Staged *Beefing* in the Music Industry in Ghana: Perspectives of Selected Entertainment Bloggers and Music Artistes

Kate Sem-Ackah

Abena Abokoma Asemanyi

Belinda Osei-Mensah
(http://www.orcid.org/0000-0001-7429-0379)*

Akosua Asantewaa Anane
School of Communication and Media Studies,
University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.
*Email of the corresponding author: ombella186@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores staged beefing in the music industry for entertainment bloggers and music artists in Ghana. This qualitative case study focuses on capturing detailed information from participants using structured interviews. Through a purposive selection technique, ten participants were chosen and interviewed to learn about their personal experiences with the phenomena of staged beefing in the music industry and its ramifications for both bloggers and musicians. The participants' responses were analysed using the thematic analysis approach, which was based on Agenda Setting and Framing Theory. Participants identified implications of staged beefing to both bloggers and musicians as fake feuds, collaboration, and controversy, monetary gains, and clout. The data capture that some musicians and entertainment bloggers collaborate to create 'fake' feuding scenarios and that the phenomenon of 'fake feuds' is real event that happen. The result also shows that entertainment bloggers and musicians present information in such a way as to market the artiste and connect with the audiences during the process of opinion formation, which subsequently influences attitudes and behaviours. Based on the outcome of the interview, supported by the literature it became obvious that both bloggers and musicians who consent to create fake feuds do so to promote their brand visibility and relevance to attract large corporations for endorsement deals and or boost sales of their music.

Keywords: Entertainment bloggers, fake feud, Ghana, Musicians, Marketing, Staged beefing

Introduction

Entertainment is founded on a standard market economy and business model where the idea is for consumer payments to meet production costs (Andersson, 2006). Thus, business academics define entertainment as a culture offered for the exchange of money (Sayre & King, 2010). The entertainment industry is any business that generates value by providing people with something to do or watch; the term is often associated with exciting and vibrant experiences that are packaged for mass consumption (De Ritis & Si, 2016). The cultural and creative industries make up a sizable and influential sector of the global economic and cultural spheres. The creative economy has become a sector of growing social, political and economic importance. The statistics show the global expert of creative goods represented 526 million dollars in 2020 while world export of creative services reached 1.1 trillion US Dollars (United Nations Creative Economy Report, 2022). The entertainment sector is a global industry made up of organizations that produce both tangible and intangible products with the main objective of enticing or capturing audiences (Moss, 2010). The ability to create entertainment is a fundamental aspect of beefing. The word "entertain" has several different definitions, but one of its main meanings is to provide the audience with something nice or enjoyable that keeps their attention for the duration of the event or object (Stebbins, 2007).

Globally, performers in the entertainment industry have been involved in some kind of stiff competition which sometimes spills over with personal grudges and intense rivalry, rivalry in the sense of the state in which two individuals or groups engage in a lasting competitive relationship. Several academics have referred to the competition in the entertainment industry as "beefing." (Tucker et al., 2013). In the music business, "beefing" is a literary contest based on the supported theory and conviction that one performer is more lyrically astute than the other. In fact, it has been shown that beefing exemplifies both of these possibilities (Tucker at al., 2013).

Brew (2019) is of the view that "beef" is a term used to describe a feud between two musicians whose primary goal is to resolve their differences through the use of lyrical jabs in songs. These musicians use their songs to publicly criticize one another in order to gain fans' approval and, most importantly, to promote their respective brands. Ghana has experienced its fair share of beef in the entertainment sector.

Since its introduction in the late 1990s, the term "blog," that is a contraction of "weblog" which has grown significantly in popularity (Rosenberg, 2009). Blogs are a relatively new genre in digital literary studies that have become increasingly popular. The blog has advanced to the mainstream as a form of digital personal diary, a venue for citizen journalism, a gathering place for forums with specialised topics, and a platform for more passive entertainment. It started out modestly as a sort of digest tool for computing professionals and internet hobbyists (Morrison, 2017). Contrary to static standard web pages, blogs are interactive (Newson et al., 2009). The messages exchanged between bloggers and their readers are greatly magnified over the internet and frequently serve as significant sources for specific businesses (Berman, 2008). Singh (2008) assert that by promptly reacting to customer comments left on blogs, businesses manage their reputation and increase trust. Bloggers have the potential to monetize or profit from their blogs by purchasing advertising space (Newson et al., 2009). As a result, a large number of citizen

journalists have branched into personal blogging. This has created a genre in the entertainment industry. The huge drama around entertainment that has been produced by both artists and consumers has necessitated a genre of journalism known as entertainment blogging, which reports on the acts of both performers and consumers; making some blogs entertainment-focused (Newson et al., 2009).

Products of entertainment, including beefing, circulate widely to audiences who are at the end of the marketing chain (McKee, 2014). These products create immersive leisure experiences which are said to be rewarding and pleasurable although short-lived. The system of appeal used by consumers to assess entertainment is particularly important because entertainment and its audiences are interdependent. Currently, entertainment can only function when there exist sufficiently large audiences with suitable leisure time to consume regularly-produced products (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005). From this process, a consumption culture is produced between the audiences and the product of entertainment to the extent that audiences yearn for entertainment values including fun, speed, emotion, spectacle, loudness, and vulgarity as described by McKee (2012).

