

## ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND NIGERIAN SOCIAL VALUES

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### **Abstract**

For a long time, the Nigerian entertainment industry has been in the spotlight. Nollywood, for example, is regarded as the world's second largest film maker. The industry is gaining new audiences and growing box office income thanks to improved scriptwriting, cinematography, and film directing; a steady influx of youthful talent; the availability of new and cheaper technologies; ease of distribution; and prospects for foreign partnerships. While many people welcome this historic achievement, others worry that the industry could pose a threat to Nigerian social norms. The purpose of this study is to assess the success of the entertainment business in Nigeria and its impact on the country's social values. Anchored on the cultivation theory, the research combines qualitative analysis of relevant literature with primary data collected through a 12-point in-depth interview in which 15 participants were purposively selected from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Face-to-face and phone interviews were conducted with various professionals ranging in age from 19 to over 60. The findings show that the entertainment industry is well-liked and successful among Nigerians, and that it has a significant positive and negative impact on the country's social values. It is suggested that the government develop laws and incentives to encourage content creators to focus more on content that promote Nigerian social values and that parents pay more attention to what content their children consume.

**Keywords:** Digital Age, Entertainment, Media Industry, Nigeria, Social Value

### **Introduction**

Entertainment has always been an element of human society, and it takes many forms including film, television, radio, theater, music, and video or computer games. The objective of entertainment is to provide amusement or to divert attention. It has evolved into a significant industry through time, thanks to

technological advancements. Vogel (2007) says it is one of the largest sectors of the U.S. economy and is becoming one of the most prominent globally. According to Motion Picture Association (2022), the American film and television industry alone supports 2.2 million jobs, pays out \$192 billion in total wages, and comprises over 110,000 businesses. According to Navarro (2022), total box office earnings in the United States and Canada in 2020 were roughly 4.48 billion dollars, up from 2.1 billion dollars the previous year.

Nigeria is not behind in this trend; the music industry alone has helped to highlight the country on the world map in very positive ways. Its income increased from around 36 million dollars in 2014 to 60 million dollars in 2020, with 86 million dollars expected in 2022.. Nollywood, Nigeria's movie industry produces over 2000 films annually, employs over a million people, and shows total sales of \$200-300 million per year. According to UNESCO (2009), as cited by Mauyakufa & Pradhan (2018), Nollywood is recognized as the second largest movie producer in the world. Thanks to ease of distribution owing to the digital revolution, and increased investment from global players, Nollywood's films are watched not only in cinemas but in homes across Nigeria, Africa and around the world; It has become the favorite of many.

While the success of the entertainment industry in Nigeria is applauded by many, some are concerned and of the opinion that the industry's heavy portrayal of negative cultures, violence, immodest lifestyles, including dressing, and ritual killings for wealth and power may have harmful effects on the country's social values. This study seeks to follow the entertainment industry in Nigeria through the ever-evolving digital landscape in order to evaluate its impact on Nigerian social values.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Entertainment:** According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2008), the definition of entertainment include: that which affords interest or amusement; Oxford Lexicon (2022) says it is the action of providing or being provided with amusement or enjoyment; an activity that is diverting and holds attention (Wordnet, 2008); amusement or diversion provided especially by performers (Merriam Webster, 2022); and Collins Dictionary (2022) further adds that entertainment consists of performances of plays and films, and activities such as reading and watching television, that give people pleasure. The ability to elicit an emotional response from an audience member is the most important factor in determining if anything should be deemed entertainment. It's possible that the response will be non-favorable or favorable. Cinema, television, radio, theatre, music, and video and computer games are examples of entertainment.

**Industry:** The term "industry" refers to a group of organizations or businesses that work together to achieve a shared goal. The entertainment industry is a global collection of bodies that supply products with the primary goal of entertaining or

captivating an audience.

