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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This is the maiden edition of ATABALA. ATABALA is the name of a Tilapia fish commonly found in the waters of the Niger Delta. The journal is published by the **Department of Film & Multimedia, University of Port Harcourt** for the **Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF)** as a scholarly component of the annual film festival.

The objective of this journal is to provide opportunity for a meeting between town and gown, industry and academia in the Niger Delta and beyond.

Manuscript, editorial communications, books, books for review, subscriptions, exchange, and other correspondences should be addressed to: Professor Friday Nwafor, Department of Film & Multimedia, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Port Harcourt

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Research essays must have double spacing, consistency in documentation style and maximum of 15 A-4 pages.





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FILMMAKING IN A STRUGGLING ECONOMY: EXPLORING THE SHIFT PARADIGM FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

By

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Introduction

As long as humanity exists, stories must be told about human beings and their activities. This is the most engaging enterprise of man on earth: storytelling. Over time therefore, humanity has saddled herself with shaping and reshaping of stories about man and his environment. In Nigeria, as elsewhere, the art of storytelling has not only engaged griots of old but also digital experts like the new Nollywood stakeholders. It is therefore right that in the context of this year's Rivers International Film Festival (2024), we are tasked to discuss an usual theme with implicit undertones, that is, "shift." This is with the view that we explore how film has kept shifting on many parlances across different seasons: from celluloid to videos and from video films to the era of filmless films.

Similarly, the industry has shifted from heavy monochrome cameras to simpler cameras and from 35mm to the new DSLR cameras. Like the shifts shrouding the industry and equipment, so also is the shift that has overtime characterized distribution and reception from the colonial cinemas of Africa to postcolonial art cinemas of the continent which in the 1990s metamorphosed into Nollywood and has continued to shift from the old to the New Nollywood. Likewise, the distribution trajectories have gone from the Euro-American controlled companies to home distribution by Electronics merchants who used to sell dubbed versions of international movies to home grown marketers and now streaming platforms and indigenous cinema houses have taken over. The





narratives too have shifted the gaze of African viewers from seeing valorized stereotypes of themselves to now seeing patriotic versions of related homegrown storylines with intrinsic connotative and denotative meanings. So, with all these shifts in film, one can say that there is no dull moment with good arts and as the saying goes: the show must go on. It also means that the shift in the quality and standard of services as advancement in the menu is something to be reworked often and on to move on.

Stamping ‘shift’ as the thematic thrust of this year’s festival therefore is a significant choice since RIFF is as interactively celebratory of cinematic outputs as it is an intellectualistic encounter. It has become an Areopagus of cinephiles and has successively joined forces with other historic film festivals named after iconic cities. Here, Port Harcourt is primed to take its rightful place as a cultural capital because of RIFF as the invocation of the shift paradigm foregrounds the need to evolve a new scintillating film culture in the city and in the industry. Thus, we are challenged by this gathering to rethink the implication of the key concept, which is an action word, or say, a verb that betrays functionality of stakeholders as its definitive purpose. In other words, ‘shift’ may be a simple vocabulary in English language but is evocative of the need to take a turn for betterment.

Considering it a privilege to give this keynote paper, I have tried to narrow my talk to issues that relate to the Nollywood film industry in the main even as I recognize the fact that this year’s RIFF has multiple entries from participants both within and outside the country. The idea is to deal with some theoretical and creative underpinnings of the cinema of Nigeria as to engage its proximate audiences with whom its stories resonate easily and by extension link the thoughts to films of the outside others. Here, I argue that the popular Nollywood film industry as an iconic mirror mounted everywhere in the nation but nowhere in particular has become a heterotopia of a space and at the same



time a vernacular text laden with theorizations of the identity and people of Nigeria. These, we shall unpack as we discuss the need to engage in shifting Nollywood cinematic lens for survival in the geopolitical entity called Nigeria – a nation with amazing promises but treacherously being held hostage by the fangs of a torturous economy that causes the citizenry to struggle in pains and pangs of a dashed hope. Let us begin by foregrounding the meaning and implication of the word ‘heterotopia’ – what is it?

Heterotopia

Unpacking the Concept Heterotopia is a concept that is widely used in pathology and ecology. But Michel Foucault, a French philosopher (1926 – 1984), applied it to arts as he reflected on spaces in society. He was taught by scholars like Louis Althusser – the French Marxist scholar noted for his robust teachings on ideology. Delivering a lecture in 1967 to a group of architects, Foucault argued that different kinds of spaces abound in every society but while some are normal, others are ignored because they are abnormal. The abnormal space is what he refers to as a heterotopia. Now you must be wondering how a nation’s film industry could be seen as an abnormal space. First, let it be made known that the word ‘space’ is the same as site here – whether seen in the context of where people live and socialize as in the normal society or in the context of cinematic mise-en-scenes which Nollywood consistently presents and represents. To understand this clarification, Michel Foucault distinguishes spaces in societies between utopia and heterotopia by arguing as follows:

Those spaces which are linked with all others and yet at variance somehow with all the other emplacements, are of two great types. First, there are the utopias. Utopias are emplacements having no real place...There are also, and probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places, actual places, places that are designed into the



very institution of society...because they are utterly different from all the emplacements that they reflect or refer to, I shall call these places “heterotopias” as opposed to utopias (Foucault, 1998, pp. 176 – 178).

Films present viewers with notions of these different worlds or spaces by means of cinematic misen-scenes: utopia, (dystopia) and heterotopia. While utopia refers to an unrealistic human space, an eldorado of a sort where everything is perfect and dystopia is the opposite of utopia where life is characterized by precarious circumstances, heterotopia is seen as a placeless space that is connected to other spaces by reflection as if it is done by means of a mirror. Limiting my exploration to the odds of the Nigerian society I apply the concept of heterotopia therefore as a framework for underscoring the role of Nollywood in the Nigerian society since as an industry it sheds light on the dark spots of apparent normalcy through her various mirror-like reflections. I decided not to focus on either the utopian space or the dystopic space in this exercise but on the heterotopia because to be visible, it must be connected to other spaces in reflection through a mirror wherein depictions of life are being represented or may be said to be controvertibly contested.

The mise-en-scenes of Nollywood films therefore are sites (or spaces, if you like) that bring together the compression of time and space in exploration of what it means to be in the world. Although differential from real human world situations (geographic space), the plastic space of audiovisual representations operates in reaction and relation to happenstances in the larger space of the society depicted as utopia or dystopia. This is how films and artistes respond to spaces as sites of meaning making by revealing human circumstances, identities and values. As a site, heterotopia can be understood as that kind of space that showcases other spaces outside of itself. In this light, a film screen is a typical example of a space different from what it represents – the outside world. All that are captured in mise-en-scenes point to



film therefore as an artform that is spatiotemporally constructed in reflection of other spaces outside of it. For this reason, heterotopia as foregrounded by Foucault is enabled only by the role it performs as a mirror in reaction to the world of normalcy outside of it – that is, the real world of man’s everydayness which is what is dramatized in movies. According to him:

Between utopias and these utterly different emplacements, these heterotopias, there must be a kind of mixed, intermediate experience, that would be the mirror...a placeless place. In the mirror I see myself where I am not; in an unusual space that opens virtually behind the surface; I am over there where I am not, a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that enables me to look at myself there where I am absent – a mirror utopia. But it is also a heterotopia in that the mirror really exists, in that it is a sort of return effect on the place that I occupy. Due to the mirror, I discover myself absent at the place where I am, since I see myself over there.....The mirror functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes this space I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass both utterly real, connected with the entire space surrounding it, and utterly unreal – since to be perceived, it is obliged to go by way of that virtual point which is over there (1998, pp. 178-179).

Being real and unreal as explicated in the above quotation refers to something having an occurrence in a real-life situation and being captured in plastic representation. This is what every film does. It is the mainstay of movie narratives which helps us look at ourselves in the mirror by offering us diverse perspectives on ourselves. What this illustrates is that the Nigerian film industry like its counterparts elsewhere must pass the mirror-effect test to be considered a Foucauldian space by offering viewers spectacular cinematic timelines in montage and mise-en-scene constructions as sites of entertainment



capable of triggering reflections about human existence and specific conditions. In other words, they must be engaging and creatively fashioned to speak for man as a being-in-the-world.

This year's Rivers International Film Festival by asking participants to engage with the key concept of "shift" implores all and sundry to take aim on reflexivity of the gaze on diverse spaces of life through pleasure giving cutting-edge artistry and spectacular aesthetics. This is the same as asking us to discover the Foucauldian spaces and tease them out through the mirror that is Nollywood in our context and in what we do as cinephiles because filmmakers are communicators of a brand, and their artistry is a site for theorizations. In the light of this, it should never be taken for granted that every national cinema is a body of theories in/on the society that produces it. This is a verdict that can better be appreciated with a full grasp of the vernacular theory administered on a film culture like Nollywood.

Movies and the Vernacular Theory

The vernacular theory is one that does not begin and end in the classroom but ties itself to the practices and performances of people outside of elite institutions. Giving a background to it, Thomas McLaughlin, whose *Street Smarts and Critical Theory: Listening to the Vernacular*, forms the basis of its domestication in this paper, highlights that it was first used by Houston Baker to "describe the strategies for understanding the African American experience that the blues provided" (1996, p. 5) in the United States in the age of slavery. In his take on this, McLaughlin references the term 'vernacular' as usefully applicable to the extent that its Latin etymology is understood to refer to the "language of slaves and particularly to the localness of those slaves" (1996, p. 5). Thus, in explicating this theory, he argues that it is used to explain "the practices of those who lack cultural power and who speak a critical language grounded in local concerns, not the language spoken by academic knowledge-



elites” (1996, p. 5/6). To the extent that this definition guides its application therefore, it must be said that what McLaughlin means by the phrase ‘lacking cultural power’ has nothing to do with the cultural industry. Rather, by it, he refers to the low status of those who by their arts do produce the ‘vernacular theory’ but cannot take them to the classrooms.

Speaking a critical language does not need to be literal but refers to creative works that while giving pleasure characterize a people or a need. It is for this that scholars are beginning to note that artistes are becoming significant in producing a body of theories by highlighting that such a “theory exists outside the academy, that it is widespread and being practiced by ‘ordinary’ people and that popular cultural texts can do interesting intellectual work on their own terms” (Brainsbridge, 2013, p. 219). Based on this, good filmmakers are cultural theorists in the vernacular sense since their productions are articulations about the universe or the space they inhabit. Thus, on the general question about the politics of theory, Hall is of the view that the starting point of a theory is to “assume that culture will always work through its textualities – and at the same time that textuality is not enough” (Hall, 1996, p. 271). What this means is that every text carries with it some critical elements that should be brought into focus in moments of analysis in order to understand the culture of the society that produces it, such as: the social context of its production, the visual and thematic concerns of its narrative, the inter-textual relationships it holds with other texts, while reviewing the import of the motifs used therein to communicate messages.

Since films are this powerful by reflecting on the society and serving as sites of in terms of what Burgess Jean calls “vernacular creativity”, referring to the ability to “describe and illuminate creative practices that emerge from highly particular and non-elite social contexts and communicative conventions” (2006, p. 205), they ought not be taken for granted. Therefore,



since Nollywood is an industry that thrives on pop culture like many others, our concern as cinephiles and stakeholders in it in a festival like this is charged with the key concept of ‘shift’ and warrants us ask some critical questions as we engage with one another, such as: How good are we at theorizing our society through artforms like the movies? To what extent are we shedding light on the heterotopias of the Nigerian society and beyond? How strong are the voices we artistically raise in constructing a befitting vernacular theory with our commitment to arts? The answer to all this is summed up in the one action-laden vocabulary that is a verb and theme of this year’s RIFF: Shift!

Concluding Remarks Shifting the Cinematographic Lens for Survival in a Struggling Economy

The high point of our discourse is in shedding light on the multiple heterotopias of our nation with the aid of a reflective mirror: the cinematic apparatus which in our context is Nollywood. It therefore needs to be said that while movies ought to be robustly outstanding as to ensure return on investments, they are at the same time, formidable platforms and spaces to serve the society in identity construction. Hence as filmmakers, critics and policy makers, the shift that ought to cause the change we are gearing for must begin now. It is to be done with our gaze and depictions of hidden heterotopias as well as the creative manipulation of our cinematographic apparatuses. It is to begin with our thoughts at rejecting flat stories and imprinting sustainable ideologies in our masterpieces. It is to be seen in our readiness to engage with artistic aesthetics of our movies as a system with rules. Doing all those will save stakeholders and the film industry at large from the cloudy weather over of the struggling economy. As RIFF beckons on all stakeholders to step up the gear by making an acceptable shift, I wish to state that doing so entails turning both the lens and the gaze of all stakeholders towards the hidden spaces of our society as well as amplifying the voices that



we raise in vernacular theorizations through our arts.

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A REVIEW OF THE INAUGURAL EDITION OF THE 2023 RIVERS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (RIFF)

By

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Introduction

The beautiful city of Port Harcourt, known for its rich cultural heritage and lifestyle, became the proud host of the first edition of the Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) from Thursday, 26 to Sunday, 29 October 2023 at Alliance Francaise, Port Harcourt, Old GRA premises. The festival was a groundbreaking celebration of film, creativity, and the self-motivated storytelling that defines the African continent by bringing together filmmakers, actors, industry mavens, and film admirers. In a landmark moment for the Nigerian film industry, the festival Director, Kate Chidinma Ezeigbo, expressed her vision with great clarity by asserting that *The Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) is a humanity-based annual film festival organised by an indigenous company; Desgol Entertainment Worldwide*. According to her it was "conceived in 2022 and birthed in October 2023 (Personal Interview 30/10/2023).

RIFF embodies an assurance to exploring the shared human experience, creating a stage for filmmakers from varied backgrounds to showcase their stories, and boosting dialogue that addresses social, cultural, and political issues present in our world today through film. The theme for the debut edition was "Educating and Empowering the Next Generation of Filmmakers". She encouraged participants to explore the opportunities the festival has provided to educate and improve on their



craft that will resonate and compete with audiences both locally and globally.

Answering questions from journalists during the opening ceremony on what inspired the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to start RIFF, and what she planned to achieve at the inaugural edition, the CEO explained:

I was inspired by the creatives in Rivers State, their tenacity, passion and hard work they have displayed over the years against all odds. I thought it was time to birth a lifetime platform for the industry that will put them on the world map. Apart from that, personally, I am motivated to establish this festival due to my strong passion for storytelling and the need for a platform that spotlights local content and diverse narratives. My vision is to create a space where filmmakers from the region can connect, inspire each other, and engage with industry stakeholders. And at this inaugural event, I desire to create a vibrant opportunity for filmmakers to exhibit their work, gain recognition, and receive feedback. Again, I hope the festival will drive economic growth by attracting local and international audiences, boosting tourism, hospitality and promoting cultural exchange through films that reflect our unique content (Personal Interview with Kate Chidinma Ezeigbo, 26 October 2023).

The passion she displayed drove the success story of the Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) 2023; it was four days of entertainment, learning and networking. During the festival, so much effort was devoted by the organisers to offer educational workshops to equip participants of the event, especially the emerging filmmakers with industry knowledge, including legal aspects of filmmaking. And in the end, the Rivers International Film Festival celebrated film enthusiasts,



fostered community, and inspired creativity so as to have a continual growth of Nollywood industry in the region.

The festival began with an outstanding red carpet captioned "Riverine" to display the cultures of Rivers State. It was well attended by prominent personalities from the Nigerian film industry, including celebrated actors, directors and producers, captains of industries and civil society organisations in the state and outside. The atmosphere was enthralling, as guests from all walks of life socialised and discussed their passion for motion pictures. This was followed by a cocktail party. The opening night featured the premiere of Rivers State-produced films titled *The Changer* (2015), produced and directed by Ejim Fortune Kezi. *The Changer* tells an intriguing story of a less-privileged adolescent rural girl with big dreams. Though she passes through difficulties, at the end she takes authorship of her life and rewrites her history. Several cultural performances from various theatre groups in Rivers State entertained the audience.



Fig. 1: The Opening Ceremony of RIFF 2023.

Hon. Cromwell Chuku, the Director of Finance, Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) outlines several significant milestones that the maiden edition achieved:

- i. A diverse selection of high-quality films from both global perspectives and local talent.
- ii. Educational opportunities were provided through various discussions



on film production and the industry in general. The hands-on training on different crafts was the icing on the cake of the event.

- iii. The event fostered collaborations among attendees for potential partnerships in the film sector.
- iv. Films and film producers received awards, an act which nurtures creativity and motivation for future projects.
- v. Indigenous filmmakers and actors were given a platform to present their works to a larger audience. Moreover, international filmmakers were invited, enhancing the festival's diversity and enriching the audience's experience.

Chuku concluded that these achievements highlight the festival's attempt to improve the film industry in Rivers State and Nigeria, supporting creativity, investment, and cultural pride (Personal Interview with Cromwell Chuku on 22/10/2024).

In his thoughts, Barrister Patrick A. Otikor, a legal practitioner, film entrepreneur and RIFF Administrator, recounts key benefits of the first edition of the festival thus:

The first edition offered opportunities for networking among filmmakers and industry experts. The workshops also addressed legal matters and intellectual property rights, platforms for rising filmmakers to showcase their talent and promote cultural exchange (Personal Interview with Patrick Otikor on 10/10/ 2024).

A stakeholder and practitioner Michael Amakara recounted how the film festival has the potential for momentous economic impact, including tourism and job creation if well packaged in the future. It is also meant to promote local content and raise awareness of legal aspects in filmmaking. In addition, mentorship programmes are connected with



experienced filmmakers (Personal Interview with Michael Amakara, 29 October 2023).

Interestingly, rewarding young filmmakers with awards and special recognition during the event motivates filmmakers to excel. Engaging the participants through panel discussions, questions and answers (Q&R) enhances their appreciation for the film industry, as the festival serves as an essential event for professional development and community building effort in the industry.

During the four day events, RIFF screened an inspiring selection of films from across the globe, emphasizing Nollywood while also highlighting international projects. Both full-length films and short films were showcased, providing a platform for upcoming talents to share their stories. The festival received a total of five hundred and sixty-three (563) films submitted from eighty-two (82) countries, and genres ranging from documentaries and animations to thought-provoking dramas, feature films and thrilling comedies. There were over two thousand five hundred (2,500) participants who screened a total of eight (8) films in the four-day event at Kada Cinema Centre located at the Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Rumuola Road.

Each day, over seventy-five (75) youths were trained in different skills and all were given certificates of participation. This was carried out under “RIFF2SCREEN INITIATIVE”, which includes smartphone videography, saponification and paint making. The participants were categorized under five separate groups for a hands-on training in filmmaking, editing and cinematography, and group C emerged winners. They were rewarded with gift items worth over one hundred thousand naira (100,000) by the sponsors. There were panel sessions on relevant industry areas, as guests were drawn from heads of industry guilds and



associations in the state. Topics of discussion included scriptwriting, film financing, the role of new media in filmmaking, the role of a cinematographer in film production, marketing and distribution strategies; all aimed at empowering local filmmakers and nurturing the next generation of storytellers, which is in league with the festival’s theme. This was coordinated by a veteran media personality, Mr. Nduka Dumebi. A special session was also created tagged “The Business of Filmmaking”, handled by a veteran actor and award-winning costumier, Amb. Millicent Jack. She shared insights and experiences from the industry perspective.

Children were also targeted at the maiden edition; they were introduced to filmmaking and allowed to screen animated movies that are educative and inspiring. The event saw over one hundred (100) secondary school students in attendance from six schools in Port Harcourt.



Fig. 2: A Cross Session of Participants and Students During the RIFF2ScreenWorkshop.

The maiden edition of The Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) came to an end with a gala and award ceremonies on Sunday, 28 October 2023. A total of fourteen (14) active indigenous Nollywood practitioners and veterans, who have mentored and supported the growth of Nollywood in the state, were recognized with awards of excellence in the following categories: “Lifetime Achievement Awards” and “Nollywood Veteran



of the Year Awards”. The Most Entertainment-friendly Commissioner of Police Award was given to Emeka Polycarp Nwonyi, the Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Police Command. The entire awards won include four (4) international films and four (4) locally produced films in different categories.



Fig. 3: Award-giving Ceremony on the Closing Day in the Year 2023

Closing the film festival was an impressive awards ceremony that acknowledged notable films and distinguished filmmakers, with winners getting accolades for their contributions to the movie industry. Without doubt, the awards added exciting moments to the festival, celebrating diverse talent and inspiring participants. The Nollywood film industry has come forth as a formidable element of Nigeria’s popular culture and acquired the unusual characteristic ability to meet the entertainment and educational inevitability of the cross spectrum of the Nigerian society. The Nigerian movie industry that started as an experiment few years ago has equally become a huge export of Nigeria's popular culture. Therefore, it has emerged as a powerful and popular medium of communication in and across Africa.



Fig. 4: The Panel Session, RIFF Ambassador Award and Dignitaries during the Workshop

As the curtain was brought down on the inaugural RIFF, attendees left Port Harcourt, Rivers state with new perspectives, arousal, and a reinforced sense of community. The festival not only celebrated the art of film production but also spotlighted the potential of Port Harcourt as a major cultural hub in Nigeria. The Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) team, through the festival director, has confirmed plans to make the festival an annual event, raising a growing community of moviemakers and lovers of cinematic culture.

Within those four days of training, film screening, exhibitions, workshops, panel discussions, etc., the organisers were convinced that film festivals are powerful events and medium that can create positive change in the society by empowering young creatives that will also ignite a new generation of creative leaders and filmmakers around them. This is because the event offered audience and attendees a space to meet and exchange ideas around the universal topics and narratives that bring us together. RIFF is targeted at protecting our culture, heritage and exposing our lifestyle to the world through the entertainment industry. We will be excited to see it evolve and impacting our region in the years to come.



Yes, mistakes were made, lessons were learned, and significant progress was achieved during the inaugural edition of the Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF).

Significantly, this event marked a historic milestone as the first indigenous film festival in Rivers State, celebrating the affluent tapestry of local culture and nurturing integration among the gathering. Through this platform, filmmakers were able to showcase their talents, and promote cultural understanding notwithstanding some challenges along the way. It emphasised the value of indigenous tales and set the stage for future events aimed at empowering local artists.



Fig. 5: Screening at Kada Cinema, CP Emeka Nwonyi at Closing Ceremony and Participants Table



Fig. 6: RIFF Award Plates



Conclusion

The inaugural Rivers International Film Festival was a landmark festival with the main purpose to breed and grow young filmmakers in Nigeria and beyond. Through its focus on education, skill development, and cultural dialogue for this edition, different themes and attention will be channeled to other aspects of the film industry going forward. As it unfolds every year, the Rivers International Film Festival promises to be a foundation of artistic celebration, promoting understanding and links through the universal language of film in this part of the world that will continue to reflect humanity-based film festival, which elevates the global profile of indigenous cinema and ensures an abiding legacy for upcoming generations.

Therefore, RIFF plays crucial roles in youth development by nurturing creativity, building essential skills, fostering cultural awareness, and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth as well as help in increasing the state's internally generated revenue (IGR) and gross domestic product (GDP) of the nation.





Fig. 8: The Rivers International Film Festival Maiden Edition in Pictures





**NOLLYWOOD EXEMPLIFICATION OF OPPRESSIVE
GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF COLLINS
CHIDEBE'S
*THE TYRANT***

By

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Abstract

Since the emergence of the Nigerian Film Industry over forty years ago, many Nigerian filmmakers have been at the vanguard of using the channel of film in documenting major historical antecedents and making critical statements at various segments of the country. Film, being a societal reflective form of arts which dwells on the methodology of entertainment in mirroring major happenings around the environment over a space of time provides a commanding influence on the transformation of society. Predicated on the surge of disillusionments of many Nigerians over self-driven priorities of leadership class over the masses, wanton violations of human rights, oppressive governance and general leadership failure in the country, this study sought to kindle good governance in Nigeria and prompt national stability, cohesion and development by examining the historical representation of oppressive leadership in Nollywood. The study was guided by the genre theory to examine its subject matter. A content analysis of a purposively sampled military dictatorship film titled *The Tyrant* by Collins Chidebe (2004) was undertaken. The study discovered that due to the riveting narrative methods utilized, Nollywood plays vital role in nation building through the encapsulation and projection of major historical antecedents in Nigeria and generating critical discourses in them. The study therefore recommended amongst other things that the Nigerian state should be structured towards improving the core values of humanity and promoting people oriented style of governance. It is also recommended that deliberate efforts should be made by government and other critical stakeholders in Nigeria to synergize with the Nigerian filmmakers and encourage him in preserving



historical legacies in Nigeria.

Keywords: Nollywood, historical, exemplification, oppressive, governance

Introduction

The place of history in stimulating growth, change and stability in a nation cannot be overemphasized. History is a field of study which creates a nexus between the past and present and provides the enabling keys in shaping a better future for the society. Marc Bloch's (cited in Jaja Jones Michael, 2023, p.1) belief that history is "the science of change" substantiates Jaja J.M's (2023, p2) position that history is not just an assemblage of dates and happenings. As he puts it, "It is a living, breathing entity that has the ability to illuminate the complexities of human existence... History enables us to understand the present by unveiling the intricacies of the past, guiding us towards a more informed and enlightened future". Studies have shown that there are various channels for the preservation and transmission of history. For example, in traditional Africa, the oral tradition where historical incidents are transmitted verbally and preserved through the same way from one generation to another plays vital role to historical preservation. This comparatively explains why the documentation of Greek classical tragedies was solely derived from mythological sources. Oscar Brockett (1991, p.18) affirms that: "All extant Greek tragedies are based on myths". The development of the human society from the primitive to the contemporary periods has subsequently led to the discovery of other means of historical preservation. Books, drama and theatre, internet, social media, film and other screen arts amongst others. This study focused on how Nollywood recreates major historical antecedents in Nigeria, influences decisions and stimulates social change. This study



aimed at improving quality of governance in Nigeria by analyzing effects of oppressive and anti-people regimes in Nigerian history. The study concentrated on Collins Chidebe's military dictatorship film titled: *The Tyrant* (2004) to highlight the historical in combination with the sociological contexts under which major military coups which have truncated governance in several regimes in Nigeria took place. In doing this, the researcher attempted to investigate the motifs behind the truncation and severances of regimes of governance in Nigeria.

The study attempted to forestall bad and animus government in Nigeria by drawing the attention of leadership class and the masses to the historical circumstances wherein revolutions against previous governments occur in Nigeria. It is expected that the knowledge drawn through this source would translate to an improved quality of governance in the country.

Oppressive Leadership in Collins Chidebe's *The Tyrant*

The Tyrant, as suggested by the title, is Collins Chidebe's cinematic creation of a historical exposition to oppressive governance in Nigeria. Situated around the era of military rule in the country's history, the *Tyrant* tells a story of the oppressive reign of General Idris Amino as the military Head of State of the country. General Idris, is a wicked, self-centered, murderous and obnoxious Head of State whose reign revolve around the circle of indiscriminate killings, gross disregard for human rights, self-centeredness, oppressive governance, bitter economic policies, terror, tension, sufferings and deaths amongst others. He is the Head of State of the Federal Republic that is cladded by upheavals. General Idris at all times resorts to indiscriminate killings of people for irrational reasons, especially those who make petty and pardonable mistakes in the line of duty, those who complained about his ill style of governance or suggests



contrary opinions to his. In the opening scene which ushers in General Idris in a convoy, the way in which the Head of State kills one of one of his drivers is so pathetic.



Plate 1: The killing of a driver by General Idris for running out of fuel while in his convoy.

One of the cars in the convoy had stopped abruptly because it is faulty. The driver, upon inquest by General Idris confirms that it ran out of fuel and he reported appropriately to his supervising officer but no action was taken. While one thinks that a warning or lighter punishment would have been an appropriate punishment, it is surprising the display of inhumanity by General Idris, who picks up a pistol from one of the soldiers in his convoy and shoots both the driver and his supervising officer to death. Figure 1 below provides a visual representation of the killing of the driver.