The Phenomenon of *Beefing* in Ghanaian Music

Artiste rivalry has been evident in the Ghanaian music industry. Competition between artists in Ghana, to large extent, has been noted to have kept the music industry afloat (Koursoh, 2021). There have been a number of artiste feuds in Ghana; some die out and others protract for years even beyond the feuding artists. One of the biggest rivalries in Ghana's music industry was between highlife legends Daddy Lumba and Nana Acheampong. The said feud began as a result of Daddy Lumba refusing to give Nana Acheampong his share of some money they had both worked for.

As Ghana transitioned from highlife music to hiplife music; a genre that fuses highlife with rap music in the late 1990s and early 2000s, two of the pioneers of rap music, Chicago and Ex-Doe, were good friends until a misunderstanding brought about one of the fiercest beef to hit the Ghanaian music industry (Ghansah, 2019). Both artists collaborated on a soundtrack titled "*Daavi Mede Kuku,*" which became an instant hit song at the time. The beef surfaced when both artists claimed ownership of the song because of its success. To prove superiority and claim rights, both artists recorded diss songs to each other which became a highlight of their beef.

During the early 2000s, the feud between Lord Kenya and Obrafuor was centered on who was the best rapper in Ghana (Koursoh, 2021). Their rivalry began after Obrafuor recorded a rap song with the lyrics *heavy-weight champion* suggesting that he was the biggest rapper in Ghana at the time. Lord Kenya did not take it lightly with that rap line. The rap battle between Obrafuor and Lord Kenya as to who was Ghana's rap heavyweight champion subsequently worsened into the beef. Hiplife artists Manifest and Sarkodie went head-to-head in 2016 when Sarkodie took a swipe at most of his fellow rappers in his song titled "*Bossy.*" Evidently, one of the notable outcomes of beef is the subtle response given by the artists to each other. Manifest responded by coming up with his own song titled "*god MC.*" A line in that song, "*when the boss himself is around,*" suggested that Manifest was evidently the boss compared to Sarkodie who touts himself as the biggest artiste in Ghana. Sarkodie responded with a song titled "*Kanta"* which taunted Manifest's style of dressing

and his global music reach. Though their beef has since toned down, fans of both musicians are still in debate over who the better rapper is (Owusu-Amoah, 2018).

Some contend that beefing is occasionally beneficial and makes the music industry more dynamic for music lovers and listeners, while others oppose that it can be a life-or-death struggle that endangers the lives of the performers and those close to them (Buckman-Owoo, 2020). For music fans and followers, it has been indicated that occasionally beef is advantageous and makes the music industry livelier (Buckman-Owoo, 2020). This phenomenon has given academics a forum to investigate, comprehend, and analyse artistic competition and its financial ramifications for both artists and entertainment bloggers (Koursoh, 2021).

In general, there have been a number of studies on blogging as a new form of media merger and an avenue of economic value for both bloggers and brands that targets the audience in an efficient time-sensitive fashion (Singh, 2008; Newson et al., 2009). Generally, there have been a number of studies on blogging as a new form of media merge and an avenue of economic worth for both bloggers and brands (Singh, 2008; Newson et al., 2009) that reaches the target audience in effective time sensitive way. It also asserts that recent advances in technology have helped migrate the relationship between the firm and the customer where the customer occupies a central role, and technology contributes to brand building by creating and sustaining a long-term relationship with the customer who has become an active participant in the process. Blogs can play a significant role in engaging the customer through ongoing communications. Customers use blogs to reflect their brand experience, both bad and good. Firms can empower customers by enabling them to have a role in the product or brand, through comment interaction. This in turn can help build loyalty by providing them with a feeling of ownership of the brand (e.g. Singh, 2008; Newson et al., 2009). However, very little attention has been given to how bloggers benefit from actively reporting on artists' beef in the music and entertainment industry, vis-à-vis how some artists actually collaborate with other artists and bloggers to create stunts and feuds, that is, staged beefing. The present study conceptualises *stage beefing* as deliberate stunts orchestrated by certain artistes to conjure audience engagement towards the promotion of their craft. Some works, though, have been done on beefing in the music sector of the entertainment industry, Owusu-Amoah (2018), also asserts that beef between artists aims to win the applause of the fans and most importantly, protect their brands.

This study thoroughly examines staged beefing in the music industry by exploring some selected bloggers and musicians in Ghana. According to the above, beefs can be staged by both artistes and entertainment bloggers for their gains or as a marketing means. However, there is still little investigated on staged beefing in Ghana although some scholars (Buckman-Owoo, 2020; Brew, 2019; Ghansah, 2019, Kuorsoh, 2021) have examined beefs between artistes in Ghana. Given this gap, the researchers identified the opportunity to answer the following research questions to explore the phenomenon of staged beefing in the music industry in Ghana by asking the following questions:

1. *What are staged beefs from the perspectives of the bloggers and musicians?*
2. *How do entertainment bloggers create and contribute to staged beefing via their blog sites?*
3. *How do artistes and entertainment bloggers profit from staged beefing?*

This study strengthens the understanding of marketing strategies, including the use of staged beefing employed by musicians to promote their craft, to leverage audience engagement and visibility. This study contributes to literature on entertainment blogging and its implications for artistes and bloggers, the phenomenon of beefing in Ghana as well as its benefits to music audiences and enthusiasts at large. This study provides perspectives to music audiences about their use of social media, particularly with regard to the way they engage in reportages of beefing among rival personalities and their judgments on such beef.

