

# Authentic Creativity: How Two Segments of Nigeria's Cultural and Creative Economy are Promoting and Redefining Nigeria

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## Keywords

Authentic creativity, cultural and creative industries, Nigerian music, Nollywood

## Abstract

A central theme of the cultural and creative industries (CCI) discourse is the exploitation of intellectual capital for economic benefits by CCI workers. Also, the CCI are seen as vehicles of cultural expression and should contribute significantly to employment generation. But beyond cultural expression and employment creation, the CCI can be a veritable pathway to the globalisation of local cultures. This paper reviews two segments of CCI in Nigeria to assess how the concept has fared, especially, with difficulties associated with registration and enforcement of IPRs in these two key segments. The paper explores a brief history and reviews activities in these two selected segments in terms of employment creation, economic value added and overall impact they are having on Nigeria's culture and political economy. It concludes that authentic cultural creativity can indeed globalize aspects of a country's culture and reposition its image in subtle but effective ways.

## Introduction

Nigeria's cultural and creative industries (CCI) has grown in recent years, attracting the interest of researchers across the globe. Some segments, especially, the music, fashion designing, creative writing, and film unarguably, stand out as the most successful in terms of attracting global recognition and even critical acclaim. Youthful talents and experienced producers have combined creativity and the use of digital media communication technologies to transform the ecosystem and landscape. In the process, they have created and continue to create a new crop of ambassadors and industry icons that are fast becoming global stars.

Creative writing and fashion designing have produced talents like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and more recently, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, just to name a few in creative writing. Also, some Nigerian fashion designers have also distinguished themselves internationally, at least in Africa. Nigerian designers have graced the international runways of London, New York, Paris, Milan and Johannesburg, and have been featured in international fashion magazines. This article is however concerned with the success recorded in two segments - music and film segments, and how their success is positively promoting and redefining Nigeria's image across the world.

In the music industry, Nigerian recording artists have created a new global sound – *Afrobeats* – that is truly unique. These recording artists are taking the world of music entertainment by storm. They are getting global entertainment arenas like London's O2 Arena packed full with music fans in completely sold-out gigs. CNN,

in a report carried in May 6, 2009, noted that Nigerian musical acts are selling out entertainment arena across Africa and many parts of the world. In a more recent report by CNN on November 26, 2019 and captioned, *Africa's biggest music stars*, CNN identified 10 music stars it recognised as Africa's top ten. The Nigerian recording artist, Burna Boy, topped the list at number one. Burna was nominated for the best World Music Grammy.

The list of top ten also included three other Nigerian music stars – Yemi Alade, Tiwa Savage and WizKid. Their sound is connecting Nigeria to the world and the world to Nigeria to the extent that Nigerian pop music can now be classified as a successful cultural export. The result of this recent success is that major United States record labels like UMG, Sony and Warner Group are finally taking notice of Nigerian acts and signing them on. For instance, Canadian rapper, Drake, has done commercially successful collaborations with a Nigerian recording artist, WizKid. This collaboration is now available on iTunes. This is to cite just one of such collaborations. If this trend continues, within the next two decades, this author believes it may become a significant part of global pop music culture just like American pop music has been in the last three or four decades.

The Nigeria film segment has also recorded significant progress in the last 28 years since its resurgence. Within this period it that has recorded significant success and global recognition, especially, among Africans in the Diaspora. However, it is reported that Netflix is taking an interest in Nollywood following recent successes. The drama, *Lionheart*, which nearly got into the Oscars but for a technical disqualification from the category it was to be nominated to, is one of the more recent

successes in Nollywood. For many years now, Nollywood films are now streamed online by iROKOTv, an online film and media content distribution service which saw the opportunity and launched their service in 2011.

Due to the successes recorded by these segments in the international marketplace, this article seeks to review the positive role these two segments have played in promoting and redefining a not-so-favourable image of Nigeria. The review applies three out of the four potential measures of activity in the creative industries suggested in the UNCTAD (2010, p. 99) creative economy report. These include: *employment, time use, trade and value added, and copyright and intellectual property right*. Because of the difficulty in estimating *time use*, this article will exclude that measure in its review and analysis.

## Exploring the CCI Concept

The concept of the cultural and creative industries (CCI) is a subject of intellectual disputes among academics and policy makers. The works of several authors and policy analysts (Garnham, 1987; Miège, 1989; Peck, 2005; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Lovink and Rossiter, 2007; Pratt, 1999, 2005, 2008; Gill and Pratt, 2008) highlight these disputes and the academic debates about the concept. Gill and Pratt (2008, p.4) have highlighted that, in different writings some of the above authors have suggested that the term 'creative industries' is simply a political rebranding of the cultural industries. Nevertheless, the CCIs are part of what is commonly referred to as the *knowledge economy*.

