



Business Models of Film Streaming Platforms in Nigeria

FAGBILE, Yinka Akintunde, Ph.D

Department of Theatre & Performing Arts

Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria.

Phone: +2348028311502

E-mail: fagbiley@lasued.edu.ng

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1156-0321>

Corresponding Author :

FAGBILE, Yinka Akintunde (fagbiley@lasued.edu.ng)

ABSTRACT

Streaming platforms are evolving business models geared towards meeting the needs and preferences of their audiences. The study seeks to understand what constitutes the business model and professional practices of streaming platforms and the attendant views of critical stakeholders in Nigeria. Based on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, the paper adopts a mixed method approach, using critical analysis of case studies of selected major streaming platforms, key informant interviews with gateway and creative boundary spanners, and secondary sources. The study reveals that the power in the distribution system of Nollywood has shifted from VCD/DVD marketing to streaming services through Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms especially foreign-based, that operate a monetised Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) and Transaction Video on Demand (TVOD) models. In contrast, most locally based streaming providers aside from iROKOTv, Ibakatv, and a few others operate on the YouTube platform and are advert-based with no monetised model known as Advertising-Based Video on Demand (AVOD). The study also established that issues relating to contracts and agreements between streaming platforms and content creators in Nollywood call for attention in addition to other findings. The study concludes that streaming platforms play critical roles in the film industry value chain, but the potential for undue exploitation of the industry by streamers must be taken seriously. The paper recommends policies from both the government and streamers that protect the rights of content creators and discourage unethical business practices on the part of film streaming platforms.

Keywords Boundary Spanners, Business Model, Film, Nigeria, Nollywood, Streaming.

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AUTHOR'S BIO



FAGBILE, Yinka Akintunde, PhD, teaches Theatre, Film Arts, and Communication in the Department of Theatre & Performing Arts of the Lagos State University of Education. He holds a B.A in Theatre Arts, M.A in Communication Studies and a PhD in Theatre and Film Arts from the University of Calabar and Lagos State University respectively. His research interests include transnational cinema, digital media, and creative economy.

The digital landscape in Nigeria's burgeoning film streaming services is creating a positive impact, jobs, and opportunities for media corporations and the creative. This transformative evolution is accentuated by the increased demand for digital entertainment content by consumers and the convergence of digital and new media technologies (McDonald, & Smith-Rowsey, 2018; Ulin, 2019; Pardo, 2012).). With the proliferation of digital platforms and increased patronage of streaming services by subscribers, there has arisen the need to study these platforms and how their strategic business models drive revenue generation, industry-user engagement, and innovation, in line with considerations for standard industry practice. Business models are management pathways designed by organizations on methods of service delivery and profit-making. Dasilva and Trkman (2014) perceive the term as everything encompassing "strategy, economic model, and revenue model". There is a need to study and provide information on operational activities, the dynamic nature of the streaming platforms, ongoing trends as well as opportunities and challenges available in the film streaming spaces. Streaming platforms struggle to balance quality content availability and user satisfaction to draw more viewers to their platforms. They devise marketing and business strategies thus, leading to an increasing demand for more market share in the competitive digital space. Through a holistic analysis of business models of streaming platforms in Nigeria, the study provides insights into the investment activities of film streaming service providers and the implications of their operations on Nollywood and future trends in the film industry.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

The theory adopted the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) by Everett Rogers and is often applied to the field of technology management (Chang, 2010). The DOI explains the processes in the adoption of a service, an idea, a product, or technology, and its gradual acceptance until it becomes widely used (diffuses) and accepted by the social system due to its constant use. According to Kaminski (2011), the diffusion of innovation theory was first introduced in 1903 by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, then used by Ryan and Gross in 1943 and popularised through Everett Rogers's seminal work in 1962, thus, falling within the ambit of the social sciences and communication (Wayne & LaMorte, 2019; García-Avilés, 2020). DOI is a hybrid of theories drawn from the field of sociology, management science, and communication, and tends to explain why and how new ideas, products,

and services are diffused (spread) through the general population. The theory is used in the study to understand how streaming platforms in Nigeria use their business models to market their services and the extent to which digital content consumers and the film industry stakeholders adopt their technology and services. The study used a mixed-method approach based on an analysis of case studies of selected streaming platforms in Nigeria. It employed interviews as an instrument to generate primary data from gateway and creative boundary spanners to supplement data from case studies. Data were analysed and discussed using content analysis and qualitative methods.

