

Cultural Infiltration and Identity Erosion: Effects of Foreign Influences in the Modern Hausa Cinema

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ABSTRACT

The paper has considered the issue of cultural intrusion and identity negotiation in Hausa film also known as Kannywood. It addressed the ways in which Western, Bollywood and Arab-Islamic motifs, aesthetics, and language had permeated the industry in the last decade. According to the results of the analysis of the qualitative content of purposely selected movies (2010-2025) and supported by the interviews with the filmmakers, critics, and cultural experts, the most apparent signs of cultural dilution, which were identified in the study, were the dress code that was being Western inspired, Bollywood-style romance and dance, and Arab-Islamic sound and appearance. All these were being brought to Kannywood through satellite television, social media and cross-border transactions, all of which were components of broader globalization processes. This analysis revealed that globalization had a paradox whereby it enhanced the technical quality, reached a wider audience, but on the flip side, it eroded the Hausa culture values such as modesty, communalism, and linguistic purity. It was interpreted based on Cultural Imperialism and postcolonial theories that explained how global media flows changed local identities leading to cultural hybridity as well as cultural loss apprehensions. The paper ended with recommendations of culturally sensitive film production, improved policy advocacy of indigenous content, media literacy among practitioners, and effective media regulation as measures to retain the Hausa cultural heritage. Lastly, the research worked to add to the discourse on globalization, media, and the future of cultural identity of the African people.

Keywords: Cultural Dilution, Globalization, Hausa Cinema, Identity Negotiation, Kannywood

INTRODUCTION

Larkin (2008) says Hausa cinema, also referred to as Kannywood, has emerged as an indispensable cultural industry serving as a reflector of lived realities and mediator of social change as it reflects and constitutes Hausa society. The industry, which began in the late 1990s and has grown since then to be a significant medium of cultural values, oral history, religion, and social commentary in the Hausa-speaking areas of Northern Nigeria (Adamu, 2010). Geertz (1973) makes it clear that culture can be best defined as a set of beliefs, values, and practices that shape identity and social interaction and further adds that culture can be defined as the set of historical and current norms of community living (Fafunwa, 1974). In Hausa society, Ibrahim (2014) notes that cultural identity is well entrenched in Islamic ideals, community values, social stratification, unique dressing and the maintenance of Hausa language.

Both Adamu (2010) and Yahaya (2021) observe that through the years, Kannywood has been heavily affected by external cultural factors, especially those of the west, Bollywood and Arab-Islam elements. These influences can be witnessed in the costumes used in the films, the plot lines, music, and the depiction of unconventional ways of life among the Hausas. To demonstrate this change Larkin (2008) notes that the themes of romantic love, dating culture and intimacy expressions previously external to Hausa film has become more and more normalized. Although these changes have broadened creative boundaries of the industry, they have brought serious questions with regard to authenticity, continuity and preserving the indigenous identity.

Tomlinson (1999) reminds us that the main problem is that the paradox of globalization needs to be negotiated: it presents us with the opportunities of innovation and puts the cultural erosion in the danger at the same time. It

is against this background that the given work will aim to achieve three goals: to recognize the foreign cultural elements in the Hausa films, to discuss their effects on the stories, costumes, language, and ways of life, and to evaluate how it has affected their identity as Hausas. These questions will provide insights to the cultural and media studies as well as understand the needs of policy makers, film makers, and cultural custodians interested in the preservation of indigenous heritage (UNESCO, 2009).

Problem statement

The invasion of alien culture in Kannywood commendations has elicited common expression within the scholars, religious, and culture propagators. It has been feared that with its concern on gaining a broader market and adopting the contemporary standards of cinema film, the industry is losing its vital values to the Hausa culture (Adamu, 2010). This conflict of globalization and conservation of culture is depicted in how directors create a bargain between heritage and technology.

Cultural critics say that excessive copying of foreign habits in local movies might result in the disorientation of the cultures, particularly of young people who are users of the medias by not relating the meaning of the media without any analysis on its origin (Hall, 1996). The question is whether Kannywood will continue to follow the previous cultural traditions or to fit the cinematic trends of the global society to stay professionally conservative and competitive.