The killing in the above frame is one of many similar killings represented in the film. It is followed by another touching homicidal scene that shows how General Idris murders one of his aides. In this swimming pool scene, while General Idris is sitting in a couch, visually enjoying himself with the presence of some skimpily dressed prostitutes who are



swimming half naked for him, another of his aides comes in to deliver his ringing telephone to him. In the course of interrogation with the aide after the call has been concluded, General Idris discovers a torn portion of his uniform, incensed by this sight, General Idris asks one of the prostitutes around him, a civilian, to give him his pistol from where he kept it on the table in front of him. Despite pleas for pardon from this aid, General Idris takes his life by shooting him to death in the presence of all in such a way that the infamous act absurdly serve as a form of entertainment for the prostitutes who dance in wild celebration. At the instance when General Idris asks them; “Did you enjoy what you just saw they all shout in affirmation; this singular act demonstrated by General Idris reveals the level of cruelty and inhumanity suffered by the common hoi-polio and the gross disregard for the dignity and sanctity of the human life in tyrannical regimes in Nigerian history.

It is worthy of note that General Idris Aminu’s display of oppression and inhumanity in the film is not only limited to the common citizens of the country but also targeted at the country’s aristocratic class. Following his ascendance to power as the Commander in Chief, General Idris decides to retire over forty officers who are senior to him each in the Army, Air force and Navy to enable hi. Even though this is legalized within the military, General Idris’ motive is to let him operate uninterruptedly and possibly forestall tendencies of military take over from his regime. He proposes to General Ogazu, one of his strongest allies who helped him with the coup that had brought him to power to voluntarily retire from the army. General Idris tells him that he is only giving him prior information due to their closeness and that others would be caught unawares. He however tells him to name any merchandize of his choice that he would import solely in the country for eighteen months.



When it became obvious that General Ogazu is not willing to do General Idris' bidding, the later considers him a potential threat and masterminds his brutal assassination by a junior Officer on his way to a scheduled meeting by Idris. In this sequence, a military driver, supposedly acting on the orders of General Idris Aminu is conveying General Ogazu to the meeting venue. He suddenly stops the car in the middle of a lonely highway in pretense that the car had broken down. As he opens the burnet to feign some corrective activities, he picks up a pistol from his pocket and meanders his way towards unsuspecting General Ogazu and suddenly assassinates him with the pistol while he escapes into the bush.



Plate2. A shot revealing how a Junior Officer, acting on the orders of General Idris assassinates General Ogazu On his way to the Federal Executive Council's meeting convened by the Commander in Chief.

The next picture in the above sequence shows reversed shot on the assassination of General Ogazu by the driver who is shown in Figure 2 above. This death is announced by General Idris to other officers in the military during the scheduled meeting while pretentiously extoling the late Army General and referring to his death as a national tragedy. No one would even suspects that he had a hand in whole incident.

Furthermore, the arbitrariness of General Idris to make his son, Aaron, a minor, a Brigadier General in the army defiles all logical conclusions. General Idris, upon announcing the immediate retirement of forty-three most senior officers in each of the military forces; Army, Navy



and Air force suddenly announces his own son, one who by physical assessment, should be in his primary education a Brigadier General in the Army. General Idris further announces the suspension of the nation's constitution which emboldens him to perpetuate anarchism without legal intervention. Provoked by the flagrant debasement of the human life by General Idris Aminu through intolerable government policies, thoughtless brutalization, indiscriminate killings, self-centeredness, gross disregard for law and order coupled with all forms of cold-hearted behaviours exhibited against humanity in the country, concerns to save the country from ruins begin to become apparent. Consequently, the civilians begin to agitate for good governance. This New wave movement is championed by Barrister Nelson, an internationally admired human right activist. Barrister Nelson uses different strategies to pursue his course. Some of these strategies include: Diplomatic talks, propaganda, protests and the use of media.

To clamp down on the ravaging agitations which are already gaining momentum both nationally and internationally, General Amino Idris, through a national broadcast proscribes the two newspapers which serve as outlet for the people's voice to be heard. These people's oriented News Paper houses include *Story Sport Weekly* and *Daily Mood*". As far as General Idris is concerned the two media houses must cease to operate, no more no less. "This government will not tolerate corruption". General Idris orders.



Plate 3 revealing a national broadcast by the Head of State, General Aminu Idris in which he arbitrarily announces the closure of three important ministries (Natural Resources, Sports and Science and Technology).

Suffice to state that the proscription of these media channels are targeted at disarming Barrister Nelson and other like minds from further criticizing his government. Barrister Nelson is the most vocal, courageous and fearless critic of General Idris' government. He has never sold his conscious to any of the numerous humongous offers of General Idris. Looking at the trajectory of General Idris in killing people at the slightest provocation, one wonders why he tolerates Barrister Nelson and resorts to lobbying him with attractive offers while he would just have him killed with ease. General Idris has revealed why he spares his life. In a dramatic flashback, it is revealed how Nelson had to take a stab for Idris while in the university as undergraduates and close friends. Thought of this has always constrained General Idris from killing Barrister Nelson whenever he is infuriated by his activism.

Initially, Barrister Nelson on recognizing his personal relationship with General Idris tries to use the most diplomatic means to make the



Head of State change. As he tells him:

That publication was put up by me you just have to change... change your behaviour. You have become too confrontational about national issues... if you behave like this, you would just crash. The other day, you banned the importation of rice and antibiotics. As if that was not enough, you went ahead to hike the price of fuel nationwide

Following Barrister Nelson's uncompromising activism, General Idris tries to buy him over to his side with humongous offers. At the scene where the Head of State, Aminu Idris offers Nelson to become the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice with the view of bribing him from criticizing his government, Nelson has this to say "I cannot become a Minister of Justice in a country where there is no justice".

Nelson represents the conscience of the nation in the film. He is the voice of the masses whose actions aim at checking the excesses of the leadership class. As a Human Right Activist, Barrister Nelson understands the powers of his instruments in stimulating major changes in the polity of a nation, so he uses them very well to the discomfort of General Amino Idris who tries to buy him over at all costs.

Resulting from the refusal of Barrister Nelson to accept the offer insistent Idris resorts to offering him juicy ambassadorial position in any European country of his choice, still, Nelson refuses. He accuses General Idris of being obstinate in sending him out of the country so he could remain unchecked while roasting innocent citizens. He tells the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces to organize an election in order to birth a democratically elected president, a president who must not necessarily be another "Amino in mufti" The refusal of Nelson to the numerous offers of Idris suddenly leads to the gruesome assassination



of Sunny, Nelson's son who just visited home from the United States..

This causes chaos in Nelson's house as his wife, Moremi who had earlier asked her husband, Barrister Nelson to shun the struggle had threatened to pack her belongings and leave his house if he continues with the fight at a time when she could no longer withstand the pressures and threats to life from General Idris Aminu

General Amino Idris further invades Barrister Nelson's house where Nelson is strategizing with a Journalist on the intensification of action to win the battle. In this sequence, General Idris orders his men to capture them. As they move to the barracks, uncontrollably furious General Idris points his gun at the journalist. In a very touching and thought provoking verbal altercation that ensues, the helpless and armless journalist who at this time is lying stomach flat on the ground with a gun pointed at him, absurdly responds to General Idris Aminu. "Your Excellency, I challenge you to shoot. Shoot. Shoot until the last man standing is down. Go ahead shoot until the whole country is down. Go ahead and shoot, until you become the president of many rivers of blood. I challenge you, shoot and kill me. Kill me your Excellency". The Journalist is however shot by Amino while he orders that Barrister Nelson be taken to a place where beasts inhabit so he can die there. At this point, Mrs. Moremi Nelson discovers she had lost everything, her first son, and now husband. Now she becomes resolute to lead the fight by herself against General Aminu.

There is however, a twist of event in the film's narrative following the press conference issued by Mrs. Moremi, wife to Barrister Nelson, in which she reinforces the complaints against General Idris' tyrannical and genocidal government and sends a Save our Soul message, an envoy of the International Diplomatic Organization visits General Idris with the



view to interface with him but this envoy is meted with brutality and humiliation as they are ruthlessly flogged and exposed to different forms of dehumanizing drills on the orders of General Idris. This provocative incident however necessitates a re-enforcement from the International Diplomatic Organization who comes in full force and tactically captures General Idris from the Barracks through the use of a hypnotic spraying device. This incident leads to the overthrowing of the tyrannical government of General Idris. At last, an interim government is announced where Barrister Nelson emerged as the Head.

Conclusion

This study examined oppressive and dictatorial governance in Nigeria using Chidebe Collin's *The Tyrant* (2004) as paradigm.

Using the instrumentality of the film medium as a critical lens, the study discovered. That power drunkenness, wanton killings, self-serving leadership styles, insensitivity of leadership class to the plights of the masses, oppressive and dehumanizing governance amongst others play key role to the established challenges. The study also discovers the inalienable powers of the film medium in projecting history and shaping society.

Following the above discoveries, this study recommends that the Nigerian state should be structured towards improving the core values of humanity and promoting people oriented style of governance. This would implant inclusiveness and reinforce peace, civil stability and overall development of the nation.

Furthermore, following the discovered inalienable powers of the film medium in projecting history and shaping society, this study recommends that deliberate efforts should be made by government and



other critical stakeholders in Nigeria to synergize with the Nigerian filmmaker and other screen artists and encourage them in contributing to the preservation of historical legacies in Nigeria through the film medium and other screen arts.

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AN AUTEURIAL READING OF BIODUN STEPHEN'S *BREAKING RULES* (2018)

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Abstract

The application of Auteur Theory in Nollywood filmmaking is responsible for the improved quality, return on investments, and the transnationalization of Nollywood films, however, while the male Nollywood directors have been sufficiently studied as auteurs, their female counterparts have remained under-researched in this area of scholarship. This study therefore undertakes a critical reading of *Breaking Rules* (2018) by Biodun Stephen to highlight the auteurial features found in the film. In doing this, the study examines the film's mise-en-scene constructions, the domain of film authorship. The methodology is qualitative in its review of literatures and in the screening of the film under study. The findings reveal that Biodun Stephen is an auteur director. Since these findings are consistent with other extant literatures in the study of auteur directors in Nollywood, this study therefore suggests that further research should be carried out in this same field to discover more female auteurs in Nollywood.

Keywords: *Auteur, Film, Biodun Steven, Director*



Introduction

Film remains a unique art which like all other arts is significant in giving meanings through communications, instructions and entertainments. Beyond these elementary values, film in recent studies, has also proven to be the mainstream of the cultural economy, “a high revenue earner, which could compete favorably with oil” (Mohammed, 2002, Aderinokun, 2004, Okezie, 2005, Ogunbiyi, 2006, Balogun, 2007, in Ayakoroma, 2014, p. 80). To promptly appropriate these values, scholars have sought different explanatory theories for film’s effective studies, productions, and consumptions. Auteurism is one of them. To introduce this theory effectively, some perennial but preliminary concerns that plague auteur practice must be addressed. Given the fact that ‘it takes a village to make a film, rephrased otherwise; it takes the collaboration of ‘many artists’ to make a film, will it be justifiable to give all the film’s credit to one artist out of the many collaborators? This is the central question that auteur critics are asking. And the answer offered by auteur theorists is that since ‘the director is the most important artist behind every film due to his ‘unifying control’ over other artists, all the film’s credit, success or failure, should be given to the director.

Wattenberg and Curran (2005) lament that “this further raises the ontological question of who is really responsible for the existence of a film?” (p. 91). In attempting this question, it must be stated categorically that that which we call a film copy or text, undergoes three basic stages of existence – the pre-production, production, and the post-production stages. At the first two stages, film exists as a collaborative art. But, at the post-production stage, it exists only as an individual art because, the director at this last stage begins to make a film that departs from the collaborative visions of the other artists, to that which expresses only the



artistic vision/s of the master-artist, the would-be author of the film. At this critical point, under an uncompromised professional ambience, all the contributing artists should have ‘downed tools’ except the director and the editor where such exist as separate artistic agents, otherwise, the editor operates only at the mercy of the director who determines the shot that comes first or second, from those that should be entirely cut off from the *rushes*. Murphy (2024) and some other studies, have proven that that is the stage from where the cinematic narration truly begins, at the *editing suite*. So, while it seems that ‘it takes a village to make a film,’ it actually takes only one individual, the director, the master-artist, an auteur, to complete it, to give it a unified vision - its true essence of artistic communication, common with other arts.

Having said that, there are three distinct versions of auteur studies according to Wattenberg and Curran (2005), the *ontological* version, the *interpretative* and the *evaluative* versions respectively, the arguments now are; “in interpreting a film, is it possible, given the cooperative nature of film production, to treat the film as the product of a single guiding hand? Or does it make more sense to see films as made by committees – with the concomitant possibility of tensions and incoherence? [Secondly,] in film evaluation, who deserves the credit for a film’s success or failure?” (2005, p. 91). With regards to the principal argument of auteur theory, that is; the director as the master-artist/film as an individual art, whichever version; *ontological*, *interpretative* or *evaluative*, the popular resolve, and that which is endorsed in this study is that the director like all other ‘artists’, is the most important creative force in filmmaking who should receive the film’s credit. Nonetheless, while this discourse may casually touch on the other versions of auteur practice as Wattenberg and Curran have enumerated, specifically, the



critical analyses of all the films here shortlisted, will be evaluated to ascertain if they have been successfully produced within the confines of auteur perspectives as envisaged by Andrew Sarris, the chief advocate for auteur practice as the most effective tool for film criticisms, and of productions. Relying on Sarris' postulations about auteur practice in film, one can confidently argue that at last, the director writes a film. The image – its plastic composition and the way it is set in time, because it is founded on a much higher degree of realism, has at its disposal more means of manipulating reality and of modifying it from within. [And it is on this ground that] the filmmaker is no longer the competitor of the painter and the playwright, he is, at last, the equal of the novelist (Wattenberg & Curran, 2005, p. 68; Astruc, 1948 as cited in Caughie, 1993, p. 9), that Biodun is studied here as an auteur.

Biography of Biodun Stephen

Biodun Stephen is one of the major female directors in Nollywood. She is equally a screenwriter and a film producer. She is perceived as having a flair for romantic comedies and dramas. Biodun studied philosophy at Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife and later went on to train in film production at the London Film Academy. She began her filmmaking career in 2014 with the release of *The Visit* (2014). This was praised for insightful cast, storyline and originality. It received two nominations at the 2016 Africa Magic Viewer's Choice Award (AMVCA) event in Lagos. In one of her interviews with *Tribune* which is cited from a Wikipedia source, she recalls that acting was her first choice but didn't have a breakthrough hence, her decision to improve by attaining new skills abroad. In 2017, her film *Picture Perfect* (2016) received five nominations and won two awards at the 2017 Best of Nollywood Awards for categories like Best Actor in a Lead Role and Best use of



Food in a Film. She also won the Best Director Award at the 2016 Maya Awards Africa. For her directorial role in *Tiwa's Baggage* (2017), she was nominated for Best Director at 2018 City People Movie Awards (2022, p. 1). In that same interview, Biodun also recalls that being nominated for AMVCA has been her most accomplished moment, and that has provided her with the confidence to continue making films. Aside filmmaking, she is also a radio presenter who anchors a weekend show entitled *Whispers* (2022, p. 1).

From her oeuvre of 38 movies, Biodun has been consistent in giving her movies unique titles, which mostly come from the names of lead characters. Titles such as *Tiwa's Baggage* (2017) *Ovy's Voice* (2017), *Ehi's Bitters* (2018) and *Sobi's Mystic* (2017) are few of them. However, it is important to reiterate here also that generally, what qualifies Biodun to be chosen for this scholarly exercise is based on the fact that she has made sufficient feature/commercial films among others. This has been identified to be the most appropriate model for a director to qualify for a critical evaluation in auteur studies.

Synopsis of *Breaking Rules* (2018)

Title: *Breaking Rules* (2018)

Length: 1hr 43.08mins

Director: Biodun Stephen

Producer: Yvone Jegede Fawole

Screenplay: Biodun Stephen

Major casts: Deyemi Okanlawon, Enado Odigie, Seun Akindele, Okunniyi Arnold, Yvone Jegede Fawole, Olakunle Fawole, and Amarachi Audu.

Breaking Rules (2018) is a story of romance exploring the themes of love, sex, marriage and betrayal. The film sets up a contrast between Vivian's early life as a passion driven, dedicated career lady, and her later withdrawal and lack of focus in her career after her relationship with



Martins fails. For instance, we see Miss Vivian Adeolu (Enado Odigie), a middle-aged lady finally falling in love with Martins Olaniyi (Deyemi Okanlawon) after her several resolves to ignore all his love proposals. Soon, Vivian will decline from a dedicated career-driven young lady into someone madly in love, even to the detriment of her career future. But midway into this, she realizes that the relationship is more of a game of gambling between Martins and his friends. As the narrative progresses, she becomes heartbroken; a confused betrayed lover who must fight back to reform herself into a beautiful courageous young woman in love again with herself. In a twist, she eventually marries the ‘repentant’ Martins and settles into a more mature, wiser, and warm relationship with him.

Cinematic Narration of the first Sequence in *Breaking Rules* (2018)

The film begins with an establishment shot of a metropolitan bridge across a vast waterscape. This shot offers an omniscient perspective of high-speed vehicles plying through this edifice before cutting to a less busy street-road leading to a residential settlement. Looking through a long shot we see a black iron-gate of a particular resident in this street slides open, letting in a black Honda car which moves gradually towards the camera. Becoming larger and larger, the car keeps moving towards the lens until it pulls to a halt at a slightly high-angle-shot before the camera cuts to an extreme-close-up of the car’s right-side head lamp. Just then, a lady and a teenage girl alight from the car and make their ways towards an apartment. Another quick cut takes us into the interior of this apartment - a moderately furnished sitting room, the Vivian’s. In this short sequence, Ella (Amarachi Audu) is revealed to be the younger sister to Vivian Adeolu, the film’s protagonist, upon her first visit to Vivian. In the series of alternating close-ups and medium-close-up shots that follow, Ella’s elated mood about the striking beauty of her



newly found environment, her sister's sitting room, is clearly emphasized as she is seen moving around in excitement before she settles down on one of the chairs – 'the red one'.

One of the early instructions given to Ella by Vivian upon her arrival is for her to always keep the apartment tidy and also to study hard for her admission into the university which is the primary reason for her relocation to Vivian's house. Afterward, the camera pulls back to a wider shot, thus, creating the spatial depth which permits Vivian to exit the frame through a stare-case at the upper screen left in the background, while Ella first retracts from the middle ground to the foreground, picks her luggage, turns back, and runs after Vivian. Soon, a dissolve brings us back to the sitting room where Vivian is found seated in the foreground of the frame in a medium wide shot. She is waiting for Ella who is preparing for her first shopping experience in the city. Towards the final sequence, the director through a rapid cut takes us through an exterior, deploying an extreme-long-shot to pick Vivian and Ella who are just stepping out from 'Old English Superstores and Bakery' in day time, clutching the shopped items as they head to the parking lot. Soon, the camera cuts again to a medium two-shot of them but, as they turn screen right towards their car, it re-tracks but stops at a medium long-shot, and begins to track horizontally after them until we first encounter Martins Olaniyi who will later marry Vivian after series of intrigues, heartbreaks, betrayals, repentance and forgiveness.

In this encounter, and under the guise of a mistaken identity, Martins appears suddenly from the background, tiptoes after Vivian and grabs her by the waist. As she wriggles herself out of his tight enclosure, she feels publicly embarrassed afterwards, that a stranger from nowhere could subject her to a public ridicule, consequently, she rains abuses on



Martins who apologizes profusely. As Ella and Vivian drive home after the incident, Ella teases Vivian for being furious at a stranger (Martins) to the point of even calling him an “idiot”. The shot concludes on Ella advising Vivian on the need to loosen up a bit, not to be too hard on strangers. The sequence thus ends on this seeming embarrassing incident followed by the sublime advice from Ella. Here, Biodun is thus able to achieve a concise but coherent overview of Ella’s arrival to Vivian’s house before Vivian leaves for work the next day as shown in the succeeding office sequence.

The Mise-en-scene Constructions of a scene in *Breaking Rules* (2018)

Mise-en-scene being one of the tools through which an auteur director uses to personalize his films, will be used to examine in details, the various shots and other technical choices perceivable in *Breaking Rules* (2018) in order to evaluate how such is used by the film’s director, Biodun, as an auteur. To realize this, this study applies Giannetti’s visual principles which argue that:

a systematic Mise-en-Scene analysis of any given shot, will include the following fifteen elements: Dominant contrast, lighting, shot and camera proxemics, angle, color values, lens/filter/stock, subsidiary contrasts, density, composition, form, framing, depth, character placement, staging position and character proxemics (2002, p. 87).

He concludes by stating that the above “visual principles, with appropriate modifications, can be applied to any image analysis” (p. 89). Applying this theory here means that each of the visual principles and their narrative relevance to the overall dramatic context in *Breaking Rules* (2018) will be examined in the shot below:



Plate 1. A medium wide shot. Vivian returns to her apartment, having gone to pick her sister Ella, who is visiting for the first time. Ella has come to live with Vivian. She admires Vivian's beautiful sitting room.

Dominant contrast: The filmmaker like a painter can exploit the principle of color contrast to shape our sense of screen space. For instance, bright colors set against a more subdued background, are likely to draw the eye.(Bordwell & Thompson, 2004, p. 209). This exemplary shot is two minutes, nine seconds (2:09s) into the film. It has duration of 16 seconds. Its mise-en-scene emphasizes *red* as the dominant contrast (i.e., what attracts our eyes first), thereby making 'color red' an important aspect of its setting. It is obvious in this shot's entire duration, Vivian's red dress, her red shoes and her proximity with the red chair and a red throw pillow, screen right, though irrelevant to this scene's dramatic context, stand out. The cinematographer systematically deployed 'red' here to throw off the scene's compositional balance, consequently, creating a new dominance that foreshadows the emotional intensity of the movie. The deployment of red as the most discernible color in this



shot's composition from the onset, sets out the mood - the aura of romance and the theme of sexual passion, dominant in the movie.

However, in the theory of color dynamism, red equally connotes danger which at some point in this movie, Vivian has to confront. Vivian's elaborate hair style and her make-up, the explicit red in her dress and shoes, with the red props around her, are all intentionally and carefully curated by the film's cinematographer to further accentuate the fact that the apartment belongs to her and also to expose her (note: this is our first meeting with these characters) as the potential protagonist who is going to steal our attentions most of the time in this movie.

Subsidiary contrasts: The second character Ella, is a teenager moderately dressed in a black top with a ripped-blue-jean, typical of her age. Appearing in a simple hair style with obviously no make-up, Ella is also introduced to us as Vivian's younger sister. The white throw pillow on the red chair down screen left, the white chair down screen right, with the white painted-wall, screen right too, are not only used to contrast the dominant red in this shot, but their colors also serve as a metaphor for Vivian's obsession with neatness and as well, her personal hygiene which bespeaks of a single, yet to be married lady. And of course, the only rule which he hands down to Ella right upon her arrival here, is to ensure that her sitting room remains clean and organized.

Ella's black top, specifically, contrasts with Vivian's red dress and the red shoes but, blends with the scene's props and decors such as the black hand-bag on Vivian's right shoulder, the black television-screen in the foreground, up screen right (note; it is not powered at the time of this mise-en-shot), the black front view of the table, also foreground, bottom screen right, and the black tiles on the stare-case, mid-ground, centre screen. Equally, the dominant red contrasts with the subsidiary



black colors already identified in the shot, the different shades of brown colors on the wall tiles, floor tiles, the reading-lamp and the throw pillow in the foreground, extreme screen right, the silver-colored décor on the table, the black-tiled stare-case decked with a silver-colored rail, mid-ground, center screen, and finally, the brown window curtains. Over all, these are but patches of colors carefully curated to make the contrasting effects on the dominant red, visually effective. In this shot, Ella has just arrived in the city which she believes is more conducive for her to study for her upcoming JAMB exam and also enjoy the city life than staying with their mother whom she complains, bores her with a lot of chores. Her arrival here signifies a transition from a seemingly unhappy hopeless situation to one with a glimmer of hope and a better future, and eventually, towards the end of the film, Ella gains admission into one of the Nigerian universities. The scene's high-key lighting design, the color composition, her actions and facial expressions, betray this inner joy.

Setting: The setting of this sitting room is moderately furnished which highlights Vivian's class and social status as an average young person in the society. Every desirable item is perfectly placed in a manner befitting of a single and unmarried working-class lady, successful in her career. The elaborate red color dominating the setting further underscores her passion and her readiness to settle in marriage if true love come calling.

Lighting key: Due to the mood of this scene, the lighting key is high, bright, with even illumination. No traceable shadows anywhere in the shot. This is appropriate to the scene's dramatic context which is that of a family re-union, hope, and excitement. Every source of light in a film always has a point where it seems brighter, therefore in this scene the source of light seems to be stronger at the window side which is



suggestive of the director's choice for a natural day-time or an atmospheric lighting effect. This design presents Vivian as one who likes nature even as it also serves as a source of inspiration and as a beacon, signaling hope to Ella who has just escaped into a new and a beautiful environment. The beaming blue color discernible on the window curtains also induces emotional feelings of rebirth, revival, and renewal of hope for the young visiting Ella. Besides that, obvious at the last plane of the shot, top of the screen right, is an orange lighting effect. In color spectrum and design, orange is one of the warm colors mostly relied upon by cinematographers for inducing moods such as affection or romance. In this case, it is obvious that Ella is warmly received by her elder sister which the scene's narration, replicates in abundance.

Shot and camera proxemics: This shot is a wide shot and slightly distant, the choice of which is to allow enough space for character movements and sufficient dramatic expression, especially for Ella who is excited about this environment. The camera proxemics which defines the space between characters in the scene is also related to shots and their distant ranges. While close shots such as medium close ups and extreme close ups possess some intrinsic powers which invoke audiences' emotions into identifying with the film characters in their travails and moments of joy, shots like wide, long, and extreme long shots, achieve exactly the opposite. In this case, both Ella and Vivian are not closely framed enough to warrant that any potential audiences should invest their emotions in their dramatic actions.

Character Proxemics: The characters even though are of the same parents, are nonetheless placed in *personal proxemics* which in Giannetti's terms, roughly ranges from eighteen inches away to about four feet away (2002, p. 77). In this circumstance, individuals can touch,



if necessary, since they are literarily an arm's-length apart. These distances, tend to be reserved for friends and acquaintances rather than lovers or family members (p.77). A critical reading of this shot emphasizes that Vivian and Ella, having just been re-united after a long while of living separately, may need some time to re-bond into some *intimate proxemics* appropriate for family members. Age differences accompanied with juvenile behaviors could also have influenced the choice for the *character proxemics* appropriated to this shot by the director.

Angle: The shot is a slightly high-angle shot because, no part of the ceiling is in focus instead, much of the floor. Because, Ella's expression of excitement in her newly found environment is the most important dramatic action in this scene, the cinematographer probably deploys this high-angle shot to deemphasize Vivian's height who is equally placed in the mid-ground, but emphasizes that of Ella who is not only in the foreground, but also occupies top-most of the frame, thus looming above Vivian in the shot. Note this, in visual compositions, foreground elements always tend to have more dramatic effects than those in subsequent planes which are mostly complementary in their optical effects. Vivian's countenance in the mid-ground, therefore, complements Ella's dramatic actions in the foreground. Finally, and in general perspective, a high angle-shot can also be used to emphasize the importance of a film's setting, which in this case comments subtly on Vivian's average socio-economic status and equally as a passion-driven-single-career lady.

Lens/filter/stock: While the film stock used in this production could not be ascertained in this shot's analysis, it is obvious that a standard (wide) lens was used here by the director with no optical



modifier capable of achieving any form of image distortion. In other words, there is no discernible color filter in this shot. Characters, props and the settings were all allowed to retain their original sizes, shapes and colors in this shot.

Density: Obviously, this shot has a shallow density. Only two characters in the scene with few props all composed in a simple setting. This invariably, makes character movements easier and efficient as required in this scene.

