PERCEPTION OF “DANCE AFRICA DANCE” REALITY TELEVISION PROGRAMME AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ACCULTURATION IN PLATEAU STATE NIGERIA

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Introduction

Television, either as a content production organisation or as a piece of equipment has continued to serve as a bridge between cultures. The cross-fertilization of cultures especially the performative and aesthetics mix very well in the crucible of the art of television production. Television manufacturing attests to the adaptations to the needs of people, the reason for the array of television specifications today from TV Apps to live-size television sets at home, schools, clubs, and stadiums (Graves, 2010).

The emergence of global media channels in the early 1990s influenced the entrenchment of a global culture providing a variety of television programme formats and genres, which compete in various media markets for audiences (Hiebert and Gibbons, 2000). Television entertainment became diversified with new programmes from America, Asia and Europe such as sports, music and drama, keeping the viewer entertained. These programmes also met the needs of the audiences in Africa where they were aired. Attempts to replicate and domesticate these programmes in Africa became popular among content producers in
the television industry as it was in Europe and America. Programming types changed across all Television channels, one of which is 'Reality Television'.

The reality TV genre is revolutionising the entertainment industry across the globe. Murray and Ouellette (2004) assert that it is almost impossible to turn on a television without coming across a kind of reality show. The reality TV genre has attracted public attention in the last two decades particularly the youth who are addicted to watching the show or are participants. In Nigeria, several of these reality television programmes have met the entertainment and empowerment needs of the youth by providing access via mobile phones, the internet and other facilities to vote for their favourite contestants by texting (SMS) or commenting on the programme as it is aired. Examples of Reality television programmes that are aired in Nigeria include, Maltina Dance All, Gulder Ultimate Search, Nigeria Idol, Naija Sings, The Voice and Big Brother Naija among others.

All over the country, the youth appears at audition centres for an opportunity to participate as individuals or as a group. From Plateau State have emerged participants and winners of some reality television shows, from Big Brother Africa, Maltina Dance All and others. Owing to the interest and participation of youths from the state and achievements made, this paper focuses on the perception of residents on the reality programme Dance Africa Dance as an instrument of acculturation.

Langley (1979) asserts that “culture is a weapon, “Culture starts with the people as creators of themselves and transformers of their environment” (p.179) while Arowolo (2022), observed that certain aspects of valued Nigerian culture were being eroded especially as it related to the role of purity in religion and marriage. Arowolo further warned that the enthusiastic assimilation of Western culture by the younger generation was suggestive of a culture whose future is on a knife-edge. For instance, sexualising young people through dance reality television shows is on the rise as opined by Wong (2021).


Idachaba and Dandaura (2010) contend that over the years, Africa has made itself a huge market for Western and European content instead of marketing its local content. Therefore, it subjects itself to perpetual cultural imperialism through the continuous movement of products from the West to Africa.

Statement of the Problem
The philosophy behind any form of dance is to tell a story to portray cultural values or demonstrate the resilience and ethos of a people, group and community (Bresnahan, 2019). However, in a situation or scenario where it becomes a strategic vehicle for exporting dominant culture from countries outside of the African continent, it has vast implications for Nigeria’s growth and development of local content. Zee World, the Indian media content industry, has become an overwhelming source of entertainment, transporting and transposing its culture to other areas, especially the African continent.
Nigeria's culture especially as exhibited in various dances may become endangered owing to the interest and increased participation of Nigerian youths in the reality programme “Dance Africa Dance”. The dance steps and styles initiated in the programme may be entertaining but can be a subtle way of cultural colonisation. This paper seeks to examine the perceptions of residents of Plateau State of the reality TV Show “Dance Africa Dance” as an instrument of acculturation with the following research questions.

Research Questions
i. What motivates Plateau State residents to watch the “Dance Africa Dance” on Zee World?
ii. What is the perception of Plateau State residents about “Dance Africa Dance” as a tool for acculturation in Nigeria?

