



Media and Entertainment Industry in Nigeria: An Inter-Industrial Interplay

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Abstract

The paper explored the interplay between the media and the entertainment industry in Nigeria. The relationship between the media industry and the entertainment industry is strong, fostering a significant bond of economic resources for Nigeria and its citizens. However, this connection is often overlooked by communication scholars on one hand and the entertainment industry on the other. This paper provided an analysis of the relationship between the two industries and established that the media industry in Nigeria is as vast, pluralistic, and diverse as the entertainment industry, interacting at various levels. Using a political economic perspective, the paper demonstrated that each industry influences the workings of the other. While the media, to some extent, confers status on artists in the entertainment industry, content from entertainment serves as a revenue source for the media. The paper also established that the interaction between the media and the entertainment industry is a continuous cycle, interlinked through publicity, status conferral, revenue generation, content distribution, agenda-setting, and even framing. The political economy of the industries reveals that key players in the entertainment sector, to some extent, dictate the media's revenue. Stories about their personal lives capture a significant portion of media attention. In turn, media owners play a crucial role in either making a particular entertainer popular or presenting them as acceptable to the public. The paper further concluded that no industry can exist in isolation due to their interdependence. It recommended exploring more opportunities to connect the two industries, which may open more avenues for Nigerians to earn a living.

Keywords: Media, Entertainment, Industry, Impact, political economy, status conferral

Introduction

Nigeria's media industry is considered the largest in Africa. However, it relies on revenue generated from political activities and the entertainment sector. Likewise, Nigeria's entertainment industry is vibrant and generates substantial income. The strong interplay between the media and entertainment industries creates a robust bond of economic resources for Nigeria and its people. In this context, the media industry balances itself with the resources generated from the entertainment sector. Simultaneously, the media serves as a platform for entertainers to showcase and sell their products, highlighting the significant relationship between the two industries. From a political and economic point of view, the media structure, ownership, and control, on the one hand, and the entertainers, wealth production, and distribution of entertainment content, on the other, reflect an indispensable interplay between two vibrant industries. For instance, entertainers use media platforms like radio, television, newspapers, social media, and outdoor media to sell their content to consumers.

Without the media, it would be difficult for the entertainment industry to sell its commodities. This means that the entertainment industry needs the media to make ends meet. Similarly, individual entertainers use the media to generate publicity and expand their fan base. On the other hand, the media generates large-scale revenue from entertainment content, activities and individuals through featuring. Social media serves as a platform where entertainers post their content for the audience. Special television stations (*Boom TV, Naija Music, Africa Magic, Arewa 24*) are dedicated to featuring such content. In return, they generate income through large-scale viewership, likes, shares and comments. Outdoor media, such as film houses, event centres, shopping malls, clubs, bars, and theatres (Ayakoroma, 2013), are places where entertainment artists perform live and charge entrance fees. By extension, entertainers use such platforms to make money, and the platforms play a role in conferring the status of importance on them.

The strategic, deliberate, and resourceful interplay between the two industries seems to have been neglected by communication scholars and the entertainment industry. Therefore, this paper attempts to examine this interplay by underscoring the key issues driving the relationship and the patterns of interaction between the two industries in Nigeria. In light of this, the paper focuses on each sector's impact on the other. It is based on four objectives: to examine the landscape of the media industry in Nigeria, to explore the entertainment industry in Nigeria, to analyse the impact of media on Nigeria's entertainment industry, and to assess the impact of the entertainment industry on the media in Nigeria.

The paper adopts the propositions of Political Economy and Status Conferral Theory (SCT), proposed by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton in 1948. SCT assumes that the mass media confer status on individuals by featuring them consistently and frequently (Folarin, 2002; Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008). This implies that the media focus on a few people and confer importance on them. The theory explains the role of the media in identifying, moulding, and showcasing individuals as important personalities. This is apparent in the cases of celebrities in politics, entertainment, and sports. The theory's assumptions are applied to explain how media in Nigeria confer the status of importance on celebrities, especially in the entertainment industry. Political Economy, on the other hand, is a modern perspective on the Marxist view of society's political and economic structure. In this regard, Political Economy extrapolates the political and economic interplay among interlinked industries.

The study employs the Library Research Method to gather relevant literature from available online and offline documented sources, including papers and newspaper reports. This research consults books, reports, and communiqués that address issues related to the history, contemporary concerns, and the interaction between the two industries in Nigeria. Therefore, as stated earlier, this paper aims to fill a gap by contributing to the existing literature. Following this introduction, the first and second sections of the paper examine the media landscape in Nigeria and the landscape of the entertainment industry. The third part discusses the media's impact on Nigeria's entertainment sector. Lastly, before the conclusion, the final section focuses on the influence of the entertainment industry on the media in Nigeria.

Landscape of the Entertainment Industry in Nigeria

The entertainment industry in Nigeria is segmented into various subsectors, given the country's abundance and diversity of talent. Each segment has its unique operations, a cluster of celebrities, and the media they use to market the content they create in Nigeria and beyond. In this section, the paper examines the landscape of Nigeria's entertainment industry by identifying a few celebrities and the types of media they utilise.