Composition: In movies, lines are parts of the compositional elements used by cinematographers to achieve some optical illusions which are complementary to the scene's dramatic action. These lines if properly deployed can carefully guide the viewers' eyes or attentions into a specific subject of interest or into some details about the film's narrative without which, it will otherwise, pass unnoticed. In this shot, there are several of such lines. While some are subtle, like the vertical lines on the parted window curtains at the screen right, and those by the window at the background, top screen right; others are distinct, such as the diagonal lines of the stair-case rails and the horizontal lines on its steps. Kyle Deguzman theorizes that "when a viewer looks at an image that utilizes lines, their eye is naturally drawn to the lines and where they lead. Hence, he concludes that photographers and cinematographers use this effect in their compositions to guide the viewer's eye towards a specific area of the frame" (2022, p.1).

Form: Even though this setting is not densely populated with props and characters, the amount of the visual information we have been able to find from this singular shot, is sufficient to qualify it as a shot in an *open form* (here, the shot's frame is wider and captures more of the surroundings, creating a sense of space, freedom and openness). Unlike



in *closed forms* of shots where some of their visual information can be sought elsewhere, sometimes even outside the frame because of its tight framing, the visual designs in this shot are not only saturated with a lot of visual information that will guide us all through the film's narration.

Staging positions: In films, this visual design helps us to understand the different psychological states of characters simply from their positions in a shot through questions such as: are the characters photographed in full front, i.e., looking at the camera, or backing the camera? Paraphrasing Giannetti (2002), are they in profile position, quarter turn position or three-quarter turn position? He stresses that each of these designs at different degrees, either invites us to the worlds of filmic characters or repels us from their worlds. In this very shot under review, Vivian stands in a quarter-turn position (i.e., she looks partly at the camera/us and partly at Ella), thereby offering us some degree of intimacy than Ella who is photographed in a profile position (i.e., her focus is only on Vivian, right of the frame), totally unaware and unconcerned about our presence neither does she care about whatever any of us may think of her. Her immediate and only concern in this scene, seems to be the new environment in which she has just found herself.

Framing: In framing of shots, the two common tendencies are that either the shot is tight or loose which are also the visual equivalence of close-up shots or distant shots. This shot under evaluation is loose, which is common with every wide shot. The motivation for this kind of narrative device in movies is same with the explanations already proffered in the two topics that dealt with *density, shot and character proxemics*.

Depth: Studies have shown that a wide-angle lens is always required whenever a depth of field or a wide-shot is to be achieved. In Plate 1 therefore, the image is composed on three conceivable depths of



planes: the brown throw-pillow and Ella in the foreground, Vivian and the staircase in the mid-ground, the other components of the setting such as the window, up screen right, with the brick wall, are all in the background. A wide-angle shot is also a vital narrative device for a director who wants to prioritize lots of character movements and dramatic expressions in a scene. Relating this technical choice to the shot being analyzed, means that Ella is offered a lot of space to move around and to express herself/joy, while Vivian also has sufficient space to walk Ella around her apartment.

Character Placement: The following are basic components of a movie screen - the center, top, bottom, and the edges. Character Placement as a part of mise-en-shot therefore addresses questions such as: what part of the screen are the characters in a shot occupying? – Centre, top, bottom or the edges, and why are they framed as such? Where characters are placed within a frame is one of the narrative tools with which an auteur director can use to effectively define the power relationships among his characters in a proposed shot. In this shot, Vivian, the film's protagonist is not in charge of the dramatic action and so she is placed slightly below Ella who is the subordinate character but in charge of the dramatic action. Hence, Ella is placed at the top of the screen right. To further prioritize the visual significance of her dramatic expressions, the right side of the frame where Ella stands, is also compositionally weightier than the left of the frame.

Color values: Some directors sometimes exploit colors' natural tendencies for effective communications in movies, to pass a subtle comment about their characters. Biodun creatively deployed 'red color' in the above shot to foreshadow the emotional intensity of the movie. That sets out the mood from the onset hence, the aura of romance and the theme



of sexual passion, dominant in the movie, were made explicit for the audiences as soon as the movie begins to screen.

The Sound & Music: In this final part of this shot's mise-en-scene analysis, it is observed through the film's narration that there is no music in this scene, however, the sound here is *diegetic*. Apart from the sound produced through the characters' dialogues, there is no over-laid sound from outside this scene. Conclusively, in this singular shot, and through the theoretical concepts of mise-en-scene and mise-en-shot, Biodun is able to 'technically' achieve a resounding narrative economy with a large amount of thematic information which would otherwise, conventionally, require many shots to realize in this film.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Biodun has been able to demonstrate the sufficient technical competence required of every auteur director as we have seen in the analysis of *Breaking Rules*. In this movie, her treatments of the mise-en-scene, the major artistic resources of the cinema, are seen to be very effective. Consequently, this study has successfully established Biodun as an auteur filmmaker while all together achieving a balanced view in the study of film authorship in Nollywood.

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ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE NIGERIA FILM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This paper explicates Arts Entrepreneurship from the lens of Nigeria's film industry, Nollywood. It outlines very imperative issues that touch the distinguishing lines as well as the points of equilibrium between the Arts and Entrepreneurship, underscoring their trajectories for easy grasp of their intricacies, analytical purposes and future development. Approaching the subject matter with a qualitative analysis, relevant literatures were fittingly reviewed; hence, we are guided to focus on concerns of entrepreneurs in the arts, presented in sub-themes, such as: the artist as an entrepreneur versus the entrepreneur in the arts, divergent and convergent factors of the artist and entrepreneur. Aligning with Bridgstock (2013), the paper proposes for the inclusion of entrepreneurship from the beginning of all educational programs in film schools /departments and every other field of Arts. It encourages for entrepreneurship to not only be considered as character imbibed in commerce, but also, as a complex range of mindset, attitude to work, skills and other capacities that underpin all areas of the artistic / commercial endeavors.

Keywords: Arts, Entrepreneurship, Filmmaking, Nollywood

Introduction

Before delving into the study of entrepreneurship it is ideal to attempt to provide clear cut definitions to arts entrepreneurship. This will certainly entail defining the concepts of art and entrepreneurship or artist and entrepreneur. With regard to entrepreneurship, it translates into actions



aimed at the creation/discovery of entrepreneurial opportunities Alvarez and Barney (2017). On the other hand, art is the result of artistic actions through which artistic talent is expressed by using a certain artistic language. Some other scholars have attempted to provide a definition of “arts entrepreneurship” as a phrase. Scherdin and Zander (2011) argue that in the arts “entrepreneurship is about the discovery and pursuit of new art ideas, using a multitude of artistic expressions and organizational forms as vehicles by which to express and convey these ideas to the public” (p. 3). They also suggest that, fully expressed creativity is only possible through arts entrepreneurship. This according to Drucker (1985) is the specific mission of arts and innovation known as “the specific tool of entrepreneurs.” Thus, Swedberg (2006) believes that combining creativity and innovation leads to the creation of something which is new and appreciated in the area of culture. In this light, it is possible to identify those undertakings and activities that can be said to constitute or that can become constituents of arts entrepreneurship, especially within the film industry where multiple sub-creative enterprises such as the art and design department, camera crew, continuity crew, sound crew, etc., are domiciled. Going by Taylor et.al (2015), this will include “entrepreneurial habits of mind” and the “new venture creation in the creative industries” (p. 6).

The practice of art for art’s sake is an age long domineering phenomenon that has been deficult to demolish. Artists have had their goals in the purest sense of what arts stand for, to be the expression of their individual artistic talent. This has resulted in artists often feeling worried about involving in business-related discusses with the thought that they could undermine the artistic values of their creativity or creative works. The negligence to commerce in art was not only within the



industry but even within the academia where even scholars who teach in art departments and some of whom are the proponents of certain entrepreneurial concepts also neglect entrepreneurial aspects of the arts, with few exceptions. Over the last 2 decades, there have been some increasing interests in entrepreneurship in the creative industry especially in the arts. Following the awareness towards the need and beneficial essences of entrepreneurship in art, scholars from various backgrounds have become interested in the discourse, contributing to the formation of a quite heterogeneous emerging literature on entrepreneurship in the arts. This paper, explicates the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in the arts, an example of this is the Nigerian film industry Nollywood.

In the opinion of Beckman (2012), till date, arts entrepreneurship is not a discipline even as it has not been subjected to a single theory. Beckman goes further to say that, rather, various theories and practices propounded within business studies and the social sciences contribute to the development of arts entrepreneurship. Viewing the discuss from other spectacles, the identification of the industrial contexts embraced by arts entrepreneurship is considered problematic because it shows both the arts, creative industries and cultural industries as not completely covered (Throsby, 2008). In this study, it is noted that scholars often engage in the discourse of arts entrepreneurship with reference to the cultural industries (Beckman, 2012) and creative industry (De Bruin, 2005) while examining artistic issues. Also, while some scholars have examined the sensation within the core creative arts (Throsby, 2008) and (Beckman, 2012), some focused on less competitive aspects within the arts (Preece, 2011), while others decide to limit their studies to specific arts and genres (Zhao, 2013).

Since the late 1990s, Nigerian movies have found a place next to



offerings from Hollywood and Bollywood, Bombay's equivalent, in the cities, towns and villages across English-speaking Africa. Though made on the cheap, with budgets of about only \$15,000, Nigerian movies have become huge hits, with stories, themes and faces familiar to other Africans. It is now, according to conservative estimates, a \$45 million, a year industry (Onishi, 2002, p.53).

The artist as an entrepreneur versus the entrepreneur in the arts

According to Rivetti and Migliaccio (2017), most difficulties concerning the approach to the study of the entrepreneur in artistic contexts can be traced to the motivations that lead him to operate in the arts. They also noted that Caves introduced the concept of "art for art's sake," highlighting that in the arts motivations often go beyond economic aspects. The dichotomy between "artistic logic" and "economic logic," emphasized by scholars is at the basis of most studies centered on the figure of the entrepreneur in the arts, since in this type of industry the artist-entrepreneur's motivation is the "primary resource for economic production. This no doubt explains why there is rapid commercial success in Nigeria's film industry. Backing this claim is Onishi who adds:

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Scholars in particular, are wondering how to conjugate these logics (De Valck, 2014). This resonates in a dual identity that the entrepreneur is



called to integrate, which is the artist, who sees work motivation and creative impetus as extremely important, and the small firm identity which would lead the entrepreneur to “living out of being an artist” (Eikof and Haunschild 2007). The relationship between culture, entrepreneurship, and territory is also expressed in the concept of “culturepreneur” (Lange, 2011). In their opinion, Eikof and Haunschild (2007) argue that making reference to the lifestyle of the artist is possible to fill the gap between art and business. More precisely, according to the authors, entrepreneurs are often conceived as “bohemians,” who tend to stand out from the society, can “integrate intensive self-management and self-marketing as well as subordination of private life to work into their artistic work life” (p. 234).

Indeed, making reference to the lifestyle of the artist is possible to fill the gap between art and business. Coming from the perspective of film history and criticism, Richards (1973) in a way aligns with Eikof and Haunschild. For a filmmaker, it may seem somewhat difficult to state what the primary motivation is, however Richards states that Hollywood's involvement in the practice was driven by two factors: "the desire for exotic and romantic escapism" and "the commercial factor" (p. 3).

Similarities between the artist and entrepreneur

There are yet other group of discourses that are focused on the identification of similarities between the artist and the entrepreneur. These discourses also provide explanation on how these connections can be beneficial for the activities of both the artist and the entrepreneur. For example, Daum (2005) identifies a number of connections between the two, noting that most times, entrepreneurs with an artistic background tend to seek solutions to the “business problems by applying lessons learned from their artistic endeavors” (p.55). Daum proceeds to state that



the two figures are much more similar than one might imagine, while usually with respect to the artists there is the prejudice to be “flaky” (p. 57). Coming from a different perspective, Fontela et al. (2006), deepens the role of forecasting, which characterizes the work of the artist and is also essential for “entrepreneurial decision making. In their opinion therefore, the entrepreneur should think in a “less ‘rational’ and more ‘emotional’ way, a manner in which the core artists may not approach. There is no doubt in saying that there are some level of prejudices around the figure of the artist, but it is also true that it is sometimes idealized. In this light, Cova and Svanfeldt (1993), define the artist-entrepreneur as “an esthetically visionary entrepreneur, who innovates by vocation rather than by utility” (p.12). Cova and Svanfeldt argue that “as opposed to the self-made person, the artist-entrepreneur plays upon one’s culture; and to the contrary of the team hero, the artist-entrepreneur is surrounded by a team” (p. 14). Meanwhile, Berglund et al. (2007) opine that the artist-entrepreneur may not respond to the type of “hero entrepreneur,” but can be a creative imitator, who uses “multiple identities in legitimizing their work,” and often does not work alone (268).

Building entrepreneurial capacity in the arts

The identification of some best practices and setting of conventions as well as the deepening of the structure of curricula in arts entrepreneurship education is rightly credited to Beckman amongst others. In particular, three practices help to shape adequate curricula a reassessment of the nineteenth century romantic esthetic; the acquisition of a supportive and visionary leadership; and the definition of entrepreneurship in a manner that informs and guides the effort (Beckman: 2007). While examining the implications of the peculiarities of arts entrepreneurship on education programs, Bridgstock (2013) focused on the characteristics of curricula



instrumental to the development of the arts entrepreneurship capabilities. Bridgstock puts up a valid argument, which is hereby seconded, that entrepreneurship should be included from the beginning of the education programs in the arts, and considering it as “a complex set of qualities, beliefs, attitudes, and skills that underpin all areas of working life” (p. 133).

In the opinion of Rivetti and Migliaccio, apart from studies that dwell on the main discuss of arts entrepreneurship education and on the definition of appropriate curricula, there is yet another area of research, which concerns arts incubators. Furthermore, Rivetti and Migliaccio aver:

Incubators constitute a particularly promising instrument in the arts [...] Arts incubators, and cultural institutions eventually related to these, can play a key role in promoting the development of arts entrepreneurship. The point is then deepened by Essig [...] who intercepted the different functions performed by incubators, the goals to which they tend, and identifies different types of incubators in the arts. To date, due to the novelty of the phenomenon, few contributions examine arts incubators, but they will probably lead to a growing attention from scholars (2017).

Rivetti and Migliaccio also notes how marketing scholars approached arts entrepreneurship, and that although in most cases, these scholars consider it collaterally when examining other themes. Citing Colbert (2003), they state:

Entrepreneurship, marketing, and leadership are interconnected; moreover, he emphasized that entrepreneurship and leadership allow improving the level of service offered to customers. Fill explored the marketing/entrepreneurship interface in the arts, claiming that in certain contexts it is useful to adopt an



“entrepreneurial” approach to marketing, based on the creative behavior. Rentschler and Geursen, explored the relationship between entrepreneurship, marketing, and leadership in nonprofit performing arts organizations (PAOs), and identify a “tension” between them in this type of organizations (2017).

Approaching from a different standpoint, the entrepreneurship-marketing link to the arts is investigated by Wilson and Stokes (2002), which dwelt extensively on the ability of the entrepreneur to create exchanges between content and service towards acquiring financial resources. Financial resources are no doubt necessary for an “effective cultural entrepreneurship”. In order to access networks in which financial resources can be found, the entrepreneurs’ legitimacy plays a fundamental role, but it is difficult to build; because of this, entrepreneurs can define specific marketing strategies: the “selection strategy,” to identify the most favorable environment, and the “manipulation strategy,” to face the environment.

Entrepreneurial bricolage is another area of research within arts entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial bricolage entails how creative works can be achieved by using limited resources (Baker and Nelson), something that is referred to as low budget production techniques in filmmaking. Entrepreneurial bricolage seems to be particularly interesting in the arts. It is indeed ideal to try to consider what kind of resources that is hereby referred to. De Klerk (2015) notes that in creative industries, artists adopt a particular type of bricolage, the (collaborative bricolage), which is used in a relationship where people work with each other to make the most of what is available, but transcends the short-term goal of getting the job done for one specific project” (p. 831). People involved in this relationship share a “long-term



vision” and work on specific projects, interacting and making best use of scarce resources (p. 837).

The Nollywood example

The film industry has been operating globally for quite some time. Film has been in production for more than a century. Creative personnel, decision-makers and stakeholders such as directors, producers and screenwriters have continued to pitch new screen ideas for production, which are subsequently developed and executed through a highly procedural business endeavour.



Plate 1: A film production set showing the collective entrepreneurial imputes used in filmmaking process. Griffin Pictures.

In a clearer illustration of the above, this section presents Nigeria’s film industry, Nollywood, its practitioners, as well as activities therein as exhibition and representation of entrepreneurial traits even as we come across global entrepreneurial scenarios. For us, the concept of filmmaking as an art juxtaposing with entrepreneurship simply entails that filmmakers as entrepreneurs turn an idea into a product with commercial value. Therefore, in essence, one can say that the goal of both being a filmmaker and an entrepreneur is not in any way different. The punch-line is that a filmmaker has the capacity to turn an idea into a market-ready product. Although this product may not be same with the none filmic entrepreneur, the results are the same. While this product for



an entrepreneur can be anything from computer application, clothes or even consumables; for a filmmaker, the product is audio-visual content. To be explicit, the filmmaker's content is a completed film, web or Television series. Even though the foregoing is ample to qualify the filmmaker as a core entrepreneur, it is not the only way the two job titles are similar. Filmmakers and Entrepreneurs are both creative innovators birthing ideas that are both novel and mind blowing. Like every successful business entity has at least one thing that is different from others (competitive edge), so also do filmmakers and all creative artist within the industry. Every successful film is released into the market with something novel and captivating, an audio-visual content that has never been screened before. Within both, some innovations are minor while others are major. Indeed, innovation is at the core of both the craft of an artist who works before or behind the camera (actor/crew) and the endeavours of entrepreneurs. This is because, whether through technology, storytelling or any form of merchandise, filmmaking and entrepreneurship both contain intelligent and creative people who are passionate about changing their world. In the same light, filmmakers and entrepreneurs have a similar circumstance in trying to put out their products into the market place. They must both figure out who will buy their product, where these prospects are, when to reach them and in what package to deliver.

If either a filmmaker or an entrepreneur is to be successful, then they need to figure out who will buy their product when it's ready to ship. If they don't know what their target market is, then it's impossible to make enough money to keep the company going or help investors recoup so you can make another film. Yennie adds to the above by stating thus:

Filmmakers and Entrepreneurs both often need to raise



money to create their products. While everything else on this list is true nearly 100% of the time, this one is only true 80-90% of the time. While some entrepreneurs and filmmakers can finance their companies out of pocket, most filmmakers need to consider how they'll pay for the things necessary to create their chosen product. Both filmmakers and entrepreneurs must develop a deep understanding of fundraising if they're going to be able to make their career in their chosen field a long-term sustainable one. Filmmakers and Entrepreneurs must both assemble a team to turn their idea into a product. No one can make a film or build a company all by themselves. Both must build and manage a team of creative and business people to create their product and take it out to the world. Without the ability to build and lead a team to success, the film or the company will not succeed. Filmmakers and Entrepreneurs must both figure out how to take their products to market. After coming up with an idea, figuring out who will buy their product, financing their vision, and assembling a team in order to create a product, filmmakers still need to get that product and figure out how to take it to market. For both, this is generally referred to as the distribution stage of the process (2024).



Plate2: Pictorial illustration of marketing, promotion and other entrepreneurial endeavours corroborating the commercial success of film.



Photo Source: Griffin Pictures.

The distribution stage is usually different between the filmmaker and the core entrepreneur. For filmmakers, the market is relatively clearly-defined. For entrepreneurs, distribution plans will usually vary depending on the particular industry. However, what they both share in common is the fact that if the end user/viewer cannot have access to the products, they both will not buy.

The issue of film marketing is very important to wealth creation and the sustainability of self-representation in any movie industry. The last decades have witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of film entrepreneurs in Nigeria. From the agricultural sector through the manufacturing industries to the tertiary sector, there has been an expanding trend in filmic entrepreneurial initiatives. Filmic entrepreneurs have been making incredible strides in their personal and professional lives, creating new spaces for social and economic mobility.) it is no more news that one of the most viable sectors in terms of those who have recently witnessed a dramatic increase of entrepreneurs is the Nigerian film industry. Producers and other creative personnel within the industry have in recent times, been utterly involved in the complex process of transforming Nigeria's film industry. These entrepreneurs have deployed varied business strategies and have progressively gained pronounced social visibility. As put by Jedlowski (2016), these brands of entrepreneurs have tremendously contributed to "the construction of the collective imagination of ... social and economic success" (as cited in <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/female-entrepreneurship-in-the-nollywood-film-industry/206812>).

Arts entrepreneurship as a promising field of research that involves



different disciplines has come to stay. In this article, we have ascertained that over the last 20 years, publications grew considerably, most of which are placed in specialized journals. Some scholars have even gone far to focus on arts incubators, instruments designed to favor entrepreneurship in the arts. Also, some marketing scholars have shown high interest in entrepreneurship, but in most cases they consider it “collaterally.” Other have approached arts entrepreneurship in order to investigate its role in the development of new products. Finally, entrepreneurial bricolage is of interest of scholars because it seems suitable to artistic contexts. All these notwithstanding, literature on this discuss is seldom consolidated. This paper therefore aligns with Bridgstock to propose that entrepreneurship should be included from the beginning of the education programs in film schools and film departments, and considering it as “a complex set of qualities, beliefs, attitudes, and skills that underpin all areas of working life.

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MULTIMEDIA LITERACY AMONG PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

This study assesses the level of multimedia literacy among public administrators in Nigeria, exploring the challenges and opportunities that influence the effective use of multimedia tools in public service delivery. With the increasing demand for transparency and engagement in governance, the role of multimedia in facilitating communication and public participation has become paramount. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from 430 public administrators across various government agencies. The findings reveal that while significant majority (60.1%) is aware of multimedia tools, only 53.6% actively utilize them, highlighting a gap between awareness and application. Additionally, 61.5% of respondents believe that multimedia enhances communication effectiveness; however, only 42.6% report receiving adequate training, indicating a critical need for improved capacity-building initiatives. Barriers such as limited access to resources and inadequate peer support were also identified, with 48.0% of respondents encountering significant challenges in utilizing multimedia tools. The study concludes that enhancing multimedia literacy among public administrators is essential for improving public engagement and service delivery. Recommendations include developing comprehensive training programs, establishing peer support networks, enhancing access to multimedia resources, and conducting regular assessments of multimedia literacy. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the opportunities presented by multimedia, Nigerian public administrators can foster a more transparent, accountable, and effective public service



that meets the needs of its citizens. This research contributes to the understanding of multimedia literacy in the public sector and provides actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders committed to enhancing the effectiveness of public administration in Nigeria.

Keywords: Multimedia Literacy, Public Administrators, Nigeria.

Introduction

The concept of multimedia literacy encompasses a broad range of skills necessary for effective communication and information dissemination in the digital age. As public administrators increasingly engage with diverse audiences through various media platforms, the need for multimedia literacy becomes paramount. This literature review synthesizes existing research on multimedia literacy, its importance in public administration, the challenges faced by public officials in Nigeria, and the opportunities for enhancing these skills.

Multimedia literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in various formats, including text, images, audio, and video (Buckingham, 2021). In the context of public administration, multimedia literacy is crucial for improving communication strategies, fostering transparency, and engaging citizens effectively. Studies have shown that public administrators equipped with multimedia skills can enhance their outreach efforts, making government services more accessible and understandable (Mwalongo, 2022). Furthermore, effective use of multimedia tools can lead to improved decision-making processes and policy formulation, as public administrators can leverage data visualization techniques to present complex information clearly (Igbokwe & Anyanwu, 2023). Despite the recognized importance of multimedia literacy, public administrators in Nigeria face several challenges in acquiring these skills. One major



barrier is the lack of adequate training and professional development opportunities. According to a study by Adewale et al. (2023), many public officials report insufficient access to training programs focused on digital skills, which limits their ability to engage with multimedia tools confidently. Additionally, infrastructural challenges, such as unreliable internet access and inadequate technological resources, further impede the adoption of multimedia practices in public administration (Ogbari et al., 2023).

Cultural attitudes also play a significant role in shaping the multimedia literacy landscape in Nigeria. A survey by the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) indicated that many public administrators are resistant to adopting new technologies due to a preference for traditional communication methods. This resistance can hinder efforts to implement digital initiatives that require multimedia competencies. Moreover, the digital divide between urban and rural areas exacerbates these challenges, as public officials in rural locations often lack access to the same resources and training opportunities as their urban counterparts (ITU, 2023).

Despite these challenges, there are several opportunities for enhancing multimedia literacy among public administrators in Nigeria. The increasing focus on e-governance and digital transformation within public sectors offers a pathway for training and capacity-building initiatives. The Nigerian government, in partnership with various stakeholders, has begun implementing programs aimed at equipping public officials with essential digital skills (UNDP, 2022). For example, initiatives such as the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy seek to improve digital literacy among civil servants and promote the use of technology in governance (Edewor & Agbonifoh, 2022).



This paper emphasizes the critical need for multimedia literacy among public administrators in Nigeria to improve governance and citizen engagement. While challenges such as inadequate training, cultural resistance, and infrastructural limitations persist, opportunities for enhancement through global best practices, educational initiatives, and technological innovations exist. By addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities, Nigeria can foster a more effective and responsive public administration equipped to meet the demands of an increasingly digital world.

The use of Multimedia among Public Administrators in Nigeria

In recent years, the proliferation of multimedia technologies has transformed the landscape of communication, particularly within the public administration sector. Multimedia literacy, which encompasses the ability to critically evaluate, create, and communicate information using various multimedia formats, has become increasingly vital for public administrators in Nigeria. This growing importance is reflected in the global shift toward digital governance, where effective communication strategies are essential for engaging citizens and fostering transparency (Mokhtar et al., 2021). The ability of public administrators to leverage multimedia tools effectively can significantly enhance service delivery and public engagement, thereby improving the overall governance process (Edewor & Agbonifoh, 2022). Despite the recognized benefits of multimedia literacy, many public administrators in Nigeria face significant challenges in adopting and utilizing these technologies effectively. According to a survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), only 45% of public administrators reported having adequate training in multimedia tools, leading to suboptimal communication practices. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructural



support, limited access to technology, and insufficient training programs pose substantial barriers to the effective use of multimedia in public administration (Adewale et al., 2023). These challenges hinder the potential for multimedia literacy to contribute positively to governance, as many administrators remain reliant on traditional communication methods that do not resonate with a digitally-savvy populace.

Conversely, the opportunities presented by enhancing multimedia literacy among public administrators are significant. Research has shown that effective multimedia communication can increase citizen engagement, improve service delivery, and foster a more transparent governance process (Okunola, 2022). For instance, the integration of social media platforms and other multimedia channels can facilitate real-time communication between public administrators and citizens, thereby enhancing the responsiveness of public institutions (Ezeani, 2023). Moreover, as Nigeria continues to advance its digital governance initiatives, equipping public administrators with the necessary multimedia skills will be crucial for harnessing these opportunities (Kehinde et al., 2023).

By identifying the current state of multimedia literacy and the factors that influence its adoption, this research seeks to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and training institutions. Understanding the relationship between multimedia literacy and effective public administration is essential for driving meaningful reforms and improving governance outcomes in Nigeria. Furthermore, the need for multimedia literacy among public administrators is underscored by the evolving expectations of citizens, who increasingly demand greater transparency and accountability from their government. As Nigeria continues to grapple with issues of corruption and inefficiency in public



service delivery, fostering a culture of openness through effective multimedia communication can serve as a critical strategy for rebuilding public trust (Nwanosike et al., 2022). Citizens are more inclined to engage with their government when they perceive it as accessible and responsive, which can be facilitated by multimedia platforms that allow for dynamic interaction and feedback (Igbokwe & Anyanwu, 2023).

In today's digital age, multimedia literacy has emerged as a critical competency for public administrators, influencing how they engage with citizens and deliver services. Multimedia literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in various formats, including text, audio, video, and interactive media (Buckingham, 2021). For public administrators in Nigeria, this skill set is particularly vital as the country continues to face challenges in governance, accountability, and public service delivery. The Nigerian government has made significant strides toward digital governance, recognizing that effective communication strategies are essential for enhancing transparency and fostering citizen participation (Edewor & Agbonifoh, 2022).

