



Big Brother Naija and Popular Culture in Nigeria

A Critique of the Country's Cultural
and Economic Diplomacy

Edited by

Christopher Isike · Olusola Ogunnubi ·
Ogochukwu Ukwueze

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| | Olusola Ogunnubi, Ogochukwu Ukwueze, and Christopher Isike | |
| | Part I Concept, Form and Context | |
| 2 | Foucault's <i>Panopticon</i> as a Theoretical Frame for Understanding the Big Brother Reality Show | 17 |
| | Christopher Isike | |
| 3 | Meanings of BB: The Social Semantics of a Nigerian Reality Show | 31 |
| | P.-J. Ezech | |
| 4 | An Assessment of Glocal Considerations in <i>Big Brother Naija</i> | 43 |
| | Rhoda Titilopemi Inioluwa Patrick and Hosea O. Patrick | |
| 5 | Exploration of <i>Big Brother Naija Reality Show</i> as an Ideological Pop Culture | 65 |
| | Olanrewaju O. P. Ajakaiye, Rachael Ojeka-John, Gbenga Owofe, Jubilee T. Apalowo, and Oluwakemi E. Akerele-Popoola | |

Part II Reception and Critique

- 6 Humour and Laughter in Reality TV: Assessing the Mental Health Effects of the Big Brother Naija Show 83
Olusola Ogunnubi and Dare Leke Idowu
- 7 Gendering Identities in *Big Brother Naija* 111
Helen Ufuoma Ugah
- 8 “Who Is Our Man?”: Corpus-Assisted Understanding of Naming Strategies in Support-Motivated Conflicts Among BBNaija Housemates’ Virtual Fans 131
Chuka F. Ononye, Tochukwu J. Chukwuike, and G. Uchechukwu Chigbu
- 9 The Making of Dreams Beyond the Screen: A Comparative Study of the Public Narratives & Stance on BBN 2018 and BBN 2020 Winners 153
Ezinwanyi E. Adam and Mobawaraye D. Odufisan
- 10 Socio-Political Reading of Nigerians’ Criticisms and Commendations of *Big Brother Nigeria (BBN)* Shows 169
Nicholas Idris Eramah and Israel Ayinla Fadipe
- 11 Cultural Interrogations and BBN Impact on Youths: A Study of BBN Season 5: “Lockdown” 185
Francis Adelodun Olowolafe and Nicholas C. Akas

Part III Socio-Political, Cultural and Economic Diplomacy

- 12 *Big Brother Naija*: A Catalyst for Nigeria’s Orange Economy 203
Dare Leke Idowu and Olusola Ogunnubi
- 13 Subjectivity and Social Order: What Can *Big Brother Naija* Teach Us About the (Rule of) Law? 225
Ogochukwu Ukwueze and Reginald Anosike Uzoechi

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 14 | The Poverty Card in <i>Big Brother Naija</i> and Nigeria's General Elections: A Reflection on the Voting Attitude of Nigerians | 247 |
| | Aina Akande and Vincent Idoko | |
| 15 | Youths, <i>Big Brother</i> Reality Show and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria: Lessons for the Nigerian Government | 263 |
| | Olusola Olasupo and Christopher Isike | |
| 16 | Connecting Them with Home: <i>Big Brother Naija</i> and Nigerians in Diaspora | 279 |
| | Ruth Oore-Ofé Ogunnowo | |
| | Index | 299 |

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LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| Fig. 4.1 | <i>Big Brother Naija</i> logos (<i>Source</i> The Big Brother Wiki Fandom Page [n.d.]) | 52 |
| Fig. 4.2 | Ebuka in Igbo and Yorùbá outfits (<i>Source</i> bellanaija.com [2018a, b]) | 54 |
| Fig. 6.1 | Socio-demographics of the viewership of the BBNaija TV show (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 92 |
| Fig. 6.2 | Gender representation of the viewership of BBNaija in 2019 (<i>Source</i> https://blog.plaqad.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Plaqad-BBNaijaReport-2.pdf) | 92 |
| Fig. 6.3 | Gender representation of BBNaija viewership in 2021 (<i>Source</i> https://blog.plaqad.com/plaqad-releases-second-edition-of-big-brother-naija-report/) | 92 |
| Fig. 6.4 | Age bracket of BBNaija viewers (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 93 |
| Fig. 6.5 | Viewership of the BBNaija TV show (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 94 |
| Fig. 6.6 | How long have respondents been watching the BBNaija show? (<i>Source</i> https://blog.plaqad.com/plaqad-releases-second-edition-of-big-brother-naija-report/) | 95 |
| Fig. 6.7 | BBNaija Seasons watched by respondents (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 95 |
| Fig. 6.8 | What is your major attraction to the BBNaija show? (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 96 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Fig. 6.9 | Viewers' major attraction to the BBNaija TV show (<i>Source</i> https://blog.plaqad.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Plaqad-BBNaijaReport-2.pdf) | 97 |
| Fig. 6.10 | Does the BBNaija TV show contains amusing entertainment that lightens the mood of viewers? (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 98 |
| Fig. 6.11 | BBNaija gives viewers some level of emotional and mental satisfaction (<i>Source</i> https://blog.plaqad.com/plaqad-rel-eases-second-edition-of-big-brother-naija-report/) | 98 |
| Fig. 6.12 | Does your viewership of the BBNaija show make you happy? (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 100 |
| Fig. 6.13 | Does your viewership of the BBNaija TV show relieve you of stress? (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation from field survey) | 102 |
| Fig. 8.1 | Word cloud analysis (<i>Source</i> Voyant Tools) | 137 |
| Fig. 8.2 | Stream graph of the most frequent words (<i>Source</i> Voyant Tools) | 137 |
| Fig. 8.3 | Selected n-gram rank (<i>Source</i> Antconc) | 141 |
| Fig. 8.4 | Selected concordance lines of the bigram "pere is" (<i>Source</i> Antconc) | 141 |
| Fig. 8.5 | Selected concordance lines of the bigram "pere is" (<i>Source</i> Antconc) | 142 |
| Fig. 8.6 | Selected concordance lines of the bigram "white money" (<i>Source</i> Antconc) | 144 |
| Fig. 8.7 | Selected collocates of the term "fake" (<i>Source</i> Antconc) | 145 |
| Fig. 11.1 | Respondents' view on Kissing as seen in BBNaija Season 5 (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation) | 193 |
| Fig. 11.2 | Respondents' view on Indecent dressings as seen in BBNaija Season 5 (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation) | 194 |
| Fig. 11.3 | Respondents' view on Lying as seen in BBNaija Season 5 (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation) | 195 |
| Fig. 11.4 | Respondents' view on Nudity as seen in BBNaija Season 5 (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation) | 196 |
| Fig. 11.5 | Respondents' view on Fighting as seen in BBNaija Season 5 (<i>Source</i> Authors' compilation) | 198 |
| Fig. 12.1 | Snapshot crew members of the BBNaija #PepperDem season (<i>Source</i> https://twitter.com/Ebuka/status/1180483456406626305) | 212 |
| Fig. 15.1 | 2019 Registered voters by geopolitical zones (<i>Source</i> Premium Times Nigeria) | 271 |
| Fig. 15.2 | Registered voters since 1999 (<i>Source</i> BudgIT Nigeria) | 272 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| Fig. 15.3 | 2019 Registered voters by age group (<i>Source</i> BudgIT Nigeria) | 273 |
| Fig. 15.4 | Official results of 2019 presidential election (<i>Source</i> Punch Newspaper, 28 February 2019) | 273 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| Table 8.1 | The tools of critical stylistics | 138 |
| Table 15.1 | Summary of six editions of BB Naija | 265 |
| Table 16.1 | Participation of Nigerians in diaspora in BBN from Season 1–Season 5 | 283 |
| Table 16.2 | Companies partnering with BBN operational in Nigeria and in the diaspora | 285 |
| Table 16.3 | Profession of BBN housemates from the diaspora since season 3 | 286 |
| Table 16.4 | Winners of the Big Brother Nigeria show between 2006 and 2020 | 287 |



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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and *Christopher Isike*^{ID}

BIG BROTHER NAIJA: WHAT IS; WHAT FOR?

This is the first academic book length publication on the Big Brother brand in Nigeria. *Big Brother Naija* is the Nigerian version of the Big Brother franchise created by John de Mol Jr., and aired for the first time

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in the Netherlands in 1999. It has since been adopted in over 54 countries of the world including Nigeria. The Nigerian version started as Big Brother Nigeria in 2006 after the cancellation of the Big Brother Africa show. After an 11-year break, the reality TV show returned in 2017 and was renamed Big Brother Naija as part of a rebranding outlook with a name “Naija” which is a mass informal designation for “Nigeria” that resonates well with Nigerians across all levels, including those in the Diaspora. Since its premiere, BB Naija has featured over hundred housemates and produced six winners. Given the popular attitude of and to the show, it has received series of backlash and criticisms from various quarters. Giving it a scholarly attention, as this book does, first calls for categorising it for ease of study. Hence, the editors located the show within the class of human production called popular culture.

The popular in “popular culture” derives from “populous”, the common people, the people in their ordinarieness, the unsophisticated, while culture, in addition to the lived aspect of it, denotes art. In other words, popular culture is a category of art that enjoys the patronage of the common people. It is the art/culture that “appeals to, or that is mostly comprehensible by, the general public” (Edgar 2001, 285). Popular culture is, therefore, identified in contrast with high culture. Hall (2018) has made a case for the need to identify popular culture’s “other” (which is high or elite culture), for it contributes to delineating the field properly. While it may take high intellectual investment to appreciate high culture, popular culture aims primarily for leisure and entertainment and, therefore, is easily grasped and responded to, mostly emotionally. In addition, popular culture represents realities the masses can easily identify with or find impressive. While most literature and some musical compositions like opera are considered high culture, popular literature (sci-fi, fantasy novels, Onitsha Market Literature), pop music, films and reality televisions belong to low/mass/popular culture.

Since the emergence of Cultural Studies as a discipline, popular culture has begun to gain scholarly attention. The exercise of thought on this hitherto ignored cultural product has apparently blurred the boundary between high and low culture (Haselstein et al. 2001, 331). Apart from claims that it does not merit critical scholarly attention, popular culture, in earlier studies, was also devalued on the grounds that: it is produced for financial gain and patronised by passive consumers (MacDonald 1957); it debases high culture (van de Haag 1957); it corrupts minds and renders the masses complacent (Marcuse 1969; Rosenberg, 1957). Gans’ study

(1999) critiques these positions and exonerates popular culture through a comparison of popular and high culture. It is, therefore, obvious that popular culture, beyond its popular entertainment value has the potential of engaging thought and yielding itself to theoretical engagements with enormous epistemic and practical significance.

As part of popular culture, Reality Television shows are popular in the sense that they simulate reality and are easily relatable to the masses. They appeal to the masses because the shows allow them to view people like them navigating through life and its vicissitudes. In this kind of popular art, there is little defamiliarisation as in high culture; instead, “shared knowledge and the experience of the everyday take centre stage” (Bignell 71). In Nigeria, a number of these reality TV shows enjoy popular viewership. These include *Who Wants to Be Billionaire*, *Gulder Ultimate Search*, *Nigerian Idol*, *Judging Matters*, *The Voice Nigeria*, *Maltina Dance Hall*, *Ultimate Love*, *Nigeria’s Got Talent*, *The X-Factor*, etc. Of the lot, *Big Brother Naija* (BBN) has remained the most popular longest surviving. The questions before this book, therefore, are: Beyond the contested ethical and affirmed entertainment value, what else can be said about *Big Brother Naija*? What can *Big Brother Naija* offer society in terms of culture, economy, politics, international relations/diplomacy, law and general human relations?

In this book, scholars from the fields of political science, media, literary and language studies, philosophy, law, sociology and theatrical art and performance theoretically engage the Nigerian version of the BB reality show from the dimensions of gender, law, subjectivity, diplomacy, soft power, conflict and fandom, cultural hegemony, ethics and morality, glocalisation, economic policy, diaspora, voting and election practice, etc. The recurrent contention of this book is that *BBN* has the capacity to inspire social, cultural, economic and political knowledge and action in the interest of the nation.

The *Big Brother Naija* show is uncontestably the most popular and viewed television show in Nigeria. But the viewership and its popularity have been largely among the youths engrossed in the entertainment it offers, and the ethically conscious populace calling for its censorship and outright ban. But the question yet unanswered is, what is the point of the show? As a domesticated reality show with its various versions spread across the world, what constitutive significance does it embody? Of course, several economic and political connections can be ascribed to

the show as the third part of this book proves, but what could the innovators of the show have thought about in developing it? These are some of the questions that the first part of this book, *Concept, Form and Context*, attempts to address.

BIG BROTHER NAIJA: CONTENT, AUDIENCE REACTION AND VALUE

Reflections on this conceptual framing of the show investigate the significance of the image of an eye which is an essential symbol of the show in all its variants. The gazing eye translates to constant surveillance. In other words, the image instils in the housemates, the consciousness of being looked upon. The one looked at is the subject. Their actions are to be affected and moderated as much as possible. Lacan (1998: 75) explains the condition of the humans as ‘given-to-be-seen’:

we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world. That which makes us conscious institutes us by the same token as *speculum mundi*. Is there no satisfaction in being under that gaze of which, following Merleau-Ponty, I spoke just now, that gaze that circumscribes us, and which in the first instance makes us beings who are looked at.

The show, therefore, seems to be a metaphor for human existence itself. It is a creative adaptation of ‘the way of the world’ with all our efforts at civility, and the moments we lose it in our existence with the other. The show offers humans, the ordinarily ‘given-to-be-seen’, the opportunity to take up the ‘quality of being all-seeing’ (75), with the associated limitation. The skewed and varied judgement following this seemingly omniscient position confirms the distortion in the gaze. As Lacan says, ‘there is, beyond, the thing, the thing itself’ (106). That is to say that the surveilled cannot always be adequately represented. Additionally, the spectacle can lure the gazing eyes in order to tame it. By this is implied the weakness of the gaze, the looker-on. The self, though under surveillance, can always manipulate the other which emasculates it. The self-other relation is therefore central in the contextualisation of the show. While the first two sections of the book basically focus on the framing of the show, its form and relation to being human, the third considers the import of the show to human–human relation.

In considering the human to human relation, the study identifies the show as an index of a shrinking world, a world that has become one. While surveillance essentially closes up distance, the distribution of the franchise across the world indicates the commonalities that close up the self-other distance. The argument, therefore, is that the Nigerian version recreates and domesticates the form thereby identifying itself with the global world. As a global culture, the popular ideology the show embodies gets universalised, elicits similar response from audience, and whatever value it has to offer becomes a shared benefit.

Big Brother Naija is perhaps the only reality TV show in Nigeria that has been subjected to a high level of controversy from the public for different reasons. Nevertheless, despite the moral outrage against the show, this negative reaction to the show has done little to abate follow-ership of the show and its celebrities. The Nigerian variant of the Big Brother brand continues to be a hugely successful brand in terms of ratings, internet use, mobile communication and spin-offs (Van Zoonen and Aslama 2006). This paradoxical audience appeal to and criticism of the show deserves further intellectual interrogation and it is for this reason that this book is interested in digging deep into the sources of reception and critique against the show. Andacht (2016) study already established that many of the assertions from media critics and from academia are not factual of the meanings for and effects on the audience.

Part of the themes that is explored is the potential benefits of the show that makes it attractive to viewers. This intellectual enquiry proceeds from the premise that it is simplistic to simply assume that the show continues to attract massive support because of its voluptuous content. Are there other benefits that is accruable to the BBN show beyond its A-rated content? What are the lessons that can be learned from the BBN Show and content for sociopolitical realities of our society? What meanings does Big Brother evoke for the public?

It is for this reason that a critical discourse on the reception and substantive critique of Big Brother as a brand and a reality TV show is important. By unpacking the reflections and critiques on Big Brother Naija as a cultural phenomenon, scholars are able to reflect on the contours and nuances that help to appreciate the show's significance beyond its entertainment value.

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE

Beyond the conceptual meanings, reception, debate and criticism of the Big Brother Naija show by Nigerians, critical readers and scholars, it is also important to explore the sociopolitical, cultural and economic value that the show has beyond its entertainment value and influence on youth pop culture. For example, in their analysis of how the BBN show has helped to shape perceptions about Nigeria, Akinlolu and Ogunnubi (2020) explored two broad themes of semantic affirmation and the opportunities for celebrity diplomacy are considered to argue that ‘BBNaija’ represents a potent source of attraction, aspiration and admiration for Nigeria. It has also been advanced that there is a correlation between high viewership of the show and the expansive growth of the entertainment industry in Nigeria (BBN Report 2022). Apart from the brand value of the BBN franchise which yields economic value for the sponsors and brand owners, the show creates employment and business opportunities for complementary service providers in the growing entertainment industry. A systematic study of the value that BBN adds at the sociopolitical, cultural and economic levels of state and society in Nigeria is imperative to fully appreciate what the BBN represents in the wake of ongoing debate on entertainment vs culture including the pitfalls of its panoptic elements.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

There are three parts and sixteen chapters in the book. Each chapter offers a theoretically guided exploration and critique of the *BBN*, bringing unique and interesting perspectives to the show. Part I, Concept, Form and Context, considers some of the conceptual and formal issues surrounding the show ranging from its idea of being under the gaze, the globalising potency and popular cultural implications. This part starts off with Christopher Isike’s Chapter 2 which lays a theoretical superstructure for the book. To explain Big Brother Naija broadly, Isike drew theoretical insights from Foucault’s ‘The Panopticon’ as a lens for understanding social control and compliance. This theoretical chapter is important in many aspects. Firstly, it provides a useful analytical frame to understand and unpack BBN from different social contexts as we shall see in the chapters of the book. Secondly, by focusing on Africa’s contexts of reality TV shows, the theoretical insight proposed in this chapter is able to stretch

our scholarly imaginations of the adaptation of indigenous popular reality shows in the framing of African identities (Sarah 2017; Oloka-Onyango 2005). The other important significance of this chapter is with its ability to assist readers to conceptually superimpose the creative elements of Big Brother with contemporary realities from society with regard to use/misuse of power, modernism, punishment, reward, order, policing, etc. as a model to explain how a society should function. The Panoptic schema is a valid theoretical explanation of the arguments presented in the chapters of this book.

Chapter 3, by P. J. Ezech, expands the theoretical insight of the book by unpacking the social semantic meanings of Nigeria's Big Brother reality show. Specifically, Ezech directs attention to the conceptual issues related to BBNaija using multidisciplinary approaches from literary studies and social anthropology. Hemmingway's iceberg theory was deployed to understand the creative inspiration of the show's producers and the reaction of viewers to the content from BBNaija. The chapter makes the claim that despite the enormous entertainment content of the show and its serious contributions to the literary and social science disciplines, moral objections to the show have their root in the efforts of moral entrepreneurs present in every society that arrogate to themselves the performative role of determining the preference of society.

In Chapter 4, Rhoda Patrick and Hosea Patrick assess global considerations in BBN with specific attention to commonalities and difference inherent in the global adaptation of BBN for Nigerian audiences. The chapter traces prominent glocalised features of the show in local adaptations of the Big Brother (Naija) brand in its unique franchise logo, use of notable celebrities as hosts, fashion and location. To the authors, the significance of this adaptation is that it challenges and disproves the claim that the show is tantamount to cultural imperialism and homogenisation for its heavy borrowing of a foreign concept. The chapter recommends further localisation especially in the areas of moral and cultural values which attracts the greatest criticism against the show.

In Chapter 5, Ajakaiye Olanrewaju, Rachael Ojeka-John, Gbenga Owocyte, Jubilee Apalowo and Oluwakemi Akerele wrap up the first part of the book with an exploration of BBN as ideological pop culture among Nigerian youth. Recognising the BBN phenomenon in Nigeria and indeed Africa, the authors argue that the western hegemonic ideology promoted via the show's content and other related variables make BBN a strong determinant of alien pop culture in Nigeria. It is this attraction to

pop culture among the youth population that create constructed realities of fame, unnecessary competition and immorality. The chapter recommends the importance of protecting the cultural history of the country by challenging dominant western ideologies reinforced through pop culture and suggests the way to do this is by replacing them with indigenous cultural programmes that curb the perceived negative effects of BBN.

In Chapter 6, which begins Part II of the book on “Reception and Critique”, Olusola Ogunnubi and Dare Idowu start with an assessment of the mental health effects of BBN by focusing on the entertainment value of the show. The chapter’s premise is that the challenges of democracy and development drive the ‘suffering and smiling’ people of Nigeria to seek for coping mechanisms to manage the stress of daily life. The authors collect data from 200 viewers of the BBN to investigate aspects of the show that are therapeutic in relieving the stress of viewers. Based on their responses, the chapter argues that the entertaining value of BBN is evident in the temporary relief it provides viewers from the associated problems of daily life in Nigeria.

In “Gendering Identities in Big Brother Naija”, Helen Ufuoma Ugah’s study (Chapter 7) reveals how BBN normalises dominant contemporary social practices that is often visible in most reality TV shows. This chapter uses this premise to examine the gendered constructions of identities for female housemates with the claim that the show demonstrates ideological perceptions of the behaviour of these housemates by online viewers. Data were collected from female-related posts and comments across official BBN Facebook page related to viewers’ use of social media to construct and challenge the lifestyle of female housemates of BBN. Her findings demonstrate that female housemates are often subjected to a higher moral standard constructed from social, mental, behavioural, spiritual and moral expectations from viewers which the female housemates are expected to uphold. According to Ugah, “through the identities constructed, the females are discriminated against, and their negative profiling is normalised”. The study then outlines five categories of identity construction gleaned from comments made by online participants: mental, behavioural, social, moral and spiritual that are fluid, multidimensional and varied in form and context.

Chapter 8 by Chuka Ononye, Tochukwu Chukwuike and Godswill Chigbu asks the important question “Who is our man?” to investigate corpus-assisted techniques of naming strategies among virtual fans of BBN housemates during support-driven conflicts. Adopting Jefferies

(2007) critical stylistics approach, their study contends that virtual fans of opposing BBN housemates deploy naming as a campaign strategy to promote their preferred BBN housemate to win the show. Fans describe a Housemate with negative labelling in the quest to ideologically disqualify him or her and promote their preferred choice. The authors make the conclusion that the social conflict that unfolds among fans of BBN reflects in some ways the unhealthy political rivalry that is often evident in Nigeria's political system because of the high stake or zero-sum game of winning or losing.

In Chapter 9, Ezinwanyi Adam brings another interesting comparative dimension by studying public narratives and stance on winners of two BBN editions (2018 and 2020), Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe and Moshood Olamilekan 'Laycon' Agbeleshebioba, respectively. The author believes that the controversies that sometimes surround the show invite diverse attitudes from the public that can be positive, negative or impartial. Based on the theoretical prism of Variation Theory of Comparative Literature, the author compares both the *Double Wahala* and *Lockdown* BBN seasons to understand why there were mixed reactions from the public towards the winners. The study finds that public perception and reception towards both winners were mixed between approval and protest from various sectors of the society.

Chapter 10, by Nicholas Erameh and Israel Fadipe, continues with the debate on arbitrary public responses to BBN by examining sociopolitical commentaries of Nigerians' condemnation and commendation of the show. The authors focus their attention on the motivation for the arguments and counterarguments for and against the BBN show. Some of the opposition against the show is its portrayal of nudity and voyeurism and the depiction of western lifestyle and cultural practices that are alien to Africa. The argument of the supporters of the show is that it promotes multiculturalism and the inevitability of globalisation which Nigeria benefits from through its support of the show. The support and projection of local content creativity and innovative aspect of the show for Nigerian youth who are its major consumers are some of the reasons presented for its continuation. The authors also make a convincing argument about the irony of dwindling voter turnout in Nigeria's elections and increasing voter participation among viewers of BBN. As the chapter argues, there is a lot of lessons Nigeria can learn from BBN to address the problem of voter apathy.

Nicholas Akas and Francis Olowolafe, in Chapter 11, use the case study of BBN Season 5 (*Lockdown*) to investigate the impact of the show on Nigerian youths. The key focus of their chapter is on using the cultural impact of BBN to understand the role of content creation in bridging the gap between culture and entertainment. In this closing chapter of the Part II of the book, the authors adopt Gerbner's Cultivation Theory to assess the effects of BBN reality TV show on viewers and argue that rather than subjugating Nigeria's indigenous culture, BBN should serve as a platform for promoting and appreciating local culture. Acts such as promiscuity, indecent dressing, lying, fighting, nudity, that the authors consider as 'UnAfrican' that is promoted by the BBN are used as strategies by housemates in a bid to win the grand prize. The authors use a survey of 100 undergraduate students of a Nigerian university to justify their arguments that the BBN show is laced with contents that negate the moral and cultural ethos of the Nigerian people.

Part III of the book addresses the theme of sociopolitical, cultural and economic diplomacy connected to the BBN brand. The five chapters in this last section collectively look at how BBN and its content creators can be of significance in different aspects of society. Dare Idowu and Olusola Ogunnubi, in Chapter 12, explore the role of BBN as a catalyst for developing Nigeria's Orange Economy. Their chapter argues that the value chain of creative products created by BBN show although significant is yet to be fully exploited to boost Nigeria's Orange Economy. Based on data-based evidence of the study, BBN and other similar reality TV shows can be a catalyst for deepening Nigeria's Orange Economy if serious attention is paid to the industry.

Chapter 13, by Ukwueze and Uzoechi, sees BBN as a reiteration of the necessity of law in human relations. It argues that the image and function of the big brother are akin to that of law that mediates human interaction and in the absence of which chaos and animality reign. It maintains that the show allows the viewers to perceive and reflect on the place of law in constraining individual and institutional behaviours which would be crude and vicious but for law. The authors, Ukwueze and Uzoechi, associate the lawlessness, brutality and poor governance in Nigeria to a decline in the accession to the rule of law. They recommend that through the sensitisation of the show the Nigerian nation would hopefully embrace the constitution and uphold the supremacy of law.

In Chapter 14, Akande Aina and Vincent Idoko underscore the argument of Olusola and Isike in Chapter 12 and provide a deeper analysis of

the conclusion made by Nicholas Erameh and Israel Fadipe in Chapter 9 on the connection between BBN and voting attitude during Nigeria's General Elections. The authors confirm the argument that there is a strong correlation between voting behaviour in the show and political elections in Nigeria. Doing a comparative review of the five seasons of BBN within the framework of poverty-inspired voting, the chapter contends that financial and social status of contestants drives voters' appeal, and the same sentiments are obvious in political elections where candidates who play the poverty card are most likely able to secure votes from the public. The authors conclude that while this voting behaviour is incapable of producing good leadership, the capability of contestants in BBN and candidates in general elections should be the yardstick for winning votes.

Olasupo Olusola and Christopher Isike continue the conversation on the links between voting behaviour in BBN and general elections in Nigeria in Chapter 15 but with a focus on youths. They draw parallels between the voting behaviour of Nigerian youths in BBN shows and general elections in the country since their inceptions in 2006 and 1999 (4th republic), respectively. In seeking answers to the key question of why Nigerian youths become active voters in BBN editions and inactive or apathetic in general elections, the finding shows the answer lies in digitalisation. While BBN uses youth friendly media platforms for electronic voting, the Nigerian government discourages it. Also, voting in BBN carries no risk of threat to life as the general election in Nigeria does. The authors conclude that if the Nigerian government learns from and adopts the electronic voting system such as used in BBN, the country will record a higher turnout of youths in the 2023 general elections. The study, therefore, recommends electronic voting as a pathway to making Nigerian youths to change their voting behaviour in the general elections.

Chapter 16 closes the third and final part of the book with a contribution from Ruth Ogunnowo on the attraction of the BBN show to Nigerians in diaspora through various opportunities for participation and voting offered by the content creators. According to the author, the show allows Nigerian diasporic communities first-hand experience of the country in a way that may not have been possible without the show. A major highlight of the chapter is the recommendation that the BBN show can be used as a platform to sensitise the diaspora on the need to contribute to the country's economic growth.

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PART I

Concept, Form and Context



Foucault's *Panopticon* as a Theoretical Frame for Understanding the Big Brother Reality Show

Christopher Isike

THE PANOPTICON CONCEPT

The concept of the panopticon has its roots in the writings of English philosopher social theorist, Jeremy Bentham, but it was later refined and popularized by Michel Foucault in his seminal 1975 book *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the Prison*. Originally, Bentham's concept of the panopticon is a type of institutional building and a system of control designed to allow all prisoners within a prison institution to be observed by a single security guard, without the inmates being able to tell whether they are being watched. According to Bentham, although it is physically impossible for a prison guard to observe all the inmates' cells at the same time, the fact that the inmates cannot know when

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they are being watched motivated them to act as though they are being always watched. In this way, the inmates are effectively compelled to regulate their own behavior. Bentham's architectural design of the panopticon prison consists of a rotunda with an inspection house at its center. From the center, the manager or staff of the institution are then able to watch the inmates. Although he conceived the basic plan as being equally applicable to institutions of social control such as schools, hospitals, sanatoriums, and factories, Bentham devoted most of his efforts to developing a design for a panopticon prison which he believed will work in the public's interest especially when the prison manager and officials themselves were also subject to public scrutiny. Typical with the assumptions of classical management theory about human nature and the role of the manager, the bottom-line of Bentham's panoptic idea is that there are certain activities which are better conducted when they are supervised by the panopticon who in the prison context is the prison manager.

Furthering Bentham's idea of the panopticon, to state and society Foucault (1975) recognized the role of power in creating social order in society. In doing this, he created a distinction between sovereign power in the monarchical era and in modern times. Sovereign power, he noted, was centralized in the monarch who exercised it by demanding obedience from subjects and punishes them by taking life when sovereign authority was disobeyed. In contrast, modern power is dispersed, and it is exercised according to norms reflected in rules and laws which Foucault referred to as "disciplinary power," and this is embedded in the Panopticon. In Foucauldian philosophy, the Panopticon is a metaphor used to explain the system of social control in solitary confinement where human beings were subjected to disciplinary condition. He calls humans under this disciplinary system who are not aware that they are surveilled on "docile bodies." In essence, this form of power production under the prison-like gaze is aimed at enforcing discipline over the docile bodies. Foucault describes the prisoner of a panopticon as being at the receiving end of asymmetrical surveillance wherein "he is seen, but he does not see; he is an object of information, never a subject in communication." As a result, the prisoner constantly polices himself to "do the right thing" for fear of punishment.

Foucault expanded Bentham's panopticon concept by using it as a metaphor in understanding and exploring the relationship between the social system and people who are placed in a disciplinary state (Mason 2022). Thus, Foucault's concept of the panopticon centers around

building an understanding of how power and knowledge are used as a kind of social control through the lens of societal institutions including the state itself (Sheridan 2016). It highlights the psychological control of society through the altering of social behaviors of the watched by those who watch (Mason 2022). Therefore, Foucault sees the panoptic not only as a physical construct but also as a lens for understanding the use of norms, laws, and policies to exercise social control and compliance in everyday life in societal institutions such as schools, hospitals, the media, banks, and other bureaucratic establishments societal institutions as Bentham had envisaged (see McKinlay and Starkey 1998; Berdayes 2002; Brunon-Ernst 2013). For instance, school pupils are conditioned to follow their school laws. Thus, if a school has a non-casual dress code policy, the pupil becomes conditioned to come to school without any casual clothes, but strictly the school uniform, thus psychologically the pupil becomes aware that wearing casual at school is wrong, altering the pupil's behavior in compliance toward the school's dress code. Therefore, power lies in the authority of the school which in this instance is a societal institution. The school then controls what the pupil should and should not do using their dress code policy. Hence, the latter is that power makes people act in ways intended by the one exercising control of disciplinary authority. In this way, power becomes both visible and yet unverifiable (Elmer 2012), but always exercised in the wielder's interest or for the general good as always claimed.

However, critics of the panopticon concept have highlighted the danger of unrestrained power that the penetrative panoptic gaze gives the panopticon. For instance, according to Semple (1993), Bentham's concept of the panopticon paved the way for authoritarian states to entrench themselves through social engineering of society in ways that enabled social control, compliance with little or no room for tolerance of those who deviate (Semple 1993: 4). There is also the question of accountability of the panopticon, the question of who watches the watcher given the abuse that come with absolute power, and which is also related to the problem of the authoritarian and unaccountable state. Sheridan (2016) in detailed treatment of Foucault and the modern panopticon also underscored the pitfalls of the interplay between panopticism and mass surveillance enabled by digitalization (modern technology) which has led to the development of invisible panopticon structures throughout society seen through, for instance, public CCTV cameras, the internet, mobile, and motor trackers as well as social media platforms

(Sheridan 2016: 1–86). The argument is that the panoptic disciplinary power has evolved from the traditional conception of the panopticon as a prison architecture (Bentham) and then as a state (Foucault) to a more decentralized apparatus that takes the strengths of panoptic power and distributes those checks on behavior throughout society. In essence, non-state actors within society such as big business (traditional and social media, banks, information technology companies) can also assume panoptic disciplinary powers at different levels of society under the state whose panoptic gaze and disciplinary powers itself have also been extended by technology in ways that breach the social contract between state and citizens as the case of Edward Snowden highlighted.¹

Overall, an important point to draw from an overview of the panopticon concept is the watched may be aware of being watched and that awareness impacts on their behavior which may align with the interest of the watcher whether benign or not. The consciousness of being watched even when the actual watching takes place is unknown, will also condition the watched in a self-disciplinary manner to comply with the expectation set by the watcher or panoptic power which may or may not align with the best interest of the watched.