Theoretical Framework – Agenda Setting and Framing

This study will be underpinned by the Agenda Setting and Framing theory. The dynamic role of the mass media in influencing the public in a way that makes them think or consider certain images is expressed in agenda setting. McCombs and Shaw (1972) explain that the mass media has some influence on the public who frequently consume information from them. To McCombs and Shaw (1972), this theory expounds the relationships between the emphasis that the mass media put on an issue and the audience's attributes to such issues (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The discussion also embraces how the media colours a particular event for their audiences (Matsaganis & Payne, 2005). The mass media can thus be assumed as responsible for influencing and shaping public opinion and agenda and it can be intentional or unintentional (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). The agenda setting theory is applicable because, it possesses the ability to set the public agenda especially in matters of opinions or attitudes (Cohen, 1963). Who is responsible for setting the media's agenda? McCombs and Shaw (1993), opine that the public agenda has a certain effect on the media's agenda. To a certain level, the mass media have to follow the demands of the audiences' interests. These interests range from ratings, audience studies, market research and survey, and the audiences' consumption patterns (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). This is conventional since the media are still associated with business and market share. And, such market shares thrive on the interests of the public and public agenda. Because of which, the mass media are pleased to respond to what their audiences want and on what they know will attract and sell to them (Krugman, 1963). Subsequent studies posit that the mass media is able to influence audience's thinking directly or indirectly, contributing to the forming of the audiences' opinions (Wanta, et al., 2004; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 1997).

Based on the understanding derived from this theory, scholars have linked the theory of agenda setting to the cognitive aspects such as the structuring of the agenda by the mass media and how the audiences feel as a result of the agenda. Essentially, these can be done through the concept of framing. When a certain issue is framed by the mass media, the audience immediately visualizes the issue as important, and that thought influences the audience's response to it (Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

Framing is a process where some facets of reality are selected and given greater prominence at the expense of others, such that the problem is defined, its causes diagnosed, moral judgments suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed (Entman, 1993). Framing is in the mind of the journalist who writes the news report, and also in the news report that he builds. According to Ardèvol-Abreu (2015), the reporter reaches the reader through a decoding process that is necessary to understand the news report and the reality to which it refers.

Communication professionals particularly journalists have to communicate news within a certain time and space, and make it available to a far-reaching and heterogeneous public. The best way to do this is by structuring the story in an interpretive context that countenances the conception of the message. Thus, in the making of scripts, journalists use frames to express and simplify reality while at the same time maintaining the interest of the public (Valkenburg et al., 1999). When journalists style a news item, they shape an aspect of reality with words and images, thus they select a frame. They could, however, have carefully chosen any other frame, by selecting another aspect that is different from the topic that they are reporting. It is important to note that the strategies used to give prominence to one piece of information to the detriment of others can be extensively wide-ranging. Even if information and sources are the same, it is imaginable to frame the information otherwise: the order in which facts are exposed, the nouns and adjectives that are used, the chosen headline, can condition very different frames (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). For Entman (1993), the concept of frame blends with the news criteria, which have a solid impact on the selection of events that will become news (agenda building), and in the decision on the aspects of the event on which the news will concentrate (frame building). Thus, story resolutions applied in the drafting process of a new piece include responding to the questions of who does what, and with what purpose.

There are many actors who would try to make their framing prevail (journalists, media ideologies), as well as intangible pressures such as context, culture and production routines of the news media (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Once conveyed into the information piece proper, media frames guide receivers' way of thinking, thus controlling their interpretation of events and facts (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Frame is an invitation and an enticement to read a story in a certain way. This invitation is often overlooked and its construction process subtle, because framing is part of culture. This does not mean that there is only one way to explain things, on the contrary, in any given philosophy there are more frames than those selected to represent reality in the narrated story (Van Gorp, 2007).

Methodology

To fully understand the issues of staged beefs and its implications for both musicians and entertainment bloggers, this study adopted the qualitative research approach. Scholars maintain that qualitative research approach, is theoretical and interpretive in nature (Brennen, 2017; Creswell, 2013). Thus, the researchers are afforded the opportunity to wholly interpret and understand the dominant issues by making sense of language which is generally based on human experiences and relationships (Brennen, 2017). The qualitative research approach aided the researchers in exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Brennen (2017) and Creswell (2014) provide a justification for selecting qualitative research approach for this study. They assert that qualitative research allows us to explore the meanings derived from the idea of staged beefs by music artistes and entertainment. Furthermore, qualitative research allows us to gain insight into the motivations and experiences of those involved in the phenomenon.