The Concept of Dance
The early documentation on the origins of dance cuts across three continents: India in Asia, Egypt in Africa and Greece in Europe (Manning, 2010). It is however arguable that other continents never had dance because, as it is today, America is not only dancing but exporting dance to the rest of the world. Music and dance evolved side by side and so the concept of dance in this paper is not devoid of music. According to Welsh (2004), “There are melodies that, when played will cause your heart to droop with sadness for no known reason. Or a rousing jig or mazurka will have your feet tapping in the accompanying rhythm, seemingly beyond your control” (p.8). Dance in Africa defines culture in a way that simplifies the complexity of the continent. Dance for diplomacy can operate as a form of political protest or a way of encouraging peaceful coexistence between nations. Warburton (2017) observed that “a growing body of research suggests that the nonverbal art form of dance can be an effective medium for intercultural communication and exchange between people from different cultures” (p.131). Dance can be exported or exchanged. It can be a colonizing force or a vehicle for dialogue and understanding. It can be many of these things simultaneously in the life of the people it encounters. Beyond the performative nature of dance and the fact that it can happen as an improvised act, what is critical to this study is the fact that dance can be purposefully selected and targeted for a course and the audiences or spectators can view it through a variety of media including stage and screen.

Television and Reality Television Programmes
The Lumiere brothers by their act of filming workers at the rail stations did not only launch the era of cinematography but also of reality show. The invention of the television only helped to domesticate the phenomenon. This is true because television content or programme centred on everyday people who are filmed in real situations almost oblivious of the presence of the camera are the ultimate focus rather than the actors. Reality TV shows today suggest a different definition to include the participation of actors (amateurs or professionals) performing their acts with the consciousness of the camera. Sarantinos (2004) identified seven reality TV types to include: Documentary, Legal, Competition, Lifestyle, Travel, Transformation/Self-Improvement and Social Experiment; the “Dance Africa Dance” falls under the competition category.

The technical history of television is a story of concept, invention, content production, transmission, and commercialisation of the contents or programmes. Television has played a huge role both in times of peace and war. The neutrality of the gadget as an amoral tool is most often contested because of the nature of the programmes it houses.
these programmes popularly referred to as content that end up standing on trial and not the piece of equipment that brings or delivers them to us (Price, 1995).

The emergence of Reality Television around the world in the last two decades has provided immense opportunities for interactions and harnessing of talents in competitive forms, as well as stimulating cross-fertilization of cultures, norms and values (Lewis, 2006). From makeovers, and game shows to fear-centric etc, the media landscape has no doubt a lot to offer to teeming consumers in its staple of programming; each a franchise to be domesticated or localised outside of Western shores.

Global media channels are an influential factor in the acquisition of this global culture which is reproduced in television programmes, thereby allowing many different genres of programming to compete for niche market audiences (Hiebert & Gibbons, 2000). The entertainment industry particularly television became democratised providing all sorts of music, sports, and drama around the clock (Sperring & Strandvall 2006). Thus emerged what has commonly termed the Franchising of television programmes which is an attempt to marry the content of a foreign programme to a local environment or setting. This has subsequently changed programming types and rapidly gained popularity across all TV channels in recent years. One such programming type is 'Reality Television'.

Even with the indigenisation of programmes on Nigerian Television, a huge chunk of current reality tv shows are franchises from Europe, America, and Asia. Some of the earliest reality shows in Nigeria are, Amstel, The Big, Fasttest Shedder, Gulder Ultimate Search, Knorr Taste Quest, Next Movie Star, The Next Titan, Nigeria's Got Talent, Nigeria's Top Model, Project Fame West Africa, RocDaMic, The Real Housewives of Lagos, Tiannah's Empire, Ultimate Love (TV series) and The Voice Nigeria (Emmy, 2006). Other reality TV shows with a variety of performances in Nigeria are The Peak Talent Hunt (2009) and Nigeria’s Got Talent (2012).

