

EXPLORING THE NIGERIAN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

The Nigerian creative industries have emerged as a powerful tool for sustainable development in recent years. These industries include sectors such as film, music, art, literature, fashion and design. They contribute significantly to the country's economy, job creation and cultural identity. This paper examines cultural and social impacts of creative industries in Nigeria. It discusses their role in generating employment, promoting cultural heritage, fostering innovation and facilitating social inclusion. However, it also highlights the challenges faced by the creative industries such as inadequate copyright protection, piracy, limited access to finance and lack of infrastructure. The paper proffers suggestions for addressing these challenges and outlines a way forward to harness the full potential of the Nigerian creative industries for sustainable development.

Keywords: Exploration, Creative Industries, Sustainable Development and Challenges

Introduction

The Nigerian creative industries have witnessed remarkable growth in recent years contributing significantly to sustainable development in the country. The industry encompassing sectors such as film, music, fashion and visual arts have gained increasing recognition for their significant contributions to the country's economy. According to Ndubuisi (2020) “the Nigerian

film industry popularly known as Nollywood has become the second-largest film industry in the world in terms of production output”. Similarly,” Adeshina and Tukur (2016) noted that, “Nollywood films do not only entertain audiences but also promote social awareness cultural exchange and national unity”. they further stated that “this sector has contributed significantly to employment generation as it provides opportunities for actors, directors,

technicians and other related professions”. According to a report by the United Nation’s Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Nollywood's economic impact is estimated to reach \$7.2 billion by 2020 (UNCTAD 2016). Therefore, Nollywood industry plays a pivotal role in driving sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Similarly, the Nigerian music has also gained global recognition it has also become one of the most influential and profitable creative industries in the country. Artists like Wizkid, Davido and Burna Boy have not only achieved international fame but have also contributed significantly to Nigeria's economy. Mahtani and Shum (2018) “the Afrobeats genre popularized by these artists has attracted millions of fans worldwide and created opportunities for collaboration with international artists”. Thus, “the music industry in Nigeria generates its revenue through music sales, concerts endorsements and licensing deals which in turn contributes to the country's GDP” (Olorunyomi 2019).

Additionally, the textiles and fashion industry in Nigeria have experienced significant growth as seen in the country's diverse cultural costumes and creativity.

Itamunoala (2017) noted that, “Nigerian fashion designers such as Lanre Da Silva Ajayi Tiffany, Amber and Mai Atafo have gained international recognition and have successfully positioned Nigerian fashion on the global stage. Nigeria textile and fashion industries have contributed immensely to sustainable development in local craftsmanship which has created jobs opportunities in the Nigerian-made clothing and accessories”.

The Nigerian literature and art have also played a crucial role in sustainable development. “Nigerian authors like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have achieved global recognition and have contributed to shaping the country's cultural identity. Nigerian literature reflects the nation's history challenges and aspirations creating a platform for dialogue and social change” (Obioma 2018). Similarly, Nigerian art with artists like Bruce Onabrakpeya, Ben Enwonwu, El Anatsui and Njideka Akunyili Crosby have gained international acclaim and have created economic opportunities through art sales and exhibitions (Adepegba and Ademolu 2020).

The Nigerian creative industries consist of film, music, fashion, literature, crafts and art are catalysts for sustainable development in the country. These industries do also contribute to the economic growth of the country and national identity. Their impact is recognized both within Nigeria and internationally.

The Impact of Nigerian Creative Industries in Sustainable Development

The Nigerian creative industries apart from their role in enforcing, they are tools for economic development and sustainability.

Economic Impact

One key aspect of economic impact is job creation. The Nigerian film industry in particular has emerged as one of the largest employers in the country both directly and indirectly. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Nollywood alone employs over one million people (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka and Sampath 2007). This employment generation has not only improved individuals' livelihoods but also contributed to poverty reduction in Nigeria. Furthermore, the Nigerian creative industries have had a positive influence on the country's foreign exchange earnings. Nollywood for

instance has gained international recognition and serves as an export of Nigerian culture. Nigerian films are distributed globally generating revenue through international distribution rights. (Okome and Haynes 2019), added that “This influx of foreign exchange contributes to the overall economic development of the country” . Entrepreneurship and innovation are also prominent outcomes of the Nigerian creative industries. The growth and success of these industries have spurred entrepreneurial activities particularly in sectors like fashion music and film. Individuals have established their own businesses leading to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These businesses in turn contribute to economic growth and foster innovation and creative problem-solving in Nigeria (Amaeshi et al, 2008).