TECHNOLOGICAL PANOPTICON

While the usage of the Panopticon has gained notoriety within the prison setting, it has been extrapolated to include several social settings such

¹ Edward Snowden is an American former computer intelligence consultant who in 2013 leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency where he was an employee and subcontractor. His leaks showed how the US and other European governments working in tandem with telecommunication companies engaged in surveillance of their citizens and other governments which he considered intrusive and against the public good. Snowden claimed to have acted out of patriotism and in the public interest to “inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them” Greenwald et al. (2013). He has since been seen as different things by different people depending on their standpoints: patriot, traitor, whistle-blower, and coward. However, “Snowden offered the global community a choice, to continue on working under the assumption that their governments were working to further their interests and protect them or to accept the invitation to step back and think critically about the methods that those governments were employing and whether or not they had overstepped. Whether that information was used for good or ill was largely irrelevant, all that was important was that it was out there, and that people could see the potential for abuse within the system” (Sheridan 2016: 77).

as schools, factories, hospitals, banks, and other bureaucratic establishments (See Berdayes 2002; Brunon-Ernst 2013) where individuals are brought under some form of appropriate norms using technology to secure compliance and productivity. This is referred to as the technological Panopticon which has expanded beyond the use of visible and hidden cameras to mass data surveillance that governments big business and IT companies undertake through not only people's use of the internet, but also through the mining of personal data for their self-serving interests in an increasingly digitalized world. As McMullan (2015) posed "the parallels between the panopticon and CCTV may be obvious, but what happens when you step into the world of digital surveillance and data capture? Are we still "objects of information" as we swipe between cells on our smartphone screens?" These questions not only draw parallels between Bentham's panopticon watch tower and the panopticon CCTV that adorn private and public spaces, but also turn attention to the penetrative gaze of the watchers (government, big business, and big technology companies) who have access to the mass data generated from peoples' everyday use of the internet, communication technologies, and digital transactions. Underscoring their more intrusive nature which is a major difference from the Benthamian prison watchtower/architectural conception of the panopticon, Sheridan (2016: 47) argues

In the original panopticon, the basis of institutional power was vested in the watchtower in the centre of the prison complex, or in the wider sense, exercised by a very visible authoritative presence. The modern surveillance panopticon has dispensed with the visible watchtower, and in fact most forms of hard power entirely. The modern panopticon exists via a series of lenses and microphones connected by intangible webs. Much like in the traditional panopticon, those subjected cannot know whether or not they are being watched, but in the modern panopticon, the subjects are not even aware they are being observed.

For example, the false sense of safety an internet user feels in the privacy of their personal space makes him or her unaware of who else may be watching and using his personal data for motives that may not align with the user's interest or that of the general good irrespective of claims to such by the watcher especially if they are government. The point, however, is that since Bentham and Foucault, the world has evolved into an era of new forms of the panoptic gaze which are dispersed. In

a nutshell, as Sheridan argues, the social conditioning and the normalizing of the presence of surveillance devices including the panoptic gaze of those who control the back end of the internet have conditioned the wider population to ignore the gazes however intrusive they may be. In the modern panopticon era, “the cameras are designed to be unobtrusive so that the gaze of the subjects passes over them, allowing for various overlapping lines of sight for whomever happens to be in the control booth” (Sheridan 2016: 48). A related area of difference is that panoptic technologies are seen and accepted as good for society and the world at large, and this explains its acceptance. For example, the video analysis technology is effective in identifying criminals, the cameras that litter the streets of both big and small cities not only help the police to solve crime, but they also have a crime prevention advantage. In essence, they promise convenience, efficiency, security, and reduced uncertainty, and it can, therefore, be argued that the potential risks posed by contemporary surveillance are acceptable and counterbalanced by the increased sense of security they provide (Sheridan 2016: 48). However, these panoptic technologies are increasingly falling into the hands of private corporate security many of which are outside the regulation radar. More small shops are selling intrusive devices that are easily affordable, and big business including government itself are increasingly using these technologies to profile and categorize people such as immigrants, refugees, and political opposition raising new questions about balancing security and personal freedoms (Sheridan 2016).

THE PANOPTIC STATE AND INCULCATION OF SOCIAL CONTROL IN NIGERIA

Drawing on the Foucauldian panoptic gaze, there is a sense in which the state itself has adopted the Panoptic method of surveillance to command obedience in a manner that is repressive, which has given rise to the notion of the Panoptic state. This is a state that erodes civil and political rights by excessively surveilling the civic space with intentions that are essentially focused on regime security. According to Foucault, this was rooted in the changing legal powers of the state which gave them (states) the right to administer more subtle methods of punishment, such as to observe and monitor citizens under the guise of securing the state from imminent threats or in the face of breaches to state security. China and North Korea are good examples of states that use the panoptic gaze to

surveil and control their citizens to compel obedience to state laws and compliance with state norms and regulation. This creates a form of organized obedience by the citizenry that is also characterized by a docility that makes them (citizens) susceptible to uncritically follow instructions from any kind of authority be it from the state or not without questions. It is in this light we can also understand why and how citizens of such authoritarian states become vulnerable to social control.

In Nigeria where the political state has steadily been on the ascendancy over time with a declining social state² as a logical outcome, the country has increasingly become a panoptic state since 2015. This is a consequence of the shrinking civic space occasioned by the government's projection of panoptic disciplinary power through its appropriation of the digital space to enable a panoptic gaze. Indeed since 2010, the digital space in Nigeria has been growing as a potent tool for civic action. Its efficacy was palpable in the Occupy Nigeria protest that followed the removal of fuel subsidy in 2012 which was eventually rescinded by the government. Also, the civic action that heralded the 2015 general elections and the youthquake that triggered the End SARS protests in 2020 all succeeded largely because of the effective utilization of online media spaces. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have also benefited from the use of digital technologies which enhanced the success of their operations in advocacy, collaboration, and awareness campaign to promote an open democratic society. But as Nnoli (2011) once observed, the neo-colonial state in Africa has a penchant for unilateral projection of state power expressed in the reckless use of the coercive apparatus of state. Accordingly, there was no way it could allow the continued use of the online civic space in a manner that would "democratically" undermine its authoritarian use of power without responding. Therefore, the increasing resort to the use of the panoptic gaze to surveil and constrain the online civic space and broadcast stations by the Nigerian state has become a new authoritarian strategy under the Buhari government since 2015. It

² According to Isike and Ihembe (2021), the political state is one that has social policy vacuity, privileges the protection of elite interests and the pursuit of narrow ends over and above the common good. They argue that the political state abdicates its responsibility to provide public goods while prioritizing regime security and survival of its abstract and territorial components even when they have little or no social value for its citizens. Compared to this is the social state which is based on the ideals of social policy, one that addresses social justice, and it is inclusive and effective in the distribution of public goods (Isike and Ihembe 2021: 378).

has projected a panoptic disciplinary power by enacting draconian laws aimed at gagging the mainstream and online civic spaces while economic conditions depreciate in ways that leave many including mostly youths frustrated and hopeless.³ For example, in 2021, the government allocated \$11.6 million for the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to monitor WhatsApp, phone calls, and text messages,⁴ and this came just after it banned Twitter which is an income generator for many youths in the country.

In a nutshell, the Nigerian government now censors contents of the mainstream media it considers uncomfortable and imposes huge fines on violations, using the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC).⁵ It has also used technological Panoptic gaze to exercise disciplinary power on citizens who expressed their constitutionally guaranteed right of civil disobedience. This was seen during the End SARS protests⁶ after which the Central Bank of Nigeria froze 20 accounts belonging to End SARS campaigners to suppress the momentum of the movement alleging the accounts were used to fund terrorist activities (Human Rights Watch 2020). Subsequently, the campaigners resorted to raising funds through virtual currencies (VCs). Again, the government responded by banning the use of cryptocurrency, alleging that it was being used to finance terrorism. While this has been seen in other countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Bolivia, Ghana, Vietnam, and Algeria, research has proven to the contrary.⁷ This use of technological Panoptic disciplinary power to stiffen

³ Youth unemployment in Nigeria rose to 53.4% in the 4th quarter of 2020, the highest it has ever been since the country gained independence in 1960 and this high unemployment rate meant that more than half of Nigerians between the ages of 15–40 couldn't find paying jobs no matter how qualified they were or how hard they searched (Big Brother Naija Report 2022: 7).

⁴ See *Premium Times* <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/473147-as-nigeria-moves-to-control-media-nia-gets-n4-8bn-to-monitor-whatsapp-phone-calls.html>. Accessed 12/7/2021.

⁵ See *Premium Times* <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/459969-nbc-fines-channels-tv-inspiration-fm-n5million-each-for-broadcast-code-infractions.html>. Accessed 12/7/2021.

⁶ End SARS was a youth movement against police brutality in Nigeria which brought about series of protest in October 2020 that led extra-judicial killings by security agents and paralyzed a significant number of socio-economic activities.

⁷ Central Banks around the world have criticized the use of cryptocurrencies in the international monetary system alleging it has the potentials to facilitate crimes (*Financial Times* 2021). However, other studies have argued that only a minuscule percentage

civil liberties in Nigeria has also been extended to the operations of the CSOs under the pretext of the counterterrorism and the Money Laundering Acts alleging they serve as “conduits for the transfer of funds for terrorist groups” which constitute a national security threat (Njoku 2020: 84–85). It has securitized the activities of CSOs by regulating the flow of their finances through surveillance even though it has not been able to establish such a case. Therefore, it could be argued that these claims were only made by the government mainly for regime security. The unilateral projection of Panoptic disciplinary power by the state points to one thing: the resurgence of authoritarianism under the guise of democracy.

The whole point of the discussion on Nigeria as a panoptic state is to underscore two things; one, how the panoptic Nigerian state prepares its citizens and inculcates docility in them in ways that make citizens vulnerable to social control by other centers and ideas of authority in society such as the Big Brother. Second, how a panoptic Nigerian state with a struggling economy drives the youth to increasingly see entertainment and other popular culture activities not only as outlets for coping with the frustrations of the double jeopardy of panoptic and political state, but also as an economic outlet for survival (see Big Brother Naija Report 2022).

THE PANOPTICON AS A LENS FOR UNDERSTANDING BIG BROTHER NAIJA (BBN)

To reiterate, Bentham and Foucault believe that physical punishment is not always necessary as once under state control, citizens will impose self-discipline on themselves. Hence, the panopticon concept suggests that society internalizes authority which is one form of power and control exercised through norms and institutions (Manokha 2018). The panopticon in this regard is not just the prison system but a broader scope of societal functions, laws, and policies that enable social control and compliance (Mason 2022). The Big Brother Reality show and its Nigerian variant, Big Brother Naija (BBN), present a good case study of the panopticon concept. To start with, the gazing eye in the BBN logo is an indicator

(0.61%) of transactions to convert Bitcoin to Dollars or Euros have illicit origins and this only marginally increased to 1.07% in 2013 (Agrawal 2018). Similarly, the International Centre for Counterterrorism has noted that the allegations that link the use of Virtual Currencies to financing terrorism are unfounded (Etenmann and Berg 2018).

of the constant surveillance that the show is about. The logo instills in the housemates the consciousness of being watched always, and in typical Foucauldian notion of the panopticon, the housemates are docile bodies subjected to disciplinary condition created by the Big Brother (panopticon). The constant and sometimes penetrative gaze of the Big Brother conditions and moderate the thought patterns and behaviors of the housemates in ways that ensure compliance with the norms, rules, and regulation of the Big Brother which is in turn determined by the interests of the organizers of the show.

Like Bentham's panopticon prison, the contestants are placed in a specially designed house that is isolated from the rest of the world (Turner 2018). This means contestants have no access beyond the house. This acts as their "prison" and contestants are aware that they are being observed and monitored with cameras and audio microphones that are used to monitor, their every move (McCarthy 2019). Indeed, the housemates voluntarily consent to the house rules and the rules of the show which includes live broadcast of the contestants with CCTV cameras all around the house operating on a 24-h cycle (Biressi and Nunn 2005). However, aware that they are placed in a disciplinary situation, contestants are conscious that there are consequences for failing to adhere to rules which in this case includes being sent home and losing the opportunity of getting the coveted cash prize. Thus, because contestants are aware of being watched, their behavior is conditioned to comply with the set rules of the house and show. This pitches them (and their fans) in a competitive mood against one another, and sometimes in cooperation to avoid leaving the Big Brother House and thus ending their chances of winning the competition.

Therefore, contestants are in a controlled environment and must abide by the rules and instructions of the big brother master which in this case is the authority. The social control power of the Big Brother further extends beyond the House to the social norms and institutions where in the case of Big Brother Africa, the public gets to vote for one of their favorite housemates of the two facing elimination except during the grand finale (Coleman 2006). This highlights the fact that contestants have no control over voter turnout and in turn subconsciously internalize authority, acting out in a manner that aims to please both the house master, "big brother or biggie" and the public to remain in the house and win the cash prize. Thus, the authority becomes omniscience and contestants' self-discipline themselves through altering their behavior in

following all instructions given to suit the satisfaction of the authority and the public voters, highlighting an element of compliance and control (Mason 2022).

The panopticon, which in this case is the Big brother who is the observer, decides on the type of punishment house guests are to receive in violations of the rules (Harp 2018; Carbone (2019)). Moreover, housemates are to fully comply with all punishment instructed by Biggie irrespective of their dehumanizing nature such as wearing of diapers and other children's items such as a dummy for the entire day (Big Brother Mzansi 2022). Additionally, the set rules themselves highlight both control and compliance. For instance, no housemate is allowed contact with the outside world, housemates are to always wear microphones so that they may be seen and heard by the public and the show production. Also, no TV, cell phones, or any gadgets are allowed unless provided for by Big Brother (Izuchukwu 2020). Should any contestant be found breaking the rules, Big Brother may decide on their exit of the show/competition Carbone (2019).

Thus, all housemates must strictly follow each house rule, lest be punished. One of the show's famous punishments includes Season 6 of Big Brother Naija where contestant Saga was made to clean an intentionally littered garden after failing to follow Biggie's order of Saga picking a fight with Nini and avoiding her for the entire day, resulting in Saga losing the 200 token reward (Olowolagba 2021). Bentham suggests that inmates must be aware that they are being observed but must not see the observer. This is so in the case of the show where housemates are aware that they are being observed through cameras and audios but, do not know who is observing them, thus they do know who exactly the big brother is, what he knows or does not know, and what his interests are except for what he tells them. Clearly then, power lies on the side of the authority which would see the self-alteration of the housemate actions. Also, Foucault and Bentham's view are in sync with the reality show where in this instance, contestants are completely aware that they are being watched when they eat, sleep, interact with each other or use the restroom, making power to be visible as the two theorists points out (Thussu 2008). Interestingly, with compliance comes reward. This is seen through, for example, when housemates comply with the house rules and follow instructions, they are rewarded in the form of, for instance, receiving a private suite while others share or in the form of currency and fun games (Mitchell 2019).

However, in line with criticisms against the panopticon idea in its different forms, the common question of accountability measured against the public good remains resonant. Who defines the public good between the state and citizens, between the watcher and the watched? And who watches the watcher to ensure they keep with the public good value of panopticon surveillance assuming they are altruistic in the first place? These are questions that frame the book's interrogation of the concept, reception, criticism, and socio-political, cultural, and economic value of the BBN show as a popular culture in Nigeria. From a panoptic state perspective, it also helps shed light on the unrestrained nature of power and political authority over Nigerians as docile bodies who imbibe authoritarianism without critical interrogation of what it means for their personhood both as individuals and society in general.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To conclude, the point of this chapter is to make some sense of the concept of "Big Brother" in the Big Brother Reality show broadly and in the specific context of the Big Brother Niaja show. It also attempts to offer a lens through which one can make sense of the reception and criticism of the show by Nigerians in ways that can help understand and weigh the socio-political, cultural, and economic value of BBN against the intrusive gaze of the Big Brother panopticon. In this way, the Panoptic schema, from its original Benthamian conception as a physical and architectural space (prison) to its Foucauldian conception as norms, laws, and policies which regulate behavior and compliance including its contemporary meaning in a digital world, the chapter presents a good theoretical anchor of the arguments presented in the chapters of this book.

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Meanings of BB: The Social Semantics of a Nigerian Reality Show

P.-J. Ezeh

PREAMBLE

I contemplated two other titles for this discourse. One was “The uncultured’s cold” after Oscar Wilde famous epigram, “Where the cultured catch an effect, the uncultured catch cold”. The other was “One long trope”. The first is a reflection of my view of the two basic views that I have either heard or read about the show. The second reflects what the show itself amounts to.

The first of the titles represents the position of those that hold the view that the show is morally lax. I had learnt from social-science research methods not to use epigraphs. Per this principle, epigraphs tend to dictate the flow of an account. I do have my take on this precept, which needn’t delay us on this occasion. I can only add that it is important for what I want to do here to be seen by all sides to have left an open mind;

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to be seen as having considered all sides to the discourse. It is advisable to allow whatever conclusion on this case to emerge from a neutral epistemic space. Sociologists and kindred disciplines have studied innovations in social processes, including diverse genres of art. Sociology itself was founded for a dispassionate study of the far-reaching changes that Europe found itself following the industrial revolution (Rao 2012). No living society is stagnant. Changes do occur and, often, reactions to those changes typically define holders of contending opinions.

BBNaija

I should say a word or two on BBNaija to properly situate the rest of this discourse. It is part of the global Big Brother franchise, the first of this highly successful reality show being the one that was aired in Holland in 1999. It was created by John de Mol Jr. Its success has led to rapid expansion to other parts of the world. BB combines mastery of audiovisual and literary genres to peerless levels which can only lead to the *succès fou* that I refer to. It now shows in over sixty countries, and in some cases regions, e.g. India, in regions as well. For the period an edition of the show lasts, contestants live in a house that is meant for the purpose and have every action of theirs recorded by cameras and microphones. They will not have any contact with the outside world. In these days of the ubiquitous GSM, even the use of their phones is denied them. During this year's (2021) Nigerian edition one of the contestants who was evicted put the effect of such privation most dramatically. When journalists asked to know what she missed most while the isolation lasted, she said it was her cell phone.

A Nigerian edition was first shown in 2006 as BB Nigeria. It took its current name, BBNaija from its second edition. This year's is the sixth. My focus in this chapter is to address the conceptual issues connected with the programme. I expect reactions that will lead to further studies by scholars whose specialties deal with the issues that I raise, not least literary critics, mass communicators, sociologists.

BBNaija is at once among the most watched and most criticised television programmes in Nigeria. This year (2021) the show ran for seventy-two days, from 24 July to 3 October. More than 1000 million viewers are reported to have voted in the grand finale; 100 million votes more than in the previous year (Kenechi 2021).

What viewers watch in the show is only a small part of what makes this show important, granted that such visible aspects are what make it worthwhile to the lay audience, and therefore what undergird its commercial success through attraction of big-time advertisers and sponsors. Ernest Hemingway's iceberg theory is the most effective way to look at such intricate relationship between what creators of the show have in mind, performance of the participants, and viewers' reactions to what is produced. Hemingway's experiences in life *as is* feed his fiction (Heiney and Downs 1974).

Regarding the iceberg theory, Hirsch et al. (1991) have explained that because the large part of the iceberg is submerged in sea, it presents an apt trope for a subject whose important aspects are hidden from public view. Hemingway, journalist/short-story writer, developed such comparison to the level of literary theory, through the narrative style in his fiction style. Robust clues are provided but they remain what they are: clues. The reader has to work out the details, which like the larger part of the iceberg is hidden in the story. Burroway (1991: 62) has said, regarding this style of Hemingway's, "The reader, focus directed by the author, learns by inference, as in life, so we have the pleasure of knowing the characters better than they know themselves".

The main body of BBNaija's iceberg consists in its title, message, symbolism and sociology or meaning. I will now discuss each of these. I should also mention that a reality show is the genre that can artistically hide these components of the narrative. Reality show is to mass communication what the ocean is to water. Its expanse is so vast and its malleability of style insulates it from many constraints which most other genres have to bear. Reality show can provide a convenient space for a message that may be difficult to give in many other genres.

TITLE

Big Brother, the eponym of the show, derives from the principal antagonist of George Orwell's celebrated novel, *1984* (Orwell 1949/1984). *Nineteen eighty-four*, or *1984*, is a prescient novel that Orwell (real name, Arthur Blair, 1903–1950) had published in 1949, just a year before his death. It was Orwell's second best-known political fiction, the other being *Animal farm*. *1984* generalised for the entire society what the eighteenth/nineteenth-century British politico-legal theorist, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), had in 1791 recommended for gaolers. Prison

inmates should be under perennial observation round the clock. It was to be achieved through a special building that consisted of a central watch-tower surrounded by a circle of prison cells. Benthal named his theorised building “panopticon” (from the Greek that means all-seeing, *panoptes*). The gaoler in the tower could see occupants of each cell but it would not be possible for the prisoners to see him, this way the prisoners got the impression that they were being watched all the time, even when indeed such was not necessarily the case.

Although never really applied in penal practice in England, Benthal’s proposition keeps finding new life in fiction as in sociological theory. A couple of countries, e.g. Cuba and Netherlands, at some point or the other actually used the idea in their prisons.

Michel Foucault has developed what is now known as the panopticon theory, where he sees the structure as emblematic of apparatus of power, and a trope of the relations between people of power and the rest of the community in modern society. Scott (2014: 453) notes, “Foucault saw this as an essential development in, and metaphor for, the increasing surveillance, hierarchy, discipline, and classifications of modern society by means of which individuals became ever more regulated and controlled by impersonal institutions”. Big Brother stands for holders of this all-pervading power in Orwell’s novel. He is, as Wilson (1977: 12) has described him, the “all-wise and all-powerful leader” of the Inner Party which holds the power of life and death in Orwell’s fictional country where, like in BBNaija, there is no privacy. In BBNaija, the invisible potentate that arbitrates on every matter also goes by the same name, Big Brother.

BBN, ORWELL AND HEMINGWAY

Like Orwell, Hemmingway is concerned with the end of an epoch although not exactly in the same way. While Orwell states his message in the famous trope that is the central concern of my contribution to this book, Hemmingway is direct. He makes his case in the way that he works his storyline and presents behaviours of the characters in his stories. Bush (1993: 129) has observed, regarding Hemmingway, “Ernest Hemmingway (1899–1961) is often the single most popular writer of the Lost Generation. In many ways he epitomises the whole idea of Modernist tradition. His novels and short stories reflect the sense of loss that accompanies the emptiness in writers who experienced the hypocrisy of World War I”. It

is Hemingway's style—the way that he presents his narrative—that makes him relevant to someone studying BBN. For Orwell, it is his overarching metaphor of the extreme change in the social order that he forecasts in his inimitable way. In *1984* he is, in a manner of speaking, a seer of a *Zeit Geist* that is yet to come.

When certain developments reflecting the tenor of the trope manifest, the relevance of the novel soars. Such developments are usually in the shape of stiffening of social control or tampering with political processes in ways that are adjudged outlandish in the Western democracies or countries such as Nigeria that attempt to copy them. Turner (2019) made a similar observation while reviewing Lynskey's (2019) new book, *The Ministry of Truth*, that focuses on this novel. He gives the example of the rise in the demand for *1984* following the election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States. As president, Trump was seen as handling the matter of journalists' and citizens' use of free expression in an unconventional way that was previously unknown in America. Turner (2019: 7) states, "Current estimates say worldwide sales exceed thirty million, and it has returned periodically to the top of the bestseller lists here [United Kingdom] and in America, most recently following the election of Donald Trump".

BBN's MESSAGE

To access the deeper meaning of BBN one must go beyond the surface instantiations that it presents and look for the deeper lying message that it draws from the classic fiction and treatise before it. The concept itself is an apt reflection of reality show, as a category of mass communication. Definitionally, a reality show is a fine blend of fact and fiction.

In 1960s, professionals in varieties of the mass media began to bring in forms that mix facts as these were known in classic straight news with commentaries in ways that recognised subjectivity as style. If well executed, such stylistic commentaries can achieve more than is possible in overt preaching or undisguised opinions. Two of the pioneers of a kindred variety in the print media, Tom Wolfe and E.W. Johnson, have published an anthology of views on the category that is known as **new journalism** (Wolfe and Johnson 1975). It says something of the new genre that both authors work also in the creative literature domain. Docu-soap does the same for the radio media—docudrama being a portmanteau word from documentary (in its more familiar form) and soap opera.

Another portmanteau term, *faction* (fact + fiction), has also been used to refer generically to all these forms. While purists criticise this melange of facts and figurative forms, their value in helping authors to navigate difficult topics are not difficult to see. Ideas are sold to readers or audience that will otherwise be more challenging or indeed impossible.

BBNaija holds up the mirror to the Nigeria's viewing public. Without endorsing or condemning it, it shows how social life currently is. A close observation will reveal patent acculturation and attempts to domesticate lifestyles copied from extraneous cultures, mainly of Europe and America. It reflects in the language, sociality and idiosyncrasies of the actors. There is nothing in the show that accommodates traditional systems of any of the Nigerian groups. Once in the cast everyone behaves in ways that show that a new culture, one that is subversive of the autochthonous systems, has evolved; something that is more barefaced than "culture jamming" (Chandler and Munday 2011: 88). Scholars in the field of cultural studies have used the term to refer to a distortion of the original cultural traits, institutions or practices through the mass media manipulation by artists and activists. For the attitude of the BBNaija actors/actresses, vis-à-vis the indigenous cultures, one may suggest the term **culturacide** (from Latin: *cultura*, culture; and ~ *cide*, the usual English suffix denoting "kill", which also comes from Latin: *caedere*, to kill).

This is part of what horrify conventional viewers. The more dizzying for most is what has been described as "obscenity". Even one sympathetic commentator while conceding a number of bright sides of the show nevertheless reflected that concern (Omokoba 2021). A harsher commentator acerbically titled his article "BBNaija: descent into hell" and concludes, "I agree with those who clamour for the reality show to be scrapped. Yes, scrap it" (Nwankwo 2021).

One of the lady participants stood out for her preference for skimpy, indeed erogenous, dressing. On one occasion, the camera caught her not being sufficiently protective of her private parts while in the loo. She was quoted in a newspaper article as saying that being carefree with dressing was her normal way of life. While the show lasted, viewers had taken her dress sense for a desperate strategy to attract attention and possibly stay through the show, maybe even win. But she denied that. In an explanation that went viral in the social media, she said, regarding the exposure of her privates, "I don't ascribe my value to what they look at. It was a communal bathroom, every other person was shy but I don't really care if you see me naked" (Gabs 2021).

Another lady participant was caught on camera apparently making love to a male participant. Viewers were appalled because she was married in real life. As the controversy raged, her husband said that he suspected a tit-for-tat of sorts because he too wasn't a paragon of marital fidelity. He had also had a fling in the past. Wrangling between participants was also recorded. The eventual winner had complained of being bullied by another participant. In a previous edition, a female participant was sanctioned for pilfering from her colleague.

While popular morality may view these acts as wrong, nevertheless they do occur in their dozens in workaday life. Again, there is none of them that is impossible of being set as a role in a normal theatre event. Someone looking at BBNaija as art or a mass communication event will shift their focus to the meaning that is being projected. The difference from the performance from that of conventional theatre is that in the latter the roles may be based on a written script. Acts of participants in BBNaija are extemporaneous.

SYMBOLISM

The things that participants do in BBNaija and how commentators see them reflect the struggle between those that wield power in the public sphere and the populace. Rather like what happens in theatre in the round where spectators are also part of the cast, analysis of the show cannot be complete without bringing in the opinions of the viewers. In Orwell's eponymic play, Big Brother who calls the shot and unleashes the over-arching surveillance does so, at least in principle, on behalf of the Inner Party. Here we can say that the Inner Party is symbolised by viewers of BBNaija. Big Brother superintends in their decision of the propriety or otherwise of actions of participants. They do this through the weekly voting where they decide who will be retained as part of the cast and who should be expelled, or "evicted from the house", to use the jargon.

The debate on the actions of the skimpy-dress lady puts the interplay of all these dimensions of the Orwellian story in high relief. While the more priggish viewers would want a bottomed-down sartorial taste, she stuck to her guns. She had told a reporter, "I don't place my value in my nakedness, my value is in so many other places. I know I'm smart. I know I'm funny and I'm fine" (Gabs 2021). This is a debate between orthodoxy and heterodoxy; between convention and self-assertion. One student of Orwell's story once saw this social conflict as the core issue in

the novel—namely the individual’s effort to claim their freedom in the face of imposition of preferences of powerful people in society. A character in the story compares the determination of people of power to get everyone to fall in line to a boot stamping on human face. Wilson (1977: 12) suggests that the helpful way to proceed is accommodation that allows individual choices that portend no harm to one’s fellows. “Once we submit to those who hate freedom, individuality, and the pursuit of unity”, he says, “we shall have snapped the final links with humanity”.

MEANINGS, MEANINGS AND MEANINGS

When wrangling occurs in social relations the odds sometimes are that the disputants have different ways of looking at a process or structure neither position of which may be necessarily wrong. We encounter this type of situation in all manner of social institutions: religion, economy, governance, art and whatnot. The cultural anthropologist, Victor Turner, has coined the term, *multivocality*, in reference to this type of situation where there can be more than one correct way of interpreting a social phenomenon (Turner 1975; Ezeh 2012). Clifford Geertz has also proposed the less elegant and less semantically obvious term, *thick description*, to refer to the need for accommodation of diverse views in some social transactions (Ezeh, 2012). In these Orwellian days with its social panopticon, powerful social voices prefer that weaker voices are stifled, not for being wrong but just for not being in the mainstream. They would rather that suggestions such as Turner’s or Geertz’s were swept aside. It is the type of intolerance that Salman Rushdie named “many-sided truths” and lamented in his famously creative manner when he wrote, “These are hurried, sloganizing times, and we don’t have the time or, worse, the inclination to assimilate many-sided truths” (Rushdie 1998).

Moral entrepreneurs is the name that sociologists give to social soteriologists or potentates who think in absolute terms regarding sociality. As it turns out, it is not always, if ever, that such powerful people are right. If we had continued to listen to them, we would still be believing that the correct structure of our solar system is geocentric. Galilei Galileo had faced the ruthless inquisition in 1632 for holding the opposite view, heliocentrism. He narrowly escaped being burnt at the stakes. At seventy-nine, he was compelled to spend the remaining ten years of his life under house arrest. Pope John Paul II in a widely publicised apology, four

centuries afterwards in 1992, admitted that the Church was wrong and poor Galileo was right. The Americans outlawed teaching of evolution as an explanatory model of life on earth. Biology tutor, John Scopes, paid dearly for flouting that. The court convicted and fined him. It took the Soviets' demonstration of superiority in space exploration via robust scientific knowledge to wake the Yankees up from their theocentric slumber. President Lyndon Johnson recalled in his autobiography, "Russia's Sputnik, which orbited the earth in 1957 ... forced us to examine the weaknesses in our educational system" (Johnson 1971: 70). Kenneth Dike would never have written his path-finding African history from the perspective of the culture-bearer. The colonial moral entrepreneur held that this part of the world had no history worth writing about (Dike 2011). Nor would Chinua Achebe had given us the exquisite *Things fall apart* since it did not fit the masters' ideas of creative writing. To be able to produce that magnum opus Achebe himself had to first jump such absolutistic barrier, which he initially held to be unquestionable (Ochiagha 2018).

Foucault gave a metaphorical value to Jeremy Benthal's panopticon in his 1975 book, *Surveiller et punir* (translated rather debatably as *Discipline and punish*). He saw panopticon as an apparatus of power thanks to the field of visibility it created (Scott 2014). Foucault applies this to the control of modern society as a whole. Panopticon is the social space occupied by Big Brother of the Orwellian story.

In Foucault's view individuals are increasingly regulated and controlled by impersonal institutions. The awareness of being constantly watched has automated and impersonalised the power that is involved in social control. Individual members of the society become entrapped in these impersonal power relations, which in turn disindividualises the power relationship itself and individualises those that potentially are actually being watched.

Again it is the extension or dislocation of the original meaning of the term that enabled Foucault to bring a construct that is capable of being employed in an abstract discourse out of it. Panopticon is removed from a particular referent and transformed into a multivocalic omnimorphic denotatum that can refer to any situation where a human group are an object of surveillance, actual or potential. It is no longer a physical structure to be found in a particular place; it becomes instead a situation or condition of being watched. The location is no longer England but all modern societies. It is no longer actual offenders that are being watched but every member of the society. That watcher is not one identifiable

person but impersonalised institution: FBI, MI5, SSS, the Mosque, the Church and the like.