Research into the form and content of reality shows franchised to different countries has shown that there seems to be a symbiotic relationship between countries where a show originated and where it is adopted. Within the past two decades people, particularly youths are either addicted to watching several reality shows, are prospective contestants on reality programmes, or are active contestants in reality programmes (Hill, 2004, Lundy, Ruth, &Park 2008)

The processes of globalisation (cultural, political and economic) have narrowed boundaries between domestic and global affairs and promoted social interconnectedness such that local events in one country can impact the cultural, political and economic life of another country (Giddens, 1999). Cultural Globalisation is driven by the increasing penetration of media technology, (Internet and Satellite television) and worldwide marketing of Western cultural industries. Marsen (2006, p.178) noted that there is a “gradual corporatisation” of the world. The mass media are directly involved in the globalisation process and the media connect the world through content that is broadcast or accessible in most parts of the globe. Again, Marsen (2006) said,

Audiences worldwide watch the same television programmes and communicate with others internationally in real-time through the Internet. Secondly, the media, in their business capacity, are often owned by
multinational corporations and are regulated according to international standards generally set by agencies that support global uniformity and equivalence in media communication (p.179)

There have been several debates on the impact of cultural globalisation on the identity of nations or countries and how the media facilitate its expansion or limitation. Rajaei (2001) opined that while some perceive this phenomenon as an instrument for the establishment of universal unity and democracy, others think globalisation is brought about by the expansion of new communication systems. In line with this perspective is that of cultural imperialism. The claim is that cultural imperialism affects some cultures and often replaces or substitutes them with a culture that promotes excessive consumption and dominance of economic and information technology (Marsen 2006). It is not surprising therefore, that there is a huge reception of television programmes, films, and music; produced and controlled by multinational and transnational corporations, from Western to developing countries because it is believed to be of high quality and superior to those from developing countries.

Scholars of Reality Television such as Murray and Ouellette (2004), and Reiss and Wiltz (2004) among others have raised important observations about the nature, content and implications of reality TV shows, questioning if reality shows are actually “real” or simply an illusion. Probing the realities, Leing, (2017) noted that:

Stations fight for ratings not because they wish to present programmes to more people but because they want to deliver more viewers to advertisers. There are subtle means of advertising. Sometimes an entire programme is an infomercial for a sponsored product... The audiences are attracted to the supportive culture of the show... The globalisation of world media is having profound, subtle, and dramatic effects on programming visions of reality. A family in Tibet may be exposed to the same programming as a family in Chicago, Illinois, or Cape Town, South Africa. How the shows are produced and, more importantly, how the shows are decoded through the lenses of different cultures, languages, and ideologies can make a show that appears comic, inconsequential, and family fair into something controversial, serious, and adult (p.12, 15).

In other words, there is a growing interconnectedness, which is fostering a feeling of belonging, allowing cultures to be exposed to outside influences. This is an indication of the existence of an emerging global culture or world culture.

Montemurro (2008) also posited that:

Reality television has become a standard genre of programming in the twenty-first century. The popularity of these unscripted programs merits investigation. Reality shows can be seen as significant cultural objects whose production and consumption reflect and reveal the norms and ideologies of contemporary culture. Although what is currently conceived as the reality television genre is perceived as novel, this type of programming has a long history, with its foundations dating back to the early days of television (p.84)

For instance, Jones (2003) conducted to examine how viewers of “Big Brother” shows negotiate the perceived “realness” of the reality show. The study found out that, while the
narratives of such docu-soaps” were indeed popular, the audiences knew about the artificiality of the experience but decided to ignore it because of the pleasure that they derive.

**Multiculturalism, Bollywood, Zee World and Nigerian’s Entertainment Industry**

Multiculturalism means different things to different people. For some, it is directly linked to the politics or recognition of difference (Taylor, 1992). While Kuper (1999) sees it as a loose form of cultural pluralism, Clayton (2020) succulently unpacks multiculturalism ‘as the existence of difference and uneven power relations among populations in terms of racial, ethnic, religious, geographical distinctions and other cultural markers that deviate from dominant, often racialised “norms”’ (p.211). Eagan (2021) defines multiculturalism as the view that cultures, races and ethnicities particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political culture. Pate and Oso (2017) see it as the coexistence of diverse cultures.

