution, paedophilia and objectification of women. Although the rating of acceptable cultural values in East Africa is debatable using global lenses, the study established that some of the music would have faced censorship even the international scene for promoting sexual crimes and gender based violence against women and children in view of such propositions as those of the UN Women and The 2017 Rome Declaration for Child Protection. Promotion of heinous acts like rape and paedophilia, through any form of music or other art cannot be condoned anywhere in the modern world.

Thirdly, although mostly the initiative to censor the songs came from government regulatory bodies using established laws or regulatory guidelines/codes, censorship moves were also initiated by uproars/concerns from the citizenry. This shows that there is certain moral decadence that can hardly be tolerated by the publics in these nations especially sexual violence against children and women (paedophilia, rape and objectification). Pornography, prostitution, vulgarity and obscenity and any explicit expression of sex in the presence of children or young people is also highly detested among the East African citizenry. Their culture is highly conservative though there are generational differences on how far is far. That's why although some songs were banned from being played in mainstream media and in schools, they were instead allowed to be played in night clubs and bars.

Further, any claims by artists that content from the West that streams into the country through OTT and other types of media had worse violations of the said cultural norms and values did not make local authorities in these countries rethink their censorship decisions especially for purposes of preserving the national aspirations and protection of children. Creative artists in East Africa have, therefore, been continually endeared to believe that their music does not have to be 'dirty' to sell. What probably both artists and regulators in East Africa need to remember is that the current parameters of censorship will not always thrive because "censorship in music is always the result of negotiations orchestrated on the basis of the context of the music and the play of power among the stakeholders of various kinds. The fear of restrictions and the subsequent incitement to self-censorship are not easily reduced to universal terms, but are rather continually shifting following the political and social requirements of governments as well as aesthetic and/or moral currents in social movements (Kirkegaard and Otterbeck, 2017, pp.260)."

As such, this study concludes that the cultural values and norms in East Africa are conservative and that government leaders and sections of the public endeavour to have them remain as so through censorship of music and other creative arts that seek to cause a shifting. The regulators of the industry should, nonetheless, remember that "on one hand censorship can prevent cultural tensions among people but on the other it also leads to the death of several ideas that could otherwise lead to the development of thought. Protecting children from explicit content is important but perhaps not worth limiting an artists' freedom... (Patwardhan, 2018?)"

This notwithstanding, there is content that cannot just be classified and restricted partially but that must be pulled down if human dignity is to be achieved in a nation (Ngwiri, 2018). There comes a time when preservation of human dignity comes before creativity (for which country can allow gender based or sexual violence to be glorified in the name of freedom of expression? And whereas legality of prostitution is debatable across different nations, it is not debatable that rape and paedophilia are criminal offenses. This study, therefore, additionally concludes that even the freedom of expression has boundaries that must be keenly guarded through reasonable censorship of music content at both local and global levels.

Finally, the study also concludes that local artists who seek to thrive in the East Africa market must be aware of existing cultural norms and values of their society as they express their artistic freedom because communication occurs within cultural, social, physical and psychological contexts. This means, that they need to freely express their creativity while ensuring decency and caution to sensitivity of the more impressionable minds of children and young people. Sessional Paper No. 8 of Kenya Section 5.11 addresses Art, Music and Entertainment sectors and highlights that, “Artists, performers, fashion designers and musicians shape a society’s cultural icons and help define acceptable social norms. They have particular impact among the youth who are the majority of our population and represent the future of our nation.”

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHER

The study recommends that government leaders carry out awareness campaigns with regard to national values and aspirations of their countries so as to groom creative artists to remain sensitive and focused as they exercise their freedom of expression. Towards this end, socialization of national values could be streamlined in the education systems so that as young people dive into the creative industry they are well groomed with the expectations of the industry.

Secondly, the study recommends that more research be done to fill scholarly literature gap in this area. One, this study was limited to censorship of music only and the researcher recommends that censorship of other forms of creative works such as film and advertisements in Africa be done. Two, this study did not examine the impact of censorship of music on the growth of the creative industry in East Africa and, therefore, encourages further research on this aspect.

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