Cultural Influence and Social Development

Nigeria's creative industries particularly Nollywood which is the second-largest film industry globally have showcased the nation's rich cultural heritage and diversity (UNCTAD 2018). Nigerian artists, musicians, filmmakers and writers draw inspiration from their cultural heritage

incorporating traditional elements into their work. This helps in preserving and promoting Nigeria's diverse cultural practices, languages and customs. By doing so these industries contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and foster a sense of pride and heritage among Nigerians. Nigerian creative industries act as powerful tools for social change and activism. Artists and filmmakers in Nigeria often tackle social issues such as corruption gender inequality and human rights through their work. From movies addressing social injustices to musicians using their lyrics to advocate for change these industries have the potential to raise awareness and drive social progress.

Innovation and the Adoption of Technology

Innovation and technology have become increasingly important in the growth and development of Nigerian creative industries for sustainable development. One area where innovation and technology have played a significant role is in the Nigerian film industry also known as Nollywood. With the advent of digital cameras and affordable filmmaking equipment, Nollywood filmmakers have been able to produce high-quality films at lower costs (Okome and

Haynes, [2019](#)). This technological advancement has not only improved the production value of Nigerian films but also increased their marketability both domestically and internationally contributing to the sustainability of the industry. Another example of innovation and technology in Nigerian creative industries is the use of digital distribution platforms. Onuzulike and Sobola, ([2019](#)) stated that, "Online streaming platforms such as iROKOfv and Netflix have provided Nigerian filmmakers with a global audience and revenue streams" . This technological advancement has opened up new avenues for revenue internally generated revenue (IGR). Furthermore, technology has played a pivotal role in transforming the fashion industry in Nigeria. According to Ibem and Arayela ([2021](#)) "Social media platforms like Instagram have allowed Nigerian fashion designers to showcase their work to a broader audience increasing their visibility and creating new business opportunities". Additionally the use of e-commerce platforms has facilitated the growth of online retail enabling Nigerian fashion brands to reach customers internationally and further contribute to the sustainable development of the industry.

The integration of innovation and technology in Nigerian creative industries has not only enhanced their economic impact but also fostered sustainable practices. For instance digital platforms and mobile applications have facilitated the promotion of sustainable fashion practices such as upcycling eco-friendly materials and ethical sourcing (Oyefeso, 2019). This integration of technology and sustainability efforts has enabled the creative industries to contribute to Nigeria's sustainable development goals.

Social Inclusion and Community Development

Social inclusion and community development have become integral aspects of the Nigerian creative industries fostering sustainable development through their inclusive practices and community engagement. “Nigerian creative industries such as music and art have played a significant role in promoting social inclusion by providing platforms for diverse voices and narratives. For instance the music industry has seen the rise of genres like Afrobeats which blend traditional Nigerian sounds with contemporary influences allowing different cultural backgrounds to be celebrated and embraced” (Giuffre, 2018). This inclusivity

helps to foster a sense of unity and social cohesion within Nigerian society contributing to sustainable development by promoting cultural diversity and social integration.

According to Adeagbo (2019) “The Nigerian creative industries have been actively involved in community development which address social issues and promote positive change. For example, the visual arts sector has seen the emergence of artists using their work to raise awareness about environmental degradation gender inequality and other social challenges”.

These creatives artistic performance among their communities stimulate have discussions for social justice which has contributed to the sustainable development of Nigerian society. Furthermore, the Nigerian creative industries have been instrumental in the creation employment opportunities that have gone a long way in stimulating economic growth within local communities. For instance the Nollywood film industry has provided employment to thousands of actors directors and technicians directly impacting the livelihoods of individuals and their communities (Okome and Haynes, 2019). This economic empowerment helps to reduce poverty improve living standards and

enhance the overall well-being of communities contributing to sustainable development goals.