Review of Literature

Ihengbe (2023) posited that there are an estimated sixty online exhibition channels streaming films of African origin on the internet for free. While noting the marketing practices deployed by these online platforms vis-a-vis physical distribution, they admit that the digital platforms as new film distribution channels "have done both good and bad to the content delivery and online distribution" (p.151). In a study conducted by Omoera & Ojieson (2022) on the merits and demerits of film streaming platforms and their relationship with Nollywood from audience perspectives and reception, they argue that Netflix has exerted so much influence in the Nigerian film industry to such extent that content creators are at their mercies, thus leading to a sort of attention economy. To these scholars, this type of model may concentrate too much economic power in the hands of the multinational streamers which may lead to monopoly. They, therefore, recommend the operation of multiple digital distribution channels, especially local platforms to satisfy audiences' quests for more entertainment content. *The Conversation* (2020) acknowledges Netflix as the most successful in Nigeria's film streaming landscape due to its vast networks and resources at its disposal but admits that this may limit Nollywood's distribution options and stifle competition in the film industry. It suggested that Nollywood must explore other business alternatives to match the extensive networks of the multinational streaming giants. Therefore, they recommend more collaborations and strengthening of the Nigerian Copyright Act to safeguard Nollywood's viability nationally and in the global film distribution cluster.

In a survey, Ajaegbu, Akoja & Akinsanya (2022) compared the modes of distribution and audience preferences between Netflix and digital satellite

television service provider DSTV among students at Babcock University in Nigeria. The study concluded that while young people preferred Netflix's programming and exhibition models to DSTV, it stated that Netflix must continue to maintain standards and access while seeking better service delivery strategies for audiences.

Case Studies of Selected Film Streaming Platforms in Nigeria

Netflix Nigeria

Netflix on its official website prides itself as a streaming platform that provides “award-winning” documentaries, TV shows, movies, and other entertainment to audiences through their internet-connected devices (Netflix.com). Netflix Nigeria is an extension of the world-renowned online streaming giant known as Netflix. It is a dominant brand in global film distribution and exhibition networks. It officially launched in Nigeria in 2020 having earlier acquired its first Nollywood film Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* in 2018. It has since increased its investments in Nigeria by continuous collaborations with local filmmakers and content owners to exhibit more Nigerian films and television series to domicile and global audiences (Conversation, 2020). Since Netflix Nigeria debuted, it has continued to collaborate and co-produce films with key players in Nollywood. However, Netflix says it collaborates mainly with producers and content creators to generate more original and quality content for streaming and not necessarily with the industry known as Nollywood (Dayo, 2020). Netflix's content usually comes with high-definition (HD) pictures whose quality may require more internet data and bandwidth. There are applications of settings, however, that are put in place to reduce the level of internet speed and lower quality reception based on the amount of data available to the user based on the efficiency of the internet network. To ensure user satisfaction, Netflix Nigeria recommends between 0.5 Megabits to 1.5 per second for broadband connection speed and 3.0 Megabits per second for SD quality and easy access to films and television shows (Netflix, n.d.)

To enjoy additional features, Netflix employs high technology in streaming its content and allows subscribers to connect their mobile devices to Smart TV and other screen technologies using Wi-Fi or connecting internet-enabled computers to a larger screen using HDMI, VGA cables, and other connectors. Netflix Nigeria generates its content from creators and individual key players who are intellectual property

owners through contracts and licensing to broadcast their works based on agreed financial fees between parties. It also enters into co-production agreements with local film companies with guiding copyright laws of the United States of America.

