The Nexus between Broadcasting and Popular Culture: A Taxonomical Discourse

Edith U. Ohaja
Department of Mass Communication
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Correspondence to: edithohaja@gmail.com
ORCID iD - https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9430-5478

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between broadcasting and popular culture in a taxonomicalmanner. Based on library research and personal observation, it assembled evidence of the bidirectional nexus between broadcasting and such classifications of popular culture as dramatic entertainment, reading culture, music/dance, fashion and celebrity obsession in Nigeria and beyond. The evidence gathered showed, inter alia, that broadcasting, particularly TV, has contributed to the promotion of reading culture, greater approval of careers in the performing arts for their children by parents and themainstreaming of homosexuality and other progressive love and family arrangements. On the other hand, the crusading by activist groups backed by powerful political and economic forces have caused an explosion in issues like transgenderism, leading to more trans visibility in broadcast programming. The paper recommends that broadcast stations should be more conscientious in their programming and confer celebrity status on laudable, more deserving achievers to ensure that their influence on popular culture is more uplifting than debasing. The foregoing, the paper suggests, will help them effectively function as agenda setters and accelerators of moral reorientation and societal development.

Key words: Nexus, Broadcasting, Culture, Popular Culture, Influence

Introduction

In a bid to curb the menace of get-rich-quick mentality that seems to have captured the youths in Nigeria and has resulted in many arrests for ritual killing, the federal government on February 21, 2022, charged Nollywood (the national film industry) to stop producing movieson the subject(Oyero, 2022). The cinema never attained great popularity in Nigeria because the theatres were few and located largely in big cities; thus most Nollywood productions are watched through television (Mgbejume, 1989; Ohaja, 2008) on the various Africa Magic and Iroko TV channels as well as other public and privately-owned TV stations.

The government directive was predicated on the views of many that the ritual killings seen by the youths in the movies on TV are influencing them to engage in the same (Oyero, 2022). That is to say that many people see broadcasting as a moulder of popular culture. But is this influence unidirectional or does existing popular culture influence broadcast contents too?

Broadcasting, itself, is an essential aspect of mass communication. Like its print variant, broadcast contents are often designed and packaged to evoke certain meanings, transmit viewpoints and depict ideas emanating from the source's intentions and motives. Generally, the relationship between broadcasting and popular culture could be conceived as cyclical and mutual. This is because while broadcasting fare tends to influence culture,

the operations of broadcasting organisations and personnel are ultimately shaped by the prevailing circumstances in the society within which they function (McQuail, 2010).

Therefore, this paperlooked at the influence of broadcasting on popular culture in a taxonomical fashion with particular attention to dramatic entertainment, reading culture, music/dance, fashion and celebrity obsession. It also identified instances where broadcasting has been shaped by popular culture.Evidence of this bidirectional nexus between broadcasting and popular culture was assembled from Nigeria and beyond, particularly from the United States, because as pointed out in the section thatexplains the concept of popular culture, much of the popular culture in Nigeria and the rest of the globalSouth emanates from the Western world, particularly the United States, and trends that begin there are eventually embraced here.The aim of the study is to deepen understanding of the nexus between broadcasting and popular culture to help in exploiting the apparent symbiotic relationship between the two for societal good.

For this researcher, who has been fascinated by the broadcast media (particularly television) for decades, ample illustrations for the ideas discussed in this paper were got from observation viapersonal experience of TV viewing and from literature obtained in the course of library research.

Conceptual Elucidations

Broadcasting: The term, 'broadcasting' has attracted numerous definitions, depending on the philosophical orientation and professional leaning of those interpreting the concept (Agbanu & Nwammuo, 2009). Perhaps one easy way to understand broadcasting will be to trace the origin of the concept to the 20th century when the word literally meant to spread far and wide. The term originally referred to a farming technique of sowing seeds by scattering them over a wide field as opposed to narrowcasting (Asemah & Asogwa, 2014). The term was later used by radio engineers from the United States to describe the analoguetechnology of disseminating radio signals to distant receivers without the use of wires. This, therefore, explains why many scholars generally describe broadcasting as the process of sending or spreading messages to a far and wide audience through radio waves (Nwanwene, 2017; Owuamalam, 2008).

Owuamalam (2008, p. 1) explains that broadcasting "involves the generation of electromagnetic signals, which are transmitted through space by means of radio frequencies and are received … by a mass audience." He adds that the electromagnetic signals are converted at the receiving end to aural messages for radio and audio-visual messages for television. Thus, radio and television are the two media used for broadcasting.

The products of broadcasting are called broadcast programmes, and all broadcast productions are meant to meet certain goals which could be the broadcast station's general purpose, a particular programme's objective and/or audience interest.

To draw a curtain on the definitions of broadcasting, it will be apt to offer the following points in summary as advanced by Agbanu and Nwammuo (2009, p. 19). **For a transmission to be classified under broadcasting:**

1. It must emanate from an audio or audio-visual station and (be) directed at an audience.
2. The audience must be heterogeneous and dispersed.
3. The transmitted signal must reach the target audience simultaneously.
4. The signals must be transmitted through the air by means of electromagnetic waves.
5. The conventional terminal point must be the electronic media (radio and television sets).

