

AN INQUIRY INTO INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE BENIN VIDEO-FILM CULTURE IN NOLLYWOOD

Osakue Stevenson OMOERA

Ambrose Alli University, NIGERIA

Abstract. Today hundreds of indigenous movies are produced yearly in Benin, Ebira, Fulfulde, Ijaw, among other ‘hinterland’ Nigerian languages, besides the so-called dominant Nollywood films of Igbo/English, Yoruba, and Hausa language expressions. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this paper inquires into the level of institutional support the Benin language video-film industry gets from development agents, including the government. There are so many untapped cultural, artistic, and economic potentials for Nigeria’s movie-making and entertainment industry in the ‘hinterlands’ which can further boost its ‘Unique Selling Point’ in the national and global arenas. Regrettably, these micro-national film cultures remain largely underexplored and under-theorized, but have been demonstrated to be representationally consequential in terms of production output, audience reception, and opportunities for contending views, and voices.¹⁾ It is in this respect that a fuller reflection on, and influence of issues in Nollywood film cultures have become needful. This is to enable film scholars, enthusiasts, theorists, critics, and entrepreneurs to better understand and navigate the boundless cultural,

artistic and economic potentials of Nollywood against the background of the kind of support it gets/should get from relevant development agents. Focusing on the Benin film industry situation, this paper finds that a significant percentage of the sampled audience holds that the support the Benin video-film enjoys is very marginal in spite of its noticeable potentials. Consequently, it recommends greater support from relevant authorities for the emergent industry by way of provision of accessible credit facilities, training schools, and requisite technologies to strengthen the capacities of its practitioners, and enhance the production of more culturally germane Benin video-films, and ultimately contribute to Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP).

Keywords: Benin video-film culture, Nollywood, institutional support, Benin film practitioners, economic viability, empirical evidence-based findings, development agents, government, Nigeria

Introduction

With the Ebenovbe Ogie's created Edo Movie, and Music Academy Awards (EMMAA) running successfully for the second year,²⁾ the stage appears to be set for the Benin video-film industry to take a quantum leap into greater societal relevance. Apart from providing a platform for Benin film practitioners to showcase their video works, and network, take stock of their activities, and earn worthy recognitions, this annual local-based event, among other efforts, is likely to deepen the production density, and strengthen the economic base of the emergent industry in the long run. Moreover, empirical evidence-based findings from an inquiry into the Benin-speaking audience's reception of Benin (Edo) video-films (Omoera, 2014a; 2014b) underscore the cultural, artistic/economic viability of Benin film's segment of Nollywood. In spite of this, there appears to be little or no institutional support from development agents, including the government, to further harness the viability of

the Benin film in addressing developmental challenges which modernity has thrown up in the Benin locality and indeed in Nigeria. This article empirically inquires into the level of support the Benin video-film industry gets from relevant authorities, including government organizations (GOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs), in its bid to provide more artistic, and economic opportunities for its practitioners, and the growing youth population, to ensure sustainability, and edutain Benin film audiences, and in so doing, contribute to Nigeria's GDP.

In this paper, institutional support is operationalised as all kinds of constructive institutional aid, pragmatic backing, matter-of-fact assistance, etc, an industry is granted or can be granted by relevant authorities, including concerned GOs, NGOs, and CBOs in order for it to be able to realise its potentials, enhance and sustain productivity and contribute its quota to societal growth and development. Such kinds of support may be in the form of the provision of accessible funds, training, requisite technologies, and partnership networks for players in an industry, and in the case of this discourse, the Benin video-film industry, which is teeming with immense economic potentials at the moment. However, one of the problems associated with many public and private ventures in the larger Nigerian business environment, and indeed African context is the issue of weak institutions or structures.³⁾ For instance, a number of programmes and projects have been thought of, set up or vigorously pursued to address unemployment, create opportunities for the growing populations or serve as instruments of social inclusion in communities within the multi-faith and multilingual structure of Nigeria, but sustenance has always been the problem. Historically relatively, programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P), etc, have had laudable intentions but a quick retrospection would reveal that they

have virtually become drainpipes for government officials who collude with some greedy business people in Nigerian to siphon public treasury.

