

SOCIAL MEDIA SKIT-MAKING AND THE RISE OF NEO-NOLLYWOOD: ANALYZING NIGERIAN COMEDY SKITS

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Abstract

Despite the popularity of the skit-industry as Nollywood's other, the intricacies surrounding its popularity and artistic style are yet to be given detailed attention. This study therefore investigated the emergence and impact of social media-driven comedy skits within Nigeria's entertainment landscape, referred to in this paper as "Neo-Nollywood." The study relied on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory to examine how social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube have enabled the rising popularity of skit-making, positioning its industry as a vital sub-sector of the traditional Nollywood, which has revolutionized content creation, distribution, and audience engagement. Through qualitative methodology of research which entailed analysis of selected skits and interviews with

prominent skit-makers, the research explored thematic content, production processes, audience reception, and social media dynamics. The findings reveal that comedy skits serve not only as entertainment but also as potent tools for social critique, cultural expression, and political satire. The study highlights the strategic use of humor, local languages, and relatable themes that resonate with Nigerian audiences, fostering widespread virality and community participation. It concludes that social media has democratized entertainment production, empowering a new generation of content creators and reshaping Nigeria's cultural economy. The study underscores the importance of creativity, technological adaptation, and audience interaction in sustaining this burgeoning industry and influencing societal discourse.

Key words: Social Media, Internet, Skit-making, Digital Culture, Neo-Nollywood, Audience Engagement, Viral Share, Content Creation.

Introduction

The emergence of social media has revolutionized not just communication but also the entertainment landscape particularly the Nigeria film industry, popularly referred as Nollywood. In recent years, a new form of creative expression has emerged from the dynamic cultural environment occasioned by the popularization of Internet technology as the most effective tool for information dissemination and gathering. Beyond the strict technology-tailored framing at the dawn of its emergence, the internet according to Barry Leiner *et al* has turned into a techno-

cultural infrastructure. They contend that “the Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before ... And its influence reaches not only to the technical fields of computer communications but throughout society as we move toward increasing use of online tools to accomplish electronic commerce, information acquisition, and community operations” (2). Leiner *et al* further explain that the apogee of Internet’s exploit is the “commercialization of the technology” (15). Internet’s partnership with the social media enabled this commercialization. Having learnt that the social media, as an Internet-driven media, relies heavily on the efficiency of the Internet to function, media and entertainment practitioners, creative artists, skit-makers inclusive began to utilize social media, as borderless and pervasive media in distributing artistic and cultural products to a global audience in quick time.

Skit making has gained momentum in the present entertainment landscape in Nigeria and the global arena owing to social media’s influence and its closest ally, the Internet. Skit-making has in fact, become an industry of its own accommodating numerous creative talents and marked by proliferation of comedy skits that tend to combine traditional cum theatrical storytelling techniques with contemporary performance approaches which are then streamed or distributed through various digital platforms. This development which has given birth to what the researcher terms “neo-Nollywood” owing to the industry’s explosive popularity and surge in the number of practitioners and audience alike is characterized by a departure from the conventional film formats which Nollywood is known for –

expansive production budget, large cast, expertise in the handling of high quality and complex digital cameras and allied equipment, strict marketing and distribution format.

The skit-making industry on the other hand thrives in economy of cast and ease of content distribution. Tekena Mark affirms that a number of Nigerian skit-makers leveraged sparse equipment, limited manpower and funds to excel during the industry's formative years (171). The skit-makers leveraged the relative technical, artistic, managerial and financial ease that define skit-making to consistently produce and stream contents online which soon formed a market pool that turned into a digital culture quelling the entertainment appetite of millions of social media users. DVS Ganapathi Raju explains that "digital culture refers to the ways in which digital technologies shape social, cultural, and economic practices" (62). Culture, arts and media have been significantly influenced by digital technology. This influence is evident in the manner the trio are produced, distributed and consumed online. Aleksandra Uzelac and Biserka Cvjetičanin further explain that;

Digital culture is a new complex notion: today digital trends are increasingly interloping with the world of culture and arts, involving different aspects of convergence of cultures, media and information technologies, and influencing new forms of communication. The new possibilities created by ICT – global connectivity and the rise of networks – challenge our traditional ways of understanding culture, extending it to digital culture as well. So, culture today should be understood as an open and

dynamic process that is based on interactive communication, and we cannot think of it as an enclosed system which makes up a ‘cultural mosaic’ with other similar or diverse cultural systems. The ICT and especially the Internet, has given these interrelations a new dimension, by changing our relation towards knowledge and knowledge society, by intensifying the flow of cultural goods and services, and by causing a new understanding of cultural creativity. (3)

Digital culture can therefore be regarded as the dynamic norms, practices, values, and behaviours molded by digital technologies. It shapes how individuals connect, communicate, and derive meaning across various social media platforms. Digital culture proves vital for driving digital transformation in societies while emphasizing creativity, innovation, adaptability, and digital centricity or digital-first thinking.

Understanding how skit-making turned into digital culture entails investigating the interplay between social media and skit-making. This requires an exploration of how the various social media platforms enable skit-makers to reach wider audiences, cultivate grassroots popularity, and respond to societal trends and issues. Mark explains that most of “the skits tackle the theme of gender roles, lingering effects of colonization, social inequalities, religion and corruption, language becomes a tool for navigating power structures, criticizing social norms and expressing discontent within a postcolonial context” (171). In order words, beyond entertainment, skit has become a potent tool for socio-

cultural crusade and the de-colonial agenda in Nigeria and by extension, Africa.