Film and Home Videos: Being the mother of all subsectors in Nigeria, the film industry consists of two major ‘woods’ – Nollywood and Kannywood (Yusha’u, 2004). Nollywood is based in Southern Nigeria, predominantly in Lagos, Rivers, Enugu, etc. It is the biggest film industry, hosting thousands of actors and actresses (Olukunle, 2019). The English-based industry produces films distributed across the globe with different themes, including comics. Kannywood is a Hausa film industry based in the Northern part of Nigeria, predominantly in Kano, Kaduna and Jos, with two major compartments – Nanaye (sentimental) and Chamama (comics) (Adamu, 2021). The industry also hosts thousands of actors and actresses and produces films with different themes. There are also ‘sub-woods’ – the Yoruba films, Igbo films, etc. However, the two segments intersect by featuring actors and actresses from each other’s films. Initially, the two industries used VHS to document the films until the CD took over. With the proliferation of technology, the two industries have upgraded their patterns of distributing films, such as shopping malls, film exhibitions, YouTube, Netflix, and Vidmate (Umar & Gujbawu, 2021).

Stand-Up Comedies: The stand-up comedy subsector also occupies a large space in Nigeria’s entertainment industry. Nigeria has a large number of stand-up comedians and comedienues. The cluster is mainly in the Southern part of the country, with a negligible number from the Northern part. The artists in this sector perform live and reality comedies at film houses, event centres, shopping malls, clubs, bars, and theatres (Ayakoroma, 2013). However, some of them have gone beyond Nigeria as they also feature in countries like the US, UK, Australia, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Germany, France, etc. (Ayakoroma, 2013). Popular stand-up comedians and comedienues include Basket Mouth, BOVI, I Go Dye, Akpororo, Kint-De-Drunk, Chigul, Helen Paul, etc.

Music: This subsector is one of the oldest in Nigeria. However, globalisation and the proliferation of technology have significantly reshaped how content is created and distributed. Similar to the film industry, the music industry is sharply divided into two parts: Afro Hip-Hop, classical, and blues on one hand, and Hausa Nanaye on the other. Local musicals are also produced in various local minority dialects, such as Igbo, Yoruba, Fulani, Kanuri, Tiv, and Nupe. Nigeria’s music is publicised and distributed through live shows, mobile music applications, and social media. Popular Afro Hip-Hop musicians include Wizkid, Davido, Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, Tems, Niniola, Teni, and Olamide. Popular Hausa industry musicians include Nura Inuwa, Umar Sherif, Ali Jita, Hamisu Breaker, and Isa Ayagi. According to Gotting (2021), the Nigerian music industry generates as much as 44 million US dollars.

Skit Making: This subsector is on the rise in Nigeria, with new initiatives emerging. Many Nigerian youths have ventured into this multibillion-dollar entertainment business. Skit makers produce comic content and often distribute it via social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and others. Popular skit makers in Nigeria include Emmanuella (Mark and Angel), Mr Lively (Barrister Mike), Mr Macaroni, Taooma, Zicsaloma, Mr Funny (Oga Sabinus), De General, Nas Boi, Brain Jotter, Broda Shaggi, and Lasisi Elenu (Emperor, 2021). Skit making is a multimillion-naira industry that produces entertaining content and provides jobs for the teeming youths in Nigeria and beyond (Oguntayo, 2021).

Reality TV Shows: Reality TV shows are a significant component of the entertainment industry in Nigeria, boasting a large fan base. The audience is perhaps thrilled by the shows’ ability to reflect societal realities, thereby capturing their attention. The blockbuster *Big Brother Naija* is at the top of Nigeria’s reality TV show chart (Usukuma, 2021). Other notable shows include *MTN Project Fame*, *Ultimate Love*, *Maltina Dance Hall*, *Nigeria’s Got Talent*, *The Gulder Ultimate Search*, *Nigerian Idol*, *Mercy & Ike*, *Shoot Your Shot*, *Love Come Back*, *Judging Matters*, and *Date My Family Nigeria* (Usukuma, 2021). According to *ThisDay Live* (2021), reality TV shows are rapidly

gaining acceptance among Nigerian audiences across various socio-economic classes. For instance, MultiChoice announced in 2020 that the BBNaija tagged “Lockdown” garnered over 900 million votes, while the 2021 edition surpassed it by 300 million votes, totalling as much as 1 billion 200 million votes.

Motion Cartoons: In an interview with *Premium Times* in 2020, Okeremute Ovuorho, a popular animator, said Nigerian animators are not recognised (Augoye, 2020). However, the recent trend in acceptance and viewership of animated cartoons as a form of entertainment is fast changing the narrative. Popular among them are *House of Ajebo*, *Kpako*, *Tegwolo*, *Owori-Takpo*, *MCKToons*, etc. These are motion cartoons created around diverse themes to entertain the Nigerian audience and beyond through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc.