In addition to the points adduced by Agbanu and Nwammuo (2009) outlined above, there are **other features of broadcasting** which may not necessarily be peculiar to it in this age of the internet. In other words, while these features may apply to other forms of mass communication and communication via the internet, they are relevant to our discussion in so far as they are observable in broadcasting and will help elucidate some of our discussions in this paper. Some of these features as gleaned from Aghadiegwu (2013) include the following:

1. Immediacy/Instantaneity: During the last century, a Canadian scholar, Marshall McLuhan, espoused the global village concept in which he conceived that the world would be networked by emerging technologies in a manner similar to the typical village in which the fire burning on one side is immediately seen on the other side(McLuhan & Powers,1989). Observably, this prediction has been partly realised through the broadcasting process. In today's world, it is not unusual for people to watch the live broadcast of significant happenings around the world. For example, the terrorist bombing of the New York twin towers on November 11, 2001 (9/11 attack) was shown live on television globally. Sports contests such as football tournaments are watched by football lovers simultaneously as the matches are being played. All these happenings unfolding before our eyes are reflections of the immediacy/instantaneity element introduced into the communication process by broadcasting.

2. Ubiquity/Pervasiveness: This refers to the capacity of broadcast signals to cover a wide range of areas at the same time, transcending physical barriers that would ordinarily stand against the seamless reception of messages by the audience. Broadcast messages are often so pervasive that they can reach people from diverse social, economic, cultural, educational and religious backgrounds.

3. Accommodativeness/Voraciousness: Broadcasting has the unique capacity to accommodate a large volume of contents which are passed down to the audience in the news, talk shows, discussions, interviews, commentaries and documentaries, among other forms.

4. Adaptability/Flexibility: This refers to the endless ability of broadcasting to immediately respond to the changing dynamics in the social milieu within which a broadcast station is situated. Often, there arises the need for adjustments in broadcast programming and scheduling. This could be in response to government policies, ownership dictates or audience interests. When such demands arise, broadcast stations can meet them without significant disruptions in their fundamental operations.

5. Audience Centredness: With respect to external influences on broadcast programming and operations, audience interests are often given prime attention. In other words, the processes and products of broadcasting are targeted at the audience – the final consumers of broadcast contents. Therefore, broadcasters tend to take the socio-cultural background of members of the audience into consideration and reflect their experiences, expectations and perceptions in programmes aired. Neglecting these can result in poor ratings and commercial loss.

Broadcast productions, like other media fare, are meant to serve a wide range of functions ranging from information to education and entertainment. Other functions include interpretation and co-ordination of facts, preservation and transmission of social heritage (culture), status conferment and opinion moulding (Agbanu, 2013).

Other scholars have identified six main functions of broadcasting as provision of news (information), serving as fora for airing of different views (opinion function), provision of new knowledge and skills (education), manipulating the audience through a perverted

use of persuasive devices (propaganda), creating awareness of goods and services (commercial function) and relaxing/exciting the audience through music, comedy, drama and the like (entertainment) [NOU, 2006].

Popular Culture: To properly grasp the meaning of popular culture, it is important to start with the primary word, 'culture,' before adding the qualifying word, 'popular.'
According to an article by Stephen B. Thomas in encyclopedia.com,

> The classic definition of culture, written in 1871 by Edward Burnett Tylor, states that 'culture … is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Thomas, n.d.).

Tylor was the English scholar who founded the discipline known as cultural anthropology. His definition shows that culture embodies various aspects of people's way of life learned in interaction with other members of society.
Furthermore, the exposition on the definition of culture "as the totality of some phenomena which include acts, objects, ideas and sentiments of a people" by Usua (2014, p. 184) sheds more light on the broad meaning of the term. Usua explains that:

> The act has to do with the pattern of behaviour, the objects … include tools made and used by the people, ideas include beliefs and knowledge of the people, while sentiments include attitudes and shared values of the people. Being the people's shared identity, it implies that their very existence is expressed and made meaningful through culture (2014, p. 184).

The foregoing can help one distinguish one culture from another through such acts as modes of greeting, prayer, marriage, child rearing and occupations; objects such as food, clothes, houses and vehicles; ideas embodied in the people's language, history, folklore, literature and symbols; sentiments in their preferences, including norms, morality, veneration of gods and idolising of heroes (past and present).
Whatever definition one may adopt, the consensus among scholars is that culture is reflective of the general pattern adopted by individuals or groups in their daily activities and in their relations with other members of society. This pattern is handed down from one generation to the next, except it is disrupted by external influences. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a literary depiction of such a disruption in ritual observances in an Igbo community occasioned by the colonisation of Nigeria by Britain and the accompanying introduction of Christianity (Achebe, 1958).
Looking at the word 'popular' tells us that popular culture (also called pop culture) is the culture admired and adopted by most people. A look at specific definitions corroborates this view. For instance, Christopher (2020), citing McGaha (2015), sees popular culture as "a set of practices, beliefs, and objects that are dominant or prevalent in a society at a given point in time and that tend to influence anindividual's attitudes towards certain topics." It covers the feelings and activities of members of society that emanate from their constant interaction with these dominant objects, and it is primarily driven by mass appeal (McGaha, 2015).
Similarly, African cultural theorist, Dele Jegede, defines popular culture as the contemporary cultural expression of the masses in contrast to both modern elitist and traditional tribal culture(Jegede, 1987). The term has also been defined as a set of practices, beliefs and objects that embody the most broadly shared meanings of a social system, including media objects, entertainment and leisure, fashiontrends and linguistic conventions (Kidd, 2017). Popular culture categories are replete in entertainment (such as film, music and books), sports, fashion, politics and slangs, among others.

Note the distinction between popular culture and high culture that is decipherable in Jegede's definition above. The idea is that popular culture is the 'inferior' aspect of culture that does not meet the benchmark to qualify as high culture. Three distinguishing marks between high culture and pop culture are that:

- The products of high culture consume huge investment of time, money and effort to create each one and are, therefore, rare and very expensive whereas pop culture products are mass produced, readily accessible and affordable.
- The products of high culture require refined tastes to appreciate them which ordinary people with limited education and exposure lack. On the other hand, such people can easily understand and enjoy pop culture products.
- The products of high culture are alien to ordinary people while they find products of pop culture relatable.

