

PLATFORMED MANHOOD: DIGITAL LABOUR AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CELEBRITY MASCULINITY IN THE AGE OF INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the multifaceted construction of masculinity within the contemporary Nigerian celebrity landscape, specifically focusing on the transition from traditional Nollywood stardom to the digital paradigm of “platformed manhood.” As social media platforms, notably Instagram, become primary sites for identity performance, male celebrities are increasingly required to engage in intensive digital, aesthetic, and emotional labour to maintain visibility and commercial viability. Through a critical analysis of selected male Nollywood celebrities – Timini Egbuson, Ebuka Obi Uchendu, and Broda Shaggi- this research explores how masculine identity is perpetually curated, marketed, and monetised within a global digital economy. The paper argues that this shift has intensified the pressures of masculine performance, necessitating a strategic blurring of private and public spheres. By integrating theories of platformisation and hegemonic masculinity, the study illuminates the ways in which Instagram serves as a site for negotiating power and authority while also reinforcing traditional links between masculinity and economic success. The findings suggest that while digital platforms offer new avenues for cultural influence and economic empowerment, they also impose significant burdens of surveillance and algorithmic governance, fundamentally reshaping the nature of celebrity and gender performance in the twenty-first century.

KEYWORDS: Masculinity, Celebrity, Landscape, Platformed, Hegemonic

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of celebrity culture in Nigeria has undergone a profound and multifaceted transformation with the advent of social media platforms, particularly Instagram. Whilst the traditional Nollywood industry established the foundations of stardom through cinematic performance and theatrical releases, the contemporary era

demands a continuous, digital enactment of identity that transcends the screen. This shift has birthed a phenomenon that this study terms “platformed manhood,” a state where masculine identity is not merely portrayed in fictional narratives but is perpetually constructed, marketed, and monetised through intensive digital labour. Male Nollywood celebrities, once distant figures of the silver screen whose lives were mediated by traditional tabloids, are now active participants in a global digital economy. This economy requires them to curate their personal lives, physical bodies, and professional achievements for a diverse and demanding audience. This paper argues that the transition from traditional stardom to digital celebrity has intensified the pressures of masculine performance, necessitating a form of digital labour that blurs the boundaries between the private self and the public brand. Through an analysis of selected male celebrities, this study explores how Instagram serves as a primary site for the negotiation of power, authority, and masculinity in contemporary Nigeria.

The selection of Timini Egbuson, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, and Broda Shaggi as case studies is strategically designed to provide a multifaceted examination of platformed manhood within the Nigerian celebrity landscape. Timini Egbuson, a traditional Nollywood actor, exemplifies the transition to digital stardom through meticulous lifestyle curation and engagement with themes of modern masculinity and economic success. Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, a prominent media personality, showcases a sophisticated form of platformed masculinity, leveraging his influence to shape discourses on male identity through curated content and initiatives like his "MENTality with Ebuka" podcast. Conversely, Broda Shaggi represents the digital-native celebrity, whose comedic persona illustrates the democratizing power of platforms in creating celebrity and monetizing diverse masculine performances. Together, these three individuals offer a varied empirical basis, representing distinct entry points into celebrity culture and diverse strategies for performing, curating, and monetizing masculine identity in Nigeria's digital economy.

Nollywood has always functioned as a mirror for Nigerian societal values, reflecting and shaping gender norms through its varied narratives (Haynes 16). However, the rise of Instagram has decentralised this influence, allowing individual actors to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and engage directly with their fans. This direct engagement is not without its high costs. It requires a relentless commitment to “aesthetic labour,” a term that describes the extensive work involved in managing one’s appearance to meet both commercial and social expectations (Wang 12). For male actors, this involves a strategic display of physical fitness, sartorial elegance, and luxurious lifestyles, all of which are designed to project an image of successful and dominant masculinity. This performance is deeply rooted in the “hustle culture” that defines much of Nigerian urban life, where economic success is seen as the ultimate marker of manhood and social standing. Examining the digital footprints of stars such as Timini Egbuson, Ebuka Obi Uchendu, and others enables this research to illuminate the ways in which digital platforms have redefined what it means to be a man and a celebrity in the twenty-first century.