However, despite the growing importance of multimedia literacy, a substantial gap remains in the skills and knowledge of many public administrators in Nigeria. A recent study conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) revealed that only 40% of public administrators reported feeling confident in their ability to use multimedia tools effectively. This lack of confidence can be attributed to various factors, including inadequate training, limited access to technology, and a prevailing culture that prioritizes traditional communication methods over digital engagement (Adewale et al., 2023). Moreover, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022) highlighted that many public institutions lack the



necessary infrastructure to support the effective use of multimedia in governance, further exacerbating the challenges faced by public administrators.

The challenges surrounding multimedia literacy among public administrators have significant implications for governance in Nigeria. As citizens increasingly expect real-time interaction and transparency from their government, administrators who are ill-equipped to meet these demands may struggle to engage effectively with the public. A survey by the National Communication Commission (2023) indicated that 65% of citizens believe that the lack of multimedia engagement from public officials contributes to a perception of opacity in government activities. This disconnect between citizens and their government underscores the urgent need for public administrators to enhance their multimedia literacy.

Despite these challenges, there are also significant opportunities for improving multimedia literacy among public administrators in Nigeria. With the advent of e-governance and the growing use of social media platforms, there is potential for more effective communication strategies that can enhance public engagement and trust (Okunola, 2022). Research has shown that leveraging multimedia tools can lead to improved service delivery, as they allow for faster information dissemination and greater interaction with citizens (Igbokwe & Anyanwu, 2023).

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of public administrators in Nigeria, specifically those employed at various levels of government (federal, state, and local). With a total population size of approximately 4,300 public administrators, this study aims to assess their level of multimedia



literacy and the associated challenges and opportunities. The target population includes public administrators who are actively involved in decision-making processes, communication, and public engagement within their respective government agencies. These individuals are likely to utilize multimedia tools in their work, making them key informants for assessing multimedia literacy in public administration.

The following table presents the population frame for the study, detailing the distribution of public administrators across different tiers and regions in Nigeria:

Gov. Level	No. of Admins	(%)	Region
Federal Government	1,200	27.9	Abuja (FCT)
State Government	1,800	41.9	Various States (36)
Local Government	1,300	30.2	Various Local Government Areas
Total	4,300	100%	

Sample Size Determination Using Yamane Formula

To determine the appropriate sample size for this study, the Yamane formula is applied. The formula is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Total population size

e = Margin of error (expressed as a decimal)

Given:



S/N	Statement	Frequency	(%)
1	"I am aware of various multimedia tools available for public administration."	220	60.1
2	"I regularly use multimedia tools to communicate with the public."	196	53.6
3	"Using multimedia tools enhances the effectiveness of my communication."	225	61.5
4	"I have received adequate training on how to use multimedia tools effectively."	156	42.6
5	"I encounter significant barriers in using multimedia tools for public communication."	176	48.0
6	"My use of multimedia tools positively impacts public engagement."	211	57.6
7	"There are ample opportunities to improve my multimedia literacy skills."	206	56.3
8	"I collaborate with colleagues to enhance multimedia communication strategies."	216	59.0
9	"I feel comfortable using multimedia tools in my day-to-day work."	211	57.6
10	"I have access to sufficient resources to utilize multimedia tools effectively."	156	42.6
11	"The training I received has positively impacted my ability to use multimedia tools."	196	53.6
12	"I receive support from my peers when using multimedia tools."	201	54.9
13	"I plan to incorporate multimedia tools more extensively in my future work."	266	72.7
14	"Overall, multimedia tools have a positive impact on my work as a public administrator."	251	68.6
Total		366	100%





Total population size (N) = 4,300 Margin of error (e) = 0.05 (5%)

Calculation of Sample Size

Substituting the values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{4300}{1 + 4300(0.05)^2} = \frac{4300}{1 + 4300(0.0025)} = \frac{4300}{1 + 10.75} = \frac{4300}{11.75} = 366.01 \approx 366$$

Thus, rounding to the nearest whole number, the sample size (nnn) is approximately **366** public administrators.

Sampling Technique

The study will employ a stratified random sampling technique. This method ensures that various sub-groups within the population are adequately represented in the sample. Given the diverse nature of public administration in Nigeria, stratified sampling allows for a more accurate assessment of multimedia literacy levels among different tiers and regions of government.

Results

The results indicate that a significant majority (60.1%) of public administrators in Nigeria are aware of various multimedia tools available for enhancing communication and engagement. This awareness is crucial as it serves as the foundation for effective multimedia literacy. However, while over half (53.6%) actively use these tools, the disparity between awareness and actual utilization suggests a potential gap in practical application. This discrepancy may be attributed to several factors, including a lack of confidence, insufficient training, or inadequate access to necessary resources. Research has shown that merely being aware of technological tools does not guarantee effective usage, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that translate awareness into practical



skills (McKinsey, 2020).

A considerable portion of respondents (61.5%) believe that multimedia tools enhance their communication effectiveness. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the role of multimedia in improving information retention and engagement among audiences (Mayer, 2021). The positive perception of multimedia's impact suggests that when effectively utilized, these tools can facilitate better public engagement and service delivery. However, only 42.6% of respondents reported receiving adequate training on using these tools effectively. This gap underscores the need for comprehensive training programs that equip public administrators with the necessary skills and knowledge to leverage multimedia tools fully.

The data indicates that nearly half (48.0%) of the respondents encounter significant barriers when using multimedia tools. These barriers may include limited access to technology, lack of technical support, and insufficient training. Addressing these barriers is crucial, as they can hinder the effectiveness of multimedia initiatives and the overall performance of public administrators. Research by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022) indicates that overcoming such barriers can significantly enhance the efficiency of public administration and improve citizen engagement. Therefore, it is essential to identify specific obstacles faced by public administrators and develop targeted strategies to mitigate them.

The findings reveal that 54.9% of public administrators receive support from peers when using multimedia tools. This collaborative environment is critical for fostering a culture of sharing best practices and experiences, which can enhance multimedia literacy. Peer support can significantly reduce the intimidation associated with new technologies



and promote a collective approach to problem-solving (Baker, 2021). However, only 42.6% reported having access to sufficient resources, indicating that structural support systems are still lacking. Building robust support systems within organizations can further enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing among public administrators.

An encouraging finding is that 72.7% of respondents plan to incorporate multimedia tools more extensively in their future work. This demonstrates a proactive attitude toward integrating technology into public administration. Furthermore, 68.6% believe that multimedia tools positively impact their work, which reflects a growing recognition of the benefits associated with multimedia literacy. This trend is consistent with the increasing emphasis on digital transformation in public service delivery (World Bank, 2023). To harness this positive momentum, it is essential for government agencies to invest in training and resource allocation to facilitate the effective integration of multimedia tools.

In summary, the results of this study highlight both the opportunities and challenges associated with multimedia literacy among public administrators in Nigeria. While there is a strong awareness and a positive outlook on the potential benefits of multimedia tools, addressing barriers to effective utilization, improving training, and enhancing resource availability are critical for translating this potential into practice. By fostering a supportive environment and investing in capacity-building initiatives, public administration can harness the power of multimedia tools to improve communication, public engagement, and overall service delivery.

The study has highlighted the critical role of multimedia literacy in enhancing the effectiveness of public administration in Nigeria. With over 60% of public administrators expressing awareness of



multimedia tools and a significant number recognizing their positive impact on communication, it is clear that these technologies hold considerable potential for improving public engagement and service delivery. The positive intent of 72.7% of respondents to incorporate multimedia tools more extensively in their future work further underscores the enthusiasm for leveraging these technologies to enhance their professional practices.

However, the findings also reveal substantial challenges that must be addressed to realize this potential. The discrepancy between awareness and actual utilization, coupled with the inadequate training reported by nearly 57% of respondents, points to the necessity for comprehensive training programs that equip public administrators with the skills required to use multimedia tools effectively. Furthermore, the identification of barriers—such as limited access to resources and insufficient peer support—indicates that organizational structures and support systems need significant improvement.

The study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration among public administrators, as over half reported receiving support from colleagues when using multimedia tools. Establishing robust peer support networks can foster a culture of shared learning and innovation, ultimately enhancing multimedia literacy across the public sector.

In conclusion, for Nigeria to fully harness the benefits of multimedia in public administration, targeted interventions are essential. These should include developing training programs, enhancing resource availability, and establishing collaborative frameworks that support the use of multimedia tools. By addressing these challenges, the Nigerian public administration can improve its effectiveness, transparency, and responsiveness, ultimately leading to better service delivery and





increased public trust. The successful integration of multimedia tools in public administration will be a significant step toward modernizing the public sector and enhancing the quality of governance in Nigeria. The need to assess the level of multimedia literacy among public administrators in Nigeria is more urgent than ever. Identifying the challenges and opportunities surrounding multimedia literacy can provide valuable insights for developing targeted strategies to enhance the skills and competencies of public administrators. By addressing the barriers to multimedia literacy and harnessing available opportunities, Nigeria can move toward a more effective and citizen-centered governance model that meets the demands of the digital age.

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IZU OJUKWU'S NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE: AN EXAMPLE OF *SITANDA* (2004)

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Abstract

Filmmaking is a sophisticated art form. It involves an aggregate of complex and discrete steps to midwife an engaging and believable storyline. A well calculated and directed effort is made with high precision by the director and other technical crew to ensure that an idea is perfectly translated into a finished product that will capture the overall purpose and goal of the initiator of the film project and lead audience into a cinema experience. This study explores the cinematic approaches used in Izu Ojukwu's *Sitanda*, which won him AMAA best director in 2007 to prove that the best director category awards in AMAA has to do with engaging storylines, good cinematographic presentational outlay – expressed in technical mise-en-shot and mise-en-scene constructions, etc. Anchored on Narrative Theory, it employs relevant literatures and a textual reading of *Sitanda* (2004) to examine directorial artistry in Nollywood. Using a qualitative research design, it argues that Ojukwu's narrative style foreshadows a distinctive shot framing, stunning narrative structure, knack for quality acting and other auteurial penchants. The study recommends that.

Keywords: *Izu Ojukwu, AMAA, Sitanda, Narrative Technique, Directing*



Introduction

Film directing is a complex skill that warrants dexterity in understanding the functions of storytelling. It manifests in weaving structural elements together as means of passing a message through an audiovisual narrative medium such as the television or cinema. In Nigeria, as elsewhere, many artistes have distinguished themselves as celebrity auteurs by being skillful in film directing. This is the case with Izu Ojukwu whose film, *Sitanda* (2004) is reputed as a creative masterpiece and won the best director movie in the 2007 edition of the African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA). The emergence of AMAA has made most Nigerian filmmakers to understand the importance of building capacity in film directing, participating in film festivals and growing the film director's skills. The director does not have to make an entry but might just participate to gauge his or her level of skill and capture some useful feedbacks. The Africa Movie Academy Awards proves to be a powerful tool in helping to determine whether film directing skills are refined enough to be competitive. It is proven from subsequent films by Izu Ojukwu such as *76* (2016) that a director can use festivals experience to gauge future works and determine his or her competitive level. For instance, making it to the list of nominees in AMAA has always made it safe for directors to think their works have achieved at least the same level of quality as other films in the category. It has also given them the opportunity to learn from winning films, where their entries do not make it. The problem that this seeks to address is the issue of production standards in films of some Nollywood directors, which do not meet the criteria and standards set by AMAA. In attempt to bridge this professional gap, this study sets out to interrogate AMAA's rules, eligibility and criteria for best director while screening *Sitanda* (2016) from AMAA winning director Izu Ojukwu, as



well as examine the extent to which AMAA can among other things engender standardization in Nollywood productions through training sessions (master classes with successful directors) and regular romance with theoreticians.

The Story of *Sitanda*

Sitanda is a feature film belonging to contemporary romance genre. It is shot in English language even though set in the northern part of Nigeria, which predominantly speaks Hausa language and operates a culture from other parts of the country where English language is often spoken. The movie addresses the importance of matrimonial love, and the inevitable essence of a father figure in the life of children in a home. (or female) and endless possibilities attainable by those who give love a chance into their hearts.

The film opens with Amanzee (Bimbo Manuel) alighting his car with the only available umbrella and entering the house while leaving his wife Ann (Stephane Okereke) on a serious rainy atmosphere. From this one gets to know that there is a crack in the couple's marriage. Regardless, Ann moves for a reconciliation but Amanzee the husband bluffs her. The next day she prepares breakfast waiting for Amanzee. But instead of eating, he pushes off the meal, picks his phone and leaves without saying a word to her. Latter in the night, Amanzee arrives home in same car, a prop with which Ojukwu presents the character as a middle class citizen. Ann quickly welcomes him and is set to serve his meal but Amanzee declines and instead asks that she sits so they can both eat the meal he bought from an eatery. Ordinarily this scene is set as Amanzee's attempt to settle scores with his wife but that is not the case as he seizes the opportunity to remind his wife of what a bad cook she is. He says to her, "I am so happy that now you can see how good food tastes, compared to



all the rubbish you have been serving me all these years,” amidst her going through emotional pain. While Ann is trying to contain abuses, he breaks the news of his dismissal from his job, blaming it on her inability to be a good wife, which again he blames on a rumour that she is from a family of outcasts. Unable to bear her abusive husband, Ann runs back to her aged father in the village, with who she has had a face off for abandoning her without the care of a father figure and letting her grow with strangers. She reconciles with him and inquires about the rumour of their being outcasts.

Through the memory of Ann’s father (Justus Esiri), Ojukwu as the film director takes viewers back to the historical events which took place around the legendary Sitanda, of which he is a descendant. With this narrative device (Flash Back), Ojukwu makes a reverse transition from present to the past leveraging almost every element within his disposal to tell an engaging and convincing narrative. From a modern day building in which environs are, lawns, electricity, textiles, cars and other features of modernity, Ojukwu takes us to a mediaeval mountain on which little Sitanda (John Daniel Uko) is being abducted from his caretaker, an old wise man (Magaji Mijinyawa). Sitanda takes a kingdom where slaves are bought in numbers to work in the farmlands and mines of the king (Sunday Rogo). He grows into a handsome man (Ali Nuhu) and battles the Princess (Ireti Dolyle) who vows to marry or kill him, over Sernu (Zizat Sicic), a maiden at whose faces he continues to stares absentmindedly. Sitanda bares his heart to Sernu and she too loves him in return but the Princess would not seize to come inbetween them. An attempt to both escape from the kingdom fails as Sitanda and Sernu are caught and brought back, lucky to have been caught on a festival day when all offences are pardonable.



Eventually, the king is poisoned by Batu who plans taking over the throne through Sutu, a maiden servant of the king. This brings about questions of about the rightful heir to the throne. Here, viewers are led to know that the Princes is not the biological child of the king, and Sitanda was exchanged by the princess by Batu as a ploy to have the king die without an heir. While the chief and the maiden through whom the king is poisoned are made to face death penalty, Sitanda is called upon to take his father's throne. He gives a condition that he would accept only if he is allowed to marry Sernu, the slave girl. But according to their custom, this is abominable. Now, Prince Sitanda opts to outcast himself from the kingdom with Sermu, offering the throne to the Princess who becomes the Queen.

Again, through the narrator viewers are returned to the modern day scenario where Ann could now see the reason why she is not cursed but rather a royalty. And like her father says, it is not a course curse to be an outcast, suggesting that it also depends on the rationale under which the person is made an outcast. In this renewed mindset, Ann returns to her matrimonial home to face marital challenges, but on getting home, Amanzee has turned to become a good husband. Coincidentally, or by fate of nature, Ann returns on a rainy day. Amanzee having missed her for a while hurries out with the same umbrella in scene one and performs a seeming restitution by standing in the rain while opening the umbrella for Ann to get in. But to show off her new knowledge about love as gained from the story of Sitanda, Ann hesitates to use the umbrella and stands in the rain with Amanzee the husband. The couple re-unites and the credits roll.



Izu Ojukwu's Use of Cinematic Approaches

Ojukwu's directing style is quite distinguished in many ways. From his shot composition, to his mise-en-scen construction, down to his character placement and lighting, one can point at many unique things that makes his style different from other Nollywood directors. Defining style, Bordwell and Thompson make us to understand that style constitutes a system in that it too mobilizes components—particular instantiations of film techniques—according to the principles of organization. In their thoughts, style simply names the film's systematic use of cinematic devices. In other words, it is wholly an ingredient of the film (2008).

- **Continuity Editing**

As the convention permits, this Ojukwu's classic used a variety of classic film editing techniques to blend various shots – some of which were taken from different angles, locations and at different times, bringing them into a seamless and consistent narrative. Indeed, editors are responsible for maintaining the illusion of a film and narrative by hiding the elements and mechanisms at work. The main tool with which they achieve this is continuity editing. *Sitanda* is another proof of the importance of post-production, which has as its integral part, the organization and coordination of the various components of production to tell a cohesive story. To maintain consistency of both time and space in *Sitanda*, measures were taken such as the use of cross dissolve as a transitive device to depict passage in time and to bridge the gap in-between the world of Ann and her father and the world of Sitanda. Although using a flash back technique, the place of transitive tools in the process of every flash back such as cross dissolve, dip to black/white, pull in /out, wipe, etc., must be noted as the linking component that defines continuity in the sequence or process.



Plate 1. Continuity Sequence of Ann and Amanzee clinging glasses from CU to CU.

The major reason for this shot is to portray the mutuality and happy times between the couple. Evidently, Ann's smile is captured on a longer take. (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV)



Plate 2. Continuity Sequence of Sitanda stretching out his arms to Sermu from High Angle to Low Angle.

Apart from depicting Sitanda as a prince of a naturally high status, this shot reverse shot also explains the vantage position of Sitanda against that of Sermu, while the hand represents aid and liberation from bondage. The above agrees with Scholes in his assertion that "film is a language" (1976, p. 419) that can be spoken from any dialect began. (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV).

- **Mise en scène Construction**

Mise en scène refers to the arrangement of the scenery and props on the set of a film production (Aguugo, Shaka & Dede, 2024, p.389). On a general note, Ojukwu's mise en scene application has always shown that he those elements permeates every other visual element, such as colour



and light. He obviously understands that the use of colour is malleable and subjective. Indeed, the role of colour and lighting in creating mood or effect as well as their function in the art and design of film production cannot be over emphasized. It may not be wrong to say that half the budget of *Sitanda* was expended on giving the mise en scene elements of the production. Additionally, Ojukwu uses what Aguugo (2024) refers to as communalistic mise-en-shot to reinforce his mise-en-scene – a cinematographic approach by which the African social order of gathering and expressing the culture of communalism is depicted in a shot. See examples bellow:



Plate 3. A cluster of guards showing an ancient costume, weaponry and environment. With this design, Ojukwu’s film seamlessly communicates to the viewer, the period the story is set as well as the culture and looks of the people who leaved there in. (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV)

The reason why most art departments in film production are the largest is not for the fun of it, but like in *Sitanda*, majority of the elements appearing on screen are either direct components of the production’s design or derivatives of the design. Therefore, it shows clearly why the last scene was astonishingly beautiful, engaging and convincing at once



or why the epic setting of the village was seamlessly understood as mediaeval in both structures, landscape, costumes, props and set without the narrator's voice over making reference to them.

- **Mise En Shot Composition**

For *Sitanda*, Ojukwu's mise en shot brought together the overall effect of every element in front of the camera before the audience and enhanced their journey as the story unfolds. It made the flicks engage the viewers and appeal to them so much that the trials of Sitanda and of Sermu and even Ann felt real. Evidently, it is easy to find viewers who shed tears watching the ordeals of these characters or those who shouted at the priest for wanting to crown Batu as the new king after killing the king, or even those who called Amanzee names because of his cruelty towards Ann. These reactions are as a result of the technicality in Ojukwu's shot composition, which helped to reinforce the actors, designs, props, sets, background, foreground, etc. Shot is to a film what voice is to the human body. While the body may feel hot or cold, and while the mind may feel bad, sad, happy, satisfied, etc., it may never be known except the mouth is used to make it vociferous. In same manner, if all production elements are put together without the shot being used to communicate them, the narrative may end up confusing the audience. Without an extreme close-up shot, the viewer may never understand the clues given by the eye language of an actor to another actor, nor be able to read a vehicle plate number in a movie, nor get to know that the reason why an actor has fallen is because he dashed his toe on a stone. Likewise, it is easy to tell the locale that a film or scene is set on by simply seeing an Ariel shot. You could tell if it is a city, what class of city it is, etc. Therefore, it is with the mise en shot composition that the real story of a film is told. Audio or



sound is only complementary. This is because with or without sound, a motion picture may still tell story with clear message. How this can be achieved is via a well-constructed storyboarding or other techniques of mise-en-shot composition.

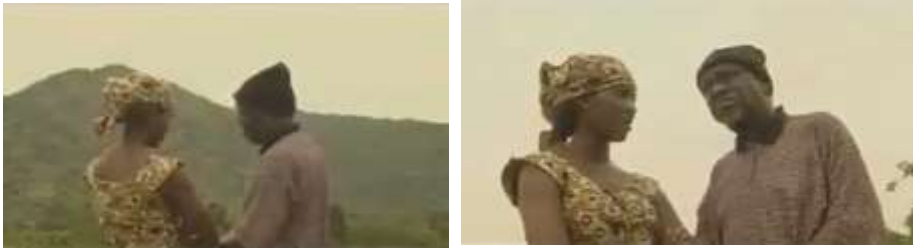


Plate 4. Shot-reverse-shot on Ann and Papa in favour of the aesthetic beauty of the location. (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV).



Plate 7. Silhouette shot of Papa and Ann from Low Angle as they look through the hills (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV).



Plate 8. Matching Eye-Line of Sernu and Sitanda using regular and upturned camera positions (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV)



- **Use of Sound Track**

The sound-track of *Sitanda* is one of the most realistic of Ojukwu's films. Although, the contemporary western soundtracks used in the beginning urban settings dropped the cultural tempo of the latter (those used in the flashback scene), there is need to commend the generality of the sound score. The chanting voice of a 'primitive' northern old folk (seemingly) –took us to the realm intended by the director, which is the world of the old African consciousness and courteousness. The beats and instrumentals all make tuneful sense on the timeline that they are scored.

- **Lighting Technique**



Plate 9. Lighting of the Royal Prison (Exterior / Night). Through this scene among others, one can easily tell that Ojukwu understands the intricacies of film noir (Source: Titus Osikoya YouTube TV)

Ojukwu also used lighting to present his characters in stunning silhouette shots. although, he also shot his silhouette against the natural sun and cloud, the bone of contention remains that Ojukwu is capable of making judicious use of his lighting, including the use of natural lights, such as the sun, moon, lightrays, etc.

Conclusion

This article has guardedly analyzed the directorial approaches of a winner of AMAA best director category –Izu Ojukwu. It therefore becomes evident that the basic criteria for awarding Ojukwu as best director



includes: an engaging storyline, good cinematographic presentation – expressed in the director’s mise en shot and mise en scene constructions, the basic elements of plot and structural arrangements, quality casting, among other functions requiring the director’s impute and supervision. The significance of AMAA and many other film festivals in its cadre has hereby been deduced to positively affect the production standards, professional practices and economic growth of Nollywood. From the data generated, and from physical, virtual and textual interactions on the subject matter, it became clear that Ojukwu’s approach falls within the categorization of auteur directing techniques. Izu Ojukwu is concerned about influencing the ideological construct of the film, leaving his personal signature on every aspect of the film and ensuring that his personal vision is impressed upon it; no wonder he becomes more visible and in some cases even more revered than his actors on the screen because of his approach.

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LINEAR AND NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN CONTEMPORARY NOLLYWOOD CINEMA: AN EXAMPLE OF *LIVING IN BONDAGE* (1992) AND *OCTOBER 1* (2014)

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of narrative structure in Nollywood cinema through a comparative analysis of two pivotal films: Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* (1992) and Kunle Afolayan's *October 1* (2014). Drawing on Temporal narrative theory, particularly Genette's framework, the research investigates how these films represent distinct approaches to storytelling in Nigerian cinema. Through qualitative analysis, this study demonstrates how *Living in Bondage's* linear structure effectively reinforced cultural values and established narrative conventions that influenced subsequent Nollywood productions, particularly in its treatment of moral themes and character development. In contrast, *October 1's* sophisticated non-linear approach, employing flashbacks and temporal shifts, reveals the industry's technical and artistic maturation. The analysis shows how these structural choices serve both artistic and cultural purposes, with linear narrative supporting clear moral messaging and emotional engagement in *Living in Bondage*, while *October 1's* Non-linear approach enables complex exploration of colonial legacy and national identity. This comparative study illuminates Nollywood's narrative evolution from straightforward chronological storytelling to more complex structural approaches, reflecting the industry's growing sophistication while maintaining cultural relevance.

Keywords: *Living in Bondage*, moral discourse, narrative structure, *October 1*



Introduction

The Nigerian film industry has developed its own unique storytelling conventions, often influenced by indigenous narrative traditions, social values, and audience expectations. Studies by Obiaya (n.d) suggest that Nollywood's preference for linear narratives in its early years was partly influenced by the need to establish clear moral messages and maintain audience engagement across lengthy running times, often spanning multiple parts. Narrative structure is the lifeblood of audiovisual/filmic storytelling, determining how events unfold and how audiences engage with the story.

In African cinema, and Nollywood in particular, the choice of narrative structure often reflects both artistic vision and cultural storytelling traditions. Linear narrative structure, characterized by its chronological progression of events, has been a dominant form in Nollywood, particularly in its formative years (Haynes, 2016). For instance, *Living in Bondage* (1992), widely regarded as the film that launched the modern Nollywood industry, exemplifies the effective use of linear narrative structure. However, the evolution of Nollywood cinema has also witnessed significant transformations in narrative techniques, with contemporary filmmakers increasingly experimenting with complex storytelling structures. Among these developments, the adoption of non-linear narrative structures represents a notable shift from traditional chronological storytelling methods. Kunle Afolayan's *October 1* (2014) stands as a prominent example of successful nonlinear storytelling in contemporary Nollywood, employing sophisticated temporal shifts to enhance its thematic resonance and psychological depth.

Gérard Genette in his seminal work *Narrative Discourse: An*



Essay in Method (1983) provides a systematic approach to analyzing time in narrative structures. While originally developed for literary analysis, scholars like Bordwell (1985) and Thompson (2020) have successfully adapted it for film studies. Genette's theory centers on three main temporal aspects: order, duration and frequency. Temporal Narrative theory provides a robust framework for analyzing both linear and nonlinear narratives in film. Its systematic approach to understanding temporal relationships, patterns, and manipulations offers valuable insights into narrative construction and effect. For Nollywood cinema analysis, this theory proves particularly valuable in understanding how different temporal approaches serve story telling purposes and contributes to narrative impact. This will be a veritable tool for understanding linear and non-linear narratives as discussed here.

The concept of Linear and Non-Linear Narrative Structures

Linear Narrative Structure

Linear narrative structure in cinema follows a straightforward chronological progression, where events unfold in sequential order from beginning to end. This approach aligns with traditional storytelling methods and creates a clear cause-and-effect relationship between events. This structure particularly resonates with African oral storytelling traditions, where chronological progression helps maintain clarity and reinforces moral lessons. It represents one of the most fundamental and traditional approaches to storytelling in cinema, characterized by its chronological progression of events from beginning to end. This approach mirrors natural human experience and perception of time, making it particularly effective for audience engagement and story comprehension. In film contexts, linear narrative structure typically adheres to the classical three-act structure: setup, confrontation, and resolution (Syd A.