This may have informed the notion that the government has no ‘business doing businesses’, with those who hold this kind of view arguing that propositions that government should take deliberate steps, and create platforms, of artistic and economic opportunities, etc, always amount to nothing but mere nostrums (Onwuchekwa et al., 2011). But the industrial environment (where filmmaking and other productive activities take place) in Nigeria is very peculiar and is fraught with a number of challenges, which need institutional support from development agents like the various tiers of government to address (Omoera, 2013). While Osakue Omoera contends that with adequate institutional support the local video culture in Benin can serve as safety nets for the large number of youths in the area who roam the streets without skill, competencies and are crime-prone (Omoera, 2013), Alexandra Meleiro (2009) argues that the video industry in Nigeria and Ghana is capable of absorbing restive, jobless but potentially creative persons if the right structures are in place.

These observations are not against the grain of the current global governing argument of the necessity of supporting the development of a continuous capacity for direct production of films in the form of strong institutional *presences* (Hjort & Morris, 2012; Stoneman, 2013). However, some studies have conceptually or theoretically drawn attention to the lack of support for the Nigerian film industry, whether at the micro-national or national level (Haynes, 1995; 2000; Okome, 2008). It is in view of such claims that this study empirically inquires into the level of institutional support the local Benin language video-film as an industry gets from development agencies, including the government, with regard to its potential to create job, and wealth on a sustainable basis for its practitioners, and the teeming Benin youth, and in so doing, contribute to national development. In this connection, this study

will attempt to provide answers to the following questions: (1) have development agencies, including the government, encouraged and supported the Benin video-film industry; (2) how can the Benin video-film practitioners create platforms for sustainable growth.

Case study

The Benin video-film subsection of Nollywood is an ethno-national film culture whose creative activities and content derive from the Benin language, and worldview. It has two distinctive traits, which culturally mark it out: celebration of royalty, including Obaship, and ancestral rites (Omoera, 2014a). The chief producers and consumers of this video culture is the Benin (Edo) people who are a major minority group in today's South-Southern Nigeria. Osarenren Omoregie claims that Benin cultural history, and traditional system of government dates as far back as the 4th century BC (Omoera, 2014a), but Jacob Egharevba argues that the Benin Empire of the first period or dynasty was founded about 900 AD (Egharevba, 2005). Whatever the case may be, there are ample evidences that the Benins had, and still have a rich cultural history, and an effective traditional system of government as symbolised by the Oba of Benin who occupies a special place in the lives of the Benins.⁴⁾ The Benin video-film producers draw from the rich repertory of Benin history, imagery, music, dance, language and so on, especially as they pertain to the Oba who embodies the customs and traditions of the Benin race to make their films. Going by the prevailing geo-political arrangement, the Benins occupy the southern senatorial district of Edo State, comprising seven local government areas (LGAs), namely, Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba-Okha, Orhiomwon, Uhunmwonde, Ovia South-West, and Ovia North-East, with the famous Benin City, doubling as their ancestral home and the capital of Edo State.

The Benin-speaking audience reception of Benin video-films has been phenomenal (Omoera, 2014a). Increasingly, more of the films are being li-

censed by the censor (that is, the National Film and Video Censors Board, NFVCB) for public screening; video rental/sales shops are stocking more of them; and every quarter an increasing number of such films feature on DSTV Africa Magic channels. In fact, Lancelot Imasuen's tour of cinemas in Nigeria, the Americas, and Europe, with his award-winning movies such as *Ebuwa* (2009) *Adesuwa* (2012), *Invasion 1897* (2014), etc, have further opened up the widows of Benin films to the wider world. Other dynamic Benin film practitioners such as Sylvester Uwadiae, Jolly Amadasun, Wilson Ehigiator, Edionwe Onions, Monday Osagie, Eunice Omoregie-Osayande, Omadeli Uwagboe, have produced, and are still producing fascinating movies in different production sites in Benin City and environs. The worth of this bustling socio-economic continuum of creative/productive activities in the Benin area and elsewhere in Nigeria represent a sphere of critical possibilities in the country's quest for sustainable national development.