Research Questions

The questions that this study tries to answer are the following:

- What are the significant foreign impressions that can be found in the modern Hausa film?
- What are the impacts of these influences regarding the Hausa cultural and identity representation?
- What do these foreign influences mean in terms of cultural continuity as well as social perception?

Purpose of the Research

The objectives that will guide the study are as follows:

- To determine the kind of foreign culture incorporated in the Hausa films.
- In order to explore how all these factors contribute to the style of the narration, the dresses, the language, and the way of life shown.
- In order to examine the effect of foreign influences on the perception and maintenance of Hausa cultural identity.

Implication of the Study

The research paper is important in more ways than one. First, it adds to the academic debate in the world of cultural studies, media studies and African cinema, especially through what is often referred to as the context of cultural globalisation and identity negotiation (Hall, 1996). The research also offers a pointed discussion into the aspects of cultural expression in a postcolonial situation, through examining the state of Kannywood in between the lines of being indigenous and external influence.

Second, policymakers, and more specifically, those policymakers who deal with aspects of cultural control and censorship will benefit from the results of this study. Awareness of the level and identity of cultural penetration will be useful in formulating policies that safeguard the indigenous values and at the same time not choking on the creative freedom (Ibrahim, 2014).

Third, the study has implications to filmmakers who find themselves in dilemmas such as whether to be loyal to their culture or comply with the market needs. It will offer information on how to achieve a balance between modernization and culture. Finally, cultural custodians, teachers, and youth guide can utilize the insights to help the Hausa people understand their cultural awareness and critical consumption of information across the media.

Conceptual Clarifications

Cultural Infiltration

Cultural infiltration is the idea of the indirect or direct introduction of alien cultures into local systems, most likely, via the channels of films, music, fashion, or education. Such infiltration, as the author of this paper (Tomlinson, 1991) points out, may alter the local values and lifestyles without necessarily leading to a major resistance among the local culture. On the same note, Schiller (1976) points out that the media is key towards enabling such cultural imports, which redefines the daily practices.

Identity Erosion

Identity erosion refers to the slow erosion of indigenous identity markers, including language, values and dress. Hall (1996) says that cultural identity cannot be said to ever become fixed but is always in the process of becoming and can therefore be easily influenced by outside forces. Smith (1999) goes further to elaborate that such erosion usually happens when these communities are continued to be subjected to dominant cultural ideologies resulting in the loss of using indigenous practices and symbols.

Indigenous Culture

Indigenous culture refers to beliefs, customs, practices and knowledge systems which have a historical continuity within a community. These aspects are passed down through generations as a source of identity and view of the world, underline Battiste (2000). Hannerz (1992) goes on to mention that those cultural characteristics are used as forms of distinction, which are difficult to homogenize through the dynamics of globalization.

Media and Globalization

The media technologies have led to the globalization whereby transnational cultural flows are becoming hard to resist. To Appadurai (1996) these flows are referred to as scapes, through which ideas, practices and images are circulated globally. McLuhan (1964) had long ago anticipated the global village, emphasizing the fact that the interconnectivity of media would change societies by opening them up to new ideologies and lifestyles.

Cultural Imperialism

The concept of cultural imperialism means that one culture takes over another, mainly through the media and communication. Schiller (1976) suggests that this process favors Western values and cultural products in many cases at the expense of the local traditions. What comes out is not the cultural exchange but a structural domination where the native cultures find it difficult to stay true to themselves amidst the enormous influences of their externalities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is based on the Cultural Imperialism Theory, the Postcolonial Theory and the contribution of the Encoding/Decoding Model by Hall to explore how Hausa cinema (Kannywood) balances cultural encroachment and identity loss.

Cultural Imperialism

The Cultural Imperialism Theory asserts that the dominant societies export their values to the less powerful societies through the media, education and consumer culture (Tomlinson, 1991). The media, as highlighted by Schiller (1976) serves as an avenue through which ideologies are generated which tend to water down or even stifle the cultural identities of the localities. In the Kannywood context, this view offers the penetration of the Western and Bollywood models in Hausa cinema and film, fashion, and romanticism in Hausa film. According to Thussu (2006), this cultural dependency compels local filmmakers to follow the foreign styles in order to attain market success which has the unintentional consequences of eroding the Hausa traditions and identity.