IrokoTV

iROKOTV is regarded as the largest online legal distributor of Nollywood films. Based in Nigeria with its headquarters in the United Kingdom, it has been described as the *Netflix of Africa* with a vast collection of over 5000 Nollywood films in its archive, attracting over 10 million views monthly (Crunchbase, 2023). It provides film streaming services to Nigerians, Africans, and diaspora audiences globally, including opportunities for film downloading. It was launched in 2011 as part of the entertainment company, IROKO Limited, by a Nigerian-British businessman, Jason Njoku. iROKOTv platform initially provided free content streaming through an advertising-based video-on-demand model on its YouTube channel before migrating to a premium subscribers' video-on-demand model (Ajene, 2017). Jason Njoku first began in 2011 when he created *Nollywood Love*, a free video channel on *YouTube* to share Nigerian films after he observed its almost unavailability online. The channel subsequently attracted not less than one million views within a very short period cutting across over 200 countries. It was based on the strength of this patronage that Jason decided to approach Nigerian filmmakers and content owners for approval of licenses to officially distribute their films online, thus giving birth to iROKOTv as an on-demand video streaming platform on its own with improved content and soaring user subscriptions.

Subsequently, a New York-based private equity company known as Tiger Global Management, which believed in Jason's ideas, invested a sum of \$10 Million in the business of making these acquired contents available to audiences across the world through digitalization and streaming. Also, the platform received another major boost in 2012 when a Sweden-based funding organization invested another \$2 Million thus creating further expansion and establishment of offices in Lagos, Johannesburg, London, and New York (Reuters, 2012). iROKOTv launched iROKO Play and iROKO Plus as two additional channels in 2015 to complement its bouquet in a digital satellite platform StarTimes, and partnered with *DSTV* and *SKY TV* in the United Kingdom to give wider reach to audiences who seek their services (World Screenings, 2015). In addition to generating returns through strategic advert placements, Iwuoha

(2013) states that while content distributed on the platform is free, subscribers are charged to access releases and fresh content newly distributed on the iROKOTv Plus channel. iROKOTv subscription ranges between \$25 to \$60 yearly depending on the subscribed plan and there has been a rise in viewership over the years especially from among diaspora audiences as of 2020 (Adebowale, 2021).

Also, in 2019, *Canal +*, a French television company owned by multimedia corporation *Vivendi* expressed interest in investing in Nollywood through administrative, finance, and equipment support. It acquired ROK Film Studios, a production arm of iROKOTV based in Lagos, Nigeria, to generate original content that would be distributed globally.

In addition to using browsers to access the website, there is an app for streaming and downloading films on the iROKOTV platform with mobile devices using the internet. The app is available for free download on the Apple Store or Google Play store using the subscriber's phone number. MacJohn (2019) states that users of the app will have to launch it on their devices to sign up as subscribers and pay a stipulated amount. With access, users are exposed to lots of unlimited content from which they can stream or download in both high and low definitions depending on the amount of internet data available to the user. The platform also explores its social media pages to acquaint subscribers with new content that is available for consumption.

Amazon Prime Video Nigeria

Amazon Prime Video is a global distributor of films and a notable platform for video streaming with a global presence in more than 200 countries. Although the company established a presence in Africa in 2016, it formally announced the commencement of its business operations in Nigeria on August 4, 2022, on its official Twitter handle Prime Video Nigeria, with a claim of availability of over 200, 000 original video content for viewership (Kene-Okafor, 2022; Nwokoma, 2022). Since its launch, Amazon Prime Video Nigeria has continued to engage in agreements with notable film production companies such as Anthill Studios, Inkblot Productions, Evoke Studios, and other reputable Nigerian content creators to generate high-quality, original, and licensed content to penetrate and compete favourably with others in the film market. According to a report, *Prime Video* already has over 600,000 subscribers in Africa. It looks forward to adding more than 1.5 million viewers in the next four years according to projections (Kene-Okafor,

2022), while Nwokoma (2022) suggests that the number of Prime Video subscribers in Nigeria is put at less than 50, 000.