CONCLUSION

As a literary and mass communication genre reality show is new in Nigeria. BBNaija has exposed this category to Nigerian viewers more than any other programme of this kind. Not least because of its novelty in this country, reactions of viewers that are constrained by moral determinacy are hostile. Other viewers see the entertainment value in the show but miss its literary and sociological quality. In this chapter, I have combined the literary and sociological aspects of the series with facts from European legal philosophy to remonstrate that while the entertainment content in BBNaija is enormous, the programme is not limited by that quality. It has serious contributions to literary studies, mass communication, social anthropology and kindred disciplines.

The central theme in this programme as in the related works of Orwell in creative literature, Bentall in political philosophy and Foucault's social philosophy is social control. But it is not social control per se that is objectionable. Social life itself will be impossible at any level without some form of rules and efforts to enforce them. What is unrealistic and unconscionable is for those that are in charge to arrogate to themselves the omniscience that no human possesses and impose their preferences on the rest of members of society; to put us all in the metaphorical panopticon and, as Orwellian Big Brother, retire to their tower to watch and dictate to us. Such a situation for the entire society and age is the submerged body of the Hemingwayian iceberg that the BBNaija show is all about. The act of the cast, the narrative, is but the tip of the iceberg. The play has an immense value as a constant reminder of the boundary of social control; the boundary beyond which our fellows with power rob us of our humanity and make us mere marionettes.

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An Assessment of Glocal Considerations in *Big Brother Naija*

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INTRODUCTION

Out of the desire to examine the integrations of and debates around glocalisation, we focus our deliberations on the reality television show *Big Brother Naija* (BBN). The rationale is to explore how its contents have been modified with local interests in mind, i.e. an infusion of global and local appeal to create what Robertson (1995: 28) referred to as ‘glocal’ instances. Local appeal indicates audience preference within the Nigerian media landscape. *Big Brother* is an international reality television franchise with various localised formats, of which BBN is one. More light is shed on this case study through Straubhaar’s (2003, 2007) theory of cultural

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proximity and Hall's (1997) along with du Gay et al.'s (1997, 2013) representation discourse. The analysis method is hinged on a basic semi-otic analysis of signs and symbols that are representational of glocalisation within Nigeria.

In the discourse on glocalisation, global players must consider indigenous cultural elements that advance a more relatable content and local value systems prominent in such milieus (Okpara 2019; van Vliet 2018; Abiolu 2017; de Bruin and Zwaan 2012). Such attempts are made to forestall the homogenising consequence of globalisation wherein a sense of sameness is perceived and 'superimposed' from the global and dominant world cultures on local contexts. This is broadly categorised as cultural imperialism (Bakker 2017; Choi and Park 2014; Morley and Robbins 2013; Rantanen 2005). Glocalisation promotes heterogenisation and the plurality of media content to produce inherently unique cultural products due to the infusion of global and local elements (Robertson, 1995, 2012, 2018; Abiolu 2017; Gordon 2009; Teer-Tomaselli 2008).

GLOCALISATION AND REALITY TELEVISION IN MEDIA STUDIES

The term glocalisation, especially in media studies, has amassed different views and opinions (Robertson, 1995, 2012, 2018; Abiolu 2017; Roudometof 2016; Teer-Tomaselli 2008). It is concocted because of globalisation, a concept about the world within an interactive sphere. The world as a 'global village' or 'network society' portrays a single world system characterised by unprecedented social-political and economic connectedness where those who can take opportunities of what is available on the global market scale thrive by exchanging goods and providing services (Graham et al. 2015: 1). In essence, globalisation creates 'a unified world economy, a single ecological system, and a complex network of communications that cover(s) the whole globe (...) which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa' (Twining 2000: 4). On the other hand, glocalisation identifies how global and local resources can create their unique constituents within the global landscape due to the interaction of global flows (globalisation) and local flows (localisation). These global and local interactions produce 'glocal,' hence the term glocalisation.

Glocalisation involves creating and incorporating localities that shape the world in various places (Tong and Cheung 2011; Robertson 1995).

Glocalisation evolved from a Japanese marketing strategy (*dochakuka*) that meant global localisation (Robertson 1995: 28). It permeates global and local components that create unique outcomes within different geographic spaces (Ritzer and Ryan 2003). These outcomes become identifiable to those within local contexts but still with a level of comparison to global outcomes in other contexts. Such is the case of *Big Brother Naija*, a subset of the global *Big Brother* franchise. The specificity of this study centres on the reality television genre that showcases *Big Brother Naija* as a glocalised transnational media exchange within Nigeria.

The reality television genre stems from the efforts of content producers to broadcast activities as they happen ‘live.’ The idea is to capture viewing experiences inclusive of an array of scheduled entertainment programmes as real events and the real lives of people (Hill 2005). The audience is provided with a virtual experience through exposure to reality television (Patkin 2003). For instance, a place where a member of the audience may not be able to go physically can be substituted for through the virtual experience obtained from reality television without being present at the scene of events.

The concept of surveillance introduced to reality television changed the outlook of this genre. Given this, reality television transformed into a mediated spectacle (Andrejevic 2004) centred on the ‘liveness’ of a show. Debates around this genre’s scripted or unscripted nature and how truly ‘realistic’ it is have generated diverse views (Onebunne and Okeke 2020; Nwafor and Ezike 2015; Devereux 2013). Hill (2015) added her voice to the debate that the ‘liveness’ of reality television shows emphasises what may be happening presently, which creates deep impressions on the viewers’ minds. The implication of this is that the audience experiences the simultaneous first-hand nature of the show. Given this, the reality television show *Big Brother* thrives on the instantaneous broadcast of the show, which is a dynamic character of the programme, among many others that are briefly identified in ensuing discussions. Though *Big Brother* contributes to the debate on surveillance and the liveness of reality television, greater emphasis will be shifted to *Big Brother Naija* and its glocalised features within the Nigerian space.

CASE STUDY: *BIG BROTHER NAIJA* (BBN)

Big Brother is an international television production with varying glocal adaptations across the world. Even though it originated from The Netherlands, it now has a presence in over 40 countries worldwide (Devereux 2013). *Big Brother* capitalises on technological innovations that ‘allow viewers to key into the program at any hour of the day or night—whether it be via website, chat lines, video, and audio streaming, or simply by downloads of the *Big Brother* ring-tones onto one’s mobile phone. In so doing, it becomes a communicant in an all-enveloping media event’ (Kilborn 2003: 81). The continental version is *Big Brother Africa*, which birthed the glocalised format in Nigeria’s *Big Brother Naija* (Chumbow 2020).

Big Brother Naija first aired in 2006 (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020; Okpara 2019), after which there have been four more editions to make five sessions in all. Like other formats, housemates are placed in an enclosed space for a period of time until the show is over and a winner emerges. Though BBN has different themes for each season, it maintains prominent distinguishing markers (to be explored as we highlight the show’s glocal characteristics). This reality television franchise documents the lives of a selected number of housemates who must live together and abide by the rules prescribed by the ‘Big Brother,’ the invisible but audible and all-seeing custodian of the *Big Brother* house (Nwafor and Ezike 2015). This is achieved through surveillance cameras fixed at strategic places in the house and microphones worn by housemates till they are evicted from the show. These housemates are ‘pitched in competition with each other as each seeks to stake his or her claim to remain in the game’ (Kilborn 2003: 76). The winner(s) is/are selected based on audience votes. It is a show that has thrust celebrity status on the participants due to media exposure, a cogent characteristic of reality television shows (Akinyoade 2020; de Bruin and Zwaan 2012). It is of little wonder that Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020: 76) averred that ‘the *Big Brother* reality show in Nigeria is most times regarded by contestants and the public as a platform for showcasing artistic talents (who) are aspiring movie or music stars.’

BBN has, in recent times, generated a series of discussions and polarised arguments around various issues. Some of the views have been for the show, while others have been against it. Among the debates are issues relating to how BBN can be a channel to repair Nigeria’s broken

and negative image, especially through its soft power and celebrity diplomacy tendency. Others are about the representation of women, observable gender stereotypes, gender-biased conversations on the commodification of bodies, the moral standard of the show, identity, and its uses, as well as gratification (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020; Chumbow 2020; Folayan et al. 2020; Oluwamayowa 2020; Amadi et al. 2019). For instance, looking beyond the show's entertainment functions, Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020) sought to emphasise the show's potency as an instrument for favourable foreign policies through semantic affirmation (the role of Nigeria as a 'Big Brother' on the continent, i.e. living up to the name Giant of Africa), and celebrity diplomacy (involving celebrities in portraying a positive image for Nigeria). They identified the soft power tendency inherent in BBN and the need to harness this resource in the face of the plagues that have befallen the country (like corruption, unrest, insecurity, greed, religious intolerance, etc.). This is in view of the wide reception of the show in well over 40 countries across the African continent, thereby generating discussion points beyond the Nigerian borders. In their words, BBN 'represents an educational tool to bridge the cultural divide across countries' (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020: 83).

In another instance, Chumbow (2020) reported that dominant themes on Twitter from her study findings were those of 'lust,' 'intellect,' 'call to action,' 'fanatic support,' 'reaction to tv content,' and 'love and relationships.' However, the theme of 'lust' garnered greater traction due to how participants were 'gazed' upon as commodified sexual beings. It led to hashtags such as #ColadaSweetLikeMercy, #FocusOnMercyEke, and so on. This particular contestant, Mercy Eke, went on to win the 2019 edition of BBN. The male and female gazes are critical points of conversation in feminist and representation studies. These constructs engage how the male gaze views the female body as a glorified object and also how the female gaze perceives the male body as desirable (Taylor 2014; Snow 1989).

Similarly, Amadi et al. (2019) established from their findings that the dominant theme used on social media platforms to frame BBN was that of nudity (53.4%). The framing of reality was 24.5%, while the framing of morality regarding the principles of right and wrong practices on the show stood at 22.1%. The authors concluded that though the show was intended to serve as entertainment, the volume of sexual immorality was high. Thus, the show had the propensity to slop the moral views of its audience.

A central area of discussion in Folayan et al. (2020) exemplified how the reality TV show, BBN, was influential in fostering national identity among other gratifications like entertainment, escape, and relaxation. The study further revealed that BBN has a huge platform for marketing brands and products, and the show's sponsors have taken advantage of this to reach a wide range of local and international audiences. Their view is firmly in line with Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020), Okpara (2019), and Omowale and Sanusi's (2015) conclusion on the commercial nature of BBN, its profitability for the producers, and the broad coverage that the show's sponsors have enjoyed through advertisement.

These studies generated varied talking points and opinions about the acceptability and relatability of the show. A fundamental idea that arose from their viewpoints stressed the need to concentrate on the indigenous milieu's sociocultural demands where the show is televised, thereby taking advantage of the show's potential for social, cultural, educative, economic, and political relations. By this, it will articulate and concretise the daily realities of viewers in relatable content. These are strongly aligned with issues around the power of 'representation' and cultural proximity, as amplified in the ensuing deliberations on the chapter's theoretical approaches. Given these analyses, our paper highlights the glocalisation of *Big Brother Naija* (BBN), paying attention to the synthesis and the difference from the global to the glocal adaptations and enunciating the local considerations.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Representation is an essential process that enhances the production and exchange of meaning between the members of a culture using language, signs, and images (du Gay et al. 1997, 2013; Hall 1997). Representation of media texts is necessary because such forms of representation will inform the outlooks of groups and cultures with the potential to affect the way social relations play out (Long and Wall 2013). The ability to pass across the message effectively is the whole essence of the representation of media texts and is vital to any communicative encounter.

As noted above, language, signs, and images are key components of representation. If communication is not based on understandable languages (written, verbal and non-verbal) or signs (in this instance, glocalised features of BBN that resonate more with the Nigerian audience rather than the global populace), communication becomes ineffective.

Because different constructs can be used to guise what ‘representation of media texts’ stands for, it is of utmost importance that these constructs reflect an accurate representation of what media texts are (Abiolu and Teer-Tomaselli 2019; Long and Wall 2013; Hall 1997). These reflections should equally be what the target audience can quickly identify with. Representation of media texts in categories such as film, popular music, television, radio broadcast, and media genres concretises imaginative constructs that the audience may have and further helps them place these in realistic terms.

The second theoretical angle is that of cultural proximity. Though De Sola Pool initially developed it, its link to media studies was credited to Joseph Straubhaar (Trepte 2008: 4) with further additions from other authors. The theory of cultural proximity identifies the void created through the longing for a similar cultural product. Straubhaar (2003: 82) pointed out that “the tendency to prefer media products from one’s own culture or the most similar possible” is created by the desire for cultural proximity. This can be satisfied through culturally relevant television programming such as reality television shows, internet sites, musical genres, and other forms of media (Straubhaar et al. 2015). Since people gravitate towards media content that are from their own culture or something quite similar (Ksiazek and Webster 2008), this study sets out to identify ways the representation of *Big Brother Naija* encapsulates the cultural closeness and diversity of the country into a meaningful whole.

Cultural proximity occurs at various levels (Straubhaar 2007). These are

- i. Locally: relating to the physical and personal experiences of people.
- ii. Regionally: relating to the direct or mediated shared experiences of people.
- iii. Nationally and transnationally: relating to the shared experiences of a people mainly facilitated by the media in terms of language and history.
- iv. Genre and thematically: relating to a shared level of values and dominant ideologies.

Language is a crucial aspect of cultural proximity and representation (du Gay et al. 1997, 2013; Ksiazek and Webster 2008; Hall 1997). Members that share a similar level of cultural proximity often exist within

the same geo-linguistic or cultural-linguistic space (Straubhaar 2007) to facilitate a more straightforward comprehension of cultural products. The implication of this is that such cultural products as language, similar cuisine, clothing styles, norms, and values must be those that such individuals with the desire for cultural products can relate to (Okpara 2019).

METHOD

The study's method is premised on a desk review, using data and already available materials. It requires the researcher to collect, sift, and interpret already published data from library and online sources for those pieces of information relevant to accomplishing the aim of the study and providing answers to the driving research question (Birn 2002). This exposé was achieved using a basic semiotic analysis of the representations embedded in randomly selected episodes of *Big Brother Naija* via their fan-based websites and YouTube channels. These episodes are obtainable on YouTube, which is a public domain. Other sources were reports and past studies on the *Big Brother* franchise, globally, on the continent, especially in Nigeria.

The analysis method adopted for this chapter is hinged on basic semiotic analysis: the study of how signs can be used in an expressive way to convey understandable messages (Chandler 1997, 2017). Signs are meaningful representations that may be indirectly or clearly communicated, indicating signs' connotative or denotative characteristics. Signs only make sense within a language system. Its focus is on anything that can be used to communicate—images, words, colours, music, and much more (Harrison 2003). This substantiates du Gay et al. (1997, 2013) and Hall's (1997) standpoints on language in representation precisely on the need to allow for a broader perspective on the interpretation of language without limiting its use to only the representations of spoken language. These will be discussed by situating semiotics within du Gay et al. (1997, 2013) and Hall's (1997, 2013) language in representation notion. This is due to their shared etymology on how signs represent and are used to represent meaningful discourses, just as Chandler (2017: 2) posited that 'all meaningful phenomena (including words and images) are signs.'

ANALYSIS OF BBN'S GLOCAL ADAPTATION: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The areas and qualities that make *Big Brother Naija* (BBN) glocalised or assimilated to the Nigerian terrain focus on their noticeable differences. A media franchise will always fit into destined localities once there are certain alterations and few local changes. To maintain few similarities with the global franchise is to identify with the 'mother brand' because franchise spin-offs are comparable programmes (Kalagian 2012).

Name and Logo of the Show

The most noticeable and prominent glocalised feature is name-specificity. In comparison with other formats in different countries like *Big Brother* (The Netherlands), *Big Brother Brazil*, *Big Brother Mzansi* (South Africa), and the continental adaptation in Africa, *Big Brother Africa* (Nwafor and Ezike 2015; Straubhaar et al. 2015; Hill 2005), *Big Brother Naija* categorically denotes that it is suited mainly for the Nigerian audience. Though the first edition was initially dubbed *Big Brother Nigeria*, the subsequent seasons adopted the alias or alternative *Naija* ('Naija' is the short form of the name 'Nigeria') (Akinyoade 2020).

The logo of any brand, product, or media content is an intellectual property and trademark of the business owners, serving as identification, and as a member of that franchise's affiliate network (Johnson 2013). It is of little wonder that the *Big Brother* franchise's logo retains similarities across the board, with the name 'Big Brother,' and in some cases, a consistent eye and brow figure that hypothetically represents the all-seeing eye of 'Big Brother.' However, what sets each glocal format apart is the accompanying name tag below the logo, as is the case with *Big Brother Naija*. Figure 4.1 shows the past five logos illustrative of the uniqueness of each season's theme.

Familiar Host and Celebrity Appearances/Performances

Over the years, *Big Brother Naija* has been hosted by popular media personalities, and prominent Nigerian music sensations have geared up the entertainment. Incorporating these features enhances a deep sense of cultural proximity and relatability (Abiolu 2017). Season one of BBN was hosted by actress Michelle Dede and on-air personality Olisa Adibua. In

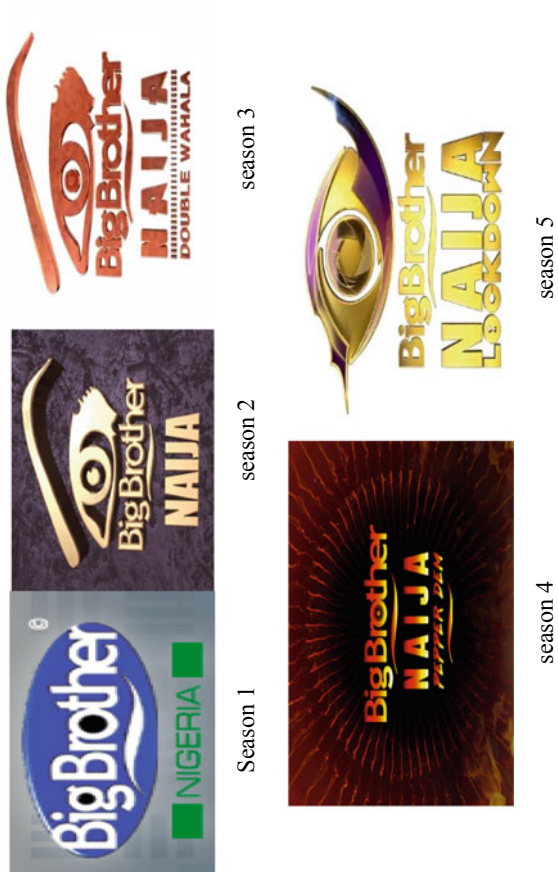


Fig. 4.1 Big Brother Naija logos (Source The Big Brother Wiki Fandom Page [n.d.])

contrast, the subsequent seasons have since been hosted by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, who himself was a contestant in season one (Akinyoadé 2020). The rise to stardom of Ebuka is credited mainly to the ‘celebrity conferring potential’ of this reality television show (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020; de Bruin and Zwaan 2012). In terms of the entertainment function and guest appearance on BBN, the show often welcomed popular Nigerian music artists for various segments of the show, such as the Saturday Night Parties, opening shows, eviction shows, and grand finale. A few of the many that have graced the occasion are Praiz, DJ Neptune, Alternate Sound, Yemi Alade, Flavour, Johnny Crooner, Simi, Davido, Iyanya, 2Baba (Tuface Idibia), Tiwa Savage, among many others (Emmanuel 2021; Africa Magic 2020). The incorporation of known celebrities into the shows so that the audience can relate to them is unique to the shows. This is because the audience identifies with people they know or people they share proximity with at cultural, local, regional, national, or transnational levels (Straubhaar 2007). In the light of this, Hansen (2014: unnumbered) affirmed that ‘interest in reality TV, where the show has been adapted locally, tend to gain traction quickly due to viewers relating better to a local superstar than a relatively unknown foreign celebrity.’

Fashion

It is mostly said that the traditional clothing and fashion associated with any context is their unspoken language of representation. To Hall (1997), this language of representation is visual or objectified tantamount to meanings attached to what such representations signify, a view shared by Chandler (1997, 2017). For this reason, ‘representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture (through) the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things’ (Hall 2013: 1).

The producers of the BBN show paid close consideration to the African fashion or clothing culture of the contestants, most especially the show’s host. Figure 4.2 displays an array of thoughtful fashion representations on the show by the show’s host. Such tangible forms of cultural representations are distinguishing markers that display the uniqueness of diverse cultural groups within Nigeria, which has been utilised to endear, reinforce, and reiterate a sense of identity and appreciation for Nigerian fashion among Nigerians in the international community.



Fig. 4.2 Ebuka in Igbo and Yorùbá outfits (*Source* bellanaija.com [2018a, b])

It is safe to concur with Rovine (2015) that the African, or in this case Nigerian, fashion is a storyteller and a narrative to explore what fashion means to Africans and Nigerians alike. Fashion is also a solid basis for non-verbal communication. In essence, the cultural traditions represented in these clothes are not only fit for the occasion but are means for cultural appreciation (Macleod 2002). As Barnard (2020) and Castaldo Lundén (2020) opined, the choice of fashion can communicate unspoken messages regarding identity, prowess, historicity, and agencies.

Location

The show's physical context and actual location also dictate some glocalised features. For instance, one of the franchise producers (in its Belgian company) opined on the relevance of location, that the shows are fit to every country's cultural context, implying that glocalisation takes place.

Compare the *Belgian Big Brother*, for instance, with the Dutch or Spanish one. In Spain, they have a swimming pool. Here (in Belgium), a swimming pool is considered a luxury. In Spain, with the climate they have, it isn't. (Plas, 2001 in Mathijs and Jones 2004: 3)

Despite the above claim of location relevance and specificity by the franchise producer as indicated above, this was deficient in the earlier seasons of BBN, which was a shortfall of the show. Reports indicated that seasons one, two, and three were hosted in South Africa, wherein allegations of 'location fraud' were investigated (Ferreira 2017, 2020). The producers themselves can only authenticate the rationale for hosting the show in South Africa as against Nigeria. However, we may imply that location and economic convenience might have influenced the use of South Africa as a host. In this sense, the decision to host BBN in South Africa might have been a given, considering that Multichoice's headquarters is in South Africa (Mogeni 2021), as well as the fact that Big Brother Africa (a precursor to BBN) was hosted by South Africa (Fandom, n.d.). After the first three seasons, the show began filming in Lagos, Nigeria (BBNaija Daily 2020; Ferreira 2020). Speaking on why Multichoice decided to bring the show to Nigeria; Martin Mabutho, the Chief Customer Officer (CCO) of Multichoice, said

It made sense that we bring it here. The first one we did was See Gobe, and Double Wahala last year eclipsed See Gobe. It was completely flawless. Now at that stage, we said there's no doubt that bringing the show to Nigeria would be the right decision. It would be worth the investment, and it's exciting for us. Corporate Nigeria and sponsors have latched onto it in a big way, so in my view, it's going to be bigger than all the shows we have ever done. (BBNaija Daily 2020: unnumbered)

Much like the CCO of Multichoice's deductions, scholars have shown that familiar environments heighten a deeper sense of belongingness and relatability with media content (Onuh 2017; Ksiazek and Webster 2008; Straubhaar 2003, 2007). Therefore, it is insufficient to fill up space without giving it an indigenous feel to enhance cultural proximity.

From the discussions above, these local alterations and changes make *Big Brother Naija* fit the local Nigerian terrain. The identified features and BBN representations indicate that they are adapted to suit the Nigerian audience. This is achieved through the show's name, the logo, familiar host, celebrity appearances/performances, fashion, and location.

As stated earlier, the representation of media texts in an understandable and relatable manner plays an important role in the production and exchange of meaning between the media texts and the consumers of the texts (du Gay et al. 1997, 2013; Hall 1997). These glocalised features can also be situated within the cultural proximity theory since they are within the same cultural and geo-linguistic space, especially in terms of national proximity (Straubhaar 2007). Most of the audience and participants (Nigerians) exist within the same national boundary and shares similar cultural characteristics. This is because representations are made to be meaningful to a unique set of people (Hall 1997).

The whole essence of zooming in on the glocalised features of BBN stems from the arguments of cultural imperialism and cultural homogenisation. Cultural imperialism in this context is viewed as the imposition of an imported national culture on another while the media serve as one of the propelling forces by broadcasting cultural meanings that penetrate borders and dominate subordinate nations (Bakker 2017; Choi and Park 2014; Morley and Robbins 2013; Gordon 2009). The argument around cultural homogenisation, which is sameness in media and global flows, threatens indigenous cultural values, norms, and traditions due to similarity inflows and counterflows (Robertson 2018). In the words of Nwafor and Ezike (2015: 6), *Big Brother* 'has raised so many issues that arise within current debates about globalization: ideas about the loss of sovereignty and identity, of the deluge of the indigenous by the foreign.' However, Devereux (2013) contended that the homogenising tendency of the *Big Brother* franchise has been modified in many local contexts, which has resulted in heterogeneous productions, thereby advancing the concept of glocalisation.

However, in the face of all these attempts at glocalisation, scholars (Amadi et al. 2019; Okpara 2019; Onebunne and Okeke 2020) have faulted the inculcation of values as an imperative aspect within the glocalisation process. As seen in other formats, there is the central theme where contestants form and break relationships while others engage in sexual activities on the show. These have attracted criticisms and backlashes. Interestingly, it has led to the questioning and critiquing of the moral values and standards of the franchise over the years, with particular attention to the steamy sex scenes and shower hours. This has led to organisations and religious groups condemning the franchise as a total departure from the social, cultural, and religious value orientation of Nigeria (Amadi et al. 2019; Okpara 2019; Onebunne and Okeke 2020;

Olley and Nwagbara 2017; Nwafor and Ezike 2015). In the words of Onebunne and Okeke (2020: 80), BBN is

a show of profound lack of sense of human worth and degradation of human dignity, as well as a show of complete loss of sense, of shame, and basic human values. The enthronement of immorality is expressed in dirty romance and all forms of sexual rakishness and indulgence, mediocrity, and a flawed value system.

These strong words of condemnation were echoed all through their discourse which focused on the ethical implications of the show. The global franchise has also been under scrutiny, with probes such as *Big Brother* or *Big Brothel*? (Pitout 2004), while the continental format has also been criticised (Nwafor and Ezike 2015). Scholars who are vocal and critical of the reception and broadcast of the franchise in Nigeria point to how the strong adult language culture, nudity, and sensual/hormonal drive of the contestants peddle immoral values and are not representational of the Nigerian culture (Okpara 2019; Onebunne and Okeke 2020; Olley and Nwagbara 2017; Nwafor and Ezike 2015). We also must consider the notion that

young people may see reality TV as a reflection of society's attitudes and behavior. They may see the comments made by contestants as an accurate expression of how they are viewed by society and adjust their perception of themselves accordingly. Does this mean that participants in the programs may become role models or protagonists? If so, the unscripted nature of reality shows may be potentially dangerous for social improvement in societies in transition – particularly if voiced bias is acted out. (Hyde-Clarke 2004: 217)

The earlier assertion of Hill (2015) to the nature of reality television is much in tandem with Hyde-Clarke's (2004) view on the way this genre creates a lasting impression on the viewers. And if this is not properly checked or controlled, it can be a source of manipulation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Without contention, the role of media in the socialisation process within society is of enormous impact both positively and negatively (Okpara 2019; Prot et al. 2015). Representations of the day-to-day reality of the

members of society within the local context where glocalisation takes place should be the priority of franchise producers. It is not satisfactory to concentrate on signs, images, and tangible forms of sociocultural practices with little focus on the intangible features that influence these groups of people and their identity.

The entertainment industry, a vital proponent in rebranding the image of Nigeria, is a potential source of attraction, aspiration, and admiration (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020; Onebunne and Okeke 2020). But prevailing challenges and disputes around BBN because of the apparent neglect of value inculcation pose obstacles in attaining an acceptable glocalisation process that celebrates heterogenisation, diversity, and cultural pluralism in the new Nigeria that we all desire. Proper implementation of glocalised practices

offers Nigerians the possibility to promote their cultures while avoiding to be ‘out of tune,’ that is, viewed as retrograde, with respect to the globalization imperatives. Though the cultural production born out of the globalization philosophy may not be purely Nigerian, the Nigerian cultures stand a chance (through the glocalisation model) to survive the onslaught of cultural globalization. This phenomenon is synonymous with cultural imperialism. (Endong 2015: 115)

Therefore, the importance and relevance of the glocalisation process to cultures and societies, especially Nigeria and Nigerians in this instance, cannot be overstated.

The glocalisation of a media franchise should be to meet the needs of its local audience. The identified glocalised features in fashion, location, name, logo, known host, and celebrity performances make *Big Brother Naija* unique to Nigeria because ‘format adaptation always lies along a continuum ranging from the radically similar to the radically different’ (Moran and Malbon 2006: 146). The inclusion of these distinctive socio-cultural elements are indications of how the show has been modified for the local terrain while at the same time not losing touch with global formats in order to maintain a degree of similarity and synergy (Johnson 2013).

The lingering questions and queries around the values and standards of the franchise at global, continental, and local levels call for attention and revisiting of the essence of the franchise. This chapter recommends that in as much as glocal and relatable features are considered in the

production of such television franchises, the indigenous value systems of the people cannot and should not be relegated. Considerations of value systems will make the show culturally acceptable and sustainable. We suggest that the efforts made in making the show culturally proximal can be employed in the infusion of values and moral standards. This thereby eschews immorality and utilises old and new media technologies and the power of entertainment to propel young minds to become achievers who can contribute to nation-building, rebrand the project Nigeria, and be more responsible global citizens.

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Exploration of *Big Brother Naija Reality* Show as an Ideological Pop Culture

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is an integrated edifice that comprises the composition of varied elements such as arts, customs, lifestyles, habits, beliefs, values, behaviours, artefacts, symbols, history, etc. that bequeath on man the status of a social animal. It is generally viewed as people's way of life that characterizes the conventional conducts and ideologies of a society or community with the dictates of accepted norms and values of such society, which may be as a result of learned behaviour or knowledge passed from one generation to another (Middleton, 2010). Ironically, when it comes to Reality Shows such as Big Brother, there is a total disconnect between what reality is perceived to be and what it is.

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The African version of Big Brother Reality Show began in South Africa with the intention of having contestants from different countries within the continent live together in a house for not less than 90 days. Its style of production ensures that microphones and cameras are well connected at every nook and cranny of the house, thereby using that as the ‘big eye and ear of the big brother’ that hears and monitors everything (Djinnit, 2018). Contestants in the show are cut off from life outside the Big Brother house for the stipulated period and are sold as commodity to the youths who are entertained, even as the contestants struggle to avoid being evicted by the same viewers they entertain. The ideology behind the Reality Show is that reality is reconstructed based on what the organizers want and desires (Christof 2011). Everything about the show is pseudo, starting from the house, environment, as well as the concept of an invisible eye dictating their every move. What makes it more fascinating is the fact that the dispositions of housemates are not at any time preplanned, rehearsed, or scripted, as this validates the ideological stance of this paper because all these factors captivate the attention of young viewers which gives credence to the show (Winston 1995). Perception is said to be everything, and it is the key element the show’s organizers use as bait to draw the youths, thereby making them to give credence to the programme in the long run, as the audience themselves are carried away by the pseudo-reality being relayed to them on TV.

Many studies have been conducted on the Big Brother, for instance, Igbinsosa (2014) looked at “the perception of Nigerians towards the cultural relevance of Big Brother Africa” and discovered that quite a large number of Nigerians were passionate viewers of the show but warned that some activities in the house were anti-Nigerian culture. Nwafor and Ezike (2015) also conducted a study on “the influence of Big Brother Africa, a case study of Ebonyi State University undergraduates” and found that Big Brother had a relative influence on Nigerian youths in terms of behaviour and attitude. Their findings further revealed that these youths learned co-habitation and sex issues from the show. In the same vein, Sarah Lwahas, (2017) examined the adaptations of the show within African context and the author maintained that the adaptations of the Reality Show have significantly improved the participation and engagements in global issues, not minding its perceived negativity (Bignell, 2006).