1978 as cited in Maio, 2023). This framework provides several key advantages:

i. Temporal Coherence

Linear narratives maintain what Bordwell (1985) terms "temporal coherence," where the relationship between cause and effect is clearly delineated. This clarity helps audiences understand: The logical progression of events, character motivations and development, the consequences of actions and choices and the build-up of dramatic tension.

ii. Cultural and historical context

Linear narrative structure has deep roots in traditional storytelling across cultures. In African contexts, particularly within Nigerian oral traditions, linear storytelling serves to preserve historical knowledge, transmit cultural values, moral instruction and community building through shared narrative experiences.

iii. Psychological Impact

Studies in narrative psychology suggest that linear storytelling aligns with fundamental patterns of human cognition. According to Herman et al (2012) research, chronological narratives: Reduce cognitive load during story processing, enhance emotional investment in character journeys, facilitate better understanding of complex moral themes and support the formation of meaningful connections between events

iv. Cultural Accessibility

Linear narrative structure's universal accessibility makes it particularly valuable in contexts where films target diverse audience demographics, cultural or moral messages need clear communication, educational objectives are primary and community engagement is a key goal.

Non-linear Narrative Structure

Non-linear narrative structure represents a departure from conventional



chronological storytelling, characterized by temporal discontinuity and narrative fragmentation. This approach often employs techniques such as flashbacks, flash-forwards, and parallel storylines to create complex narrative patterns. In film studies, non-linear structures are particularly valued for their ability to create psychological complexity, enhance thematic depth, generate suspense through strategic information revelation and mirror human memory and consciousness. While it is a truism that Nollywood has traditionally favored linear storytelling approaches, recent years have seen increased experimentation with non-linear structures. It can be said that this shift reflects growing technical sophistication, influence of global cinema, desire to address complex historical and social themes and evolution of audience preferences.

Analysis of Living in Bondage

Title: *Living in Bondage*
 Year of Prod.: 1992
 Producer: Obi-Opia C.
 Prod. Company: Nek video links. Nollywood.
 Major Casts: Kenneth Okonkwo,

Synopsis

Living in Bondage is the story of Andy Okeke (Kenneth Okonkwo), a young man whose desperate pursuit of wealth leads him to join a secret cult that demands the sacrifice of his wife, Merit (Nnenna Nwabueze). Blinded by greed and desperation, Andy agrees, leading to Merit's mysterious death. Andy's newfound wealth brings temporary luxury and admiration, but it also plunges him into a regrettable world of guilt, paranoia and spiritual torment as he is haunted by Merit's vengeful ghost and trapped in a cycle of fear and despair. Andy embarks on a desperate





quest for redemption. The film highlights the dangers of greed, the consequences of compromising one's morals and the power of repentance. *Living in Bondage* is widely regarded as the film that launched the modern Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, blending supernatural horror, moral lessons and gripping drama into a groundbreaking cinematic experience.

The film's linear structure allows for a clear progression from Andy's initial state of poverty through his moral decline, culminating in his eventual redemption. The chronological ordering of events here serves several key purposes which include:

a. Character Development

The chronological progression of linear narrative structure supports natural character evolution through clear establishment of baseline characteristics, visible growth or deterioration over time, understandable responses to events, and logical personality transformations. In *Living in bondage*, Andy's transformation from a sympathetic protagonist to an antagonist is clearly traced and we see his gradual moral deterioration therefore, his eventual redemption feels earned through the sequential presentation of events.

b. Thematic Reinforcement

Linear structure facilitates the organic development of themes through progressive exploration of ideas, building of symbolic resonance, accumulation of meaning and clear moral or philosophical progression. In the film under study, the cause-and-effect relationship between choices and consequences is emphasized. The price of materialism and moral corruption is clearly illustrated and the spiritual journey from sin to redemption follows a clear path.

c. Cultural Context





Traditional moral values are reinforced through sequential storytelling. The film's commentary on contemporary Nigerian society is strengthened by showing the progression of events. Religious and spiritual elements are integrated naturally into the narrative flow

Key Narrative Segments

The film's linear structure can be broken down into distinct segments that build upon each other:

1. Establishment

(Opening Acts) which includes the introduction to Andy's financial struggles followed by the presentation of his relationship with Merit and the establishment of societal pressures and expectations.

2. Rising Action

Linear progression allows for the systematic building of tension which involves gradual introduction of complications, progressive intensification of conflicts, systematic revelation of character depths and building toward climactic moments. These we see in Living in bondage in Andy's introduction to the cult, his internal struggle with the sacrifice requirement and the ritual sacrifice of Merit.

3. Complications, Climax and Resolution

In the film we see the complications as in Andy's initial success and wealth followed by the haunting by Merit's ghost and the deterioration of his mental state. The film's climax and resolution cover Andy's confession and repentance, his spiritual liberation and final redemption.

Impact of Linear Structure on Audience Engagement

The linear narrative structure of *Living in Bondage* contributes significantly to its effectiveness by:

1. Accessibility

It provided an easy-to-follow storyline for diverse audience



demographics which enables clear moral messaging and strong emotional engagement through sequential development

2. *Cultural Resonance*

It aligns with traditional Nigerian method of storytelling with clear presentation of moral lessons and enhanced understanding of social commentary.

3. *Dramatic Impact*

It builds tension through sequential events wherefore; it creates meaningful character arcs and establishes clear cause-and-effect relationships.

Influence of narrative linear structure on Nollywood Cinema

Living in Bondage established several narrative conventions that influenced subsequent Nollywood productions. The film's successful use of linear narrative structure created a template that many subsequent Nollywood films followed. This approach arguably prevents films from dealing with similar themes of wealth, morality, and supernatural consequences.

Cultural Storytelling

The linear structure's effectiveness in conveying moral messages and cultural values led to its adoption as a preferred narrative form in Nollywood's early years. This choice aligned with the industry's role as a vehicle for cultural expression and moral instruction.

Technical Considerations

The straightforward nature of linear narrative structure also proved practical for an industry that was developing its technical capabilities. This approach no doubt simplifies production processes and helps maintain clarity despite technical limitations.

On the one hand, the success of *Living in Bondage* demonstrates



the effectiveness of linear narrative structure in Nollywood cinema, particularly when dealing with themes of moral corruption and redemption. The chronological progression allows for clear character development, audience understanding of motivations, emotional investment in character journeys plus recognition of moral choices and consequences. The thematic clarity is seen in direct presentation of moral messages and enhanced social commentary with strong cultural resonance. Its audience engagement is superb and cuts across demographics. On the other hand, the success of *October 1*'s non-linear structure demonstrates three realities first, the narrative sophistication which entails complex storytelling viability, audience capability, and technical possibility. Second thematic enhancement seen in the film's historical complexity representation, psychological depth achievement and cultural meaning layering and finally, industry development which entails production quality advancement, storytelling evolution and global competitiveness

Analysis of *October 1*

Synopsis

October 1 is set 1960, on the eve of Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule. It follows **Inspector Danladi Waziri**, a dedicated police officer from Northern Nigeria, who is dispatched to the small, remote town of **Akote** to investigate a series of brutal and ritualistic murders of young women. As Waziri delves deeper into the case, he uncovers a web of dark secrets, cultural tensions, and colonial legacies that threaten to unravel the fragile unity of the soon-to-be independent nation. With the deadline of **October 1, 1960** looming the date Nigeria will officially gain independence. Waziri races against time to unmask the killer and confront the sinister forces at play.



Structurally, *October 1* employs a sophisticated non-linear structure that weaves together multiple temporal threads of present timeline (1960) and recent past. For the present timeline, we see investigation of serial murders, approaching Nigerian independence and detective Danladi Waziri's investigation. In the recent past the audience is psychologically connected to the killer's activities, community tensions and political developments. Also interwoven is the distant past; colonial experiences, character backstories and historical context.

Narrative Techniques

The film begins with detective Waziri arriving in Akote to investigate murders, immediately plunging viewers into the story's crisis. This technique creates immediate engagement, establishes narrative tension, sets up mystery elements and provides structural framework for flashbacks. The film employs flashbacks to reveal character motivations through gradual exposition of trauma development of psychological complexity and building of character backstories. The historical context of the film includes colonial period representation, cultural transformation and social change documentation while the thematic development involves exploration of identity, investigation of colonial legacy and examination of trauma. The film also uses flashback to achieve information control, suspense building and mystery development.

Technical Implementation

The film employs various techniques to manage its non-linear structure. These techniques include visual cues, transitional devices like sound bridges, match cuts and thematic connections. It also employs temporal markers like date indicators, historical events and cultural references.



The Influence of Non-Linear Narrative on Nollywood Cinema

October 1's successful implementation of non-linear structure has influenced Nollywood in various ways:

- a. Technical advancement thereby encourages elevated production standards, enhanced storytelling sophistication and improved narrative complexity.
- b. Artistic development. This is expressed in expanded narrative possibilities, increased experimental approaches and enhanced creative freedom
- c. Industry recognition. Afolanya's *October 1* increased international festival success opportunities for Nollywood film. The film's nonlinear approach contributes to its cultural impact through historical representation, narrative innovation, traditional storytelling evolution, modern technique integration and cultural expression advancement. The film also gives sophisticated viewing experience, enhanced emotional connection and deeper thematic understanding to its audience.

Conclusion

Living in Bondage uses linear narrative structure which effectively reinforces cultural values, supports clear moral messaging and character development, establishes narrative conventions that influenced subsequent Nollywood productions, enhances audience engagement through accessible storytelling methods and aligns with traditional Nigerian storytelling practices.

Non-linear Narrative Structure (*October 1*). The second film titled *October 1* demonstrates significant technical and artistic maturation in Nollywood, successfully implements complex temporal shifts to enhance thematic depth, enables sophisticated exploration of historical and



psychological themes. It maintains cultural relevance while advancing narrative techniques and shows industry capability to handle complex narrative forms. There is also a clear progression from straightforward chronological storytelling to more complex structural approaches.

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AN ANALYSIS OF “THE DAZZLING MIRAGE”, TUNDE KELANI’S FILM ON SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA

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Abstract

This article examines styles and concept of film directing for health campaign. Focus is placed on the movie titled “*The Dazzling Mirage*” by Tunde Kelani, one of Nigeria’s exceptional filmmakers. It provides insight and exposes how sickle cell disease can be avoided with necessary precautionary measures. Owing to the facts that sickle cells die early, which causes a constant shortage of red blood cells. Also, when they travel through small blood vessels, they get stuck and clog the blood flow. This can cause pain and other serious complications (healthy problems) such as infections, acute chest syndrome and stroke. It adopts the analytical style of criticism while using the qualitative method of documentation. The findings indicate that ignorance continues to persist among individuals who engage in procreation under the guise of love, without seeking proper health advice. This article recommends and provides insights that sickle cell disease can be avoided if necessary precautionary measures are observed and followed in choosing spouses rightly before procreation or consecrating any marital union.

Introduction

Sickle cell anaemia (SCD), the most common inheritable disease in Africa, leading to public problem in the region and elsewhere where descendants of Africans have settled, is recognized as a major cause of morbidity and mortality with tremendous social and economic impact mainly due to the recurrent acute episodic clinical events called “crises” and hospitalization worldwide (Lena et al., 2012). Given that sickle cell



disease (SCD) is an inheritable blood disorder primarily affecting individuals of African, Asian and South American descent, as well as the middle eastern regions (CDC, 2020b), is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders. SCD is marked with many pain episodes for patients, usually called pain crisis.

Pain crisis represent the main reason for frequent hospital visits and admissions among SCD patients, as well as the reason for SCD patients' dependence on opioid analgesics for managing pain. SCD, at times referred to as the "forgotten disease," is regarded as a neglected public health condition. SCD is more prevalent among people whose ancestors are from sub-Saharan Africa; Spanish-speaking regions in the Western Hemisphere; Saudi Arabia; India; and Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy (CDC, 2020). Currently, an estimated 300, 000 affected babies are born each year, more than 80% of whom are in Africa.

Due to recent population migrations, increasing numbers of individuals affected by SCD are in countries that are not historically endemic for malaria, such as the US. It is estimated that 100,000 Americans are affected with SCD, the majority being of African descent (Hassell, 2010,2016). the numbers affected with SCD are predicted to increase exponentially Piel et al. (2013) estimate that between 2010 and 2050, the overall number of births affected by SCD will be 14,242,000; human migration and further globalization will continue to expand SCD throughout the world in the coming decades. While 75% or more of newborns with SCD in sub-Saharan Africa do not make their fifth birthday (McGann, 2014), in medium- to well-resourced countries almost all of affected babies can now expect to live to adulthood but overall survival still lags behind that of a non-SCD person by 20–30 years (Telfer



et al., 2007; Quinn et al., 2010; Elmariah et al., 2014; Gardner et al., 2016; Serjeant et al., 2018). Despite these global prevalence figures, and the fact that SCD is by far the largest public health concern among the hemoglobinopathies, it was not until 2006 when the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized SCD as a global public health problem. There are a few treatment options for people with sickle cell anaemia. These options include blood transfusions, hydroxyurea, penicillin, folic acid, iron chelators, antiemetics, and many others (Maakaron & Taher, Sickle Cell Anaemia Medication, 2014). There are a few ways that it could be prevented by having both parents screened for the trait to see the probability of the child having sickle cell anaemia. In the last 50 years, tremendous progress has been made in understanding the pathophysiology and pathobiological complexities of SCD, but developing treatments has been disproportionately slow and elusive; a history of Perils and Progress. It is believed that in the next 30 years, the therapeutic landscape for SCD will change due to a combination of recent advancements in genetics and genomics, an increase in the number of competing clinical trials, and also an increased awareness from the funding bodies.

Film been a valuable tool for education and information, offering a unique way to engaging its audience and convey complex ideas, scholars have documented its effectiveness in various contexts. Film as a medium of communication offers numerous educational benefits which also acknowledges the challenges of adapting films for educational settings by ensuring their effective integration into the regular school curriculum. In addition, educators have successfully integrated film into their teaching practices, using it to develop critical thinking skills, promote cultural awareness, health enlightenment, enhance readers and



viewers engagements alike. This article utilizes it to communicate information about the causes, symptoms, treatments and prevention of sickle cell anaemia.

Tunde Kelani been one of Nigeria's foremost filmmakers showcased his craft by introducing creative and technical decisions during the production of the film "*The Dazzling Mirage*". In the light of this, cinematography which comprises of camera angles, lighting, movement, production design/set construction, costumes, props, were adequately and creatively utilized to pass an in-depth mise-en-scene.

The incorporation of sickle cell anaemia challenges into film and media studies is as a result of the influence of agenda setting informed film theory and thus, Beja (52) notes that, "films surround us every day of our lives and can hardly be avoided in modern society. With the theoretical and clinical analysis of the challenges of sickle cell anaemia this article has shed light on contemporary psychosomatic understanding of the sufferer's pain and that of the society at large.

Using the textual analysis method and literary investigative approach, this article examines how sickle cell sufferers recuperate from traumatic and crisis experiences.

History of Sickle Cell Anaemia

In 1910, Herrick described an anaemia characterized by bizarre, sickle-shaped cells. The role of deoxygenating was discovered in the 1920's by Hahn and Gillespie. The hereditary nature of the disease was suspected but not demonstrated until 1949 by Dr. James V. Neel. The association with haemoglobin was discovered by Linus Pauling and Harvey Itano in 1951 and the actual amino acid substitution by Vernon Ingram in 1956. Thus the 100th anniversary marks the discovery of this ancient disease from Africa by western medicine and naming of the disease for a simple



agricultural implement to which a medical resident in 1910 likened the shape of the abnormal cells he saw under the microscope (Herrick, 2001).

The Symptoms of Sickle Cell Anaemia

The following is symptoms and complications associated with sickle cell anaemia. Each child may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms and complications may include, but are not limited to, the following: The most common symptom of anaemia is fatigue (feeling tired or weak). Other signs and symptoms of anaemia may include: Shortness of breath, Dizziness, Headaches, Coldness in the hands and feet, Paler than normal skin or mucous membranes (the tissue that lines the nose, mouth, and other organs and body cavities) and Jaundice (Platt et al., 1994).

"The theoretical framework is termed as the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed both metaphorically and literally for a research study" (Osanloo & Grant, 2016, p. 1). "According to these authors, the theoretical framework fits as the structure and support for the rationale for the paper. The Agenda-Setting Theory the theoretical foundations for this paper.

The Agenda-Setting Theory

This theory states that mass media regulate the issues that concern the public rather than the public's views. Under this theory, the problems that receive the most attention from media are issues that the media consider important. This means that the media is decisive on what issues and stories the public thinks about. Therefore, when the media fails to address a specific issue, it becomes ostracized in the minds of the public (Hanson).

When certain detractors claim that a particular media outlet has an agenda, they are drawing on this theory. Agendas can range from a



superficial liberal unfairness in the news media to the propagation of merciless capitalist ethics in films. For example, the agenda-setting theory explains such phenomena as the rise of public opinion against drug abuse. Before the mass media began taking an antidrug abuse stance, drug abuse was considered a personal health issue. By promoting antidrug abuse sentiments through advertisements, public relations campaigns, and a variety of media outlets, the mass media moved drug abuse into the public arena, making it a public health issue rather than a personal health issue (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Media scholars who specialise on agenda-setting research study the relative importance of an issue and ~~then attempt to understand~~ what causes it to be important. The relative salience of an issue regulates its place within the public agenda, which in turn influences public policy creation. Agenda-setting research traces public policy from its roots as an agenda through its promotion in the mass media and finally to its final form as a law or policy (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Film Directing

Film directing, simply put, is story telling through shots. It is a multifaceted and complex process. In most cases, it involves three main phases, Ekwuazi (1993, p. 5). According to Benson:

A film is born in my head and I kill it on paper. It is brought back to life by the actors and then killed again in the camera. It is then resurrected into a final life in the editing room where the dismembered pieces are assembled into their finished form (as cited in Bordwell and Thompson, 2003, p. 20).

Film directing is focused on developing and implementing the overall creative vision of a script, as well as working with actors on crafting performances. (2024, America Film Institute). The process of film



making which is essentially a three-stage procedure captures all that happen from script to screen. The script is the skeleton that takes on flesh as the production progresses and it is dressed in the studio while editing, after which it is ready to go for screening by the audience.

In other words, each of the three stages of film production simulates fundamental importance in the chain of production, the fact is that one cannot do without the other and no attempt should be made to exaggerate one to the disadvantage of the other. As expected, a film production that is not perfectly arranged in terms [of preparation is a disaster in the making. Even in Nollywood, wherein a sizable number of the films made are improvisational, success hangs on the effort of key creative, imaginative and creative personnel

Biography of Tunde Kelan

Tunde Kelani, also known as TK was born in Lagos in 1948 but at age of five, he was sent to live with his grandparents at Abeokuta in Ogun. He attended the Oke-Ona Primary School in Ikija, Abeokuta and had his secondary school education at Abeokuta Grammar School. During this time, his grandfather was a Chief (the Balogun of Ijaiye Kukudi) and he was privileged to witness Yoruba ways of life, their religion, literature, philosophy, environments and worldview in arts at close quarters. He was introduced to Yoruba literature from an early stage in his life and is greatly influenced by theatre as the Yorubas had a strong travelling theatre tradition at that time.



Photo of Tunde Kelan

When he was in secondary school, he had the privilege to see some Yoruba theatre classics including *“The Palm-Wine Drunkard”* directed by Tunde Awosanmi, *“Oba Koso”* directed by Duro Ladipo, *“Kurumi”* directed by Anucharan, Ogunde plays and more.

He got interested in photography from primary school. Throughout his secondary school education, he was actively investing money and taking time to learn photography. So, he became an apprentice photographer after he finished secondary school. Later, he trained at the then Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) and went further to attend the London Film School. In 1970s, Kelani worked as a BBC TV and Reuter’s correspondent, and in Nigerian TV. For Reuters he travelled to Ethiopia to cover the drought and to Zimbabwe three times to cover independence there. Once he finished from the London Film School, he returned to Nigeria and co-produced his first film *“The Dilemma of Rev. Father Michael”* directed by Adebayo Faleti. Tunde Kelani has also worked on most feature films produced in Nigeria in his capacity as a



cinematographer. Some of the 16mm feature films he worked on include: “Anikura” as directed by Oyewole Olowomojuore, “*Taxi Driver*” as directed by Iwa and Fopomoyo. In 1990, Kelani was an assistant director and an actor in the 1990 film “*Mister Johnson*” the first American film shot on location in Nigeria, Starring Pierce Brosnan and Maynard Eziashi, the film was based on a 1939 novel by Joyce Cary.

TK developed a soft spot for reading at a very young age and this later developed into his favourite pastime. Starting with the five works of D. O. Fagunwa, which include *Igbo Olodumare*, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale*, *Aditu Olodumare*, *Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje* and *Ireke Onibudo*. He immersed himself in any literal work he could get his hands on in both Yoruba and English language. Once he discovered the relationship between literature and drama, he adopted literary adaptations as a working model for his filmmaking. Not only does he love the books, he loves the authors as he is always found hanging out among them. His favourite writers include Kola Akinlade, Pa Amos Tutuola, Cyprian Ekwensi, Akinwunmi Ishola, Adebayo Faleti, Wale Ogunyemi and Wole Soyinka.

In 1991, Tunde Kelani started his own production company, Mainframe Films and Television Productions – Opomulero, so he could produce films and not just lend technical support. Having emerged from the world of theatre and literature, adaptations of books and plays for cinema are the core of Kalani’s filmmaking practice and through them he celebrates writers and their work to what he sees as a public that reads less and less.



Filmography of Tunde Kelan

Orun Mooru

<i>Ti Oluwa Nile Part 1-3</i>	released 1993
<i>Ayo Ni Mofe part 1 and 2</i>	released in 1994
<i>Koseegbe</i>	released in 1995
<i>O Le Ku</i>	released in 1997
<i>Saworoide</i>	released in 1999
<i>White Handkerchief</i>	released in 2000
<i>Thunderbolt</i>	released in 2021
<i>Agogo Eswo</i>	released in 2002
<i>The Campus Queen</i>	released in 2004
<i>Abeni</i>	released in 2006
<i>Life In Slow Motion</i>	released in 2008
<i>Arugba</i>	released in 2010
<i>Maami</i>	released in 2011
<i>Dazzling Mirage</i>	released in 2015
<i>Ayinla</i>	released in 2021

Synopsis of “The Dazzling Mirage”

“*The Dazzling Mirage*”, a beautiful story revolves around a young woman named Funmi, who is diagnosed with sickle cell anaemia. The film explores her struggles with the disease, as well as the societal stigma surrounding it. It also depicts the hard existence lived by sickle-cell disease sufferers, and how society can either support or discourage them. The movie educates viewers on the need to check their genetic compatibility, as love is no excuse to subject a child to a life of pain. The effects of genetic incompatibility do not affect directly the parents as much as it does the unborn child who may grow to hate their parents for their avoidable ignorance.



Funmi, a successful career lady excelled in her chosen field in the public relation industry, the stress involved in pulling off the job threatened to have her hospitalised. Akindele (Sanya), the man she is in a romantic relationship with happens to be a mummy's boy but is nowhere to be found in her difficult times. Akindele is clearly unsure of his place with Funmi, and besides his controlling mother, he makes most of his decisions personally. Akindele's mother, Mrs Fadipe (Ajai-Lycett), makes it clear that she is not support of her son's relationship with a sickle-cell disease sufferer (Funmi), and is determined to ensure they do not end up together. Fortunately, table turned and her boss Dotun (Kunle Afolayan) fell in love with her after several consultations from medical and health specialist on the challenges and management of sickle cell anaemia. They had a colourful wedding, tarted a family together and lived happily ever after.

Settings

"The Dazzling Mirage" is a 2014 Nigerian drama film directed by Tunde Kelani. The movie is set in modern-day Nigeria, precisely in the city of Lagos and the town of Ibadan. A beautiful masterpiece with a blend of African and urban lifestyle. *"The Dazzling Mirage"* movie is like one never seen in a long time in Nigerian cinema. It exposes the beauty of being an African through tactful display of characters, costumes, fantastic show of artworks, creative cinematography, perfect sounds, high ends filmic special effects and in addition to the props and sets used in each scene of the film were well properly delivered. The film also showcases the country's rich cultural heritage, particularly in the Yoruba tradition.

The setting of the movie is significant, as it highlights the challenges faced by people living with sickle cell anaemia in Nigeria. Overall, the setting of *"The Dazzling Mirage"* provides a unique backdrop



for a powerful and thought-provoking story.

Analysis of “*The Dazzling Mirage*”

“*The Dazzling Mirage*” is an expository film enhanced with African culture and norms which serves as voice for millions of people battling with the deadly scourge called sickle cell anaemia and the challenges that comes along with it. The movie also stimulates the minds of the sickle cell patients by encouraging them on how to accept who they are, find strength in their weakness and carry on with their normal lives but to never forget their self-motivated strength limits.

Visible in this movie as a central motif is the challenges sickle cell sufferers frequently encounter and other issues of thematic concern raised and analysed. “*The Dazzling Mirage*” is directed and produced with a conscious exposition of the degrading societal values, teaching priceless lessons about health, love and life. Though simplistic in a predictable style, the story indeed imposes soberness on the viewer, in its revealing formula of the challenges ravaging a healthy living, career and wellness. For instance, in the sequence below, Funmi with his boss Dotun in a heated confrontational argument on why she is not fit to continue with her job because of her health status, she is seen furiously objecting to that stance knowing how much she has put in and the resounding successes and results she has gotten as well in making the company bid and win several contracts. Here in the sequence 1, the proper use of mise-en-scene was put to use and the director made use of a wide shot which is a fundamental aspect of filmmaking that serves several purposes like establishment of the scene, providing visual context, showing action and movement, creating sense of scale, guiding the audience attention, setting the tone and mood, and providing visual balance shot to accommodate all characters on set. Thereafter, to keep the intense argument, the director



incorporated the use of medium shots and close up shots in other to give room for details and textures, emotional expression, building up tension and suspense and guiding the audience's attention.



Sequence 1. A meeting between Funmi and Dotun.

Tunde Kelani Liberal Directorial Approach

Tunde Kelani, a foremost film director understands his onions and practically knows the professionals in the movie industry and has closely followed everyone's success story.

Before he starts shooting, he takes the cast and crew through a lot of rehearsals, carry out pre-production designing; makes sure every set is ready. Thereafter, he takes the cast and crew through what he calls "a proper script breakdown" from which they prepare the schedule and storyboards. As a director, he dictates the positioning of the camera, the angles and shots to be taken and he feels that however good a D.O.P. is, he must not unduly interfere in the actual activities of directing the film. The mise-en-scene of his films is a combination of actual location, set constructions and improvisation. This, to a large extent, depends on the



financial resources available.

Tunde Kelani blocks every scene established on the various elements of production. He comes to the location with a broad creative idea, evaluates what is available on ground, and utilisable. This he confirms: "so the thing is, you will have roughly an idea but when you step on the floor, you look at all the other accessories and the time available, that is the only way you can decide this is what we are going to do" (Kelani, 2015, nterview). He uses camera language firmly as an element in telling stories. He does not use equipment for fascination or sheer aesthetics. He feels that the type of equipment, the movement of camera or the angle of shot ought not to be based on anything else but the story that is being told. He is particularly very conscious of continuity in his films.

Conclusion

Sickle cell is a mis-normal that has shortened the destiny of young men and women who have great prospects and aspirations to pursue worldwide. It replicates in the social functions and reconstruct the perspective of negligent individuals who still neglect the warnings of proper genotype match and spousal pairing.

This film has revealed that majority of sickle cell patients suffer severe pains as a result of their mismatched genetic components. It further reveals that parents ignore clinical counselling advice before getting into a marriage relationship.

Interestingly, "*The Dazzling Mirage*" reveals that even in the face of such experience, people can successfully integrate their life-threatening health challenges into building a successful career and family.

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TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF MULTIMEDIA

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Abstract

This study explores the role of multimedia in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria, examining both its potential and the challenges it faces. With the growing demand for improved governance and citizen engagement, multimedia tools such as social media, websites, and mobile applications have emerged as vital channels for communication between public officials and the populace. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing surveys and interviews to gather data from a sample of 5,800 respondents, which revealed that over 74% believe multimedia significantly enhances transparency and accountability. The findings highlight a strong public consensus regarding the effectiveness of multimedia tools in fostering citizen engagement and facilitating real-time information dissemination. However, the study also identified challenges such as limited digital literacy, access to technology, and varying levels of skepticism among citizens. To address these issues, the study recommends enhancing digital literacy programs, developing interactive multimedia platforms, establishing communication guidelines for public officials, and conducting regular assessments of multimedia initiatives. The results underscore the necessity for policymakers to prioritize the integration of multimedia in governance frameworks to build public trust and ensure effective communication. By leveraging multimedia tools strategically, Nigeria's public administration can enhance transparency, promote accountability, and ultimately foster a more participatory democratic process. This research contributes to the growing discourse on the intersection of technology and governance, providing insights into how multimedia can be utilized to strengthen public administration in Nigeria.