To illustrate the inferiority of pop culture products, Ohaja's paper on the Nigerian film industry is instructive. In that article, she, citing Mgbejume (1989), points to the British Colonial Office's description of its mission in the colonies in 1948, "as the procurement of films, which according to it, could 'draw a large number of unsophisticated African folks who will laugh at the most inconsequential things'" (Ohaja, 2008, p. 4). The Office, thereafter, declared its intention to prioritise quantity over quality.

Consider also the differences between an opera and a pop concert. Firstly, much more goes into enacting the former than the latter – the elaborate scenery, costumes, a large number of specially trained musicians in the orchestra, the peculiar voice pitch needed by the cast to deliver their parts, etc. As a result, average people can hardly afford opera tickets. On the other hand, a pop concert can be held in an open field with a dais, a four-man band, an amp, speakers and stage lights. Secondly, many ordinary people may be lost or bored if they went to watch an opera but they will probably know the songs in a pop concert and can sing along. Thirdly, operas deal with issues in a more surreal and complex manner while pop songs deal with everyday issues like love, hope, rejection and despair in a plain manner that most people can identify with. Fourthly, people need to dress formally to attend the opera while they dress casually for concerts and they can not waltz in an out of the opera as they canat a pop concert.

With regard to the difference between folk culture and pop culture, the former "refers to the products and practices of relatively homogeneous and isolated small-scale social groups living in rural locations. Thus, folk culture is often associated with tradition, historical continuity, sense of place, and belonging" (Revill, 2014), while pop culture has a much wider application, traversing ethnic, racial, geographical, religious and other boundaries.

Popular culture, the aspect of culture we are focusing on in this paper, emerged as a result of industrialisation and urbanisation in countries around the world (Storey, 2013). Industrialisation led to the mass production of goods for the teeming numbers in the cities and advertising helped to promote these goods for commercial success. And because industrialisation began in the Western world, a significant portion of popular culture is the culture of the West, notably America.

With Western broadcast media dominating the airwaves for decades and Western news agencies focusing less on the developing world except in cases of wars, epidemics and natural disasters, the culture of the West has been sold to the rest of the world and has undermined local cultures. This situation has attracted a pushback in the creation of national and sub-regional news agencies by developing countries and the setting up of policies, laws and regulatory bodies to ensure the protection of their own cultures (Kayode, Jimoh&Adeniran, 2015).

However, pop culture is not limited to imported products, ideas and practices. Many of its manifestations are home-grown as some of the examples in this study show.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws from the propositions of two related theories. First is the Cultural Norms Theory propounded by Melvin L. DeFleur in his book, *Theories ofMass Communication* (DeFleur, 1966). The theorymaintains that the mass media, particularly radio, television and film, can strongly determine societal norms or standards (what is regarded as acceptable behaviour in the society). The theory further posits that television and other media tend to selectively present and stresssome current notions, valuesand behaviours with the intention of reinforcing or changing them (Wogu, 2008).

Second is Albert Bandura'sModelling or Social LearningTheory.This theory postulates that people learn new attitudes and practices by observing and imitating others. Banduraadds that observation goes beyond seeing actions to hearing verbal explanations (Bandura, 1977).Thus when people listen to and watchactorsand other starsonradio and TV shows, for example, they tend to identify with them, begin to imitate them and get further motivated to continue on those paths if they find them rewarding. Although Bandura renamed this theory Social Cognitive Theory in 1986 to take into account the fact that external influences cannot solely change people's behaviour and values but that they exercise cognitive control to a certain extent, such human agency does not invalidate his thesis that people do copy what they are exposed to in the media, particularly broadcast media.

Therefore, the postulations of the Cultural Norms Theory and the Social Learning Theory are quite relevant to this study whichexamines how the content of broadcast programmes often permeates and shapes popular culture and how popular culture sometimes defines broadcast programming.

Broadcasting and Popular Culture: The Nexus

The relationship between broadcasting and popular culture seems to be a cyclical one. This is because, as stated in the Introduction, broadcasting can influence the opinions, attitudes and behaviours of members of society. Yet, the processes and products of broadcasting reflect the colouration and social structure of the larger society where broadcast stations are located (Rodman, 2012; McQuail, 2010). No doubt, the mass media (particularly broadcast media) represent the most notable platforms for creating, delivering and sustaining popular culture.

As Makamani (2009) notes:

> Television and film are part of our everyday life. We mean, our life styles have increasingly been associated with the television and film in one way or the other. This makes film and television part of our popular culture. Your hairstyle, dress code, speech, behaviour, eating habits, family life style and understanding of the world are constantly reflected and influenced by radio, television and the film industry.

Having seen the assertions that the media, in this case broadcast media, influence and reflect popular culture, the rest of this paper will be devoted to demonstrating this influence in specific spheres of popular culture and pointing out how the influence appears to be mutual.

Broadcasting and Dramatic Entertainment: Broadcasting has affected the usual way people enjoy the entertainment offered by movies. Some of the means through which people get to know about the production and release of new movies, when such movies are available at different cinemas and the cost of tickets for them are through commercials on radio and TV stations. Interest in new movies are whipped up through

trailers shown on TV and interviews on radio and TV shows by the stars, producers and directors in the course of promoting the pictures.

More importantly, TV adaptations of movies bring a lot of big budget pictures to the small screen so that people can enjoy them in the comfort of their homes. The concept of movie nights where friends and family gather to watch some pictures of choice at home with popcorn has thus developed. Television not only brings foreign movies into homes. Africa Magic and other TV stations help to keep Nollywood alive and entertain millions with its products beyond what direct marketing of DVDs can do.