Methodology

A multi-dimensional approach involving questionnaire, key informant interview (KII), and participant observation was adopted in this study. This combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study is what contemporary researchers refer to as Triangulation Strategy (Oboh, 2014). The method involves a process of crosschecking the findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to validate research findings (Deacon et al., 1998). Accordingly:

[T]his model (Triangulation Strategy) generally uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other. [...] This strategy usually integrates the results of the two methods during the interpretation phase. This interpretation can either note the conver-

gence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study or explain any lack of convergence that may result (Creswell, 2003).

This approach was adopted in this study because virtually no critical or empirical scholarly attention has been paid to the issue of institutional support for the Benin video-film culture. Thus, the nature, manner, and volume of creative activities in that segment of Nollywood merit quantitative and not only qualitative assessment. In view of this development, the study is aimed at contributing to the present knowledge of Benin video-film as an ethno-national film culture in Nollywood.

The Benin-speaking people who watch Benin video-films and reside within the seven LGAs in Edo south constitute the population of this study. Due to obvious constraints, it would be extremely difficult to source information from every member of the population. Hence, it was necessary to take a sample of the population under investigation. Out of the 600 copies of questionnaires administered among the respondents, 556 respondents indicated that they watch Benin video-films. These 556 were the subjects used in this study. The size of the sample was intended to ensure an adequate representation of the study population so as to represent its characteristics in terms of value, conviction, and perception. The survey questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A consisted of seven questions dealing with background information about the respondents (demographic variables), while section B dealt with the research questions which were divided into 10 items worded in a three-point response format ranging from ‘Yes’, ‘No’, to ‘Don’t know’. The questionnaire was pretested in Oredo LGA, which is the most populous LGA in Edo south. Stratified random sampling technique was the main sampling procedure employed in this work.

For efficient management of the study, it was expedient to divide the study area into a number of smaller, non-overlapping units (zones). Accordingly, the study area was divided into three zones on the basis of geographical nearness, and the historical, and cultural affinities of the seven Benin-speaking LGAs. That is, Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha LGAs made up Zone 1, Ovia South-West and Ovia North-East LGAs constituted Zone 2 while Uhunmwonde and Orhiomwon formed Zone 3. Next, on the basis of random sampling, five wards were picked from each zone. To achieve this, all the wards in each zone were carefully listed and numbers were assigned to them. Then, five wards were randomly selected from each of the zones, using a ballot system thereby having a total of 15 wards in all. The essence of this was to give the wards in each zone an equal opportunity of being selected. From each of the selected wards, two communities (or villages) were randomly chosen for the study. Finally, through accidental random sampling the researcher administered a total of 20 questionnaires to people (respondents) in and around the communities selected from each of the 15 wards, making a total sum of 200 questionnaires per zone. To make the process of administering questionnaires efficient and well organized the researcher employed the services of research assistants who were familiar with the communities. Questionnaires were administered to respondents in households, government offices, markets, schools, bus stations, and other public places in and around the designated communities.

In order to generate additional information/data which have bearing on the issue of institutional support for the Benin video-film industry, interviews were conducted with some purposively selected stakeholders (Benin filmmakers, enthusiasts, cultural administrators, palace historians, video-shop operators, etc.). And, as a participant observer, the researcher paid several visits to production-sites within Benin City and participated in the making of Be-

nin films, from 2007-2013, while also availing himself of relevant archival documents on Benin society and culture.

Results and analyses

Demographically speaking, the number of male respondents (288; 51.79%) was slightly higher than that of the female respondents (268; 48.20%). The age bracket of 21–30 (48.92%) had the highest number of respondents compared to those above 50 (3.59%), with the others ranged in-between. This young population (48.92% above) has great implications for the sustainability of patronage of Benin films and it is likely that future actors, producers, marketers, and other workers in the industry may emanate from this group in the future. A majority of the sampled population is made up of single individuals (344; 61.87%) while a small number of them are divorced (4; 0.72%). All the respondents in this study (556; 100%) are fluent in the Benin language. They are all relatively educated, whether formally or informally, with 236 (42.44%) and (168; 30.22%) being ND/NCE and HND/Bachelor's degree holders respectively. In terms of occupation, students (208; 37.41%) are more in number, followed by civil servants (158; 28.41%), business people (128; 23.02%), and others (62; 11.15%) respectively. Also, a majority of the sampled audience are Christians (484; 87.05%) with pockets of Traditionalists (28; 5.03%) and Muslims (32; 5.76%). Data were analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages.