The evolution of Nollywood from its video film origins to its current state of global streaming prominence has been accompanied by a parallel shift in celebrity. In the early years, stars were often valued for their moral authority or their ability to represent the common man. Today, the “New Nollywood” star is expected to be a global citizen, a fashion icon, and a digital influencer. This new set of expectations has placed a premium on the visual and the performative. The Instagram grid has become the new cinema screen, where every post is a scene, and every caption is a script. This study seeks to understand the implications of this shift for the construction of masculinity. Does the platformed nature of celebrity allow for more diverse expressions of manhood, or does it merely provide new ways to reinforce traditional power structures? By focusing on the labour involved in these performances, the paper highlights the agency and the constraints of male celebrities in the digital age. Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to the broader academic discourse on digital culture, celebrity studies, and gender performance in the Global South, offering a comprehensive perspective on how local cultural contexts interact with global technological trends. It also seeks to fill a critical gap in the existing literature by providing an in-depth examination of the specific forms of digital labour undertaken by male Nollywood celebrities, moving beyond general discussions of social media influence to a more granular analysis of their daily practices and their impact on masculine identity. The theoretical underpinnings of this research are therefore crucial for understanding the complex interplay between individual agency, technological affordances, and socio-cultural expectations in the shaping of contemporary celebrity masculinity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws primarily on Performance Theory and Masculinity Studies to analyse the construction of celebrity masculinity in the age of Instagram. These interconnected theoretical concepts provide a robust lens through which to examine the multifaceted transition of male Nollywood stardom into the digital sphere.

Performance Theory

Performance Theory, drawing from the work of theorists like Judith Butler, emphasises that gender is not an innate essence but a repeated stylisation of the body, a set of acts that create the illusion of stable gender identity. Applied to male Nollywood celebrities, Performance Theory illuminates how masculinity is actively constructed through repeated performances both on screen and in public life. On Instagram, this involves a strategic use of filters, captions, hashtags, and stories to construct a version of manhood that is both culturally resonant and globally appealing. The visual grammar of Instagram, with its emphasis on images and short videos, lends itself particularly well to this performative construction of gender, allowing for rapid dissemination and consumption of curated masculine ideals. This constant performance of gender on a public platform means that masculinity is not a fixed state but a fluid and continuously negotiated identity.

Masculinity Studies

Masculinity Studies provides a framework for understanding how male identity is constructed and performed. In the Nigerian context, platformed masculinity often intersects with hegemonic masculinity, the culturally dominant ideal of what a man should be. This ideal emphasises authority, physical strength, financial success, and heterosexuality. However, the digital space also allows for the emergence and visibility of ornamental masculinity, where the male body becomes an object of aesthetic consumption and visual pleasure. This shift towards the visual and the aesthetic does not necessarily undermine traditional power structures; rather, it provides new and sophisticated avenues for men to assert their authority through the curation of their image. The tension between these different forms of masculinity is a key feature of the digital labour performed by male Nollywood celebrities, as they seek to balance traditional expectations with modern demands. The digital platform thus becomes a battleground for competing masculine ideals, where celebrities strategically deploy different facets of their identity to appeal to diverse audiences.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive analytical approach to examine how male Nollywood celebrities negotiate masculine performance, power dynamics, and aesthetic presentation within the digital sphere. The research design focuses on a critical analysis of contemporary Nigerian celebrity culture, specifically the transition from traditional cinematic stardom to a platformed identity.

Three prominent male celebrities who represent distinct facets of platformed manhood are selected for this study. These include Timini Egbuson, who exemplifies the digitally native, aesthetic-focused masculinity, often referred to as the "poster boy" of the younger generation. Ebuka Obi Uchendu embodies the "authority of style" and professional excellence, showcasing a blend of traditional and modern Nigerian gentleman ideals. Lastly, Broda Shaggi (Samuel Perry) represents "comedic masculinity" and the "performance of the hustle," reflecting resilience and wit rooted in Nigerian street culture.

The collected data is interpreted through the theoretical lenses of platformization, hegemonic masculinity, and digital labour. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how these celebrities navigate the tensions between authenticity, commercial viability, and societal expectations in shaping their public personas.