Social media as a digital tool of communication has enabled the pervasiveness of comedy skits in this digital era. Aghogho Agbamu explains that the invention of certain digital tools utilized in promoting and distributing entertainment contents across social media platforms have not only dismantled traditional film marketing format that limits visibility and is characterized by bureaucratic bottlenecks but also encourages innovativeness in film and skit streaming (179). The digital format empowers emerging film and skit-makers to reach out to unlimited population of potential audiences thereby side-stepping traditional distribution challenges that hindered many upcoming artists from excelling in the creative industry in the earlier years. Moreover, comedy skits deliver superior economic value over Nollywood films for both producers and audiences through their brevity and low-cost accessibility on social media. Producers gain by slashing production expenses – quick shoots and minimal resources yield high returns via viral shares and advert revenue – while audiences save on data costs from short, low-bandwidth streams that fit fast strolling habits. This affordability turns skits into social media staple, fuelling endless downloads, views, and remixes without the hefty price tag of full-length films.

As an art form, a number of comedy skits made by Nigerians mirror Nigeria's sociopolitical and cultural landscape, thereby serving as a vehicle for socio-political commentary and pedagogy. In other words, skits not only entertain but also engage audiences in discussions about pressing societal

issues and emerging youth culture. Based on skit's popularity, preference among audiences and edutainment role, one can make bold to say that the skit-making industry has become a critical arm of Nollywood, sparking broader discussions about media influence and cultural representation in this age of Internet technology. This study therefore examines selected comedy skits and their makers within this "Neo-Nollywood" framework, analyzing the nature of the industry, thematic concerns in selected skits, the survivalist techniques adopted by selected skit-makers, audience reception and engagement and other social media dynamics. By investigating these dimensions of the skit-making industry, the study provides insight into how the skit-making industry is reshaping Nigeria's entertainment landscape.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the significant rise in popularity of skit-making, as an emerging as a vibrant sub-sector of Nollywood, there is however a limited understanding of the intricate relationships between social media platforms, skit-making practices and audience engagement. While previous studies highlight skits' rising popularity and relevance, certain dynamics that characterize the industry which positions it as a viable alternative to Nollywood such as its production pattern and technique, thematic (re)presentation and audience engagement have not been thoroughly explored. Regarding skit-making as lower art compared to filmmaking has become disprovable in the light of its soaring popularity, peculiar artistry that stands it out as a unique art form that requires immense wit and exceptional level of creativity to flourish. More so, the industry tends to measure up with the conventional Nollywood in today's entertainment landscape.

This study therefore investigates skit-making as Nollywood's other, analyzing selected skits in order to unravel the factors that tend to elevate the industry to the status of a digital culture.

Methodology

This study employs the qualitative methodology of research. Select episodes of Gentuu and Edoboy's comedy skits were purposively sampled because of their thematic semblance with a number of Nollywood films because beyond humour, the skits address sociopolitical, economic and cultural issues confronting Nigeria. Content analysis approach of the qualitative methodology was utilized in analyzing themes, audience reception and engagement in the select skits. Interview was further used in gathering in-depth data from the skit-makers as regards the modus operandi of the skit-making industry and the dynamics of audience reception and engagement with socio media content. Data from the library and internet materials further supported the study.

Theoretical Framework: Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Diffusion of Innovation is a theory popularized by Everett Rogers in 1962 in his book entitled *Diffusion of Innovations*. Diffusion of innovation, according to Rogers, is a theory that seeks to analyze the reason some ideas or innovations within the humanistic and technological cum scientific spheres are acceptable by the society or gain popularity more swiftly. Clay Helton while affirming the historical indices surrounding the theory, states that "the diffusion of innovation theory explains the passage of a new concept through stages of adoption by people participating in or using

the idea. The “new ideas in the diffusion of innovative theory can be things like ideas, technologies, goods, services, or behaviors” (n.p). Helton’s explanation above justifies the relevance of the theory to this study. Within the entertainment landscape, Ebuka Ilukwe contends that the emergence of Nollywood, its subsequent transnational popularity driven by the video-film revolution and the thereafter award-winning exploits in global competitions which is connected to the industry’s “internet-film” revolution aptly aligns with the diffusion of innovation ideology behind the Diffusion of Innovation theory (“Navigating the Digital Landscape ...” 80 – 81). Certain innovations thrive when the public welcome it and such outcome drive societal or institutional transformation.

Diffusion of innovations as related to this study is bipartite. First is the technological innovation of the social media which revolutionized communication. Regarding it as a “game changer”, Ebuka Ilukwe and Judith Ume hold that the social media which was referred to as the “new media” during its early years of emergence, as it was regarded as secondary to the traditional media – print and electronic, has become a melting pot of media communication, exerting profound impact on almost all humanistic activities and endeavors. They further aver that social media influences contemporary society in diverse ways so much so that no aspect of human endeavour can easily excel without reliance on social media (637).

