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THE FUTURE OF TRADITIONAL CINEMA IN THE ERA OF FILM STREAMING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Traditional cinema in Nigeria is undergoing positive transformations with the advent of digital technologies, the rise in demand of audiences' preferences, cultural and economic dynamics, and the burgeoning film industry landscape. One propelling reason for this is film streaming. Globally, demand for online consumption of digital video-film content has risen thus impacting significantly on the patronage of traditional modes of film distribution and exhibition. Academic and film industry discourses on the future of traditional cinema in the age of film streaming have majorly centered on disruption and democratisation. Apart from the conveniences and comfort that streaming provides for subscribers, there are also conversations on the potential for streaming dominance. Consequently, there are efforts by cinemas to leverage technology to improve cinemagoers' experiences through high-quality screen and audio equipment. Within this global discourse, few empirical studies have investigated the impact of film streaming on the future of cinema culture in Nigeria. The paper uses a qualitative approach and interviews of select content creators, exhibitors, and government regulatory agencies to investigate the current trends in traditional cinema practices, film streaming services, and their general implications for the film industry landscape. The technological determinism theory is used as the paper's theoretical framework. The paper revealed that while film streaming has contributed to the global integration of Nigerian films, it is only complementary to the cinema whose major challenges are security and affordability. The study posits that future film exhibitions are tilting towards Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) which favours streaming platforms and poses a threat only to satellite and digital television service providers. It recommends that traditional cinema embrace hybrid exhibition models to compete with film streaming platforms. The paper contributes to the socioeconomic integration and sustainability of the Nigerian film industry.

Keywords: *Cinema, Film, Nigeria, Nollywood, Streaming Platforms.*

Introduction

Film streaming activities have increased globally and are now challenging the status of the cinema and other traditional distribution and exhibition channels like Video Compact Discs (VCDs) and Digital Video Discs (DVDs) that have hitherto held sway until now. This current reality that created alternative preferences for the digital space as a choice for the consumption of entertainment content by audiences was accentuated by many factors, but most especially, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (Kavas, 2021). The epidemic led to the shutdown of many cinema houses across the world due to the limit placed on physical contact of people in public spaces. This health measure adversely affected the cinema, content creators, entertainment show business, and audiences seeking social and outdoor pleasure.

The global health crisis and consequent shutdown of cinemas changed consumer preferences, leading to an upscale of business activities of film streaming platforms. These platforms provided personalised services to subscribers in the comfort of their homes through subscriptions, internet data, internet-enabled electronic gadgets, and mobile devices. Given these experiences, the Post COVID-19 crisis which affected audiences turn-out at the cinemas led to low sales and reduced income for producers and entertainment business outlets.

Kavas (2021, p.317) noted:

The coronavirus pandemic has adversely affected not only local sectors, but also all sectors on a global scale. According to March 2020 data, there was a 59% box office loss in the world's 10 largest cinema markets (England, Japan, Russia, France, China, Germany, South Korea, Australia, Italy, Mexico) compared to 2019. Especially the American cinema industry, which makes up 80% of the world cinema industry, has been one of the markets that suffered the most from the coronavirus pandemic.

This dire situation propelled content creators and production studios to increase their fortunes by embracing a strategy known as hybrid release models, ensuring that films are released at the same time both at cinemas and streaming platforms, thus, adapting to users' behaviour. The streaming platforms, with high numbers of film content in their libraries, offered alternative viewing practices to audiences in a compelling way. The accentuation of streaming through technology and the internet made them visible on the internet and this shaped global access to their networks for the distribution of high-end content to audiences. This wider reach, prodded producers, and content

creators into exploring this avenue to open their cultural products to new opportunities and possibilities beyond the traditional cinema.

In Nigeria, there has been an increased presence of local and international Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Showmax, Ibaka TV, iROKOTV, AFOREVO, Northflick, and many home-grown Transaction Video on Demand (TVOD) and Advertising-based Video-on-Demand (AVOD) platforms respectively. The streamers have established a presence and channels on apps and through the America-based YouTube platform. These platforms are making huge investments in the film industry through the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure and have continued to collaborate with A-list producers and directors in Nollywood to produce originals and purchase third-party licensing for exhibitions through contracts and agreements, thus formalising the sector.