**Social Value:** Values can be defined as the principles and norms of human interaction within a certain group that are seen worthy, valuable, or noteworthy by members of that organization. The way in which social processes operate in a given society is explained by societal values, norms, and institutions. Halstead & Taylor (1996) in state that values are principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards, or life positions that operate as broad guides to behavior or as reference points in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or action. According to Lamorde (2012), they are a gauge of goodness or desirability, as well as social sources of structured interaction. Ndubueze (2013) posits that values create space within which members of society are to operate and define boundary lines which when crossed is considered an offence, nonconformance to social expectations.

**Digital age:** Digital age also referred to as digital revolution or information age is a time when large amounts of information are widely available to many people, largely through computer technology. Techopedia (2022) defines digital age as the advancement of technology from analog electronic and mechanical devices to the digital technology available today. The era started during the 1980s and is ongoing. Cambridge Dictionary says that digital age is the present time, in which many things are done by computer and large amounts of information are available because of computer technology.

### Research Objectives

1. To find out whether the entertainment industry in Nigeria is successful.
2. To find out the effects of the entertainment industry on Nigerian social values.

### Research Questions

1. How successful is the entertainment industry in Nigeria?
2. What effect does the entertainment industry have on Nigerian social values?

### Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory will form the theoretical framework of this study. Cultivation Theory states that long-term exposure to media (entertainment) influences how media consumers perceive the world and act. George Gerbner proposed this notion in the 1960s as part of the Cultural Indicators Project, which looked at the impact of television on viewers. According to the cultivation hypothesis, the more individuals watch television, the more likely they are to have a sense of reality that is similar to what is depicted on television. For many people, the skewed and incomplete reality depicted on television is representative of how the world really is. Gerbner invented the phrase "mean world syndrome" to explain a cognitive bias in which television viewers exposed to violent content are more inclined to see the

world as more dangerous than it is. Exposure to media content has escalated due to the availability of round-the-clock multichannel traditional and online media distribution platforms, consumers according to Statistica (2021), spend an average of 7.5 hours every day with media content.

The Cultivation Theory of George Gerbner is significant for our study because it gives us a way to quantify the impact of entertainment media on Nigerians and see where we can improve.

### **Literature Review**

Many young people today who are exposed to long periods of movies and other forms of media are found to emulate what they see or hear, which may be seen in their clothing, speech, and other aspects of their lives. For instance, a study by Gutschoven and Van den Bulck (2005), cited by Lai, Chung, & Po, (2015), revealed that people who watch more television start smoking earlier. Also, according to a recent study by Truth Initiative (2020), teenagers who were exposed to a lot of popular streaming and TV episodes with tobacco pictures were three times more likely to start smoking than their peers who were not exposed. As a result, limiting children's exposure to tobacco use onscreen will greatly reduce young tobacco use.

Video games which have been increasingly popular in recent years are a particularly significant medium among teenagers due to their unique properties. Muhannad, Abdullah, & Rehab (2019) caution that the impact of video games on the behavior and emotions of the players cannot be ignored, they are shaping teenagers' attitudes. Martins, Dimitri, Rabindra, & Kristen (2009) looked at female body images in some of the most popular video games in the United States, they discovered that female characters in these games have smaller waists, hips, and chest sizes than the average American woman, and that the games promote slender female body types as ideal. As a result, early adolescent girls start to be dissatisfied with their own body shapes. Martins et al. advised parents to pay attention to their children in order to prevent them from succumbing to the thin ideal. In a related study Martin et al. discovered considerable links between adolescent video game use and dangerous driving behavior later in life. Playing racing games, according to André Gonçalves (2020), can increase the likelihood of gamers making riskier real-life decisions in quest of similar feelings as in the games.