Bollywood is one of the nine language film sectors of the Indian moviemaking industry. Birthed in Mumbai in the 1930s, it has become the flagship film enterprise in India and an empire in Asia. Its films are available globally both in cinemas, on cable television and numerous streaming platforms. Indians' technology is productively the service of her film industry. Currently, Bollywood is rated as the second-largest film industry in the world second only to the United States of America's Hollywood (Dotun, 2021).

The viewership of Bollywood films started from the cinemas. In the northern region of Nigeria cinema houses like the Kwararafa Cinema, New Era Cinema, the Scala and Rex Cinema in Jos Plateau State Nigeria, became a converging point for other nationalities like Syrians, Lebanese, and Jordanians who found Bollywood films interesting. Despite the barrier of language between the cinema owners and these audiences, Indian movies gained a lot of traction in Nigeria, especially in the conservative Northern region. Dotun (2021) connects the similarities between Bollywood and local cultures in northern Nigeria to include, conservative sensibilities relating to dress, morality, family relations, gender and marriage. It was no surprise then when Bollywood decided on a very brave cinematic innovation to subtitle her movies in English and dubbed the same into the English and Hausa languages.

Zee World is India's media ambassador to the world and the producer of “Dance Africa Dance.” They specialised in cultural diplomacy and the transaction of performing arts enterprise between India and receiving nations. India is not the first to employ the dance competition reality TV approach to promoting cultural diversity however it has become a major player in the industry. Kellogg’s “Dance Africa Dance” was Zee World's first reality dance competition in Africa. The show, which aimed to uncover the continent's best dance team, premiered in September 2021. Dancers from African countries including Angola, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, DR Congo, Uganda, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe all participated in the competition. Two dance champions, one team and one solo winner emerged at the end. The Dance Africa Dance was modelled after the “Dance India Dance” show, which premiered on the 30th of January 2009 on Zee TV, India.

The format of the show requires that a group of dancers who have registered for the show would present different dance styles in an audition process. The top teams from the
auditions are then selected to perform at the finals to choose the winner. The “Dance Africa Dance” reality show has so far entertained audiences across fifty-two African countries and other parts of the world (Onwuamaeze, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Uses and Gratifications Theory
The fundamental assumption of the Uses and Gratifications Theory is that mass media audiences are not made up of passive individuals but active participants who exercise freedom in their use and motives for making specific consumption choices. (Balnaves, Hemelryk & Shoesmith 2009; Baran 2005).

It is assumed that the viewers use the media to satisfy needs that are determined by the social environment, namely the desire to acquire knowledge and understanding, as emotional and pleasurable needs. The viewers also do so by strengthening contact with friends and family, strengthening credibility and confidence and releasing tension needs as a diversion or escape. It will not be out of place to say that people get what they want from the media (Pierce, Beatty & Hagner 1982). Concerning this study, the viewers and contestants of “Dance Africa Dance” are seeking to satisfy their need for knowledge of the Indian culture and to extricate themselves from the daily tensions created by social pressures of life such as conflicts, unemployment and ignorance.

Agenda Setting Theory
The Agenda setting theory explores how the views and thoughts of the public can be altered by what they see and hear in the media. Zain, (2014) submits that:

the agenda setting theory is a discussion on how the mass media influences making a certain issue a public agenda. The public agenda is the main focus or prime issue that the members of the society or the public are concerned about (p.4)

Woerner (2022) gives an insight with the example that obtrusive events, dramatic events that are noticeable and effects large amounts of the economy, like gas shortages and high cost of grocery prices, are often used to push one agenda over another. The negative effect of Agenda setting theory in politics is biased messaging, which may mislead audiences to believe one concept over another. While the contents of the “Dance Africa Dance” Reality shows are being exposed to broader perspectives on culture and music, Zee World owners of the show may not be able to control their preferences and biases because their interests are at stake. In this way, it becomes a vehicle for political advertising of the Indian culture.