CASE STUDIES IN PLATFORMED MANHOOD

Timini Egbuson: The “Bad Boy” and the Aesthetics of Aspiration



Timini Egbuson

Timini Egbuson represents a pivotal and highly influential figure in the transition towards platformed masculinity within the Nigerian entertainment landscape. Often dubbed the “poster boy” for the younger, digitally native generation of Nollywood, his presence on Instagram is a masterclass in the curation of a specific and highly profitable masculine brand. Egbuson’s digital labour is characterised by a sophisticated blend of professional promotion and personal lifestyle display, which constructs a persona that is both aspirational and seemingly relatable. His posts frequently feature high fashion, luxury travel, and social engagements with other high-profile individuals, all of which serve to reinforce his status as a successful, modern, and cosmopolitan man. This performance of “the good life” is a form of digital labour that directly translates into significant commercial value, as evidenced by his numerous and diverse brand endorsements. For instance, a typical Instagram post might showcase him in designer attire at an exclusive event, accompanied by a caption that subtly promotes a lifestyle brand or a new film project. This seamless integration of personal branding and commercial endorsement is a hallmark of platformed

manhood, where the celebrity's very existence becomes a marketable commodity. His carefully chosen outfits, often from international luxury brands, communicate a globalised sense of style that resonates with a youthful, upwardly mobile demographic. The aspirational lifestyle he projects is not merely a reflection of his success but a deliberate strategy to cultivate a particular image that appeals to both fans and corporate sponsors.

The masculinity performed by Egbuson is deeply and intentionally rooted in aesthetics. His physical appearance is meticulously managed, with a constant focus on fitness, grooming, and style that aligns with global standards of male beauty. This "ornamental masculinity" is not a sign of vanity but a strategic tool for visibility and influence. By positioning himself as a visual object, Egbuson commands attention in the crowded digital marketplace. His carefully sculpted physique, often displayed in gym selfies or beach photos, signals discipline and self-control, qualities traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinity. However, this aesthetic focus is carefully balanced with a "bad boy" persona that maintains a sense of traditional masculine edge and rebellion. This duality allows him to appeal to a wide and varied audience, from young women who admire his looks to young men who aspire to his lifestyle and confidence. His digital labour involves a constant and delicate negotiation between these different facets of his identity, ensuring that his brand remains both relevant and highly profitable. The "bad boy" image, often conveyed through edgy fashion choices or cryptic captions, adds an element of intrigue and nonconformity, making his brand more dynamic and appealing to a generation that values individuality and a certain rebellious charm. This carefully cultivated image allows him to embody both traditional strength and modern sophistication, a potent combination in the digital sphere, demonstrating the strategic deployment of multiple masculine archetypes.

Furthermore, Egbuson's engagement with his fans is a key part of his digital labour. He often uses his stories and live sessions to provide a "behind the scenes" look at his life, creating a sense of intimacy and authenticity that strengthens his brand. This engagement is not random; it is a calculated effort to build a loyal community of followers who are invested in his success. By sharing his triumphs and his challenges, he humanises his brand, making his aspirational lifestyle seem more attainable. This interactive dimension of his digital presence transforms passive viewership into active participation, fostering a sense of community around his persona. He responds to comments, participates in trending challenges, and uses question and answer sessions to directly interact with his audience, thereby deepening their connection and loyalty. This constant interaction requires significant emotional labour, as he must maintain a positive and engaging persona even when faced with criticism or negativity. His strategic use of Instagram exemplifies how contemporary male celebrities navigate the demands of digital visibility, aesthetic perfection, and commercial viability, all while maintaining a carefully constructed public image that is both aspirational and relatable.

Ebuka Obi Uchendu: The Authority of Style and Professionalism



Ebuka Obi Uchendu

Ebuka Obi Uchendu, though primarily known as a media personality and host, occupies a unique and highly influential space in the Nollywood ecosystem. His influence on masculine fashion and professional conduct is unparalleled, making him a central figure in any study of platformed manhood. Obi Uchendu's digital labour is focused on the "authority of style." His sartorial choices dominate his Instagram feed, particularly his innovative and often groundbreaking takes on traditional Nigerian attire. Each post is a calculated statement of cultural pride, modern sophistication, and personal brand authority. This focus on fashion is a form of "sartorial labour" that has redefined the boundaries of male self-expression and cultural identity in Nigeria. His ability to seamlessly blend traditional Nigerian fabrics and designs with contemporary cuts and styles has made him a fashion icon, not just in Nigeria but across the African continent. This deliberate showcasing of indigenous fashion elevates his brand beyond mere celebrity, positioning him as a cultural ambassador and a tastemaker. His posts often feature detailed descriptions of his outfits, crediting designers and stylists, thereby contributing to the fashion economy and influencing trends. This meticulous attention to detail in his presentation reinforces his image as a man of discerning taste and cultural awareness.

