

VLOGGING AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING AFRICAN CULTURE IN SELECT TAYO AINA'S FILMS.

By

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Introduction

It can be said that there is no human society without culture and values, Africa inclusive. The continent, like every other, has its own culture which forms a unique way of bringing about unity and commonality of interest among the people. The word culture is derived from the Latin word 'cultura' which means 'to cultivate'. Asemah (2011) in an attempt at deliberately emphasising on the concept of culture, notes it is the specific system of norms, beliefs, practices, techniques and objectives that the people of a given society have inherited from their forefathers, invented or adopted from other sources, thence, it is all that man has added to nature. Indeed, a study in communication is incomplete without the understanding of culture. Culture may mean different things to different people in different fields who use the term except that in all of the usages, Haralambos, "Holborn, Chapman and Moore (2013) note that culture implicitly or explicitly contrast with nature. (p.61), Haralambos, Holborn, Chapman and Moore. Culture is an integral part of our lives. It shapes our identities, drives economic development, encourages collaboration between different cultures, fosters creativity and innovation, and builds bridges between communities. Culture defines our shared values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours. It provides a sense of belonging, especially when everyone speaks the same language. Moreover, having a diverse culture broadens our understanding and acceptance of various viewpoints, fostering mutual respect. Ultimately, culture plays a major role in how communities react, respond, and grow. It also serves as an identification purpose, a problem solver in a society, a socialization function, instrument of governance and more importantly a tool of communication.

As noted in sociology and other related disciplines, culture is made up of certain traits known as its components. The components of culture are the major elements such as material culture (tools, artefacts and technology), institutional culture, (coronations, leadership in the society), philosophical culture (religions, beliefs) and creative culture (oral/written literature, folklores) and social organisation that characterise its existence. As human society continued to increase in size and population, modern ways of sharing and passing on these cultural values and elements became a problem for mankind (Usua, 2022). This is because these cultural values in themselves are vital means of communication as Baran (2010) rightfully opined that culture is socially constructed and maintained through communication, with the media of

communication generally defining our realities, in the process, they shape the way we think, behave, feel and act.

Advancement in technology birthed the social media platforms which are offshoots of the Internet developed by man. Conventionally, it is an undeniable fact that the internet has become the most important achievement of modern society (Madon, 2000). According to Okorie (2021), life before the internet was characterized by slower communication, limited access to information, and a reliance on traditional forms of media and entertainment. The advent of the internet transformed every aspect of human lives, from how we communicate and learn to how we shop, work, and socialize. The internet has created a place where people from every culture can convene and share their experiences. It has transformed the ways in which people create, consume, and share cultural content, leading to new forms of artistic expression, communication, and interaction.

YouTube is among the third most visited social media platforms in the whole world (Nyagadza, 2020). With many different forms that can attract different types of audiences, YouTube has become an important social media medium.

Vlogs include several types and they are viewed by large audiences and with their authentic (Cunningham & Craig, 2017), credible (Johnson & Kaye, 2004) and realistic nature, they attract millions of watchers (Lee & Watkins, 2016) and therefore are more influential than any other type of content available on social media. More so, this can be created on various topics and niches, such as social issues, health and wellness, lifestyle, current affairs, comics, marketing, etc. The video of a vlog typically comprises supporting images, texts, and other valuable resources.

Tayo Aina films which the researcher used as a case study in this research is a social media YouTube Vlogger who mostly showcases African culture by traveling and exploring African countries, vlogging his whole experience and in essence promoting African culture. Therefore, with this research, the researcher talked about the use of Vlogging as a tool for promoting African culture in select Tayo Aina's films.