The Prime Video streaming platform says its investment in Nigeria will boost local filmmaking and expose Nollywood films to more than 200 million of its subscribers globally by providing genres to include comedy series, romance, drama, and action and making it a “truly localized experience”. As reported, a senior executive of the organization, Mba-Uzoukwu said that its activities now “signals our continued commitment to the Nigerian TV and film industry, bringing the very best of authentic home-grown stories to not only our customers in Nigeria but also Prime Video members around the world” (Anagor-Ewuzie, 2022). To access the streaming services of Amazon Prime Video, subscribers are mandated to download and install the Prime Video app on their devices from their website or other application stores. This leads to a monthly subscription plan which costs the sum of ₦2, 300 (\$3.4), followed by a seven to thirty-day trial, giving users access to an extensive catalogue of both current Hollywood and Nollywood films across the board. While the Prime Video platform provides ease of convenience through acceptance of the local currency for subscription unlike pre-2016 when payments had to be made using the dollar, the new product also does not necessarily require a VPN to stream content. It however says that while these incentives are meant for customer satisfaction, they are strictly business decisions whose outcome would be profit in the long run (Nwokoma, 2022).

IbakaTV

IBAKATV is one of the largest online catalogues showcasing Nollywood films to the rest of the world. It boasts over 15, 000 hours of television series and films in its kitty, and according to its official website, the streaming platform says it “offers large varieties of the latest premium Nollywood blockbuster movies” to subscribers all over the world. On its LinkedIn.com page, the company states that it is “an amazing online streaming TV destination that seeks to captivate and connect viewers worldwide to the best of African Entertainment with stories they love by creating an amazing experience that celebrates entertainment and technology”.

IbakaTV has a base in Nigeria with Headquarters in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, in the United States of America. The company was begun in 2012 by Blessed Idornigie when he discovered that Nigerian films were

highly sought after especially by Africans and diaspora audiences. He commenced business with a YouTube Premium partnership and launched four channels which include IbakaTV Nollywood, IbakaTV Yoruba, IbakaTV Africa Magic Clip, and IbakaTV Events. The company subsequently, recorded between six million to 20 million viewers within the first month of its entry. It was this success that led to the formal launch of IbakaTV as a customized online streaming platform in 2014 named *Ibakatv.com*. This was achieved by Blessed Idornigie in collaboration with other partners who invested financially in the business. Currently, the company boasts about 80 million to 200 million subscribers globally. On subscription, IbakaTV requires its customers to subscribe to a billing of \$60 annually. This payment strategy indicates that the focus of the company is not limited to the local customers alone but transnational audiences who are cut across the globe. To gain access, subscribers are required to create an account on its app through email or social media account, enter their payment options and details, and select the plans suitable for them which could be one month, six months, or one year. It is after the successful activation of these steps that subscribers can begin to have access to the benefits of video-on-demand and streaming services offered on the IbakaTV platform.

Showmax Nigeria

Showmax is an online video-on-demand streaming channel founded in South Africa by the Multichoice Group, a subsidiary of Naspers in collaboration with mobile telecommunication companies to provide local and foreign content to subscribers while also competing with international video platforms offering streaming services like Hulu, Disney, Amazon Prime Video and Netflix among others. Immediately after its launch, Showmax extended its reach to over thirty-six countries including Australia, North America, and many African nations, and boasts of a presence in 65 countries as of 2016 with over 10 million viewers. Showmax registered its presence in the Nigerian film space through Multichoice Nigeria, owners of the DSTV and GOTV brands, while promising subscribers a superior library of Nollywood videos as well as content that considers the interests of the African culture. The company argues that the African film market is now taking into consideration wider audiences whose preferences for mobile streaming services are increasingly gaining popularity daily. This and many more are what Showmax promised to offer through internet-enabled smart mobile phones, computers, and other devices for access to television

series and film shows.