On the artistic sphere, skit-making is an innovation that relies heavily on the limitless digital space of the social media to diffuse. Ikani Ugbededojo contends that “the proliferation of

social media platforms has revolutionized entertainment and media consumption patterns globally and TikTok and Nollywood, Nigeria's film industry have gained popularity, captivating millions of users and audiences" (336). The explosive and growing popularity of social media and skit-making as innovations that have successfully diffused in contemporary age is worthy of critical attention hence this study. Jose Garcia- Aviles explains that the extent to which an emerging idea or concept impacts on society as well as the level of information received regarding the said idea or concept most likely determines its level of diffusion. Thus certain innovations according to him may tend to be ignored at its inception but would later become unavoidably needful to society if its level of impact is high (5). Similarly, the rise of the social media which during its early years emergence was not accorded much importance has today become almost indispensable in people's daily activities, both formal and informal. Furthermore, entertainment content which seemed far-fetched before the advent of the social media now flooding the social media space is another example of how skits have diffused as an entertainment staple among Nigerian audiences.

Hence, Rogers explains that the Diffusion of Innovations theory has a close tie between technology and communication as affirmed by Garcia-Aviles (6). In essence, the theory recognizes the relevance of technology and communication, and to this extent, social media and skit-making are concepts that directly align to the above ideology and theoretical footing.

Literature Review: Social Media, Comedy Skit and Nigeria's Entertainment Landscape

Social media can be seen as a digital technology driven tool that facilitates the creation and dissemination of information in quick time. Enabled by internet technology, social media has democratized media practice, decentralizing electronic communication and amplifying marginalized voices. Due to its pervasiveness, social media has significantly influenced media practice in recent times as Olusegun Ojomo and Oluwaseyi Sodende affirms that “the emergence of social media has produced diverse changes for broadcast media in the discharge of their entertainment function” (1). This means that the social media being more interactive and less formal provides opportunity for persons who may not be privileged to access broadcast media outlets to maximize the myriad of platforms provided by the social media for mass communication.

In essence, Social media can be said to be the most pervasive media of communication in this digital age due to the fact that its influence has contributed in reshaping communication and entertainment thereby expanding the frontiers of media art and production. Ebuka Ilukwe and Chidinma Ebubeoha, for instance acknowledge the influence of the social media in not only the sustenance but the reshaping of broadcast media practice. According to the;

The advent of the internet necessitated the emergence of the social media which involved communicating with a wider audience via various interactive platforms like Instagram, Telegram, X (Twitter), WhatsApp, Tik Tok, and so on. Hence, contemporary broadcast practice has assumed a more station –

audience conversational approach which tends to blur the producer – consumer divide. Phone-ins, social media comments and reactions have become the latest trends in programme presentation which provides opportunity for more participatory and engaging broadcast experience in this digital age. (78)

Their assertion reinforces the stance that social media has become almost indispensable in the present communication and entertainment landscape, not just expanding the frontiers of media practice but also enabling the emergence of the skit-making industry in Nigeria which in itself has blossomed into what may be safely regarded as a Nollywood other or simply put, “neo Nollywood”. Hence, Godwin Simon affirms that “the professionalization of the hitherto amateurish social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok as well as the platform capitalism that it engenders is empowering these young Nigerians to create a social media skit industry In Nigeria” (n.p). In fact, the entire social media space is virtually taken over by the youth population who now utilize it as veritable site for showcasing their art majorly in the form of skits.

The term “skit” in the Nigerian context broadly refers to short, humorous video clips that depict social realities, often animated by recurring characters, catchphrases, and local dialects. These skits are characterized by their improvisational style, and the use of local languages, which make them accessible to a wider audience (Ojomo and Sodeinde 1). Skits now keep the social media buzzing with activities, constituting a significant percentage of what is now known as digital culture. Thanks to the affordance of smartphones and the accessibility of the Internet as a good

number of social media users have taken skit-making as their stock-in-trade, tasking their imaginative ability and streaming scintillating videos online. Indeed, the comedy genre found expression in skits, as comedy has turned out to be about the most popular genre in contemporary social media era. In fact, skit is now often associated with comic genre.

The emergence and rise to stardom of many Nigerian skit-makers testifies to the fact that skit-making constitutes significantly to what Stuart Cunningham and David Craig terms “Social Media Entertainment (SME)” and a leading force in the “new wave of media globalization” (5409). Furthermore, Ebuka Ilukwe argues that due to the popularity the skit-making industry has garnered, there is noticeable narrowing of earlier existing gap between it and Nollywood. According to him;

The rise of skit-making and other short film genres that are characterized by a sparse cast and minimal budget has further widened the operational scope of the Nigerian film industry, thereby giving room for unlimited exploration of talents. In fact, skit making has turned out to be an extension of Nollywood or what the researcher terms “neo-Nollywood”. Star skit makers who became popular due to their innovativeness and ingenuity, like Adebawale Adedayo (Mr. Macaroni), Nasiru Lawal (Nasboi), Josh Alfred (Josh2funny), Omozele Gabriel (Flora) among others, have been featuring in Nollywood films since the last the couple of years, a trend that has contributed in narrowing the gulf that existed between Nollywood feature filmmakers and skit makers (“The Nigeria film industry ...” 24).

Many Nigerian skit-makers through limitless streaming are (re)defining comedy through their creative outputs.

Social media and skit-making seem to have elevated the artistic relevance of comedy in the present age. Earlier in the history of art and literature, Western literary criticism dismissed comedy as a “lesser genre” than tragedy, a bias rooted in classical theory and entrenched prejudices. This perspective emerged prominently in the writings of influential critics like Aristotle, John Milton and William Hazlitt who championed tragedy’s superiority for its profound revelation of human character and its power to evoke deep emotion. In contrast, they viewed comedy as escapist, treating humanity with through a lighter, more superficial lens (Kieran 427 – 428).