Several studies and mapping documents by the Australia Creative Industries National Mapping Project (CINMP), UK Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), the World Intellectual property Organisation (WIPO), UNESCO and others have identified segments and industries that constitute the CCI or the creative industries grouping. As earlier highlighted, the field literature indicates that the definition of the concept and the segments that form the CCIs are not universally accepted. Different countries applying different methodologies of classification have ended up including and classifying different segments as CCIs or creative segments. Hence, defining the concept has therefore been fraught with ambiguity, as various definitions and conceptualization of the subject matter have been "inconsistent and confusing" (Galloway and Dunlop 2007, p.17).

In many instances 'the terms *creative industries* and *cultural industries* have been used interchangeably even though their origins, meanings and uses are, quite different' (Galloway and Dunlop 2007, p.33). In classifying what constitutes CCI segments, Australia's Creative Industries National Mapping Project (CINMP) developed what they called the *creative trident* approach. This approach measures the *creative workforce* within the creative industries; the *creative occupations* within other industries; and the *support occupations* in the creative industries. The mapping project identifies the creative industries as those enterprises whose primary business activities fall within specific industrial activity classifications that are wholly or mostly creative.

Higgs, Cunningham and Pagan (2007) have suggested six broad categories or groups within the creative economy segments and a number of finer sub-segments.

These include: 1) Music and Performing Arts Segment; 2) Film, TV and Radio Segment; 3) Advertising and Marketing Segment; 4) Software and Digital Content Segment; 5) Publishing Segment; and 6) Architecture, Design and Visual Arts Segment. Within these segments, Higgs et al (ibid) identified the core industries and occupations in each broad category.

According to the DCMS (1998; 2001, p.4) the CCIs are "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." According to the DCMS template, CCIs include: advertising, architecture, arts and antique markets, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software (electronic games), music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, and television and radio. Higgs and Cunningham (2008), Hesmondhalgh (2007), Galloway and Dunlop (2007), Pratt (1999, 2004) and others, have criticized this template. They argue, among other things, that it over reaches and overlaps various industries and occupations.

In its own contribution to the development of the concept, UNCTAD/UNDP (2010, p.5) defines the cultural industries as "those industries that combine the creation, production and commercialization of products which are intangible and cultural in nature. The contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services." According to UNCTAD/UNDP, the cultural industries include printing, publishing and multimedia, audiovisual, phonographic and cinematographic productions as well as crafts and design.

Literally speaking, the term creative industries incorporates a broader range of activities than the cultural industries. UNCTAD/UNDP (2010, p. 8) defines the creative industries as:

*the cycles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs; constitute a set of knowledge-based activities, focused on but not limited to arts, potentially generating revenues from trade and intellectual property rights; comprise tangible products and intangible intellectual or artistic services with creative content, economic value and market objectives; stand at the crossroads of the artisan, services and industrial sectors; and constitute a new dynamic sector in world trade.*

Like other definitions, the UNCTAD/UNDP definition appears to be too wide and overreaching. It is however important to note that the concept makes a distinction between the creative and the cultural industries. But for the purposes of this paper, the terms *cultural* and *creative* will be used together to represent a group of economic segments.

From observation, the overriding factor in the definitions is the recognition that individual creativity from cultural activities provides a viable pathway to economic prosperity. Consequently, the central idea in the cultural industries discourse is how to harness individual talents from everyday cultural activities and position them for economic benefits within the sphere of intellectual property and the knowledge economy. This central idea resonates in all the CCI segments, especially, the music and film industries where individual talent and creativity is the currency that drives the creation and exchange of

value through intellectual property rights. This is different from other workers who also apply their talents in everyday work that create economic value but are not usually able to claim or register intellectual property from such works.

In the final analysis and regardless of the shortcomings in the definitions and other issues that problematize the concept, the development of the CCI remains an economic and social policy success. Despite all the criticisms, its conceptualization broke new grounds in defining and bringing the contributions of the various segments to the economic limelight at various levels of government in the UK. It highlighted their economic relevance to the national economy. But their impact was not only limited to the UK, rather several countries have now adopted the same framework of analysis for the benefit of their cultural and creative industries. Hence, one can argue that the CCI, as an economic policy concept, has been a successful British export.