After it launched the Showmax Pro in Nigeria in 2020, the company went further by consolidating its business investments in Nigeria. It appointed a Nigerian, Opeoluwa Filani as its first General Manager in 2022 to manage its operations and set strategic goals to achieve growth and profits for the enterprise. (Olodunmade, 2022). Although Showmax is owned by the Multichoice group, it has continued to emphasize that it is not a TV channel but a streaming service for distributing films, kids' programmes, TV series, and documentaries and for televising live football and sporting activities through its website or by downloading and installing the Showmax app on devices like Smartphones, Gaming consoles, Smart TVs, media players and tablets that are capable of connecting to the internet. However, DSTV subscribers who are on the Premium Bouquet plan have the additional benefit of accessing the channel on their decoder as the cost is already added to the DSTV subscription.

ApataTV+

ApataTV+ is an offshoot of Apata Entertainment Limited founded by its Chief Executive Officer, Olusola Akinyemi, and commenced operations on September 30, 2015. The streaming platform does not operate on an App. It is a channel on YouTube with a presence on social media pages like Facebook, Instagram, and the X platform (formerly Twitter). It offers myriad Yoruba films and original releases to audiences. The platform says it showcases captivating films that showcase the best of African culture that are educative and engaging. The platform prides itself on the future of African entertainment while its content is offered free of charge so that viewers can keep coming back. The entertainment news platform, Pulse (2018) ranked Apata TV+ as the second most popular streaming platform to view current Yoruba films on YouTube. The City People Magazine in 2018 also pronounced it the online television with the best film content in the Yoruba category in 2108. The streaming platform uploads about 15 films per week and has about 136 million views, and 3200 videos on its YouTube exhibition channel.

In 2021, the American-based YouTube Platform released a list of the top ten streaming channels celebrating the year 2021 biggest platforms on its platform in Nigeria, with Apata TV+ included as one of

them. YouTube said it considered content creators and distributors with presence, the number of engagements, the number of clicks, likes, and shares to arrive at its decision. Several hits have debuted on the ApataTV+ platform including one of the latest originals, *Okansoso* which premiered in 2023. Other hits that have debuted on the channel include *Elebute* (2022) among many others. ApataTV+ says it takes Nigerians on an emotional, compelling journey, and a cinematic spectacle not to be missed.

Libra TV

LibraTV has succeeded in registering its presence among notable digital film platforms in the country. Libra TV is a Nollywood streaming and video-downloading channel on YouTube. It is an indigenous Nigerian company owned by Lekan Wasiudeen. Libra Multimedia Ltd was incorporated in Ibadan, Nigeria, and registered on the 22nd of June 2015. It was incorporated as a digital production outfit which comprises pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution levels. On the 30th of August 2015, Libra TV commenced operation as a channel on YouTube with a dedication to streaming and downloading Yoruba films. Libra TV says its focus is to bring good and quality African films to audiences while also facilitating production in like manner. So far, LibraTV has uploaded 352 videos on YouTube and continues to generate monthly income from the content. The streaming service claims it has about Ninety million, eight hundred and thirty-nine thousand and nine hundred and thirty-nine views on its platform. The streaming service operates in a pay-per-click mode. This means the streaming service is paid based on the number of views and downloads generated from its online channel by subscribers. Currently, Libra TV makes about \$1.21 per 1000 clicks generated on a single online content.