Furthermore, TV programmes like sit-coms, soap operas and reality TV shows keep many glued to the TV screens in their homes for hours. Reality TV is often anything but real because so much conflict and suspense are packed into the episodes as shows like E! Network's *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, Bravo's *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, ABC's *The Bachelor*and Showmax's *Real Housewives of Lagos*have shown. And because of their incredible success (Allan, 2018), there are reality TV shows on almost everything, including weight loss bootcamps, survivalist adventures and treasure hunting. As is the practice in TV programming, popular shows are aired on many networks beyond their founding stations, thus ensuring a massive reach that potentially influences the culture.

From the stars of these ubiquitous TV shows have come awareness of issues like animal protection, lifestyle trends like low-carbohydrate dieting among many other pop culture manifestations. One other way these TV shows, particularly reality TV, have influenced pop culture is the shrinking of personal space and privacy. The exhibitionism encouraged in these shows and the attendant fame have blurred the lines between what is private and what is public for many. However, while some may be willing to be in the cast of these shows and divulge personal matters on the airwaves, others are concerned about the privacy breaches by shows in the style of *Candid Camera* that played pranks on unsuspecting people for some American networks for decades (Wyatt &Bunton, 2012).

Beyond issues of privacy,many of these shows push the boundaries of decency in speech, dressing and sex, among other areas. Nwabueze (2014, p. 157) identifies as one of the fears expressed by developing countries concerning the possible effects of direct broadcast satellite (DBS) television transmission, the "Fear of corruption of culture, for example, in material that offends traditions, damages values, and seduces the population with alien culture." In confirmation of this fear, TV shows like E! Network's *I am Cait*, which focuses on a transgender woman, Caitlyn Jenner (formerly William Bruce Jenner), are presenting changing one's gender as an act of courage, thus making transgendering attractive. A CBN News article reports that there has been a "4,000% explosion in kids identifying as transgender" in the United States and that doctors are performing "double mastectomies on healthy teen girls" (Aaron, 2018).

In spite of these staggering statistics, a public health expert at Brown University, Lisa Littman, who wrote a paper describing this trend as "rapid onset gender dysphoria" which may be "socially contagious," faced so much media backlash. The backlash extended to the journal which published the paper and the university with the result that both essentially distanced themselves from the article (cited in Wadman, 2018). This gives a glimpse into the power currently wielded by the transgender movement such that suggesting little kids who say they feel they are the opposite gender may be reacting to societal trends and do not need immediate treatment with puberty blockers,'gender-affirming'hormones and surgery (Shrier, 2020) results in pressure to recant. In this case, it appears that the media (including television) are conforming to the dictates of asociocultural movement withpowerful political and economicbacking and thus helping to push its acceptance by ordinary people.

Similarly, the media are contributing to a redefinition of what is acceptable as love and family. In this regard, fictional and reality TV shows promoting polyamory and open

relationships are increasing, thus lessening ordinary people's objections to what is normally seen as cheating and promiscuity. Examples of such shows are Showmax's*Polyamory: Married and Dating* – reality TV – and Audience Network's *You Me Her* – fictional drama (Minka, 2020). In the same vein, TV shows like ABC's *Modern Family* have broadened the concept of family from the traditional heterosexual notion to include same sex couples and their children (often adopted or born through a surrogate for gay couples and artificial insemination for lesbian couples).

Furthermore, the idea that an unmarried couple can start a family is all over television and is no longer viewed as unacceptable in popular culture. In their article comparing the role of cohabitation in family formation in the United States and 16 other industrialised countries, Heuveline and Timberlake (2004) note that in the Western world, children are born to cohabiting parents almost as frequently as to married parents. They further observe that many married couples go through cohabitation and have children before tying the nuptial knot. This trend is also observable in Nigeria. So at this point, it appears the TV shows are essentially reflecting the pop culture practice in this respect, which practice may have spread through media portrayals of sexual permissiveness and non-traditional living arrangementsfrom several decades ago (Ward, 2002).

Whereas scholars like Nwabueze (2014) point to the concern of developing countries that TV brings in corrupting content from the developed world, national shows like *Big Brother Naija*(*BBNaija*) have also been blamed for doing just that: debasing public morals (Ngbokai, 2020; Onebunne&Okeke, 2020). TV shows are also accused of dumbing down their content, like Western movies did in their early days and movies from developing countries (such as Nollywood productions which are regularly aired on TV) do, leading critics to complain of their simplistic plots, undue idealism and stock characters (Ohaja, 2008).

In recent years too, broadcast programmes that activistssee asworsening social justice issueshave been discontinued. Examples can be found in the cancellation of popular cop shows,includinganimations,on some American TV stations on the accusation that they peddle police brutality as entertainment.Three of the affected shows are police reality TV shows:*Cops*, *Live P.D.* and *Body Cams*(Cop shows cancelled, 2020).These are examples of pop culture influencing broadcast content.

Broadcasting and Reading Culture: The culture of reading fiction and non-fiction has also been influenced by broadcasting. Generally, books serve a wide range of purposes, including education and entertainment. Broadcast programmes have given coverage to literary societies and book clubs, even hosting the latter, like Channels Book Club on Nigeria's Channels TV. The book clubs discuss new and old titles, do book reviews in which verdicts are passed on the quality of published materials. Expectedly, such regular reviews stress the need for the wider audience to grab copies of such books for their personal reading. Such consistent attention could help to promote the habit of book reading.