Methodology
Qualitative research was adopted for this study with questionnaires and interviews as instruments of study. The study population is residents of Plateau State. According to 2006 National Census figures the population of the state is 900,000. 18% are between the ages 21-40 years of which about 56% are males and 46% are females, (Gwom & Jugu 2017). The study adopted a non-probability sampling of youths between the ages of 18-25. 50 youths were purposively selected within Jos metropolis because they qualified for the study having been exposed to the Dance Africa Dance show between 2021 and 2022.
Three lecturers who teach choreography and TV/Film production at the University of Jos and Plateau State University all in Nigeria were also interviewed face-to-face because they had an understanding of the dynamics of television/film production. Of the 50 youths selected 44 responded to the questionnaire which was administered online. An interview guide with four questions was used for the interview. The three respondents were given codes: First respondent PEO, second-DA, third- PAAB. Three themes were selected from the transcribed interview data namely: Cultural Diversity, Entertainment and Dominance.

Findings and Analysis

The data is presented in charts for a better understanding of the findings and the interview was analysed in line with some of the themes in the study, namely: Dominance, cultural diversity and entertainment.

Chart One above shows that the majority of the respondents (63.6%) frequently watch the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show.

Chart Two shows that most (36.4%) of the respondents could not ascertain the reason for watching the “Dance Africa Dance” show. Although some (22.7%), watch the show because they like dancing, very few (4.5%) said it is because they like the Indian culture. It may then be concluded that the love for dancing rather than the Indian culture motivates respondents to watch the show.
Chart Three shows that cultural harmony (38.6%) and entertainment value (34.1%) lead to the opinion of respondents about the “Dance Africa Dance” show. While (33.7%) of the respondents believe that the show projects the African culture, only (2.3%) said that it reflects the African culture. Therefore, it could then be concluded that cultural harmony, entertainment value and the projection of African culture, shape the perceptions of respondents regarding the “Dance Africa Dance reality show.

Chart Four shows that half (50%) of the respondents found the cultural mix expressed in the show more interesting while (23.7%) love the artistry of the participants. These findings show that the cultural mix depicted in the show remains a major attraction.

Chart One shows the perceptions of respondents regarding the “Dance Africa Dance” reality television programme in Plateau State Nigeria.
Chart Five shows that watching the “Dance Africa Dance” have helped the majority (68.2%) of the respondents to understand cultural diversity. Against the few that alluded to the appreciation of the Indian and African cultures, it can then be concluded that the show has been a good tool for understanding cultural diversity.

Chart Six is consistent with findings as the majority (65.9%) of the respondents perceive the “Dance Africa Dance” Chart five shows the opinions of respondents on what “Dance Africa Dance” reality show as a vehicle for showcasing cultural diversity positively. However, the opinion of a minority (9.1%), which perceives the show as an element of cultural domination, provides a marginal reason for further examination.

Discussion
The first research question asked, “What motivates Plateau State residents to watch the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show? Chart One, Chart Three and Chart Four indirectly answer the research question with Chart Two directly answering the research question. Chart one data shows that a high percentage (63.3%) frequently watch the show. This adds to existing knowledge of the popularity of Indian reality TV shows. According to the study by Samprathi and Ravi (2021), the youth are huge fans of Indian reality TV. Reality TV programmes appeal to young viewers because they feature people and events that apply to their everyday life. Chart Three shows that the perceptions of residents of Plateau State to the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show are that it showcases cultural harmony besides its entertainment value and projection of African culture.

No doubt television has its basis in culture and local content values however, some television programmes from America and Europe have elements of acculturation for countries of the global south including Nigeria. Studies such as Miller (2007) have established reality TV to project dominant culture. The study’s findings, which is a dissertation on reality TV cultural values, conclude that reality television portrays cultural values and myths as well as preferred ideologies of the ruling class through narrative elements woven into these programmes. An understanding of this relationship between reality television and modern culture can be gained through television analysis. Data from the qualitative research also show that part of the motivation for watching the show besides the fact that “it is appealing…it is about cultural harmony and cultural values” (RESA)
Chart Four data concludes that the most liked aspect of the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show is the cultural mix (Indian and African culture). This is a pointer to reality TV’s role in globalisation. This finding aligns with Lwahas (2017), who posited that reality television is a true component of modern global popular culture in the process of globalisation, as seen by the rising adaption of such shows and the involvement and participation of people, particularly young people. The responses from the qualitative data show that “DAD” is a “reflection of urban popular culture because the African and indeed Nigerian dances are robust” (RES A). The data reveal that dance unites and helps in the construction of national identities as well as ethnic nationalities in popular theatre; a part of a global movement where dance narratives are sold.