## **The Cultural and Creative Industries in Nigeria**

There is no clear organizing framework that maps out sectors to be classified as the CCI in Nigeria because there has been no similar mapping document by the Nigerian government that clearly delineates the CCI in Nigeria. The closest attempt at official policy for the CCI in Nigeria is the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) and its equivalent in all the states of Nigeria. The NCAC Act identifies the segments and activities that are covered and supervised by the agency. This lack of a CCI mapping document or framework makes it difficult to effectively measure the impact and contribution of these segments to the Nigerian economy. But in November 2013,

the British Council in Nigeria took steps to introduce and promote the CCI concept by publishing what it called a pilot study on the CCI in Lagos, Nigeria. The study was sponsored and conducted in collaboration with some key stakeholders and organisations. It attempted to map some traditional cultural and creative segments in Nigeria.

The findings from that pilot study are documented in the, *Mapping of Nigeria Creative Industries: Report of Lagos Pilot Study*. In that study, the BC study made a preliminary delineation of what segments should constitute the creative sector in Nigeria, whereas a national and official consensus has yet to be reached on which segments constitute Nigeria's creative industries. But a quick comparison indicates that the NCAC listing, the British Council preliminary delineation and the DCMS template are remarkably similar (see table 1), even though there remains to be seen an official delineation of the CCI by the Nigerian government. It is however important to note that the basis for the selection of the segments included in the NCAC Act and by the British Council working group is not explained. This falls into what Flew (2002, p.14) describes as 'the element of ad hocery in some definitions of the cultural industries.

The British Council also encouraged the formation of the Creative Enterprises Association of Nigeria (CEAN), and sponsors events organised by it. In all of these, the British Council has tried to raise an awareness about the potential contribution the CCI can bring to national socio-economic development. Hence, the concept is gradually finding its way into official planning documents of the Federal Government and some state government in Nigeria.

Table 1: Alternative templates for CCI segments composition  
 Source: Developed by author

DCMS	BC Preliminary Template	NCAC
Advertising	Advertising	Photography
Architecture	Architecture	Architecture and town planning
Arts and antique markets	Visual art and animation (photography, painting, graphic design, drawing, sculpture, etc.)	Painting, sculpture and general arts
Crafts	Arts and crafts	Sundry crafts
Design	-----	-----
Designer fashion	Fashion and design	Fashion, embroidery, weaving and similar crafts
Film and video	Home video/film/television and radio	Film and cinema
Interactive leisure software (electronic games)	Tourism and hospitality (museums and monuments, cuisine, night clubs, events managements etc.)	Traditional dance, oral tradition and folklore
Music	Music	Music
Performing arts	Performing arts (theatre, festival, carnival, dance, drama, stand-up comedy)	Drama and opera
Publishing	Publishing (literature, book fairs, E-resources etc.)	Literature and poetry
Software and computer services	-----	Indigenous cuisine
Television and radio	-----	-----

It is quite unfortunate that statistical reports from the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics and other relevant agencies of government such as the Central Bank still hardly provide data in a form that enables researchers to measure the economic contribution of the cultural and creative industries in Nigeria. But there is available information from other segments that may provide useful insights on the potentials that may exist in Nigeria's CCI. We shall explore some of such information.

The website of Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), projects the country's current (February 2020) population to be above 200 million people, with more than 50% of its people under 30 years of age (<https://nigerianstat.gov.ng>). With 18 years as the median age of the population, Nigeria has a relatively young population with its attendant positive impact on creativity and productivity. The NBS estimated Nigeria's GDP figures at \$410 billion (US dollars) as at 2019. Unfortunately, the reporting of Nigeria's GDP figures provide little assistance in estimating the contribution of the CCI.

For instance, the textile, apparel and footwear sector, which has a high input from individual entrepreneurs such as tailors and leatherworks producers, is classified as part of the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector also includes the wood and wood products producers which incorporates furniture makers. Two sectors – the arts, entertainment and recreation sector and the information and communication sector, which includes telecommunications and information services; publishing; motion pictures, sound recording and music production; and broadcasting- best approximate what should constitute the CCI. Nwankwo (2018) noted that as at 2015 Nigeria's motion pictures, sound recording and

music segment of the creative industries contributed about 22.8% of the of the total contribution of what he regarded as constituting the creative industries in Nigeria.

Nwankwo (2018), drawing from figures provided by the NBS, estimated that some segments that form part of Nigeria's CCI contributed 5.3% of 2015 GDP. In nominal terms this amounts to about US\$16.4 billion or NGN5 trillion as at that time. These segments, however, included the textile, apparel and footwear manufacturing segment, wood and wood products manufacturing segment, publishing segment, broadcasting segment, motion pictures, sound recording and music production segment, and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector. If we apply the same percentages to 2019 GDP of US\$410 billion, the contribution of the CCI to GDP, using the same segments, will be about US\$21.7 billion. On a high level, the telecommunications and information services sector, another sector with key segments of the CCI, contributed about US\$26.2 billion or NGN8 trillion to 2015 GDP. Combining both figures indicate a significant contribution to Nigeria's GDP. It is, however, unclear where figures for advertising, a key segment in the DCMS template, are captured. If we add the figures for the advertising segment, then the contribution of the CCI will further increase far beyond US\$50 billion.