Beyond his fashion choices, Obi Uchendu performs a masculinity that is defined by professional excellence, intellectual authority, and composed leadership. His roles as a host for major shows like Big Brother Naija provide him with a powerful platform to display these qualities to a massive audience. On Instagram, he reinforces this image through posts that highlight his professional achievements, public engagements, and family life. His digital labour involves managing a persona that is both authoritative and approachable, a balance essential to his role as a cultural

influencer and role model. By leveraging his style and his professionalism, Obi Uchendu has constructed a form of masculinity that is both deeply traditional and forward-looking, providing a template for the modern Nigerian gentleman. His articulate commentary on social issues, often shared through thoughtful captions or interviews, further solidifies his image as an intellectual and responsible public figure, adding depth to his platformed persona. He frequently shares insights from his interviews, engaging his audience in thoughtful discussions on current affairs and social issues, thereby extending his influence beyond fashion and entertainment. This intellectual engagement distinguishes his brand from those focused solely on aesthetics or entertainment, positioning him as a thought leader.

His digital presence also serves as a platform for cultural commentary and advocacy. He often uses his influence to highlight important social issues and to promote Nigerian culture on a global stage. This form of “cultural labour” adds another layer of depth to his brand, positioning him as a figure of substance as well as style. For example, his posts might feature discussions on Nigerian politics, social justice, or the promotion of local businesses, demonstrating a commitment to community beyond personal gain. He actively participates in campaigns for social good, lending his voice and image to causes that resonate with his values. His success demonstrates that platformed manhood can be a site for positive social influence as well as commercial gain, challenging the notion that digital celebrity is solely about superficiality and self-promotion. His brand exemplifies a sophisticated form of digital labour that combines aesthetic appeal with intellectual engagement and social responsibility, offering a model of masculinity that is both aspirational and ethically grounded.

Broda Shaggi: The Performance of “The Hustle” and Comedic Masculinity



Broda Shaggi

Samuel Perry, popularly known as Broda Shaggi, offers a different and equally compelling perspective on platformed manhood. His brand is built on the “hustle culture” of the Nigerian streets, a masculinity that is defined by resilience, wit, and a relentless drive for success against all odds. Unlike the polished and luxury-focused aesthetics of Egbuson or Obi Uchendu, Broda Shaggi’s digital labour involves the performance of a more “rugged,” energetic, and comedic persona. His content, which consists largely of short skits and character-based performances, highlights the daily struggles, frustrations, and triumphs of the everyday Nigerian man. This “comedic masculinity” allows him to engage with a massive and diverse audience by tapping into shared cultural experiences and frustrations. His skits often feature exaggerated scenarios of everyday Nigerian life, from dealing with difficult market traders to navigating Lagos traffic, making his content highly relatable and humorous. The raw, unpolished nature of his early content, often filmed with basic equipment, further enhanced his authenticity and appeal to a broad demographic, demonstrating that high production value is not always a prerequisite for digital success.

The digital labour performed by Broda Shaggi is intensive, highly creative, and physically demanding. It involves the constant production of high-energy content that requires significant physical and mental effort to script, film, and edit. His persona, characterised by his signature shirtless look, energetic delivery, and streetwise slang, is a deliberate and strategic construction designed to stand out in the noisy digital space. This performance of “the street” is a form of cultural labour that validates and celebrates the experiences of a large segment of the Nigerian population. Despite the comedic and often exaggerated nature of his work, the underlying message is one of economic empowerment, social mobility, and the power of the individual hustle. His consistent portrayal of a character who is always striving, always working, resonates deeply with the Nigerian ethos of perseverance and ambition. He often incorporates moral lessons or social commentary into his skits, adding a layer of depth to his comedic performances and reinforcing his connection with his audience. This blend of entertainment and social commentary makes his digital labour particularly impactful.

By transforming his “hustle” into a powerful digital brand, Broda Shaggi has demonstrated how alternative and more traditional forms of masculinity can be successfully platformed and monetised in the digital age. His success is a testament to the power of authenticity and cultural resonance in the celebrity economy. His ability to connect with a mass audience through humour and relatable content highlights the diverse pathways to platformed manhood, moving beyond purely aesthetic or intellectual displays to embrace a more grounded and culturally specific form of masculine performance. His brand also demonstrates the potential for digital platforms to democratise celebrity, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to achieve widespread recognition and commercial success through their unique digital labour. His journey from a relatively unknown comedian to a household name underscores the transformative power of Instagram as a platform for talent discovery and brand building, and as a space for the articulation of a distinctly Nigerian masculine identity.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study indicate that platformed manhood represents a structural transformation in the way masculine identity is produced, circulated, and legitimised within contemporary Nigerian popular culture. Instagram does not merely function as an additional publicity channel for male celebrities. It reorganises the symbolic economy of masculinity itself. Visibility, engagement, aesthetic appeal, and commercial partnerships become central criteria through which masculine legitimacy is assessed. In this sense, masculinity is no longer anchored primarily in cinematic representation or narrative roles but in sustained digital presence.