Statement of the problem

The mass media which are believed to be major carriers of cultural values are the vehicle through which news, information, ideas, culture and entertainment can move from the developed world to the developing world, because every media content carries the culture of the originator. Thus, the aggregation of cultural values spread by means of the media of mass communication, makes up mass culture. Yet, this culture is disseminated mostly by a handful but large media conglomerates which control the daily media output or news and entertainment

that most of the people of the world use including Africans. The power and spread of the large media conglomerates along with their technologies give them their multinational outlook, with extensive networks of interest operating across the globe. Having, so widely spread their presence, the network becomes vehicles for the worldwide dissemination of language, identity, aspirations and values that are congruent with the ideologies of their home countries.

During the 1970s, studies on information flow revealed imbalance of information and entertainment between the industrialized world and the nations of the South. This is because most of the contents are coming from the Western world, hence, one part of the world dominates the global media and Africa does not seem to have too much voice. As earlier hinted by scholars, international broadcasting from these rich nations continually leads to the exportation of social products with the least value to developing nations; the programmes lead to new cultural patterns that are detrimental to the development of indigenous cultures because foreign programmes that are broadcast over local networks in most cases determine the socio-cultural outlook and direction of the nations. Implying that most of what is available on the media are from the Western world, and this reduces visibility of the African cultural values. This ignited the debate on new world information and communication order.

But, as it has been shown, the digital era opened the space for media and content creators to navigate, and many of these content creators in Africa have utilized the opportunity to portray the African cultural values and heritage. ICTs have enabled nations and regions to have access to the global market place and have afforded people of the world the opportunity to share knowledge and views irrespective of distance and socio-cultural differences. A clear example is Tayo Aina's films which is projecting African culture so that people including the Western world will know about it and invariably lending a voice to Africa as a continent. However, it is not known if the residents of Port Harcourt Local Government Area consume the contents created by Tayo Aina films and their attitudes towards these contents that appreciate African cultural values and heritage. It is against this background that the study emerged.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the level of awareness of Port Harcourt Local Government residents on Tayo Aina's films via Vlogging on African culture?
2. To what extent do the residents of Port Harcourt local government area consume Tayo Aina's films via Vlogging on African culture?

3. To what extent does Tayo Aina's vlogs on African culture influence the residents of Port Harcourt Local Government Area?

Review of Related Literature

Vlogs

Vlogging has grown in popularity among all generations as one of the most popular daily digital videos. It is a mix of the words "video" and "blog" that allows users to create, upload, and watch lifestyle videos. Users can record their ideas on a variety of topics and publish them to vlogs using video (Anil, 2016). Vlogs include several types and they are viewed by large audiences and with their authentic (Cunningham & Craig, 2017), credible (Johnson & Kaye, 2004) and realistic nature, they attract millions of watchers (Lee & Watkins, 2016) and therefore are more influential than any other type of content available on social media (Burgess & Green, 2009; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Culture

Culture is "the way in which the minds of people inhabiting a particular area are cultivated, in turn determining or contributing to the area's culture" (Ololube 2011, p. 105). According to Usua (2022), the word culture is derived from the Latin word 'cultura' which means 'to cultivate'. Indeed, a study in communication is incomplete without the understanding of culture. Haralambos, Holborn, Chapman and Moore (2013) note that culture implicitly or explicitly contrasts with nature. Mari (in Asadu and Usua, 2011) defines culture as "the common possession of the body of people who share the same traditions in social terms" (p.61), Haralambos, Holborn, Chapman and Moore (2013) see it as the whole way of life of the people found in a particular society. Culture connotes beliefs, customs, traditions, practices and behaviours of different people in human groups or tribes within the African continent.

Aspects of culture

Onabajo (2005) breaks down culture to comprise material, institutional, philosophical and creative aspects. The material aspect has to do with artefacts in its broadest form (tools, clothing, food, medicine, utensils, housing, building architecture, fine arts and any other physical items). According to an American Sociologist, Charles Ellenwood, these are material instruments or artefacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices, art objects. Nnonyelu (2009) & Ogundele (2005) add that this material aspect can be physical. The physical culture can be physically ingenious products, such as buildings, crafts, tools, food, dresses, pottery, works of arts.