Patton and Cochran (2007) emphasise that in qualitative research, the researcher's goal is to unveil the facts without interfering or manipulating the natural setting of the phenomenon of interest. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also point out that qualitative researchers often employ an interpretive and naturalistic approach to research by studying phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Furthermore, Lindlof and Taylor (2002) aver that qualitative research seeks to preserve and analyse the situated form, content and experience of social action rather than subject it to mathematical or formal transformations. Similarly, this study adopted the qualitative research approach because it offered the opportunity to probe deeper and explore the phenomenon of staged beef between feuding music artists and entertainment blogger for economic gains. The study was also conducted in the natural context of asking questions through interviews without any attempt to manipulate or influence the phenomenon under study since qualitative research is concerned with the opinions, experiences, and feelings of individuals and not that of the researcher. Finally, the data were analysed in thick rich descriptions. The researchers employed thematic analysis in analysing the data for the study.

This research employed a case study because it provides much more detailed information than what is available through other methods (Yin, 2003). Case studies also allow for the presentation of data collected from multiple methods (surveys, interviews, document review, and observation) to provide the complete story. Under qualitative research, the object or subject selected for the study, where and when, depends on certain criteria which are determined by the purpose of the study. Data for this study were purposively sampled (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). To Creswell (2014), purposive sampling, as a form of non-probability sampling, includes data or subjects that are selected for possessing specific features that are in line with the study. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) also acknowledge that the right choice of a sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communicative phenomena. Furthermore, purposive sampling was adopted for this study due to inability of the researcher to capture every beefing incident on social media as they unfold. As a result, the bloggers and musicians in question were purposively selected to gain rich, in-depth understanding of the dominant issues that emerged from the staging beefs by rivalling musicians and their reportage by entertainment bloggers. The study sampled ten (10) participants, made up of five (5) entertainment bloggers and five (5) musicians. These bloggers were selected because they are Ghanaian entertainment bloggers who are most popular at reporting beefs between music artistes, they blog consistently and garner a large amount of traffic to their blogs and are considered as influencers. Also, the five musicians were chosen because they are Ghanaian artistes who have experienced beefing incidents, and a large following on social media (Owusu-Amoah, 2018).

The data collection procedure begun with an online observation of the blog sites of the selected entertainment bloggers. Marshall and Rossman (2016) avert that online observation is the way of gathering data in a systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting. This method employs vision as the basic means of data gathering where the researcher describes an existing situation in a particular online setting. Through online observation, the researchers learnt about the activities of the entertainment bloggers on the phenomenon of stage beefing in their natural setting through the posts. This

was coupled with interview sessions which were conducted via phone call sessions with the selected entertainment bloggers with guaranteed confidentiality (Tongco, 2007). Unstructured interview was employed as it allowed for free interaction between the participants and the researchers. The interviews were recorded per the consent from the participants and were transcribed for data analysis. The questions asked of the bloggers bothered on what beef incidents they report on their blog sites and if they had reported staged beefs at all; what benefits do they derive from reporting on staged beefs and how these benefits serve both bloggers and the musicians. Likewise, the selected musicians were interviewed to gain a wholesome perspective on the phenomenon of stage beefing. The interview with the bloggers lasted for two hours, and the interview with the musicians also lasted for two hours, altogether

The analysis of the data for this study followed the thematic analysis procedures because it is flexible and accessible and it allows the researcher to focus on the data in numerous different ways. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into, patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2016). By focusing on meanings across a dataset, it allowed us to see and properly understand collective or shared meanings and experiences of a phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2016). This method is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is examined or written about and then making sense of the commonalities. As stated, the interview data were subjected to thematic analysis where patterns in the data were minimally organised and described in rich detail (Braun & Clark, 2016).

Findings and Discussion

A detailed presentation of the findings from the online observations and interviews conducted with five musicians and five entertainment bloggers. The research questions posed at the beginning of the study are answered from the data gathered using themes and were analysed in relation to the theories.

Perspectives of bloggers and musicians on staged beefing in Ghana

Staged Beef as *Fake Feuds*

From the data collected for the study, it was deduced that some of the staged beefs are *fake feuding* scenarios created by consenting artists and sometimes consenting bloggers. The theme of fake feuds, ties into the agenda-setting theory. Lippmann (1922) posited that the media can set a specific agenda that can impact the sentiments of the public. Matsaganis and Payne (2005) also expounded that through agenda-setting theory the media colours a particular event for their audiences. It can be presumed that the media is in some way responsible for influencing public opinion and agenda, whether on purpose or accidentally (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). From the data, it was realized that the bloggers come together with consenting artistes to create a 'feud scenario' to elicit a particular response from the audiences. This act becomes successful because the media feed on it these particular kinds of issues for various reasons howbeit intentionally or unintentionally. The theme of fake feuds emerged as a real phenomenon that happens in the entertainment industry, especially within the music industry. For instance, one of the participants for the interview alluded to

the point that fake feuds as staged beefs are real and are employed as a publicity strategy for clout purposes:

Yes, it is very real. So, if like…and usually they are publicity stunts to promote their music and brand image. So, anything for the clout deƐ…so two artists may come together to create some fight bi just like that to get the people talking and the internet buzzing then in the heat of the moment they drop whatever song or just ride on the clout for promotion and relevance. It happens, it's real.' (Blogger CG)

Yeah, as for that one de3, ya understand. People actually stage beefs for the clout kƐkƐ and traffic to them. Yes, so like I said they want the clout maybe for their upcoming track, or just the visibility so they may agree to that situation and create a feuding scenario for the public sympathy. It's real paa ya understand. (Musician NY)