To get more reliable estimates of the CCI in Nigeria, it will be useful to consider reports and opinions by various agencies and researchers. An online report published on January 6, 2019 by THISDAY, a leading national daily in Nigeria, suggest that Nigeria's creative industry accounted for about 2.3% of National GDP as at 2016. A similar report published on April 2, 2019, by the Guardian, another leading national

daily newspapers, corroborates the earlier report by THISDAY. Both reports suggest that in monetary terms, the creative industries contribute about NGN239billion (about US\$660million) to GDP. The writers of both reports further suggest that this figure should have grown by 2019, and opine that the creative sectors hold the key to reducing the unemployment levels put at about 23%. However, these reports did not clarify which segments they considered while making these estimates. But the content of the reports seemed to center more around the music, high fashion and entertainment segments.

Further insight into the CCI may be got from the records on mobile telecommunication penetration in Nigeria. Records available on the website of the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), suggests there were over 186 million active mobile and fixed wireless telephone subscribers as at January 2020. However, mobile GSM accounts for over 99.85% of this figure. Figures from the NCC also state that there are over 128.7million internet subscribers in Nigeria, as at January 2020, representing over 69% of all telephone subscribers. Of the 128.7million internet subscribers in Nigeria, 73.4million, representing 38.49%, are broadband internet subscribers. This high numbers of internet subscribers provide additional insight into the potential size and economic contribution of Nigeria's CCI. Without much doubt, the structure of Nigeria's population suggests that a significant majority of these internet users are likely to be young. These statistics suggests that Nigeria's young population is busy online.

In the age of globalization and digitization, a large population size and high internet penetration both present significant economic advantages, opportunities and challenges, as has been witnessed in

China, India and Brazil. A predominantly young population and relatively high internet penetration level constitute an interesting combination that potentially promises to have a positive impact on Nigeria's CCI sectors and the economy in general. Industry watchers have posited that this high internet penetration is largely responsible for the shift in the creative industries' business and revenue models. The internet is enabling content streaming services and therefore upending traditional business models in the creative industries. These indices signpost potential economic opportunities for young creative talents even though research shows that they also present great challenges to CCI producers such as fashion designers, movie producers, film producers, etc.(Samuel, 2019, Shultz, 2011; Spender, 2009 ). In a nutshell, these trends are also being witnessed in Nigeria.

## **Reviewing the Impact of the Music and film segments in Nigeria**

### **The Nigeria film industry – Nollywood.**

The Nigerian film segment otherwise known as *Nollywood*, has recorded significant progress in Nigeria in the last 28 years. The success story of Nollywood has been highlighted by several writers (Onuzulike, 2007; Lobato, 2010; Obiaya, 2012; Giwa, 2014; Bisschoff, 2015; Alakwe, 2018, Nwankwo, 2018, etc.). According to UNCTAD (2010) film production started in Nigeria around 1948 with the production of documentaries and news reels. However, commercial film production began in the early 1970s when the first commercial film was made in Nigeria. But since those days, the Nigerian has continuously shown significant



potential for economic prosperity. The UNCTAD (2010) report and other writings provide fairly good historicity of the development of Nigerian film segment.

It is now widely believed that the industry is the third largest film industry in the world, in terms of value, after America's *Hollywood* and India's *Bollywood*. Lobato (2010) argues that while Nollywood may not lead in revenues, it probably leads other industries in terms of volume of films produced per annum. It is not precisely known how many titles are released every year in the Nigerian film industry. UNCTAD (2010, p .250) however reported that, "Nollywood produces more than 1,005 home video films annually, but Lobato (2010) believes it may be about 2000 titles annually. If you go by the number of titles approved by the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVSB), the number is somewhere between 1000 and 2000. This number of titles is significant and suggests either that there is demand for it or that it is economically profitable, at least on a small and subsistence scale.

Although the industry has great potentials and has recorded significant number of titles and value of productions, the sector is battling several challenges that stifle its growth and development. There are structural and resource constraints that hinder the entry of Nigeria's home video into the global market. According to the UNCTAD (2010) report, these constraints include: lack of funding sources, lack of structured local and international distribution/marketing infrastructure, piracy and lack of a robust anti-piracy enforcement mechanism, poor quality of production, distribution and exhibition infrastructure, dearth of technical/professional skills, lack of technical/professional training infrastructure, high level of industry fragmentation, and a lack

of industry data for planning and decision-making.