In a study also conducted by Bolu et al. (2021), on the Big Brother Reality Show as coordinate of media functions and dysfunctions, the authors sought to investigate from 300 surveyed viewers of the

programme from Lagos and Ede, South West Nigeria if the Big Brother Naija is functional or dysfunctional in connection to the gratifications they get from the Show. However, it was discovered that 66% of the respondents found the Show entertaining, while 50% disliked the Show because of the level of immorality it presents. Notwithstanding public hullabaloo against the programme, some respondents saw it as functional. Despite studies conducted on the Big Brother, there has been no focus on its ideological dominance among youth, this paper therefore critically examines how the 2020 Big Brother Naija has become a determinant pop culture through ideology among Nigerian youths, as this reflects in the producer's choice of content, presentation style, language, mainstream media, social media, location, set design, costumes, players (housemates), audience base, games, house activities, and the millions of Naira attached to the show, which serves as the major motivation for the contestants. These are some of the issues being examined by this paper to interpretatively justify the need for a paradigm shift from the Big Brother Pop Culture that is fiercely gaining mamut acceptability among Nigerian youths.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter employed a systematic literature review in gathering data from relevant scientific and accredited published research gathered from Elsevier, Google Scholar, Academia, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect using appropriate keywords relevant to the subject matter such as Big Brother, Big Brother Naija, Pop Culture, Media and Pop Culture, Media and Globalization, and Nigerian Youths using the principle of the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis (PRISMA) (Ahmad and Murad, 2020; Ali and Kurasawa 2020; Brindha et al. 2020; Tasnim et al. 2020). On a general note, PRISMA comprises of a four-phase procedure of minimum “evidence-based” analysis and reporting which involves existing published literature via “systematic reviews and meta-analysis.” In summary, PRISMA primarily is a process of evaluating published literature that focuses on the subject matter in a paper of this nature (Sharma, et al., 2020). The eligibility of articles selected for the study is premised on the fact that it must cover Big Brother, Pop Culture, Mass Media, social media as well as Nigerian Youths. Furthermore, the eligible literature selected criteria were (1) original, (2) empirical studies, (3) peer-reviewed (Tam et al., 2019, Rufai, & Bunce, 2020), (4) published and must have covered

information regarding the subject matter (Ahmad and Murad, 2020; Ali and Kurasawa, 2020; Brindha et al. 2020). The selection criteria for the materials selected were guided by PRISMA guidelines which helped in understanding how the media serves as a mechanism through which Pop Culture is transmitted to Nigerian youths, using Big Brother Naija 2020 Lockdown Edition as a study. The process was systematically terminated when saturation was reached, having covered specified data and the paper's study objectives.

WHAT IS POP CULTURE?

Popular culture is always defined in contrast to other conceptual categories, whether implicitly or explicitly: folk culture, mass culture, dominant culture, working-class culture, and so on. One must first define the term "culture" before describing "popular culture." Culture, according to Raymond Williams, is "one of the two or three most difficult words in the English language." Sometimes, people use their gained knowledge to understand their experiences and develop behaviour, which is referred to as culture. Understanding culture necessitates not just information, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour differences, but also differences in knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. It refers to the patterns of human behaviour as well as the symbolic frameworks that give these actions meaning and purpose (Wong, 2016). Culture can alternatively be defined as a set of symbols and meanings that, even in the context of its creators, have no fixed bounds, are continually changing, interacting and competing with one another. To summarize, culture can be defined as all of a population's ways of life, including arts, beliefs, and institutions, that are passed down from generation to generation. It is referred to as a society's way of life since it encompasses standards of conduct, attire, language, religion, rituals, art, behavioural norms such as law and morality, and belief systems (Adedimeji, 2006).

Being a part of popular culture and feeling connected to global flows are important aspects of modernity (Appadurai 1996). This type of modernity structures African youths' lives in such a way that local culture and memory are dissolved into the influence of global culture on the other (Diouf, 2003). Popular culture can be either positive or negative, and it can cause anxiety or joy (McCarthy et al. 1999). In the United States, for example, the success of Rap music created a moral panic in the 1990s, while the computer and internet have sparked even more moral

panic in many countries due to nudity (Halliday, 2001). However, as Hall (1981: 239) points out, popular culture is one of the arenas in which this struggle for and against a powerful culture is waged; it is also the prize at risk in that struggle. It is a place where people can agree or disagree. It is partially where hegemony emerges and is maintained. As a result, McCarthy (1998) contends that people do not consume popular culture mindlessly and passively, but rather use it to build and express themselves in novel ways. As a result, identity in this setting is fluid and ever changing (Dolby, 2001). Interestingly, popular culture is more than just a private pleasure or leisure; it has a tremendous impact on a society's social fabric, particularly among youth (Dolby, 2003).

NIGERIAN MEDIA AND POP CULTURE AMONG YOUTHS

Fascinating media materials that accompany Pop Culture genres such as music, television programmes, movies, streaming on the internet, as well as reality shows are indeed ubiquitous due to advancement in Information Communication Technology (ICT). This is aside fascinating advertisements that are produced for big screens at every turn in major cities in Nigeria. The Media serves as a platform for the spread of pop culture being an agent of socialization itself and the media is able to achieve this via, providing the platform for political participation, debate, education, re-orientation, mobilization, and entertainment (Lasswell, 2013). Pop culture refers to products that are aesthetically produced and sold by profit-seeking organizations that dominate the global entertainment market. Culture is transmitted from one generation to another through interactions among people through social networking but when it comes to pop culture, profiting is behind every material produced and the media serves as a platform to sell such to the larger circle of social networks using their versed and heterogeneous audience base (Wong, 2016).

The ever-expanding Hollywood, Nollywood, Bollywood, and other 'Woods' with premium on highest level of quality production, as well as the coming of Netflix (an online streaming site) which offers wide variety of unlimited access to shows, movies, animies, animations, documentaries, etc. (Chan-Olmsted, 2011). to millions of subscribers globally through affordable subscription fees, pop culture among Nigerian youths would not have metamorphosed to the level it is today. Once an idea of a media production is conceived, the goal sometimes is to reach a global audience and that is how pop culture is spread innocently to

unsuspecting youths and Nigerians are no exemption to this significant rule in pop culture. Oftentimes, greatest appeal is not necessarily to persuade people to accept a change of attitude towards a social cause but to attract the largest audiences as much as possible because many of these contents are now translated to easier local indigenous languages to overseas stratified audiences.

There are two perspectives put forward here, firstly, the mass media companies, actors, artistes, musicians, film makers, and other content creators who are indeed bent on making profit at all cost, having invested so much in the production process. Secondly, the audience just wants to get entertained with the best form of production contents and packages but in the long run are indoctrinated into accepting pop culture as the dominant culture knowingly or unknowingly. The question is, in this era of globalization, on whose side should the media be, being an intermediary in this process? More researches need to be conducted in this regard to balance this divide. This is also in line with the burden of critical theorists who take their cue from Karl Max and Conflict theory, as they posit that, “the mass media is an industry that is designed to indoctrinate and subordinate the masses (audiences) into passivity and acceptance of the capitalist mode of consumption through popular culture consumption.” The major argument in response to the question raised above is that, no one is forced or coerced towards accepting any dominant or pop culture, people simply buy into it subconsciously because they depend on the media for many things including what next market to visit or next food item that would be on their table.

THE BIG BROTHER REALITY SHOW AS AN HEGEMONIC IDEOLOGY

Ideology is a difficult concept to define and there is a general notion that, when media scholars take on the issue of ideology, they always tow the lines of Marxists who believe that, at every point in the history of any society there is always an upsurge ideology and it is the ideology of the dominant class who are regarded as the hegemons. It is always argued that this believe system is what helps justify the inclinations of those in the dominant class because they distort and represent or sometimes misrepresent what reality is (Kanu, 2013). A note of caution here is that, Big Brother as a dominant ideology among Nigerian youth by the hegemonic class has become widely accepted based on earlier research cited in this

article. There is a departure here because, this paper is not towing the line of Marxists at this point but looking critically at the concept and context of the Big Brother reality show in relation to the youth's worldview (Igbinoba, 2014). It is basically the way the world is defined in relation to how it is, using concepts such as worldview, belief system, and values. Fundamentally, there is a reality and many media scholars believe any message that passes through any media has metamorphosed into 'constructed reality' and Big Brother Naija Reality Show is no exemption (Sarah, 2017). The cash prize and the fame it portends is the bait used by the organizers of the Reality Show to draw the youths but in the long run are innocently indoctrinated to accept whatever they see on the show as the reality (Viney, 2019).

Historically, the Big Brother Naija originated from the Reality Television Show known as 'Big Brother' in Netherland, which was adapted from George Orwell's book "Nineteen Eighty-Four." The book portrays tyranny in the society where an invisible eye keeps a watch on all human actions, interactions and otherwise to ensure compliance with the rules (Okorie, 2020). Scholars such as Nwafor & Ejike (2015: 4) opined that, there have been several versions/editions of the Big Brother TV Reality Show such as, "Celebrity Big Brother for Netherland and Teen Big Brother for Britain." In addition were, Big Brother Germany, Big Brother Switzerland, Big Brother Sweden, Big Brother Italy, and Big Brother Africa, etc. (Okorie, 2020). These Big Brother Reality Shows aforementioned formed the foundation of what became Big Brother Naija, which is the Nigerian version of the others. Adaptation is key in ideology and that is how it spreads in a given society, Big Brother itself became a dominant ideology among the Nigerian youths as a result of adaptation. The African version of the show was originally premiered May 25 and ended September 7, 2003, as the show lasted for 106 days with 12 contestants (housemates) from 12 various African nations (Chikafa and Mateveke 2012; Nwafor and Ezike, 2015).

South Africa became the first African country to host the Big Bother Reality Show in 2003, its popularity and followership among Nigerian youths was what led to the launch of the Nigerian version, popularly known as the Big Brother Naija on March 5, 2016, making it 13 years after the first of its kind appeared on African soil in 2003. Historically, the transmission of Big Brother Africa was halted after nine seasons before that time (Leviton, 2018). The first season of Big Brother Naija lasted for 91 days and it has become an annual Television Reality Show since

then till date, six seasons held from (2016–2021). The most spectacular of all seasons is season four tagged “Double Wahala” which recorded an unparalleled viewership of more than 170 million (Izuzu, 2018).

2020 BIG BROTHER (LOCKDOWN EDITION)

One of the selling points of the Big Brother Naija Reality Show is the fact that, it turns young Nigerians with relatively low backgrounds into celebrities, this is considered as the ‘magic in Africa magic TV’, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the fifth season of Big Brother Naija tagged ‘Lockdown’ was premiered July 19, 2020 and ended September 29, 2021. One of the key factors that portrayed this show as a pop culture among Nigerian youths is that, due to the restriction during the COVID-19 pandemic, which made the organizers move their auditions online, over 30,000 young Nigerians participated. Although there were calls from various quarters that the show should not hold because of its overbearing influence on the youths, those calling for the cancellation of the 2020 Big Brother Naija Reality Show were more concerned due to the fact that schools across the nation were on lockdown in the wake of the pandemic. The organizers countered those clamouring for the show not to hold by stating categorically that, the BBN channel is restricted and subscribed to by interested viewers only and it is not an opened access channel (Channels 198 on DStv and 29 on GOtv). The clamour notwithstanding, the show went on as stipulated and lasted for 71 days with contestants’ age ranging from 22 to 35 years (youngest being, Rebecca “Nengi” Hampson and oldest was Timmy Sinclair “Trikytee”).

Details of the 20 Contestants

| <i>Housemates</i> | <i>Age on entry</i> | <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Residence/birthplace</i> | <i>Day exited</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Olamilekan “Laycon” Agbeleshe | 26 | Singer and rapper | Lagos | 70 | Winner |
| Dorathy Bachor | 24 | Entrepreneur | Lagos | 70 | Runner-up |
| Rebecca “Nengi” Hampson | 22 | Entrepreneur | Bayelsa | 70 | 3rd Place |

(continued)

(continued)

| <i>Housemates</i> | <i>Age on entry</i> | <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Residence/birthplace</i> | <i>Day exited</i> | <i>Status</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Emuobonuvie “Neo” Akpofure | 26 | Ride-hailing app driver | Delta | 70 | 4th Place |
| Victoria “Vee” Adeyele | 23 | Musician | Lagos/ London, UK | 70 | 5th Place |
| Ozoemena Chukwu “Ozo” | 27 | Consultant and Entrepreneur | Imo | 63 | Evicted |
| Timmy Sinclair “Trikytee” | 35 | Creative artist and storyteller | Lagos, Bayelsa | 63 | Evicted |
| Nelson Enwerem “Prince” | 24 | Model, fashion designer, and interior decorator | Lagos/Abia | 56 | Evicted |
| Terseer Kiddwaya Waya | 27 | Self-employed | Benue | 56 | Evicted |
| Lucy Essien | 30 | Entrepreneur | Lagos | 49 | Evicted |
| Erica Nlewedim | 26 | Actress and commercial model | Lagos | 49 | Ejected |
| Ezekiel Bright “Brighto” Osemudiamé | 29 | Sailor | Edo | 42 | Evicted |
| Florence Wathoni Anyansi | 29 | Fashion entrepreneur and parenting blogger | Karatina, Kenya | 42 | Evicted |
| Tolani “Tolanibaj” Shobajo | 27 | Media personality | Lagos | 42 | Evicted |
| Praise Nelson | 28 | Dancer | Enugu, Enugu State | 35 | Evicted |
| Aisha Umaru “Kaisha” | 25 | Entrepreneur | Sokoto | 28 | Evicted |
| Eric Akhigbe | 24 | Student, fitness enthusiast, and bodybuilder | Lagos/Edo | 21 | Evicted |
| Tochukwu Okechukwu Tochi | 28 | Rapper and real estate agent | Imo | 21 | Evicted |
| Boluwatife “Lilo” Aderogba | 23 | Entrepreneur and dietitian | Lagos | 14 | Evicted |
| Kate “Ka3na” Jones | 26 | Entrepreneur | Rivers | 14 | Evicted |

Source DStv.com (2020)

One cannot rule out the thrills and entertainments the Big Brother Naija brings to the homes of millions of its viewers in Nigeria. Aside making celebrities out of ordinary Nigerians, the show has revolutionized the creative industries, aside providing direct employment to those who work to keep the show running, it provides indirect employment to other ancillary services in terms of make-up, fashion, set design, audio-visual and photography as well as online engagements for bloggers. All these positivity notwithstanding, Big Brother Naija Reality Show still remains a tool of dominant ideology among the elites/ruling class whose children can never under any disguise be part of the show. If the show is targeted at promoting the Nigerian culture, there would be less cynics about it, for instance, one of the house rules categorically stated that, communication in any of the three (3) major Nigerian languages (Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo) are not allowed. The bugging question is ‘why’? This would have been an avenue to preach unity through these languages in a nation currently bedevilled with several calls for secessions among various ethnic groups.

The climax of the 2020 ‘Lockdown Edition’, which has remained the side attractions for youth participation is the fact that the winner, Olamilekan Agbeleshe, popularly known as, ‘Laycon’ won a cash prize of ₦85 million, a two-bedroom apartment from Evolution Plus property company, a range SUV from the Nigerian indigenous automaker, Innoson Motors and a trip to Dubai and Dublin sponsored by Guinness amongst others. ‘Laycon’ became the first winner of the Big Brother Naija winner to reach a follower of 1.2 million Instagram followers while still in the house, while Victoria Adeleye popularly known as ‘vee’ became the contestant to first exit the house, followed by Neo, Nengi, and Dorothy till the last housemates with lower votes were evicted. Prior to the 2020 edition of the show, the voting pattern is that viewers would nominate those they want evicted from the show, but for the 2020 ‘Lockdown Edition’, it was reversed for the first half of the show, as fellow housemates nominated for eviction, as well as those they wanted saved. For the first half of the show, all the housemates, aside the House Head and Deputy, face the public votes that are usually opened Monday nights after close of the week’s game on Thursday night. Four (4) contestants with the lowest votes are slated for eviction by the housemates. This also is a travesty to the reality that a pop culture brings along, as the pseudo-reality of undue competition created by the show has promoted crave for unprepared wealth among Nigerian youths.

USES, GRATIFICATION FRAME, AND SILENT HEGEMONIC IDEOLOGY DILEMMA

A well-known theory in the media is Uses and Gratification with focuses on understanding, why, how, and to what need do people use the media to meet in their daily lives (Liu, 2015; Stephenson, 1967). The Big Brother Naija is indeed an entertainment programme that many seeks for in the name of being entertained, but they are in the process curdled into the bound of hegemonic ideology that could be devastating to the Nigerian culture in terms of content and packaging. Although, the viewers of this show cannot be blamed for the acculturation they meet in the process. The theory invariably shows the reason many people look out for media messages and what they use such for (West and Turner, 2004). It primarily assumes that media content seekers to a large extent have control on how they use the media. Invariably, this theoretical disposition assumes that those who consume media products are active in their choice on media contents as they are not passive in selection of any genre.

A critical look at the international Big Brother Reality Show which has become a franchise has seen different region or country variations of it. The show which took its bearing from George Orwell's 1984 book thematically centres on mass surveillance, totalitarianism, as well as repressive control of all humans and their behaviours in a confined environment. This is indeed a call for worries because man is born free, why is his life subjected to regimentation? As depicted by the concept adopted from the novel. Contestants put together in a location is the thrill that draws many to the show, they in their mind seek entertainment as the Uses and Gratification posits but are drawn by hegemonic ideology to enrich the ruling class who have designed it that way for profit maximization through their bourgeois inclinations.

It teaches politics in its raw form, as manipulation is the strategy because one contestant must be smart enough to outshine the other in the race for grand prize which is in millions of Naira. In the process of time, the audience seek the media to meet certain needs individually, which are relaxation, entertainment, and socializing, as the Big Brother Reality Show accords them all these, they are then caught in the web of other intervening variables such as the hegemonic ideology of the elite who have put up the show as serious business (Larose and Easton, 2010). Nigeria has hosted five seasons of the show, the first was aired between March 5 and June 12, 2006 where Katung Aduwak won. The second

season came 11 years after January 22, 2017 with Efe Ejeba claiming the grand prize, and the third was premiered January 28, 2018 which saw Miracle Ishokwe crown the winner. The fourth was on June 30, 2019, as Mercy Eke emerge winner. The fifth was premiered on July 19, 2020 which saw 20 contestants battle for the grand prize and Olamilekan Agbeleshe popularly known as ‘Laycon’ became the winner with 85 Million Naira grand prize.

The fundamental question is, how do these winners emerge over the years? Housemates in the show are sustained by viewers’ vote, either through SMS, Website, Big Brother mobile sites, or via GOTV/DSTV apps. While other platforms are free with applicable data cost, votes via SMS platforms attract specified charges, depending on mobile network service provider. How have the arrays of young Big Brother show winners over the years added value to the development of the nation, with the cost of grand prize gathered through viewers’ votes? While youths in other climes are innovative with tangible contributions through advancement in technology, Nigerian youths are getting entertained. Once the Big Brother Naija Reality Show goes on air, the young ones do not always bother about anything else, most especially governance and this to the ruling class is good news. For example, during the fifth edition of the show in 2020, electricity tariff was increased by the government by 100% from 30.23 to 62.33 Naira, again, price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) also known as petrol was increased from 148 to 152 Naira but the youths simply stayed glued to their darling Big Brother show undisturbed. All these economic issues with all its consequences on the livelihood of everyday life seem not to bother the youths, who were supposed to protest such harsh decisions on the public.

This is as x-rayed by William Stephen in 1967 which provides an insight into the study of Uses and Gratification theory. William argued that individuals define imagery from real-life events, because he divided people’s activity into play and work. To him, play has to do with relaxation, entertainment, and satisfaction while work is fondly referred to as production. According to his school of thought, humans use communication as play more than work because they seek more entertainment and pleasure. Nigerian youths are culpable in this regard, as they seek play and pleasure more than rigorous engagement, as the ruling class dishes out unfriendly policies from time to time, the youths are supposed to engage them to ensure balance, equity, justice and fairness to all concerned. Their energies and creativity are channelled to the Big Brother Reality Show instead.

If the amount of energy and commitment devoted to the show by the youths are channelled towards engaging the government meaningfully, Nigeria would be better for it in all ramifications. Young Nigerians are currently engrossed in pleasure that breeds no advantage to the social, political, and economic life of the nation, as the nation cannot afford its youths in docility towards governance, yet active in pleasure stricken Big Brother Reality Show. They must be tasked on how to get more involved in governance, else, the wide gap created by the ruling class would continue to widen without remedy in sight.

Part of human do seek pleasure no doubt and this paper do not discourage pleasure-seeking, the emphasis here is that, the youth who are the major stakeholders in nation building must seek to make tangible contributions in all ramifications. Instead of allowing the elite 'commonise' the nation as a private investment and youth left as bait to contribute to their curve of growing wealth and investment through votes knowingly and unknowingly donated to the Big Brother Reality Show. The investment in 24 hours heavy TV viewership could be channelled to other more profitable venture, aside pleasurable Big Brother Naija Reality Show. Hegemonic codes which has an ideological base appear in many forms, sometimes they are subtle, indirect, and absolute but caution and discernment are needed for the survival of a fragile statehood called Nigeria, most especially her peoples' consciousness of culture in engaging the reality show and any other in the nearest future.

CONCLUSION

Pop culture is not bad in itself, it is the subtle ideology behind it that a nation such as Nigeria should be sceptical of among its teaming youths which forms her majority in terms of population. Although culture is dynamic and must interact with others for it to be universally acceptable, but an alien culture is alien any day. This paper has put issues surrounding Big Brother Naija as a pop culture among Nigerian youths into a perspective of dominance and political economy that is permeated by the elite but however recommends that the only way the dominant pop culture among Nigerian youths could be challenged is through indigenous cultural programmes to counter the negative effects of the Big Brother Reality Show among youths if the nation does not want to lose its cultural relevance in future.

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PART II

Reception and Critique



Humour and Laughter in Reality TV: Assessing the Mental Health Effects of the Big Brother Naija Show

Olusola Ogunnubi and Dare Leke Idowu

INTRODUCTION

It is intriguing that Africans humorously keep hope alive and laugh despite the arduous challenges of surviving in countries with a worrisome record of poverty and unemployment, endemic political corruption, bad

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governance, political repression, repressive institutions, and bad leadership. Fela Anikulapo, the famous Nigerian afrobeat star described this phenomenon as ‘suffering and smiling’ (Abdulkareem 2021). This position is substantiated by Obadare (2009) who alludes to the indefatigable enthusiasm of Africans for life amidst their precarious situations. Obadare reports that “most accounts of the grim existential reality in African countries conclude by noting that, even amid the all-pervading gloom, the African’s zest for life remains palpable...” (Obadare 2009, p. 243).

Africans are renowned for creating and appropriating humorous entertainments such as stand-up comedy, music, movies, reality TV shows, memes, and digital comic skits to evoke laughter as anxiety pills and a mechanism of coping with the challenges of daily life. The position is substantiated by the scholarly premise on the global recognition of the therapeutic potential of humour as a stimulant of laughter and a coping mechanism for the pains and imbroglio associated with the arduous tasks of everyday life (Obadare 2009). It also helps the nationals of the African States and other countries of the world to assuage stress and burnout, and keep hope alive (Cameron 2015).

Unsurprisingly, the ‘suffering and smiling’ citizens of states in Africa use humour as a coping mechanism, a means of escape, a tool of subversion and vengeance (Obadare 2009). The assertion by Obadare and Cameron is substantiated in the claim that despite the ravaging effects of AIDS in Malawi, “it is remarkable that people are still able to laugh about it” (Ngwira and Lipenga 2018). Obadare (2009) also recounts the paradoxical ranking of Nigerians as the happiest people on earth by the 2003 New Scientist survey despite the worrisome realities of sadness accruable from economic hardship, poverty, unemployment, development crisis, and violent politics among others. Nigerians are renowned for having great enthusiasm even in harsh political and economic situations. Astute Nigerian youths and adults are renowned for their ability to trivialize and convert the most troubling socioeconomic crisis and political events into sarcastic posts on social media, humorous memes, mimicry, ridicule, music, jesting, hilarious jokes, stand-up comedy, digital comedy skits and reality shows that trigger laughter.

Regrettably, despite the widespread appropriation of humorous entertainment to evoke laughter and cope with the challenges of daily life, there is scant literature on the nexus between these humorous entertainments and the mental health of viewers in the Nigerian context. Apart from Obadare (2009) which underpinned how Nigerians use ridicule and

joke to assuage the imbroglio of daily life, there is a dearth of studies on how humorous entertainment impact the mental health of Nigerian audiences. A recent study by Idowu and Ogunnubi (2022) established the therapeutic potential of the Nigerian digital comic video as a stimulant of humour and laughter among Nigerian and foreign publics. Ogunnubi and Idowu (2022) also unpacked the therapeutic potentials of the iconic ‘Way Maker’ song that became a global sensation with mental health benefits during the COVID-19 era. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of studies on the mental health implications of reality TV shows and especially the BBNaija reality TV show in Nigeria.

The Big Brother Naija (BBNaija) reality TV show is arguably Nigeria’s most-watched show in Africa and live entertainment on Showmax (Vanguard 2020). The BBN is a controversial reality show that has attracted widespread accolades and condemnation from different sections of the Nigerian public. Although some quarters have lauded the show for its economic and foreign policy potential, the show is widely castigated for diffusing immoral contents and values that are alien to Africa (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). The display of nudity and pornographic content which are presumed to be detrimental to the social health and lives of the Nigerian youths and especially teenagers earned the show the label of a ‘social monster’ or ‘a semi-packaged porn’ (Adelagun 2021). For this reason, different interest groups such as the Ohanaeze Youth Council (OYC), Arewa Youth Advisory Forum (AYCF), the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), the Foundation for African Cultural Heritage, and the Association of Concerned Mothers among others have called for the ban of the show (Adelagun 2021). Some quarters disparage the large amount spent in organizing the BBN show as waste of resources capable of addressing the multivariate developmental deficits in Nigeria. Others consider the huge cost of organizing the show as a misplacement of priority, arguing that the funds could be channelled towards creating more enlightening programmes capable of reviving the interest of Nigerian youths towards entrepreneurship, human capital development, cultural exchanges, capacity building, and career development (Punch Newspaper 2017; Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020).

Despite these divergent views, the BBN reality show continues to attract widespread viewership among Nigerians and from viewers across Africa with South Africans and Kenyans contributing 30% and 15% of the viewership of the 2020 BBNaija Lockdown edition recorded on Showmax, respectively (Vanguard 2020). This study does not seek to

contribute to the divisive argument on the moral value of the BBN show. Rather, its central focus is to interrogate the potential value of the BBN show in promoting mental health among viewers. How does viewership experience with the entertainment content of the BBN show improve our understanding of the connection between reality TV shows and mental health? How do reality TV shows help audience think about their mental health and why is this important? The study seeks to establish whether the humour, suspense, and laughter characteristic of the BBN show have mental health value that encourages viewership of the show.

THE BIG BROTHER NAIJA REALITY TV SHOW: WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT IS UNKNOWN

The *Big Brother* concept is derived from George Orwell's political satire titled *1984* in which he depicts a world of constant surveillance for Winston Smith (Groening 2019). John De Mol, a Dutchman built a television reality show around the concept of Big Brother by appropriating the Dutch television series in 1997 where housemates who lived in seclusion under close monitoring with 24-hours cameras were required to always wear their microphones (*The Nation* 2019). The housemates were watched by viewers whose votes determine the fate of the housemate.

Formerly called Big Brother Nigeria, Big Brother Naija (BBN) is a reality television show that operates in line with the pattern of the Big Brother television franchise. BBNaija is organized by MultiChoice Nigeria which selects young Nigerians between the ages of 20 and 38 through auditions and a rigorous process that leads to the emergence of the contestants (Ogunnubi 2021; Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). The BBN show operates by housing contestants (called housemates) in an isolated house (called BBN house) with the intent of competing for grand prizes which from past seasons ranged from N100,000 to N100 million including cash prizes, a furnished house, and gifts from associated sponsors (Ogunnubi 2021) by avoiding eviction through the votes of viewers and fellow housemates (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). Housemates who emerged victorious in the weekly games and tasks also stand the chance of winning cash prizes and endorsements (*Ventures Africa* 2020).

The BBN house is constructed in a way that allows all forms of interaction and the performance of roles and varying tasks that expose the character of housemates and produce humorous actions capable of intriguing the public and evoking laughter. The housemates are closely

monitored using several live cameras and personalized audio microphones (*The Nation* 2019). The live cameras record every moment of the housemates as they engage in the house activities such as the head of the house challenge, arena games, Saturday night parties, diary sessions, and evictions nights (*The Nation* 2019).

The maiden edition of Big Brother Naija premiered on the 5th of March 2006 and aired for 90 days on the DStv Channel 37. The maiden edition of the show had 14 housemates and was won by Katung Aduwak. The second edition of the BBN show tagged Big Brother Naija: See Gobbe premiered on 22 January 2017 and lasted for 77 days. The BBN: See Gobbe had 14 housemates and was anchored by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, a former housemate in the Season 1 of the BBN Show. It was won by Michael Ejeba. Season 3 of the Big Brother Naija show tagged Big Brother Naija: Double Wahala was premiered on 28 January 2018 and lasted for 84 days. Anchored by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu the BBN: Double Wahala season had 20 housemates and was won by Miracle Igbokwe. The BBN Season 4 tagged *Big Brother Naija: Pepper Dem* premiered on 30 June 2019 and lasted 99 days. It was anchored by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu and had 26 housemates. It was won by Mercy Eke who won ₦60 million worth of prizes. The Season 5 of the BBN show premiered on 19 July 2020 on Africa Magic and lasted for 71 days. Titled Big Brother Naija ‘Lockdown’ edition, the fifth season of the show was also hosted by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu and had a total of 20 housemates. The Lockdown edition of the BBN show was won by Olamilekan Agbeleshe “Laycon” who won ₦85 million worth of prizes. Season 6 of the BBNaija debut as *Big Brother Naija: Shine Ya Eye* premiered on DStv Channel 198 and GOtv channel 29 on 24 and 25 July 2021. It was anchored by Ebuka Obi-Uchendu and won by Hazel Oyeze Onou alias “Whitemoney” who won a total of ₦90 million grand prize including a ₦30 million cash prize, a two-bedroom apartment, an SUV, and other prizes.

Protagonists of the show adulate it for its entertainment value and potentials for projecting Nigeria’s culture and image in good light globally (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). Considering the successes of the BBNaija show in showcasing Nigerian local contents, cultures, and lifestyles to the world, Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020) describe it as Nigeria’s ‘best PR campaign of any period’ (p. 77). Hence, the cultural export of the BBNaija offers Nigeria a medium to challenge the stereotypical depiction of Nigeria and Nigerians in bad light (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). Apart from its entertainment value, protagonists of the BBNaija show

consider it of great value because of the educational, informational, and socioeconomic benefits the show avails the housemates, Nigerians, and Nigeria (Iyorza 2021). Unlike other reality shows, the BBNaija is lauded for exposing the true character of housemates to the surveillance of the cameras and the judgment of audiences (*The Nation* 2019). The show is also lauded for the prospects of making housemates instant celebrities and its economic value especially in increasing the worth of the grand prizes annually and other packages like the prizes for excellent performance in games and tasks and endorsements (*The Nation* 2019). The Thursday night presentation show which tasks housemates to make a presentation showcasing the cultures of Nigeria and other countries in Africa is arguably a medium of showcasing and endearing the Nigerian cultures to the world and learning the culture of other African states (*The Nation* 2019). Another very exciting value of the BBNaija show is the creative economy of the show through the employment of an all-Nigerian production crew, its value chain effects, and contributions to Nigeria's GDP (*The Nation* 2019).

On the contrary, antagonists of the show have largely criticized the BBNaija for the portrayal of immoral and explicit sexual content and values that are anti-African (Ogunnubi 2021; Ogunyombo and Ogbonna 2021; Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). The fact that housemates have the liberty to unrestrictedly discuss phenomena that are culturally considered unworthy of public discussion and the explicit sexual relation among housemates makes the show very controversial, with some sections calling for its ban (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020; Adelagun 2021). Studies such as Folayan et al. (2021) interrogates the popularity of the BBNaija show and its perception among viewers and identified that at least 66% of the viewers like the show because they find it entertaining, 50.5% dislike it for immoral and sexually explicit contents. Osisanwo (2019) extracted data from Facebook and Twitter to interrogate the linguistic and discourse strategies adopted by discourse participants in representing the winner of the BBNaija in 2017 who was depicted as 'the chosen one'.

There have been several studies on reality TV shows, including Big Brother. Some of this research focuses on audience engagement (Hill 2018), viewership, stereotyping (Talbot 2007), gendered identity, glocalization (Chikafa and Mateveke 2012) participation and experience, class (Wood and Skeggs 2011), content, performance (Roscoe 2001) broadcast, and media buzz, cultural diffusion. However, research on the mental aspect of reality TV shows is in its infancy stage globally and non-existent

in Nigeria. This dearth of research means that the behavioural effects of reality TV shows are relatively unknown and by looking at the mental health rewards of these shows, we can answer the question of how BBN affects the mental health of viewers.

Although a handful of studies such as Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020) and MultiChoice Nigeria (2021) have identified that the BBNaija show enjoys widespread viewership in Nigerian and across Africa, there is a paucity of literature on the BBNaija show and none of the existing studies has examined the potential impact of the show on viewers' mental health. In this study, we seek to fill this important gap and establish the connection between the BBN TV show and mental health in Nigeria. This study fills this gap by investigating and ranking the activities that viewers find satisfying and thereafter establishing viewers' perceived mental health implications of the BBNaija show and the linkage between the increasing viewership of the BBNaija TV show and viewers' stress management practices.

HUMOUR AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE LITERATURE

Humour is a universal phenomenon, and humorous entertainment that evokes laughter is an indisputable feature of most cultures of today's globalized world (Sen 2012). Humour is a process that evokes rhythmic and pleasurable responses to verbal and non-verbal stimulus like joke, comedy, cartoon, tickling, and skit video among others (Chapman and Foot 1976). So great is the power of humour and the laughter that many have adopted humorous entertainment that evokes laughter as a coping mechanism or therapy for assuaging anxiety (Kuiper and Martin 1998), distress and depression (Nezu et al. 1988), and the challenges associated with the daily life (Lee and Kleiner 2005; Weaver 2016). Additional evidence suggests that Africans appropriate humorous entertainment as a means of navigating the arduous challenges of eking out a living in Africa (Obadare 2010). In this regards, Obadare (2009, 2010) underscores how the subalterns and middleclass exploit humour as a survival strategy by exploiting humorous entertainments to ridicule the state and make fun of or laugh at themselves.