Marwick and Boyd (2011) assert that the increasing economies challenges of the entertainment industry have led some performers and personalities to seek alternative means of publicity. This is what Knoopner (2009) refers to as the deliberate attempt by some celebrities to court the entertainment press by staging pseudo-events in order to try to extend their 15 minutes of fame. The researchers realized that Fake feud scenarios created by consenting artists and bloggers run through the responses of most of the participants for the study. Some of the musicians and bloggers interviewed had this to say:

'It's true, artists can stage beef between themselves. I have been contacted by some up-and-coming artists to hype them through beef on my page before. Did I do it? I'd rather not say (laughter).' (Blogger YGH)

Oh yeah, ei.... people actually stage beef for the clout w'ateaseƐ. For instance, I staged one between myself and (name withheld) some months back for the clout and hype kƐkƐ. Staged beef is when artists come to an agreement to create a feud between themselves in order to get clout and public buzz to themselves for a period of time. They must trend and collect sympathy from their fans and well-wishers.' (Musician KS)

'Yes, it is very real. Like two artists will come together sometimes with the involvement of some bloggers to create a fake fight like that to get the internet busy in their direction for all its intents and purposes. Most times it's purely business.' (Blogger GHP)

The researcher realized that most of the respondents had very similar understanding of what staged beefing are and actually agreed that staged beefs are real in the entertainment industry, especially in the music industry. It was again realized that most the participants interviewed were in agreement that most artists usually engage in fake beefs just to get the attention of the audiences and increase their shine. They indicated that there are millions of people who will only want to listen to a song because they heard it was an invective

targeted at another artist. The excerpts above indicate that staged beefs have a marketing purpose with the aim of creating publicity, hype and to garner clout for the artists involved.

How Do Entertainment Bloggers Create And Contribute To Staged Beefing On Their Blog Sites?

This question examined how bloggers create and contribute to stage beef on their blog sites. It was observed that bloggers used the medium of the blog to present or frame information about the feuding artists in a way that appeals to the audience's mind during the process of opinion formation, which subsequently affects attitudes and behaviors (Scheufele, 1999). The media's repeated coverage of one particular story and audiences' reactions to the news serve as evidence of the influence of agenda-setting in this situation. The key factor is not how an event is reported, but rather how much attention the media gives the event or its aspects and how long people are exposed to the coverage of the event (Scheufele, 2000). In framing, the key issue lies in the way the news or event is described, as well as the explanatory schema that has been stimulated to process it. Therefore, framing does not focus on usability but rather on application, in the sense that the ideas linked together in a message will help to connect with the audience's mind during the process of opinion creation (Zhou & Moy, 2007; Scheufele, 1999). The data revealed the theme of controversy which shows how the beef was developed through blog posts.

The strategy of Controversy
According to Singh (2008), entertainment blogs can be used as tools to manage reputation and build trust by responding quickly to consumers' comments posted in blogs. By swiftly responding to customer comments left on entertainment blogs, businesses may manage their reputations and increase trust. Because conversations taking place on various blogs often become an influential source for particular industries, the messages exchanged between bloggers and their readers become highly amplified throughout the internet (Berman, 2008). Hence, reporting on beef in the music industry has the potential to draw traffic to blog sites. On the other hand, beefing parties have support bases or following which are enlarged or get new fan bases to their craft because of the traffic generated on the blog sites on the reportage of beef in the industry.

A music artiste who was interviewed for this research had this to say;

> *'...So, for instance myself if I have an upcoming single or album and I know it won't reach the desired number of people I want, I will approach say, artiste "A", or "B", because of their relevance, right, and we agree to create controversy amongst ourselves such that public sympathy and opinion will be aroused. We achieve that controversy by contacting a prominent blogger and the rest is history. When I feel the buzz is rife enough I drop my craft then boom they will at least search for it or listen because of clout sake.'* (Musician TP)

Another music artiste represented by NL, basically buttresses what TP stated above,

'*Yeah, I've heard at least a couple of artistes who actually staged their beef for the clout and hype so yeah. So, they are like this, I need some visibility for my craft but it isn't coming because there's no controversy around me or I'm 'underground', and you know that in entertainment controversy sells, like negativity sells, so two artistes agree to create controversy amongst themselves through a renowned blogger…'*

Blogger CT also says;
'So, they want attention to themselves for whatever reason so they stoke public sympathy by instigating a deliberate feud, through blog posts or YouTube videos uploads to get the internet buzzing on their account. They sometimes collaborate with influential bloggers to that effect. It happens.'

So, blog posts are crafted in such a way as to get the audience affected by the seeming feud so that they act in a certain way. Researchers believe that since people use media for different reasons, the accurate recognition of media's effect is possible only by identifying the reasons for which they are used. Emphasis is on the fact that the concepts connected in a message will also tend to connect with each other in the audience's mind during the process of opinion formation, which will subsequently influence attitudes and behaviours (Zhou & Moy, 2007; Scheufele, 1999). Based on the information gathered from the interviews, the researchers realised that most of these artistes want attention from their audiences and would deliberately make up feuds just to get that attention. For that reason, they approach bloggers and convince them to fabricate a fake feud scenario and drive audience's attention towards knowing very well that people have come to trust their news and thus have become very familiar and conversant with their blogs.