Analyses of research questions

Research question 1

Have development agencies, including the government, encouraged and supported the Benin video-film industry?

This research question has been stretched into questions 1-5 of the questionnaire. It is very significant that over 80% (Tables 1 and 2) of the re-

spondents believe that more investments are required to produce better quality Benin video-films and that the government needs to support the fight against piracy. Equally significant is the notion that 51.7% (Table 3) of the respondents believe that concerned authorities and development agencies have not done enough to encourage the Benin video-film subsector of Nollywood. Hence, an overwhelming 94.96% (Table 4) of them want government and other relevant agencies to provide credit facilities for the players in the industry. Another vast majority of the sampled population (91.37%; Table 5) thinks that government needs to establish film villages/training centres to support the emerging industry.

Table 1. Do you think more investments are required to produce better quality Benin video-films?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
464	68	24	556
83.45%	12.23%	4.31%	100%

Table 2. Do you want government to help fight piracy of Benin movies?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
448	48	60	556
80.58%	8.63%	10.79%	100%

Table 3. Do you think concerned authorities and development agencies have done enough to encourage the Benin video-film subsector of Nollywood?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
116	284	156	556
20.86%	51.07%	28.05%	100%

Table 4. Do you think that the government and other relevant bodies should provide credit facilities for the Benin video-film industry?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
528	16	12	556
94.96%	2.87%	2.15%	100%

Table 5. Do you think government should set up film villages for the Benin film industry?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
508	24	24	556
91.37%	4.31%	4.31%	100%

Research question 2

How can Benin video-film practitioners create platforms for sustainable growth?

Questions 6-10 of the questionnaire have been used to gather relevant data for the answer to this question. 86.33% and 95.68% (Tables 6 and 7) of the respondents believe that the present crop of practitioners in the Benin video-film industry need to go for more training and that film schools and training centres should be set up for training them. It is also significant that as many as 80.05% (Table 8) of the respondents are of the view that Benin video-film professionals should create associations to promote their activities while another overwhelming majority of the respondents (82.73% and 81.29%; Tables 9 and 10) subscribe to the idea that Benin video-film practitioners should involve better equipped film/video makers outside Beninland in their industry and make cartoons and other animated movies as a way of enticing children.

Table 6. Do you advise that the Benin video-film practitioners go for more training?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
480	40	36	556
86.33%	7.19%	6.47%	100%

Table 7. Do you agree that Benin video-film professionals form associations to promote their activities?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
448	28	80	556
80.5%	5.03%	14.39%	100%

Table 8. Do you suggest the creation of film schools and training centres for the growth of the industry?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
532	16	8	556
95.68%	2.87%	1.44%	100%

Table 9. Do you suggest that Benin video-film practitioners should involve better equipped film/video makers outside Benin in their industry?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
460	56	40	556
82.73%	10.07%	7.19%	100%

Table 10. Do you suggest the making of cartoons and other animated Benin movies as a way of attracting children?

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
452	76	28	556
81.29%	13.66%	5.03%	100%

Discussion of results

Data from research question 1 (that is, questions 1-5 of the questionnaire) are informative as well as instructive: many of the respondents are of the view that development agencies, including the government have not provided enough support for the practitioners in the Benin movie industry. Andrew Osawaru, and Alhaji Yusuf Bako shared similar views, and roundly condemned the lukewarm attitude of the government, and other development

agents in the Benin locality towards the activities/goings-on in the local Benin movie industry.⁵⁾

The foregoing is consistent with the observations made in previous studies by Nollywood film scholars. According to Haynes, Nigerian and African filmmakers have had to contend with a lot of difficulties, including “the absence of effective support from their own governments” (Haynes, 2000). In the same way, Okome (2008) mourns that filmmaking in Nollywood is “without the minimal support of institutional set ups...” Another significant study has also underscored the claim that “...the aesthetic, and economic possibilities of an emergent Nollywood are yet to be fully explored, and exploited by development agents in both the academic, and professional circles of the cultural, and entertainment industries in Nigeria (Omoera, 2014b). This present study empirically validates these earlier positions. An overwhelming majority of respondents in this study would like to see concerned government organizations (GOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and development-minded community based organizations (CBOs), help to fight the menace of piracy and establish film villages/training centres as a way of strengthening the local Benin video-film industry, and encouraging its practitioners to raise the ante of their productions. In due course, this can sustain the livelihoods of many artistes/practitioners as well as serve as safety nets for many creative but jobless, and crime prone youths in the locality, and ultimately, contribute to the gross domestic product of the country.