Given the disruptions occasioned by the advent and growing popularity of film streaming amidst the democratisation of distribution channels as a strategy, there are growing concerns and debates on potential revenues, and audience patronage of traditional cinema. There is a need to address and navigate the seeming cinema dwindling patronage in the face of film streaming and to consider the future implications of these trends on the Nigerian entertainment landscape. It is therefore necessary to study this phenomenon in changing preferences and what they portend for the film industry in the digital age.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to:

- (1) Investigate current trends of film streaming and its future implications for traditional cinema culture in Nigeria.

Research Question:

RQ 1: Will film streaming replace traditional cinema as an exhibition practice in Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approach adopted for the study is the Technological Determinism Theory also referred to as “Media Determinism” according to Chandler (1995, p.3). It is a theory that emphasises the use of technology as a tool for shaping the future of society, politics, economy, and culture. The theory states that technology is the driving force through which societal change and

development are achieved. Hauer (2017) notes that technological determinism is a concept that projects technology as “the principal initiator of a society’s transformation” (p.1). Therefore, “technological determinists interpret technology in general and communications technologies in particular as the basis of society in the past, present, and even the future”. (Hauer, 2017, p.4).

The theory was introduced by the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) in the 20th century with two factors showing that the theory first, follows an underlying principle that technology follows a predictable path that is not likely attributed to political and cultural factors. Secondly, that technology has multiplying effects on the society that is already entrenched, and that society in furtherance of its development motif advances technology once it has been introduced.

Therefore, media-generated content is incomplete if the technology that produces the content is not given priority attention. Since technological determinism theory focuses on establishing the relationships between society, its culture, and how they are affected by technology, discussions are usually on its primacy and its cause and effects on society. Within this paradigm, the theory is applied to the study to determine how film streaming platforms aided by digital technology affect current trends in cinematic culture in Nigeria and its future implications for stakeholders and the film industry.

Methodology

The study adopted the qualitative method of research. The main research instruments used for the research were one-on-one and telephone interviews. A total of seven (7) interviewees were purposefully selected for interviews. They comprised interviewees from the Government regulatory agencies, content creators, and film exhibitors respectively. One interviewee was selected from the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), and two others from the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) representing three interviewees from the government regulatory institutions. Two content creators were also correspondingly selected from professional guilds and associations. The last two interviewees were selected from among film distributors and exhibitors. The selected interviewees were made up of experienced industry practitioners who responded to the interview questions. This categorisation and selection were arrived at to attain diversity and balance.

The study also drew on secondary data that were of benefit to the study. The research employed the descriptive method to analyse data gathered from both primary and secondary sources and was analysed using content analysis of data gathered from the instruments used for the research. The validity of the research was tested based on rigorous cross-referencing of data gathered, the appropriateness of the data gathering instruments, the reliability of interview questions to elicit the right responses for which they were intended, the trustworthiness of interviewees' responses, their believability, and overall plausibility of all the sources.

Global Context of Cinema and Film Streaming

The Cinema is categorised as both art and science. It is a tool for communication, enlightenment, and entertainment. Fisher (2022) asserts that cinema extends beyond art and technology but also “mediates our experience of the world, helps us make sense of things, and in doing so, often helps shape the world itself” (p. 6). This means that film goes beyond performing aesthetics and therapeutic functions to being a powerful influence and cultural expression tool. As a form of entertainment, the film industry is the largest within the artistic and creative sectors (Haiming, 2021), and long after its emergence, film has continued to link many cultures and created large-scale economic opportunities for many advanced and developing nations. Generally, the nature of film focuses on the aesthetics, culture, media, and socioeconomic integration of cinema and other display technologies, such as film streaming, pay TV, cable, and digital satellite television services.