In terms of employment creation, Lobato (2010) has noted that Nollywood producers are achieving many of the objectives of the CCI concept. Lobato reaffirms that Nollywood has created thousands of jobs and achieved unprecedented levels of growth without government subsidies or any assistance from the state, NGOs, international agencies or film festivals. The UNCTAD (2010) creative industry report stated that the Nigeria film industry has well over 500,000 home video distribution and rental clubs that employ millions of Nigerians. Apart from the actors, Nollywood employs thousands of skilled and unskilled "behind the scenes workers" (Obiaya, 2012). Nollywood now indirectly provides online jobs for many through strategic private sector led initiatives such as the online streaming services provided by *iROKOTv*. Through this unique service and some others, thousands of Nollywood titles are made available for online viewing to millions of audiences across the globe. In an environment where there is a weak intellectual property right protection framework, such initiatives have helped protect and cushion the effect of revenues losses due to piracy. Thus, *iROKOTv* met with immediate market acceptance and success.

It is important to note that there was practically no government funding assistance or subsidies to Nollywood until *Project Act* was initiated by the Goodluck Jonathan led Federal Government of Nigeria in 2013. As a way of building capacity in the film industry, the *Project Act*, sought to partner with local training institutions to provide world class training and skills development facilities for practitioners in the film industry. Part of the intervention fund was to enable local



organisations acquire modern equipment for training of creative workers in the film industry. President Jonathan's initiative was the first time a sitting president and indeed the country would make available such an amount (US\$200million) as intervention fund to strategically grow the film sector.

It was therefore a manifest declaration of the growing importance of that cultural segment and the recognition of its potential impact on Nigeria's cultural and socio-economic development. The fund was made up of two components. The first component was to be dedicated to training and skills acquisition for 'behind the scenes' Nollywood practitioners in scriptwriting, directing, production and production design, special effects, lighting, sound engineering, HD techniques, acting, cinematography, make-up, editing, etc. The second component was meant for modernizing, upgrading and purchase of technical training equipment in existing Nigerian-owned private institutes that offer training courses and professional

programs for technical certification in the movie industry.

Notwithstanding all the challenges and peculiar difficulties in the Nigeria environment, Lobato (2010) observes that Nollywood has recorded uncommon success with limited funding and no financial support from government. Therefore, there is a need to formally study the sector to reveal strategies and measures that could be applied in other jurisdictions. The summary of the Nollywood experience is that the creative exploits of Nigerians in this segment is now a known global phenomenon and can be replicated in other CCI segments. It also demonstrates that by leveraging information technology (internet), cultural and creative producers in Nigeria's CCI can reach international audiences and assume global relevance in this era of globalisation. Despite the challenges, globalization and increased connectedness via the internet and digital media technologies has enabled Nollywood to record significant growth within the last 28 years. Nollywood stars

are celebrities in their own rights in Africa and among Africans in the Diaspora. They celebrated in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Jamaica, Brazil, Haiti, and many more countries. Their movies are popular with black communities across the world. Nollywood now boasts of movies that premiere on IMAX cinema. Nollywood now produces films and television series that run on international cable TV. Nollywood has recently produced movies like *Lionheart* that nearly got nominated for the 2019 US Academy awards. It is reported that following the quality and success of *Lionheart*, Netflix is finally taking notice of Nollywood and may be planning to make investments. If this happens (even though it may be more of a medium term plan), it will move the segment several notches up. In the author's reckoning iROKOTv remains Nollywood's most important evidence of the existence of global appeal and endorsement.

This evidence of its relative success in the global space suggests that the industry could constitute a veritable source of foreign revenues for Nigeria as a country and for the individual artists. It also constitutes a powerful cultural communication tool that unites and integrates. It is both an art and an industry whose development should be of great national interest in terms of its social and economic value. Its impact, as earlier highlighted, goes beyond the stories told in the films. The industry as a global audio-visual media platform showcases various aspects of Nigerian and African culture – fashion and textile, sundry arts and crafts, architecture, beauty and make-up, carpentry and woodworks, wrought iron, tourism, etc.

I will like to argue that the success of Nollywood is, among other things, hinged on its role in telling the authentic

Nigerian and African story; its role in showcasing the authentic contemporary cultures of Nigeria and by extension, Africa. Nollywood represents a manifest statement that Africans have cultures and identities that are not projected or deliberated mis-projected by mainstream media and entertainment networks. Nollywood showcases Africa's rich cultural heritage in dress fashion, textile, beauty and make-up, architecture, furniture and woodworks, metalworks, sundry arts and crafts, tourism, religion and philosophy. It announces a rich diversity that was hitherto not known or just taken for granted. This is another reason why *iROKOTv*, a digital content and film distribution service, seems to be commercially succeeding (at least in convincing investors to invest in it). In this sense, despite its relative infancy and many weaknesses, Nollywood is a true Nigerian success story.