From time immemorial, laughter has often been described as the best medicine. This position is corroborated by the Biblical allusion that 'a merry heart doeth good like a medicine' (Proverbs 17:22). This arguably depicts the potency of therapeutic potentials of laughter evoked

by humorous entertainment and activities in healing the human soul and emotions by triggering positive emotional and physical changes in the body (Robinson et al. 2022). Laughter protects the body from the debilitating effects of stress, relieves pain, strengthens the immune system, and translates the mind from a negative to a positive mood (Robinson et al. 2022). This position is substantiated by literature on humour as the best medicine (Skevington and White 1998; Dormann 2015).

A study conducted by Szabo (2003) compares the effects of humour and exercise on mood and anxiety using 39 university students who were subjected to exercise and humorous activities and tested at weekly intervals. Szabo (2003) discovered that although humour and exercise had positive effects on psychological distress and positive well-being of participants, 'humour exerted greater anxiety-lowering effect than exercise' (Szabo 2003, p. 152). Deducing from this, Szabo (2003) made a tentative conclusion that 'humour could induce positive psychological changes that are at least comparable if not superior to the effects of exercise' (Szabo 2003). A similar study conducted to examine the 'impact of a structured humorous activity on the psychological well-being of older people in residential settings' (Houston et al. 1998) identified that residents who received the intervention of humorous activity experienced significantly reduced levels of anxiety and depression compared with residents who did not receive the intervention.

Despite the extant literature on the connection between humour and stress management, there are other areas that researchers have not contemplated. Drawing from this literature, we seek to establish in this study the role of the humorous activities embedded in the BBNaija show for the mental health of viewers. Specifically, the authors delve more into this connection by focusing on the entertaining and humorous contents of reality shows that enhance mental health.

METHODS

To achieve the specific objective of this study, primary data were obtained through an online survey of the viewers of the BBNaija TV show in Nigeria. Primary data from respondents were obtained through the Free Online Surveys website,¹ an online survey and data analysis websites

¹ <https://freeonlinesurveys.com/>.

which assisted authors in obtaining data on the frequency of viewership and tabulation of findings in graphical form. Online questionnaires were distributed between 15 March 2022 and 17 April 2022, through respondents' personal and group WhatsApp platforms where we asked viewers of the BBN show to complete the short survey. Respondents were asked to provide a quantitative and qualitative response to a set of eleven questions bordering on the frequency of viewership of the BBNaija TV show, and their perceived benefits of the show in lightening their mood and helping them relieve stress and depression. Qualitative data obtained were used to complement the quantitative data. In all, a total of 203 respondents participated in the study although some respondents did not provide responses to all the questions asked. Eleven questions were asked in total which included participants' social demography, age range, frequency of viewership, most seasons watched, major attraction towards the BBN show, humorous content in the show, happiness derived from BBN, and finally the stress-relieving content of the show.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Of the 203 respondents, only 197 respondents identified their gender. The gender distribution of the respondents indicated 120 (61%) females and 77 (39%) males (Fig. 6.1). Although not conclusive, this data suggests that the BBNaija TV show enjoys more female viewership. This result also corroborates a report on the gender representation of the viewership of the BBNaija in a report conducted by Plaqaad in 2019 and 2021. As show in Fig. 6.2, the Plaqaad reports indicate that as against 32% men, 67.9% women watched BBNaija in 2019. Similarly, Fig. 6.3 indicates that 46.7% men watched BBNaija show as against 53.3% women in 2021 (Adeyeye 2021).

Figure 6.4 indicates that 30 persons (18%) between the age bracket 13 and 18 watch the BBNaija TV show, 105 persons (63%) between the age bracket 19 and 24 watch the BBNaija TV show, 25 persons (15%) between the age bracket 25 and 31 watch the BBNaija TV show, 7 persons (4%) between the age bracket 32 and 40 watch the BBNaija TV show, and 4 persons (2%) between the age bracket 41 and above watch the BBNaija TV show. This study indicates that the major viewers of the BBNaija TV show are persons between the ages 19 and 24.

Figure 6.5 indicates that a total of 187 (93%) respondents have watched the BBNaija TV show. Of the 187 respondents, 14(7%) never

Fig. 6.1
Socio-demographics of
the viewership of the
BBNaija TV show
(*Source* Authors'
compilation from field
survey)

Gender of BBNaija Viewers

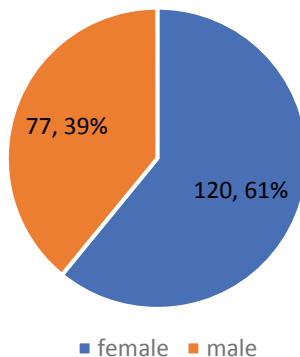


Fig. 6.2 Gender representation of the viewership of BBNaija in 2019
(*Source* <https://blog.plaqad.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Plaqad-BBNaijaReport-2.pdf>)

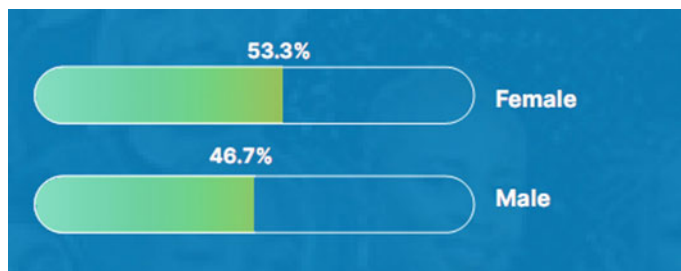


Fig. 6.3 Gender representation of BBNaija viewership in 2021 (*Source* <https://blog.plaqad.com/plaqad-releases-second-edition-of-big-brother-naija-report/>)

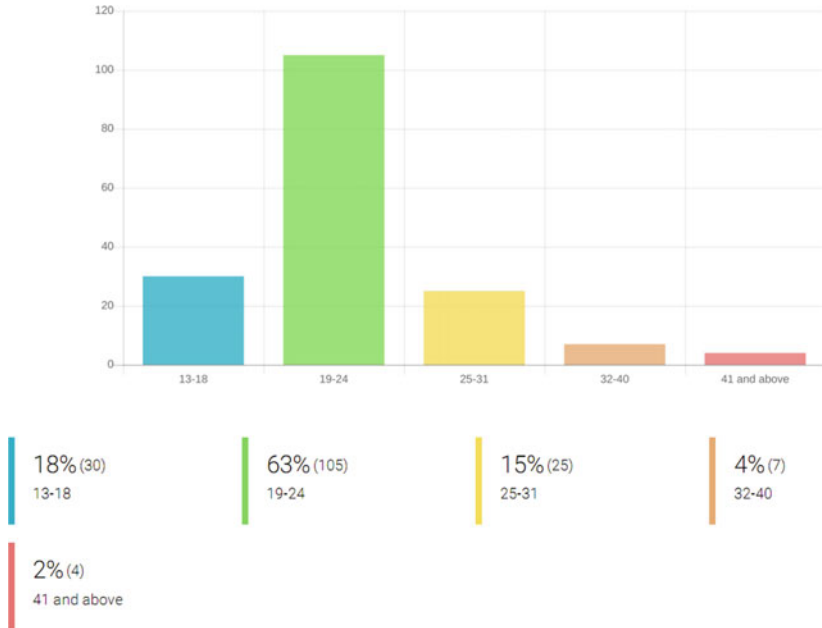


Fig. 6.4 Age bracket of BBNaija viewers (*Source* Authors' compilation from field survey)

watched the show, 40 (20%) respondents 'rarely' watch the show, 78(40%) respondents 'sometimes' watch the show, 48 (24%) often watch the TV show, and 21 (11%) always watch the show. The result indicates that apart from 14 representing 7%, most of the respondents have watched the BBNaija TV show. This position is substantiated by Fig. 6.6 which indicates that apart from 12.4% who began to watch the BBNaija show in 2021, 84.6% respondents have watched different episodes of the BBNaija show since the first edition, 2019 and 2020.

Figure 6.7 indicates that a total of 25 (13%) respondents watched 1 Season, 51 (27%) respondents watched 2 Seasons, 62 (33%) watched 3 Seasons, 29 (16%) respondents watched 4 Seasons, 8 (4%) respondents watched 5 Seasons, and 12 (7%) respondents watched 6 Seasons of the BBNaija TV show.

Although the BBNaija has intriguing entertainment value and activities such as the task execution and display of unique talents by housemates

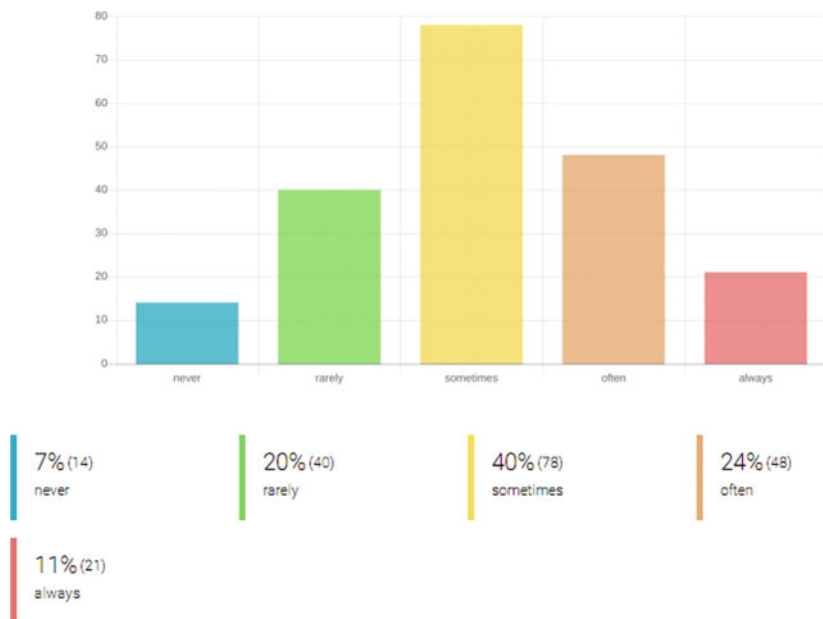


Fig. 6.5 Viewership of the BBNaija TV show (*Source* Authors' compilation from field survey)

(Plaquad 2021), existing studies on the BBNaija has often depicted it in negative light considering it as wasteful entertainment (Lengnan 2013). Despite this, the show continues to grow in popularity gaining 1.3 billion votes and over 40 million views across Africa (Plaquad Report 2021). On the contrary, from the population sample, 82 (43%) respondents indicated that tasks assigned to housemates are their major attractions to the BBNaija show. 8 (4%) are attracted to the show because of romance and sex, 53 (28%) respondents are attracted to the BBNaija show because of the amusing character of the housemates, 47 (25%) respondents are intrigued by the show because of the suspense-filled eviction night, 29 (15%) are attracted to the show because of the Saturday night party, and 65 (34%) respondents are drawn to the show by the tasks assigned to housemates, romance and sex, character of the housemates, eviction, and the Saturday night party. Our result is validated by an opinion poll by Plaquad which indicates that 70% of sampled respondents watched the

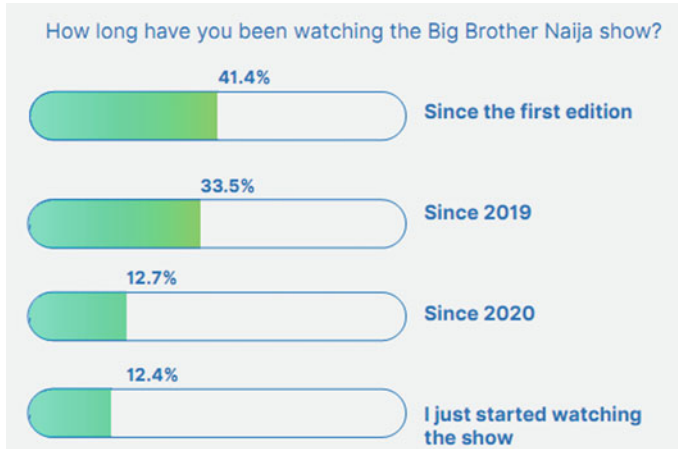


Fig. 6.6 How long have respondents been watching the BBNaija show? (Source <https://blog.plaqad.com/plaqad-releases-second-edition-of-big-brother-naija-report/>)

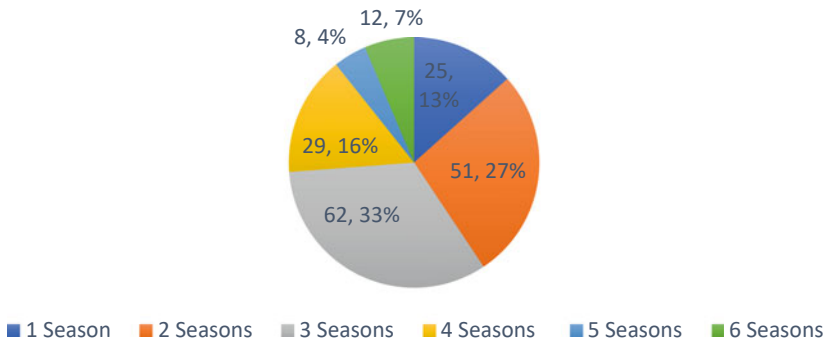


Fig. 6.7 BBNaija Seasons watched by respondents (Source Authors' compilation from field survey)

BBNaija show because of its humour-loaded fun and entertainment value (Plaqad 2019, 2021). Plaqad (2021) further asserts that a majority of the 40 million viewers of the BBNaija show “watch the show strictly for its

entertainment value - from task execution to seeing housemates fall in love with each other” (p. 25) (Fig. 6.8).

Qualitative data obtained from respondents also validate this assertion that the bulk of the viewers of the BBNaija watch the show because of its fun and entertainment value. For instance, Respondents 138 expressed that ‘watching numerous housemates undertake tasks which are most challenging, the diary sessions, the Friday night games, Saturday night parties and of course Sunday are very humorous and exciting’. In addition, Respondent 59 stated that ‘the drama and the diverse talents of the housemates especially in the game aspect, the fight, the entertainment, gossips, and cruise are all very amusing’. Contrary to the pedestrian construction of the show as a ‘wasteful entertainment’ (see Lengnan 2013; Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020), it is evident that the show contains

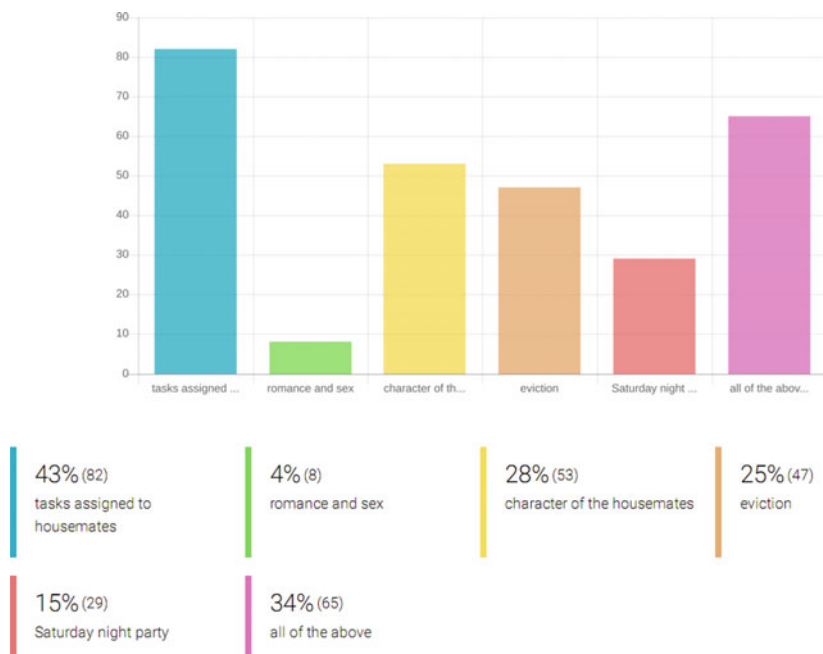


Fig. 6.8 What is your major attraction to the BBNaija show? (*Source* Authors’ compilation from field survey)

many useful but challenging tasks that have non-material benefits in boosting the cognitive and affective domains of the viewers (Fig. 6.9).

Respondents were asked if the BBNaija TV show contained humorous entertainment that lightens their mood. Figure 6.10 indicates that 149 respondents (75%) indicate that the BBNaija TV show contains amusing entertainment that lightens their mood as against 50 respondents (25%) who did not find the show humorous. This data is validated by a previous study conducted by Folayan et al. (2021) which interrogates the popularity of the BBNaija show and its perception among viewers. The study found that viewers like the show because of its entertaining value especially in uncontrollable evoking laughter.

Similarly, the study by Plaquad (2021) affirmed that the BBNaija show has a positive impact on the emotional and mental state of viewers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 6.11 reveals that 64.4% of respondents indicated that viewers of the BBNaija TV enjoy some level of emotional pleasure and mental satisfaction from their viewership of the show, especially during the heat of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the contrary, 11.3% indicate that the show does not give them emotional and mental satisfaction and 24.3% were unsure if they derive emotional and mental satisfaction from the show.

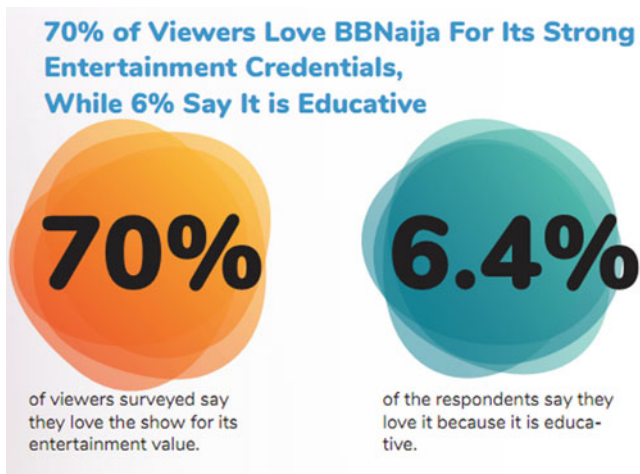


Fig. 6.9 Viewers' major attraction to the BBNaija TV show (Source <https://blog.plaquad.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Plaquad-BBNaijaReport-2.pdf>)

Fig. 6.10 Does the BBNaija TV show contains amusing entertainment that lightens the mood of viewers? (*Source* Authors' compilation from field survey)

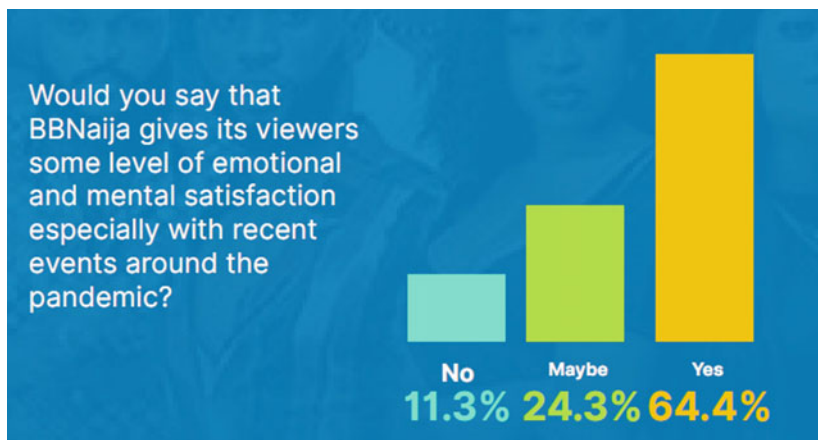
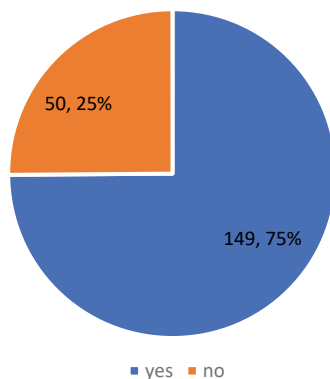


Fig. 6.11 BBNaija gives viewers some level of emotional and mental satisfaction (*Source* <https://blog.plaqad.com/plaqad-releases-second-edition-of-big-brother-naija-report/>)

Qualitative data collected from respondents also validate the claim that the BBNaija is an entertaining show that lightens the mood of viewers. Respondents were further asked to state the BBNaija activities that make them laugh and provide the reason. The most distinct qualitative responses obtained from respondents about the entertainment value of BBNaija are the programmes such as debates, cultural displays, and

talent hunt, head of house games, and the eviction night, critics, games, the party, and the game among others. For instance, Respondent 14 claims that ‘the drama can be entertaining, the fun, the fights and especially I get to learn stuff like how to handle social vices’. Respondent 53 avers that ‘the numerous and challenging tasks housemates undertake, the Diary sessions, Friday night games, Saturday parties and of course the Sunday eviction nights are interesting events that make me think and laugh uncontrollably’. Respondent 24 also claims that ‘the show is fun to watch because bringing different individuals together makes it so fun to watch others interact and compete at the same time’. Respondent 11 added that ‘when I watch their task session and see the way they struggle to win the game I feel great’. To Respondent 87, the ‘Saturday’s party in the house and task given to them makes me happy... I get entertained by watching the dress given to them, how they dance’. Respondent 113 suggests that ‘how housemates work together to achieve a task, and the joy on their faces when they win. Also, the romantic moments with a favourite housemate,’ makes him happy. Respondent 5 claims that ‘It’s always fun watching everything and it just lightens my mood, it gives me something to look forward to’. Respondent 127 says that ‘the characters of the housemates can be funny and the games they play too, it lightens my mood one way or the other’. Corroborating Respondents 11 and 87, Respondent 154 claims that ‘the tasks are fun to watch and the drama the housemates bring is really entertaining’.

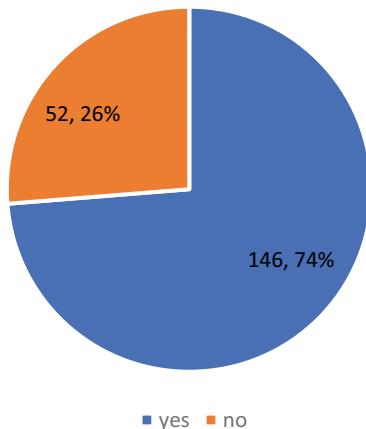
From the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from respondents, we make the claim that BBNaija TV show contains humorous entertainment that bring excitement to viewers which in turn lightens their mood. Arguably, the fact that Nigerians find the BBN show very humorous and entertaining amidst their precarious socioeconomic realities validate Obadare’s claim of how the citizens of African states continue to suffer and smile enabled by the coping mechanism that humour offers them to assuage the challenges of the daily life (Obadare 2009, 2010).

Figure 6.12 indicates that, of the 198 responses, 146 respondents (74%) identified that their viewership of the BBNaija show makes them happy. Again, 52 respondents (26%) indicate that the show does not make them happy. This reflects that a majority of the BBNaija show viewers have a positive perception about the show. Considering the challenges of surviving in Nigeria, it is apposite to state that Nigerians adopt the BBNaija show as humorous entertainment that makes them feel happy and evokes emotional responses in the form of laughter. This position

is supported by the distinct qualitative responses of the respondents. For instance, Respondent 13 claims that ‘the emotions attached to the show make me happy’. Respondent 61 claims that ‘I am so happy while watching the show’. Respondent 4 expresses that ‘the party is another mood vibes on its own, it makes me happy’. Respondent 115 claims that ‘the humour and entertainment characteristic of the show keeps me happy, so I don’t get sad’. Respondent 130 claims that the ‘Saturday’s party in the house and task given to them makes me happy. I get entertained by watching the dress given to them, how they dance and how they work together to achieve a task; the joy in their faces when they win. Also, the Romantic moments with favourite house mate. It just makes me happy’. Corroborating the position of Respondent 130, Respondent 197 claims that ‘I see exciting stuffs like tasks by housemates... so it makes me happy’.

Respondent 145 also claims that ‘I feel happy only on their task part... It makes me so happy, and mood lifted’. Respondent 5 expresses that ‘most at times when watching the tasks giving to the house mates and the way fellow housemates cheer each other. It tends to make you feel happy and for a little while forget what made you sad’. Corroborating the position of Respondent 5, the BBNaija is a temporary distraction from the imbroglio and arduous challenges associated with the daily life in Nigeria. In addition, Respondent 27 expresses that he watches the BBN often ‘because the eviction makes me happy’. Corroborating the expression of

Fig. 6.12 Does your viewership of the BBNaija show make you happy? (*Source* Authors’ compilation from field survey)

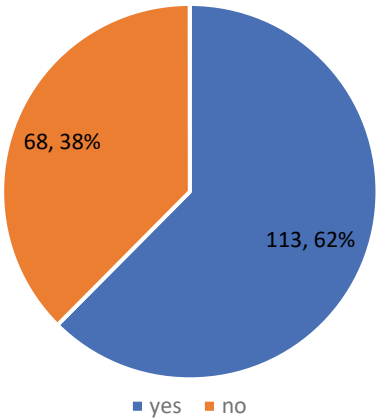


Respondent 27, Respondent 179 expresses that ‘I feel so happy watching the show; especially, the eviction show makes me want to know who is up next to leave. I feel excited after all the suspense’.

Respondent 139 expresses that ‘I always feel so relaxed and happy watching the show especially when I am stressed and sad because it tends to make me forget about painful stuff and bad experience’. Respondent 148 claims that ‘I feel alright and stress-free watching the show, I feel so happy lol, but I don’t allow my younger siblings to watch it because of its sexual content’. The voting component is another intriguing and humorous aspect that makes Respondent 168 ‘feel happy when who I vote for wins and feel somehow unhappy if who I didn’t expect to win wins’. Furthermore, although Respondent 135 claims that ‘I don’t have a specific feeling’, she stated that she ‘just love the show because I tend to discuss some of the happenings with my friends. And each of us have our favourite housemates so we tend to be at each other’s throat if a particular housemate who is my friend’s favourite flops’. Respondent 135 further claims that this makes her always feel happy and anticipate the next season. On the contrary, Respondent 129 claims that ‘I feel sad whenever there is sexual or romance involvement’. Respondent 158 also expressed that ‘watching the BBNaija show does not make them overcome sadness’. Respondents 110 claims that ‘the BBNaija show makes me happy as well as sad depending on the outcome of the Day’.

Figure 6.13 indicates that of the 181 responses received, 113 respondents (62%) expressed that their viewership of the BBNaija TV show helps to relieve them of stress. On the contrary, 68 respondents (38%) expressed that their viewership of the BBNaija TV show does not relieve them of stress. Qualitative data obtained from respondents also validates the position that the viewership of the BBNaija TV show helps viewers to overcome stress. For instance, alluding to their viewership of the BBNaija TV show, Respondents 19 expressed that ‘it enlightens me and relieved me of my stress sometimes’. Respondent 26 claims that ‘it relieves me of stress because I laugh most times or smile’. Respondent 37 claims then ‘the BBN show eases stress. I get bothered if I can’t make it to the house to watch the BBN show’. Respondent 148 claims that the BBN Show ‘... helps me unwind from a stressful day’. Respondent 164 claims that ‘It simply just relieves me of mental stress during the arena games, diary season, and other tasks like drama etc.’ Respondent 194 claims that the Show ‘... takes away emotional distress and helps you relate and learn proper lessons from the mistakes made in the house’. Respondent

Fig. 6.13 Does your viewership of the BBNaija TV show relieve you of stress? (Source Authors' compilation from field survey)



129 claims that ‘It helps me to relax my mind when I’m actually going through a lot’.

MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF BBNAIJA VIEWERS: EVIDENCE FROM DATA

The BBNaija TV show has often been depicted in a negative light as a wasteful entertainment (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020), a display of nudity, and ‘a semi-packaged porn’ and ‘social monster’ (Adelagun 2021) detrimental to the social health and lives of the Nigerian youths and especially teenagers. Contrariwise, we study these notions by interrogating the probable value of the BBN show in promoting mental health among viewers. Our findings indicate that the BBNaija receives a larger viewership from females 120 (61%) compared to males 77 (39%). This is corroborated by a report that indicates that 67.9% women watched BBNaija as against 32% men in 2019. Similarly, 53.3% women watched BBNaija show as against 46.7% men in 2021 (Adeyeye 2021). Drawing from these data, we conclude that the BBNaija Show enjoys larger viewership among women than men.

The largest viewership of the BBNaija shows that 105 persons (63%) are among persons within the age bracket 19–24. In addition, a total of 187 (93%) of the 203 respondents sampled have watched the BBNaija TV show. Arguably, that 187 (93%) respondents have watched the show

is an indicator that the show possesses some value that attract the fancy of the youthful population of Nigerians who constitute the largest viewer of the show. We probed further to account for the higher viewership count of the BBNaija and our results indicate that a majority of the respondents are drawn to the show by the entertaining tasks assigned to housemates, romance and sex, the amusing character of the housemates, eviction, and the Saturday night party. From the population sample, we found that 82 (43%) respondents identified the tasks assigned to housemates as their major attractions to the BBNaija show. Fifty-three (28%) respondents are attracted to the BBNaija show because of the amusing character of the housemates, 47 (25%) respondents are intrigued by the show because of the suspense-filled eviction night, 29 (15%) are attracted to the show because of the Saturday night party, and 65 (34%) respondents are drawn to the show by the tasks assigned to housemates, romance and sex, the character of the housemates, eviction, and the Saturday night party. Contrary to the negative depiction of the show as an untamed display of nudity and pornographic content or a semi-packaged porn (Adelagun 2021), our result indicates that only 8 (4%) respondents indicate that romance and sex are their attractions to the show.

Our findings also indicate that the BBNaija TV show contains humorous entertainment that positively animates the mood of viewers. One-hundred and forty-nine respondents (75%) of the sampled population indicate that the show contains humorous entertainment that lightens their mood. On the contrary, 50 respondents (25%) did not find the show humorous and entertaining. We compare our result with a report by Plaquad which reveals that 64.4% of respondents sampled enjoy some level of emotional pleasure and mental satisfaction from their viewership of the BBNaija show, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This finding is substantiated by data from qualitative study in which a majority of the respondents indicates that they find the BBNaija show a humorous entertainment that make them happy, laugh, and lighten their mood. This position is corroborated by Folayan et al. (2021) who interrogate the popularity of the BBNaija show and its perception among viewers. Folayan et al. (2021) identified that at least 66% of the viewers like the BBNaija show because they find it entertaining. Building on this finding, we argue that the fact that Nigerians find the BBN show very humorous and entertaining amidst their precarious socioeconomic realities validates the claims of Obadare that 'suffering and smiling' citizens

of Nigeria and other states in Africa use humour as a coping mechanism and to assuage the challenges of the daily life (Obadare 2009, 2010).

Having established that the BBNaija constitute amusing entertainment that lightens the mood of viewers, we probed further to establish if the viewership of the BBNaija makes viewers happy and overcome stress. Our findings indicate that 146 respondents (74%) identified that their viewership of the BBNaija show makes them happy. Again, 52 respondents (26%) indicate that the show does not necessarily make them happy. Qualitative data from respondents also corroborate the position that a majority of the respondents claims that the BBNaija TV show makes them happy. Respondent 130 claims that the 'Saturday's party in the house and task given to them makes me happy. I get entertained by watching the dress given to them, how they dance and how they work together to achieve a task the joy in their faces when they win. Also, the Romantic moments with favourite house mate. It just makes me happy'. Respondent 4 expresses that 'the party is another mood vibes on its own, it makes me happy'. However, Respondent 5 expresses that 'most at times when watching the tasks giving to the house mates and the way fellow house-mates cheer each other. It tends to make you feel happy and for a little while forget what made you sad'. The position of Respondent 5 indicates that although the BBNaija is a humorous entertainment that makes them happy, it is only a temporary distraction from the imbroglio and arduous challenges associated with the daily life in Nigeria.

With respect to stress, our result shows that 113 respondents (62%) expressed that their viewership of the BBNaija TV show helps to relieve them of stress. On the contrary, 68 respondents (38%) expressed that their viewership of the BBNaija TV show does not relieve them of stress. Qualitative data from respondents validates the position that the BBNaija TV show relieves viewers of stress. For instance, Respondent 139 expresses that 'I always feel so relaxed and happy watching the show especially when I am stressed and sad because it tends to make me forget about painful stuff and bad experience'. Respondent 148 claims that 'I feel alright and stress-free watching the show...'. Respondent 164 claims that 'It simply just relieves me of mental stress during the arena games, diary season, and other tasks like drama etc.' Respondent 194 claims that the show 'takes away emotional distress and helps you relate and learn proper lessons from the mistakes made in the house,' Respondent 129 claims that 'It helps me to relax my mind when I'm actually going through a lot'.