Kieran however challenges this traditional view that tragedy surpasses comedy in literary value. He insists that the perceived superiority of tragedy over comedy lacks justification, as what he terms “high comedy” – a specific type of comedy – achieves parity with tragedy in structure, audience engagement, and significance to human life. High comedies demonstrate how happiness can emerge despite human flaws, paralleling tragedy’s exploration of downfall (439). Social media skits may qualify as “high comedy” in certain respects outlined by Kieran, adapted to their role as popular digital art that mirrors tragedy’s complexity through brief yet artistically packed structures. They generate extensive audience engagement via viral platforms and significantly impact human life – not just as entertainment staples but as sources of economic empowerment, cultural

promotion, and sociopolitical commentary. Although Kieran's high comedy requires complex plots with error, reversal of fortune, recognition, and sympathetic ludicrous treatment evoking pity-to-hope (439-440), the study's select skits achieve this in condensed form: protagonists face escalating mishaps toward disaster, resolve via ironic insight, and end hopefully, as in serialized Nigerian skits by creators like Gentuu and EdoBoy.

Ibe Ogbobuiké and Christabel Chukwuka affirm the ineluctability of comedy in today's social media era. According to them,

A comic skit can be defined as a short comedy-sketch or amusing writing, particularly a parody created to convey a message that is not always instructive or educational. Through a blend of humorous writings and theatrical presentations, these parodies aim to critique and challenge societal norms, conventions and popular culture. With satire serving as its defining characteristic, comic skits have become a popular form of entertainment. (116-117)

The major target of skits is to inform or enlighten through the creation of humor. The technicality and artistic demands in skit-making lies in the evocation of laughter in the audience as it is known that causing people to laugh while watching a performance requires one to master the art of comedy. Ogbobuiké and Chukwuka affirm that "skit-making as an industry requires every skit-maker to put in some work. While making people laugh can be a simple endeavor, the real industry in skit-making is getting people laugh in order to gain money" (177). By acknowledging that skit-making in

Nigeria has become an industry which sometimes intermingles with Nollywood, is another way of referring to it as Nollywood other or simply put, “neo Nollywood “.

Just like theatre is a place where various performances such as music, dance, drama, puppetry, pantomime are staged, the social media provides adequate space for the display of all the above listed performances. However, the comedy genre seems to have taken a larger percentage of the social media space due to its likeability by the audience. Social media has become the hub of comedy in contemporary times. The growing popularity of the comedy genre is attributable to the technological revolution that characterizes the social media. Ogbobuike and Chukwuka affirm that the social media enabled the emergence of a skit-making industry in Nigeria and the diaspora which today has become a lucrative source of income generation to teeming Nigerian youth. They further add that comedy skits predominates the skit-making industry because of the light-hearted and subtle manner in which important messages are conveyed to audiences (116 - 117).

Unlike the tragic genre, comedy triggers laughter and this is why it has become popular in recent times because messages are packaged and delivered to the audience in ludicrous form, thereby making the content appreciated by the audience. Stephen kekeghe ,Oghenekaro Ilolo and Hilary Akuburunwa while analyzing selected comedy skits of Emmanuel Chukwuemeka Jekwu, popularly known as Sabinus holds that his popularity stems from his ability to creatively “appropriate light and dark humour in his comic skits, to euphemistically underscore the depravities and woes that

characterise Nigeria society” (111). Hence, as the audience watches the artistic approximations of the Nigeria society captured in comic form, they easily relate with such situation. They regard the comic content as ludicrous representations of the struggles and challenges of the people while the skits exert some kind of therapeutic effect, temporarily dousing, through evocation of laughter, the pains of belonging to a country that is saddled with numerous challenges that impede real development. Sabinus and other skit-makers like Gentuu and Edoboy, according to Kekeghe, Ilolo, and Akuburunwa “euphemizes repugnant behaviors and dreadful, despairing experiences in Nigeria” (111). The result of such skits is the soothing of the socio-political “wounds” of the populace through humour.

The popularity of comedy skits in Nigeria often point to its cultural relevance, relatability to everyday Nigerian experience and the use of local languages as tool of expression. These key factors account for its high receptiveness by large population of audiences. Emana Ogheneakpobor and Macaulay Mowarin explain that Nigerian comedians “employ a variety of linguistic strategies to communicate with the audience, they employ language alteration and code-switch between NP, English and a variety of indigenous language” (36). This strategy contributes to the popularity of comedy among Nigerian audiences. Nigerians appear to appreciate content that reflects their unique cultural context and comedy skits often fulfill this need by portraying relatable situations, language, characters, and other visual components like costume, make up, scenery, and props thereby fostering a strong connection with viewers.

History of Skit-making in Nigeria

The origin of skit-making in Nigeria can be traced to the country's rich oral tradition, which includes poetry, drama, satirical performances, and the playing of talking drums and other native instruments. It evolved as a vibrant form of comedic expression that reflects the socio-cultural realities of the Nigerian people and has historically served as mediums of social commentary and cultural preservation. Scholars like Isidore Okpewho contend that storytelling in Nigeria has historically been a tool for moral instruction, social cohesion, and political critique. These traditional forms, according to him, often employ humour, satire, and parody to communicate to their audience (42). These elements are also identifiable in social media skits. In the Yoruba culture, for instance, the Oriki (praise poetry) and the Egungun masquerade incorporate humour and satire while commenting on social issues. Similarly, the Mmanwu (masquerade) tradition practiced by the Igbos adopts masked performance in critiquing social issues and confronting institutional authority, thus employing humour as a form of social resistance (Isidienu and Onyekelu 203). These traditional narratives laid the groundwork for contemporary skit-making, which continues to use humour as a means of societal reflection.