Views of Gateway and Creative Boundary Spanners

Gateway Boundary Spanners are film organisations and personnel that transmit or distribute content for audience viewing, while the Creative Boundary Spanners are creators and technical people, such as producers, content creators, marketers, and distributors who are active players in the film industry and are responsible for establishing relations with other film-related organisations (Muñoz Larroa, 2015). The views of this category of experts were sought through interviews on practices of streaming platforms in Nigeria and the perception of their business models in the film industry generally. In a telephone interview, Olusola Akinyemi, a gateway

boundary spanner from the streaming platform ApataTV+ on the 7th of July 2023 said Apata TV+ is presently comfortable with the YouTube platform as a base for launching its business activities because it provides convenience, and it is technologically less cumbersome.

Olalekan Ibrahim Wasiudeen, a content creator, exhibitor, and the Chairman and CEO of Nigeria-based streaming platform LibraTV on the YouTube Channel, said the decision not to operate a special app for the Libra TV platform was deliberate because his organization is concentrating more on the content or artistic aspect of entertainment rather than the creation of the technology behind the business. In an in-depth telephone and online interview with Wasiudeen on the 15th of March 2023, he declares:

It is deliberate that we do not have an App. We believe that we should concentrate on creating content and let another organization host the platform so we can exhibit on that hosted platform. Let them bother about developing the back-end technology and how it runs – while we just create the content and run it on their platform. Instead of looking at creating an App and developing backend platforms, we will rather concentrate on fortifying our house by creating and aggregating good content from producers. So, we leave the back end for a third party to take care of while we concentrate on production, creating content, and receiving content from producers. (Personal communication, 2023).

From this revelation, it is observed that streaming platforms with developed apps offering paid subscriptions to Nigerians and global audiences are predominantly owned by internationally based media companies that operate from their headquarters that are usually based outside of Nigeria. Some of these platforms include Netflix, Showmax, and Amazon Prime Video. They make their profits mainly from end users who subscribe to their streaming services.

On the other hand, most of the local entrepreneurs in Nigeria who operate streaming services do so on YouTube channels with the exceptions of the popular IbakaTV, and iROKOTV among very few others who own their apps. The locally based platforms that exhibit on the YouTube channel offer free subscriptions to end users and recoup their investments through the agreed profits-sharing model preferred by the YouTube platform that hosts their content. While seeking more insights on how streaming services that operate on YouTube, based on free subscriptions make profits and still pay taxes to the government, Olusola

Akinyemi of Apatatv+ said his platform offers free subscriptions on the YouTube channel to content users, while the owners of the YouTube platform who are based in the United States of America pay financially in return based on the number of clicks and adverts generated on the content, and that taxes are deducted from the source. He reiterated that the business has been good so far and that it could only get better.

The CEO of Libratv Lekan Wasiudeen also explains how his organization generates funding and how the business is run to break even and make profits. Wasiudeen, says:

Our profit is from advertisers. YouTube has created a platform on which advertisers can come and place their adverts on content available on the YouTube channel. YouTube only bothers about creating the platform. They do not create any content. Once film streaming happens, you will see advertisements on those films, and if you watch them for a particular moment or several times, it will turn into a monetized view. So, that is where the money comes from. We make the content, they create the platform, advertisers put their money on content made available on the platform, and then we share the proceedings. (Personal Communication, 2023).

Lekan Wasiudeen emphasised that from his organization's end, the approach is not to bother about the technology but the content. He said he could not ascertain whether locally based streaming services that combine the business of technology and content exhibition break even. Still, he confirmed to the researcher that what his streaming service does is profitable. He explains the processes involved in how his platform acquires, produces, and distributes content to make profits. He says:

The nature of our kind of practice and what we do is profit sharing. On our side, we do not do more acquisitions. Instead of acquiring the content totally, we would rather produce because we indeed have a production arm of the company. But when we aggregate content from a third party, what we do is stream their content, and then share the profit according to percentages spelled out in the agreement. (Personal communication, 2023).

From the interview, it was discovered that streaming service providers who are based in Nigeria pay taxes to the Nigerian and the American governments

respectively. The streaming channels hosted on the YouTube Platform most especially deduct these payments directly from the source and make onward remittances to the government accordingly.