Furthermore, the video-film enterprise has been identified as “a potential source of employment generation, wealth creation and skill development” (Meleiro, 2009). Therefore, if the Benin language film industry is properly organized and supported by the relevant GOs, NGOs, and CBOs, it can help in addressing the challenges of youth unemployment, prostitution, kidnapping, cyber crime (Yahoo Yahoo), among other criminalities that are threatening to tear apart the sinews of love, harmony, and peace which bind the people to-

gether. The economic forces or activities within the Benin movie industry ought to be adjusted to/realigned with the prevailing centripetal and centrifugal forces of the political economy of Edo State in the manner Leonard Aimiuwu has rethought the packaging of Benin culture for the next level (Aimiuwu, 2007). In fact, with specific reference to the economic challenges facing the Benin people, he asks a trillion naira question:

On National TV, Cable TV (DSTV etc), which culture is likely to be displayed in drama, home movie, theatre and entertainment in general? Most unlikely Benin, Africa's Culture Capital. What is Benin's share of Nollywood and total entertainment market? The future belongs to the strong. Is Benin strong? Can we be strong or stronger? It is one of the greatest ironies of our time that people who sit atop such great wealth are afflicted with such great poverty and deprivation (Aimiuwu, 2007).

This discourse wholly agrees with Aimiuwu (2007), and posits further that well-meaning Benin sons and daughters at home and in the Diaspora in concert with the government of the day should take some smart steps to call for a stakeholders' meeting of players in Benin video-film industry with a view to giving political muscle and streamlining their activities for greater efficiency. The thinking here is that with a strong political will and support, other bases that tug at the economic heart of Benin film enterprise will necessarily fall in line and Benin videographers/filmmakers can adjust and galvanize themselves for better productivity. The consequence of such economic adjustment would be palpably felt in the immediate and long run developmental indexes of Edo State in terms of job, and wealth creation, poverty alleviation, and technical empowerment as well as a corresponding decrease in the incidence of social crimes such as armed robbery, youth restiveness which are

presently clogging the socio-political and socio-economic wheels of progress of the Edo people.

In a recent collaborative research entitled, “Integrating Developing Countries’ SMEs into Global Value Chains”, carried out by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Universities of Geneva and Fribourg, which draws on a global conference organized by the OECD in June 2007, and an intergovernmental Expert Meeting held by UNCTAD in November 2007, identified video-film enterprise as a veritable small and medium enterprise (SME) tool that is capable of removing the Nigerian populace from economic doldrums. The researchers in their report, with specific reference to Nollywood, contend that:

A viable film industry contributes to the economic development of a country through employment and wealth creation. The film industry is labour intensive. From production to distribution many people are directly or indirectly employed in the industry. In this respect the domestic value chain of movie production is enormous and its economic spin-offs are even larger. In Nigeria the turnover of the industry has been estimated to be \$200 million–\$300 million per year. This is a significant contribution to an economy that relies primarily on the petroleum sector... and the sector is dominated by SMEs.⁶⁾

Harnessing this economic viability at the Edo State level is only possible if an enduring institutional framework of support is put in place. Here lies the *raison d'être* for the proposition that GOs, NGOs and CBOs to provide support for the Benin film enterprise because it has the potential of reducing the number of unemployed youths roaming the streets and restoring Benin to

its lost glory of harmonious living where people were not afraid of being kidnapped or molested by hoodlums/ruffians (Omoera, 2013).

Hence, governmental organizations (GOs) such as the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and Bank of Industry (BOI) need to work in concert with Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and other development partners, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to put necessary structures in place. In doing this, community-based organizations (CBOs)—such as Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO)—that focus on poverty reduction, the development of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), employment generation, and vocational, and technical education should be identified and encouraged to include the local Benin film industry in their programmes.