The cinema has survived many onslaughts and audio-visual technology inventions despite the uncertainties brought about by television, video, and digital satellite television services. Notwithstanding, the last decade has yet witnessed an upsurge in other public and private media exhibition channels through which audiences now consume digital content, with film streaming being a major trend. The streaming technology is reflected in variants such as Over-the-top (OTT), Video-on-demand (VOD), Subscription Video-on-demand (SVOD), Transaction Video on Demand (TVOD), and Advertising-based Video on Demand (AVOD). Given this technology, OTT platforms have become increasingly popular among film audiences due to the advantages they offer in content selection and preferences. To this extent, therefore, cinema must emphasise high-quality audio-visual content as deviation from this requirement may sway cinemagoers from the cinema medium.

The 21st century has brought about a revolution in digitization, and the screen media most especially, has impacted the cinema immensely with the help of the internet. The changing trend in digital content consumption has evolved certain factors that will restructure how films are produced, distributed, and consumed. The consequences of this may include the displacement of the VCD/DVD distribution systems and restrictions in other forms of physical distribution patterns through disruptions at the middle level of the film industry distribution and exhibition landscape. This line of thought has been re-echoed by City Research (n.d), that the New Media, like YouTube, delivery platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Netflix, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok are changing the face of content delivery and monetization. Thus, these trends have brought about a change in the film economy, business models, society, cultural productions, and content delivery. This current reality requires a holistic approach to discovering the implications of these new practices and their inherent opportunities, including the navigation of the risk factors during this transition phase.

In explaining how film streaming is impacting the cinema, Gaustad (2019) argues that film streaming has taken centre stage in global content distribution while other forms of physical distribution systems have been alienated due to what he termed “technocultural disruption” (p.67). Consequently, audiences’ preferences are now favouring the streaming services which do not only determine what content is consumed but how they are consumed through their “premiere window” (p.68). Gaustad (2019, p.76) argues that film streaming services have established a place for themselves as a dominant film exhibition platform:

We can see that cinemas retained a relatively stable share of between 18 percent and 23 percent of the market. However, the dominant home video platform in 2010, DVD and Bluray, which then held a market share of 34 percent, was diminished to only 5 percent in 2016. During the same time period, SVOD grew from 1 percent to 31 percent and claimed the position as the dominant channel.

Kavas (2021) says the digitization of the cinema began in the 20th century as against film streaming in the 21st century but both have been merged with the emergence of the new media. The introduction of digitisation in the cinema, therefore, has changed the narratives because films are now digitised from the point of production through computer technology. Nevertheless, digital

platforms may have an edge in global reach over traditional distribution channels through the Internet.

Considering the speed of development and spread of new media technologies in the 21st century, opportunities and conveniences they provide in extraordinary situations, it would not be wrong to say that they will gain an advantage over traditional media tools in the future. Considering all these qualities, it can be said that new media tools are the most effective communication systems of the 21st century (Kavas, 2021, p. 319).

Due to varying experiences in production and distribution in the industry value chain, in addition to meeting challenges arising from the incursion of digital technology, content creators are partnering with streaming platforms to ensure easy access to films by audiences who are ecstatic about their ability to switch preferences. The cinema is also re-inventing itself by the acquisition of high-tech equipment and by ensuring more audience interactions to guarantee audience satisfaction.

In a study conducted in India, Awasya & Patel (2021), argue that film streaming has created a big gap and poses a great threat to cinema owners because the film industry in India has witnessed a very high rise in patronage of OTT platforms such as Voot, AltBalaji, Zee5, and MX Player since the Covid-19 pandemic. While the film industry in India is valued at \$2.4 billion in 2023, the study established that the film streaming sector is projected to have the highest share in revenue of the film economy in the future. However, Hutson (2023) has noted that while it is not in doubt that technology has revolutionised film viewership in the cinema business through disruptions of traditional exhibition systems by streaming platforms, the cinema will continue to be relevant through the communal ambiance it provides in addition to the big screen appeal that film streaming lacks, being a small screen medium.

The State of the Nigerian Cinema

Given the background of Nigerian cinema, it should be noted that exhibition and distribution channels are critical to the film industry and have been a major area of concern plaguing Nollywood. In recent times, there has been more consciousness and reawakening in cinema attendance by local audiences, thus, leading to the establishment of modern cinema houses and multiplexes for film screenings. Some of these Cinemas include the *Ozone Cinema*, *Genesis*

Deluxe, Silverbird Cinema, Viva Cinema, Film One, and many others situated in strategic cities in the country. These structures cater to large audience patronage thus increasing the potential revenue for the Nigerian film market.