Evidently, contrary to its negative portrayal as wasteful entertainment, our study draw from primary and secondary sources to establish that the BBNaija is a humorous and fun-filled entertainment with proven therapeutic potentials in relieving viewers of stress, emotional distress, and boosting mental health. Building on this, we argue that the widespread viewership of the BBN show is engrained in its rich non-material value especially in promoting mental health among viewers.

CONCLUSION

The popular BBNaija TV show is a controversial show that has attracted widespread accolades and criticism among Nigerians. Many viewers adulate the show for its entertainment value and potentials for projecting Nigeria' culture and image in good light globally (Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020), and because of its educational, informational, and socioeconomic benefits (Iyorza 2021). On the contrary, the show is widely criticized for portraying immoral and explicit sexual content and values that are anti-African (Ogunnubi 2021; Ogunyombo and Ogbonna 2021; Akinola and Ogunnubi 2020). This study detours from the divisive argument on the moral values of the show by focusing on its probable value in promoting mental health among viewers. The study fills a major gap in establish the connection between the BBNaija TV show and mental health of Nigerian viewers.

To achieve these objectives, the study relied on the analysis of primary data obtained from quantitative and qualitative sources to establish that viewers identified that BBNaija show contains humorous entertainment and activities that viewers find attractive. Respondents identified the tasks assigned to housemates, the amusing character of the housemates, intriguing and suspense-filled eviction night, and the Saturday night party as humorous entertainment that draw them to the BBNaija show. In contrast to the negative portrayal of the show as an untamed display of nudity and pornographical content or a semi-packaged porn (Adelagun 2021), only 8 (4%) respondents indicate that romance and sex are their attractions to the show.

The study also indicated that a majority of the viewers, 146 respondents (74%) identified that their viewership of the BBNaija show makes them happy as against 52 respondents (26%) who indicate that the show does not make them happy. Considering the potentials of the show for easing stress, a majority of the viewers, 113 respondents (62%) expressed

that their viewership of the BBNaija TV show helps to relieve them of stress. On the contrary, 68 respondents (38%) expressed that their viewership of the BBNaija TV show does not relieve them of stress. Evidently, contrary to its negative portrayal as a wasteful entertainment, the study establishes that the BBNaija possesses therapeutic potentials in relieving viewers of stress, emotional distress, and mental stress. Building on this, we argue that the widespread viewership of the BBN show is engrained in its non-material value especially in promoting mental health among viewers.

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Gendering Identities in *Big Brother Naija*

Helen Ufuoma Ugah

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the main purpose of most reality television shows is entertainment. Reality television shows depict the natural behaviour of a set of people living in a particular environment where their daily activities are not only recorded but also broadcast live or recorded for viewers. Whether recorded or live, contestants/participants/housemates of these shows are expected to temporarily forget their private lives during the show. Contestants of reality shows audition for them for monetary gains as well as for the fame that comes with being viewed by the rest of the country/world (Sarpong 2018).

There have been arguments about how real reality shows can be especially as the broadcasts cannot reveal all the environments at the same time (Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer 2006; Okpara 2019). It has been argued that the environments of reality shows are simulated to suit the intents and whims of the producers, and that producers only reveal to the audience what they want the audience to know. Thus, in this light, it can

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be argued that events in reality TV shows are not spontaneous. Though there is no definite submission about the realness in reality shows, there is no doubt that reality TV shows contribute to and influence societal perception of females and gendered stereotypical perceptions of female contestants.

Big Brother is a popular show across the world that was first aired in the Netherlands. After the success of the show there, its franchise was then sold to some countries in America, Asia and Africa. *Big Brother* usually centres around four major events: the tasks participants are expected to perform, the elimination system, the dairy room and the house where the contestants live in during the show. In Africa, *Big Brother* aims to encourage and promote peaceful co-existence among Africans as it encourages contestants from all countries across the continent to apply for audition, their ethnicity and religion notwithstanding. This is also one of the strengths of *Big Brother Naija* (Nigeria).

Big Brother Naija (BBN) was first aired in Nigeria in 2006 and several years after, it has become a popular Nigerian reality show that is watched by many Nigerians—youths and adults inclusive. It encourages peaceful co-existence among the housemates/contestants despite the ethnic and religious divide in Nigeria. It also promotes the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria as part of the tasks the contestants are expected to perform centres around the display of their culture. Considering the fact that contestants of BBN are different people from different backgrounds, they have different ideals and values, which is reflected in their behaviour in the house.

Media shape and structure various types of communication and also frame the foundation of public opinion. In this regard, it influences societal perception of women and gendered stereotypes such that women are assessed and perceived based on how the media portrays them. With the creation of social media, Reality TV shows have social media pages/handles where producers post contents of the shows and the comment section gives room for the readers/viewers of the shows to share their opinion about the updates as well as the contestants of the show. One popular social media platform used by producers of Reality TV shows is *Facebook*. Facebook, just like many other social media platforms, has changed the dynamics of the relationship between audience and producers of these shows, such that the audience can give immediate feedback on any scene in the show without time or space constraint, thereby creating a para-social relationship between them (Chung and

Cho 2014; Chumbow 2020). Social media create the feeling of inclusive participation and in BBN, followers and viewers are encouraged by the producers to share their opinions about the show and housemates on their different social media platforms. Since these platforms are interactive and the online participants are heterogeneous, they have different reactions and opinions about what happens in the BBN house and the behaviour of the housemates. This extensively culminates in the creation of varying identities for the housemates.

Though identity is a difficult concept to define, Gee (1999, p. 39) defines it as a ‘sense of self that is fixed and continuous over time’. It is the quality of a person that makes them who they are, mostly as a result of their beliefs. Jaworski and Coupland (1999) conceptualise identity as ‘a series of choices made about oneself and life, it is a process rather than a set of personal attributes’. Identities are also ascribed to persons by other persons; thus, this study adopts Litosseliti and Sunderland’s (2002) submission that ‘identities also come from the attributions or ascription of others’. Identities arise as a result of the different forms of relationships we have with different people and our perceptions of them, which makes identity fluid and multidimensional.

Gender identities can be seen in terms of practices—one’s sense of self as a man or woman. Gender identities are complex and context bound, leading in some cases to stereotypes (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002, p. 7). Though individuals have multiple identities, the identities are only salient in different contexts. Likewise, different contexts lead to the ascription of different identities to individuals. People create identities for other people based on their interpretation of other people’s behaviour in particular contexts. Identity construction is the core of discourse systems. This study agrees with existing studies (Hamo 2013; Biondi 2007) that RTVs construct identities for their contestants and that BBN is no different, especially in its goal of generating commercial and financial returns. In addition, it maintains that viewers of the show create, in the comment section of the official Facebook page of the show, different identities for the housemates based on the daily interactions that occur in the BBN house. The identity created by viewers of the show provides the basis of assessing the housemates and also helps to differentiate one housemate from another. The identities created for the male housemates are different from those created for the females, such that there are different value-laden and ideological perceptions embedded in the identities created for the female housemates. These identities are a reflection of the general

societal perceptions of females in Nigeria; hence, the comment section of the BBN Facebook page is an extension of the Nigerian society.

Previous studies on reality shows have analysed the representations of substance use and abuse in the shows (Atkinson and Sumnall 2018); race and racism (Patterson 2016); gender; class (Lee and Moscovitz 2013); the effect of reality shows on their audience (Vogel 2012); reinforcements of gender stereotypes in the show (Downing 2018; Dubrofsky 2009; Mano and Willems 2008); etc. Though there are studies on para-social online relationships created by Reality TV shows, this study deviates from them by investigating how viewers of *Big Brother Naija* Season 6 (2021) SHINE YA EYE Edition utilise the BBN Facebook Fan page to discuss their perceptions about the character traits of female contestants of the show through the construction of divergent identities for the female housemates. This is in recognition of the fact that the construction of identities for the female housemates is discursively created with the use of language aided by the cultural practices of African societies and the personal stance and belief of the identity constructor. Thus, it aims to provide answers to questions such as: what forms of identities are created for female housemates/contestants of the show? How are female housemates of the show perceived? How are they described? etc. This is with a view to explicating societal prejudicial assumptions about female contestants in Nigerian Reality TV show (BBN). To adequately account for the major concerns of this study, the study investigates the comments generated from twenty-six posts about the female housemates made by the social media handler of the show. Since the comments are viewers' reactions about what goes on in the house, they represent the viewers' perception about the show and the contestants of the show. The comments are analysed using the analytical tools of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA).

REALITY TELEVISION (RTV)

Reality TV shows have been noted to affect the behaviour and belief system of their audience (Vogel 2012; Ferguson et al. 2013; Lippman et al. 2014; Ward et al. 2016). Vogel (ibid.) for instance notes that reality shows act as agents of social change, shaping their audience's belief about certain things in life. Ward et al. (ibid.) opine that reality TV engenders self-sexualisation, body objectification and equating one's self-worth with sex appeal. Lippman et al. (ibid.) connect perceptions about 'love at first

sight' and the idealisation of love to reality TV viewing. Ferguson et al. (ibid.) suggest that the conflicts in reality TV influence the mental perception of school-aged girls about relationships. From all submissions about reality TV stated above, it can be deduced that reality TV has become an integral part of entertainment and may positively or negatively impact on its audience.

There is a body of research on reality TV's construct of gender. This leaves no doubt that reality TV, just like every other facet of the society, has its own stereotypical representation of women. Research on gender dynamics in reality TV has demonstrated that it scrutinises, commodifies and brands women, as well as reinforces stereotypes about the role of women in the society and their relationship with men (Biondi 2007; Pozner 2010; Bjelskou 2012; Cox 2015; Downing 2018; Dubrofsky 2009, 2011). For instance, Biondi (2007) asserts that Reality TV presents the women as mother, child, iron maiden and sex object. This indicates that the stereotypes are both negative and positive, pigeon-holing women to fit a particular trait. Dubrofsky (2009) maintains that women are presented as emotional humans in reality shows; women's emotional display is the hallmark of many dating reality show as their emotions are regarded as excessive, dangerous and threatening. Downing (ibid.) argues further that through careful gender scripting and production, women's relational interaction in Reality TV normalises aggression and bullying among adult women, considering it as a normal and 'empowering' role for adult women who are in the service of seeking for a male partner. This assertion seems to suggest that the pursuit of a male partner is regarded as a trophy that only the fittest, strongest and most aggressive woman can win. Downing's study is drawn from an American Reality TV contestants' first-hand experience. Findings from the study suggests that the show permits and encourages aggression, competition, self-criticism and behavioural regulation that excuses meanness in adult women. Downing's argument is also reflected in Scharrer and Blackburn's (2017) submission that Reality TV approves women's aggressiveness and violence as reactions to provocation and conflict, suggesting that aggression and violence are normative female character traits. This assertion is quite true, especially in past BBN shows. The highlight of the show in several years has been the aggressive behaviour of some female housemates towards other members of the house. For instance, in the 2019 edition of the show, one of the housemates (Tacha) aggressively insulted a male housemate for almost an hour. However, her aggressiveness and sauciness were

regarded as expected because she had fought with almost every housemate during the show. This was also seen in the 2020 edition of the show when another female housemate, Erica, was disqualified for her aggressive attitude towards a male housemate. Thus, it can be submitted that female aggression is a popular trend in BBN shows. Although female aggression is a popular trend in BBN, female and male housemates are not allowed to fight with or insult other housemates. Failure to adhere to this instruction leads to disqualification as exemplified in the cases of Tacha and Erica discussed above.

Sung (2012) however deviates from the argument made above by maintaining that the verbal behaviour of female contestants in the American Reality TV show, *The Apprentice*, is considered inappropriate and impolite; professional women are subjected to more stringent gender norms than men. Martinez-Sheperd (2006) holds a disparate view in the submission that women have positive portrayal in Reality TV shows, though it could be attributed to the fact that the women in the shows are professional career women.

This present study, though holding similar thematic preoccupation with studies cited above, is not concerned about the positive portrayal of female housemates in reality TV shows. Its major preoccupation is to examine the divergent identities created for the female contestants of the show by viewers who interact on the Facebook fan page of the show. Hence, the study investigates online comments on the Facebook fan page of the show in order to analyse the language that explicate identities which portray different assessment of female housemates of BBN (2021) SHINE YA EYE edition.

BIG BROTHER REALITY TELEVISION SHOW IN AFRICA AND NIGERIA

The relevance of *Big Brother* to Africa and its effect on African society has been debated. Okorie (2020) argues that BBA promotes African identities and as such, more of such kind of reality shows should be produced. This is on the premise that the show influences the African populace. Nwafor and Ezike (2015), on the other hand, maintain that BBA influences perceptions of decency and morality among youths. Their study which comprised interviews and survey questionnaires targeted at students of a Nigerian university, evinces that Nigerian youths learn social vices from watching the show.

In Nigeria, *Big Brother* is the most popular reality TV show that impacts youth culture and also contributes to the Nigerian economy, with the major attraction being the amount of money the winner goes home with. It is also regarded as a platform that provides opportunities for grooming new talents that would be relevant to the Nigerian entertainment industry. This is quite true to the extent that beyond becoming celebrities, a number of former BBN housemates have built niches for themselves in the Nigerian entertainment industry. The show enjoys wide media coverage (Mainstream and New Media) weeks before it starts each year, while it is on-going and weeks after it has ended. Though it is usually vilified and people who watch it are regarded as jobless, it still attracts national and global viewership as it keeps a lot of people entertained. The show also generates a lot of profit as viewers are encouraged to vote to keep their favourite housemate from being evicted; the vote sometimes attracts a particular sum of money and viewers are encouraged to vote as many times.

Despite the popularity of the show and the number of youths that watch it, research on BBN seems to reveal negative findings. Okpara (2019) maintains that BBN does not reflect the sociocultural and religious norms that exist in Nigeria; it is not designed to promote moral values and customs as there appears to be a double standard between acceptable moral norms in Nigeria and what exists in the *Big Brother* house. Obayi and Onyebuchi's (2019) content analysis of the frames used in social media coverage of the 2018 BBN show reveals the frames of immorality and nudity that demonstrate that social media coverage of the show is unfavourable as it received criticisms and negative assessments of its activities. Chumbow (2020) argues that BBN contributes to gendered stereotypical conversations on social media as it influences viewers' interaction about what goes on in the house. This present study extends previous studies on BBN by investigating the fans' comment section of the BBN official Facebook page. It maintains that the section is a site for the construction of gendered identities for housemates of the show.

RESEARCH METHOD AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study investigates gender identities constructed for the female housemates of *Big Brother Naija* Season Six (2021) by fans of the show on the official Facebook page of the show. It interprets and analyses the identities with a view to explicating the ideological beliefs embedded

in the identities. Hence, the study devotes attention to the analysis of the linguistic and discursive peculiarities used to create identities for the female housemates. The analysis is based on the perception of identity as ‘an emergent, contextualised and interactional process of on-going discursive construction’ (Hamo 2013, p. 72).

The data consist of comments generated from posts about the female housemates as uploaded on the official Facebook page of the show. Generally, most posts made on the page generate a lot of comments from online participants. Thus, two posts about each female housemate are purposively selected, with not more than three hundred comments downloaded for each post. Thus, there are twenty-six posts with about five thousand, two hundred comments. Usually in online spaces, some comments are not remotely related to the posts, thus, as much as five thousand, two hundred comments were downloaded for this study, only about two thousands of them were found relevant. The comments were then read and those that represent identities created for the female housemates were identified and code-named ID. Hence, the comments are used as extracts in the analysis and numbered according to their use in the data analysis section. The comments are adapted in their original form without any form of editing; thus, they may contain sexually explicit terms there might be instances of the use of sexually explicit terms in the analysis.

The data is analysed using insights from Lazar’s (2007) Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). In FCDA, Lazar (2007, p. 1) posits that gender intersects with social identity and since Critical Discourse Analysis examines the ways in which social assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, perpetuated and challenged, FCDA adopts critical feminist view of gender relations with a view to ‘changing the existing conditions of these relations’ (Lazar 2007, p. 3).

FCDA analyses oppressive social practices that are embedded in discourses. It focuses on the linguistics ways in which gendered relations of powers are reproduced, negotiated and contested in societal practices through text and talk. Thus, it investigates the implicit and explicit renderings of societal ideological assumptions about females, especially as they are used to oppress females.

FINDINGS

The study demonstrates that the comment section of the BBN Facebook page is rife with sarcastic, abusive and discriminatory opinions about the

female housemates. These opinions are enshrouded in identities. Through the identities constructed, the females are discriminated against and their negative profiling is normalised. The comments, though positive as well as negative, are value laden—representing an intersection of the language, thought process and cultural beliefs of the online participants. It is noteworthy that the identity constructed for the female housemates by the online participants may or may not be their true identity even though the identities are created based on the speech, behaviour and actions of the housemates. The various identities found in the data are grouped into five major categories: mental, behavioural, social, moral and spiritual. They are discussed in subsequent sections below.

MENTAL IDENTITIES

Mental identities in the context of this study are what the online participants believe to be the mental or cerebral acumen of the female housemates. Mental identities are created for the housemates based on the nature and content of their discussions with other housemates, their ability to communicate proficiently in the English language and their performance in tasks that require strong mental ability. Hence, the female housemates' ability to impress viewers determines the extent to which they would be perceived as dull, intelligent or smart. The online participants, who also happen to be viewers of the show, construct mental identities for the female housemates based on their own level of exposure, experience, knowledge and sociocultural beliefs. Since language plays a major role in the construction of identities, the linguistic choice of the participants, beyond representing identities, also embody varying gendered stereotypical assessments of females. Consider the extracts below.

- ID 1a:** Those guys in that house don hear plenty nonsense from those girls 😂 their ear for don full by now.
- ID 1b:** Biggie talk to your daughter's abeg oooo abeg 🙏 the confusion must come to an end 🙌 they claimed not to be interested in the man but gets jealous/angry when they show interest in your other daughter's 🤔 what nonsense 🙏

The extract ID 1b above seems to suggest that the female housemates are constantly confused in their relationship with the male housemates. This assertion stems from the reluctance of some of the female housemates to engage in any form of amorous relationship with the males. By tagging the females as ‘confused’ there is an indication that the females lack the ability to think clearly or articulate their wants and desires correctly, suggesting that they are mentally unstable. ID 1a places the male housemates at the mercy of the females, insinuating that the females have put the males through the mental torture of making them listen to their gibberish. This assertion could be said to have developed from the ideological perception of females as the gender that talks a lot about inconsequential things—institutionalising women as silly, incompetent and mentally inferior to men. Despite the negative mental identities constructed for the females in the extracts above, the extracts below are positive.

ID 1c: Saskay is naturally intelligent, matured, beautiful and a wife material.. I’m just waiting for her to come out from the house first let me shoot my shot

ID 1d: Hate maria all you want but you can’t deny the fact that she has a very intimidating aura, very strong personality, she can stand alone and be unapologetic about it. Maria is the content y’all need this season, hold on to her.


The extract applauds a female housemate for being intelligent. Despite being a positive assessment, the adverb ‘naturally’ has negative connotations as it seems to suggest that she did not contribute to or do anything worthwhile to become intelligent—she got it by chance. This connotation also applies to the adjectives ‘beautiful’ and ‘matured’. The construction of mental identity for the housemate, though positive, ends with an ideologically packed assessment—‘a wife material’. This identity seems to suggest that the female housemates are considered intelligent, beautiful and matured based on their ability to become good spouses. The use of ‘naturally’ to modify these adjectives seems to suggest that females are equipped with these traits from inception so that they can become ‘good wife materials’.

The expression ‘intimidating aura’ though appears to be positive has negative representation. ‘Intimidating aura’ and ‘very strong personality’

are adjectives used negatively to refer to women who are assertive and not easily intimidated.

BEHAVIOURAL IDENTITY

Behavioural identities relate to the construction of how the female housemates conduct themselves, especially in their interaction with other housemates. This form of identity is as well a method of analysing the extent to which the female housemates are considered honest, emotionally mature, hardworking or otherwise. In some instances, the online participants construct positive behavioural identities for the female housemates, but more often than not, the behavioural identities are negative. This is explicated in some of the extracts below.

- ID 2a:** Chai that breast shock me o...Indi 21years old with that kind wall of Jericho/things fall apart. Abeg no hard feelings o make nobody attack my post o, I no get strength bikonu
- ID 2b:** She's not having a breakdown she is malicious and a drama queen...attention seeker and the fakest housemate in the making... She is crying because her secret is out, she didnt think Pere will tell people about their doings
 mrs fingering
- ID 2c:** Saskey is just like Diana of pepper dem serious. Las las this babe na confirm player, she is hiding her identity ...we know them
- ID 2d:** Maria is so damn real... I love her, give it to people the way they asked for it...

Through the construction of positive behavioural identities, the online participants adulate the good qualities of the female housemates. Positive behavioural identity is used to commend the female housemates for being hardworking, kind, entertaining and emotionally mature. This is exemplified in ID 2d above where a female housemate is commended and loved for being intolerant of other housemates' misdemeanour and for not living a life of pretence. The construction of this identity is a form of praise and acceptance of that particular character trait of the housemate. Social media discourse on what happens in the BBN house during the show appears to love it when the housemates, especially the female

ones, have a verbal fight. It is regarded in Nigerian slang as ‘gbas-gbos’ and ‘giving content’. The ability of the female housemates to engage in verbal fights makes viewers to tag them as ‘interesting’, though they also castigate the housemates for being childish or immature enough to fight. Thus, as much as the female housemate in the extract above is commended for being intolerant, she is also castigated for picking a fight with almost every housemate. The construction of positive behavioural identities for the housemates is always one side of the coin as what is considered positive may later be the basis for criticism.

The construction of negative behavioural identity for the female housemates is used to disparage their behaviour. It presents them as untrustworthy, unreliable, devious and dishonest. The construction of negative identity in some instances in the data is couched in expressions that body-shame and slut-shame the female housemates. This is exemplified in ID 2a where the breasts of a female housemate are ridiculed. The size and shape of her breasts are used to assess the veracity of her age. Since the breasts are not pointy and firm, she is termed a liar and a slut.

The construction of this identity also presents the females as pretentious and insincere, suggesting that they are worse than the character trait they are portraying on national television.

ID 2h: Saskay the pretender the way she replied Pere this morning shows she is a pure pretender, asking him if she was the mother just because Pere asked her if she was cooking for the boys? But the yeye girl has been eating a man’s food for a month and now

ID 2i: Tega was just pretending before, she’s a promiscuous woman

One constant behavioural identity ascribed to the female housemates is ‘emotional’. It appears that a majority of the viewers consider being emotional a negative trait; female housemates are constantly castigated for being emotional. This is exemplified in the extracts below.

ID 2e: I don’t even like dah jackie abi jacket of a girl always taking tyns too personal and serious..onye ashiri gbakwa ute

ID 2f: Angel is too emotional, any little thing she will start crying, I don’t blame Boma sha

- ID 2g:** The truth is Angel has emotional problem I see no reason why she should be in that house crying everyday???Na your papa house? You wey cry for morning go still wear catapult pant for night...all na scam abeg...Biggi should please call Angel to order

In all the extracts above, the housemates are criticised for showing too much emotion such as crying, anger, affection, etc. The construction of negative behavioural identities for the female housemates portrays females as emotional beings that should not be taken seriously.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

The construction of social identity for the female housemate is strategically used to assess the female housemates' relationship with other housemates as well as their ability to keep guests entertained. As much as the viewers expect the female housemates to 'give them the content they signed up for', they are still expected to portray positive traits like humility, responsibility, respectability, etc.

- ID 3a:** Maria rant like a local market woman... the hatred is so shown on her face...she beta calm down Bbnaija season 6 is not her father's house o 🤔🤔
- ID 3b:** She dnt have home training at all. So rude ad disrespectful. Always fighting every day. Okwanu onyera di ochaaa
- ID 3c:** Liquorose you wen we dey try to still raise up with our vote, na you come dey talk this one oh what a shame ,I dislike this statement of yours ,How much did you have? That's making you to feel proud abeg get out

It can be deduced from the extracts above that viewers expect a high level of decorum from the housemates. This is quite an irony considering the degree of trolling and flaming that occur on Nigerian social media platforms and the official BBN Facebook page. This suggests that flaming is only tolerable online but frowned at when it is done on national television, especially by women.

MORAL IDENTITY

The construction of moral identities for the female housemates is used to judge the extent to which viewers find them moral or immoral. Female housemates are always policed by viewers of the show, such that their relationship with the male gender, sexual orientation and their dress sense is always scrutinised and judged. Consider the extracts below:

- ID 4a:** Angel is for the people and by the people not Sammie alone, she give anybody she feel like to give attention. Today Sammie tomorrow Boma next tomorrow Micheal 😊😊
- ID 4c:** This is not something to say on national TV. This is just the reason why I don't like queen 😞 I don't like it when some girls carry ashawo work on their head 😞 especially for an African woman you have to respect yourself for a man to respect you back.. you can be freaky but freaky in your man arms ...
- ID 4d:** BBN jus carry Ashawo for house! Confused Girls.
- ID 4e:** Shameless women..how is this woman husband feeling right now? Even if ur husband cheat on u.u don't have to pay him back this way..for her Mind now anything wey wan happen make E happen 😂

In ID 4a above, a female housemate is castigated for not sticking to a male partner throughout the show. The female housemates are expected to 'fall in love' or get emotionally attached (otherwise called 'situation-ship') with only one male partner during the show. This expectation arises from the Nigerian societal expectation that regards a lady that has more than one male partner as promiscuous. Failure to live up to this expectation leads to name-calling and aggressive sexist remarks embedded in the creation of negative moral identity for them. In ID 4c, a female housemate is cautioned for talking about her sexual fantasy (threesome). The negative moral identity embedded in the extract stems from societal gendered expectation that see women's sexual desire as something that should be kept a secret at all times; a typical Nigerian female is not expected to have a sexual fantasy.

The data portray that in most cases, most of the female housemates are adjudged immoral and irresponsible, so much so that they are slut and body-shamed; this is portrayed in ID 4d above where all the female

housemates are identified with a demeaning adjective: ‘ashawo’ (a Nigerian word for prostitute). A female housemate is responsible when she wears unrevealing clothes but irresponsible when her clothes are revealing. This is exemplified in the extract below.

ID 4b: I think it’s time for this Angel to go home ...she doesn’t have to represent young girls as cheap beings with no respect and values for their bodies. No, that is unacceptable. That remark by WM that she is a marketer is very degrading.

In the extract above, a female housemate is considered irresponsible for opening her vagina on national television. The act is considered unacceptable and regarded as a criterion for her to be evicted from the BBN. Surprisingly, even though she was put up for eviction the following week, people voted for her to remain in the house. This seems to suggest that BBN fans are hypocrites who castigate female housemates for supposed immoral acts, but they still vote for them to remain in the house.

Female housemates who neither exposed their bodies nor engaged in sexually-oriented activities with male housemates are likewise applauded:

She is indeed a decent lady. So proud of you. You have represented other single moms well.

Exactly, whether content or not, she exhibited a high level of integrity and good training. I love you JB.

The housemate being referred to in the extract above is commended for not having sex with any of the male housemates even though she had been earlier castigated for refusing to get emotionally attached to one of the male housemates. Varying behavioural and moral identities were constructed for this particular female housemate when she was in the BBN house, giving credence to the assertion that identity is fluid.

SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

Considering the fact that the show is created for entertainment, it is quite an irony that Africans, in their characteristic behaviour, would bring in the spiritual when deliberating on the behaviour of the housemates. There is no doubt that Africans and Nigerians especially are religious—religious beliefs are demonstrated in most African and Nigerian activities

and the BBN show is no different. Female housemates who are found to be ‘promiscuous’ are identified as ‘destiny destroyers’ by viewers of the show.

ID 5a: Any young man who knows fully well that a woman is married yet engages in extra-marital affairs with her is only bringing doom to himself. Tega is just there to frustrate those young men with bright future.

ID 5b: Cross please run for your life, she wants you to fall for her trap as Boma did. This is Delilah at work.

This identity is constructed based on the Nigerian belief that any woman that commits adultery is destroying the life of the man she is having the extramarital affair with because God honours marriage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The official Facebook page of BBN, just like most social media pages, makes provision for viewers of the show to interact and participate in discussions on various news-worthy acts in the show. The online participants that comment about the show are from different sociocultural backgrounds largely made up of youths from Nigeria and other African countries; one would see in the comment section, comments like ‘watching from Cameroon’, ‘watching from Kenya’, ‘we love you in Namibia’, etc. As a result, the page is rich in diversity as well as divergent views about the housemates—giving rise to varying stereotypical and value-laden perceptions of the female housemates. Discourses are representational meaning where actions and identities are represented (Fairclough 2003). The comments generated from posts on the BBN official Facebook page is an interaction between the language, thought process and culture of Nigerians and citizens of other African countries that watch the show. The issues of concerns in the BBN house as discussed in the Facebook page represent Nigerian sociocultural beliefs and values, portraying that Nigerians have zero tolerance for what they consider immorality on national television.

Online discourse on what occurs in the BBN house as performed through language reproduces, reinterprets and reinvents social action against female contestants of the show, and shapes gender relations and

identities that support male heterosexual privileges, presenting males as more well-behaved than females. Even when positive identities are created for the females, the linguistic expressions used to construct the identities are sometimes diminutive.

Findings from the data evince that viewers of the show expect the housemates/contestants of the show to show their ‘real’ self at all times. However, the revelation of a housemate’s real self in terms of impoliteness, aggression, emotional outbursts, etc. usually goes viral on Nigerian social media platforms and generates varying criticisms from Nigerians. The criticisms provide unparalleled access to Nigerians’ perceptions of the character and behavioural traits of the housemate. Viewers of the show find it pleasurable because it is not only entertaining but also fulfils their love for voyeurism, curiosity and verbal violence. But when the voyeurism or verbal violence is perpetrated by a female housemate, it leads to the construction of negative identities for the female. The study evinces that each online participant constructs identities for the female housemate based on their perception of the housemate; however, the identities end up being similar. Findings from the data also demonstrate that the construction of identities for female housemates of the show is sometimes instigated by the content of the post that generates the comment. Hence, one can hazard that the page handler deliberately makes posts that may denigrate the female housemates and normalise negative profiling of them.

In conclusion, gendered identities constructed in the readers’ comment section of the official Facebook page of BBN are multidimensional, fluid and non-monolithic. The identities are social, mental, spiritual, behavioural and moral in nature. They are ideological and demonstrate Nigerians’ intolerance for misbehaviour. Identity construction, just as what obtains in other contexts, is multifaceted—the viewers of the show who participate in the deliberation on the online platform construct varying identities for the housemates though in some cases, the identities are similar.

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“Who Is Our Man?”: Corpus-Assisted Understanding of Naming Strategies in Support-Motivated Conflicts Among BBNaija Housemates’ Virtual Fans

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INTRODUCTION

Naming in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an important discursive strategy for investigating the representation of social actors in discourse. This is different from its focus in other disciplinary backgrounds where the concept is also studied, such as Anthropology (which

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focuses on the socio-cultural significance of names), Onomastics (classification of complex taxonomies), or Pragmatics and Semantics (referential and semantic properties of names). In his socio-semantic inventory of how social actors can be represented in discourse, Van Leeuwen (2008) illustrates that text producers can endow social actors with different representational choices which identify them either as individuals or as groups (nomination and categorisation), doers of something or bearers of some qualities (functionalisation and identification), or as humans or objects (personalisation and impersonalisation) and so on. These representational choices are naming strategies realised in the form of proper names, personal or possessive pronouns, or even abstract nouns and adjectives functioning as noun phrases in text constructions. Jeffries (2007, 2010) also identifies naming and describing as parts of the tools of Critical Stylistics, a systemic framework for the ideological study of textual meta-functions. According to Ononye and Osunbade (2015, p. 5), naming and describing tasks require the analyst's knowledge of the noun phrase (NP), because the NP in English textual structure typically 'names' an entity. Citing Fowler (1991), they argue that naming could be ideologically laden since the NP in a sentence is not prone to dispute or questioning (unlike the predicate, which contains an argument), and its relationship of meaning could be taken for granted by the readers. Hence, naming strategies are important to critical discourse analysis as they could ideologically function to attribute some features to, include or exclude, associate or dissociate social actors in relation to given social actions.

The BBNaija show is a social experiment of conflict of interests that extends beyond the Big Brother House to the virtual fans of the housemates. Fans of Big Brother Nigeria (henceforth, BBN) deploy different naming representations as campaign strategies to support their chosen housemates and misrepresent other housemates as part of their support for their "man" to win the BBN prize. Big Brother, a reality TV show, was introduced in Nigeria in 2006 as a local franchise of the television competition, Big Brother, created by John de Mol Jr. in 1999. Known as Big Brother Naija or BBNaija, the show has since then witnessed six episodes, known as seasons, with the winner of each season going home with a whopping sum of money that could amount to ninety million naira (approximately \$180,000) and other gifts. Because of this huge prize, the show has become very popular among the youthful population in Nigeria, who, despite the criticisms of the show's display of sexual immorality (especially from the religious circle), have seen it as a means of economic

empowerment amidst the ravaging poverty and unemployment in the country. Hence, with the proliferation of social media, different online fan groups have emerged and serve to discursively mobilize votes and support for the Housemates. As observed by Osisanwo (2017, p. 246), the availability of the internet, smart phones, and social media has made it possible for viewers of BBN to engage one another as discourse participants, and in this engagement, negotiations and canvassing of votes are at play. Delineating the conflict of (re)presentation of candidates, particularly the two most influential housemates, Pere and Whitemoney, in Season six of the show by their respective fandoms through the discursive construction of naming strategies, is the aim of this study. This is to account for the discursive use of naming strategies in following tenets of corpus linguistics and critical stylo-discursive approach.