Sarcasm/Graveyard Humour: This is also called black comedy. It involves using serious life events to create comedies. Many pages on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are dedicated to such comedies. People create memes and sarcastic content and post them on these platforms. The notable aspect of this humour is its large fan base, which entertains audiences with such content. Through this significant following, it generates revenue and gains popularity as well.

Overall, the Nigerian entertainment industry is vast and accommodates many talents. This largely contributes to the growth of youth in the country by providing jobs and sources of income for many. It is also important to note that the entertainment industry has rapidly expanded due to the availability and abundance of media that assist in marketing and distributing the content they create.

Impact of Media on the Entertainment Industry in Nigeria

At the centre of the discourse of this paper is the twofold impact of the two industries on each other. The media industry is a ready tool for the entertainment industry to utilise. As such, media outlets, beyond conventional and social media, serve as platforms for publicity. These platforms feature content, individuals, and groups from the entertainment industry that are publicised. It serves as a channel of distribution for the entertainers. For instance, the use of film houses, cinemas, event centres, bars, and clubs by stand-up comedians and music artists to showcase their talents clearly demonstrates that such outdoor media have a significant impact on the distribution of this content. As a result of this role, content producers consider the nature of the media even before producing the content. Similarly, some of the content is created based on prevalent media reports. In this case, the media set the agenda for entertainment producers. For instance, comedians like Mr Macaroni, Taooma, Broda Shaggi, McLively, Alibaba, etc., use current events and media trends to produce entertainment content. This demonstrates that the media are a significant determinant of the content of the entertainment industry in Nigeria.

Moreover, the media serve as a tool that breeds new celebrities. Without the firm role of the media in status conferral, some celebrities would not have made it to the limelight. In this case, the media are impactful in breeding celebrities in Nigeria’s entertainment industry. For instance, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have made many celebrities like Tasha, Mercy, Bobrisky, Emmanuella, Barrister Mike, Tiwa Savage, etc., popular. Using social media as a tool, many celebrities have large fan bases on such platforms. Through these fan bases, they make a fortune. In this case, the media industry provides an available ground for Nigerian youths to compete, build their networks, and earn a living. In this regard, the entertainment industry cannot survive in isolation from the media industry, which is the major distributor of their content and publicity and from which they generate themes for their production.

Impact of the Entertainment Industry on the Media in Nigeria

The other facet of impact is that of the entertainment industry on the media. The relationship between the two industries is not one-sided. Even when the media influence the entertainment industry, they also utilise entertainment content to generate an audience. Many media platforms have large followings because they broadcast or distribute entertainment content. Therefore, the media also employ entertainment content to achieve their mission. FM stations use music to retain their audience. In contrast, television stations such as Boom TV, Arewa24, African Magic, and BBNaija TV utilise their platforms to broadcast entertaining content to keep their audiences engaged. This demonstrates that the media industry recognises the demand for entertainment among its audience and works towards satisfying those needs.

The entertainment industry also serves as a source of revenue for the media. The earlier example cited about live performances at film houses, cinemas, bars, and clubs reflects this fact. Whenever such entertainment events are organised, media owners generate large-scale revenue from the entertainers and viewers. For instance, in Northern Nigeria, Kannywood has reintroduced the cinema-going culture. Film producers take their commodities to such media and show them to viewers. In return, viewers pay entrance fees that are shared between the venue owners and the entertainers. Stations like Arewa24 broadcast films produced by Kannywood filmmakers under large revenue agreements. Such films generate revenue for these stations. In the same vein, stations also utilise technology and build applications through which viewers can consume the content and pay. These efforts make it easier for the entertainment industry to sell its content and for the media to generate revenue.

Happenings in the entertainment industry serve as a news source for the media. Regardless of whether conventional or social media, Nigerian media outlets cover celebrity gossip, entertainment rumours, rivalries, and the personal lives of entertainers as part of their news reporting. In some media organisations, a desk is dedicated to covering and reporting such issues because Nigerians have a high interest in these stories. At times, such stories trend the longest and largest on social media platforms. As a result, celebrities have become agenda-setters for media coverage. In this regard, the entertainment industry sometimes shapes the content of what media outlets report to their audience.

This paper demonstrates that the interaction between media and the entertainment industry is continuously circular and interlinked in terms of publicity, status conferral, revenue generation, content distribution, agenda-setting, and even framing. The political economy of the industry shows that key figures in the entertainment sector, to some extent, dictate the revenue of the media. Similarly, stories about their personal lives receive significant media attention. In turn, media owners play a greater role in making particular entertainers popular or presenting them as acceptable to the public.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that the depth of the relationship between the media and the entertainment industry in Nigeria is not adequately explored. Closer attention to the interaction reveals more exciting and insightful relationships which, if examined, would enhance their impact on youths and the country. The interlink between the two industries has provided many Nigerian youths with jobs and bred millionaires and billionaires. This is because the entertainment industry in Nigeria is a multibillion-naira sector. The paper further concludes that neither industry can exist in isolation due to their interdependence. As a result, the paper recommends exploring more opportunities to strengthen the connection between the two industries, which may create more avenues for Nigerian youths to earn a living.

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