Keywords: The Role of Multimedia, Transparency, Accountability



Introduction

The advent of multimedia technologies has revolutionized the landscape of public administration, particularly in enhancing transparency and accountability in governance. Multimedia, encompassing tools such as videos, infographics, interactive websites, and social media platforms, provides citizens with access to real-time information, fostering greater public oversight and participation in government processes (Bertot et al., 2010). In Nigeria, where corruption and opaque governance have historically hindered development, the adoption of multimedia offers a significant opportunity to bridge the gap between government actions and public accountability.

Globally, the United Nations (2019) recognizes transparency and accountability as key pillars of effective governance. Multimedia tools play a crucial role in making public administration more transparent by providing easy access to information on governmental activities, public spending, and decision-making processes. For instance, in the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer, 74% of respondents indicated that they trust governments more when they openly share data and decisions, emphasizing the importance of transparency in modern governance.

In the Nigerian context, multimedia has become an increasingly critical tool for civic engagement and scrutiny of government actions. For instance, platforms like Twitter and YouTube have provided Nigerian citizens with the means to expose instances of corruption and administrative inefficiency (Olaniyan & Okeke-Uzodike, 2021). However, the integration of multimedia into public administration also presents several challenges, including issues of digital literacy, infrastructure, and the regulatory environment (Agbaje, 2022).



Transparency and accountability are cornerstones of effective governance, particularly in the public administration sector. Globally, governments are increasingly relying on information and communication technologies (ICTs) to foster open governance, and multimedia has emerged as a critical tool in this effort. Multimedia platforms—including social media, digital news outlets, and interactive portals—allow for the dissemination of information and encourage public engagement, which in turn holds public officials accountable for their actions (Bertot et al., 2012). The World Bank (2022) highlights that the integration of multimedia in governance not only enhances transparency but also increases citizen participation, trust, and the effectiveness of public institutions.

In Nigeria, the issues of corruption and lack of transparency have long hindered public administration. According to Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index, Nigeria ranks 150 out of 180 countries, indicating a significant lack of trust in government accountability mechanisms (Transparency International, 2023). Multimedia tools have the potential to address this issue by providing real-time access to government information and creating channels for public discourse, scrutiny, and feedback. The rapid proliferation of smartphones and social media platforms in Nigeria has opened new avenues for citizen engagement with governance, which was previously limited by traditional media (Oyeleye & Ojebola, 2020).

One of the most significant instances of multimedia use for accountability in Nigeria occurred during the #EndSARS movement in 2020, where digital platforms were instrumental in amplifying citizens' voices against police brutality. The role of social media, live video streams, and user-generated content allowed for transparency on an



unprecedented scale, with millions of Nigerians engaging in the discourse, which pressured the government to respond to the demands of the protests (Afolayan, 2021). This movement underscored the potential of multimedia in reshaping governance and increasing accountability in Nigeria.

Despite these positive developments, several challenges hinder the widespread adoption of multimedia in public administration. Digital literacy remains a significant barrier in Nigeria, as a large portion of the population lacks the skills to effectively use multimedia tools for civic engagement. A study by Nwachukwu and Eze (2021) revealed that only 40% of Nigerians possess adequate digital literacy skills, limiting their ability to utilize multimedia for holding public officials accountable. Furthermore, Nigeria's digital infrastructure is underdeveloped, with unreliable internet access and frequent power outages posing significant obstacles to the use of multimedia in governance.

Additionally, the regulatory environment in Nigeria presents further challenges. Government-imposed restrictions on digital platforms, such as the 2021 Twitter ban, create a chilling effect on the use of multimedia for promoting transparency and accountability (Eze, 2022). These issues highlight the need for comprehensive policy reforms and investments in digital infrastructure to enable the full potential of multimedia in Nigerian public administration.

This study explores the role of multimedia in enhancing transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria, examining both the opportunities it provides and the challenges that must be addressed for its successful implementation. By assessing current trends and potential barriers, this research seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on the use of ICTs in governance.



This literature review explores the contributions of multimedia to transparency and accountability in governance, its adoption in Nigeria, and the associated challenges.

Multimedia technologies, such as videos, infographics, social media, and interactive websites, have revolutionized the way governments engage with citizens. Bertot et al. (2010) argue that multimedia platforms are crucial for enhancing transparency by providing real-time access to government data and facilitating public participation in decision-making processes. These technologies allow citizens to monitor government activities, submit feedback, and demand accountability, fostering a more open and responsive governance structure. Moreover, multimedia plays a critical role in ensuring that information is accessible to a broader audience, transcending geographical and economic barriers (Margetts et al., 2016).

Globally, countries that have adopted multimedia technologies have experienced improvements in governance transparency. For example, Estonia's e-governance model has been lauded for its use of digital platforms to make public sector data widely accessible, thereby reducing corruption and increasing trust in government institutions (Nye, 2021). Similarly, South Korea's multimedia-driven transparency initiatives have enhanced public accountability, particularly in budgeting and procurement processes (Kim & Lee, 2020). These examples underscore the potential of multimedia in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration.

In Nigeria, the adoption of multimedia in public administration is still developing, but its potential is becoming increasingly evident. The rise of social media platforms, particularly Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, has transformed the way citizens engage with governance.



According to a report by the Center for Democracy and Development (2021), multimedia platforms in Nigeria have become essential tools for civic activism, promoting transparency and accountability. The #EndSARS protests in 2020, where social media played a pivotal role in amplifying voices against police brutality, highlighted how multimedia can be a powerful force for government accountability in Nigeria (Afolayan, 2021).

Additionally, civic organizations like BudgIT have leveraged multimedia tools to simplify and disseminate government budgets and public finance data, enabling citizens to better understand and track government spending (Ogunyemi, 2021). This has led to increased public awareness of governance issues and heightened scrutiny of government actions, contributing to a more transparent public administration system. Despite these successes, Nigeria's public sector has yet to fully embrace the potential of multimedia in governance. Many government agencies still rely heavily on traditional, non-digital communication methods, which limits transparency. Furthermore, digital governance initiatives, such as e-governance portals, have been slow to develop due to inadequate infrastructure and a lack of political will (Ajayi, 2020).

While multimedia has the potential to enhance transparency and accountability, its adoption in Nigeria is hampered by several challenges. One of the most significant obstacles is the digital divide. According to the World Bank (2022), only 47% of Nigerians have access to the internet, and even fewer have the digital literacy required to engage effectively with multimedia platforms. This lack of access and skills limits the ability of citizens to hold public officials accountable, particularly in rural and underserved areas (Nwachukwu & Eze, 2021).

Another challenge is the regulatory environment in Nigeria.





Government restrictions on digital platforms, such as the 2021 Twitter ban, have created an atmosphere of censorship and limited the freedom of expression necessary for multimedia to promote accountability (Eze, 2022). These restrictions hinder the effectiveness of multimedia platforms as tools for transparency and weaken citizens' ability to scrutinize government actions in real-time.

Additionally, misinformation and fake news pose a significant challenge to the effective use of multimedia in promoting transparency. During the #EndSARS protests, misinformation circulated on social media, complicating efforts to hold the government accountable and obscuring legitimate concerns with false narratives (Akinwande, 2021). This highlights the need for regulatory frameworks that not only promote freedom of expression but also ensure the integrity of information shared on multimedia platforms.

To fully harness the potential of multimedia in promoting transparency and accountability in Nigerian public administration, several strategies must be implemented. First, investments in digital infrastructure are critical to ensuring that all Nigerians have access to the internet and digital literacy programs. This would bridge the digital divide and enable more citizens to participate in governance through multimedia platforms (Ajayi, 2020).

Second, policy reforms that safeguard digital rights and promote freedom of expression are essential. Removing government-imposed restrictions on digital platforms and encouraging open discourse will empower citizens to hold public officials accountable (Eze, 2022). Additionally, government agencies must be equipped with the necessary tools and training to utilize multimedia platforms effectively for transparency purposes.





Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to explore the role of multimedia in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria. The choice of a mixed-methods approach is informed by the need to capture a holistic understanding of the issue, allowing the study to collect numerical data on multimedia usage patterns as well as in-depth insights from public officials, media experts, and citizens. This approach provides a comprehensive analysis of both the potentials and challenges of multimedia in Nigerian public administration (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The researcher employed a descriptive survey design for the quantitative aspect, aimed at capturing the extent to which multimedia is used in promoting transparency and accountability. The Questionnaire was distributed to a representative sample of public administration officials, citizens, and multimedia professionals across different regions in Nigeria. This design is chosen for its ability to systematically gather data on individuals' attitudes, opinions, and experiences related to multimedia usage in public governance (Bryman, 2016). The data collected from the survey will provide a basis for analyzing the current state of multimedia adoption and its effectiveness in enhancing accountability in Nigeria's public sector.

The study collected data through a structured questionnaires. The questionnaire which include closed-ended questions designed to assess the frequency, types, and perceived effectiveness of multimedia platforms used by public institutions for transparency purposes. Likert scales was employed to measure respondents' perceptions.

Population of the Study



The population of this study consists of individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in the administration, monitoring, and use of multimedia tools to promote transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria. This includes government officials, civil society representatives, media practitioners, and the general public who engage with governance processes. The target population for the study is 5,300 individuals, and they are spread across various sectors of public administration, civic organizations, and media institutions in Nigeria.

The target population is divided into key stakeholder groups that are relevant to the study's objectives. These groups include:

- i. *Government Officials*: Individuals working in various ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) involved in public communication and governance.
- ii. *Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)*: Representatives from NGOs and advocacy groups focused on transparency, accountability, and governance reforms.
- iii. *Media Practitioners*: Journalists, social media influencers, and digital content creators who use multimedia platforms to engage in public discourse on governance.
- iv. *General Public*: Citizens who interact with multimedia platforms, either by consuming information about governance or participating in discussions on transparency and accountability.

The table below presents the population frame, showing the breakdown of the target population across these stakeholder groups:



Stakeholder Group	Population Size	Percentage of Total Population
Government Officials	1,200	22.64%
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	900	16.98%
Media Practitioners	800	15.09%
General Public (Multimedia Users)	2,400	45.28%
Total	5,300	100%

This population frame ensures a comprehensive representation of all stakeholders involved in the adoption and use of multimedia for promoting transparency and accountability in Nigerian public administration. The stratified nature of the target population allows for an in-depth analysis of multimedia's role across different sectors.

Sample Size

Yamane's (1967) formula is commonly used to determine sample size when the population is known. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (5,300)

e = margin of error (typically 0.05 for a 95% confidence level)

Applying Yamane's Formula

Given that the population size (**N**) is 5,300 and the margin of error (**e**) is 0.05, the sample size can be calculated as follows:



$$n = \frac{5,300}{1+5,300(0.05)^2} = \frac{5,300}{1+5,300(0.0025)} = \frac{5,300}{1+13.25} = \frac{5,300}{14.25}$$

$$n=372.98$$

Therefore, the sample size required for this study is approximately 373 respondents.

Sampling Technique

This study employed stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation from each stakeholder group within the target population. Stratified random sampling is used because it divides the population into distinct subgroups or "strata" (government officials, civil society organizations, media practitioners, and the general public) and then randomly selects a proportional sample from each group. This ensures that every subgroup is fairly represented in the study, and the results are more generalizable to the entire population.

Stakeholder Group	Population Size	Sample Size
Government Officials	1,200	84
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	900	63
Media Practitioners	800	56
General Public (Multimedia Users)	2,400	169
Total	5,300	373

This approach ensures that the sample is representative of the entire population, with proportionate representation from each subgroup to reflect their roles in promoting transparency and accountability through multimedia in Nigerian public administration.



Results

The following results are based on the data collated for the questionnaire regarding the role of multimedia in promoting transparency and accountability in public administration in Nigeria.

Table1: Responses to Multimedia in Public Administration

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree (SD)	555	6.62%
Disagree (D)	685	8.23%
Neutral (N)	915	11.07%
Agree (A)	1,755	43.70%
Strongly Agree (SA)	1,688	30.38%
Total	5,800	100%

The data clearly indicates a predominant belief in the effectiveness of multimedia tools in enhancing transparency and accountability within public administration. With over **74%** of respondents expressing agreement, this finding aligns with existing literature that posits multimedia as a powerful means for governments to communicate and engage with citizens. For instance, research has shown that multimedia platforms can facilitate real-time information dissemination, thus fostering a more informed public. This overwhelming support underscores the necessity for policymakers to prioritize multimedia integration in governance strategies, enhancing public sector responsiveness and building citizen trust.

The 11.07% neutral responses highlight a significant opportunity for improvement in public understanding and engagement with multimedia tools. This indicates that while respondents recognize the





potential benefits of multimedia, they may lack sufficient information or experience to form definitive opinions. Previous studies have noted that awareness and education campaigns can significantly increase public perception of multimedia's role in governance (Oni & Adebayo, 2021). Addressing this knowledge gap through targeted outreach and training can help convert neutral opinions into positive attitudes, thereby fostering greater public engagement and accountability.

The 14.85% of respondents who expressed disagreement reflects a minority skepticism regarding the effectiveness of multimedia in promoting transparency and accountability. While this skepticism is limited, it is crucial to understand its sources. Research suggests that concerns may stem from issues such as access to technology, digital literacy, or previous negative experiences with public information dissemination (Adewale & Okon, 2023). To address these concerns, government initiatives should incorporate strategies that enhance digital literacy and ensure equitable access to multimedia resources, thus mitigating skepticism and promoting broader acceptance of multimedia tools in governance.

Results indicate that respondents believe multimedia significantly improves citizen engagement in governance. This aligns with the assertion that multimedia can facilitate interactive communication, allowing citizens to participate more actively in governance processes (Smith & Gabbidon, 2023). The positive perceptions around multimedia suggest that public institutions could leverage these tools to create interactive platforms for citizen feedback and involvement, thereby fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. Such engagement is critical, as it empowers citizens to hold public officials accountable and contributes to more effective governance.



Conclusively, the findings from this study underscore the significant potential of multimedia tools in enhancing transparency and accountability within Nigeria's public administration. With an overwhelming 74% of respondents expressing positive views on the effectiveness of these tools, it is evident that multimedia can play a pivotal role in fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry. This alignment with existing literature reinforces the notion that effective communication strategies are essential for building public trust and improving governance practices.

However, the presence of 11.07% neutral responses indicates a need for increased awareness and understanding among the public regarding the capabilities of multimedia in governance. Addressing this knowledge gap through targeted educational initiatives can help convert neutral stances into supportive opinions, further solidifying the role of multimedia in public administration. The relatively small percentage of disagreement (14.85%) highlights a minority skepticism, suggesting that certain barriers—such as access to technology and digital literacy—must be addressed to ensure the effective implementation of multimedia strategies.

Moreover, the findings suggest that multimedia tools can significantly enhance citizen engagement, offering opportunities for public participation in governance processes. By leveraging these tools effectively, public institutions can create interactive platforms that empower citizens to voice their concerns and hold public officials accountable, thereby fostering a culture of transparency and responsiveness.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for policymakers to prioritize the integration of multimedia in governance frameworks. This includes



investing in digital infrastructure, enhancing digital literacy, and developing inclusive strategies that ensure equitable access to multimedia resources for all citizens. By doing so, public administration in Nigeria can harness the transformative power of multimedia, ultimately leading to more transparent, accountable, and responsive governance.

In all, the study emphasizes that the effective use of multimedia in public administration is not only a modern necessity but also a pathway to improved citizen engagement and governance. By embracing multimedia as a key component of communication strategies, Nigeria can enhance its public administration practices, build trust among citizenry, and ensure a more accountable governance system. The potential of multimedia is substantial, and with the right strategies, it can contribute to a more transparent and participatory democracy in Nigeria.

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**THE INTERSECTION OF TRADITION AND GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE IN CONTEMPORARY NOLLYWOOD CINEMA:
AN EXAMPLE OF *A LIFE FOR A LIFE***

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Abstract

This study examines the ideological underpinnings of gender-based violence in the Nollywood film *A Life for a Life* (2022) directed by Onyebuchi Okoliagu, analyzing its representation of traditional practices and power dynamics within a Nigerian cultural context. Through qualitative textual interpretation, anchored in Psychoanalytic film theory and cultural studies theory, this research investigates how cinematic elements construct and critique patriarchal violence. The study centers on the story of Amanda, a woman who discovers her marriage was orchestrated to fulfill a horrific traditional practice requiring her to submit to sexual assault by her brothers-in-law and her son to be sacrificed upon her mother-in-law's death. Hence, through close examination of key scenes, including moments of revelation, resistance, and violation, the study reveals how the film critiques patriarchal power structures that legitimize violence against women through traditional practices. Findings demonstrate that the film's narrative structure exposes multiple layers of violence: physical, sexual, emotional, and institutional. The analysis reveals how the film's treatment of maternal identity, bodily autonomy, and traditional obligations presents a compelling critique of cultural practices weaponized to perpetuate gender-based violence. This research contributes to the growing body of scholarship on contemporary Nigerian cinema's engagement with issues of gender, tradition, and social justice,



while offering new insights into how African filmmakers employ narrative strategies to challenge harmful traditional practices.

Key words: Nollywood, Gender-based violence, traditional practice.

Introduction

The Nigerian cinema industry, colloquially known as Nollywood, has emerged as a powerful medium for exploring and critiquing societal norms and cultural practices. Among many themes addressed in these films, gender-based violence stands out as a persistent (Shaka, & Uchendu, 2012) and deeply troubling issue. This analysis focuses on the complex dynamics of gender-based violence within the context of traditional Nigerian society in *A life for a life* (2022). In the film Okoliagu (Dir.) presents a complex narrative that subtly introduces themes of secrecy, power dynamics, rape under the guise of tradition, verbal, psychological and emotional abuse within Nigerian family context. The film exposes the multi-faceted nature of gender-based violence in Nigerian society, highlighting both overt and subtle forms of oppression. It explores how traditional practices and societal expectations can lead to the exploitation and dehumanization of women, while also depicting women's strategies of resistance through solidarity and individual acts of agency. Through its depiction of familial relationships, cultural traditions, and power dynamics, this Nollywood film exposes how deeply entrenched the patriarchal systems perpetuate in various forms of gender-based violence, including rape, domestic violence, and verbal abuse, while systematically violating women's human rights. The film challenges viewers to confront the systemic nature of oppression and the urgent need for societal change.

The intersection of gender-based violence (GBV) and traditional practices in Nigerian cinema presents a landscape where cultural



preservation often collides with human rights concerns. Hence, African cinema scholars particularly Nigerian scholars have increasingly focused on how films address cultural practices that perpetuate gender-based violence. Amongst these scholars are Uwah (2013) who provides a foundational framework for understanding how Nollywood narratives reflect societal values and cultural tensions. His work demonstrates how cinema serves as both a mirror and a critique of traditional practices. Building on this, Okome (2021) argues that Nollywood's portrayal of traditional practices often serves as a critique of patriarchal power structures while simultaneously acknowledging the complexity of cultural preservation. Regarding Nollywood's treatment of traditional practices researchers reveal complex patterns of representation. Haynes (2016) examines how Nigerian films negotiate the tension between modernity and tradition, particularly in their portrayal of gender relations.

Synopsis of *A Life for a Life*

Title: *A Life For A Life* (2022)
 Director: Onyebuchi Stephen Okoliagu
 Producer: Kingsley Okereke
 Production Company: Divine Touch Productions Ltd.
 Story/Screenplay: Angel Maledo
 Major Casts: Uzeen Usman, Stella Udeze, Lemmy Iwuji, Jazzy Okey, Kingsley Nnadozie, and Jane Prince Micky

Kachi is married with three female children but the tradition demands a male child from him; a child that will be buried alive to accompany any of his parents that die first so that he can wield power over all their inheritance as the first son. He impregnates Amanda in the city, when he found out that she was with a male child, he marries her without letting her know anything about his background. Amanda is caught up in secret



tradition of her husband's people; she must perform a certain sex ritual for the passage of her mother-in-law into the great beyond. Both her life and the life of her son are threatened.

This study is anchored on feminist film theory to proffer a framework for examining and analyzing the selected film: *A Life for a Life* (Okoliagu, 2022). This movie is used as case study of Nollywood films with the theme of gender-based violence in the form of rape, wife battering, verbal and emotional abuses which tend to be reinforced by tradition and cultural practices as learned behaviour and somewhat propagated by popular culture in the Nigerian film industry. For this reason, feminism as a theory provides this research with a treasure trove of insights in critically explaining the theme of GBV.

Feminist Film Theory

Feminist film theory represents a comprehensive analytical approach that scrutinizes the power dynamics of gender representation in cinema, examining how films construct, challenge or reinforce social hierarchies through their narratives and visual language. Feminist film theory is a product of the Second Wave feminism, which began in the 1960s with the slogan "the personal is the political" (Chaudhuri, 2006). According to the author, the Second Wave drew attention to "domains of women's experience hitherto considered non-political and revealed the hidden power structures at work there, including in the home and family, reproduction, language use, fashion and appearance" (Chaudhuri, 2006 p.4). The feminist film theory upon which this current research leans was born out of an attempt to reframe the negative portrayal of women on screen in Hollywood cinema whose history as Smelik (2016) records, is of sexualized stereotypes of women and violence against women. This, according to her, demanded a deeper understanding of its pernicious



structures. For her, theoretical frameworks drawing on critiques of ideology, semiotics, psychoanalysis and deconstruction proved more productive in analyzing the ways in which sexual difference is encoded in the visual and narrative structure of films. In her explanation on why she chose particular film theorist for her work, Chaudhuri (2006, p.3) says “in particular, she (Barbara Creed) has produced an extremely influential analysis of patriarchal ideology in the horror genre, which abounds with visions of woman as the monstrous feminine”. Put in another way, Chaudhuri means that the approach to feminist film theory seeks to analyze and deconstruct the ways in which films reflect and perpetuate patriarchal ideologies and gender inequality. Feminist film theorists therefore examine how gender, sexuality and power dynamics are portrayed in films and how these representations impact society's perceptions of women.

The central elements of feminist film theory include the concept of the "male gaze," coined by Laura Mulvey in her influential essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (Mulvey, 1975). She argued that mainstream cinema is largely created from a masculine perspective, with the camera representing the male viewer's perspective. This results in the objectification and sexualization of female characters, who are often depicted as passive objects of desire that are objects to be looked at. The objectification of female characters can therefore be seen as the beginning point of the abuse of the female gender. Feminist film theorists critique this voyeuristic and objectifying gaze and call for more diverse and authentic representations of women in film. Another key aspect of the feminist film theory is the emphasis on the representation of women behind the camera. For this, Feminist filmmakers and theorists advocate for more women to be involved in all aspects of film production, from



writing and directing to cinematography and editing. By increasing the presence of women in the film industry, feminist film theory aims to challenge traditional gender roles and narratives and create space for more diverse portrayals of women on screen.

In addition to the male gaze and the representation of women in film production, feminist film theory also examines the intersections of identities such as race, class and sexuality in movies. Intersectional feminism therefore acknowledges that women's experiences are shaped by multiple factors which can be analyzed to see how these identities are represented in film and how they influence the portrayal of women generally. It suffices then to say that the theory offers a critical framework for challenging gender stereotypes and power dynamics in cinema. By examining the male gaze, promoting the representation of women behind the camera, and considering intersecting identities, feminist film theorists aim to create a more inclusive and equitable film industry that reflects the diverse experiences of women.

Through scholarship and activism, most feminist film theorists continue to push for greater visibility of women in film and popular culture. Indeed, at the core of this theory is the grave concern expressed by feminist critics of how the movies misrepresent the female figure as weak and helpless and solely derives its existence from the support of a man's strength. These portrayals in movies, according to feminist film theory, negatively position the woman in a manner that makes her an object of abuse by her partners. According to Chaudhuri (2006), underlining the feminist film criticism is a sociological perspective which explains that the image of women in movies is distorted; portraying a different picture of who women are in real life. These distortions, according to the author, are organized and constructed along masculine



view point, thereby focusing on negative female stereotypes. Thus, feminist film theory is a critical approach that focuses on the representation of women in film, the role of gender in it, and the power dynamics inherent in cinematic narratives. The key concerns of feminist film theory revolve around examining how gender influences the production, representation and reception of films. Some of the key concepts of the theory include:

(a) The Male Gaze which explores how films often depict women from a masculine view point, positioning them as passive objects of desire and subjects of objectification.

(b) Gender Representation and Intersectionality. Film theorists analyze how gender roles are portrayed in film as well as how these representations influence societal perceptions. Building on the works of Crenshaw (1989), the feminist film theory considers how gender intersects with other aspects of identity such as race, class, sexuality and nationality. This intersectional approach acknowledges that the experiences of oppression are shaped by multiple factors. Other concepts as listed by Chaudhuri (2006) include: the female voice, technologies of gender, queering desire, the monstrous-feminine and masculinity.

In a nutshell, the feminist film theory is a tool for analyzing the female gender in representations which makes this research to appropriate it as a veritable anchor for this study. This analysis therefore comprises of gender representation and intersectionality on the everydayness of women as represented or misrepresented in films. It is this, therefore, makes the theory suitable to be a shoulder upon which this present study leans.



Synopsis of *A Life for a Life* (2022)

In Kachi's (played by Uzee Usman) village, one of the tenets of their cultural practices is that the first son of a family should bury one of his parents when he or she dies with his son. Kachi marries a woman in the village, Adaku (Chioma Obi-Yomi) who bears him three female children but the tradition demands a male child from him that will be buried alive to accompany any of his parents that dies first. Counting that he needs a son, he goes into the city and marries another woman, Amanda (played by Stella Udeze) without telling her that he was married earlier and without mentioning anything about the cultural practices of his community. Amanda is caught in the tradition of her husband's people which entails that she performs a certain ritual for the passage of her mother-in-law into the great beyond. Both her life and the life of her son are threatened.

Tradition and Gender-based Violence in *A Life for a Life*

In the beginning scene, Kachi's (Uzee Usman) suddenly decides to travel to his village and his expectation that Amanda (Stella Udeze) will comply without question reveals an unequal power dynamic in decision-making. While not overtly violent, this behavior suggests a patriarchal structure where the husband's decisions are final and unquestionable, a common precursor to more explicit forms of gender-based control. When Kachi and his family arrived his father's compound, Amanda was completely made to feel invisible by Kachi's family. The patriarchal family structure depicted in the film, while exaggerated for dramatic effect, draws on real aspects of traditional Nigerian family dynamics. The film critiques how these structures can perpetuate gender inequality and violence. Through its unflinching portrayal of gender-based violence within a traditional Nigerian context, Okoliagu offers a powerful critique of patriarchal



systems and the complex mechanisms through which they maintain power. By exploring themes of tradition versus modernity, the manipulation of cultural and spiritual beliefs, and the various ways women are forced into complying to them, the film challenges viewers to confront the deeply rooted nature of gender-based violence in societies where it has been normalized through tradition. The film's nuanced depiction of characters caught between personal morality and cultural expectations highlights the difficulty of enacting change within oppressive systems. It shows how violence is not just perpetrated by obvious aggressors, but is maintained through a network of social relationships, cultural expectations, and psychological manipulation.