The colonial period introduced Western theatrical forms, including comedy sketches and parody, which further influenced Nigerian performance arts. The advent of Nigerian “native” theatre in the mid-20th century, especially through the works of actors like Hubert Ogunde and Duro Ladipo, integrated indigenous storytelling with Western theatrical elements. Aghogho further adds that such performances have their origins in minstrelsy which

according to him often incorporated satire and humor to address social issues such as corruption, injustice, and cultural identity (160 – 161). Over the years, skit-making has transitioned from traditional oral performances to modern digital expressions, particularly through social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Central to this evolutionary trajectory is the relationship between skit-making and stand-up comedy, both of which have contributed significantly to Nigeria's entertainment landscape, shaping public discourse and influencing social norms (Diete par 2). While skit-making and stand-up comedy are distinct forms of comedic expression, they are deeply interconnected in Nigeria's entertainment scene. Both rely on humor as a vehicle for critique and social reflection but differ primarily in delivery mode. Stand-up comedy in Nigeria emerged prominently in the 1990s, with pioneers like Alibaba and Omo Baba No 1 leading the wave. According to Aworita Agoma, Nigerian stand-up comedy was initially rooted in traditional comedic storytelling, often performed in nightclubs, comedy clubs, or on stage during festivals. It has historically functioned as a platform for addressing social, political, and cultural issues directly, with comedians adopting satire, irony, and storytelling techniques (64).

Modern skit-making in Nigeria gained momentum in the early 2000s, primarily through the proliferation of mobile phones and social media platforms. This era marked a shift from traditional stage performances to short, easily shareable video sketches. Nigerian youth, began creating short comedic videos that mimic everyday life, social taboos, political issues, and cultural nuances. According to Ojomo and

Sodeinde, the rise of digital technology democratized entertainment production thereby proving channels and platforms upon which any and everyone's creative output can be seen and appreciated without hindrance (4). The creation and distribution of comedic contents online provided opportunity for creative Nigerians to use humor as a form of social commentary, often addressing topical issues such as corruption, unemployment, and social injustice (Simon 6). Notable skit creators like Mr. Macaroni, Lasisi, Mr. Funny, Elenu, Mark Angel, Gentuu and EdoBoy amongst others have become not just household names, but cultural ambassadors who contribute in shaping the Nigerian popular media culture and exporting her cultural products to the global audience.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Themes in Gentuu and Edoboy's Skits

The rise of social media platforms has revolutionized Nigerian comedy, giving birth to a new wave of content creators such as Gentuu and Edoboy, whose skits reflect contemporary societal issues using humor and satire as devices of audience engagement. Emuze Clinton, popularly known as Gentuu, is a Nigerian comedian, actor, and master of ceremonies (MC) recognized for his engaging comedy skits on social media platforms. He embarked on his comedic journey in 2018, focusing on creating content that humorously depicts the realities of life and relationships. He has gained prominence through his relatable and humorous skits that resonate with a broad audience on the social media.

Okojie Bobby Oseyi on the other hand, popularly known as Edoboy Billions, is a Nigerian comedian and social media

personality recognized for his engaging comedy skits. Born and raised in Edo State, Nigeria, Edoboy discovered his passion for comedy at a young age, often entertaining friends and family with his witty remarks and humorous antics. His active presence on social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, has garnered him widespread recognition. The duos' skits mirror Nigerian life, encapsulating diverse themes that resonate deeply with their audiences. Analyzing these themes reveals how social media-driven skits are not just entertainment but also a form of social commentary, cultural expression, and identity negotiation. Gentuu and Edoboy adopt unique artistic approaches in treating similar themes in their skits. Some of the themes as would be explored in their selected skits capture socio-political issues, particularly Nigeria's political climate, highlighting issues such as corruption, governance failures, electoral malpractice, and police brutality.

Almost all artistic content captures theme(s) that reflect socio-political, economic and cultural situations within the society it belongs. Comedies present such situations by satirically creating humour. Gentuu's comedy skits are no exception. Love and relationship matters are some of the recurring themes in Gentuu's comedy skits. Gentuu frequently explores the intricacies of romantic and platonic relationships, highlighting misunderstandings, conflicts, and humorous situations that arise between partners and friends. This focus offers viewers a comedic lens through which to view common interpersonal challenges. The skit-maker also develops the theme of everyday experiences where his content often draws from daily life scenarios, making his humor accessible and relatable. By portraying typical situations with a comedic twist, Gentuu connects with his audience on a

personal level. Social Interactions and Friendship is another theme in his comedy. Gentuu looks into the nuances of friendships and social interactions, showcasing the humorous aspects of loyalty, betrayal, and camaraderie. These skits reflect the complexities of human relationships in a lighthearted manner.