The institutional aspect deals with the political, social, legal and economic structures and spiritual objectives. Charles Ellenwood describes culture as the collective name for all behavioural patterns socially acquired and socially transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as governance, kinship, language, tool making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals and religion. Philosophical aspects of culture are nonmaterial, it deals with African philosophy, religion and beliefs, language, proverbs and idioms, morals, behaviour, character, ethics and knowledge.

Culture holds the background for every philosophy and gives shape to its existence, the meaning to its morale. Philosophy gives us the rationale that saves us from anachronism. The creative aspect is concerned with a people's literature (oral and written) as well as their visual and performing arts (folklore, music, dance) which are normally moulded by as well as help to mould other aspects of culture.

Culture and communication

As Usua (2022) rightly puts it, not only does culture influence communication, the latter reflects the former and, in the end, as Martin and Nakayama (2000) have it, both are interrelated and reciprocal. Communication is the bedrock of any culture. Cultural groups influence the process by which people create and maintain the perception of reality, just as "we might also say that communication helps create the cultural reality of community" (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p.62). Culture and values are passed and kept alive from generation to generation through communication and socialization. This is because socialization is inevitable in every society. Both those that are born into the society and settlers are introduced to norms, values and behaviours that are acceptable within that society. To socialize, whether an infant or a new entrant to the society is to teach them what they should do or say and how they should do or say them. To that extent to socialize is to communicate to them (Usua, 2022). The same is the fear of social media. Many Africans see it as polluting African culture and influencing African youths negatively because of its major western culture content. They lament its impact on the attitude, behaviour, language and ways of life of Africans. Johnson (2012) declares thus, "the exploding new media realities and globalization are sensed as both a gift and a threat especially to African culture. This is enunciated in the cultural transmission function of the mass media. The media makes for the sustenance of a culture through its coverage and reporting of people and activities of a particular culture. Thus, helping people of other culture know and appreciate the culture.

Using social media in the sustenance of African culture

In all, the increasing usage and prominence of social media cannot be ruled out. In Africa, social media is one which has a growing population of users and audience. What needs to be done is to find ways to harness the potentials of social media and use them as channels to transmit and make for sustenance of African culture which are; Global nature of social media: social media is global in nature, in that users and consumers of social media contents are diverse and from all across the world. Uploading contents on African culture – values, lifestyle, dressing, arts, music, food, etc, on social media afford the world to see and appreciate the various aspects of African cultures. Such information gets into discussions and writings thus making for the perpetuation of the culture. Archive for cultural materials: Being a mass medium that is not transient, social media can be a repository or archive for African cultural materials thus enabling the sustenance of the culture. Contents on social media are available 24 hours a day; 7 days a week and users have the opportunity of viewing previous content on a site any time. This will mean that social media sites, pages or accounts that are dedicated to African culture displaying – videos, poems, literature, drama, music, images – can be stored and accessed anytime, even in many years to come. Creating virtual cultural and ethnic communities: social media builds close interactions among users. It facilitates greater connectedness among users of the same ethnic group; reinforces existing ethnic links and ties. Poster (2010) in Bainum puts it this way “internet use also has the effect of linking together web users with the same ethnicity, into a tightly knit online community.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural proximity theory

The theory of cultural proximity was suggested by Joseph Straubhaar in his 1991 paper, *“Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity.”* The theory argued that audience would like to choose media products that are proximate to their own cultural backgrounds (Straubhaar, 1991). Cultural proximity was defined by similarities in history, ethnicity, religion, language, and geography. Among them, similar language was often highlighted as an important determinant of audience preferences (De Sola Pool, 1977; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2003). Besides language, there are other cultural elements at play, such as dress, ethnic types, gestures, body language, humours, music, religion, gender image, lifestyle, personal experiences, education, family, and organizational affiliation (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2003).