Results from studies carried out by Johnson & Holmes (2009) showed that Adolescents often believe that frequently watched shows portray cultural standards, and as a result, they develop unrealistic romantic expectations. Bleakley, Michael, Martin, & Amy (2008), opined that teenage exposure to sexually-oriented information has a significant impact on their expectations about sex, peer sexual behavior, and ideas about permissiveness, resulting in greater premarital sexual activity. Sondakh, & Hiola (2021) believe that adolescents'

unregulated usage of social media can impact premarital sexual activity. According to Pardun, Laden, L' Engle, & Brown (2005), music and movies are the most important types of media for spreading messages about sexual acceptance. Teenagers are significantly influenced by the sexualized media they consume, according to Zepp (2020), the potential dangers and consequences of sexual activity are rarely discussed in the media. Perse (1986) adds that, by glamorizing certain social features of reality, the media helps adolescent viewers modify their beliefs. These findings are pointers to the validity of George Gerbner's cultivation hypothesis.

### **Foundation and Developmental History of the Entertainment Industry in Nigeria**

Entertainment in Nigeria dates back to pre-independence, when colonial filmmakers started producing films for local audiences within Nigeria using mobile cinema as a means of exhibition . The colonial government began the development and operation of cinema houses in 1937. However, the content of films screened at cinemas during this time was foreign. From the 1930s through the 1940s, Yoruba travel theatre groups supplemented film exhibitions; one of the most well-known were the Agbegijo and Alarinjo theatrical groups, which featured stage players such as Duro Ladipo, Ishola Ogunmola, Lere Paimo, and Oyin Adejobi, among others. The Nigerian Film Unit was later founded in 1949 and 1950 to decentralize colonial film production. It used mobile cinema vans to show health and educational films to local audiences. It also produced newsreels and short films for internal and international audiences, showing festivities and colonial achievements.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, new movie houses were opened, resulting in a considerable influx of international films from the United States, India, China, and Japan. However, 1970s, marked the beginning of indigenous initiatives in Nigerian filmmaking. According to Adegbola (2011), Francis Oladele made *Kongi's Harvest* written by Wole Soyinka in 1971 and, soon after that, Ola Balogun made *Alpha in Paris*. Balogun later followed with other works like *Amadi*, *Ajani Ogun*, *Money Power* and others films, while Jab Adu made *Bisi*, *Daughter of the River Goddess*. The then-head of state, Yakubu Gowon, issued the Indigenization Decree in 1972 to limit the entrance of foreign culture into Nigeria. This policy resulted in the transfer of ownership of around 300 movie theaters in Nigeria from foreign owners to Nigerians. As a result of the strategy, more Nigerians began to participate actively in the film industry. Nigerian playwrights, screenwriters, and film producers emerged as well. The oil boom in Nigeria from 1973 to 1978 greatly aided the spontaneous growth of the cinema culture; it had become a significant employer of labor and also served an essential social role, as Nigerians went to the cinemas for leisure and entertainment.

Apart from cinema houses, television also become an outlet for entertainment

in Nigeria. The law at the time limited foreign content on television so producers in Lagos began televising local popular theatre productions. NIFICON (2010) documented that many of these productions were circulated on video as well, and a small-scale informal video movie trade developed. The cinema culture began to collapse in the late 1980s, prompting most Nigerian film producers to switch to television productions. Only a few of the once-thriving cinemas remained in business in the early 1990s, and all had closed by 1999. Eddie Ugbomah and Jimi Odumosu, both film producers who later became television producers, are sometimes credited with the "coincidental discovery" of the idea that video production could be profitable. In Nigerian cities like Lagos and Onitsha in the 1980s, it soon became common to see video copies of popular television shows being sold on the streets. Some producers and distributors took advantage of this to help build the video film industry in Nigeria.