Postcolonial Theory

The Postcolonial Theory is used to describe the perpetuation of identity and cultural expression in the societies of previous colonies (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002). Bhabha (1994) comes up with the concept of cultural mimicry, where the colonized societies imitate aspects of the culture of the colonizer in search of modernity. This is reflected in the dressing, gender roles, and narrative styles in Kannywood that put premiums on western values. Said (1978) also criticizes the endurance of cultural hegemony by representational practices whereas NgugiwaThiong'o (1986) sees postcolonial cultures as in a continual negotiation between local values and those perceived by the world, struggling with the cultural debris left by colonialism.

Encoding/Decoding Model

Although it can be observed that it is dominated by foreign culture and can be traced to colonial remnants, it is necessary to remember that audiences are not passive receivers, as observed by Hall (1980) of Encoding/Decoding Model. Hausa audiences might oppose or redefine or localize foreign contents in Kannywood movies, and, thus, generate cultural hybrids. The active nature of the audience here brings out the ambiguity and disputed aspect of cultural exchange in media.

Combined, these models shed light on the way in which foreign domination, colonial past, and agency of the audience intersect in forming Hausa identity via cinema.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between globalization and local cinema has received much scholarly interest especially in Africa. Globalization in the opinion of Tomlinson (1999) is not to be diminished to an economic or even a technological trend but rather be seen as a cultural process that facilitates the spread of dominant ideologies beyond national boundaries. In the African film industry, this exchange sometimes leads to conflicts of universal film norms and cultural principles (Diawara, 1992; Ukadike, 1994).

Nollywood and Kannywood in Nigeria are the examples of such cultural exchange. According to Haynes and Okome (2000), Nollywood began its origin in indigenous storytelling and later on started to borrow aesthetic and theme characteristics of Bollywood and Hollywood. On the same, Larkin (2008) noted that films made in Hausa language in Northern Nigeria were progressively stealing narrative structure, costumes and musical elements of Indian and American films. This integration though rich to the industry, also depicts the hybridization of cultural production.

Resistance and adaptation is displayed in the history of Kannywood. Adamu (2004) records that the industry was cultured in the 1990s as a localized arm of Nollywood although with an Islamic-cultural focus. In its initial days Kannywood strengthened traditional Hausa values with a strong emphasis on modesty and community morality. Nevertheless, with the maturity of the industry, moviemakers adopted the global trends in the film industry and their work tended to copy Bollywood in its musical and dancing sequences (Larkin, 2008). Later on, Yahaya (2016, 2021a) emphasises that the industry has grown to be a cultural and economic force, but one that has always been influenced by foreign forces.

This cultural change has its consequences, which are further seen in empirical studies. Adamu (2012) and Umar (2018) point to the fact that the symbols of the Hausa culture, their language, and dress are undermined by foreign infiltration, and the Western romanticism and images of young rebellion are being introduced. According to Musa and Ibrahim (2020), such a phenomenon is termed as cultural hybridity, as Hausa cinema balances between maintaining the local culture and adopting foreign culture. Ibrahim (2020) also agrees with him by arguing that young filmmakers, due to commercial interests and global fame, are more focused on marketable material than local color.

All these studies in a nutshell support the Kannywood paradox of being a continuum and change agent of Hausa identity. According to the literature, the industry is a cultural archive, but at the same time, it represents erosion processes, hybridity and negotiation of cultures in the context of globalization (Haynes, 2007; Yahaya, 2021b).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative content analysis is used in this study to examine the extent and nature of the foreign cultural influences on Hausa and Kannywood cinema. The qualitative design is suitable in understanding of meanings, patterns and symbols integrated in movies, particularly concerning cultural identity and globalization (Schreier, 2012). The paper has critically analyzed narrative structures, visual signification and the use of language in order to come up with cultural infiltration and negotiation of identity in the chosen films.

Population and Sample

It will focus on the Hausa-language movies made during the period 2010-2025 when Northern Nigeria experienced radical changes in technology, society, and culture. The participants will include 10-12 representative films of various genres (romance, drama, historical, urban lifestyle) selected with the help of purposive sampling. Some of the selection criteria will be popularity, objective reviews as well as topicality to cultural transformation.