It will be worthwhile if government officials will leverage the linkages to showcase the opportunities that exists in other segments of our national economy and culture. For instance, the cultural dominance of the US is not just because of its economic and military strength but also because of its control of mainstream global media that continually propagate its culture. Through various forms of media (print, film, television, music, literature, etc.) key aspects of American culture – language, fashion, arts, music, etc., are given daily coverage that gradually make them acceptable and established as dominant (hegemonic) cultures. This is consistent with the Gramsci idea that cultures become hegemonic as they are constantly propagated, through institutions like the media that form the superstructure of society, to the point that they become the 'common sense' values of everyone.

## The Nigeria music industry

The UNCTAD (2010) report identifies music as one of the central CCI segments that provides not just a platform for cultural expression but also economic reward in practically all societies. Music transcends and penetrates physical boundaries, language and cultural barriers and therefore a veritable instrument for intercultural dialogue. Musical composers, singers and songwriters can share their creative expressions with people and audiences from different cultures, languages and geographies. This unique characteristic makes music easily exportable. With advances in information communication technologies, any local music can reach a global audience within minutes of pushing a *share* command icon/button on a digital device. Consequently, digital technologies have introduced a paradigm shift in the way music is created, produced, traded and marketed globally as a commodity of value.

In the recent past effective music promotion required the artist to produce a few hundreds of demo/promotion copies to be distributed to television and radio presenters and DJs. But all that has changed. Nigerian music has blossomed with a variety of creative talents in the last few decades. There are songwriters, recording artistes, back-up singers, instrumentalists, sound engineers, musical video producers, etc. Also, there are show promoters, financiers, artistes' managers, PR handlers, etc. This is not to suggest that these professionals are new to the industry, but they have grown in numbers.

With the popularization and wide acceptance of a unique rhythm and

authentic style of music previously known as *Nigerian hip-hop* (but now collectively referred to as *Afrobeats*) the industry assumed a new growth and development trajectory in the last decade. Initially, its acceptance was limited to Nigeria and Nigerian audiences in the diaspora. But gradually the genre has become appealing and accepted by audiences across Africa and the world. Amadi (2017) in an article published in Vanguard newspapers on July 23, 2017, noted that several speakers and contributors at the *Creative Nigeria Summit, 2017*, overwhelmingly voiced 'the success of Nigerian music, nationally, continentally and internationally.' The speakers at the summit included representatives of the Copyright Society of Nigeria (COSON) as well as other stakeholders in the Nigeria music industry. The summit participants also observed that over 80% of music content on Nigeria media is now Nigerian. This wide appeal has reflected in the annual revenues attributed to the industry, the radio-airtime devoted to Nigerian music on local radio stations, as well as in the number of youths attracted to pursuing careers in various aspects of music.

It is common knowledge that in the decades of the 1970s and up till the end of the 1990s, music and the performing arts were not considered top career choices for many youths in Nigeria. Music and the performing arts was largely considered careers for social misfits, for those who could not pursue further education, those who could not seek careers in the civil service or in the more formal sectors of the economy. Unarguably, the industry has come a long way. However, the story has not always been about hip-pop/pop music. The industry has witnessed the *rise* and *fall* of different genres of music.

Afropop Worldwide, in an article in its website, (<http://www.afropop.org>), noted

that *Highlife* music was West Africa's pioneer popular music of the late colonial and early independence era. During this era other genres - *Apala/Juju/Fuji and Afrobeat*, related to highlife also emerged. But in the late 1970s and up to the early 1990s, reggae and pop music genres gained ground. During this era Fela Kuti stood out, and achieved international recognition and acclaim. I believe he stood out because of the uniqueness of his music which he styled *Afrobeat* without an 's'.

Nigerian musicians of that era played music that I will argue was authentic to Nigeria and Africa. They fused sound from western instruments with those from local instruments. Most of the times they sang in local dialects, local Pidgin English, but sometimes in Standard English. The result was something unique to Africa. Many of the musical talents of that era should have become international music stars but were constrained by the histories and the capacities of the infrastructure of their times.

During this period, music was produced and marketed by record companies through long play plates (LPs) and cassettes. Those who desired to listen to music must own record players or be closely associated to someone who owns one. If you could not afford record-players, you have to, either, wait to watch live performances of the artists or hope to hear music from the local radios. But poverty levels also meant that large portions of the population, especially rural dwellers, did not have radios and could not afford to go watch live shows.