In 1992, Kenneth Nnebue, a Nigerian trader based in Onitsha, was trying to sell a large stock of blank videocassettes he had imported. He decided that they would sell better with something recorded on them, so he shot a film called "Living in Bondage" which sold more than 750,000 copies. This experiment, according to Digital Nollywood, (n.d.) gave birth to an industry that was later named Nollywood by Matt Steinglass in a 2002 New York Times article. Nollywood films are based on Nigerian community life and are firmly ingrained in Nigerian cultural traditions. African idioms, proverbs, costumes, antiques, cultural displays, and images are used to tell Nigerian stories. Horror, humor, urban legend, mythic tale, love and romance, juju, witchcraft, melodrama, and historical epics are all popular Nollywood genres. Video technology was a crucial enabling aspect in the prolific performance; it sparked a lot of interest and excitement among customers as well as in the entertainment and communication businesses. Nollywood quickly grew into one of the world's most prominent creative enterprises in barely over two decades. It was a commercial success, with a large number of movies being sold in stores and on street corners across Africa and beyond.

### **The Entertainment Industry in the Digital Age**

According to Ebelebe (2017), new digital technologies have had an impact on practically every area of entertainment including filmmaking and music production. Emerging new filmic methods are drastically altering the landscape of filmmakers' aesthetics in terms of both form and content development. Nollywood is no exception. In recent times, Directors have attempted to infuse professionalism and quality to Nollywood in order to make it more relevant in the global marketplace. The movies are transitioning from being only home videos available on VCDs and DVDs to being available in standard digital formats. Improved scriptwriting, cinematography, and film directing are raising the bar in the film industry, attracting new viewers and increasing box office revenue.

Nollywood films are increasingly being exhibited in cinemas around Nigeria



and many African countries. New connections between content producers and consumers are being established thanks to internet-based platforms. Nollywood films are now available on digital platforms such as Iroko TV, Afrinolly, and Netflix, providing a low-cost and convenient way to reach a global audience. Netflix premiered its first Nigerian film, "Lionheart," in 2018 and is currently working on a screen adaptation of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* with Ebony Life Films in Lagos..

### **Influence of Entertainment Industry on Social Values**

The average Nigerian youth watches and listens to music and music videos very frequently thereby influencing broadcasters in Nigeria to air more of these types of entertainment. The content can also be accessed through all kinds of electronic media, online streaming, and new technologies, enabling the youths to view and listen to them in diverse settings. Ojukwu (2019) suggest that the implication of this is a significant shift in values among Nigerian youths which may likely have direct consequences on their academic pursuit as a result of the time they dedicate to entertainment at the expense of their studies.

There have been concerns recently that certain music types in Nigeria encouraged rape and drugs.

According to a report by Anazia (2016),

“The Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) raised alarm over a popular music video that was being aired in Nigerian TV stations. The music video, *Fans Mi* by multiple award-winning Nigerian music act Davido also known as Omo Baba Olowo (O.B.O), generated a lot of controversy among many Nigerians as it showcased drugs and guns. According to the NDLEA the musician through the music video could be encouraging young adults into the business of drug trafficking as clearly highlighted in the video.”

Nigerian films have dominated television screens across Africa and the diaspora, since the 2000s. Vota, (2019) says actors in the films have become household celebrities, and the films have had tremendous impact on the cultures of many African countries, influencing everything from how people dress to how they speak and utilize Nigerian slang. The Nigerian government, on February 21, 2022, cautioned filmmakers against promoting money rituals in their films. This directive, according to Sahara Reporters (2022) came on the heels of confessions made by some suspected money ritualists who said they learned the horrible behavior from movies and social media.

### **Chronicles of Highest-Grossing Movies and Music**

With the rise of Afrobeats in and outside of Nigeria, digital streaming platforms such as Apple, Audiomack, Boomplay, and Spotify have expanded their catalogs

by signing new license agreements with record labels across the country. The music industry is recognized as a major contributor to the economy with income rising from around 36 million dollars in 2014 to 60 million dollars in 2020. Some notable names associated with the music industry in Nigeria and their net worth are; Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun known as Wizkid is a singer and songwriter with a \$20 Million net worth. He is followed closely by David Adeleke, known as Davido. Davido's net worth is estimated at 19 million U.S dollars. Others are Collins Michael Ajereh, known as Don Jazzy, Damini Egunoluwa Ogulu also known as Burna Boy, and last but not the least, Innocent Ujah Idibia known as 2Face (2Baba) with net worth of \$18.5 million, \$17 million, and \$16 million respectively.