Data Collection

There will be two large sources of data:

Film Analysis - Selected films will be analysed in the following aspects:

- Themes: the motifs of modernity, tradition, westernization, and religious values are repeated.
- Costumes and Fashion: fashion as a semiotic indicator of cultural assimilation or resistance.
- Language Use: Hausa, English, Arabic, and Hindi words and cultural connotations.
- Plotlines and Settings: analysis of narrative patterns and symbolic meaning of urban or rural setting about the impact of global socio-cultural factors.

Key Informant Interviews - The interviews will be carried out with Kannywood filmmakers, cultural critics and media scholars. This will offer professional knowledge on the new creative choices, views of the audience, and perceived effects of globalization on Hausa film content.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis and discourse analysis will be used to analyze data. Analysis of similarities and differences in general cultural themes and symbolic clues in the two films and interviews will be achieved through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The critical media studies based on discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) will be used to examine the way language, symbols and representations, build or challenge Hausa cultural identity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Here, the researchers will word and explain the most significant results of the research and here are the areas the researchers will address these three fruitful themes identified in the research i.e. the foreign influences being observed in Kannywood films, on how the foreign elements are making their way into the industry and the effects of the same on Hausa cultural identity.

Foreign Influences Identified

Hausa movie (Kannywood) are slowly adopting western fashion, music and romance like jeans, sunglasses and pop-style soundtracks. The power of Bollywood is seen through melodramatic love affairs, choreographed dances, and bright costumes (Adamu, 2010; Yahaya, 2021a). Arab-Islamic aesthetics is also evident, especially in religious movies, with the use of Arabic words and clothes, occasionally supporting the Islamification of

localized Hausa cultural identities and deemphasizing those of the Hausa (Larkin, 2008; Musa and Ibrahim, 2020).

Processes of Cultural Infiltration

Through the channels of globalization like the satellite TV, streaming services and social media platforms, filmmakers and viewers are subjected to foreign cultural paradigms (Appadurai, 1996). The youthful film makers, encouraged by the profitability and global fame, tend to emulate the Nollywood, Bollywood and Hollywood styles. This is in line with the argument by Tomlinson (1999) that globalization forces non-western creatives to conform to the world standards of sophistication.

Effects on Hausa Identity

The results suggest the erosion of native Hausa culture, including modesty, communalism and purity of language. Western ideals of individualism, romance and the Hausa values of respecting elders, modest dressing and deference is a contrast (Schiller, 1976). Some people interpret this change as a cultural decline, but others see it as a cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) in which Hausa and global elements are combined in new forms. Younger generations view hybridity as modernization and older viewers think of it as erosion of morality and culture (Hall, 1996; Yahaya, 2021b).

CONCLUSION

This paper shows that Hausa cinema is on the crossroads: the issue of globalization enhances film content by creating hybridism and, at the same time, it also threatens the native Hausa culture identity. Cultural identity, as Hall (1996) would emphasize is dynamic and adaptive, but when foreign influence predominates over control, the Hausa youth might lose their cultural identity. The problem therefore, is to strike a balance between modernization and cultural integrity (Tomlinson, 1999).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluating the outcomes of this work, it is necessary to say that the cultural transformation of the Hausa cinema is significant, as it is influenced by the foreign media trends. In as much as in the age of globalization such change cannot be avoided, we must be conscious that in the process of modernization we do not lead to extinction of different cultures. It is hence implied that the recommendations that can be made to save and preserve Hausa cultural identity according to film are some of the following.

Develop Culturally Aware Narratives

Moviemakers ought to use the native traditions, proverbs, and aesthetics instead of just imitating other models.

Stakeholder and Government Support

The policies, tax incentives, and grants must focus on indigenous content. Housea traditions should be emphasized by the local film boards in terms of productions.

Awareness and Education of the Culture

The cultural appreciation among the filmmakers and audiences should be inculcated by training institutions and workshops. According to Kellner (1995), the media representation shapes identity and, therefore, it requires cultural sensitivity.

Regulatory Standards

Cultural representation policies should also be adopted by the agencies like the NFVCB to strike a balance between freedom of creativity and maintenance of Hausa identity (Schiller, 1976; McQuail, 2010).

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