Cultural proximity theory is particularly relevant to the study of vlogging as a tool for promoting African culture in the sense that vlogging, as a medium, has the potential to bridge

cultural gaps by bringing African culture closer to audiences around the world, fostering a sense of familiarity and connection. With this, individuals are more likely to engage with content that aligns with their own cultural background.

Technological Determinism Theory

The theory was developed by Marshall McLuhan in 1962. The theory states that the media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act, and how society operates, as we move from one technological age to another (Anaeto, Onabanjo & Osifeso, 2008). We learn and feel and think the way we do because of the messages we receive through the current technology that is available.

The theory explains that when new systems of technology are developed, the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology. This theory therefore, is relevant to this study because, the advent of vlogging the scene of filming is as a result of the advancement in technology which the society in turn must adapt to as a way of modernisation. Vlogging, the technological features of video-sharing platforms influence how content creators present and promote African culture. As a technology-driven medium, it facilitates the transmission of cultural information.

Methodology

7.1 Research design

The research design used in this study was the triangulation design method. This method enabled the researcher to use a mixed method of content analysis and survey. The choice of this mixed method was to avail the researcher the opportunity to analyse the contents of the study. The content analysis was to handle the aspect of the cultural elements established in Tayo Aina's films via Vlogging. Whereas, the survey sought to evaluate the residents' awareness, consumption and influential level of Tayo Aina's films.

7.2 Population of the study

According to the National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics 2022 population projection of 2.3% growth rate, the population of Port Harcourt City Local Government Area is 774,600 which is a projection from a number of 538,558 from the last held census in Nigeria.

7.3 Sample size

The sample size for this study therefore, was drawn from the population using the Meyer's Sample Size Determination Template. The sample size derived from the population of the study was three hundred and eighty-four (384) for the survey.

7.4 Research instruments

The research instruments used for this study was questionnaire. The questionnaire was for the survey, it was divided into sections A and B, with section A consisting of demographic items of the respondent, while the B section contained questions and propositions which the respondents are meant to answer. The items in section B of the questionnaire were couched to address the research objectives and questions

7.5 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis adopted for this research was the descriptive technique. The research was analysed entirely in verbal terms and statistical dealing on numerical values and explaining the data in tables. For the questionnaire, the opened-ended questions were analysed using Yin's explanation building technique, while the Yes-No questions of the closed-ended were analysed using simple percentage and frequency tables

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the copies of the questionnaire responses collected from the residents were analysed and interpreted here. This research work was set out to assess Vlogging as a tool for promoting African culture with a focus on Tayo Aina Films in Port Harcourt Local Government. In doing this, the researcher made use of the mixed research method which was a mixture of survey and content analysis. The choice of this was to give the researcher the opportunity to explore the multifaceted nature of the work.

Thus, for the survey, a total of three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher on the different communities under Port Harcourt Local Government Area, and three hundred and sixty (360) copies of the questionnaire were correctly filled and retrieved for the analysis. This means that only twenty-four (24) copies were wrongly filled and not used for the study. Thus, the retrieval rate of the copies of the questionnaire was 93%.

From the demographic data analysis, 108 (30%) representing the highest number of respondents were within the generation age of gen millennials and gen z, showing their awareness and knowledge on the research topic. Also, the male gender 216 (60%) constituted the higher number than the female who had a percentage of (40%). The analysis on the respondent's exposure to social media had a high percentage of (80.6%), while the percentage

of those who watched vlogs on YouTube was 270 (75%) with the minority of 90 (25%) respondents. 270 (75%) respondents agreed to be aware of vlogs covering African culture on YouTube while 90 of the respondents claimed they were not aware of vlogs covering African culture on YouTube. Lastly the majority of respondents with a frequency of (75%) accepted that they watch Tayo Aina's vlogs relating to promoting African culture On YouTube.