Music as an art form was largely produced and enjoyed locally, and so the influence of the artist could not travel quite easily. The artist had to physically travel to desired audiences outside of their urban base. At this time the infrastructure and technology

of transportation, its availability and affordability, were greatly constrained. For instance, the highly talented highlife musician, Rex Jim Lawson, died in a car crash, on his way to play at a musical show in 1971. This meant that musical artists lived very precarious lives - exposed to the dangers of frequent travels under unsafe conditions. Poverty level also meant that record sales were low, and artists had to rely on live performances to augment income, which made the occupation appear economically insecure and even more precarious, at that time. Of course, there were little or no opportunities at all for endorsements. I believe the experience from this era created a narrative that informed the mindset against pursuing careers in the performing arts. But all that has changed dramatically, even though there is still a hangover of that mindset today.

In the mid-1980s and the 1990s, reggae, pop, and afrobeat music held sway, even though highlife was still enjoyed by older audiences. During this time, the technology and marketing infrastructure of music as well as the technology and infrastructure of transportation were greatly improved. Many international recording companies were already domiciled in Nigeria and many local recording labels had also emerged. Recording artists now had the opportunities their predecessors never had. By these developments, truly talented artists achieved fame as music stars. Yet, only a few of them were truly financially successful. Except for a few, most of them had limited fame. Despite local fame and success, many were hardly known outside Nigeria and beyond Africa, unlike many contemporary Nigerian artists of today. The Nigerian music industry began to assume a new trajectory in the early to mid-2000s. Within this period, the industry has also had a very active Christian gospel

music segment with a unique sound. A new crop of artists began to emerge with a new sound. Many Nigerian gospel musicians have also achieved international success. The likes of Frank Edwards, has recorded songs with the world-renowned gospel musician, Don Moen. Many Nigerian gospel musicians like Sinach have performed and are well known within the global Christian community.

One can argue that during this period another *authentic* Nigerian music genre emerged. Although it resembles western style *R & B/hip-hop*, it remains a unique genre that reflects a style and sound of music that truly evolved from Nigeria. A style that is now recognized and accepted across the world. I will like to argue that this uniqueness was the extra factor in the success of Nigerian music. This resonates with the global success Fela Kuti, who also created a truly unique genre he called *afrobeat*. Afrobeat music is unique, even though it carries features of jazz music, it is unmistakably unique in style and sound. The success of Nigerian music on the global music arena is a clear example that the world is waiting for authentic African contributions. Fela Kuti's fame suggested this thinking, and the success of contemporary Nigerian music that is unmistakably unique in sound, language and style of rendition confirms it.

Ubani (2015), in an article published May 6, 2015 on *Tush Magazine*, noted the contribution of some music entertainment channels in the rise of Nigerian music – MTV Africa, Channel O Africa, Hip TV, Primetime Africa, Sound City, Trace TV, Afropop TV. Through television playtime and the various awards they organize, they have all played important roles in bringing Nigeria music to a global audience. But that is primarily because their audiences across the world find Nigerian music an appealing media content. Ubani further

notes that the international exposure and success Nigeria music has enjoyed has led to international collaborations between Nigerian musical acts and some international recording artists – D'Banj featured the Senegalese star, Akon, while P-Square have featured Rick Ross and T.I. Many of these artists are brand ambassadors for leading corporate brands in Nigeria. Within the mobile network operators of Nigeria alone, the following musical artists have signed brand endorsement deals. It is estimated that some of these endorsement deals are significant sums that run into tens, and sometimes more than, NGN100 million. With such evidence, one can argue that the Nigerian music industry is one of the more outstanding examples of how individual creativity can drive economic prosperity. Despite weak frameworks for the protection of intellectual property rights (IPRs) and the menace of piracy, content producers in the industry have found creative ways to use the weakness to their advantage.

In the face of globalisation and increasing digitization, industry players have leveraged the traditional media (radio and TV) and digital mobile technologies to access new markets, reach new audiences and create new revenue streams. But just as the internet and digital technologies provide great opportunities to reach global markets, it also poses threats to revenues. Unless music producers can develop creative ways of tracking and converting free online music downloads and peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing activities, significant revenues will still be lost. However, some industry watchers like this author, believe that this development is not necessarily a threat to revenues. They argue that what has happened is that the revenue model has changed. Therefore, those recording artists under good management have



in turn modified their acts. The revenue model has changed in the sense that producing music is no more an end, but now a means to an end.

Music is no more a product but a service sold to create a brand following that can then be *commoditized* by the artist. Commodification of brand following comes in the form of brand endorsements, caller ring-back tunes (RBT), music shows and private gigs, advertising revenues from large online following. As a matter of fact, the rise of digital telecommunication technologies and the internet, especially, the filing sharing dimensions of the internet, and the rise of the so-called digital generations Y and Z, have combined to drive the observed global rise and popularity of Nigerian music.