This finding was corroborated in an interview with a creative boundary spanner, Francis Onwochei, a notable Nigeria-based actor, producer, and member of the Association of Movie Producers of Nigeria (AMP), Directors Guild of Nigeria (DGN) Independent Television Producers of Nigeria (ITPAN) and National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP). In an in-depth telephone interview with him on the 23rd of March 2023, he affirmed that "They pay you (streaming platforms), after removing various forms of taxes, then your content commercially goes on air". (Personal communication, 2023). However, it was noted that the content does not just go on air instantly. There are stages the content creators go through before selling their content to the gateway boundary spanners that constitute the streaming services. In a personal interview with a notable content developer, production manager, and member of the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), Sulayman Deji-Etiwe, on the 12th of April 2023, the researcher sought to investigate these processes. Deji-Etiwe relying on his personal experiences claims that what a content owner does is submit their film to the platforms for screening, while they await a response. Then, if there is a need for corrections, they ask the content creator to correct identified portions, then, followed by an offer. Once there is an offer and acceptance in the form of an agreement, the content owner gets paid, and such persons are bound by the agreement afterward. (Personal Communication, 2023).

Continuing, Deji-Etiwe says:

In some instances, if they accept your content, the agreement they will sign with you is that for the first year, you cannot put it on any other platform except theirs. The agreement is one and a half years, but for the first year, you cannot show it anywhere. Then, after one year, you may be allowed. So, between that one year, if almost everybody has seen it, who else do you want to exhibit it to? So, it makes it a secondary product for whoever wants to buy it. (Personal Interview, 2023).

Further explanations were given on the subject from another filmmaker and industry stakeholder, Francis

Onwochei. In his words:

The process is quite simple. When you finish your film, then you take it to the digital platforms to negotiate. Usually, they would have read about your project. Sometimes, they even invite you to come for a conversation. Then, you are given a contract. Both of you then sign. A lot of times, to be honest, you do not even need to read the contract because they are the only opening available, so you will have to take what they offer anyway. What now happens is that they pay you, removing various forms of taxes. Then, the content commercially goes on air. (Personal Communication, 2023).

Responding to perceived exploitation tendencies by streaming platforms, Wasiudeen, says the streaming platforms have been transparent in their dealings with producers and content creators. In an interview with Wasiudeen, he asserts that everyone is in business to make money and that streaming platforms are not in the know or in control of how much producers spend to produce their content. He said what they are preoccupied with as exhibitors is to acquire content based on value and assessment of returns on investments. So, before one acquires content rights, he must have assessed the overall benefits of the content based on personal experiences in the industry taking into consideration overhead cost and estimated profits. It is, therefore, the consideration of these factors that influence the judgment of distributors on product pricing.

Citing another example, Wasiudeen explains:

For example, YouTube immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic said that the American government was asking for a percentage of what is made on their soil. And it was as high as 30%. So, when you make payment to whoever owns the content and they see the kind of entry on their invoice, then they would understand. So, you must go a step further to explain to them by showing them emails and other evidence. Also, after the End-SARS, the Nigerian government started collecting VAT on every money made by any content owner in Nigeria. They collect 7.5% VAT. So, all these VAT and other taxes are deducted from the source. So, again, you need to explain to content owners and make available your own

Memorandum of Understanding that you signed with them. So, when you make it explicit to them over time and explain further, you get to resolve issues and they would get to understand one way or the other. (Personal Communication, 2023).

These revelations on the mode of acquisition and distribution of content by streaming platforms in Nigeria align with the postulations of Jedlowski (2017) which emphasizes the need to study how multimedia productions are generated, distributed, and consumed. By creating their various platforms and models of operation, the streaming platforms have succeeded in creating diffusion and innovations through which their content is distributed to the end users (Wayne & LaMorte, 2022; García-Avilés, 2020; Kaminski, 2011), thus, justifying the research on the need to study the business models of streaming platforms in the country and how they conduct their businesses. The views expressed by the interviewees are consistent with the diffusion of innovation theory adopted for the study which emphasizes business procedures based on the input and output of media organizations, returns on investments, and the purchasing power of subscribers.