Broadcast programmes not only make reading published work fashionable but also showcase the works of established and emerging authors, thereby increasing their social visibility and portraying them as individuals worthy of celebration and commendation. The most famous example of this is, perhaps, *Oprah's Book Club*, a part of the Oprah Winfrey Show, which since its inception in 1996 has recommended scores of books and shot their authors into the limelight and commercial success. Ms. Winfrey's book club is credited with igniting a reading passion among ordinary people and empowering female writers who delved into issues of equality, conflict and self-discovery, often with the same intimate and emotion-laden style that her talk show was noted for. She is also credited with arming ordinary people with the confidence to read and assess books, thus

giving them a voice that ensures that books cover their struggles, hopes and concerns. As a result, while some accuse her of debasing literary tastes, others praise her for promoting reading culture and liberalising the book market (Farr, 2004).

Broadcasting and Music/Dance: Music is a basic offering of broadcast stations and dance often accompanies it on television. Radio brings music to the audience for most of the day. In this regard, FM radio stations, which offer essentially music programmes via stereo transmission that reduces noise and improves sound quality, have made tremendous contributions. They have endeared many listeners to music; improved their knowledge of musical genres, artistes (singers, instrumentalists, producers, DJs), songs, record labels and streaming services. Radio has also fostered the emergence of national music stars and exposed national and international audiences to local or regional music (Lule, 2013). In the wake of this has come the popularising of unconventional lifestyles like having one or more *baby mamas* before marriage by young men and the desire to make tons of money to splash on women and live large. This negative influence will be elucidated further in the next portion of this segment under the discussion of music on television.

Like radio, television has contributed to improved knowledge and perception of music through dedicated music channels like MTV and reality TV talent shows that have captivated millions around the world and birthed many music stars. Shows like *American Idol* have produced mega stars like Carrie Underwood (winner of the 4th Season) and Jennifer Hudson (7th place winner in the 3rd Season). Ms. Hudson, for instance, has blossomed as a singer, actress and role model for women with weight issues through her endorsement deal with Weight Watchers and her personal successful weight loss. Britain's *X Factor* has produced stars like Alexandra Burke (winner of Series 5) and Leona Lewis (winner of Series 3). These winners have recorded chart-topping musical success, branched out into other performing arts and won numerous awards since participating in these music shows, thus becoming pop culture idols with the attendant appearance fees and merchandising of their names and images in huge endorsement deals and oneveryday goods like mugs, posters and T-shirts.

The music talent shows mentioned above developed West African and Nigerian versions in time and there were also some home-grown ones, all with similar effect. Shows like *West African Idols, MTN Project Fame West Africa, The Voice Nigeria*and *GloX Factor* have given rise to stars like Omawunmi, Iyanya, ChidinmaEkile, Praiz, Chike and DJ Switch. The huge prizes and opportunities offered by these shows have positively influenced the acceptance of musical careers for their children by families who hitherto associated such careers with immorality and unstable success. Other careers whose perceptions have been positively influenced in recent times through TV shows, particularly in the reality genre, include dancing, modelling and comedy (Wahab, 2019).

Dance is a common accompaniment of music and an element of culture that has been elevated by television. Reality TV shows on dancing such as the *Maltina Dance All* competition have produced stars like Celine U.Opuwari, a graduate of Mass Communication from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who danced to victory with her family in the 2008 edition of the contest. Ms. Opuwari is currently the Head of Presentation at the Society for Performing Arts in Nigeria (SPAN), a regular judge at national dance contests and a sought-after performer. As noted above, a few decades ago, parents were not so eager to see their children take up careers in dancing but public perception of the craft is changing with broadcast exposure.

Music videos aired on TV have also helped to promote dancers and wildly popular dancing styles. Two of such dancing styles are *azonto* from Ghanaian musicians, Sarkodie and E.L.'s hit song, "U Go Kill Me" in 2011 and *kukere* from Nigeria's Iyanya

via his 2012 chart-topping song of the same title (Kariisa, 2013). The video of another Nigerian singer, Davido's 2013 hit-song, "Skelewu," also generated a dance craze named after the song. While these dance crazes often combine elements of known traditional dances from the singers' backgrounds, like Iyanya's*kukere,* based on a dance among his AkwaIbom people, they tend to face charges of lewdness, like the imported dance style, *twerking,* does(Abimbola, 2018).

Music videos by famous artistes in Nigeria and elsewhere are also characterised by obscene display of wealth, seduction, nudity and objectification of women as sexual objects. In other words, they breed unrealistic aspirations of affluence in viewers and perpetuate negative stereotypes about women as other aspects of television entertainment do (Ndolo, 2011).

In their book, *It's Not Only Rock and Roll,* Americanprofessors, Donald Roberts and Peter Christenson, provide ample evidence of the influence of music on youth, stating that music stars inspire how they act and dress (Cited in O'Toole, 1997). Looking at the proliferation of internet fraud, termed *yahoo yahoo*in street parlance, BBC News Pidgin wonders if the glorification of the vice in popular music about a decade ago could have contributed to people not seeing it as a crime given that celebrities influence how people think and behave(*Yahoo yahoo and di Nigeria musicians wey celebrate internet fraud,* 2018).A more immediate question would be on the influence of the thoughtless exhibition of wealth in Nigerian music videos in the midst of widespread poverty on young people's decision to engage in internet fraudand other rampant crimes like kidnapping.