One of the most significant insights emerging from the analysis is that masculine authority has shifted from institutional validation to audience-mediated recognition. In earlier phases of Nollywood, authority was often grounded in acting pedigree, seniority, or association with respected production houses. In the current platform-driven environment, legitimacy is increasingly tied to metrics of engagement and influence. Followers, comments, and brand affiliations operate as public indicators of value. Masculine success is therefore rendered measurable and continuously updated. This does not dismantle hegemonic expectations of strength, achievement, and leadership. Rather, it recalibrates them within a digital marketplace where influence functions as a new form of capital.

The case studies reveal that while there is no singular model of platformed masculinity, each performance is shaped by similar structural pressures. Timini Egbuson constructs masculinity through aspirational aesthetics, where physical discipline, luxury environments, and cosmopolitan mobility signify upward movement and desirability. Ebuka Obi Uchendu performs a masculinity grounded in composure, cultural sophistication, and professional authority, demonstrating that refinement and intellectual presence can command digital attention. Broda Shaggi articulates a masculinity rooted in humour, resilience, and everyday struggle, translating street culture into a widely consumable brand. These models differ in style and tone, yet all require continuous self-management, strategic self-disclosure, and careful brand alignment.

What becomes clear is that platformed manhood operates through constant calibration. Masculinity must be adjusted in response to audience reception, trending conversations, and commercial opportunities. This responsiveness reflects a broader condition in which gender identity becomes iterative and dialogic. It is shaped through interaction rather than imposed from a fixed position of authority. Instagram, as a participatory space, invites followers to validate, critique, and co-produce celebrity identity. Masculinity is therefore negotiated in real time.

Another important dimension of the findings concerns intimacy and emotional expression. Digital celebrity culture demands proximity. Followers expect not only professional updates but glimpses into personal routines, relationships, and reflective moments. This expectation reconfigures masculine boundaries. Traditional Nigerian masculine norms often valorised emotional restraint and distance. On Instagram, however, controlled openness enhances relatability and strengthens audience loyalty.

Vulnerability, when carefully curated, becomes a resource rather than a liability. This suggests that platformed manhood does not simply reproduce rigid masculine codes but subtly reshapes them to accommodate affective labour and relational visibility.

The study also demonstrates that aesthetic labour has become integral to masculine performance. Grooming, fitness, fashion, and spatial presentation are not peripheral embellishments. They are central mechanisms through which authority and desirability are communicated. The male body emerges as a site of disciplined self-investment. However, this emphasis on appearance should not be interpreted as a departure from hegemonic masculinity. Instead, it represents a refinement of it. Physical control, self-mastery, and visual dominance are expressed through style and bodily cultivation rather than overt aggression or physical power. Masculine strength is reframed as aesthetic coherence and lifestyle coherence.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that platformed manhood exists within a tension between autonomy and constraint. On one hand, digital platforms offer expanded opportunities for self-branding, entrepreneurship, and cultural influence. Celebrities can bypass traditional gatekeepers and directly cultivate audiences. On the other hand, their visibility is mediated by algorithmic structures that privilege forms of content. Content that displays wealth, physical attractiveness, and romantic desirability often receives heightened engagement. As a result, certain masculine traits are amplified while others remain marginal. The digital field, therefore, shapes the contours of acceptable masculinity even as it appears to democratise expression.

The analysis also points to the psychological implications of sustained visibility. Continuous audience scrutiny creates an environment where masculinity is never fully secured. Approval must be renewed through consistent engagement and content production. The expectation of constant presence generates pressure to remain relevant, stylish, and responsive. This condition produces a form of ongoing self-surveillance in which celebrities anticipate audience reaction before content is posted. Masculinity becomes both performance and monitoring. It requires attentiveness not only to personal identity but also to collective perception.

Importantly, platformed manhood intersects with broader socioeconomic realities in Nigeria. The prominence of hustle narratives within digital performances reflects a national context marked by economic aspiration and precarity. The celebration of success, mobility, and brand affiliation resonates with a generation seeking upward movement within constrained conditions. Digital celebrity masculinity thus functions as both inspiration and spectacle. It offers symbolic pathways of achievement while also reinforcing the centrality of material accomplishment as a marker of male worth.