Findings

From the case studies analysis and interviews with stakeholders on business models of select video-film streaming platforms in Nigeria, the study discovered that:

- o Multinational streaming platforms operating in Nigeria (Over the Top – OTT platforms), have developed apps, using a subscription and monetized model known as Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) and Transaction Video on Demand (TVOD) models respectively. On the other hand, many of the local-based streaming platforms in Nigeria, apart from iROKO TV and a few others, operate on the YouTube platform and are advert-based with no monetized subscription model known as Advertising-Based Video on Demand (AVOD). The study established that while streaming

providers like Netflix, iROKO TV, and Amazon Prime Video operate special apps, take charge of subscriptions, and engage in the production of originals and third-party content acquisition, local streamers like Libra TV, Apata TV+, and many others on the YouTube platform are focused on creating and acquiring content only, rather than developing back-end technology and apps for content exhibitions.

- o The study also found that the YouTube exhibition platform which is based in the United States of America remits financial returns to Nigerian streaming platforms that exhibit content on their platform based on the number of clicks on content using the AVOD model. The terms and conditions of this model involve profit sharing while taxes are deducted from the source for both the American and Nigerian governments respectively. Given this, foreign-based platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime which operate their apps, based on professional practices, first deduct taxes from the source based on the total sum of money acquired on content before they eventually go online.
- o It established that film streaming has helped to build standardization in Nollywood. Content is now received and viewed in High Definition (HD), and Ultra High Definition (UHD), which are global standard picture quality. Therefore, Streaming platforms have put the film industry in Nigeria in the limelight globally through the showcasing of Nigerian culture, dressings, and hospitality. Also, through streaming, piracy has been brought to a minimal level

because many content creators are now releasing their content directly on online channels, bypassing the physical market and avoiding pirating their works. Since production standards required by streaming platforms are usually very high, producers are now being challenged to improve their production value which requires spending a lot of money and resources to actualise. These new expectations now provide high-impact job opportunities and short-term employment for theatre and film graduates who are now absorbed into the film industry.

- o However, the study revealed that streaming service providers are disrupting the film industry by providing alternative exhibition channels as the VCD/DVD market is being obliterated although, not totally. The power in the distribution system of Nollywood has shifted from VCD/DVD marketing to streaming service providers who have helped democratising the system.

Conclusion

The study provides an assessment of the business practices of streaming platforms operating in Nigeria. The study affirms the potential opportunities they offer in terms of boosting economic growth and expanding access to a variety of content, while also considering the challenges they may pose in terms of regulations, cultural domination, and suppression of the local film industry. Overall, the study provides an analysis of the landscape of film streaming platforms in Nigeria and its implications for Nollywood. The study concludes that streaming platforms either international or local have had a considerable impact on Nigeria's culture as well as Nollywood, its film industry. The Nigerian film streaming market has the potential to play a major role in the growth of the film industry and the global media space. However, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed.

Recommendations

While noting that streaming platforms have expanded access to films of Nigerian origin and cultures to global audiences, notwithstanding, the study recommends adequate consumer protection and data security of subscribers and the need for government regulatory agencies to stress these requirements and enforce them. The research recommends the promotion of new policies that protect the rights of content creators while blocking unethical and unprofessional practices in contracts and agreements tending towards the exploitation of content creators and the film industry generally. In alignment with previous recommendations on collaborations and public-private partnerships (Conversation, 2020; Omoera & Ojieson, 2022; Fagbile, 2023), the study re-echoes the need for the promotion of more collaborations between local content creators and local streaming platforms given the influx of the already established multinational media corporations in the country for the balancing of power and revenues. It calls for consumer protection and prevention against exploitative business models for sustainable film industry development.

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