Broadcasting and Fashion: Fashion may generally refer to a popular or trending style of clothes, hair or the peculiar way things get done in a society. It also denotes certain new ways of behaviour or the manner of carrying out certain activities. In thisstudy,we focus on fashion in the sense of trending clothes and accessories.A constant feature of fashion is its ever-changing form (Zareen, Ali &Shafi, 2014). Considering that popular culture is usually mass produced and spread by the mass media, especially through broadcasting (McDermott &Albretcht, 2002), modern broadcasting tends to create platforms for the exhibition of designer clothes and accessories –modelling and runway shows – which have the capacity to influence how members of society perceive and adopt various types of fashion.

American popular fashion show, Bravo TV's *Project Runway*, which began airing in 2004 is a reality TV competition seriesamong relatively unknown designers that helps to brush up their skills and launch them into the limelight. In an article on the show, *Fashionista* identifies some of its influence on the American public's awareness and involvement in fashion. According to the online magazine, *Project Runway* "inspired thousands of kids to go to design school."It also contributed to the mainstreaming of fashion and homosexuality in America. The first it did by creating awareness of New York Fashion Week and the work of designers in ordinary people outside the fashion industry and coastal elites. The second was accomplished through the fact that it had a "cast made up of a large percentage of openly gay people" (10 Ways Project Runway Changed the Fashion Industry, 2012).

Inspired by *Project Runway,* other countries developed similar shows. Nigeria, for instance, came up with its own reality TV fashion show to groom local designers and give them a shot at fame. An article in the *Vanguard* explains that in addition to popularising local designers in Nigeria, the showhas exposed them to an international audience and market by running international editions of the show (in fashion centres like Paris, Milan and New York) which winners of the Nigerian edition are sponsored to participate in. The article identifies some past winners and participants of the show as

ZiziCardow, DeolaSagoe, Mudi Africa, Frank Oshodi, Modela Couture, Nobel Afrique and KeseJabare (Nigeria Fashion Show Reality Series – The Unveiling, 2018).

The Nigerian Fashion Show Reality TV Series has also encouraged Nigerians to embrace fashion that depicts the country's local cultures by mandating the contestants to use local fabrics and accessories exclusively in their designs. By making them research into the traditional fashion of their various ethnic groups and apply them in their designs, the programme is showcasing home-grown fashion products and boosting their patronage in Nigeria and beyond.

Television has also been used to popularise clothing designs like 'comrade shirt' (used to describe the unique shirt style of former National Chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress and former governor of Edo State, Adams Oshiomole) and 'Ebuka suit' (which refers to the peculiar suit design worn by popular TV personality and *BBNaija*host, Chukwuebuka Obi-Uchendu).

Broadcasting and Celebrity Obsession: Traditional societies had hero worship as a strong element of their cultures whereby living and dead members of society (plus mythological figures) with admirable qualities and outstanding accomplishments were emulated and venerated in rituals (Hero worship, n.d.). This seems to have been replaced in modern times with an obsession with celebrities largely created and sustained by the media, including broadcast media. Many people, some hitherto unknown, have become celebrities by anchoring or being regular guests on radio and television shows. The terms, On-Air-Personality (OAP) for radio and TV personality, are used to identify such people.

The immediate past White House press secretary, Kayleigh McEnany, first gained visibility as a frequent guest on CNN where she spiritedly defended conservative ideas on the notably liberal news network. She remains in the spotlight currently as a co-host on the Fox News show, *Outnumbered* (McEnany, 2021). As success begets success, McEnany has authored two books since gaining prominence, namely, *The New American Revolution: The Making of a Populist Movement*, published by Simon and Schuster in 2018 and *For Such a Time as This: My Faith Journey through the White House and Beyond*, released by Post Hill Press in 2021. She has thus become a voice for the ideological right in America, garnering millions of followers on social media with almost everything she says or does making news.

In the past, celebrities earned their status by making exceptional contributions to society like McEnany, but with appearance on media sufficient to confer the status and the prevalence of reality TV shows casting ordinary people, celebrities are everywhere. And due to how the media constantly speak of them and glamorise their lives, members of the public, particularly young people, obsess over them, hang on their words and imitate their speech and actions (Uzuegbunam, 2017). For example, MTV's*Cribs*and MTV Base's *Celeb Living*show the palatial homes of celebrities and they get their own reality TV shows that basically have camera crews following them around all day. Erica Nlewedim, who was one of the*BBNaija*housemates in the Lockdown Edition of the programme, now has her own reality TV show on MTV Base, *Inside Life with Erica*. The show portrays "her daily activities with family, friends and how she journeys through life with her acting career" (Bassey, 2021).

The debasement of values the media have been accused of in preceding sections of this paper is also relevant here. What a society celebrates shows its values. In traditional culture, people became heroes due to such feats as victory in contests of strength (wrestlers), exploits in battle (warriors) and prodigious food production (farmers). Now broadcasting gives people the opportunity to spend hours watching someone whose only claim to fame is appearance on an adult TV show, whereas young people who perform brilliantly academically or make useful inventions do not receive sustained media

attention.This skewed status conferment by the media seems to fuel notions like*school na scam¹*, which became common parlanceamong Nigerian youthsafter a hit song, "*Las Las School Na Scam,"was* released in 2019 by singers Gururu and TDY.

Conclusion/Recommendations

This study only looked at certain aspects of popular culture, namely, dramatic entertainment, reading culture, music/dance, fashion and celebrity obsession. It did not explore other aspects of popular culture like the current trend of getting offended over major and minor issues, expressing outrage stormily and whipping up public sentiments against the perceived offender (Ohaja, 2019). This has resulted in what is known as cancel culture in which the offended masses call for the punishment of the perceived offender through loss of job and other privileges. Although cancel culture is largely bred on social media, it affects broadcasting because anchors and guests have lost theirpositions on shows and programmes have been cancelled due to the uproar it generates – another instance of popular culture influencing broadcasting. The connection between broadcasting and cancel culture can be fullyinvestigated in another study.