The BBN social media fan base has grown rapidly over the years, making the show one of the most popular issues in the Nigerian social media space during its annual season. More so, the language use of the BBN housemates and the fan-based social media engagements are appropriate discourses for critical linguistic inquiry. This serves as one of the reasons for the scholarly attention the social experiment and its attendant discourse are getting. However, beyond the study of the representation of the show and its winners by the fans and the media (which studies have looked at), there is an emerging political struggle among fan groups over who should be the right person to win the show as manifest in the discourse—a phenomenon that has become both a campaign strategy (for the Housemates) and a socio-ethno-religious struggle for the fans. Unfortunately, this trend of activities has not been documented in previous literature, and this is where the present chapter comes in. Specifically, the chapter is aimed at investigating the different strategies deployed by BBNaija fans in describing housemates both positively and negatively. This is achieved through critical stylo-discursive and corpus linguistic approaches.

Review of Related Literature

The Big Brother reality TV generated-discourses have received diverse linguistic attention. The majority of existing studies on reality shows focused largely on celebrities and the Big Brother shows that were conducted outside of Nigeria and Africa. Undoubtedly, the 2007 Celebrity Big Brother UK series appears to have gotten the most empirical

linguistic coverage. Other related studies have been European centred. For example, Riggs and Due (2010) researched the UK series of *Celebrity Big Brother* 2007, which drew substantial attention to Britain as a result of the alleged racist mistreatment of Bollywood film star Shilpa Shetty by four British celebrity housemates. The authors looked at the interviews with four bully housemates to see how the *Big Brother* presenter made their racist charges and how racism almost vanished from the interviews. Similarly, Sinkeviciute (2015) investigated politeness in *Big Brother* UK to establish the triggers for true impoliteness and which features of the hearer's face and rights are claimed and or targeted in such interactions. Sinkeviciute used twenty-nine actual rude verbal behaviours that happened in the *Big Brother* UK 2012 home, and the results show that previous impolite (non) verbal behaviour, indicated negativity, or personal dislike of the target all cause impoliteness among the housemates.

Beyond these studies, there are also critical responses to *Big Brother* RTV in general and BBN in particular. They have been predominantly in the form of newspaper editorials and articles. Others (such as Folayan et al. 2021; Ogunyombo and Ogbonna 2021; Nwafor and Ezike 2015; Chikafa and Mateveke 2012) are media studies focusing on the presentation of the *Big Brother* show as a development in RTV shows. Within the linguistic sphere (to which the present study belongs), there is still a paucity of studies on BBN RTV, especially as regards the discursive manifestations of the controversies surrounding the show. However, some of the few previous works have dealt with important discourse topics such as the construction of actors by the viewing public, media representation, and so on in relation to BBN, *Big Brother* UK, and *Big Brother* Africa, which are worth reviewing in relation to the current study.

Osisanwo (2017) using social media discourses examined the discursive representation of the 2017 winner of BBN, Efe Ejeba, by fans. This study revealed how the Nigerian fans view the act of winning the BBN prize. Hence, deploying van Leeuwen's discourse categories for representation of social actors as a framework, the study uncovered that the fans represent Efe as "the chosen one," which implies that they believe that the winner is predestined by some supernatural power to win the show. Furthermore, the perceived moral burden of BBN has drawn the attention of scholars (e.g., Amadi et al., 2019; Ayeni, 2017). Amadi et al. (2019) studied the discursive representation of the 2018 BBN show as media content by fans on social media. The authors relied on quantitative analysis of corpora using content and frame analysis theories to

demonstrate that nude and immoral shows are among the top discursive frames used by fans to represent the BBN RTV. This focus on the frame of morality in the show was also the case in point in Ayeni (2017); particularly the issues of sexual violence and consent in relation to female housemates. The study focused on the incidence of alleged sexual molestation of a female housemate by a male housemate in the 2017 BBN show by assessing viewers' comments on Instagram using Content Analysis. The researcher concluded that sexual violence in BBN RTV creates an awareness of many forms of sexual molestation in Nigeria.

In addition, critical enquiries on the Big Brother RTV discourses outside Nigeria do not only reflect viewers' responses to the show but also deploy in-house participants' discourses to study how some important discursive practices manifest in their interaction engagements. For instance, Thornborrow and Morris (2004) examined the social function of gossip as a strategy for establishing social relationships and positive self-portrayal in Big Brother UK. Through the analysis of different turns, frames, and positions, the researchers argued that gossip is an important tool used by housemates for alignment or distancing as well as self and other representation in the Big Brother game, all of which can be deployed to win the game. This discursive pursuit of interest is connected to the objectives of the current study. However, while the former looks at the discourse strategy of gossip as deployed by the housemates to win the game, the latter focuses on naming strategies as deployed by the fans to influence the votes in favour of a housemate. On the other hand, Mathijs (2002) mapped the critical attention given to Big Brother RTV when it first came to Belgium into those who view the show as a tactile art form and those who see it as aesthetic. Meanwhile, the study acknowledged the blurry distinction between fact and fiction in relation to the Big Brother RTV, which accounts for the way critics react to it. The study concluded that critical discourses on Big Brother RTV in Belgium portray three dimensions of scholarly attention, viz., a shift in critical attitude, a shift in the mode of criticism, and a shift in relationship towards the show's format. This study typifies a survey of critical works on Big Brother Belgium. These studies in perspective have shown that Big Brother RTV and its attendant discourses are critical for understanding identity misrepresentation, impoliteness, acceptability or viewers' preference of the shows and of course, question of morality, especially in the Nigerian context. However, the notion of supported-motivated conflict remain under-explored even as it is one of the key determinants or

indicators of winners. For us in the current study on Big Brother Nigeria, our study represents a shift in critical attitude, from the usual criticism of how the show is or ought to be, to how the growing controversies among the Nigerian audience with regard to the emergence of the show's winner are perpetuated in discourse as discursive and social practice.

METHODOLOGY

This study is essentially a corpus and qualitative content analysis, which examines a mini-corpus of BBN fandom comments. To build this corpus, approximately 1000 Facebook comments on different 2021 BBN-related posts from official pages of African Magic BBN and two national dailies (*Punchng* and *Vanguard* newspapers) were downloaded using export-comment.com and uploaded into an excel sheet. Facebook was chosen because it is the most popular social media platform in Nigeria. We limited our scrapping to posts about Pere and Whitemoney. This is due to the fact that the duo have been experiencing non-violent confrontations in the BBN house. Their verbal and non-verbal conflict in the BBN house extended to their supporters and fanbase on different social media posts. In fact, evidence of conflict existing between the two housemates is carried and sustained by the language used by their fans in the Facebook comment sections. The housemates were also the most talked about in Season six of the show. To ascertain that Pere and Whitemoney, who are the “actors of conflict,” are the most talked about housemates due to the conflict they have, cirrus, a word cloud analysis that visualizes the top frequency words of a corpus or document, was conducted using Voyant Tool, a web-based application by Sinclair and Rockwell (2016). See Fig. 8.1.

In the word cloud, Pere (variant: General) and Whitemoney (variants: White, Money, Mazi, WM) are the most frequent keywords in the corpus. They mostly dominated the discussion in the comment sections. The word cloud result also demonstrate that the feud indexed in comments is predominantly about Pere and Whitemoney. In order to ascertain that the most frequent keywords dominated at both ends the supported-motivated conflict interactions by the BBN fanbase and, in particularly, Pere and Whitemoney fans, we analysed the corpus using a stream graph. A stream graph in corpus linguistics is a visualisation that depicts the change in the frequency of words in a corpus. It indirectly

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL STYLISTICS

This study is anchored primarily on the insight of critical stylistics (or CS). Critical Stylistics is proposed as “a method of finding the ideology in any text, whether or not you agree with it” (Jeffries 2014). A set of textual conceptual metafunctions underpins the model. These functions provide a level of meaning between language structure and language in context, and they may be considered part of Halliday’s (1985) ideational metafunction of language because they also produce worldviews (Jeffries 2014). Critical Stylistics attempts to “assemble the main general functions that a text has in representing reality” (Jeffries 2010, p. 14), and may be seen as a progression of CDA in terms of theory and technique (Jeffries 2007, 2010). The tools of critical stylistics, as outlined by Jeffries (2007, 2010), are shown in Table 8.1.

The model builds on linguistic characteristics that are often used in other critical methods, such as critical linguistics (Fowler 1991) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1989, 1996; Van Leeuwen

Table 8.1 The tools of critical stylistics

| <i>Conceptual-textual function</i> | <i>Formal realisations</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Naming and describing | Choice of nominals to denote a referent; nominalisations; the construction of noun phrases with modifiers (in pre- and post-positions) to further identify the referent |
| Equating and contrasting | Noun phrase apposition; parallel structures indicating synonymous relationships; relational transitivity choices |
| Contrasting | Lexical or structurally constructed opposition (antonymous sense relations or syntactic triggers); negation |
| Enumerating and exemplifying | Two, three or four-part lists indicating hyponymous and meronymous sense relations |
| Assuming and implying | Presupposition and implicature |
| Prioritising | Transformation of grammatical constructions (e.g. active to passive voice); clefting |
| Constructing time and space | Choices of tense; adverbials of time; deixis; metaphor |
| Representing actions/events/states | Transitivity choices |
| Presenting opinions | Modality choices; speech and thought presentation |

Source Adapted from Jeffries (2007, 2010)

1996, 2008). The tools are shown here according to textual function and some of their possible formal realisations. It is not meant to be thorough but rather to give a cohesive model that directly tackles the functional component of text analysis: to “answer the question of what any text is doing” (Jeffries 2010, p. 15). Thinking about the conceptual functions of a specific language form increases the reader’s ability to establish linkages between linguistic form and ideological meaning, and it is for this reason that this study found Jeffries’ model’s “naming and describing” to be a particularly enlightening toolbox. The process of naming and describing is outlined simply below.

Naming is a process of constructing an entity by labelling. A name means a label and to label is to name. Naming distinguishes entities. It is also a processing of “othering” through categorisation by using lexical choices. Such a process is not innocent. It is a way of power tussle. Fowler (1991) contends that “categorisation by vocabulary is an integral part of the reproduction of ideology” (p. 84). Through naming, identity and individuality are bequeathed on an entity or a group. “Naming and describing” is realized through lexical choices such as the noun phrase, adjectivals, or figuratives, and entails investigating how items and events are labelled and changed. Recognising the importance of how an item or event is defined and assessed through naming practices is not a novel notion; it is akin to the concept of “referential strategies” in CDA (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, 2015). Nomination, one manifestation of naming, is also often examined in CDA research and is included in Fowler’s list of CDA analysis techniques (1991). The use of the lexical choice like the noun phrase as the primary unit of analysis distinguishes Jeffries’ method. The following discursive strategies, namely, labelling, predication, and nomination, that are proposed in Reisigl and Wodak’s (2015) the Discourse Historical Approach provide tools to further analyse naming as a linguistic practice in the BBN corpus. The BBN Facebook commenters’ practice of naming in the corpus is mostly indicated through single nouns, noun phrases, and clauses, as well as adjectives, either attributive adjectives premodifying the head noun or serving as complements in predicative form. These lexical and syntactical forms are concentrated on during analysis for the realisation of naming.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This analysis explores the linguistic practice of naming in the BBN mini-corpus. Two approaches shall be adopted, thus: a corpus-assisted approach and a critical stylo-discursive approach. The former is realised using stream graph, n-gram, concordance lines, and collocates, while the latter is realised by the examination of selected discursive strategies proposed by Reisigl and Wodak (2015) in the corpus. Naming as a strategy is found extensively in the data under study. As a linguistic practice, it is a way of constructing an entity, othering, giving identity or individuality to, and/or indicating referents in a discourse. The naming strategy largely covers two social actors in the corpus, namely, Pere and Whitemoney. This section examines how the two alpha males (Pere and Whitemoney) are labelled and categorised by their opposing fanbase. Naming is discursively significant because “one of the potentially most influential choices any writer makes is the names s/he uses to make reference” (Jeffries 2007, p. 63). Following Jeffries, this analysis takes a single lexical form, or lexical strings, as the basic unit of its analysis of naming.

CORPUS ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF NAMING

Who Do They Say Pere Is?

The fandoms of Pere and Whitemoney represent two opposing groups in the BBN comments corpus. To understand the most preponderant expressions used in naming and describing these actors of conflict by the groups, N-gram analysis of bigrams in the corpus was done, and “Whitemoney” and “Pere is” dominated the rank. We selected the most two-dominated lexical forms and carried out concordance analysis so as to view the bigrams in context (Figs. 8.3 and 8.4).

The actor Pere is identified in the corpus using nominals, emotive metaphors, similes, and adjectives (Fig. 8.5). The descriptions are not entirely opposed. The pattern of the description has adverbial intensifiers such as, really, too, very. The describing of Pere is evident in naming construction using nominals, adjectives, and metaphoric expressions. An aggregate of the individual descriptions can be identified as thus: (1) betrayer, (2) authority, (3) enigma, (4) strategic and wise, (5) liar, (6) bitterness, and (7) evil. However, the lexical choice betrayer is

| Total No. of N-Gram Types | | | 1133 | Total No. of N-Gram Tokens | 3807 |
|---------------------------|------|-------|-------------|----------------------------|------|
| Rank | Freq | Range | N-gram | | |
| 1 | 59 | 1 | white money | | |
| 2 | 45 | 1 | pere is | | |
| 3 | 37 | 1 | is a | | |
| 4 | 33 | 1 | don t | | |
| 5 | 27 | 1 | for the | | |

Fig. 8.3 Selected n-gram rank (Source Antconc)

| Concordance Hits 45 | | | File |
|---------------------|--|--|-------------|
| Hit | KWIC | | |
| 1 | money remains white White money for the money. pere is a betrayer and a stupid fellow Pere | | bbnaija.com |
| 2 | 's a very big allegation on the organizers. Pere is a bitter soul. Imagine d bold lies | | bbnaija.com |
| 3 | rd. I Stan whitmoney. Free spirited soul. ????? Pere is a bloody liar, very manipulative and a | | bbnaija.com |
| 4 | amMaria #BBNaija Pere is behaving like Idi Amin Pere is a bully but I'm beginning to | | bbnaija.com |
| 5 | kinda right but mazi is not fake even Pere is a good man if he wins will | | bbnaija.com |
| 6 | rest until we dig out Pere's placenta.???? Pere is a ?? in human na lie go kill | | bbnaija.com |
| 7 | is he now lying? Pere has mental problem Pere is a Polymath liar???????? Who dey breeeeeeet Pere | | bbnaija.com |
| 8 | cooking your know But the guy right oh Pere is a strategist just the way Whitmoney is... | | bbnaija.com |
| 9 | that staff he was holding gave him goosebumps. Pere is a wild card and he remains a | | bbnaija.com |
| 10 | is d deal. But am suspecting dat dis pere is also an igboman. Delta igbo Head of | | bbnaija.com |
| 11 | , shameless I don't like this guy call pere, is annoying abeg That barbeque will kill u, | | bbnaija.com |
| 12 | force.cheeeewwww ?????????? Pere respect my foot Pere is bad abeg Man of the moment ,u | | bbnaija.com |
| 13 | Pere #bigbrothernaijaseason6 #TeamMaria #BBNaija Pere is behaving like Idi Amin Pere is a | | bbnaija.com |
| 14 | go kill yourself pere for the money If Pere is big brother he will do worse , his | | bbnaija.com |
| 15 | to nkoli nwa nsukka , that is exactly what pere is doing. I have done hiv test the | | bbnaija.com |
| 16 | .. pere is a betrayer and a stupid fellow Pere is evil... Let White money win oooo I | | bbnaija.com |
| 17 | be that of Zidicus Zulzander! Not small evil Pere is evil. The real evil and devil in | | bbnaija.com |
| 18 | support to our general Team Patriots we did , Pere is going to excel outside let's support | | bbnaija.com |
| 19 | to hate even perevinkle more and more oh Pere is just a blatant liar... Mthew Someone should | | bbnaija.com |
| 20 | oldest at same time most senseless Hahahahaha... Pere is just like every other African Politicians, no | | bbnaija.com |
| 21 | trouble. Let others try to change cooking stuff. Pere is just so jealous and not even friendly | | bbnaija.com |
| 22 | ... that pere's will still win... because Pere is did you know? Pere i | | bbnaija.com |

Fig. 8.4 Selected concordance lines of the bigram “pere is” (Source Antconc)

categorically used to identify Pere. The lexical forms “bully, authoritative, leader, suing wm (whitemoney), behaving like Idi Amin” are some of the lexical terms and expressions also used in describing him. These expressions sumly indicate that Pere has an authoritative personality, a form of identity and his individualness. The exercise of authority is what the opponent group would not take, hence the calling out. Through this naming, the opposing fanbase, more correctly, the fans of White-money, has constructed an authoritative entity in the person of Pere. The truism of this ontological reference may be arguable but the categorisation has projected an negative identity which most likely would dissuade the public from voting for Pere. Also, he is also identified as

a Mogube soldier. This naming is realised using a metaphorical autonymasia (See Skrebnev, 1994). Although it is a fact that Pere worked in the US army for six years, and he often told and reminded his fellow housemates about this profile, the opposing group, instead of calling him a US soldier, chose to allude him to a Mugabe soldier. The premodifying term “Mogube” refers to Robert Gabriel Mugabe, who was a Zimbabwean revolutionary and politician and who served as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe from 1980 to 1987 and then as President from 1987 to 2017. Robert Mugabe has been identified by many as a tyrant and a dictator. Consequently, labelling Pere as “Mogube” soldier becomes metaphorical as it systematically maps the identity of Robert Mugabe into Pere. The identity of this housemate as Mugabe consolidates his authoritative identity. Furthermore, Pere exhibits a character of enigma such that opposing groups who are not in his favour find it difficult to describe him. The nominals “something, somehow” are constantly used to describe him, as exemplified in Lines 29, 31, and 32. The intangibility or lack of concreteness of this label further projects Pere as the negative other. Naming him as “Something” constructs a negative enigmatic self that is cancerous and a plague and should be avoided by all means; while as “somehow” construct a negative enigmatic behaviour. The notion of avoidance is the idea of vote denial because obviously other housemates are not aware of this ongoing discursive action among the fans. Therefore, this commenter is advocating that people should not vote for Pere but Whitemoney.

| | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 21 | trouble. Let others try to change cooking stuff. Pere is just so jealous and not even friendly | bbnaija.com |
| 22 | eyes that see's well win ooooo. lseyyyy! Pere is mogube soldiers did you know? Do I | bbnaija.com |
| 23 | = 47% Who Dey Breett!!!! I dont care who win pere is my winner. Congratulations team Patriots .Pere as | bbnaija.com |
| 24 | t Nigeria government coming into power again 2023 Pere is not a leader because how can he | bbnaija.com |
| 25 | wrong. White money his more than that. If Pere is not comfortable with whitemoney cooking, he should | bbnaija.com |
| 26 | endorsements and appointment Top 3 congratulations Pere is now MAZI gate man, Maria house maid, | bbnaija.com |
| 27 | som,????????? As in big evil no be small Pere is only jealous and I sense pride in | bbnaija.com |
| 28 | you. make your name no enter eviction o Pere is really into this game. Guy knows how | bbnaija.com |
| 29 | Goodness record don't lie... This guy called Pere is really something else Ewo Chim, the worst | bbnaija.com |
| 30 | confronted wm which I think was uncalled for... pere is smart and understands the game which gives | bbnaija.com |
| 31 | sins and receive Jesus Christ and be saved. Pere is somehow right, but bringing in the world " | bbnaija.com |
| 32 | "t you shake him instead this guy call pere is something to avoid But white money greetings | bbnaija.com |
| 33 | pass am but he said WhiteDollar ignored him, Pere is stupid. As Najia be now eeh if | bbnaija.com |
| 34 | Pere has always been a bitter soul smh Pere is such a liar. like what does he | bbnaija.com |
| 35 | amusu ndieri Where are pere's fans na? Pere is such a liar I think the organizers | bbnaija.com |
| 36 | alone in this See to say the truth pere is the reason the house not boring, his | bbnaija.com |
| 37 | this point in time u said rubbish Ewu Pere is the reason for the season..A man | bbnaija.com |
| 38 | w more content.... unlike the dumed housemates. Pere is the wizard of the old??. | bbnaija.com |
| 39 | demand respect, you earn it. Idi Amin dem . Pere is too authoritative, assistant Buhari. He has forgo | bbnaija.com |
| 40 | nor be Mate Much Respect to White Money Pere is using wm as a strategy should in | bbnaija.com |
| 41 | him from cooking? Over jealousy This Guy called Pere is very correct, because white money may be | bbnaija.com |
| 42 | hating him the more we keeo lovina him. Pere is very intelligent. White money strategy is food. | bbnaija.com |

Fig. 8.5 Selected concordance lines of the bigram “pere is” (Source Antconc)

Pere is described as strategic and wise by the expressions "strategist, intelligent, smart, wizard, using wm". There are several occurrences of the term "liar," which also refers to Pere. This lexical choice is "critically" modified as a "blatant" liar and, pejoratively, a "polymath" liar. The modifier polymath is a knowledge that the commenter has through one of the BBN housemates, Yerin, who described himself as a polymath during the housemates' first introduction to the show and in the course of the show. The opposing group conceptualises Pere as having a bitter personality. This description is supported by the following expression: bitter soul in Lines 2. In Lines 21 and 27, Pere is further identified with the emotive metaphor "jealous". The actor Pere is constructed as "evil, devil, and bad" in Lines 12, 16, and 17. Generally, the valence of Pere's description is mostly negative. There are instances where the actor Pere is identified from a positive view, for example in Lines, 36, 37, and 41.

Who Do They Say That Whitemoney Is?

The description of Whitemoney, at most times, happened simultaneously with Pere. Where they talked about Pere is where they also talked about Whitemoney. It is the usual discourse structure or pattern for the opposing groups on Facebook. Pere generated more discourse patterning for description or naming than Whitemoney. The valence of discourse concerning Whitemoney is positive. However, a recurring construction or identification of white money was primarily from one point of view, and that was "fake." The opposing group, that is, those against Whitemoney, referred to him as being a fake. Those in his support group also identified him as a fake (Fig. 8.6). Whitemoney display of "goodness" through his act of cooking for his fellow housemates is adjudged as fake by mostly, Pere's fanbase. Constructing Whitemoney as fake shows that naming is one way of invalidating positive actions.

In Lines 8 and 29, supporters of Whitemoney declare that they stand with Whitemoney irrespective of whether he is a fake or not. In Line 17, the perception of Whitemoney as a fake is extended to his followers or fans. To ensure that this perspective of Whitemoney is significant, collocation analysis of the term "fake" was done and the lexicals "kind, white, money, and Whitemoney" referring to Whitemoney dominated (see Fig. 8.7).

The dominance of "white," "money," and "whitemoney" as collocates of "fake" indicates that the virtual fans of other housemates, and especially

| Concordance Hits 59 | | | File |
|---------------------|------|--|-------------|
| Hit | KWIC | | |
| 1 | | it this far. We have all learned from White money about certain things in life. Good luck. | bbnaija.com |
| 2 | | not her strategy. Oooo ooooo. that is someone White money all the way Me sha agree with | bbnaija.com |
| 3 | | . White money buying his way with the cooking. White money all the time Pere, don't let | bbnaija.com |
| 4 | | Dis girl na jealous dey worrie you, leave white money alone let him be If I no | bbnaija.com |
| 5 | | gain???? Mind your business But its true na, white money and pere have always been each others | bbnaija.com |
| 6 | | thing about this guy is that he sees white money as threat to him, he's a | bbnaija.com |
| 7 | | ocha for me abeg White go no where ??????? White money BBN self dey take coddin???? Congratulations whit | bbnaija.com |
| 8 | | Pete doesn't gossip, ok ooo Let white money be fake we like him like that | bbnaija.com |
| 9 | | . Pere hated Wim from day one I love WHITE MONEY because he is fake???? he go win | bbnaija.com |
| 10 | | ????? F How can General shake All man and white money becomes an exception with negative vibe. He | bbnaija.com |
| 11 | | ?? This is wonderful, we did very well for White Money biko???? WowOnce again, congratulations to Us mo | bbnaija.com |
| 12 | | bn without knowing that whitemoney smart pass am. White money buying his way with the cooking. White | bbnaija.com |
| 13 | | time Pere, don't let your hatred for white money consume you. Nawa ...pere our money white, | bbnaija.com |
| 14 | | idiot and liar why will he say that white money did not shack him and he have | bbnaija.com |
| 15 | | great liar This guy can lie, he claimed white money did not shake him so he can' | bbnaija.com |
| 16 | | she does to be seen as being real? White money don win already who is with me | bbnaija.com |
| 17 | | Rosco everything abt her is real not like white money fake follower Them no dey pity this | bbnaija.com |
| 18 | | Cross Congratulations to Whitemoney in advance. White money for the money If nobody else is | bbnaija.com |
| 19 | | mean white money room The money remains white White money for the money, pere is a betrayer | bbnaija.com |
| 20 | | he really knows how to play the game. White money for the money ?? is my slogan. He | bbnaija.com |
| 21 | | to support. I rest my case here. Omo white money geng no dey joke If not whitemoney | bbnaija.com |
| 22 | | not compare yash with ooo a chosen white money, do not eat manna white money to | bbnaija.com |
| 23 | | guy call pere is something to avoid But white money greetings him nah .why is him saying | bbnaija.com |
| 24 | | ..I'm so loving what i just saw???????????? White money has always been winning since from the | bbnaija.com |
| 25 | | sadist ? Is the kitchen limited and secluded to White money ? Has WM ever dragged, chased anyone away | bbnaija.com |
| 26 | | like pere, for these, he is very wrong. White money his more than that. If Pere is | bbnaija.com |
| 27 | | conquer From day one we know de winner white money I live u my man Who is | bbnaija.com |
| 28 | | the HoH.. If he likes, let him keep white money in the toilet. we follow him to | bbnaija.com |
| 29 | | still love him like that, period! Yes oo white money is fake I support dt Yes ooh... | bbnaija.com |
| 30 | | jealous ooo. It's everyone right to cook. White money is my guy and I support Pere | bbnaija.com |
| 31 | | eing.. I sincerely believe in what pere said ...white money is not big brother house cook or | bbnaija.com |

Fig. 8.6 Selected concordance lines of the bigram “white money” (Source Antconc)

Pere, conceive Whitemoney as not being real in playing the BBNaija game show. They consider his self-appointed position as the “chief chef” of the Big Brother house a strategy to win more fans for himself. In fact, while Pere is negatively named with different lexicals, the lexical item “fake” is the most preponderant lexical choice used by the virtual fans to identify Whitemoney in the corpus.

From the foregoing, and with evidence from the concordance lines and collocates above, it is obvious that the virtual fans of the two most-conflicted housemates, Pere and Whitemoney, are also at loggerheads. The virtual space or distance among the fans implicates linguistic-driven

| Concordance Concordance Plot File view Clusters/n-grams Collocates Word List | | | | | |
|--|------|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|------------|
| bbnaja.comments.txt | | Total No. of Collocate Types: 26 | | Total No. of Collocate Tokens: 119 | |
| Rank | Freq | Freq(L) | Freq(R) | Stat | Collocate |
| 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 8.60402 | kind |
| 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 6.51656 | angel |
| 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6.18899 | ur |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5.66542 | when |
| 5 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5.46652 | like |
| 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5.43410 | good |
| 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4.97953 | people |
| 8 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4.69713 | white |
| 9 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4.64983 | will |
| 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4.57428 | they |
| 11 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 4.56840 | is |
| 12 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 4.41816 | money |
| 13 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 4.33932 | he |
| 14 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4.23945 | whitemoney |
| 15 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4.16345 | you |

Fig. 8.7 Selected collocates of the term “fake” (*Source* Antconc)

conflict where naming as a strategy is the dominant instrument of execution. Who is our man is either favoured by negative and positive naming. Apart from the fact that naming could be positive or negative, a striking feature of the BBN virtual fans is accepting the negative naming of their “man” as positive. Or rather, invalidating the negative naming for the favoured housemate, in this case, Whitemoney. The housemate is dedicated as a winner, as can be seen in Lines 16 and 24 of Fig. 8.6. Beyond these impositions of victory, the trivialities and faulty behaviour of such a mate are ignored.

DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES OF NAMING IN THE BBN CORPUS

Within the BBN corpus, we examined the discursive strategies of naming. In the support-motivated virtual conflict between the fans of Whitemoney and Pere, the two BBN housemates have been identified in the data through three major discursive strategies, namely: labelling, predication, and nomination. Names or labels are lexical words that “sort out persons or a group [or their activities] into certain social categories

that dictate how members of the public should understand and judge their actions” (Chiluwa 2011, p. 203). In the data, naming is realised by two lexical choices—emotive metaphors and qualifying adjectives. Emotive metaphors are metaphors based on emotive words as vehicles. The emotive metaphors are either positive or negative. The qualifying adjectives modify nouns. Most often than not, they express emotions in the same way as emotive metaphors do. These lexical choices are used to describe social actors in ways other than their conventional meanings. Naming provides the fans the opportunity to evaluate the referents beyond who they are. The fans utilised the strategy of naming to attribute characteristics, qualities, and features to social actors: Whitemoney and Pere, and the fans against each other.

Emotive metaphors and adjectives have also been noted in the data to fall into two linguistic patterns: they occur as single nouns and as collocations. While the nouns are primarily concerned with the emotive metaphors that are used to identify the type of referent (e.g. arrowhead, shove), the qualifying adjectives are used to assess the qualities of the referents. Consider the following examples of metaphorical selections and their noun patterns in the data:

Extracts 1–4

- 1: Periwinkle d *wicked soul*
- 2: Pere has b acting as a *wizard* towards whitemoney..more than evil if you ask me ooo
- 3: Na real **shameless** *Annoying* pere ☹️
- 4: Pere’s fans are the *most lazy fans* ever in the history of BBN.

Such lexical choices as “wicked soul,” “wizard,” and the premodifiers “shameless” and “annoying” are emotive metaphors and qualifying adjectives, respectively. The metaphors “wicked soul” and “wizard” instantiate the conventional conceptual reasoning or meaning that man is evil. The metaphor evokes a negative emotional perception towards the referents. The qualifying adjectives, “shameless”, “annoying”, and (sic) “most lazy”, are utilised to derogatorily label the referent. The adjectives are clearly negative. The emotion the adjectives indicate is further indexed using emoticons, which is not within the scope of the present study. However, the employment of emoticons shows the reactionary disposition of the

BBN fan towards the referents and is a way of conveying a virtual display of his emotions.

Another form of labelling in the data was achieved using satiric misspelling. A satiric misspelling is a deliberate misspelling of a word, phrase, or name for a rhetorical purpose. Satiric misspelling, in the data, was achieved using deliberate malapropism. The following extracts illustrate, thus:

Extracts 5–10

5: A big shout-out to all *PEREWINKOS* and *PERESITES*

6: Shame on you Perewinkle I mean Pere

Although satiric misspelling has become the style of informal writing on the internet and in some serious political writings that oppose the status quo, its usage here was to achieve humour and derision. It is a way of discrediting the referents. In Extract 5, the fans of Pere were referred to as Periwinkles and parasites, deliberately using malapropism that captures the name of the virtual fans’ man “Pere”. In Extract 6, the housemate, Pere is referred to as periwinkle using satiric misspelling. The pattern of the satiric misspelling here is intended to capture the actual name of the referent.

Another predominant discursive strategy in the BBN corpus is predication. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2015), predication is a strategy involving the stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits to social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes, and actions. An explicit comparison is a significant device of predication evident in the data. The explicit comparison is realised using juxtaposition and hyperbole. These extracts below illustrate, thus:

Extracts 7–9

7: *General* Pere and *Civilian* Whitemoney...They are good to go...No bad blood!

8: Pere go win award for the *best liar* in the world

9: Pere’s fans are the *most lazy* fans ever in the history of BBN.

The virtual fans qualify the housemates' understudy using predication. They achieve explicit comparison by employing the literary device of juxtaposition to contrast Pere and Whitemoney. Whitemoney is typecast as being civilian in nature, while Pere is evaluated as being militaristic. Hyperbole is used to attribute negative traits to the fans of Pere and his fans. The negative traits of the referents are intensified to superlative degrees.

Additionally, we found nomination strategy as being very preponderantly significant in the data. Reisigl and Wodak (2015) conceptualised nomination as the discursive construction of social actors, objects, phenomena, events, and processes. The nomination is realised mostly using deictics: “we, us, our” and “they, una”. “Una” is the Nigerian English pidgin form of the third person plural pronoun “they”. The deictics were used to generate in-groups and out-groups within the discourse.