How do artists and entertainment bloggers profit from staged beefing?

A Ghanaian Hip hop musician said in an interview with Celebrities Buzz TV, "I think anything that propagates the music culture is good…beef, like competition, is good, so beef to some extent is good." Two themes emerged from interviewing both bloggers and artists that can be considered as gains through the staged beef; monetary gains and clout.

Monetary Gains

Bloggers can be self-employed, employed by print media or other companies, or work as contractors (Liming, 2012). The amount of money they make from ads depends on the number of times people visit their website, called traffic. As traffic increases, advertisers pay bloggers more. Well-known bloggers may also make money through sponsorships, book or product sales, and speaking fees (Liming, 2012). Do both artistes and bloggers get monetary gains by engaging in and reporting staged beefs/feuds? The following responses from both artistes' and bloggers attempted to answer that question;

'…*And for me an entertainment blogger or content creator, when I report on these beefs I get traffic on my channel and web pages because the issues trend, and when they trend people want to read about it and watch it and since I have that platform*

where they can read and watch such trending beefs I make money. Beefooo beef equals money for me watease3.' (KS)

According to "KS" when he reports on trending beefs he makes money because the issues draws traffic to his sites and platforms and that equals money. Another blogger GHP added to the point;

'Like I said, I haven't reported on a staged beef yet, that I know of. But I've gained from reporting on beefs because it brings me traffic and traffic in our line of business equals money.'(GHP)

Another Blogger NY also added;

'…Yes, like I said about the Wode Maya Anwar saga. I gained considerable traffic on my channel after doing a YouTube video on the beef between those two, though they are not musicians (they are big YouTubers)' (NY)

Music artiste CT also buttressed the point.

> *'Beefs bring hype and entertainment is all about hype and following, and public sympathy is a sure way to get that hype so yeah. And the more the hype the more the relevance and visibility and monetary opportunities.' (CT)*

TP also added to the monetary gains by saying;

> *'I know they do. Like when there's that fight, they get visibility. And visibility reinforces relevance and relevance builds credibility. Credibility brings positive reputation and large corporations love to associate with celebrities with credibility, so yeah.'*

Clout and Visibility

Apart from the monetary gains that bloggers and artistes get from staged beefing they also get clout and visibility. Many online businesses seek and provide attention (Evans, 2012). This attention is so important to bloggers because big corporations needing that attention to their business pay for some of that attention in the form of advert placements and sometimes endorsement deals. Most artistes have allegedly been in a fake beef just to get the attention of the population and increase their shine. There are millions of people who will only want to listen to a song because they heard it was an insult or message addressed to another artist. Everyone will want to make a gist about it thereby, giving the artist involved in the beef an automatic promotion which they might not get that much attention without being involved in a beef.

Below are some excerpts from the interviews which reinforce this assertion:

> *'Absolutely, like why would anyone fight and actually plan to fight in public if they won't gain from it? And you know it can get dirty right…pulling guns, inciting public fury even between rivalry camps of fan bases? Yes they do, like it brings hype, and entertainment is all about hype and following. And public sympathy is a*

sure way to get that hype so yeah. And the more the hype the more relevant and visible you get.' (NL)

*'I know they do. Like when there's that fight, they get visibility. And visibility reinforces relevance and relevance builds credibility. Credibility brings positive reputation and large corporations love to associate with celebrities with credibility, so yeah.' (*AB)

Bloggers capitalize on the number of people connected to their blogospheres as that phenomenon increases the impetus for others to establish connections to their network. Many online businesses seek and provide attention. These online attentions provide products and features to obtain the attention of consumers and sell some of that attention (Evans, 2012). Many online businesses attract consumers to their sites by offering them products and services, other businesses access some of the attention they have harvested. They make most, and sometimes all, of their revenue from supplying attention (Evans, 2012). This attention is so important to bloggers and big corporations needing that attention to their business, and this symbiotic relationship results in advert placements and sometimes endorsement deals. As Evans (2012) puts it, these online attention seekers may compete with offline attention seekers for attention and also for providing that attention to merchants and others who want access to it. He goes on further to say that most online advertisers use channel-attribution technologies that enable them to substitute different types of online advertising, in some case automatically through computerized decision rules, for each other based on rules for maximizing rates of return on investment in advertising spending. Musician CGH responded thus;

'Yes, it is very real… and usually they are publicity stunts to promote their music and brand image. So anything for the clout de3…so two artists may come together to create some fight bi just like that to get the people talking and the internet buzzing then in the heat of the moment they drop whatever song or just ride on the clout for promotion and relevance. It happens, its' real.'

Applying the agenda setting theory to the findings of the study, it is clear how the media possess the ability to set the public agenda especially with regards to how it leads the audience to think about issues concerning these artistes. With such influence, the audiences tend to form their own opinion on those issues that are considered as worthy of inclusion on their mental agendas (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). People seek communication to satisfy their needs, which in turn stem from social and psychological states and conditions. According to Cohen (1963), the media only tell one what to think about and not what to think. The media, thus, is responsible for delivering information but not to set what the opinion of the audiences should be. Mass media is able to influence audience's thinking directly or indirectly contributing to the forming of the audiences' opinions (Wanta et al., 2004; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 1997). Scholars, from the above positions spread out the possibility of agenda setting to the cognitive aspects such as the structuring of the agenda by the mass media and how the audiences feel as a result of the agenda. These essentially can be done through concept of framing. When a certain issue is framed by the mass media, the audience immediately visualizes the issue as important, and that thought

influences the audiences response to it (Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This process as illustrated by Scheufele (2000), and Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) guided this current study in determining how staged feuds are real in the entertainment industry to drive in competition, visibility and monetary gains, through the use of the internet.