The influence of broadcasting, particularly activist news and talk show hosts along with their like-minded guests,on politics was not also discussed. It would be worth knowing if and how they have contributed to the hate and division in various countries and how the deep ideological, racial, religiousand political divides in countries of the world have shaped broadcast programming.

Nonetheless, the discourse in this paper has shown that broadcasting influences the emergence and sustenance of popular culture in many respects. Given that it has a massive reach, broadcasting has ample opportunity to promote what can inculcate cherished traditional values such as honesty, diligence and kindnessin citizens of a country like Nigeria. It can also foster development through its popular culture fare.However, it appears to be doing so minimally as itsmost popular shows are not the uplifting or ennobling sort, but the salacious, degrading and frivolous sort exemplified by *BBNaija.*

Undoubtedly, commercial considerations inform the proliferation of programmes that offer little benefit beyond entertainment, but to serve as agenda setters and catalysts for moral reorientation and societal development, broadcast stations need to play more resourceful roles in pushing meaningful programmes and conferring celebrity status on the right kind of achievers. In that way, their influence on popular culture will be more constructive than destructive.

Note:

¹*School na scam*is a PidginEnglish expression that means that going to school is equivalent to being duped, implying that education is useless.

References

10 ways Project Runway changed the fashion industry.(2012).*Fashionista*. Retrieved from fashionista.com/2012/09/10-ways-project-runway-changed-the-fashion-industry

Aaron, C. (2018, September 19). 4,000% explosion in kids identifying as transgender, docs perform double mastectomies on healthy teen girls. Retrieved from https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2018/september/4-000-explosion-in-kids-identifying-as-transgender-docs-perform-double-mastectomies-on-healthy-teen-girls

Abimbola, O. (2018, August 30). Video: Pastor stops wedding party over bridesmaid's twerking. *Punch*. Retrieved from https://punchng.com/video-pastor-stops-wedding-party-over-bridesmaids-twerking/

Achebe, C. (I958). *Things fall apart*. London, England: William Heinemann Ltd.

Agbanu, V. (2013). *Mass communication: Introduction, techniques, issues*. Enugu, Nigeria: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.

Agbanu, V. N.,& Nwammuo, A. N. (2009). *Broadcast media: Writing, programming, production and management*. Enugu, Nigeria: RhyceKerex Publishers.

Aghadiegwu, U. C. (2013). Broadcasting industry in Nigeria: Growth and perspectives. In N. Okoro (Ed.).*Contemporary readings in media and communication studies,* pp. 274-283. Surulere-Lagos, Nigeria: St Benedette Publishers.

Allan, K. (2018, April 4).Reality TV changed the economics of television, and now it's paying for it.*Business Insider*. Retrieved fromhttps://businessinsider.com.au/reality-tv-changed-the-economics-of-television-and-now-its-paying-for-it-2018-4/

Asemah, E. S.,&Asogwa, C. E. (2014). *Broadcast production techniques: A comprehensive guide*. Enugu, Nigeria: Franklead Printing and Publishing Company.

Bassey, E. (2021, June 10). Erica finally flags off reality TV show.*The Nation*. Retrieved from https://thenationonlineng.net/erica-finally-flags-off-reality-tv-show/

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Christopher, A. (2020) Promoting student intercultural communicative competence in the Japanese context. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343996352_Promoting_Student_Intercultural_Communicative_Competence_in_the_Japanese_Context

Cop shows cancelled. (2020, June 14). *GBH News*.Retrieved from https://www.wgbh.org/news/national-news/2020/06/14/cop-shows-cancelled

DeFleur, M. L. (1966). *Theories ofmass communication*. New York City, NY: D. McKay Co.

Farr, C. K. (2004). *Reading Oprah: How Oprah's Book Club changed the way America reads*. New YorkCity, NY: SUNY Press.

Hero worship. (n.d.).*Encyclopaedia Britannica.*Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/hero-worship on July 11, 2021.

Heuveline, P.,& Timberlake, J. M. (2004). The role of cohabitation in family formation: The United States in comparative perspective. *Journal of Marriage and the Family. 66*(5), 1214-1230.

Jegede, D. (1987). Popular culture and popular music: The Nigerian experience. *Presence Africaine, 144*, 59-72.

Kariisa, J. (2018, July 27). A history of Afropop dance crazes. *Red Bull.*Retrieved fromhttps://www.redbull.com/ng-en/music/a-history-of-afropop-dance-crazes

Kayode, J., Jimoh, J.,&Adeniran, R. (2015). Development journalism: Mass media's contributions to social change and development. In I. Ndolo& C. Onwumechili. (Eds.). *Nigeria: Development communication and interrogating the field,* pp. 102-115. Enugu, Nigeria: RhyceKerex Publishers.

Kidd, D. (2017). Popular culture. *Oxford Bibliographies.* Retrieved from https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756384/obo-9780199756384-0193.xml

Lule, J. (2013). *Understanding media and culture: An introduction to mass communication.* Irvington, NY: Flat World Knowledge.

Makamani, R. (2009). Television and film as popular culture. Retrieved from https://ir.nust.na/bitstream/10628/118/1/makamani.%20Television%20and&20Film%20popular%20culture.pdf

McDermott, R. J.,& Albrecht, T. L. (2002). Mass media.*Encyclopedia of Public Health.* Retrieved from http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3404000519.html

McEnany, K. (2018). *The new American revolution: The making of a populist movement.*New York City, NY: Simon and Schuster.

McEnany, K. (2021). *For such a time as this: My faith journey through the White House and beyond*. New York City, NY: Post Hill Press.