The Nigerian creative industries have actively participated in community-based projects that promote skills development, education and cultural preservation. Organizations such as the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) have implemented programs that aim to train and empower local artisans traditional dancers and musicians enabling them to preserve their cultural heritage and generate income from their crafts (Nwankwo, 2019). These initiatives not only contribute to the preservation of Nigerian cultural traditions but also enhance the social and economic well-being of local communities promoting sustainable development.

The creative industries in Nigeria are very important for helping young people feel included and part of their community. This is especially true when it comes to programs that help artists learn new skills, get support from mentors, and find jobs. These kinds of initiatives can be really helpful for young people who want to grow as individuals while also giving back to their communities. Overall, the goal is to empower young artists

so they can make a positive impact on society.

Challenges Facing the Nigerian Creative Industries

Despite the significant contributions of the Nigerian creative industries challenges such as limited infrastructure, copyright and intellectual property, Funding Constraints and Skills and Capacity Building hinder their growth and sustainability.

Limited Infrastructure

There aren't enough modern production facilities, art studios and exhibition spaces for artists and creatives to use (Oloyede, 2020). Because of this, it's hard for them to show off their work and make money from it, which makes it difficult for them to survive financially. Basically, if there isn't enough good places or equipment for artists to work with, they can't do their job properly and might struggle to make a living.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Issues

Copyright infringement and the lack of protection for intellectual property can harm creativity and innovation in Nigeria's creative industries (Esimaje 2017). This means that people who create things like music, art, or writing might not be able to make money from their work if others are stealing it or

using it without permission. This can make it harder for these creators to keep making new things because they aren't being rewarded for their hard work.

The problem is made worse by the fact that there aren't strong laws in place to protect these creators' rights, so they're more likely to be taken advantage of by other people who want to profit from their work without giving them credit or compensation. This makes it less attractive for investors to support creative projects in Nigeria, which could slow down growth in this industry.

Financial Limitations

One of the obstacles encountered by innovative individuals in Nigeria is a dearth of financial resources (Toluwalase, 2019). Financial institutions and banks often view investing in creative ventures as excessively perilous, leading to a lack of assistance for artists and entrepreneurs. Consequently, these industries struggle to prosper and devise lucrative strategies.

Skills and Capacity Building

There is a need for targeted training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and professionalism of Nigerian creatives (Omololu 2018). Many artists lack the necessary business acumen or perception of marketing skills and knowledge of

intellectual property rights limiting their ability to effectively navigate and thrive within the industry.

The Way Forward: Strategies for Sustainable Development

To address the challenges faced by the Nigerian creative industries, it is essential to take a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, private sector, civil society, and international organizations. The following are some suggestions for addressing these challenges to harness the full potential of the creative industries for sustainable development.

Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development refers to investing in the creation of various facilities that support creativity, such as production studios, art galleries, and cultural centers. These facilities are important for creative productivity because they provide them with the necessary tools and resources to showcase their talents. When these infrastructures and equipment are established, it can attract creative individuals from different fields to want to develop their areas of specialty. Therefore, it is essential for governments and relevant stakeholders to invest in infrastructure.

Legal and Regulatory Reforms

Legal and regulatory reforms and policies that aim at improving the protection of intellectual property rights. Sustaining creativity and innovation is important for economic growth because it leads to new products or services that can benefit society. However, without adequate protection for intellectual property rights, creators may not have an incentive to invest their time and resources into developing new ideas.

As piracy is a major problem in today's digital age where it is easy to share content online without permission. Therefore, legal frameworks must include enforcement mechanisms which can help combat piracy; to eliminate people from steal other people's creative works with little consequence.

Access to Finance

Financial institutions should be encouraged to develop specialized funding schemes and investment opportunities tailored to the needs of the creative industries (Adeniji, 2020). This will provide artists and entrepreneurs with the necessary capital to develop and grow their businesses sustainably.

Conclusion

The Nigerian creative industries have emerged as a catalyst for sustainable development as they have contributed to its economic growth, cultural preservation, innovation and social inclusion. However, challenges such as copyright infringement, piracy, limited infrastructure and financial constraints need to be addressed to ensure their long-term sustainability. By implementing appropriate policies and fostering collaboration among stakeholders Nigeria can harness the full potential of its creative industries and further drive to sustainable development.

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