At the same time, the diversity of performances observed in this study suggests that masculine identity in Nigeria is undergoing subtle diversification. Comedic masculinity, aesthetic masculinity, and professional gentlemanly masculinity coexist within the same digital arena. This plurality indicates that young men encounter multiple templates of success and visibility. Although many of these templates remain tied to consumption and status, they expand the range of behaviours through which masculine legitimacy can be expressed.

Taken together, these findings indicate that platformed manhood is defined by continuity and transformation. It retains core elements of hegemonic masculinity, such as authority, economic success, and visibility. Yet it reframes them through aesthetic cultivation, audience interaction, and continuous self-narration. Masculinity becomes labour-intensive, relational, and visually mediated. It is produced through sustained effort rather than assumed through static identity.

In a broader theoretical sense, this study demonstrates that digital platforms must be understood as active participants in gender formation. They are not neutral containers of self-expression. They shape incentives, reward structures, and visibility patterns that influence how masculinity is articulated. Platformed manhood, therefore, represents a convergence of gender performance, economic ambition, cultural aspiration, and technological mediation.

Ultimately, the discussion underscores that being a male celebrity in the age of Instagram involves more than talent or charisma. It entails strategic identity management, aesthetic discipline, emotional negotiation, and commercial alignment. Masculinity becomes an ongoing project sustained through performance and engagement. It is at once empowering and demanding, offering new avenues for influence while subjecting identity to perpetual evaluation. For scholars of gender, media, and African cultural production, this transformation signals the need to reconceptualise masculinity not as a stable category but as a dynamic practice shaped by digital infrastructures and the economies of visibility they sustain.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined platformed manhood as a defining feature of contemporary Nigerian celebrity culture, with particular attention to how male Nollywood figures construct and sustain masculine identity on Instagram. It has been shown that the movement from screen-based stardom to digitally mediated visibility is not simply a technological progression. It represents a re-organisation of masculine authority, value, and recognition within a culture increasingly structured by visibility and engagement.

Through an analysis of Timini Egbuson, Ebuka Obi Uchendu, and Broda Shaggi, the study has demonstrated that platformed masculinity operates through differentiated yet structurally similar strategies. Whether expressed through aspirational aesthetics, refined cultural authority, or comedic resilience, each model depends on sustained self-management, brand alignment, and audience cultivation. Masculinity becomes inseparable from performance, visibility, and commercial positioning.

The research establishes that digital labour is now central to masculine celebrity identity. The work of content production, aesthetic maintenance, audience interaction, and strategic self-disclosure constitutes an ongoing process of identity construction. Authority is no longer secured solely through cinematic roles or industry recognition. It is continuously negotiated through metrics of engagement and public

perception. In this environment, masculine legitimacy must be renewed rather than assumed.

At the same time, the findings indicate that the digital environment intensifies exposure and evaluation. Constant visibility invites continuous scrutiny, requiring celebrities to manage perception with precision. This condition does not eliminate traditional masculine ideals such as success and control. Instead, it reframes them within an economy of attention where influence operates as symbolic capital. The male body, lifestyle, and personal narrative become curated resources through which status is communicated and sustained.

The study also underscores the ambivalence embedded within platformed manhood. Digital platforms create unprecedented opportunities for entrepreneurship, cultural influence, and direct audience engagement. Yet they also bind identity to systems of measurement and comparison. Masculinity becomes tied to performance metrics and public affirmation. The dynamic carries implications not only for celebrities but for broader youth culture, where digital representations of male success circulate as aspirational templates.

By situating these developments within Nigerian socio-cultural realities, the research contributes to scholarship on gender, media, and African popular culture. It demonstrates that masculinity in the digital age must be understood as relational, economically embedded, and technologically mediated. Platformed manhood is neither purely emancipatory nor wholly restrictive. It is a negotiated terrain shaped by ambition, creativity, market forces, and audience participation.

Future research may further explore how sustained digital exposure shapes long-term identity formation, emotional well-being, and professional longevity among male celebrities. It may also consider comparative studies across African contexts to determine whether similar patterns emerge within other entertainment industries. As digital infrastructures continue to evolve, so too will the forms through which masculinity is articulated and legitimised.

In sum, platformed manhood captures a historical moment in which masculine identity is increasingly performed through networks of visibility and value. It reflects the convergence of technology, culture, and labour in contemporary Nigeria, and signals an ongoing transformation in how men inhabit and narrate public life.

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