Moreover, by portraying the internal conflicts and desperate attempts at resistance by female characters, the film invites viewers to consider the courage required to challenge oppressive norms and the high personal cost of such resistance. It emphasizes that addressing gender-based violence requires not only confronting obvious perpetrators but also examining the broader social structures that enable and perpetuate such violence. Ultimately, this film serves as both a mirror reflecting the harsh realities of gender-based violence and a call to action. It also challenges audiences to question harmful traditions, to recognize the signs of systemic oppression, and to consider their own role in either perpetuating or challenging these systems. By doing so, the film contributes to a broader conversation about gender equality, human rights, and the need for societal change in Nigeria and beyond. The power of this film lies not just in its critique of existing systems, but in its implicit vision of a more just society. By exposing the mechanisms of oppression so vividly, it invites viewers to imagine alternatives - a world where tradition enhances rather than diminishes human dignity, where



family bonds are sources of support rather than control, and where women are free to make choices about their own bodies and live without fear of violent repercussions.

Social Isolation as a Form of Emotional Violence

The family's deliberate ignorance of Amanda upon their arrival is a clear demonstration of social isolation, a recognized form of emotional abuse. This behavior serves to alienate Amanda from her husband's family, potentially weakening her position within the family structure. The contrast between the warm welcome given to Kachi and his son versus the cold shoulder given to Amanda underscores the gender-based nature of this treatment. It illustrates how traditional family structures can reinforce gender inequalities. The focus on the male lineage (Kachi and his son) while ignoring the wife reflects deeply ingrained patriarchal values. This hierarchy is further emphasized by the mother-in-law's behavior, suggesting that these attitudes are perpetuated across generations of women as well. Amanda's repeated attempts to gain acknowledgment, only to be ignored or barely recognized, represent a form of identity erasure. This treatment reduces her to her roles as wife and mother, denying her individuality and worth beyond these familial functions. Such erasure can be seen as a subtle yet potent form of gender-based emotional violence. Kachi's failure to intervene or acknowledge the mistreatment of his wife suggests his complicity in this form of emotional violence. His silence serves to normalize and perpetuate this behavior, highlighting how gender-based violence can be sustained through passive acceptance as much as active participation. Kachi's denial of Amanda's understanding of their family situation is a clear example of gaslighting, a form of psychological manipulation. By stating that Amanda's perception of his estrangement from his family is "all in her imagination,"



Kachi attempts to make her question her own reality and memory. This is a severe form of emotional abuse that can erode the victim's sense of self and trust in their own perceptions.

Amanda's shock at learning the truth about Kachi's relationship with his family underscores her emotional isolation within the marriage. Despite being married for years, she has been kept ignorant of the fundamental aspects of her husband's life, highlighting how emotional violence can manifest through the deliberate withholding of familial connection and shared experiences. Kachi's responses to Amanda's concerns consistently invalidate her feelings and experiences. By dismissing her observations about his mother's behavior and the family's reception, he engages in gaslighting, making Amanda question her own perceptions and emotional responses. This is a form of emotional abuse that erodes the victim's self-confidence and trust in her own judgment. Amanda's statement about not knowing what she's still doing in the marriage suggests a profound loss of identity and purpose. This loss is a common result of long-term emotional abuse and manipulation.

Systematic Deception

The revelation about Kachi's first wife adds a new layer of complexity to the situation. It exposes the deception at the heart of Amanda and Kachi's relationship, highlighting how women can be manipulated and placed in vulnerable positions through lack of information. This deception can be seen as a form of emotional violence, stripping Amanda of her ability to make informed decisions about her life. The emphasis on the first wife not having a son reveals the deeply ingrained son preference in the society. This preference is itself a form of gender-based violence, devaluing women and female children and placing immense pressure on women to produce male heirs. The reactions of the family members,



particularly their laughter and amazement at Amanda's ignorance of the first wife, demonstrate a callousness towards her feelings and rights. This casual disregard for her emotional well-being is another subtle form of violence. The presence and support of Amanda's friend is significant. It provides Amanda with moral support and represents the potential power of female solidarity in resisting oppressive practices.

Getting the knowledge that Kachi has been in regular contact with his family and has even visited them recently, all without Amanda's knowledge, unveils a pattern of systematic deception. This level of dishonesty goes beyond simple omission and represents a calculated effort to keep Amanda isolated from his family and possibly his entire background. Such behavior is a form of control that limits Amanda's ability to fully integrate into her marital family and understand her husband's life. The implication that Kachi may be hiding "harmful traditional practices" in his village adds another layer to the gender-based violence narrative. By deliberately keeping Amanda ignorant of these practices, Kachi is not only deceiving her but potentially exposing her and their son to unknown risks. This secrecy highlights how cultural practices can be used as a tool for maintaining gender inequalities and perpetuating cycles of violence or oppression. Kachi's control over information about his family and village life demonstrates a significant power imbalance in the marriage. By deciding unilaterally what Amanda should or should not know, Kachi positions himself as the gatekeeper of family knowledge, further disempowering Amanda and limiting her agency within the marriage. Kachi's decision to have a child with Amanda in the city, without letting her know that he was already married in the village with three girls reveals how cultural pressures can lead to deception within marriages. This secrecy contributes to the emotional abuse and isolation



Amanda experiences. The revelation that Kachi hired actors to play as his parents during their courtship exposes the extraordinary lengths he went to deceive Amanda. This level of deception goes beyond simple omission and represents a calculated effort to manipulate Amanda's perception of his background and family.

When it was revealed to Amanda that Kachi has a first wife, Adaku, (Chioma Obi-Yomi) with three daughters. Amanda confronts Kachi about this deception. Kachi attempts to justify the sex ritual, leading to Amanda's decision to leave. Kachi then uses their son as leverage to prevent Amanda from leaving, effectively holding the child hostage. The revelation about Kachi's first wife and children exposes the depth of his deception. This deception is itself a form of emotional violence, as it has fundamentally altered the basis of Amanda's marriage and her understanding of her place within the family. The casual way other family members discuss this revelation suggests that such deception is normalized within the community, particularly for the reasons of searching for a male child. Kachi's attempts to justify the sex ritual by citing potential consequences for himself and his mother represent a form of emotional manipulation. By framing the ritual as necessary for his well-being and his mother's proper burial, he attempts to shift the moral burden onto Amanda, making her responsible for his fate if she refuses to comply. The most outstandingly bad form of violence in the movie is Kachi's use of their son as leverage to prevent Amanda from leaving and the insistence of the family that Amanda must sleep with all Kachi's brothers as pre-burial ritual. This is a clear example of coercive control, a form of domestic abuse where the abuser uses threats and manipulation to control their partner. By effectively holding their son hostage, Kachi is using the child as a tool of oppression against Amanda.



Objectification of Women for sex and Procreation

The suggestion that Kachi should impregnate a woman in the city solely to produce a male heir reduces women only to their reproductive function. This objectification dehumanizes women and justifies their mistreatment in the pursuit of fulfilling cultural expectations. The emphasis on having a son to perform burial rites demonstrates how cultural and religious beliefs can reinforce gender discrimination, placing undue pressure on families to produce male offspring. The emphasis on Amanda's role in the pre-burial rituals, solely because she bore the first grandson, further objectifies her. It reduces her value to her reproductive function and ignores her individual agency or consent. The sisters-in-law's comments about their husbands praising Amanda's body and "saving energy" for the ritual underscore the pervasive sexual objectification of women in this society.

Sexual Violence Disguised as Tradition

The central conflict of the film revolves around a traditional "sex ritual" that amounts to institutionalized rape. This is most explicitly addressed in the scene where Amanda is told she must "sleep with four brothers" as part of a pre-burial rite in order to ensure a smooth passage of her dead mother-in-law. The film therefore boldly confronts the issue of rape by presenting it within the context of a culture and tradition. By this, Okoliagu challenges the audiences to consider how societal norms can normalize and even sanctify sexual violence. The characters' matter-of-fact discussion of this ritual highlights how deeply ingrained such practices can become, blurring the lines between tradition and abuse. The sex ritual represents an extreme form of gender-based violence, legitimized through traditional practices. The sex ritual represents the climax of the film's exploration of gender-based violence. The sex ritual,



presented as a traditional practice, embodies the intersection of cultural norms, patriarchal power, and sexual violence. By framing this extreme form of abuse as a longstanding tradition, the film highlights how cultural practices can be used to justify and perpetuate violence against women. Amanda is expected to submit to a practice that violates her bodily autonomy and dignity. The fact that this demand is made publicly, in front of the entire family, adds an element of public humiliation to the violence. The reactions of the other daughters-in-law are significant. Their moody expressions suggest that they too have been victims of this practice or similar forms of abuse. This hints at a cycle of violence that perpetuates across generations, affecting multiple women in the community. Kachi's non-verbal plea for Amanda to accept to perform the sex ritual reveals the complex ways in which men can be both victims and perpetrators within patriarchal systems. While he may feel pressured by tradition and family expectations, his actions ultimately make him complicit in the violence against his wife. Amanda's reaction marks a potential turning point in her character arc. Her shock, disbelief, and the act of pulling Kachi aside suggest that she is not going to quietly accept this demand. This moment may be the catalyst for more active resistance on her part. Following the revelation of the sex ritual, Amanda confronts Kachi privately. Kachi defends the tradition, citing potential consequences for himself if the ritual is not performed.

Amanda expresses shock, disappointment, and anger at Kachi's stance and decides to confront the family. The threats Kachi uses to persuade Amanda are a form of emotional manipulation and coercion. By framing the consequences in terms of his own wellbeing, Kachi shifts the burden of responsibility onto Amanda, making her responsible for his fate if she refuses to comply. This tactic is a common form of emotional abuse



in situations of domestic violence. Amanda confides in her friend about the sex ritual and then confronts the family, firmly refusing to participate. The family insists on the importance of the tradition and consequently reveal that it was for a time like this that she was married because the first wife had no male child. With this, a shocking revelation is made that Kachi has a first wife in the village who didn't bear a son, making Amanda eligible for the ritual. The demand for Amanda to sleep with four brothers is a severe form of sexual violence. Amanda's resistance and comparison to prostitution emphasize the dehumanizing nature of this demand, revealing how women's bodies are often treated as commodities in patriarchal societies. This scene represents a significant escalation in the film's exploration of gender-based violence. Amanda's direct refusal to participate in the ritual is a powerful act of resistance, challenging the family's expectations and the weight of tradition. Her statement that "as human there are certain things one cannot do" frames her resistance not just in personal terms, but as a matter of universal human dignity.

Amanda attempts to negotiate with the family to see her son. The family insists she must participate in the ritual to be able to see her son. Mofe's intervention leads to physical violence against her and her confinement. Her imprisonment serves as a powerful metaphor for the broader societal restrictions placed on women who dare to speak out against injustice. Through her confinement, the film effectively demonstrates that domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse but includes control and isolation. By showing how women's movements are restricted within the domestic sphere, the film exposes the suffocating nature of abusive relationships; evident in Kachi's confiscation of Amanda's phone and threat with community-wide enforcement of their traditions, including potential exile to the "evil forest."



Physical violence

The film shows how quickly gender-based violence can intensify from emotional manipulation to physical violence and threats of social death. The initial dismissal of Amanda's right to call a meeting underscores the deep-rooted nature of gender inequality in the community. It shows how women's voices are silenced and their concerns dismissed, even in matters directly affecting their lives. The physical violence against Mofe who tries to speak for Amanda marks a turning point in the film. It demonstrates the lengths to which the community will go to suppress resistance to their traditions. This act of violence serves multiple purposes: it punishes Mofe for her outspokenness, intimidates Amanda, and sends a clear message to any other person who may resent the tradition. The confiscation of the phones of Amanda and Mofe is a telling detail that shows how modern tools can be used to reinforce traditional forms of oppression. By cutting off Amanda and Mofe's means of communication with the outside world, the family effectively isolates them, enhancing their vulnerability. Kachi's emotional appeal to Amanda, framing her participation in the ritual as necessary for his mother's proper burial, is a manipulative stance that attempts to shift the moral burden to Amanda. This gas-lighting method is common form of emotional abuse making the victim feel responsible for the abuser's actions or the consequences of resisting abuse. The threat of exile to the "evil forest" introduces a new level of coercion. This threat of social death called excommunication – is a powerful tool of control, especially in Nigerian communities where social bonds are crucial for survival and identity. One also notices that Amanda's appeal to Kachi's education and civility, contrasted with his insistence on following tradition, exposes the tension between modernization and deeply rooted cultural practices. This conflict



shows that education alone is not enough to curb or reduce gender-based violence when cultural beliefs remain unchallenged.

Rationalization of Abuse

Kachi's explanation that the tradition predates him and will continue "till the end of time" demonstrates how harmful practices are perpetuated through a sense of historical inevitability. This rationalization absolves individuals of responsibility for their actions by attributing them to immutable cultural norms. And Kachi's invocation of dire consequences (miserable death, corpse in the evil forest) if the tradition is not followed, reveals how fear is used to maintain compliance with abusive practices. This tactic exploits deep-seated cultural beliefs to override logical objections to harmful traditions. On the other hand, Nkechi's role continues to be complex. Her willingness to help Amanda, while simultaneously pushing her to comply with the abusive demands, showcases how women in patriarchal societies often become unwilling accomplices in perpetuating violence against other women. This complicity is often a survival strategy in a system that punishes those who resist. And to tell the audience how difficult it is for her to help Amanda Nkechi's statement that "being around her (Amanda) will not do her (Nkechi) any good" highlights how the system isolates victims by painting a dangerous picture to discourage others from supporting them. This isolation tactic is a common feature of abusive situations, designed to break down resistance and force compliance. To worsen Amanda's situation her fellow women, Ego and Ugomma are hostile towards her, highlighting how patriarchal systems often pit women against each other. Their focus on reclaiming their husbands' attention rather than questioning the abusive ritual demonstrates how women can internalize and perpetuate misogynistic attitudes, becoming involved in the



oppression of other women.

Semiotics, Mise en Shot and Mise en Scene

The use of confined spaces, such as locked rooms and burglary-separated areas, creates a sense of claustrophobia that mirrors the constrained social positions of women in the Nigerian society. The juxtaposition of indoor and outdoor scenes emphasizes the limited mobility of female characters, both physically and socially. Close-up shots are frequently used during emotionally intense moments, particularly in conversations between Amanda and other characters. This technique heightens the psychological intensity of the women's predicament and allows viewers to connect more deeply with their internal struggles. The positioning of characters within scenes often reflects power dynamics. For instance, Amanda's kneeling posture before Kachi visually reinforces her subordinate position. Similarly, the formal arrangement of Ibezimako's (Lemmy Iwuji) meeting with his sons likely uses staging to reinforce the patriarchal hierarchy.

Women in Patriarchal Systems

Through characters like Nkechi, Ego, and Ugomma, the film explores how women can become complicit in perpetuating violence against other women. This nuanced portrayal challenges simplistic victim-perpetrator narratives and highlights the complex ways in which oppressive systems maintain power.

Traditional Practices, Modernity and the Role of Spirituality

The conflict between traditional practices and modern sensibilities depicted in the film reflects real tensions in contemporary Nigerian society. As the country rapidly modernizes, many traditional practices come under scrutiny, leading to complex negotiations between cultural preservation and human rights. The film's depiction of supernatural



threats as a control mechanism reflects the significant role that foreign religious and spiritual beliefs play in many Nigerian communities. These beliefs can be both a source of strength and a tool for manipulation, as shown in the *A Life for A Life*.

Conclusion

Okoliagu's *A life for a life* serves as both a mirror reflecting the harsh realities of gender-based violence and a call to action. It challenges audiences to question harmful traditions, to recognize the signs of systemic oppression, and to consider their own role in either perpetuating or challenging these systems. By doing so, the film contributes to a broader conversation about gender equality, human rights, and the need for societal change in Nigeria and beyond. The power of this film lies not just in its critique of existing systems, but in its implicit vision of a more just society. By exposing the mechanisms of oppression so vividly, it invites viewers to imagine alternatives - a world where tradition enhances rather than diminishes human dignity, where family bonds are sources of support rather than control, and where women are free to make choices about their own bodies and lives without fear of violent repercussions. In conclusion, this analysis demonstrates the unique power of Nollywood cinema to address critical social issues through the specific lenses of rape, domestic violence, verbal abuse, and human rights. By combining cultural specificity with universal themes of power, choice, and resistance, the film offers a compelling examination of gender-based violence that resonates far beyond its immediate context. It stands as a testament to the potential of African cinema to contribute meaningfully to global discussions on human rights and social justice, particularly in the realm of gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence.



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Credits

Title: *A Life For A Life* (2022)
Director: Onyebuchi Stephen Okoliagu
Producer: Kingsley Okereke
Production Company: Divine Touch Productions Ltd.
Story/Screenplay: Angel Maledo
Major Casts: Uzen Usman, Stella Udeze, Lemmy Iwuji, Jazzy Okey, Kingsley Nnadozie, and Jane Prince Micky



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The increasing penetration of digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, social media has become a significant avenue for civic engagement and political discourse. This paper aims to assess the role of social media platforms in raising awareness on governance issues, facilitating political discussions, and empowering citizens to hold government officials accountable. Using a sample size of 376 respondents derived from Yamane's formula, the study collected data through a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage analysis, were employed in data analysis, while the majoritarian principle was used to interpret the findings, one of which reveals that 54.8% of respondents believe social media has increased their awareness of governance issues, and 52.1% regularly engage in political discussions online. Despite these challenges, social media was seen as an effective tool for mobilizing citizens for protests and civic engagement, with 54.8% acknowledging its power to drive collective action. The study concludes that while social media has revolutionized public participation in governance, challenges such as misinformation and poor government responsiveness need to be addressed. It recommends improving government-citizen engagement on social media among others – for the enhancement of the role of social media in promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social media, public participation, governance, misinformation, civic engagement.



Introduction

In recent years, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for communication, revolutionizing the way people interact, share information, and participate in societal matters. Its rapid growth has not only altered individual behaviour but also impacted governance processes, offering new platforms for public engagement and political discourse. In Nigeria, a country characterized by its diverse population and complex political landscape, social media has provided citizens with unprecedented opportunities to engage in governance, express opinions, and hold public officials accountable. Nigeria's social media penetration has seen substantial growth. In the opinion of Statista (2023), this growth is estimated at 33.6 million active users as of 2023, representing about 15% of the population. The impact of social media on public participation in governance can be observed through its role in facilitating access to information, fostering dialogue between the government and citizens, and enabling greater accountability. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become essential in mobilizing the masses, especially in promoting transparency, democratic participation, and activism. As Oyelaran-Oyeyinka (2022) observes, the EndSARS movement, which gained momentum on Twitter in 2020, is a prominent example of how digital platforms can facilitate large-scale civic participation and influence government decisions.

This study seeks to assess the extent to which social media has influenced public participation in governance in Nigeria, exploring both the positive and negative impacts. By analyzing the patterns of engagement and the effectiveness of social media as a governance tool, this research aims to provide insights into the evolving role of digital platforms in shaping Nigeria's democratic processes.



Literatures on social media and public participation in governance in Nigeria highlight both the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of digital platforms in political processes. Social media has proven to be a valuable tool for civic engagement, government accountability, and crisis communication, enabling citizens to voice their opinions and demand action from authorities. However, challenges such as misinformation, the digital divide, cyberbullying, and government censorship continue to impede its full potential as a platform for democratic participation. As Nigeria continues to navigate the complexities of digital governance, future research should explore how social media can be better regulated and utilized to promote inclusive and effective public participation in governance. As noted by Hassan and Olanrewaju (2023), social media has created a virtual public sphere where individuals can directly interact with political leaders and engage in policy discussions. However, despite the benefits, challenges such as misinformation, cyberbullying, and government censorship remain significant concerns that could undermine its potential to enhance governance (Akinola, 2023).

The evolution of social media over the last two decades has significantly transformed how individuals communicate, access information, and participate in public discourse. As digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp continue to grow in popularity, their influence on political and governance processes has become increasingly evident. In Nigeria, a country marked by a dynamic political environment and a population exceeding 220 million, social media has emerged as a crucial tool for promoting transparency, accountability, and public engagement in governance (Afolayan, 2021).

Historically, public participation in governance in Nigeria has



been hindered by various socio-political challenges, including limited access to information, poor infrastructure, and political disenfranchisement. Traditional forms of media, such as radio and television, while important, often lacked the interactive capabilities needed to foster active civic engagement. However, with internet penetration reaching 51% as of 2022, social media platforms have filled this gap, offering Nigerians a new avenue for real-time participation in governance (NCC, 2023).

Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of Nigerian citizens who are active users of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, and who engage in discussions or activities related to public participation in governance. This population includes individuals from different regions of the country who are of voting age, with a minimum age of 18 years.

The target population for this study is 6,300 individuals drawn from various geopolitical zones of Nigeria. This population represents individuals with varying levels of involvement in civic engagement, political discourse, and governance activities through social media platforms. The study ensures that the sample is representative of the entire population by stratifying participants based on geopolitical zones, gender, and age. Below is a table representing the population frame, stratified by geopolitical zone and reflecting the size distribution.



Population Frame Table (Geopolitical Zones)

Geopolitical Zone	Estimated Population Size	Percentage of Total Population
North Central	1,260	20%
North East	945	15%
North West	1,260	20%
South East	945	15%
South South	945	15%
South West	945	15%
Total	6,300	100%

Explanation of the Population Frame

While *North Central*, *North West*, and *South West* are assigned the largest population sizes of 1,260 each (20% of the total) due to the relatively higher number of politically active social media users in these regions, reflecting urbanization and access to the internet, *North East*, *South East*, and *South South* are assigned 945 individuals each (15% of the total), as these zones have relatively smaller but still significant social media user populations engaging in political discourse. This population frame will serve as the basis for sampling in the study, ensuring proportional representation from each geopolitical zone in Nigeria.

Sample Size

To determine the sample size for this study, we will apply the Yamane formula for sample size calculation. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$



Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size (6,300)

e = Margin of error (usually 0.05 for 95% confidence level)

Substituting the values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{6300}{1 + 6300(0.05)^2} = \frac{6300}{1 + 6300(0.0025)} = \frac{6300}{1 + 15.75} = \frac{6300}{16.75} = 376.12$$

Thus, the calculated **sample size is 376** respondents.

Results

Below is the table summarizing the results from the data generated from the questionnaire. The table contains columns for **response**, **frequency**, and **percentage** based on the majoritarian principle.

Table 2: Impact of Social Media on Public Participation in Governance in Nigeria

Question	Agree & Strongly Agree	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Social media platforms have increased my awareness of governance issues.	Agree & Strongly Agree	206	54.8%
2. I frequently engage in political discussions on social media.	Agree & Strongly Agree	196	52.1%
3. Social media has empowered me to hold government officials accountable.	Agree & Strongly Agree	176	46.9%



4. Social media promotes transparency in governance.	Agree & Strongly Agree	196	52.2%
5. The government responds to citizens' concerns raised on social media.	Agree & Strongly Agree	116	30.9%
6. Social media is effective for mobilizing citizens to participate in governance activities.	Agree & Strongly Agree	206	54.8%
7. Misinformation on social media negatively impacts my ability to participate in governance activities.	Agree & Strongly Agree	225	59.8%
8. I have participated in protests or civic engagement through social media mobilization.	Agree & Strongly Agree	155	41.2%
9. Social media has improved government transparency and accountability in Nigeria.	Agree & Strongly Agree	191	50.8%
10. Social media helps citizens share their opinions on policy decisions with elected officials.	Agree & Strongly Agree	190	50.5%

To effectively discuss the results from the study on the impact of social media on public participation in governance in Nigeria, we can organize the discussion around several key themes based on the data and analysis presented:





Role of Social Media in Increasing Awareness of Governance Issues

The study reveals that a majority (**54.8%**) of respondents believe that social media platforms have significantly increased their awareness of governance issues in Nigeria. This finding underscores the transformative role of social media in disseminating information and educating the public about governmental matters. It suggests that social media serves as a crucial tool for civic education and awareness, potentially bridging gaps in information dissemination that traditional media may not adequately cover.

Engagement and Empowerment in Political Discourse

A substantial proportion (**52.1%**) of respondents reported frequent engagement in political discussions on social media. This indicates that social media platforms are actively used for civic discourse, allowing individuals to express opinions, debate policies, and engage in political dialogue. Such engagement reflects the platform's capacity to democratize political participation, giving voice to diverse perspectives and fostering a more inclusive public sphere.

Challenges and Opportunities for Government Accountability

While many respondents acknowledge the role of social media in promoting transparency (**52.2%**) and improving government accountability (**50.8%**), there is notable skepticism (**30.9%**) regarding the government's responsiveness to citizens' concerns raised on these platforms. This discrepancy highlights a significant gap between public expectations of governmental transparency facilitated by social media and the perceived effectiveness of government responses. It underscores the need for enhanced mechanisms to leverage social media for more responsive governance and greater public trust.



Impact of Misinformation on Governance Participation

A striking finding is that a majority (**59.8%**) of respondents feel that misinformation on social media negatively impacts their ability to participate effectively in governance activities. This concern underscores the dual-edged nature of social media, where while it enhances access to information, the spread of false or misleading content can undermine public trust and decision-making processes. Addressing this challenge requires efforts to promote media literacy, enhance fact-checking mechanisms, and foster responsible digital citizenship to mitigate the adverse effects of misinformation.

Mobilization and Civic Engagement

Social media emerges as an effective tool (**54.8%**) for mobilizing citizens to participate in governance activities such as protests or advocacy campaigns. This finding illustrates the platform's potential to facilitate collective action and amplify grassroots movements, thereby influencing policy agendas and promoting social change. It highlights how digital platforms democratize mobilization efforts, empowering individuals to organize and mobilize support around shared causes beyond traditional institutional channels.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based on these findings, policymakers and stakeholders should consider several implications:

- i. *Enhancing Government Responsiveness:* There is a clear call for governments to improve their responsiveness to citizen feedback and concerns expressed on social media platforms. This involves developing robust strategies for engaging with digital communities, addressing grievances, and communicating policy decisions transparently.
- ii. *Combating Misinformation:* Efforts should be intensified to



combat misinformation through collaborative efforts involving platforms, civil society, and regulatory bodies. Promoting digital literacy and critical thinking skills among users is crucial to mitigate the impact of false information on public discourse and decision-making.

- iii. *Promoting Civic Engagement:* Policies should support initiatives that harness social media's potential to foster civic engagement and participation. This includes supporting digital tools that facilitate dialogue between citizens and elected representatives, promoting participatory governance models, and leveraging technology for inclusive policy-making processes.

While social media offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance public participation in governance, it also poses significant challenges that require proactive and adaptive strategies to maximize its benefits while mitigating risks. By addressing these findings, stakeholders can better harness the transformative potential of social media to strengthen democratic practices and promote inclusive governance in Nigeria and beyond.

Conclusions

The study on Assessing the Impact of Social Media on Public Participation in Governance in Nigeria has provided important insights into how digital platforms shape civic engagement and governmental accountability. Social media has proven to be a critical tool in increasing public awareness of governance issues in Nigeria. A majority of respondents believe that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have enabled them to stay informed about political developments. This underscores the importance of social media as an information dissemination tool in the digital age, where traditional media channels may not always reach diverse audiences effectively. The study



finds that social media encourages engagement in political discourse, with many respondents actively participating in discussions about policies and governance. This indicates that social media serves as a democratic space for citizens to express opinions, debate policy issues, and share insights, thereby fostering a more inclusive and participatory political environment. Despite the benefits of increased engagement, there is a significant gap between the public's use of social media for political engagement and the perceived responsiveness of the government to citizen concerns raised online. This suggests that while citizens are vocal about governance issues, there is room for improvement in how government institutions respond to social media-driven concerns, underscoring the need for more interactive and transparent governance.

A majority of respondents highlighted the negative impact of misinformation on their participation in governance. This points to a critical challenge of the digital era: while social media democratizes access to information, it also amplifies the risk of spreading false or misleading content. Addressing misinformation is essential to ensuring that public participation in governance is informed and constructive. Social media has shown its potential to mobilize citizens for protests, advocacy, and civic engagement. The ability to quickly organize movements and campaigns through digital platforms suggests that social media plays a significant role in driving social change and holding political actors accountable. However, this also raises questions about how governments can engage constructively with such movements to foster positive change. Social media has undoubtedly revolutionized public participation in governance in Nigeria, empowering citizens to engage, share, and mobilize around governance issues. However, to fully harness the potential of these platforms, challenges related to



misinformation, government responsiveness, and transparency must be addressed. By doing so, social media can continue to play a transformative role in promoting democratic governance, accountability, and inclusive civic participation.