Research question 1: What is the level of awareness on residents of Port Harcourt Local Government of Tayo Aina's films via vlogging on African culture?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
		4	3	2	1			
1.	I am aware of Tayo Ainas films	108 432	108 324	144 288	0 0	360 1044	2.9	Agree
2.	I know he is a vlogger	0 0	36 108	288 576	36 36	360 720	2.6	Agree
3.	As a social media user, I know that he makes videos dealing with African culture	36 144	180 540	144 288	0 0	360 972	2.7	Agree
4.	I am aware of Tayo Ainas films but not aware it Is used as a means of promoting African culture	36 144	144 432	180 360	0 0	360 720	2.0	Disagree

The results of this analysis as contained in table indicated a high level of awareness of Tayo Aina's films via vlogging in promoting African culture and it showed in the response rate as having a criterion mean of above the 2.5 which showed valid response to the research question. A total number of 216 (60%) respondents agreed to be aware of the film, while the other 144 (40%) claim not to be aware.

Research question 2: To what extent do the residents of Port Harcourt Local Government Area consume Tayo Aina's films via vlogging on African culture?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
		4	3	2	1			
5.	I consume Tayo Aina's vlogs as soon as I get a notification on a new vlog	85 340	150 450	100 200	25 25	360 1015	2.8	Agree
6.	My level of consumption on Tayo Aina's vlogs are bi-weekly.	0 0	50 150	288 576	22 22	360 748	1.5	Disagree
7.	I consume Tayo Ainas films via vlogging weekly	0 0	36 108	324 648	0 0	360 756	2.1	Disagree
8.	My consumption on Tayo Aina's vlog is a daily occurrence	0 0	0 0	360 680	20 20	360 720	1.9	Disagree
9.	My level of consumption of Tayo Ainas vlog is inconsistent.	0 0	20 60	340 680	0 0	360 740	2.0	Disagree

The results of the analysis contained in table showed the responses on the consumption level of Tayo Aina's films via vlogging. The data indicated that respondents agreed on the consumption of Tayo Aina's vlogs as they claimed that they consume (watch) the films as soon as they get a new notification on the vlog which has a mean value of 2.8. this explained that a total of 235 (65.3%) respondents agreed to have watched the films as soon as they were notified. The other respondents disagreed with the consumption extent of the vlog. This implies that the consumption level of the films is high (65.3%).

Research question 3: To what extent does Tayo Aina's vlogs on African culture influence the residents of Port Harcourt Local Government?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
		4	3	2	1			
10.	When I started watching Tayo Aina's vlogs, I gained new knowledge on African culture.	16	200	144	0	360	2.6	Agree
		64	600	288	0	922		
11.	The portrayal of African culture in Tayo Aina's vlogs has influenced me to visit and learn about African culture in different African countries.	0	108	252	0	360	2.3	Disagree
		0	324	504	0	828		
12.	I have been influenced by Tayo Aina's vlogs to appreciate my culture.	0	216	144	0	360	2.6	Agree
		0	648	288	0	936		
13.	I have not been influenced in any way from the content in Tayo Aina's vlog.	0	24	300	36	360	1.9	Disagree
		0	72	600	36	708		
14.	I understand the content of culture in Tayo Aina's vlog but I am indifferent about it.	0	40	320	0	360	2.1	Disagree
		0	120	640	0	760		

The data in Table above showed that out of the 5 items (14-18) used to measure the influence of Tayo Aina's films on the audience, item 15 and 16 had a negative mean below 2.5; others had mean scores above the mean average. This, therefore, indicated that the majority generally agreed that there is an influence of the vlog on them. Thus, the films have made them gain new knowledge on African culture thereby making them to appreciate culture as humans' way of life.

Discussion of Findings

The aim of this research work was to examine vlogging as a tool for promoting African culture. Using the collated and analysed data, answers would be provided for the research questions and inferences made as well.