The British Broadcasting Corporation, (BBC, 2019) notes that Nigeria currently has 45 cinemas with demands for more on the rise daily. According to the reports, a lot more investors are coming into the business to partake in the emerging possibilities. Akinpelu (2020) also notes that Nigerian cinemas currently have less than 100 screens situated around the country with a majority of them located in Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt. If the number of available cinema outlets in the country based on these statistics is anything to go by, then, they are not enough to capture major audiences in Nigeria.

In this vein, Fagbile (2023, p.65) observes:

There are instances where audiences abound at cinemas but without spaces to accommodate them in the halls. This situation is made worse when exhibitors have many films competing for their attention, whereas the number of days or weeks a film stays in the cinema may be short-lived except if they have been highly publicized and have enjoyed more reviews and public attention. Except for this, Nollywood filmmakers go through hurdles to get their films distributed through alternative marketing and exhibition channels such as streaming which is now being formalized through the interventions of digital platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Showmax in the country.

The BBC writes that international cinema giants like IMAX are making incursions into the Nigerian film market by investing in building more cinemas in the country, while film entrepreneurs and content creators are optimistic that there will be better returns on investments in their content (BBC, 2019). However, compared to other film-producing nations with advanced cinema culture winning home markets (India at 94.1%; America, 93.4%; and China at 60%), Nigeria's cinemas' capture of the home market is put at 25.8% (Medeme, 2022). The Nollywood record is yet to fully capture and harness the home market potentials of the industry vis-à-vis the local population compared to others, and this limits revenue-generating capacity for the industry.

These limitations posed by inadequate exhibition channels and the obvious lack of considerable film infrastructures raise a lot of concerns about potential revenue to film entrepreneurs, the government, and the industry. This assertion is corroborated by Judith Audu, a filmmaker who

argues that with a population of over 170 million people, the number of screens currently available in the country is insufficient to meet the needs of the population (Awa & Thomas-Odia, 2020).

Justifying calls for additional exhibition channels, Awa & Thomas-Odia write:

Having up to 1,000 screens in the country will encourage movie lovers to go to cinemas knowing that they would not have to wait in long queues for long, just as it would also help filmmakers recoup funds expended in productions and also make profits (Awa & Thomas-Odia, 2020, para. 71).

Table 1.1: Select States and Number of Cinemas in Nigeria

S/N	STATE	CINEMA
1	Lagos	26
2	Delta	6
3	FCT Abuja	5
4	Rivers	4
6	Oyo	4
7	Ogun	4
8	Anambra	2
9	Edo	2
10	Abia	2
11	Imo	2
12	Ondo	1
13	Bayelsa	1

Source: Sasu (2023)

From the available records of well-established cinemas in Nigeria, it is observed that many are located in the Southern part of the country, with very limited numbers in the North. This imbalance could be ascribed to either one of the effects of the previous indigenization decree of 1976, economic reasons, religion, and culture, or distribution models unique to the various variants of ‘Woods’ in Nollywood and the Nigerian film industry generally.

Although there is growth in the construction of new cinemas, and attendance is also rising, the threat to cinema in present-day Nigeria may be further heightened by the rising incursion of local and multinational streaming platforms into the film industry. Considering other factors that inhibit attendance at cinemas like security and finance, the prevalence of streaming services is making it less enthusiastic for viewers to attend cinemas. Some have questioned: Why go to cinemas where

you will have long queues, whereas you can watch recent films on the film streaming platforms? What then gives streaming services an edge over traditional cinema and vice versa?

Film Streaming in Nigeria

Streaming is a technology that allows on-demand distribution and reception of video files or other media content through the internet and with the aid of mobile and other electronic devices. Streaming allows for the uploading of content through a digital server and is accessed by users through mobile and computer appliances connected to the internet. Gillis (2023) perceives streaming as a repeated transmission of multimedia productions to consumers of such products which allows viewing without the need to download such files on their devices.