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FILM FESTIVAL IN A DIGITAL AGE: A PEEP INTO THE RIVERS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (RIFF)

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Abstract

The paper examines the effect of digital engineering on film festivals in the 21st century, how the emergence of digital technology and virtual platforms have transformed the setting of film festivals, affecting their organization, participation, distribution, and audience engagement. While there is a growing research on digital cinema and online platforms, there is limited empirical study concentrating on how film festivals have responded to, embraced, or resisted digital formats. This work focuses on the challenges and opportunities faced by traditional film festivals as they manoeuvre an increasingly digital landscape by evaluating changes in the festival formats. The methodology applied is Case Study Research approach of an in-depth examination of prominent film festivals that have successfully integrated digital technology as Media Ecology and Cultural Studies Theories were adopted as the theoretical framework. The study reveals that a shift in film festival's format increases accessibility to wider audience and also creates networking challenges as regards traditional networking prospects that occur in face-to-face settings. The study contributes to knowledge by advancing theoretical discussions on the impact of digital technology on cultural events which provide insights into the future of film festivals and their role in filmic culture. It suggests a further research direction to identify long-term implications of these shifts for the future of the film industry and festival trails.

Keywords: Digital transformation, film festival formats, traditional film festival, cultural consumption, networking opportunities.

Introduction

Film festivals have long served as essential platforms for showcasing innovative cinematic works, aiding in industry networking, and boosting cultural dialogue. Traditionally held in physical venues, these festivals



have supported a communal atmosphere where filmmakers and audiences gather to celebrate and critique movies. Nevertheless, with the advent of digital technology and the rise of video-on-demand services, the entire concept of film festivals is undergoing a significant transformation, allowing more participation from those who could not attend in person due to geographic, economic or physical barriers.

As film festivals encounter challenges from the rise of digital platforms, they must rethink their plan of action to maintain relevance and pull in diverse audiences. The shift from in-person screenings to hybrid or virtual formats has raised questions about the festival experience, especially in terms of audience engagement, accessibility, and cultural significance. Inasmuch as there is increasing research on digital cinema and streaming platforms, there is a small-scale written report focusing on how film festivals have reacted to, or resisted digital formats. The sustainability of film festivals in a digital era involves a re-evaluation of their economic models and relevance. As Burgess and Williams (2022) articulate, "the future of film festivals lies in their ability to innovate and adapt to the changing digital landscape while remaining significant cultural events" (p. 37). This is a statement of fact because festival owners and organizers should conform to the reality on ground as regards to technological advancement. Without adapting to the digital instruments available now film festivals will not deliver its purpose.

Similarly, understanding the shifts in film festival's composition can aid and inform film producers, festival organizers, and cultural policymakers about best industry practices and innovative strategies for breeding community and promoting cinematic art in a developing digital landscape. The digital age has enabled film festivals to go global, attracting international audiences and submissions. According to



Iordanova (2018, p.19), "film festivals have become vital platforms for showcasing diverse voices from around the world, facilitated by digital technologies". Digital technologies have indeed become pivotal platforms for amplifying various marginalized voices, encouraging global connections, and enhancing accessibility to a collection of cinematic expressions. This globalization fortifies the importance of inclusivity in festival programming.

It is against this background that this study will examine the socio-economic ingredients influencing these changes and how they affect filmmakers who are beginners and diverse voices in the industry. Moreover, it will highlight how film festivals can leverage digital instruments to diversify their reach, participation, distribution and audience inclusivity, thereby improving their cultural impact. It is therefore, necessary to x-ray various case studies of film festivals spotlighting their tactics and innovative approaches.

Sundance Film Festival

This is a yearly film festival started in 1978 in Park City, Utah United States of America. It is one of the largest and most prestigious independent film festivals, which was founded by Sterling Van Wagenen, a notable filmmaker. After Robert Redford became engaged in the festival it was renamed as Sundance in 1985. However, in 1990s it became an outstanding film festival in the world, showcasing films and serving as an important platform for award recognition, launching of celebrated film titles such as *The Blair Witch Project (1999)*, *Little Miss Sunshine (2006)* and *Whiplash (2014)*. Sundance film festival features marketplace for film sales and most currently has responded to digital transformation through hybrid models and streaming opportunities and diversity, while





highlighting social issues and stories of the alienated voices. As a strategy for expansion, they set up online screening services in 2021. It was the first fully virtual film festival, giving admittance to films from various geographical places using streaming platforms; it allowed a broad audience to participate compared to traditional in-person attendance. Sundance also introduced interactive events such as live question and answer (Q&A) sessions, panel discussions, and provided attendees with real-time engagement opportunities.

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) was the first global film festival and it is known as "Festival of Festivals". It was established in 1976 and designed to showcase international cinema and to promote the local film culture. Between 1970s and 1980s, the maiden event featured one hundred and twenty-seven (127) films and brought together about thirty thousand (30,000) persons in attendance. TIFF grew into a respected worldwide platform for filmmakers, expanding its reach and recognition (Parmar, 2020). These films *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974) and *The Big Chill*, (1983) were screened in the festival and later became Oscar contenders from the 1980s to 1990s, which helped to institute TIFF as a platform of repute for both independent and mainstream films. Presently, TIFF has developed into an important networking hub for filmmakers and industry professionals. The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) began offering online screenings in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to accommodate audiences who could not attend physically due to health and safety concerns. The hybrid platform enabled attendees to enjoy films from the festival real-time, which broadens access to wider audiences.





The London Film Festival (LFF)

It is organized by the British Film Institute (BFI), and held annually every October. London Film Festival (LFF) was established in 1957 and over the years it serves as an indispensable platform for filmmakers to premiere their works. The festival gives various awards, such as the Best Film Award, voted on by both audiences and industry professionals. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LFF initiated hybrid screening in 2020 edition, providing both in-person and web options for audiences, enabling audience to watch from the comfort of their homes using streaming platforms. This adaptation was successful, as a result the BFI continues to integrate hybrid formats in future editions, improving accessibility for viewers. The London Film Festival highlights different display of films, which include full-length films, short films and documentaries, featuring celebrated international film titles. The festival usually lasts for two weeks, as it features a variety of events that are held in several venues across London. The major marketing strategy is the utilization of social media, partnerships with influencers, and collaboration with different entertainment brands and strong traditional media campaigns, as their target audience include such audience segments as film enthusiasts, industry professionals, and members of the public. The adaption of hybrid screening reflects the festival's resiliency and sensitivity to contemporary viewing habits in a digital age. Undoubtedly, the London Film Festival stands out for its inclusive programming and groundbreaking marketing styles, which not only back up the festival but also engage with the broader audience, making it a lively event in the global film schedule.

The Effect of Digital Technology in Programming of Film Festivals

Digital technology has made tremendous impact in the distribution and programming structures of film festivals, influencing every facet from



submission processes to audience engagement, marketing and film accessibility. Several critical developments explain this modification. This transformation has not only configured how films are exhibited but also how a cinephile engages with film content. Below are several aspects of this transformation, which increases volume of film entries. It allows festivals to accept more submissions than traditional print methods. Events like the Sundance Film Festival have reported a substantial rise in the number of submissions, highlighting how online opportunities attract a broader range of projects (Sundance Institute, 2021). This agrees with the argument this study is addressing, encouraging filmmakers and festival owners to adapt to the waves of technological growth. Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) experienced over two hundred (200%) percent increase in film entries in the second edition due to the digital application strategies engaged. RIFF 2023 inaugural edition received five hundred and eighty-two (582) movie submissions from eighty-two (82) countries while the second edition (RIFF 2024) recorded two thousand two hundred and thirty (2,230) movies submitted from one hundred and seventy-two (172) countries with United States of America and India having the highest submissions respectively (Edozie, 2024). Meanwhile, one hundred and twenty-seven (127) films were selected for different award categories. The reason for the surge in entries is that RIFF adopted a hybrid format strategy. Many festivals are now adopting hybrid models, which is combining both in-person and online screenings. This model increases accessibility for viewers who might not be able to attend in person due to geographical or financial constraints. Festivals like Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) have taken advantage of digital evolution after Covid-19 pandemic, allowing audiences to participate virtually if they cannot attend





physically (TIFF, 2021). Festival organizers achieved innovative programming and interactive events with the aid of technology. Currently, film festivals across the globe have begun to experiment with interactive content, such as virtual reality (VR) experiences and augmented reality (AR) installations (George, 2021). These applications provide new forms of storytelling and engagement, enhancing the festival experience.

As film festivals continue to adapt hybrid models, innovative approaches will possibly persist, being a reflection of the ongoing evolution in the film industry in a digital age. This transformation presents both challenges and opportunities, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional festival structures and audience interactions. However, while the traditional film festival model still holds value, the adaptation of digital technology is essential for future sustainability and pertinence, ushering in fresh models of accessibility, engagement, and interaction. With this shift from traditional, in-person-only events to a hybrid type, digital components have created a more inclusive environment for both filmmakers and audiences, which play a decisive role in defining the future of cinematic culture. Therefore, understanding these transformations provide rich insights for festival organizers as they steer the increasing digital world, enabling them to create unparalleled experiences that resonate with diverse audiences.

The Concept of Digital Transformation

According to Parker (2021, pp.45-55), "digital technologies have redefined the structure of film festivals, leading to new paradigms of accessibility and audience reach". This transformation allows festivals to broaden their reach beyond geographical limitations through digital distribution networks. It is the method of delivering media content, such



as motion pictures, through online platforms and services rather than traditional physical media (for example, DVD plates, television sets and cinema screenings), which examines how online platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and virtual screening rooms have transformed the way films are disseminated and consumed. Platform variety obtainable in digital age explains the collection of platforms available for filmmakers to distribute, including subscription-based services (like Netflix and Amazon Prime), transactional video-on-demand (TVOD), and social media platforms.

The growing trend of online film festivals has brought about series of discussions regarding the value of physical presence in a film festival versus the accessibility of virtual platforms. Lacey (2020, pp.78-92) says that "the pandemic catalyzed a rapid transition to online formats, challenging the very notion of what a film festival can be". Hence, festivals are struggling to find a balance between in-person experiences and digital availability. Digital accessibility has created an economic necessity in the area of redefining the revenue models like subscription services, pay-per-view model, advert-supported content model, and the potential for revenue diversification through global markets, which influence overall film industry revenues. This particular construct also has cultural impact, that is to say digital distribution platforms affect representation in films and the opportunity for diverse voices and stories to reach wider audiences. Taplin (2019, p. 62) states that "the emergence of digital distribution platforms has democratized access to films, yet it poses challenges for the traditional festival circuit". Now, filmmakers have alternative means for reaching audiences that may bypass festivals entirely.



The African Film Festival Experience

African film festivals have gained momentous recognition for exhibiting numerous cinematic voices and stories from the continent, Festivals such as FESPACO (Panafrikan Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou) holds in Burkina Faso. The biennial festival is the biggest of its kind in Africa, supporting African cinema since 1969. There are film festivals in Africa such as Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF) Egypt, Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) South Africa that focuses on African cinema and promotes local filmmakers as well as screen international films. There is Nairobi Film Festival (NFF). The Abuja International Film Festival (AIFF) which started in 2006, and has become a major player in African film calendar. The Zuma Film Festival (ZFF) established in 2005, is also among the earliest film festivals in Nigeria held yearly in Abuja, the federal capital territory, and it aims to promote the Nigerian film industry while encouraging cultural exchange. The African International Film Festival (AFRIFF) takes place in Calabar, Cross River State of Nigeria. There is the Lagos International Film Festival (LIFF), which is held in Lagos State annually to market Nigerian and African films to the world with workshops and screenings.

Overall, the shift to hybrid formats among African film festivals has opened new possibilities for growth and engagement, making African cinema more accessible to audiences internationally and helping to further a prosperous cultural exchange. However, challenges remain in the African film festivals adapting to virtual formats, including the digital divide in some regions, ensuring quality across platforms and the costs associated with necessary technologies persist.

The case studies exemplify how different film festivals across the



globe have adapted to the digital era using innovative approaches that deepen audience engagement and accessibility. Their thriving initiatives serve as models for other festivals seeking to maneuver the evolving landscape of film distribution and viewer interaction. By drawing on technology and reshaping traditional structure, these festivals have not only enlarged their reach but also improved the whole essence of festival experience for their audiences despite different challenges.

Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) in a Digital Age

The Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF), established in 2023, is an important cultural event in Nigeria, held annually in Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State. The festival aims to celebrate the art of filmmaking while promoting the region's cultural heritage and tourism. More importantly, RIFF not only raises the visibility of Nigerian cinema but also contributes proportionately to social, cultural, economic growth and development of the film industry in the country. Through initiatives that leverage technology, the festival continues to adapt to ever-changing landscapes, ensuring its relevancy and effect for years to come. In recent years, most African film festivals have adapted to hybrid formats by combining physical screenings with online components to reach bigger audience.

Like the slogan of Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) “Film festivals are not just events”, they serve as ecosystems where filmmakers and audiences can interact, learn, and grow together. Bill Nichols (2017) captures the current developments in film festivals in a digital age by saying that "digital technologies have not only changed the landscape of distribution and exhibition but have also transformed the audience experience, allowing for new forms of community engagement" (p. 112).



More importantly, community building in a digital society includes a focus on audience engagement through social media platforms, interactive contents, and virtual events. These channels enable audiences globally to share their experiences, opinions, and critiques, thereby expanding the communal aspect of film festivals. This is explained further by Smith (2020) in this way: "The potential for social media to create communities of like-minded individuals not only enhances the festival experience but also expands the notion of what a film festival can be" (p. 45).

The empowerment aspect of the digital age experience is captured in the opinion of Rognan and Martin (2021, p.78), that "the collaborative environment fostered by digital film festivals allows independent filmmakers to establish networks, share resources, and connect with audiences in more meaningful ways". In other words, digital tools ease collaboration among filmmakers, and between filmmakers and audiences. Currently, festival organizers like Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) are increasingly using technology to empower independent filmmakers who might otherwise be marginalized, as in the case of RIFF whose programmes have been empowering the young filmmakers by teaching them the newest discoveries in filmmaking and innovative ways to navigate in economic hardship.

The audience demographics and engagement level of the Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF) evolved sufficiently in the second edition with the full transition to digital film festivals, which made it accessible and easy during the festival period. The switch- over greatly impacted the structure of the film festival, prompting the rating of audience demographics and engagement dynamics that reflects cultural consumption. As digital experience gain more attention in RIFF, understanding how these changes impact attendees, how they



participate, and their general experience becomes paramount. From research and records, streaming platforms enhanced accessibility, facilitated broader audience participation and added new demographic interaction championed by the use of technology. Bennett 2021, p. 201 says that technology help to speed up film accessibility by the film enthusiasts. However, this shift also presents difficulties or challenges, particularly for filmmakers that do not have dependable Internet access or digital skill (Smith and O'Neill, 2020). This was experienced in some part of the regions in Nigeria where film submissions were low in the last RIFF edition.

Moreover, the essence of film festival networking oftentimes defined by personal interactions and group interaction may be compromised or not meet the expected outcome. Therefore, appraisal of audience demographics and engagement levels provides serious insights into the evolving nature of the Rivers International Film Festival in the digital age, suggesting that the festival experience may require more assignment in the light of these technological advancements. Some of the key component parts in the digital age that film festivals including RIFF could leverage on in shifting from in-person participation to hybrid engagement include:

Audience Demographics

- i. **Broader Reach:** Digital film festivals bring about global participation, attracting viewing audience from different geographical locations who may not have attended physical events.
- ii. **Diverse Age Groups:** Inasmuch as digital natives dominate Internet platforms, older demographics are progressively getting involved, the reasons being the high rate of awareness in digital technologies after COVID-19 experiences.



- iii. **Inclusivity:** Digital formats encourage inclusivity, which permits individuals from various backgrounds and field of study, including those with disabilities or financial constraints, to access content more freely.
- iv.

Engagement Levels

- i. **Interactive Features:** Digital film festivals usually have live questions and answers (Q&As) and chat rooms, improve real-time connections with filmmakers and other viewership.
- ii. **On-Demand Viewing:** The choice for on-demand viewing increases suitability and engagement but can reduce communal experiences known for in-person festivals. This is the opportunities created by YouTube facilities and social media handles which foster audience engagement, creating a shared real-time experience that encourages film visibility.

Accessibility Implications

- i. **Increased Access:** Digital film festivals can provide accessibility features like subtitles and audio descriptions, reaching a wider audience, including those with disabilities. This breaks language and cultural barriers by improving cultural exchange and winning sympathy across different ethnic communities.
- ii. **Financial Accessibility:** It makes festival participation cost effective and affordable for diverse audiences compared to in-person festivals.

Networking Implications

- i. **Virtual Networking:** As digital formats assist global networking experience through online events, there is no personal connection of face-to-face interactions. It also allows industry professionals and



colleagues to connect across borders, enhancing possible film business collaborations that could be more difficult to achieve in traditional film festival settings.

However, a major challenge could emanate from overcrowded virtual spaces and stop reasonable connections, as effective networking relates to managing disconnected online interactions. This trend in digital film festivals highlights more of the shifting system of cinematic consumption. Basically, one may ask how has digital distribution transformed sharing and screening practices of films at festivals, and what impact do streaming services have on festival programming? This is simple because the emergence of digital distribution essentially adjusted the entire pattern of film festivals. With advancements in technology and changes in audience consumption form, the original methods of film sharing and screening are being redefined. This question investigates the multifarious changes brought about by digital distribution, focusing on both the mechanism of screening and the programming options made by festival organizers. Digital distribution channels have revolutionized how current filmmakers share their works, having clear advantages over normal system of content distribution. The role of digital distribution channels like Amazon, Vimeo, YouTube, Netflix, Facebook and film festival-specific services in enabling filmmakers to reach global audiences has generated a lot good for film festivals in several ways including; accessibility from anywhere in the world with an Internet connection, which breaks geographical barriers that previously and seriously limited film distribution to local markets. It has also made filmmakers to be able to target and reach niche audiences that may not be available through Traditional cinema releases.

This favours independent and young filmmakers; more importantly,



cost efficiency is a major benefit as it reduces distribution costs such as related to physical media (like DVDs), transportation, or theatre rentals. Digital platforms lessen these costs, making it easier for film owners to share their works without heavy financial difficulty. Rather than spend too much money hiring agents, self-distribution is encouraged as they can upload and distribute their movies directly, do away with middlemen, as this will allow more profit ownership and creative control. Digital distributions bring in different monetization models, which include multifaceted revenue options. That is to say filmmakers can choose from assorted monetization models like ad income (YouTube), subscription fees income (Vimeo), rentals, or direct sales. This flexibility allows for multiple opportunities to receive financial targets of the filmmaker. There is the gain in getting instant feedback from viewers, which can inform future projects and improve storytelling techniques of a filmmaker and the festival organizers.

In all, digital distribution channels serve as potent tools that aid filmmakers to bypass the traditional confinement and shortcomings of film distribution. By exploiting these platforms, filmmakers and festival owners can reach global audiences more effectively, interact directly with viewers, and develop innovative strategies for promoting and monetizing their works and events. As the industry continues to evolve, these tools will likely play an even more fundamental role in shaping the future of film distribution and audience engagement. Consequently, digital distribution has affected the selection processes of festival curators, permitting only greater diversity, wider access to submissions, and the ability to showcase relevant and meaningful works. As curatorial patterns evolve together with technological advancements, film festivals are now more inclusive, thus improving the cinematic landscape. This shift not



only deepens the representation of various voices but also positions film festivals as beautiful platforms for discovering and supporting emerging talents on a world scale. Obviously, the aim is to provide an all-encompassing analysis of the evolving workings within film festivals in the digital age.

Different Approaches Adopted by the Case Study Festivals in the Digital Age

This intensifies both the strategies engaged by film festivals and the concrete outcomes of those strategies, thus addressing both the "what" and "how" of the adaptation procedure. Accordingly, film festivals that have successfully changed over to digital platforms have adopted innovational approaches to film entries, marketing, screening and audience interaction, creating more robust engagement and wider reach. This indicates that an understanding of these strategies is crucial in counting their gains. Significantly, Barlow (2020, p.102) says that "the integration of digital technologies in film festivals not only facilitates remote participation but also presents unique challenges that require strategic planning and implementation". Thus, exploring this plan of action will lend insights into the best practices for other festivals with the intention to thrive in a digital society.

The experiences of film industry stakeholders in submitting to and participating in digital film festivals compared to traditional film festivals in this part of the world is a progressive experience in that most of the filmmakers are becoming tech savvy and that eliminates difficulties emanate in technological setup. However, their experiences can be viewed both the subjective experiences and the comparative analysis that the study aims to explore. According to Hong et al. (2020), "the shift from traditional to digital platforms has altered not only the submission processes but also the overall experience for filmmakers and participants"



(p. 73) thus, highlighting the need to understand these mechanics from the stakeholders' perspectives. A Nigerian filmmaker living in South Africa in a telephone chat narrated his experiences in submitting his films to different film festivals across the globe in recent times with less efforts and time. According to him, "in less than fifteen (15) minutes I can submit my short films to different festivals from the comfort of my home" (Johnson George, 16 June 2024)

Furthermore, as Meyer (2019) points out, "the rise of digital festivals has provided both opportunities and challenges for filmmakers, raising questions regarding visibility, audience engagement, and economic implications" (p. 45). This reinforces the value of understanding how different stakeholders navigate these environments. Meyer's observation captures a nuanced and evolving landscape for filmmakers in the context of digital festivals. While these festivals present novel opportunities for visibility, audience interaction, and new economic models, they also come with significant challenges that filmmakers must overcome. The balance between maximizing opportunities and handling the pitfalls will shape the future of film distribution and audience engagement in the digital age. Ultimately, the successful integration of digital festivals into filmmakers' strategies will likely depend on their ability to adapt to this new paradigm while remaining true to their artistic vision. Looking at opportunities they present, digital festivals provide filmmakers with a broader platform to showcase their works beyond geographical boundaries. According to Miller et al. (2021, p. 112), "digital film festivals foster a sense of community and interaction that was previously limited to physical gatherings". This engagement is crucial for creating connections between filmmakers and audiences which can create collaboration among colleagues.



Independent and emerging filmmakers can have access to diverse audiences that they might not reach through traditional film festivals. Online festivals often have the capacity to host a greater number of films, which can increase the chances of being noticed, especially for lesser-known creators. There are economic opportunities associated with it. For example, digital festivals can lower the costs associated with travels and accommodations, enabling more creators to participate and exhibit their films. There are associated challenges in a digital film festival such as competition. Digital space can be fierce, making the potential for valuable films to be overlooked amidst countless options. While digital festivals increase the potential for visibility, the sheer volume of content submitted can lead to oversaturation. The director of Rivers International Film Festival (RIFF), Kate Ezeigbo Chidinma, agrees that digital festival can be challenging in ascertaining the best movie due to the volume of films submitted. She says “it was so difficult to select movies to contest in the forthcoming festival in October 2024 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State because there were too many beautiful and competitive movies”. She stated this during a World Press conference held in Port Harcourt at Hotel Presidential on the tenth of October. Filmmakers who are not strong will struggle to stand out in a crowded online marketplace because it is a competition between filmmakers across the globe.

Generally, industry stakeholders have different perceptions of their experiences with digital versus traditional film festivals, shaped by individual goals, budgets, and networking needs. While digital festivals offer appreciable advantages in accessibility and audience reach, traditional festivals sustain their allurement through prestige, personal engagement, and networking possibilities. At long last, the choice between these platforms hinges on a combination of practical



circumstances and the unique objectives of each stakeholder, leading to a dynamic premise in which both traditional and digital film festivals create important functions. The ongoing evolution of the film industry will likely make stakeholders continually appraise their strategies and alternatives as digital platforms grow and adapt.

From the forgoing, it is observed that shift in film festivals has:

- i. **Increased Accessibility:** The shift to digital formats has increased access to film festivals for a bigger audience, allowing more participation from those who couldn't attend in person due to geographic, economic, or physical barriers.
- ii. **Diverse Programming:** Online platforms have encouraged more diverse programming and the inclusion of a wider range of films, including independent and international productions.
- iii. **Networking Challenges:** While digital festivals have provided broader access, they could also hinder traditional networking opportunities that occur in face-to-face settings, potentially impacting relationships and collaborations.
- iv. **Evolving Audience Experience:** The study reveals several changes in the audience experience, such as altered engagement and interaction modes, which can vary more importantly between physical and online formats.
- v. **Influence on Film Distribution:** Findings highlight how digital film festivals are reshaping distribution models, with important implications for sales, distribution deals, and audience reach.

Consequently, film festivals in the digital age has historically served as opportunity for displaying new talents, nurture industry connections, and to celebrate filmic artistry. In the digital era, the rise of streaming channels, social media, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR)



platforms have led to variegation of content delivery and consumption, allowing audience to participate from the pleasure of their homes and locations. Despite the gains of broader reach, cost effectiveness, short cut to travel expenses, accessibility and convenience, this shift brings concerns regarding the quality of engagement, oversaturation of content, and the travail upcoming independent filmmakers face in surviving in an increasingly crowded digital marketplace. However, this paper has significantly lighten the evolving dynamics of film festivals in a digital age, enriching both academic discourse and practical applications within the film industry.

Again, digital technology has deeply transformed the distribution and planning of film festivals, introducing new dimensions of film accessibility, viewing habits, engagement, production methods and interaction. The shift from traditional, in-person-only events to hybrid formats with digital device has created a more reboost environment for both filmmakers and audiences. As festivals continue to conform to evolving technological era, their ability to innovate in distribution and scheduling will play a pivotal role in defining the future of cinematic culture that resonate with divers audiences. The film festivals coordinators, directors and owners should also be ready to address new challenges this shift brings, such as maintaining purposeful engagement in a high level digital environment. Uninterrupted adjustment to audience needs and preferences will be decisive for festivals aiming to boom in the ever-evolving landscape of a digital technological age.

Therefore, these recommendations can be applied to help in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital era, continuing to serve as essential platforms for the film industry and offering improved experiences for audiences globally. These are few



recommendations.

- i. **Hybrid Models:** Film festivals should research and fine-tune hybrid formats, combining in-person experiences with the accessibility of digital platforms so as to retain the communal aspect of the event while reaching a worldwide audience.
- ii. **Community Engagement:** Creating and maintaining a sense of community should be a major target. Film festivals can utilize interactive elements, such as online gathering, networking opportunities, Q&A sessions, masterclasses and community screening, to improve connections between filmmakers and audiences to better in-person and virtual festival experiences.
- iii. **Embrace Technological Innovations:** Film festival organizers should utilize the improvement in technology, such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), to create immersive occurrences that can deepen storytelling and audience engagement especially in African film festivals.

Succinctly, the paper has addressed a fundamental gap in literature regarding the point of intersection of technology and cultural events, specifically film festivals. The contributions the paper makes to scholarship can be explained in the following ways:

In theoretical framework, this paper advances theoretical discourse on the impact of digital technology on cultural events, specifically in a cinematic context.

Again, in a practical insight the work provides valuable insights for filmmakers, programmers, and festival organizers on adapting to the changing landscape, developing strategies for future festivals especially in Africa. There is also policy recommendations offered to policymakers





so as to be guided accordingly regarding support for diverse filmmakers and the sustainable development of film festivals in a digital age.

One of the contributions of this paper is the insight on benefit of application of digital technology on cultural commodity. The work enhances understanding of how digital transformations are reshaping cultural consumption, community building, and access to artistic experiences. Furthermore, it gives further research directions: This paper identifies areas for further research, such as the long-term implications of these shifts for the future of the film industry and festival circuits.

Filmography in Alphabetical Order

Little Miss Sunshine (2006): Directed by: Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, USA.

Murder on the Orient Express (1974): Directed by: Sidney Lumet; France, UK and Turkey.

The Big Chill (1983): Directed by: Lawrence Kasdan, USA.

The Blair Witch Project (1999): Directed by: Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez; USA.

Whiplash (2014): Directed by: Damien Chazelle, USA.

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