From the data on research question 2 (that is, questions 6-10 of the questionnaire), the basic inference is that Benin movie practitioners should go for more training, form associations through which they can establish linkages with better equipped professional filmmakers outside their circuit of operations and innovatively buy into the children's market by producing cartoons and other animated movies. A clear majority of the respondents [both males (288; 51.79%) and females (268; 48.20%), a demographic indication that the Benin video-film is not encumbered by any gender bias from the sampled population] perceptively suggest that the Benin filmmakers should undergo more specialised training/explore linkages in the different professions and trades in filmmaking so as to bring themselves up to speed in the use of new technologies, learn new 'tricks' in niche target marketing, and improve their technical poise to ensure sustainable growth.

Today, technologies which can deliver excellent quality pictures, great sound effects are available, and relatively easy to come by. Gone are the days when groping in the dark was the order of the day because raw stocks could

not be acquired or film negatives had to be canned, and flown abroad for processing as obtained with the celluloid film or DV cameras that more often than not produced blurred visuals. Benin moviemakers must begin to think of how to shoot on Hi definition (HD). Abulu (2010) notes that “by shooting with HD cameras which range from simple \$5,000 to high end Red One HD cameras costing about forty thousand dollars, Nigerian filmmakers can shoot with these cameras for a fraction of the cost needed to shoot on celluloid.”

The presupposition here is that the cinematic world is now ringing the death knell for celluloid: as filmmakers in the first world cinema and second world cinema are all in the process of phasing out celluloid because they find it too expensive and too time consuming, especially during editing. With such projections in the horizon, it is high time Benin moviemakers began to unionise, form associations/linkages as a way of building capacity to train, and re-train themselves in the latest art, and science of filmmaking to achieve sustainable growth. The respondents also suggest the making of cartoons, and other animated Benin movies as a way of enduringly buying into the children’s market. Filmmakers from the Igbo/English strata of Nollywood are already exploring this idea with niche target marketing productions such as *Chika the Warrior* (2007), *Mark of Uru* (2009), *Enemy of the Rising Sun* (2010), *Bino and Fino* (2011), among other animated Igbo/English Nollywood movies to win viewership among the Igbo/English speaking populations at home and in the Diaspora.

At the level of Benin video-film industry, serious capital investment, and adequate economic support systems for the players can be pursued, among other reinforcements of areas of economic strengths of the Edo people. This thinking is fortified by the views of Uyi Akpata, Osas Idahosa, and Anthony Edosomwan who insisted that stakeholders in the Benin movie industry must create new vistas of economic opportunities, advantages, and hope for the Benin of today, and the future instead of the pervasive warped idea of

making ‘it’ through ignoble means such as prostitution, kidnapping, and cybercrime which unfortunately currently envelopes the locality.⁷⁾

Conclusion

The dire consequences of not investing in human capital development, whether at formal or informal levels are better imagined than experienced. Such consequences, and their debilitating impacts which are already visible in the Benin locality can be curtailed, and/or reduced considerably if necessary steps are taken by relevant GOs, NGOs and CBOs to provide institutional support for the boundless productive/creative endeavours and enterprises available in the teeming Benin video-film industry to engage the hordes of youths who are presently not productively engaged and crime-prone. Consequently, Benin sons and daughters of means, friends and patronisers of the arts in Nigeria and the Diaspora, film critics, film theorists, film entrepreneurs, and filmmakers within and outside the Benin locality need to synergistically support the Benin video-film enterprise, with a view to providing the practitioners with better training, linkages, and requisite technologies to keep the film culture aglow, and in so doing, contribute to national development.

Benin language filmmakers need to also form cooperative platforms as a means of pooling their resources together for greater efficiency and better content creations. In this way, they would be able to take advantage of current developments in film production to make animated movies of Benin orientation to buy into the children’s market where cartoons are an irresistible attraction. Besides, Benin filmmakers should learn how to write winning grant proposals so that they can readily access funds, especially now that the federal government of Nigeria (FGN) has promised the larger Nollywood and entertainment industry the sum of three billion naira capacity building/development fund. Again, considering the fact that a significant number of the sampled population in this study are young and claim that they find the use of Benin

vernacular in Benin video-films interesting and entertaining, Benin video-films can be effectively utilized as language revitalization resource to make the growing population in the Benin area learn/speak the Benin language, which is currently endangered. Ultimately, such deliberate efforts will leapfrog the Benin video-film enterprise among other ethno-national film cultures in Nollywood as well as further consolidate the socio-cultural heritage of the Benins, while helping to enhance job opportunities for the teeming youth population in the locality.