In this current study, the researcher first and foremost, examined the characters in the texts. In the case of this study, the primary characters were five (5) entertainment bloggers and five (5) music artistes. The researcher critically looked at how responses from the interview conducted on them answered implications of staged beefing or fake feuding in the entertainment industry to both entertainment bloggers and artistes and the various themes that came out.

It is evident that artistes engaged in staged feuds to promote their brand visibility and relevance. Attention span of fans is limited because every star is given 15 minutes of fame by divine design since many more artistes are springing up every now and again, so if the spotlight leaves an artist or if one needs adequate spotlight or more spotlight they have to be innovative about that. And internet sensationalism is the surest way to create that needed buzz around them for that long.

Secondly, the researchers in applying the agenda setting theory identified another theme monetary gain as one of the implications of staging beefs amongst artistes by both bloggers and artistes. An example of how the researchers identified the themes can be seen from the following responses from both bloggers and artistes respectively;

> *'...I've gained from reporting on beefs because it brings me traffic and traffic in our line of business equals money.' (*CGH)

> *'And for me an entertainment blogger or content creator, when I report on these beefs I get traffic on my channel and web pages because the issues trend, and when they trend people want to read about it and I make money. Beefooo beef equals money for me wateaseƐ.'(*KS)

> *'... it brings hype and entertainment is all about hype and following, and public sympathy is a sure way to get that hype so yeah. And the more the hype the more the relevance and visibility and economic opportunities.' (*CT)

> *'I know they do. Like when there's that fight, they get visibility. And visibility reinforces relevance and relevance builds credibility. Credibility brings positive reputation and large corporations love to associate with celebrities with credibility. Large corporations associating with an artiste equals large money, so yeah.' (*TP)

Conclusion

Upon analysing the data, the key findings that were discovered led to several conclusions. The first research question sought to identify what staged beefs were in the music industry. Drawing from the agenda setting and framing theory, it was established that the media can set a specific agenda which can impact the sentiments of the public. From their research,

McCombs and Shaw (1972) found out that mass media had some influence on the public who frequently consumed information from them towards forming certain supposed opinions. To this end some entertainers and bloggers engage in staged beefs where they create scenarios that seem like feuding between two parties and report on them, in other words, the media colours a particular event for their media audiences (Matsaganis & Payne, 2005). Therefore, the mass media can be considered as responsible in influencing and shaping the public opinion and agenda. Such influence of mass media on the public agenda or opinion intentionally or unintentionally (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). This research question was intended to identify what staged beefs in the music industry in Ghana are. From the data collected for the study, it was deduced that staged beefs are fake feuding scenarios created by consenting artists and bloggers too, and they are real events that happen.

The second research question sought to establish how staged beefs are created through blog posts. The findings of this research question revealed that from framing theory, framing is not focused, therefore, on user-friendliness, but on applicability, to the extent that the concepts connected in a message will also tend to connect with the audience's mind during the process of opinion-formation, which will subsequently influence attitudes and behaviours (Zhou & Moy, 2007; Scheufele, 1999). According to data collected from artistes that were interviewed for this research, entertainment bloggers and consenting artistes present information in such a way as to connect with the audience's mind during the process of opinion-formation, which will subsequently influence attitudes and behaviours.

The findings of the third research question, how do artistes and bloggers profit from staged beefs from blog posts also revealed the themes of visibility and monetary gains. In view of agenda setting theory it was concluded that artistes engage in staged feuds to promote their brand visibility which is relevance to attract large corporations for possible endorsement deals, and boost sales of their music. Also, well-known bloggers may also make money through sponsorships, book or product sales, and speaking fees. The amount of money they make from ads depends on the number of times people visit their website, called traffic. As traffic increases, advertisers pay bloggers more.

Five (5) entertainment bloggers and five (5) music artistes were the primary characters of the study. Secondly, the study concluded that staged feuds are real and both entertainment bloggers and musicians collaborate to engage in them for their benefits in terms of clout visibility and monetary gains.

References

Andersson, C., Freeman, D., James, I., Johnston, A., & Ljung, S. (2006). *Mobile media and applications, from concept to cash: successful service creation and launch*. John Wiley & Sons.

Ardèvol-Abreu, A. (2015). Framing theory in communication research. Origins, development and current situation in Spain. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, (70).

Berman, F. (2008). Got data? A guide to data preservation in the information age. *Communications of the ACM*, *51*(12), 50-56.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2016). Misconceptualising themes, thematic analysis, and other problems with sample-size tool for thematic analysis. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 19(6), 739 – 743.

Brennen, B. (2017). Making sense of lies, deceptive propaganda, and fake news. *Journal of Media Ethics*, 32(3), 179 – 181. Https://doi.org/10.1080/23736992.2017.133 1023

Brew, J. O. (2019). Career sustainability in the Ghanaian music industry: The case of Okyeame Kwame (M. PHIL thesis). University of Ghana, Legon.