In the recent decade, the Nigerian film industry has seen a lot of celebrities and high-grossing films as a result of directorial and technological advancements in the business. According to Sule (2021), the *Wedding Party*, a film directed by Kemi Adetiba and released in 2016, is projected to have grossed N453, 000, 000 since its debut and currently holds the top spot on the list of the most grossing films of the previous decade. Niyi Akinmolayan directed *'The Wedding Party 2'*, a sequel to *'The Wedding Party'*, which has grossed N433, 197 377 since its premiere. It is second among the top ten highest-grossing films of the last decade. In 2020, *'Omo Ghetto'* directed by Funke Akindele grossed N187m followed by Toyin Abraham's *'Fate of Alakada'* released in October of the same year. *Fate of Alskada* grossed N113 million. Top highest grossing films in January 2022 include; *Christmas in Miami* -N260,541,250, *Aki and Pawpaw* -N134,427,849, *Superstar* - N62,555,100, *Dinner at My Place* -N11,567,565, *Over Her Dead Body* -N 7,372,300.

### **Research Methodology**

The study combines qualitative analysis of relevant literatures with primary data gathered from 15 participants in a 12-point in-depth interview. The participants, who were purposively picked from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, were made up of eight males and seven females, with the youngest being 19 years old and the oldest being over 60 years old.

Participants were drawn from a mix of professionals including; Medical practitioners, a building engineer, broadcasters, traders, housewives and a student. The interviews which spanned two days, were conducted either face-to-face with participants or over the phone. Each interview lasted between 10 and 20 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Q1: Knowledge and Use of Nigerian Entertainment**

14 of the 15 participants interviewed said they were familiar with and consumed Nigerian entertainment in the form of movies or music. One participant, a young



mother of three, stated that she does not watch or listen to Nigerian entertainment for the following reasons:

“We don't watch them as a house rule because we don't want our children to be influenced by what the movies depict. It is not what we subscribe to as parents.” (P-7)

The entertainment sector in Nigeria is quite popular with Nigerians, as evidenced by the data above.

### **Q2: What People Like about Nigerian Entertainment**

13 participants claim they enjoy Nigerian entertainment because the stories are relatable to their daily lives and provide them with a lot of humor and pleasure.

“I like the simplicity and how it showcases the culture of our country.” (P-9)

### **Q3: What People Don't Like about Nigerian Entertainment**

Poor story structures, bad musical lyrics, predictability of tale plots, portrayal of society as constantly negative, and indiscriminate use of inappropriate language were all cited as sources of concern and dissatisfaction by more than half of the participants. One of the participants made the following observation:

“I hate the way time is wasted on some scenes for example scenes where they are Driving or travelling somewhere” (P-6)

All of those who indicated one or more concerns were among the participants who had previously had something positive to say about Nigeria's entertainment sector. Despite the shortcomings in its product, our previous conclusion that the Nigerian entertainment industry is popular among Nigerians is reaffirmed.

### **Q4: Probability of Recommending Nigerian Entertainment to Others**

10 out of the 15 participants interviewed said they felt confident enough to recommend Nigerian entertainment to their friends and family.

### **Q5: Positive Influence of Nigerian Entertainment on Societal Values**

The Nigerian entertainment business, according to 12 participants, has opened people's eyes to observe and understand what goes on in society, as well as taught them cultural identity, patriotism, hard work, and promoted peaceful coexistence.