For research question 1, which sought to ascertain the residents' level of awareness of Tayo Aina's films via vlogging on African culture. From the result on Table 8.1, it can be inferred that the level of awareness of the respondents on vlogging as a tool for promoting

African culture is high. This conclusion is clearly seen in the fact that the average mean for three of the variables were above 2.5. However, there was a variable (item 4) with a low mean average which also represented the disagreement to non-awareness of the promotion of African culture. This finding goes in relation with that of Uche and Nwosu (2023) that the users of social media are highly aware of the media's use in the promotion of their culture and thus, this culture can be transmitted, promoted and sustained by the present generation using their media.

The research question 2 was to ascertain the extent to which the residents consume Tayo Aina's films via vlogging. The data indicated that the respondents agreed that they consume (watch) the films as soon as they get a new notification on the vlog which has a mean value of 2.8. This explained that a high number of the respondents agreed to have watched the films. Thus, the extent of consumption was relatively high. This finding agrees with the study of Lashley (2013) that all the users are being constantly engaged with feedback solicited from and offered by other users.

Research question 3 was to ascertain the extent to which Tayo Aina's vlogs on African culture influence the audience. The result on table 8.3 showed the responses on the extent Tayo Aina's vlogs on African culture have an influence on the audience. This, therefore, indicated that the majority generally agreed that there is an influence of the vlog on them. Thus, the films have made them gain new knowledge on African culture thereby making them to appreciate culture as humans' way of life. This finding supports that of Solo-Anaeto and Jacobs (2015) that YouTube among other media have made the communication process faster, interactive, user friendly and enabling user generated content. As all these make the influence of social media far reaching; with good sides and bad sides to it. It also corresponds with Saidalvi, Mohamad and Fakhruddin (2021) findings which revealed that English Vlog within YouTube offers many positive changes towards students' speaking skills in the aspects of language learning and motivation. This also resonates with the study by Jensen (2020) as the results indicated that the travel vloggers are established as a tourist research method does affect what tourists want to experience when they visit. Similarly, Arinze-UmobiSomtoo and Chiweta-Oduah (2020) which lent credence to this found out that Nollywood films are used to promote African culture, thus, having a heavy positive influence on the consumers.

Conclusion

This study has argued and discussed that vlogging as a tool for promoting African culture is on the high level as a whole. Vlogging will still be used as a means of promoting African culture by constantly creating awareness and building knowledge on culture and also consciously and unconsciously influencing the audience. The analysis of this study shows that

there is a high level of awareness and consumption on the vlogs. It also shows that the messages and content created in the vlogs have a positive influence on the audience which relatively means vlogging serves as a tool for promoting African culture. This doesn't dispute the fact that there were also disagreements to some of the research questions which means that there are still some solutions that need to be done to ensure the promotion of African culture through the use of new media enabling more awareness and engagements.

Furthermore, the role that media plays in the development of a society cannot be over-emphasized; therefore, African culture should not be limited to be discussed on just the new media, but also on every other media platform, as it was found in this work that the gen x carried a low percentage of those who use and engage with social media, meaning the use of radio and TV should still be used to create awareness on African culture.

Finally, even if individuals and organisations work to promote African culture, this paper concludes that such efforts will only have a lasting impact if the media is able to raise more awareness and reach more audience, even with the support of the government.

Recommendations

The research has been able to demonstrate that the new media have helped a great deal in creating awareness on vlogging as a tool for promoting African culture. It has also been advanced that what remains is need to spread more awareness not just through the new media but also other forms of media. On the strength of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

1. Vlogs relating to African culture should be made more accessible to the audience than just on YouTube. Although development has been established and has made spread of information easier, there is still avenue to make it accessible to the audience who do not use social media (YouTube in particular), so the need to put it in other media outlets should be encouraged.
2. Vloggers and content creators on African culture should ensure there are constant ways of notifying viewers and audience when contents on African culture are done as it has shown that there is an almost instant action from the viewers.
3. Diverse and educational messages on African culture should also be inscribed in media messages as it has shown that there is a form of influence on the mass, as it helps to keep the culture alive and preserve history that would be passed down for easy referencing and understanding.

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