Political commentary is another critical preoccupation in Gentuu's skits. For instance in one of Gentuu's popular skits entitled "Election in Nigeria", Gentuu plays a flamboyant politician who promises voters everything: roads, hospitals, jobs, free electricity, and more. He makes grandiose promises during campaign rallies, often using exaggerated Nigerian slang and humorous catchphrases like "Naija go better!". The voters portrayed as eager but skeptical, cheer and accept the promises. After the election, the scene shifts to the politician enjoying luxurious goods while the voters are left disappointed, with scenes of broken roads, unfulfilled promises, and citizens lamenting.

This skit humorously depicts the Nigerian electoral process, exaggerating campaign promises and the subsequent reality faced by citizens. It's a satirical take on the cycle of deception often associated with Nigerian politics. The skit critically treats themes like political deception and corruption, voter disillusionment, the cyclical nature of Nigerian politics and the role of social media in exposing political flaws. This skit resonates deeply because it reflects common frustrations. It uses humor to critique a pervasive issue, uniting viewers with shared experiences and fostering political awareness. It also underscores the role social media plays in holding politicians accountable.

“Traffic Jam Chronicles” is another example of the sociopolitical dimension to Gentuu’s skit art. This skit features Gentuu and other cast who are commuters stuck in a traffic jam while a traffic police officer demands bribes from drivers, while vendors go about their daily business, selling snacks and phone chargers from makeshift stalls on the roadside, with exaggerated product pitches. Meanwhile, a driver comically tries to bribe the traffic officer with exaggerated gifts and promises as commuters engage in humorous banter, dialectical exchanges, singing popular songs to pass time. The skit is a comedic depiction of the daily traffic congestion in Nigerian urban areas, especially Lagos, illustrating the frustrations and humorous interactions that occur during commutes. Themes punctuated in the skit include infrastructure challenges and governance issues, everyday frustrations and resilience of Nigerians, community bonding amid adversity, complacency in the face of bad governance, and the humorous coping mechanisms of urban dwellers. The skit resonates because traffic congestion is a universal Nigerian experience. It provides comic relief while subtly criticizing infrastructural neglect. It also fosters a shared identity among urban viewers, turning daily frustrations into humour.

Gentuu’s “The Corrupt Politician’s Speech” is another satirical comedy that portrays Nigerian politicians who make outlandish promises during campaigns, only to forget them afterward.

Gentuu, in this skit, plays a caricatured politician giving a speech filled with absurd promises like “I will turn the

Sahara into a garden of flowers” and “I will make Nigeria the global capital of tourism in 24 hours”. The scene is exaggerated with flamboyant gestures, humorous dialects, and over-the-top promises. The audience, made up of fictional villagers, reacts with skepticism and laughter. Gentuu treats the themes of political dishonesty and corruption, and disillusionment associated with leadership. Through this skit, Gentuu exemplifies the power of satire in political critique as viewers can easily relate with the narrative. This skit exposes widespread frustrations with Nigerian politicians, using humor to criticize false promises and promote political awareness. It aligns with Nigeria’s tradition of using comedy to comment on societal issues.

One dramatic style that is common in his comedies is satire. Through satire, Gentuu addresses societal norms and behaviours, encouraging viewers to reflect on various aspects of contemporary life while providing entertainment. He often collaborates with fellow comedians and influencers, such as Sydney Talker, Nasty Blaq, and Lord Lamba, to create diverse and engaging content. These partnerships not only expand his reach but also introduce varied comedic styles to his audience. Gentuu's comedy skits are characterized by their focus on relationships, everyday life, social interactions, and satirical elements. His ability to weave these themes into humorous narratives has solidified his position as a notable figure in Nigeria's digital entertainment landscape.

Edoboy is another comedian whose contents trigger audience interest due to their socio-political relevance and entertainment quality. Edoboy's skits often draw humor from common, relatable scenarios, highlighting the quirks and

idiosyncrasies of daily life. This approach allows audiences to see reflections of their own experiences thereby enhancing the comedic impact of the skits. One thing that is unique about his comedy is the infusion of culture. Incorporating elements from Nigerian culture, traditions, and societal norms, Edoboy's comedy resonates deeply with local audiences. By weaving cultural references into his skits, he fosters a sense of familiarity and connection with viewers. His “Traditional Marriage Customs”, a skit that humorously portrays traditional marriage rites in some parts of Nigeria, emphasizing the elaborate and sometimes absurd financial and physical procedures involved is a good example.

Edoboy stars in the comedy as a young man preparing for marriage and being faced with a series of traditional rites that involve exaggerated ceremonies. The marriage rite involved several absurd stages like the “Yam Festival” stage where the groom must present a giant yam to the bride’s family, with humorous dialogues about the size of the yam compared to the groom’s financial status, the “Bride Price Negotiation,” portrayed as a comedic auction where families haggle over the bride’s value, with humorous exaggerations about dowry demands as well as the “Approval Ritual,” involving funny interrogation scenes where the groom is questioned about his background, with comic responses. Themes that resonate in this skit include cultural identity and preservation, Modern versus traditional value systems, the humorous side of societal expectations in marriage and negotiations of gender roles and family authority. The skit humorously captures the complexity and sometimes absurdity of traditional rites, prompting reflection on cultural practices in a modern

context. It resonates with young Nigerians who are caught between traditional expectations and contemporary lifestyles.

Social commentary is another important theme in his comedy. Beyond entertainment, Edoboy utilizes satire and sarcasm to comment on scathing societal issues, critiquing certain behaviours and trends. He utilizes this approach to not only elicit laughter but to also encourage reflection on various aspects of society. His “Social Media Addiction” buttresses this point. This skit explores how Nigerian youth are increasingly obsessed with social media, often at the expense of real-world interactions.