“Some of the really good ones draw attention to common problems we face as a nation and educate citizens about them and how to solve them. A lot of youths also get motivated by some of the artists”. (P-5)

### **Q6: Negative Influence of Nigerian Entertainment on Societal Values**

13 participants believe that the entertainment industry is a serious threat to the

country's social values. They claimed that the industry has westernized traditional norms and imported incorrect behavioral patterns; it has instilled negative values in the youths such as rituals, fraud, kidnapping, infidelity, and sexual promiscuity.

“Music and movies that portray wrong values have made youth chase after money fame, dishonesty; young people will do anything for money because of what they expose themselves to.” (P-6)

“People copy and live out what they see on screen.” (P-1)

Even while they had, on the one hand, approved the entertainment business, participants were quite passionate about discussing the subject of the industry's harmful influence.

#### **Q7: Rating of Nigerian Entertainment**

Asked to rate the entertainment industry in Nigeria on a scale of 0 to 10, one participant scored the industry 9, five participants scored her 8, four participants scored the industry 7, another four participants scored her 6, and one participant scored the industry 4, this averaging 7, a pass mark. This further underscore the industry's popularity and acceptance amongst Nigerians.

#### **Discussion**

This study seeks to answers two questions bordering on Nigerian entertainment industry. Objective 1, to find out if the entertainment industry in Nigeria is successful. Data from the finding suggest that, the Nigerian entertainment industry has been very successful. This is evident in the participants' unanimous high rating of the industry. Also, in spite of flaws and concerns observed by participants, majority still had positive things to say about the industry.

“The industry has influence young film makers and created a platform for their expression. They also create jobs.” (P-15)

This affirms the position of Chiekezie (2021). He said that the industry's success is such that the income of the music sector alone increased from around 36 million dollars in 2014 to 60 million dollars in 2020, with 86 million dollars expected in 2022 and UNESCO's (2009) recognition of Nollywood as the second largest movie producer in the world further strengthens this position.

Objective 2, the impact of this success on Nigerian social values is evaluated against the cultivation theory. According to the cultivation theory, long-term exposure to media content influences how media consumers perceive the world and act. The cultivation hypothesis states that the more individuals watch television or are exposed to media content, the more likely they are to have a sense of reality that is similar to what is depicted on television. From the findings, the interview participants all agree that entertainment has had an impact on the country's social values. If the cultivation theory holds true, the effect could be

positive or negative depending on whether the individual is exposed to wholesome materials or unwholesome materials. The participants all maintained that the effect is split almost in the middle between positives and negatives. one of them noted;

“People learn and practice what they see from the movies” (P-7)

People learn because they believe what they have watched is true whether is good or bad. This tallies with the position of Johnson & Holmes (2009), he said young people often believe that what they watch portray cultural standards, and as a result, they develop unrealistic romantic expectations. Zepp (2020) also said that youths are significantly influenced by the sexualized media they consume. This therefore affirms the cultivation theory, social values are affected one way or the other. The question will then be; how do we desire it to be affected? A positive effect calls for a concerted effort in production of content that promotes positive social values.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to analyze the success of the Nigerian entertainment industry and its impact on the country's social values. According to the findings, the entertainment industry's enormous success has a direct impact on Nigerian social values in both positive and negative ways. The content provided, which may be adjusted to favor whatever side is desired, is what determines where the effect swings. As a result, decision-makers, in this case the government, have a major role to play.

### **Recommendations**

In order to complement the efforts of Nigerian filmmakers who have been self-motivated up until now, the government must take on the task of providing oversight by:

- i. Formulating policies through relevant agencies to provide regular orientation and trainings for filmmakers.
- ii. Regularly reward outstanding film producers that promote good social values. This will encourage others to strive for excellence too.
- iii. Proper research of cultural themes should be encouraged to help identify and deemphasize promotion of negative values.
- iv. Parents and guardians must keep close watch on what media their children and wards consume
- v. Parents and guardians should Hold healthy discussions of media consumed by the younger folks with a view to discourage them from imitating the falsehoods inherent in most of them.

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