A CNN report, citing PwC data, states that 90% of record sales in Nigeria will be on digital platforms by the end of 2020. We are now in 2020 and so we await the

figures. However, other similar reports suggest that this figure may be much higher. For example, a CNBC Africa report suggested that global live performances revenues were about \$105 million US dollars in 2014, despite challenges with piracy and copyright infringements, infrastructure, etc. Going further, CNBC Africa quoted Obi Asika, CEO, of Storm Records, a leading record label, as stating that Nigeria's mobile telephone network providers recorded revenues of more than \$150 million US dollars from the sale of music ring back tunes (RBTs), and other related music services to mobile telephone subscribers in Nigeria in 2014. This was corroborated by Bloomberg, which reported that mobile music sales in Nigeria generates up to \$150 million US dollars in annual revenues, and currently provides the largest platform for digital music distribution.

Unarguably, the use of mobile networks and other digital platforms provide a gateway to reach global audiences, and

allows artists to be in touch with their fan base using social media platforms - Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. It is instructive to note that global media organisations such as CNN and CNBC are now devoting media space to the Nigerian music industry. CNN Marketplace Africa notes that at a recent international conference on music (South by Southwest conference - SXSW) held in Austin, Texas, United States of America, in 2017, panel discussion sessions were held on the Nigerian music industry, for the first time. Finally, the entry of global music labels like Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, and Universal Music Group into the Nigerian music industry as evidenced by the signing of local music artists like Burna Boy (Warner), Davido (Sony), Tiwa Savage (Universal), and others, indicates that the industry is assuming global relevance.

## Conclusion

The creative and cultural industries concept was formulated as a policy framework to harness the individual talents in the creative and cultural industries. The big idea was to provide a viable and sustainable platform for promoting economic prosperity in local populations and to transform cultural societies into viable value adding participants in the national and global economy (Kwanashie et al, 2009). Therefore, the impact of the cultural industries is beyond the economy. As cultural segments they have intrinsic cultural identity values that cannot be quantified in monetary terms. There are social impacts which include providing platforms for cultural expression, contributing to civilization, creating a sense of pride and dignity, promoting the art, reducing poverty, among others. The wellspring of expression it affords ordinary people constitute forms of social and

cultural liberation (UNDP/UNESCO, 2013, p. 21). The impact of these two segments of Nigeria's creative industries have proved to platforms for cultural expression and the globalisation of culture, promotion of the arts and which contributes to civilisation. Without doubt, Nigerian music and film are veritable cultural exports, and as Nwankwo (2018) noted, these segments among others in Nigeria's creative industries have bathed Nigeria with global limelight.

The Nigeria film and music industries have fared well in terms of providing employment and a means of economic empowerment for ordinary talents and creative people. Their estimated contribution to GDP suggest that both industries together are providing millions of direct and indirect jobs in the Nigeria economy. In terms of value added, these industries are currently generating revenues in hundreds of millions of US dollars and are making significant contributions to income taxes and foreign exchange earnings through royalties from IPRs. In a country where there is high incidence of high negative emigration due to poverty, insecurity and unemployment, this is a welcome development. The opportunities these segments provide remains an encouragement to many Nigerians in the Diaspora to return.

The structure of the Nigerian film segment has also proved that there can be success outside the Hollywood model. This success led to the creation of iROKOTv, the leading internet-based African movies distribution service. IROKOTv, was simply born out of the need to create and effectively distribute Nigerian movies. The iROKOTv platforms has ensured that creators of IPR in the film segment derive economic benefits. This ensures that more titles are produced by Nigerian producers. It has however expanded its operations



to include movies from other countries in Africa. IROKOTV has subscriptions across the world, especially, among Africans in the Diaspora, which is its main target audience. But it all started with the success of Nigerian film.

In conclusion, Nigerian music and film have created a new wave of cultural awareness and increasing tendency to identify with Nigeria, especially, among Nigerians in the Diaspora. Due to their economic potential, there is now a resuscitated sense of pride in being Nigerian. Nigerian stars that now populate these two segments are shining so bright that they are increasingly eclipsing the previously dark and battered image associated with the Nigerian identity, thereby encouraging many in the Diaspora to consider returning home. By strictly exploiting their talent and creativity, they have attracted international capital and foreign direct invest from global capitalist players in music and entertainment. These erstwhile local players have demonstrated that ordinary Nigerians have a critical role to play in making Nigeria better. Despite the apparent weaknesses and documented failures of successive governments, ordinary citizens in these two segments have used their creative talents to positively promote the image and culture of Nigeria to the world.

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