Edoboy plays the role of a young man whose life revolves around his phone. The skit depicts a young man who ignores family and friends to scroll through social media feeds. His obsession for social media content consumption leads to humorous misunderstandings, such as missing out on important events and misinterpreting messages he receives. A scene where he tries to impress a girl by showing off his “online followers,” but fails to notice her annoyance and other exaggerated memes and viral contents are used to add flavour to the skit thereby intensifying the humour. Digital addiction among youth, the influence of social media on identity and relationships, the contrast between online personas and real-life interactions, youth aspirations and frustrations are some critical themes captured in the skit. The skit comments on a growing societal concern – how social media shapes perceptions, behaviours, and social interactions among Nigerian youth. It humorously warns about overdependence on digital validation.

Exaggeration and absurdity are devices he employs through hyperbolic presentation of situations in his skits. In other words, he amplifies the comedic impact of his skits by taking ordinary scenarios to extreme or absurd levels, resulting in humor that captivates his audience. These techniques are however not uncommon among Nigerian comedians, as evidenced by studies analyzing comic techniques in the works of his peers like Broda Shaggi and Mr. Macaroni. Similar studies also highlight the use of distortion, retorts, rhetorical questions, satire, malapropism, and sarcasm to create humorous effects and convey particular messages emphatically among the audience. Edoboy and Gentuu's comedy skits are characterized by their reliability, cultural depth, insightful social commentary, and creative exaggeration. These themes contribute to their growing popularity and the effectiveness of their humor in engaging and entertaining audiences.

Audience Reception and Engagement with Case Study Content

The success of Gentuu and Edoboy's skits hinges on how audiences receive and engage with their content. Social media platforms facilitate direct interaction, enabling viewers to not only consume content but also to participate in ongoing dialogues through comments, shares, and remixes. Understanding audience reception involves examining engagement metrics, viewer feedback, and the socio-cultural context influencing perceptions. One of the patterns of audience engagement is through content's virality and shareability. Data gathered during this study shows that many of Gentuu and Edoboy's skits go viral within hours or days of posting, indicating high shareability. This virality is driven

by relatable content, humor, and topical themes that resonate with Nigerian audiences across socio-economic backgrounds. The shareability of these skits amplifies their impact, transforming individual viewers into active participants in social discourse. The short-form nature aligns with social media consumption patterns, providing easily digestible content that encourages sharing.

Another audience engagement pattern is through interactive feedback and comment culture. Audience comments reveal a high level of engagement, with viewers sharing personal experiences, agreeing or disagreeing with skit messages, and suggesting alternative narratives. For example, Gentuu's "Election in Nigeria" video went viral, amassing over one million views on Instagram within weeks. Comments ranged from laughter to serious political debates. Many viewers shared personal stories of broken promises, and some used the skit as a meme to criticize current political figures. Its humor made it accessible, encouraging widespread discussion and engagement. Also his "The Corrupt Politician's Speech" video got over 800,000 views and was widely shared and remixed. Many viewers commented that it accurately represented their experiences with politicians, and some used memes to mock current political campaigns thus reinforcing the role of comedy as a form of social protest. "Traffick Jam Chronicles" received over 2 million views, becoming one of Gentuu's most shared skits. It sparked memes and remixes, with viewers creating their own versions or adding captions. Comments often expressed solidarity and humour, with some viewers sharing their personal traffic stories, reinforcing the skit's relatability.

On the other hand, Edoboy's "Traditional Marriage Customs" skit garnered over 500,000 views and thousands of comments. Many viewers shared their own experiences with traditional marriage rites, using light-hearted expressions. Some used the skit to poke fun at overly elaborate ceremonies, while others appreciated the subtle critique of societal pressures and fostered conversations about balancing tradition with modernity. Similarly, his "Social Media Addiction" skit amassed over 1.5 million views and hundreds of comments, many from youths who related to the content. Some shared their own stories of social media obsession, while others used the skit as a meme template. It sparked conversations about digital wellbeing and the challenge of balancing online / offline life in a social media saturated society.

The skit-making industry in Nigeria, even though not as economically powerful as the conventional Nollywood, tends to be measuring up with the latter in terms of popularity and cultural production. Gentuu and Edoboy in separate interviews with the researchers explained that although the skit-making industry is behind, in terms of equipment and manpower, their impact in the global digital space matches that of Nollywood. Gentuu contends that "skits are consumed quite faster than a full length film so audiences tend to prefer watching skits in which they can grasp the message faster which will otherwise take longer time grasping if it were a normal Nollywood film" (online interview). Similarly, Edoboy held that "the popularity of Nigerian skit-makers has soared across the globe ... You can travel to any part of the world and be easily recognized, you will be surprised, even where you do not expect people to know you" (online

interview). These are proof that skit-making industry has become as popular as Nollywood as it continues to expand in terms of production style and thematic focus.

The skit-makers however noted that the popularity of the industry also came with its own challenge which is mainly increased competition. According to Edoboy, “skit-making in Nigeria is growing very fast. If you are not talented, creative, dynamic and innovative you may not survive the changes and trends that continually redefine the industry” (online interview). Gentuu further added that “the competition in skit-making is very high now. You have to put everything into making your followers enjoy your contents, otherwise you will lose them to another skit-maker. So the growth of the industry brought its own challenge” (online interview). As the industry provides unlimited employment owing to the democratization of art production courtesy of the social media, engaging the audience and sustaining one’s art demands creativity, tact, skill and intellect.