NOTES

1. http://web.ccsu.edu/afstudy/upd20-1.html#Nollywood_Unbound-Benin_Language_Video- Film_as_Paradigm
2. Oral interview with Ebenovbe E. Ogie, founder/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of EMMAA, conducted by Osakue S. Omoera, August 21, 2013 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
3. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-ghanaians-parliament>
4. <http://www.edo-nation.net/naiwu1.htm>
5. Oral interview with Andrew Osawaru, Benin movie director, and actor, conducted by Osakue S. Omoera, November 1, 2008 and January 15, 2012 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria; Oral interview with Alhaji Yusuf Bako, former chairman, Actors Guild of Nigeria, Benin Chapter, conducted by Osakue S. Omoera, September 26, 2010 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
6. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), “Integrating Developing Countries’ SMEs into Global Value Chains” (New York & Geneva: United Nations, 2010),
7. Oral interview with Osas Idahosa, Benin movie actor, and video-shop operator, conducted by Osakue S. Omoera, February 23, 2010 in Igieduma Village, Uhunmwonde Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria; Oral interview with Uyi Akpata, Benin movie director, producer, and CEO of Signals Communications, conducted by Osakue S. Omoera, September 26, 2009 in Benin City, Edo State, Ni-

geria; Oral interview with Anthony Edosomwan, Arts, and culture administrator, and former Director of Arts, and Culture, Edo State Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Tourism, conducted by Osakue S. Omoera, March 10, 2011 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Abulu, T. (2010). Goodluck for Nollywood. *The Nation* (Nigeria), November, 17th.
- Aimiuwu, L.E. (2007). *Benin culture: towards the next level: a compendium of speeches/lectures at the symposium on Igue festival: the religious and socio-cultural relevance in modern society*. Benin City: Benin Traditional Dance Foundation.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches*. London: Sage.
- Deacon, D., Bryman, A. & Fenton, N. (1998). Collision or collusion: a discussion of the unplanned triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods. *Intern. J. Social Res. Methodology*, 1, 47-63.
- Egharevba, J.U. (2005). *A short history of Benin*. Benin City: Fortune & Temperance Publishing.
- Haynes, J. (1995). Nigerian cinema: structural adjustments. *Res. African Literatures*, 16(3), 97-119.
- Haynes, J. (2000). Introduction (pp. 1-36). In: Haynes, J. (Ed.). *Nigerian video films: revised and expanded edition*. Athens: Ohio University Centre for International Studies.
- Hjort, M. & Morris, M. (2012). Institutional culture: a manifesto with rules (pp. 21-23). In: Morris, M. & Hjort, M. (Eds.). *Creativity and academic activism: instituting cultural studies*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Meleiro, A. (2009). Nigerian and Ghanaian film industry: creative capacities of developing countries. *Revista de Economia Politica de las Technologias de la Informacion y Comunicacion*, 11(3), 1-7.
- Oboh, G.E. (2014). *Mediatisation of Nigerian elections: issues and perspectives for African democracy*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- Okome, O. (2008). Film theory and criticism: from world cinema to Nigerian cinema. *Intern. J. Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship*, 3-5, 64-79.
- Omoera, O.S. (2013). Bridging the gap: answering the questions of crime, youth unemployment and poverty through film training in Benin, Nigeria (pp. 39-58). In: Hjort, M. (Ed.). *The education of the filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East and the Americas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Omoera, O.S. (2014a). *Audience reception of Benin video-film: PhD thesis*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan.
- Omoera, O.S. (2014b). Audience Reception of the Benin Language Video Film in Nollywood. *J. African Cultural Studies*, 26, 69-81.
- Onwuchekwa, C.A., Omoankhanlen, J.A. & Akhator, P.A. (2011). *Business basics for business and non-business organisations*. Benin City: AVA Publishers.
- Stoneman, R. (2013). Global interchange: the same, but different (pp. 59-80). In: Hjort, M. (Ed.). *The education of the filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East and the Americas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

✉ Dr. Osakue Stevenson Omoera
 Department of Theatre & Media Arts
 Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria
 E-Mail: omoera@yahoo.com