The new streaming technology has created innovations in filmmaking, production, post-production processes, and other possibilities that come in the form of “video on demand, streaming platforms, social media, internet, and YouTube” (Hanmakyugh, 2023, p.194). Since the emergence of film streaming platforms in Nigeria, Nollywood has witnessed improved global access to its films and has attracted a lot of market potential through official links to global distribution networks, including collaborations with Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Showmax.

Collaboration efforts are being made by global media corporations to invest in the film industry in Nigeria and this is already getting attention and yielding results through financing and investment opportunities in film projects and infrastructures. The investment by Canal+ in Multichoice Nigeria in 2020 and the acquisition of local film production studios by foreign investors are indicative of these developments. The American online streaming giant Netflix, DSTV Now, Amazon Prime Video, and other international and locally owned platforms like iROKOtv, Apata TV+, Ibaka TV, Northflix, and Libra TV have also been streaming a handful of Nigerian films through their platforms whose content are also available for download for offline viewing. This new collaboration pattern is relatively increasing, with the emergence of new local content creators versed in advanced technologies.

Table 1.2: Select Streaming Platforms in Nigeria and Year of Operations

S/N	STREAMING PLATFORM	LOCATION	YEAR
1	Amazon Prime Video	Lagos	2022
2	DSTV Now	Lagos	2022
3	Netflix Nigeria	Lagos	2020
4	Showmax	Lagos	2020
5	Northflix	Kano	2019
6	Delonifera TV	Lagos	2016
7	Libra TV	Oyo	2015
8	Apata TV+	Oyo	2015
9	Ibaka TV	Lagos	2012
10	iROKOTv	Lagos	2011

In 2022, the America-based global online media distribution giant, Netflix acquired the rights to films like *Anikulapo*, *Blood Sisters*, *Citation*, *The Griot*, and many more. Films acquired at this level enjoy higher marketing and promotions. However, the terms for acquiring these film rights have not been made public. Apart from this kind of films with high productions, the marketing of Nollywood films is reflected in local-based streaming channels, and physical distribution released directly on DVDs and VCDs. Only a few of these films make it to the cinema except for some productions with relatively huge production values. Nevertheless, film streaming is providing alternative distribution and exhibition channels that broadcast through the Internet to global audiences which is a form of transnational film practice.

Who Wins Between Nigerian Traditional Cinema and Film Streaming Platforms?

In an interview on the 12th of April 2023 with a content creator, Suleyman Deji-Etiwe, he opined that the streaming platform and the cinema are two different markets and that no one can override the other in the film marketplace. According to him, the only problem with the cinema is security. Deji-Etiwe asserts that the preference for either the streaming services or the cinema is a matter of choice and that both exhibition channels have their audiences, therefore, one cannot take out the other. (Personal Communication, 2023).

Another content creator, Francis Onwochei, in an interview with the researcher on the 23rd of March 2023, reiterated that he does not see streaming platforms replacing cinemas. He said the reason is because the cinema medium has come a long way and has its history.

He said:

At a time when celluloid was in vogue, a lot of people said cinema was going to die, but of course, it did not die. What has now happened is that instead of making a film in celluloid, you now begin to make the film in the digital format which will still go to the cinemas. So, both channels will be there. (Personal Communication, 2023).

Continuing, Onwochei posited:

The digital platforms may have a whole large chunk, but the cinemas will still have their space. Whether it will now be profitable enough is what I cannot guarantee because cinema is quite elitist and not so many people would want to spend #2000 or #3,000 to buy a ticket. So, would it be profitable? Well, I do not know. But it is available. It is there. It will not die, but the digital platforms will perhaps have the upper hand. (Personal Communication, 2023).