Analysis of Gentuu and Edoboy's skits as well as their social media receptivity and engagements show that social media comedy contents have gone beyond mere entertainment. They have become tools for reflecting, critiquing, and sparking conversations about the Nigeria society. Their humor, relatability, and social commentary style foster strong audience engagement, making them central figures in the emerging “Neo Nollywood” driven by social media. The viral success and active participation of viewers through comments, shares, remixes, and memes underscore the sociopolitical and cultural impact of these skits. They serve as accessible platforms for discussing politics, culture, daily

struggles, and youth aspirations, shaping perceptions and fostering community dialogue in Nigeria's digital landscape.

The rise of skit-makers like Gentuu and Edoboy therefore reflects a broader trend in Nigeria's entertainment industry, where digital platforms have become pivotal in content distribution. This shift has democratized content creation, allowing comedians to reach audiences directly and successfully monetize their work without undue interference that characterize Nollywood's marketing and distribution subsector.

Conclusion

The study has shown that the expansive popularity and socio-cultural relevance of the skit-making industry in Nigeria makes it stand almost at par with Nollywood. Its rapid rise in this age of digital technology has democratized comedy, shifting power from traditional comedians to social media-savvy youth. It has also created new pathways for social activism, where humor becomes a tool for engaging the masses and fostering social change. The study also found that skit-making is characterized by Production and Distribution Dynamics. Skit-making thrives due to its low-cost production model, requiring minimal equipment and manpower. Content is often pre-recorded, edited with basic tools, and distributed via social media platforms, which facilitate instant reach and virality. Prominent skit-makers employ improvisation, local dialects, and relatable scenarios to enhance engagement. Their ability to produce short, punchy content aligns with the consumption

habits of Nigerian youth, who prefer quick, shareable, and impactful videos.

The emergence and popularity of skit-making in Nigeria has shown that comedy can be adopted as an effective tool for sociopolitical critique. The study has further shown that Nigerian skit-makers often adopt satire as an artistic style to criticize the government, by portraying themes of corruption, and other social vices bedeviling the nation. These themes reflect the societal frustrations, aspirations, and cultural dynamics of Nigeria's diverse population. The skits serve as a mirror, that foster social awareness and stimulate public discourse.

The study observed an interconnection between Audience Engagement and Viral Traction. Audience interaction plays a crucial role in the success of skits. Comments, shares, remixes, and memes are indicators of high engagement levels. Skits like Gentuu's "Election in Nigeria" and Edoboy's "Social Media Addiction" have garnered millions of views, eliciting active participation from viewers worldwide. The viral nature of these skits demonstrates their capacity to influence perceptions, reinforce cultural identities, and serve as platforms for social activism.

The study further identifies social media as an enabler of cultural and artistic innovation. Social media platforms have democratized content creation, allowing emerging skit-makers to bypass traditional industry barriers. This has led to a proliferation of diverse voices and styles, fostering a vibrant digital entertainment ecosystem.

The industry's growth is marked by increased competitiveness, with creators continually innovating to sustain audience interest.

The implication of the study is that skit significantly impacts on Nigeria's cultural and entertainment economy. As skit-making is gaining increasing recognition both locally and globally, skit-makers are becoming cultural ambassadors, influencing perceptions of Nigeria's societal issues, and creating economic opportunities. The industry's accessibility and scalability position it as a significant contributor to Nigeria's creative economy.

Lastly, there is clear alignment between the finding and study's theoretical framework. The rapid adoption and diffusion of social media technology and skit-making as an entertainment form align with the Diffusion of Innovation theory. The acceptance and integration of these digital practices demonstrate how technological innovation influences cultural practices, leading to new forms of social expression and engagement.

Based on the findings and implications this study, the following recommendations are proposed.

- Enhanced support for content creators: Government and industry stakeholders should develop policies that provide training, funding, and infrastructure support for skit-makers. This will help improve production quality, professionalism, and sustainability of the industry.

- Promotion of ethical and responsible content: While humor and satire are vital, content creators should be encouraged to produce socially responsible content that promotes positive societal values without propagating stereotypes or misinformation.
- Capacity building and digital literacy: Educational institutions and industry bodies should organize workshops and seminars to equip skit-makers with skills in video production, digital marketing, and audience engagement strategies, ensuring they stay competitive and innovative.
- Collaboration with traditional media and cultural institutions: Integrating skit-making with mainstream media and cultural agencies can foster synergy, expand audiences, and legitimize skit-making as a credible art form that complements traditional Nollywood.
- Research and documentation: Further academic and industry research should be encouraged to document the evolution of digital comedy, analyze audience demographics, and explore the socio-economic impacts of the industry.
- Encourage content diversity and inclusivity: Promote the production of skits that reflect Nigeria's cultural diversity, gender inclusivity, and social issues, ensuring broad representation and fostering social cohesion.

The study affirms that skit-making is a significant component of Nigeria's entertainment industry while underscoring the transformative power of social media in redefining cultural production and consumption in contemporary Nigeria.

Furthermore, the industry's growth signifies a shift toward a more inclusive, innovative, and economically viable entertainment sector. As skit-makers continue to harness digital technologies creatively, their influence is poised to expand further, shaping societal perceptions and fostering cultural resilience.

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