Buckman-Owoo, J. (2020). Matilda Asare: Ghallywood failed GH movie industry. Graphic Showbiz Online. https://www.graphic.com.gh/showbiz/ghana-movies/matilda-asare-ghallywood-failedgh-movie-industry.html

Cohen, B. C. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 627.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th Ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Daymon, C., & Holloway, I. (2011). *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communications*. Routledge.

De Ritis, A., & Si, S. (2016). Media and entertainment industry: The world and China. *Global media and China*, *1*(4), 273-277.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Sage,

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Towards clarification of a fractured paradigm. *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory*, *390*, 397.

Evans, D. (2012). The internet of everything: How more relevant and valuable connections will charge the world. *Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group*, 1 – 9.

Ghansah, E. (2019). Ghanaian artistes that were one-hit wonders. Ghana music. https://www.ghanamusic.com/news/top-stories/2019/04/26ghanaian-artistes-that-were-one-hitwonders/

Hesmondhalgh, D., & Pratt, A. C. (2005). Cultural industries and cultural policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, *11*(1), 1-13.

Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Koursoh, P.K. (2021). Music awards and the phenomenon of beefing, an analysis of audiences posts on Shatta Wale and Stonebwoy at the 20th Vodafone Ghana Music Award. MPhil thesis. University of Education, Winneba. https://41.74.91.244:8080/handle/123456789/1305

Krugman, H. E. (1963). The impact of television advertising: Learning without involvement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *29*(3), 349-356.

Lindlof, T. R. (2002). Interpretive community: An approach to media and religion. *Journal of Media and Religion*, *1*(1), 61-74.

Lindlof, T. R. & Taylor, B. C. (2017). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Sage.

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. Transaction Publishers.

Littlejohn, S. W. & Foss, K. A. (Eds.). (2009). *Encyclopaedia of communication theory* (Vol. 1). Sage.

Liming, D. (2012). Bloggers and Webcomic Artists: Careers in Online Creativity. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, *56*(3), 16-21.

Matsaganis, M. D. & Payne, J. G. (2005). Agenda setting in a culture of fear: The lasting effects of September 11 on American politics and journalism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *49*(3), 379-392.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitiative research*. Sage.

Marwick, A. E., & Boyd, D. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media & Society*, *13*(1), 114-133.

McKee, A. (2014). The aesthetic system of entertainment. *Entertainment Industries*, 17-28

McKee, A. (2012). Pornography as entertainment. *Continuum,* 26(4), 541-552.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1993). The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas. *Journal of Communication*, 43(2), 58-67.

McCombs, M. E. (1997). New frontiers in agenda setting: Agendas of attributes and frames. *Mass Communication Review*, 24,4-24.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *36*(2), 176-187.

Morrison, M. D. (2017). The sound (s) of subjection: Construction American popular music and racial identity through blacksound. *A Journal of Feminist Theory*, 27(1), 13-24.

Moss, S. (2010). *The entertainment industry: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Newson, K. M., Collier, D. A. & Olsen, O. E. (2009). Using "biztainment" to gain competitive advantage. *Business Horizons*, 52(2), 167-176.

Owusu-Amoah, G. (2018). Don't fuel Ghallywood, Kumawood rivalry—Prince David. Graphic Showbiz Online. https://www.graphic.com.gh/showbiz/news/don-t-fuel-ghallywood-kumawoodrivalry-prince-david.html

Patton, Q. M. & Cochran, M. (2007). *A guide to using qualitative research methodology*. In Medecins San Frontiers.

Rosenberg, J. (2009). Online impression management: Personality traits and concern for secondary goals as predictors of self-presentation tactics on Facebook. Unpublished master's thesis. Kent State University.

Sayre, S., & King, C. (2010). *Entertainment and society: Influences, impacts, and innovations*. Routledge.

Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication*, *49*(1), 103-122.

Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass Communication & Society*, *3*(2-3), 297-316.

Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, *57*(1), 9-20.

Singh, J. P. (2008). Paulo Freire: Possibilities for dialogic communication in a market-driven information age. *Information, Communication & Society*, *11*(5), 699-726.

Stebbins, R. A. (2007). The sociology of entertainment. *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook; SAGE Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA*, *2*, 178-185.

Tongco, M. D. C. (2007). Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research & Applications*, 5, 147 -158.

Tucker, D. A., Yeow, P., & Viki, G. T. (2013). Communicating during organizational change using social accounts: The importance of ideological accounts. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *27*(2), 184-209.

Valkenburg, P. M., Semetko, H. A., & De Vreese, C. H. (1999). The effects of news frames on readers' thoughts and recall. *Communication research*, *26*(5), 550-569.

Van Gorp, B. (2007). The constructionist approach to framing: Bringing culture back in. *Journal of communication*, *57*(1), 60-78.

Wanta, W., Golan, G., & Lee, C. (2004). Agenda setting and international news: Media influence on public perceptions of foreign nations. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *81*(2), 364-377.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage.

Zhou, Y. & Moy, P. (2007). Parsing framing processes: The interplay between online public opinion and media coverage. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 79 – 98.