McGaha, J. (2015).Popular culture & globalization: Teacher candidates' attitudes & perceptions of cultural & ethnic stereotypes. *Multicultural Education. 23*(1),32–37.

McLuhan, M.,& Powers, B. R. (1989). *The global village: Transformations in world life and media in the 21st century.* New YorkCity, NY: Oxford University Press.

McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory.* (6th ed). London, England: Sage Publications.

Mgbejume, O. (1989). *Film in Nigeria: Development, problems and promise.*Nairobi, Kenya: African Council on Communication Education.

Minka, F. (2020). Binge-worthy TV shows about polyamory. Retrieved from https://www.minkaguides.com/shows-about-polyamory/

National Open University. [NOU] (2006). *Course guide: Foundation of broadcasting.* Retrieved fromhttps://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://nou.edu.ng/sites/default/files/2017-03/MAC%2520242.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwid_fyp48nxAhWHlxQKHZy8B7QQFjAS egQIKRAC&usg=AOvVaw3qrIxOG3fUtlZn4kXMMR0I

Ndolo, I. S. (2011). Changing the images of women in the Nigerian media. In I. S. Ndolo (Ed.). *Contemporary issues in communication and society*,pp. 33- 40. Enugu, Nigeria: RhyceKerex Publishers.

Ngbokai, R. (2020, Aug. 17), BBNaija immoral, non-educative — Educationist. *Daily Trust.*Retrieved from https://dailytrust.com/bbniaja-immoral-non-educative-educationist

Nwabueze, C. (2014). *Introduction to mass communication: Media ecology in the global age.*Owerri, Nigeria: TopShelve Publishers.

Nwanwene, A. T. M. (2017). Information communication technologies and broadcasting. In I. E. Nwosu& I. Nsude (Eds.).*Trado-modern communication systems: Interfaces and dimensions*. (2nd ed.), pp. 264-278. Enugu, Nigeria: RhyceKerex Publishers.

Ohaja, E. U. (2008). According primacy to reality as a strategy for increasing the appeal of Nollywood movies.*Kiabara: Journal of Humanities. 14*(1), 1-11.

Ohaja, E. U. (2019). 5 ways to avoid being easily offended.Retrieved from https://edithohaja.com/5-ways-to-avoid-being-easily-offended/

Onebunne, J. I.,&Okeke, A. C. (2020). Ethical implications of Big Brother Naija show. *Nigerian Journals Online*, pp. 80-98. 666-1311-1-SM.pdf.

O'Toole, K. (1997). News release: Book review. Retrieved from https://news.stanford.edu/pr/97/971023teenmusic.html

Owuamalam, E. (2008). *Elements of broadcasting.*Owerri, Nigeria: Top Class Agencies Ltd.

Oyero, K. (2022, Feb. 21). FG directs filmmakers to avoid money ritual contents. *Punch*. Retrieved from https://punchng.com/just-in-fg-directs-filmmakers-to-avoid-money-ritual-contents/

Revill, G. (2014). Folk culture and geography. *Oxford Biblioraphies*. Retrieved from https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199874002/obo-9780199874002-

0092.xml#:~:text=Conventionally%2C%20folk%20culture%20refers%20to,sense %20of%20place%2C%20and%20belonging

Rodman, G. (2012). *Mass media in a changing world: History, industry, controversy.* (4th ed.). New York City, NY: McGrawHill.

Shrier, A. (2020). *Irreversible damage: The transgender craze seducing our daughters.* Washington, D. C.: Regency Publishing.

Storey, S. (2013). *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction.* (6thed). New York City, NY: Routledge.

Thomas, S. B.(n.d.) Cultural identity, Retrieved from https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/cultural-identity#:~:text=The%20classic%20definition%20of%20culture,society%22%20(Primitive%20Culture%20)

Usua, N. J. (2014). Indigenous culture and the global stage: Taking advantage of ICTs. In G. B. Okon& O. P. Ohiagu (Eds.)*ICT, communication and society: Trends and issues,* pp. 183-202. Owerri, Nigeria: Accuracy Prints.

Uzuegbunam, C. E. (2017). Between media celebrities and the youth: Exploring the impact of emerging celebrity culture on the lifestyle of young Nigerians. *Mgbakoigba Journal of African Studies, 6*(2), 130-141.

Wadman, M. (2018, August 30). New paper ignites storm over whether teens experience 'rapid onset' of transgender identity.*Science Magazine.* Retrieved from https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/08/new-paper-ignites-storm-over-whether-teens-experience-rapid-onset-transgender-identity

Wahab, B. (2019, March 7). Throwback Thursday: 5 career choices Nigerian parents won't allow you to make in the 80s. *Pulse Magazine.* Retrieved from https://pulse.ng/lifestyle/careers/5-career-choices-nigerian-parents-wont-allow-you-to-make-in-the-80s/xte5bcf

Ward, L. M. (2002). Does television exposure affect emerging adults' attitudes and assumptions about sexual relationships? Correlational and experimental confirmation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 31*, 1-15.

Wogu, J. O. (2008). *Introduction to mass communication theories.*Nsukka, Nigeria: University of Nigeria Press Ltd.

Wyatt, W. N.,&Bunton, K. (2012). *The ethics of reality TV: A philosophical examination.* London, England: Continuum International Publishing.

Yahoo yahoo and di Nigeria musicians wey celebrate internet fraud. (2018, May 14).Retrieved fromhttps://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-44106251

Zareen, S., Ali, A.,&Shafi, S. (2014). Effect of TV fashion shows on dressing style of female students of University of Gujrat. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19*(4), 79-97.