The Zonal Director of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Lagos Zone, Dr. Chibuike Ogwumike on the other hand is rather circumspect. He extolled easy access to content by audiences made possible through film streaming platforms, including the cost and comfort they provide using the internet and mobile devices. He also considered the advantages the cinemas provide in terms of socialisation, noting that insecurity remains the impediment in its consideration. Yunusa Rikoto, Assistant Zonal Director of the NBC, Lagos, Zone in an interview with the researcher on the 12th of April 2023 explains that the growing acceptance of film streaming may most likely affect cinema attendance. However, Dr. Ogwumike quickly added that “No one is driving each other out of the market. They are both complementary to each other”. (Personal Communication, 2023).

In an interview on the 12th of April 2023, Dr. Ogwumike reiterated:

These days, there is recognition for the cinema in such a way that the newly released films, you can see them on streaming platforms, will see them being premiered in cinema houses, and from there again, they will now come into mainstream television broadcasting before being produced in physical copies for everyone to buy. You will see that these are many stages and all of them complement each other. So, all of them are very important. None is driving the other out of the market. (Personal Communication, 2023).

Mark Akhuetie of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) confirmed to the researcher in an interview on 27th January 2023 that the streaming platforms will not suppress the cinema in the future because of its unique experience. Currently, cinemas are opening new outlets every new day, especially in Lagos, PortHacourt, Ibadan, and other big cities in Nigeria. In

addition, the cinema-going culture keeps rising and that is why cinemas like Film One, Silverbird, Genesis Deluxe, Ozone, Viva, and others keep thriving. Many releases have also been seen in cinemas in recent times because some audiences want to see them first as they are released. Nonetheless, stakeholders think that streaming platforms will continue to thrive as long as the digital age remains relevant, more so, that Nigeria is also working on digital migration although this is yet to be fully achieved.

A film exhibitor, Lekan Wasiudeen in a telephone interview with the researcher on the 15th of March 2023, expressed the opinion that although the activities of streaming platforms are taking a toll on cinema attendance in some nations, it would be for only a while because audiences will get tired of sitting at home and would want to attend the cinema, because cinema is a different experience entirely. Therefore, there may not be a long-term effect of film streaming on the cinema, especially in Nigeria. Corroborating this view, Olusola Akinyemi another film exhibitor in an interview with the researcher on the 7th of July 2023 explains:

Except the streaming platforms cover the whole space, but if they do not, then of course we would still have a chance for the cinema. A lot of people in rural areas still buy CDs to watch their favourite films because they do not have access to internet services or the cinema. So, the streaming platforms will come and do their own and the cinemas will do theirs too. That is the way we have it now. The streaming services and the cinemas will both remain. Streaming services are a big player in the industry coupled with the fact that it has a much wider range than the cinema. The cinemas are trying to improve their standard and platform as well. So, the competition is there really but I do not think it is something big that would kick the cinema out of business. It is not possible. That is the way I look at it. (Personal Communication, 2023).

From the aforementioned, the general views of content creators, exhibitors, and the regulators interviewed show that film streaming does not pose a serious threat to traditional cinema in Nigeria. However, the sustainability of the cinema will depend on the enablers, such as security, buoyant economy, and purchasing power of cinemagoers. Additionally, it should be noted that the experiences of cinema and streaming platforms are different and distinct. There are scenarios when audiences visit the cinema to see movies and still subscribe to streaming platforms to see the same film when released on digital channels. This is because they present dissimilar experiences. To this extent, stakeholders hold the view that the cinema may not be affected by trends in film streaming. There is consensus that the future of streaming and content creation in Nigeria is very bright and full of potential. Film streaming is getting more popular and busier in the film industry.

In all of the discussions, Lekan Wasiudeen, a gateway boundary spanner, and film exhibitor mentioned in an interview on 15th of March 2023 with the researcher that providers of digital satellite and cable TV services like DSTV Nigeria and their variants who deal in decoders and digital boxes might suffer business setbacks from the rise of streaming platforms in Nigeria because the future and trend of film entertainment is tending towards the Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), where streaming and new media platforms would continue to thrive in line with trends in digitalization and the new media.