Chart Two directly answers the research question and concludes that the majority of respondents watch “Dance Africa Dance” reality show for no particular reason even though some (22.7%) attribute their reason to their love for dancing. The data from Samprathi and Ravi’s (2021) study showed that the majority of respondents who watched reality shows do so for entertainment making other motivations secondary. In the same vein respondents to the interview were emphatic in stating that the show is a performance that “brings to our living rooms the inventiveness and creativity of choreographers and dancers, acrobats and costumiers including artists…” (RES A)

As regards research question two which investigated the perception of residents of Plateau State about the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show as a tool of acculturation in Nigeria, Chart Five, and Chart Six provide answers. Chart Five data concludes that a majority of respondents (68.2%) have more understanding of cultural diversity from the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show. This shows that the Nigerian cultural space is exposed to the cultures of other nations and in this case India. Cultural diversity or multiculturalism remains a salient topic due to its propensity for cultural erosion. However, people react and choose to live together irrespective of their customs, morals, religions, languages, beliefs, arts and the manner they live together. (RES A) interviewed affirmed this statement that, DAD is a performance to be enjoyed from two vistas in entertainment and content development for the entire continent and beyond”. For (RES B), the show is another way for India to further articulate and protect its culture. “The “Dance Africa Dance” is an experiment…”

Chart Six data showed that the majority of respondents (65.9%) admit that the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show showcases cultural diversity. Television, more than any other medium, is seen to better showcase our cultural values, according to media researchers. Media content reflects our most fundamental social norms and beliefs, and reality television is especially suited to exposing these norms (Lindemann, 2022). The theme of cultural diversity is further buttressed by qualitative research. (RES A) states that “The show challenges participants to dig into their culture and bring up dances that are representative of the people where they come from...they come together to bring up dance movements that show quite a remarkable understanding between various ethnic representativeness”

Conclusion
The researchers were able to establish three themes and concluded that: cultural harmony, entertainment value and projection of African culture defined the reasons and perceptions of the respondents about the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show. The media
narratives surrounding the “Dance Africa Dance”, are an attempt to use a fusion of Indian and African dance styles as entertainment and a way of promoting cultural diversity. This is evident from the responses analysed. Though the programme is packaged and distributed by the Indian media industry Zee World, the perception of respondents is that diversity in dance steps is shaping a better understanding of dance culture, which embraces different ethnic nationalities and is therefore acceptable.

The interculturalism at play, therefore, dances, which are indigenous to different countries, are essential for appreciating cultural harmony and partnerships at a global level. What becomes of our indigenous dances within our multicultural milieu are opportunities for inventiveness and creativity that programme producers, choreographers and dancers in Nigeria and indeed Africa can explore.

Recommendations
This research has thrown up some very salient points to revisit on the perceptions of residents of Plateau State about the “Dance Africa Dance” reality show as a tool for acculturation. The researchers will like to recommend the following:

1. India and Nigeria share a lot in common, for example, population. Our film industries are at each other’s heels and popular pressure in reality television shows should unite our different multicultural composition. African and indeed Nigerian dances are robust therefore; collaboration with other countries will further encourage cultural harmony between national identities and facilitate youth popular culture where dance narratives are sold.
2. Nigeria and indeed Africa have the content but lack the technology (production, good lighting and sound production or aesthetics) to tell their stories on the world stage. Nigeria needs to export its musical dance shows by ensuring that content packaging meets the standards of international audiences.
3. The Ministries of Information and Culture and Youth and Sports Development can explore the opportunities both economic and otherwise to channel the energies of our youth to reimagining the country through dance.
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