Results

From the data gathered, the study revealed the following findings:

- (i) The study revealed that film streaming platforms and traditional cinema are not obliterating one another from the film exhibition space. The limitation to cinema patronage is purchasing power and the challenge of lack of security and protection for cinemagoers in the country.
- (ii) Film streaming platforms have promoted Nigerian films by offering their platforms for transnational exhibitions. In addition, film distribution and exhibition constraints in the old traditional channels are now broken because streaming has corporatised and democratised the process in such a way that content with good standards and production value will get to the right marketplace. This development aligns with the assertions of Chandler (1995) and Hauer (2017) that technology shapes a society and its culture. This is reflected in how film streaming is impacting Nollywood as an industry and how subscribers are responding to the new trend vis-à-vis the cinema.
- (iii) Regulatory agencies agree that the streaming platforms have put the film industry in Nigeria in the limelight globally through the showcasing of Nigerian culture, dressings, and hospitality.
- (iv) The study found that cinema-going culture in Nigeria will not be erased by the rise in the activities of film streaming platforms because both have different features and audiences. The findings indicate that streaming platforms may, however, have the upper hand or take a larger chunk due to distance in terms of proximity and reach, as well as the cost of cinema tickets and attendance which may not be affordable for everyone.

- (v) Based on responses from interviewees, the study revealed that digital and cable television service providers may suffer setbacks from the operations of streaming platforms since it appears the trend of film exhibition is tending towards Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) where the digital television service providers may be limited in their operations.
- (vi) Also, through streaming, piracy has been brought to a minimal level because many content creators now release their content directly on online channels, bypassing the physical market and avoiding pirating their works.
- (vii) Since production standards required by streaming platforms are usually very high, producers are now challenged to improve their production value which requires spending a lot of money and resources to actualise. These new expectations are expected to provide high-impact job opportunities and short-term employment for theatre interns and film graduates who are absorbed into the film industry.
- (viii) The study revealed that film streaming has contributed to the promotion of indigenous language films. Through transnational modes of exhibition and viewing practices, Indigenous Yoruba language films such as *Anikulapo*, *Ageshinkole*, and *Jagun Jagun* have been well received by audiences globally. Streaming has helped to build standardisation in Nollywood, and content is now received and viewed in High Definition (HD), and Ultra High Definition (UHD), which are global standard picture qualities. The acceptance and promotion of this new technology follows the postulations of Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) that society embraces and adapts to a new technology when it is introduced. A lot of film industry stakeholders and enthusiasts in Nigeria and globally are now adjusting to the innovations that technology has brought to the cinema through the film streaming medium.

Conclusion

It is noted that there has been an increase in the consciousness of Nigerians about film streaming because it possesses the advantage of comfort and convenience. This new consciousness is what is driving the influx of digital platforms – both local and international into the film market. The streaming platforms appear to be harnessing alternative exhibition channels and market potentials untapped by the cinemas.

Similarly, investors are also coming into the cinema business due to its market potential. There is substantial growth in the number of cinemas springing up in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Abuja, and other big cities in Nigeria. Foreign cinema companies like IMAX have also invested in the construction of more movie theatres. This view is consistent with an earlier report by Akinpelu (2022), thus, audiences, content creators, and industry practitioners are bracing up for more film streaming and cinema activities in the country.

This new move is evident in creative guilds and association's readiness to participate in the SVOD, VOD, TVOD, and the cinema business. They are hopeful of members making profits on their investments and film projects. Given this, it is plausible to conclude that both the streaming platforms and the cinemas have operated side-by-side. Both have their audiences and the government, through the regulatory agencies is working at adapting to current realities by instituting regulations for practitioners while stakeholders are hopeful that the industry will thrive.

Recommendations

The study recommends that traditional cinemas should prioritise their customer services by providing immersive and compelling experiences so that consumers of their products can distinguish from the cinematic experience they receive compared to what they feel when they watch from the comfort of their homes. The cinema must embrace new technologies, especially virtual reality as this will enhance audience engagement through more interactive storytelling. Also, there is a need for cinemas to embrace a hybrid exhibition model. By this, both the cinemas and streaming platforms can always collaborate and leverage the strength of one another to invent simultaneous releases of content. This will provide audiences with the choices available for patronage as both platforms are complementary to one another. This innovation will engender more creative economy engagement and increase revenue streams for film exhibitors, content creators, and the government.

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