Extracts 10–15

10: Making it to top 3 is a win for us, I didn't expect we would make it to top 3. Congratulations Pere

11: Congratulations team Patriots, Pere asked for top 5 and *we* have him top 2 ... thanks for the love and support to *our* general Team Patriots *we* did, Pere is going to excel outside let's support him & more especially love him 🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌❤️❤️❤️

12: A big shout-out to all *PEREWINKOS* and *PERESITES*, una try small, 3rd no easy.

13: He came in with no fan base and was hated by many. So this is a big win for us who believed in him. 🏠🏠🏠 #Top3 #GeneralPere

14: Let white money be fake we like him like that we moveeeeeeeee

15: Pere's fans are the most lazy fans ever in the history of BBN. They were the very bane of that guy. They claimed to be patriotic but they didn't love the guy. Holding someone at 14% slot every time is v!le, desp!cable and d!sgusting.

Deictics are important nomination devices. According to Chilton (2004, p. 56), they can prompt the perceptual relation of uttered indexical

expressions to various situational features. The first person plural "we", for example, can be used to make the perceivers conceptualise group identity as insiders, whereas "they" would designate an outsider (*ibid.*). The pronouns "us", "we", and "our" in Extracts 10, 11, and 12 refer to the fans of "Pere", while "una" and "they" in Extracts 12 and 13 refer to Pere fans as an outgroup in this case. In Extract 14, "we" refers to the fans of Whitemoney as an in-group. In-group and out-group in a mediated discourse of fandom are exchangeable and/or revolve between competing interests. Every fandom is both an in-group and an out-group depending on trending topics and a celebrity's, in this case, housemate's dominance of popularity, acceptability, and tendency to win empathy or sympathy beyond his fan circle.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, naming is deployed in the current study by the two opposing BBN online fanbases as a discourse strategy of negative presentation in the struggle to promote their housemates to win the BBN prize. The fans of the two most popular housemates on BBN in Season six, Pere and Whitemoney, use negative names like "liar," "bitter soul," "fake," and so on to portray the actors as unqualified to win the prize. These representations are analysed following insights corpus linguistic approaches. The study also found labelling, predication, and nomination as predominant discursive strategies in the BBN corpus. Their various forms of realisation are typical characterisation of the mediated discourse of fandom. The engagement of each fandom using the negative names or label is to discourage support for the housemate being supported by the opposing fandom in order to influence the vote in favour of their chosen housemate. We conclude that the social conflict in the discourse of the BBN fandom is a reflection of the innate human rivalry when there are competing interests and that, in the case of the virtual fans, the conflict is fuelled further by the popularity, acceptability, meekness, feebleness, empathy, and sympathy a housemate has created for oneself. The desire to have one's supported in-group celebrity win the huge monetary prize attached to the show drives the social conflict further.

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The Making of Dreams Beyond the Screen: A Comparative Study of the Public Narratives & Stance on BBN 2018 and BBN 2020 Winners

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines how Big Brother Naija (BBN), a television reality show, provides a much sought-after platform for Nigerian youth to achieve their goals or live their dreams beyond the screen, through a platform provided by the BBN organisers. Specifically, the study adopts the Variation Theory in its comparison of two experiences, which are purposively selected to achieve the major aim of study, which is to examine the public perception and reception to the BBN winners of the 2018 and 2020 editions. The study reveals how stances towards the same or similar

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subject matter can shift immensely over time. The two cases for this study analysis are Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe and Moshood Olamilekan ‘Laycon’ Agbeleshebioba, winners of 2018 (Double Wahala) and 2020 (Lockdown) BBN editions, respectively. Miracle and Olamilekan are both Nigerian youths with different visions but similar goals, which are largely to be very successful in their life’s endeavours. Their goals motivated them and largely influenced their decisions to participate in the popular TV reality show, BBN.

For Miracle, all attempts to get help, including scholarships to pursue his dream career in life as a pilot failed, thus his participation and victory at the BBN 2018 edition was a dream come true. Similarly, Olamilekan has his dream and ambitions although his are not as well articulated as Miracle’s. As observed, Miracle’s win attracted many positive comments, cheers and congratulatory messages from both viewing and non-viewing Nigerian populace. However, though Olamilekan’s victory also came with joyful noise and celebrations from his fans and supporters, it was trailed by many negative comments, criticisms and backlashes. This study attempts a comparative analysis of the two winners to unveil possible reasons they experienced different receptions from the society. It showcases the evidence of how public opinion is fairly arbitrary; the same or similar actions can garner a myriad of different reactions over time. It is necessary to note that this phenomenon may be replicated in different spheres of life; all actions are subject to scrutiny and may generate a startling spread of responses.

To achieve the main purpose of this study, we have attempted a brief historical review of BBN, highlighting its objectives and winners, from inception to the last edition. The study also describes the reactions that trailed the victory of Olamilekan in line with the stance of MURIC (Muslim Rights Concern), a Nigerian Islamic human rights organization, explaining the motivations behind their antagonistic standpoint, as well as the responses of certain tax offices. This is done in comparison to the post-BBN experiences of Miracle, using the theory of variation. This study also highlights how BBN contributes to nation building and especially human capital development by providing an avenue where Nigeria youth can fulfil their dreams; hence, the dreams of participants are made real even beyond the screen.

THE VARIATION THEORY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Variation Theory is an acceptable framework in the process of study or communication between different narrations, people and cultures. According to Cao (2013), it is also the basic law for the interaction, integration, and development of people, culture and civilization. The Variation Theory is applicable to the study because of its main focus on seeking not only the common trends, similarities or same facts in narrations, particularly of the BBN winners selected for the study but also “seeking the difference” in their experiences as BBN winners. Variation Theory allows for the expansion of inquiry from seeking homogeneity to seeking heterogeneity and variations in narrations, experiences, cultures, social realities and people, amongst others.

BIG BROTHER NAIJA: A RUNDOWN OF THE PROCESS

BBN (Big Brother Naija, formerly known as Big Brother Nigeria) is a reality show based in Nigeria, and an offshoot of the widely successful Big Brother Television Franchise (a Dutch reality competition created by John De Mol Jr). The style of operations for the show comprises a number of selected contestants, usually anywhere between the numbers of 12 to 21, who live together in an isolated house, for a period of roughly three months. Participants in the show are mostly within the 20-year age gap (of the prime youthful age), ranging from graduates to those freshly or formerly in the workforce, and further selected from a variety of job fields and positions.

According to Kelvin (n.d.), this show employs the format of a social experiment, which is based on testing and examining people’s reactions to social policies, situations and events. These housemates are monitored by live feeds that showcase both audio and video, and capture activity within the house 24/7, for the entertainment of the viewers tuned in to watch. Housemates must have their microphones on their person and on at all times. Viewers must be able to hear all conversations, regardless of private dialogue, and contestants are not allowed to whisper, cover their mouths or make their speech inaudible when interacting with fellow contestants. Housemates are further forbidden from revealing the location of said cameras and microphones.

Another major condition of this show is that contestants are not allowed access to any electronics or writing materials, leaving them to

primarily rely on social interactions with other house guests to keep themselves occupied. Housemates are expected to be courteous in their communication with others, and they must have no contact with the outside world. Additionally, they are kept further busy with various tasks and challenges set forth by the house officials, from which they can win points and prizes. It should be noted that throughout the course of the competition, contestants are voted out (usually on a weekly basis), and sometimes players can be exempt from these evictions for doing said assigned tasks. The last contestant who constantly avoids eviction and garners the most votes, ultimately emerging as the fan favourite, is celebrated as the winner and is awarded the large cash prize, as well as other material gifts (prizes and deals from notable brands, paid vacations) at the end of the show. Runner-ups are awarded consolation cash prizes.

Being a reality show, there is expectedly much conjecture over whether the actions of participants in the house are genuine, and over whether scenes and settings are scripted for effect. However, whether dialogue and situations are supposedly contrived or dramatized, it is nevertheless the responsibility of shows, reality or otherwise, to exhaust all possible avenues to acquire and retain a high viewership ratio. The programme must therefore employ all means and strive to keep events as engaging as possible. Contestants within the reality show may alter or adopt personalities that they feel will be relatable and appealing to the target audience, and may also exaggerate emotions and reactions.

The show premised originally on the network, M-net (on DStv) since 2006, but moved to African Magic (on both DStv and GOtv) as from 2017, after a hiatus of eleven years, and from then on, has had its seasons run consecutively (each year). Its movement to a different network was accompanied by its brand name alteration: from Big Brother Nigeria to Big Brother Naija (which is the slang form of Nigeria). The logo of the programme is an eye opened wide, a depiction of the characteristic ‘eagle eye’, a terminology meant to represent total coverage of all activity, down to the last detail, within its line of sight. The eye in the logo can be taken as a metaphor for the cameras that cover the house premises, and capture all action within.

Big Brother Naija recently concluded its sixth season in 2021. For its total of six seasons held, below is a tabularized list below with the salient/relevant information (BBN Admin [2021](#)):

| Big Brother Naija: Condensed Information on Past Seasons | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Edition No | No of days | No of housemates | Winner | Runner-up | Original release | Prize worth | Edition slogan |
| 1 | 92 | 14 | Katung Aduwak | Francisca Owumi | 5 March 2006 to 4 June 2006 | \$100,000 | None |
| 2 | 77 | 14 | Michael 'Efe' Ejeba | Bisola Aiyoola | 22 January 2017 to 9 April 2017 | ₦25 million worth of prizes | See Gobbe |
| 3 | 85 | 20 | Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe | Cynthia 'Cee-C' Nwadiora | 28 January 2018 to 22 April 2018 | ₦45 million worth of prizes | Double Wahala |
| 4 | 99 | 26 (21 plus 5 later on) | Mercy Eke | Mike Edwards | 30 June 2019 to 6 October 2019 | ₦60 million worth of prizes | Pepper Dem |
| 5 | 71 | 20 | Moshood Olamilekan 'Laycon' Agbeshebioba | Dorathy Bachor | 19 July 2020 to 28 September 2020 | ₦85 million worth of prizes | Lockdown (aptly named considering the lockdown status of the nation at that time, consequent of the Corona 'COVID-19' virus) |
| 6 | 72 | 26 | Hazel Oyeze 'Whitemoney' Onou | Roseline Omokhoa 'Liquorose' Afije | 24 July 2021 to 3 October 2021 | ₦90 million worth of prizes | Shine Ya Eye |

BBN FIFTH EDITION (2020): FOLLOWING CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSY

Taxation

According to BBC News (2020), Lagos and Ogun state Internal Revenue Service (LIRS and OGIRS respectively) expected Moshood Olamilekan ‘Laycon’ Agbeleshe (winner of BBN season 5 edition) to pay tax out of his winnings (which is worth 85 million naira). These tax offices of these two neighbouring states in Western Nigeria claim their tax laws demand 7.5% value added tax (VAT) to be paid to government in the following year by persons who have worked within such states in the previous year. In other words, persons who live, work and make income within the state are given one year to ready their total income, and subsequently pay tax thereon out (calculating and forwarding their tax to the government) come the next year. According to LIRS, the tax is incurred on the following: salary, business gains, and even gifts and winning money for games amongst others.

However, these tax authorities admitted that this law is ineffectual if ‘Laycon’ chose not to live and work within the mentioned states. However, they persisted in their demands, with the expectation for him to demonstrate altruism by donating some of his prize money to state revenue to contribute towards supporting state development.

Taxation is a term for when a relevant authority imposes a financial obligation on its audience. The government is an example of a legal taxing authority that requires compulsory financial dues from its citizens/residents. Taxes are typically paid from one’s income, which could be from a range of sources such as salaries, allowances, profits, etc. The question then arises: whether cash prizes or giveaways won from shows by an individual are taxable in Nigeria. This is a question both asked and subsequently addressed by Taxville (2020), as seen below:

The Personal Income Tax Act (PITA) regulates the taxation of every individual that is resident in Nigeria. It is imposed on the basis of residence, and therefore residents who do not possess an exemption status (non-Nigerian residents, FCT Abuja residents and Nigerian military are exempt) are required to pay tax on their income. There are some forms of exempt income, but prizes and cash winnings do not fit this criterion of exemption, and are therefore taxable. However, a certain system allows such an individual to pay a slighter percentage as tax than what

would have normally been demanded. In the case of taxing prizes and cash winnings, the Consolidated Relief Allowance (CRA) and expenses that an individual can justify as being Wholly, Reasonably, Exclusively and Necessarily incurred for the purpose of generating income (WREN Test) for this purpose are not subject to tax. Therefore, Laycon would only have to pay tax on the remaining part of his income from the BBNaija winnings, once he separates the above from it.

It should additionally be mentioned that just as PIT is imposed on the basis of an individual's residence, it is payable to the tax authority of the individual's state of residence. Therefore, the tax authority of Laycon's state of residence prevails over any claims of LIRS and OGIRS.

The topic of the appropriateness of taxation on prize and cash winnings is one still under debate by the public. Some have opined that such individuals be left to spend their money as they see fit without paying tax on it, while others are firmly of the viewpoint that such form of income must be and remain taxable. An opinion that captures the latter viewpoint is concisely captured by Insta_News (2021):

In a normal situation, it is an income to them which should be taxed to make more funds available for the government to cater for the basic needs of Nigerians... It is time the government take action and implement bills to make reality show winners and earners pay from their winnings... The reason Nigerians are complacent about the situation of Nigeria is because 60-70% of Nigerians don't pay tax... It is such a sad news that no tax will be paid on all these earnings... In developed nations, lottery winners pay tax, show winners pay taxes, boxers, comedians, actors and so on but I wonder what system we run in Nigeria.

The consensus, therefore, is that while prize and cash winnings have already been established as forms of taxable income, there is a relaxed/nonchalant attitude towards making the requisite payment from these sources. It is however perceived to be in the interest of Nigeria's advancement that the mandatory taxation status be enforced on such prizes and cash winnings, especially since only a percentage of the winnings are subject to tax, with the remainder incurring no tax charge.

MURIC

MURIC (Muslim Rights Concern) is a Nigerian Islamic human rights organization, which has expressed their profound dissatisfaction with the activities of BBN. The group's director is Professor Ishaq Akintola and the National President of the forum is Yerima Shettima.

For the 2019, 2020 and 2021 BBNaija seasons, MURIC made their strong displeasure over the reality show known by issuing several condemnations against it. Their major concern is that the show is detrimental to the susceptible minds of the youth. Their position is that the show endorses the pursuit of materialism as the ideal standard. In their words, the show is 'damaging the psyche of the youths'. The show is purportedly distorting the perspectives of the youth towards what is considered acceptable behaviour, as lewdness, indecency and inappropriate behaviour is supposedly shown and glorified on screen. This conservative group therefore fears that youth will see this wanton behaviour as one to be emulated, thereby surely causing an erosion of morality, and leading to bastardization of fundamental values and norms. Additionally, the group feels that the reality show could cause an encouragement/uptick in robbery as youth, in an envious desire to emulate their peers on screen who have received millions of naira in awards, will succumb to practising robbery as an avenue to grant them riches. MURIC firmly believes that the show is an abomination, further describing it as an 'exhibition of nudity' and 'an invitation to chaos and insecurity.'

MURIC has called on the government, and even National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), to ban the show. In 2019, they petitioned President Buhari especially to ban the programme in the course of its running and cancel all subsequent editions of the show. They were however unsuccessful in their attempt as that season progressed without interruptions, and later seasons were subsequently released in 2020 and 2021.

Apart from appealing to the moralistic sensibilities of the public, MURIC has appealed also through a religious perspective; Professor Ishaq Akintola has urged Pastors and Imams to speak against the show, saying the Qur'an and the Bible are against what is being openly demonstrated in the Big Brother Naija house.

In their 2019 condemnation, MURIC expressed their disappointment that no other traditional ruler had joined them to agitate against the celebration of Bohemian behaviour that BBN supposedly is. However, the

Arewa Youths Advisory Forum has similarly called on the government to ban the show.

According to El-Kurebe (2020), Moshood Olamilekan Agbeleshebioba, the winner of the fifth season of the BBNaija reality show, was awarded a three-bedroom bungalow and ₦5 million cash gifts by the governor of Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun, on 7th October 2020. Additionally, the governor appointed him the Ambassador of the Youth in Ogun State. This religious group finds the governor's actions to be extremely disappointing. A day after these honours were bestowed by the governor, a statement was released by the group to the media (on 8th October 2020).

In this release, this group heavily criticized the show for promoting the pursuit of materialism and allowing contestants to engage in promiscuous, immoral behaviour. They further cited the fact that there were a high number of unemployed youths roaming the streets in the state's capital. The group reasoned that that the money could have been expended more wisely, and could have gone towards getting these youths off the street and engaging them in meaningful employment, thereby alleviating poverty rampant in those areas. In the eyes of this conservative group, it is a 'misplaced priority'. The BBN winner was already awarded 85 million naira, a car and a house from the show's organizers. According to MURIC, there is hardly any need for the governor to give further awards especially when it is unmerited. The lavish gifts are perceived by them as rewards for mediocrity, and the appointment conferred, a mockery of ethical behaviours. Additionally, the claim of this group is that not only are gifts given to one who is undeserving of it, but those who have actually exhibited exemplary intellectual feats, and demonstrated academic excellence, have not been similarly rewarded or commended.

There is also speculation over where the money and gifts given by the governor are from; the source of these gifts is questioned. MURIC is highly sceptical that such prizes emerged from the governor's private accounts. It is their belief that state money was spent on this imprudent activity, and therefore MURIC further probes why it is deemed necessary to waste the resources of an entire state on someone who has already received prizes from the

show, and additionally who is unjustified in receiving them at all. Their final advice and appeal to the governor is to:

...return that money to government coffers if it was taken from tax payer's money. The governor must also withdraw the bungalow if it is not his private building. He can build a whole estate for the BB Naija winner from his personal money for all we care. As for the ambassadorial appointment, decent parents will not allow the winner of BB Naija to represent their children.

The overall claim of MURIC towards Olamilekan's gifts from the governor of Ogun State is that these actions are highly damaging when viewed as a whole, promoting a harmful philosophy where reaping unjust rewards is viewed as acceptable, and even idealized. MURIC generally calls for an end to the show, in order to put a stop to all the negativity it supposedly breeds in the populace, especially amongst the youth population. This moralistic stance is especially representative of the conservative portion of the public.

While there is some social media opposition to MURIC's extremist stance towards a total ban of the show (Olu 2019), with many mocking MURIC on Twitter, some have identified areas that they are in agreement with from MURIC's complaints. In MURIC's criticism against the Ogun State Governor for his gifts to the BBNaija 2020 winner, some other Nigerians on social media additionally joined to voice their concerns. According to Augoye (2020), the governor bestowed said gifts upon Laycon, while the protests of dozens of Ogun State retirees over non-payment of their gratuities by the government went unanswered. The non-payment went as far back as 2011. State workers had also embarked on a one-week warning strike over the refusal of the government to implement the new national minimum wage. Additionally, the state owed law school students their bursary. Several youths consequently accused Mr. Dapo Abiodun of misplacement of priorities, and disinterest in rewarding academic achievements. Therefore, MURIC is a group firmly against BBNaija, justifying their opposition to the show due to its perceived disregard for morals, disregard for religious sensitivities, and disregard for rewarding actual academic and intellectual achievements of the populace.

A COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF TREATMENT
TOWARDS THE 2020 WINNER (FIFTH EDITION)
AND 2018 WINNER (THIRD EDITION), RESPECTIVELY

As outlined by Augoye (2018b, 2020), both winning contestants (of 2020 and 2018) won:

| <i>PRIZES</i> | <i>2020 WINNER (Season 5): Moshood Olamilekan 'Laycon' Agbeleshebioba</i> | <i>2018 WINNER (Season 3): Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe</i> |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| BBN SHOW WINNINGS | ₦85 million worth of prizes (₦30 million cash and ₦55 million worth of prizes) | ₦45 million worth of prizes (₦25 million cash and ₦20 million worth of prizes) |
| CASH/ GIFTS FROM STATE GOVERNOR | ₦5 million and a house (three-bedroom bungalow) | ₦2 million and a promise to a plot of land in any location of his choice to enable him build his own house |
| APPOINTMENT BY STATE GOVERNOR | Youth Ambassador in Ogun State | Education Ambassador of Imo State |

The general consensus however is that Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe was a responsible, moral character. After the show, the 2018 winner devoted majority of his time and energy towards funding his studies in commercial pilot training as he had hitherto expressed the lifelong drive to be a pilot. According to Augoye (2018a, b), he additionally collaborated with Imo state governor to establish a pilot school in Imo State with some of his proceeds from the show. He also expressed an interest in his plans to invest in agriculture. Furthermore, he was very vocal about the free education policy in Imo State. It should be noted that his appointment as the education ambassador of Imo State was a reward for his patriotism; the third edition of BBN was held in South Africa and he spoke very highly of his state and his beliefs in education. In essence, Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe was generally lauded for his authenticity and superb behaviour in conduct, and for his interest and investments in improving society.

On the other hand, Olamilekan Agbeleshebioba's future career has only been discussed in relation to his social achievements and milestones.

For example, he is publicly considered a fast-rising singer and rapper, and mentions are also often made of his admirable ability to attain 1.2 million Instagram followers while still within the reality show (Augoye 2020). Regarding his plans, he expressed that he would first attend to his mother and subsequently, those that supported him from the start. Additionally, he said that during his media tour, he would feature some of the housemates on this ‘Hip Hop’ video song. He also generally stated his intentions in giving back to society; according to him, “It is not about winning the show alone but about winning in life. People have shown me love and support so it is time to give back,” (Nseyen 2020). However, despite his optimistic and generous views, he does not quite give off the appearance of surety (clarified in his goals) that his predecessor in question (the 2018 winner) did; there was not the sense that he had formulated concrete plans with what he intended to do with his substantial winnings, both personal and public development wise.

It should be noted that the 2018 BBNaija edition generated little to no controversy. As reported by Shibayan (2018), there was some disgruntlement by the viewing public over a perceived favouritism, scripting and incorrect percentage report of the show. However, this is a common gripe with reality shows, as the audience routinely question the genuineness of such shows. On the other hand, the 2020 BBNaija edition suffered a lot of attention and censure, from tax offices, religious groups and other members of the public. Therefore, it can be adjudged that there was a significant attitude shift over the years between the 2018 version and 2020 version which led to the latter becoming a provocative subject matter. Additionally, the plans of the 2018 winner appeared to be more education based while the 2020 winner seemed to be more entertainment based. This difference in views and priorities of the winners may or may not have also influenced public opinion.

Beyond the screen, Miracle has equally pursued his sole purpose of participating in the BBN show of 2018. In 2019, he obtained his certification as an ‘Instrument Rated’ pilot, after passing his exam at the US Aviation Academy in Florida, USA (Acceleratetv 2019). On the other hand, Olamilekan maintained his popularity in social media although his expressions on social media show no significant future plans, pursuits or projects, other than in relation to the euphoria of his victory. Certainly, both have achieved the success they craved for and would attain more. Noteworthy is the fact that the BBN provided the needed platform for the successes and popularity, which continue beyond the screen.

CONCLUSION

This chapter examined how the Big Brother Naija (BBN), a television reality show, provides needed space or opportunity for Nigerian youth to actualize their goals or live out their dreams, even beyond the screen. Specifically, the study, using the Variation Theory of Comparative Literature, compared the narration of experiences of two BBN winners, which are purposively selected to achieve the objective of study, the cases of Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe and Moshood Olamilekan 'Laycon' Agbelshebioba, winners of 2018 (Double Wahala) and 2020 (Lockdown) editions, respectively. In essence, this paper makes for an enlightening evaluation, by bringing into focus the disproportional treatment towards the winners of the 2018 and 2020 editions of Big Brother Naija. Both received adoration from fans, favours from their respective governments and positives of the like. However, while the former successfully evaded vocal condemnation, the latter was the target for displeasure from certain public groups. Additionally, one can notice a significant difference in the depth of development for both characters, in terms of setting their priorities and plans with their prize winnings, with the former again displaying a seeming more mature and philanthropic outlook (towards societal development) than his successor. Conclusively, there is fairly significant difference of public opinion, as examined between the attitudes towards these individuals in this case study.

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Socio-Political Reading of Nigerians' Criticisms and Commendations of *Big Brother Nigeria* (BBN) Shows

Nicholas Idris Erameh^{ID} and Israel Ayinla Fadipe

INTRODUCTION

John de Mol created Big Brother television reality shows as a television reality franchise. After that, interested media production organizations from other continents bought into the idea and the franchise. They began to organize the show in different countries whose contexts vary in dispositions to moral and value systems. The presence of an appreciable youth population within these countries has given an advantage to the growth of this show particularly. Evidently, the idea has fascinated the teeming

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media audiences irrespective of their geographical locations in the world. Mudzanire et al. (2016: 77) explain the concept of the Big brother thus,

[Some] entrants are secluded from the rest of the world and confined to a large house under continuous surveillance of cameras where the last housemate to survive eviction lands the grand prize. Contestants freely interact around Big Brother assigned menial tasks, competitions and general household chores under the watchful eye of the cameras. The contestants from time to time have a moment to reflect on their activities and those of others in the diary room or the confession room. In the house, they are exposed to a coterie of familiar interactive emotions of happiness, frustration, failure, anxiety, friendship, opportunity and love.

The inaugural of Big Brother show happened in the Netherlands in 1999 (Okorie 2020). It is the first country in Europe that hosted the show. Later, many countries in Europe and Africa adapted it to suit the current realities in their geographical location. Mudzanire et al. (2016) also explain that it became a popular show among African countries on Mnet, an electronic media network or a pay television established in 1986 from South Africa. Also, they posit that Big Brother Africa (BBA) shows have 30–40 million essentially youth viewership in Africa that religiously follows the programme. Olarinmoye and Odunaike (2016) also confirm that BBA's aim is about uniting African countries and reflecting the whole spirit of Africa with no prejudice towards any African country. Usually, participants are from different African countries.

It appears that this historical analysis of Big Brother TV reality shows describes how an idea that originated from a communist bent has found vent in capitalist ideology. It seems that the concept which initially was meant to gag people's freedom of expression is now being used to commoditize their liberty. However, the authors explain that the BB show is operated within the prism of a reality TV programme referred to as "elimination game show". The reality shows' fame among the African youths alone has given it its sustenance over time because of various gratifications being dangled to them in the course of each show annually (Nwafor and Ezike 2015). In a way, the idea surrounding the TV reality that initially started as an avenue to monitor the people's activities, a kind of voyeuristic machine to control people's lives has become so much commercialized for the satisfaction of the predominantly young viewers. It is incontestable that the development does have several implications.

In addition to the explanation on the concept of the Big Brother Africa shows, Amadi et al. (2019: 3) affirm, in that

the Big Brother concept can be attributed to George Orwell's novel "1984," that stressed on all-encompassing observation and the relevance of verifiable truth. Through all-round observation (which might be a large remote sensor and projection telescreen) from an unseen superior, this philosophy analyzes all complexity of people's actions and insinuates their thinking.

Moreover, according to Lwahas (2017), Big Brother Nigeria (BBN) debuted on March 5, 2006, ended on June 4 on DSTV Channel 37. Describing the maiden show, Lwahas says that:

The house situated in the commercial city of Lagos was purposefully designed to match with green, white, green colours as reflected in the Nigerian flag. The Age limit for contestants was pegged at 21, and were selected from about 13,000 persons from a screening programme across several states in Nigeria. The activities span through a period of twenty hours in a day, with the use of sixty-eight microphones and twenty -seven cameras to project the live activities of the contestants. The winner of the event is expected to receive a cash prize of \$100,000.

Eventually, she reveals that cash prize was eventually won by Aduak Katung. So, this event started the journey of BB TV reality shows in Nigeria. Also, Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020) assert that BBN derives its popularity from the fact that the show constantly generates many profits and viewership from the teeming youths for the organizers. Therefore, from the foregoing, the modern concept of the television reality show, Big Brother Africa, generally revolves around opportunity, marketing, profits, and money. Unfortunately, this development reveals that like awful news, nudity and voyeurism sell among media audiences in any part of the world.

OVERVIEW OF NIGERIAN TELEVISION REALITY SHOWS

Television broadcasting in Nigeria started in 1959 as a political and educational tool for the Western regional government. The dominant Western Region's political party, Action Group (AG), employed the television station to counter the political antics of the party at the central level.

Thus, the politicians used the television station as a political tool and as an avenue to educate their electorate, sensitizing them about their party's programmes that would impact their living standards. Umeh (1989) says that television, the mass communication medium, has been thriving ever since its introduction in Nigerian media ecology. Throughout the progressive developments of this medium over the years, television has been used as a cultural tool through which peoples worldwide represent themselves in different programmes meant to give information, education, and entertainment. In recent times, one of such television programmes includes different reality shows that media outfits are dishing out to the audience from one clime to the other.

According to Mudzanire et al. (2016), citing Steeves (2008), the concept of television reality shows began with Candid Camera in 1948. This concept is believed to have given birth to a syndicated reality show, *An American Family*, in 1973, with *COPS* of the 1980s, leading to the current television reality shows. Television reality shows are unscripted and are about unedited scenes of ordinary people full of surprises and unpredicted plot development.

On the other hand, Lwahas (2017: 2) foregrounds the birth of television reality shows thus:

Since the late 1990s, emerging policies in the areas of privatization, deregulation and trade liberalization across major European countries ushered in a new path in the production space within the media industry. Specifically, the innovations brought about by the introduction of the Information Communication Technology revolutionize present-day TV programs.

Undoubtedly, the importance of the media in a globalized world cannot be over stated, and this explains why TV stations and producers strive to update and entertain the viewers across the globe. The significance of ICT in the popularity of television reality shows is evident in the increased viewership among the youth population worldwide. The millennials, mainly born into the boom of ICTs usage, further bestow some credibility to television reality shows considering the young people's fantastic engagement with social media networking sites.

More so, aided by globalization trends, the concept of television reality shows hinges on consumer satisfaction. Broadcasting organizations understand that in the competitive environment as the media industry, consumers are king. Television consumers love entertaining programmes

like television reality shows because they like what mirrors their social experiences. They can hear, see, and interact with characters who look like them, and smart producers know this psychological advantage in the media world, the world of make-believe. Lwahas further says that with the advent of foreign reality shows, media organizations intend to sell reality shows to other countries, especially in Africa. Consequently, the Nigerian producers have had to localize such TV reality shows with popular slogans such as “Don’t Forget the Lyrics”, “Who wants to be a Millionaire”, “The Apprentice”, “Big Brother”, “Nigerian Idol”, “The Intern”, and “Next Movie Star”. However, she highlights economic considerations attached to the procurement of TV reality shows franchises that the local producers experience from transactions, showing the exploitation angle to these experiences. Citing Thomas (2006), she posits that TV reality shows depend on a wide range of issues such as technology transfer, expertise knowledge, unacquainted cultural background, right of ownership which all form the basis of success in the programme. Moreover, Okpara (2019: 26) explains that the concept of TV reality shows is based on a depiction or narration of the core realities as they appear in our physical world. The key essential of the programme is to project a clear picture about how people adapt in the real sense. Participants in such shows will no longer control their privacy, as these will be monitored by content producers and beamed live to the audience of the TV reality shows for personal consumption. This is the reason why it was stated earlier that most media audiences are voyeurs, because of the way they thirst after television reality shows everywhere.

On the other hand, Betiang (2013) laments the Nigerian television broadcasting stations’ lack of originality in content productions despite the deregulation of broadcasting, which has allowed the proliferation of TV. He opines that ever since the deregulation of television broadcasting, Nigerian TV stations have been aping the global market/technological determinism which has turned Nigerian TV into localized versions of commercialized Western master scripts with a very little local ideological direction. This author’s assertion has already been corroborated by Lwahas above. Since deregulation, the Nigerian television media landscape has been inundated with direct or adapted programmes and contents that are shaped by the effects of superpowers’ globalization ideas and ideals (Egbunike 2017).

Nevertheless, Wilfred et al. (2019) state that Nigerian television reality shows are cheap sources of entertainment for media audiences. They also

explain that virtually all Nigerian television stations heavily rely on reality shows to win a large audience and advertiser patronage. This reliance has made television reality shows become a dominant genre in television broadcasting in the country. Its wide acceptability by the Nigerian audience makes them famous among TV stations' organizations. It is clear that Nigeria is not the only country where Western-styled media programmes have intruded into its media environment. It has become a trend in a globalized world.

NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT REGULATION PRACTICES

When it comes to television broadcasting, the Nigerian government primarily regulates it through its National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). The establishment of NBC by Decree 38 1992, by Ibrahim Babangida Regime, and amended by Decree 55 1999, by General Abdulsalami Abubakar Regime ended the monopoly of television broadcasting by both state and federal governments. The indication that the Nigerian government possesses a firm authority over television broadcasting is shown in the three subsections of Section 39-1 of the 1999 federal constitution. According to Ihechu and Okugbo (2013: 14), the freedom of self-expression is permitted or granted in subsection one, and then subsection two provides the grounds or condition for the exhibition of such freedom while subsection three takes out the freedom. It means that the government still has absolute power over radio or television broadcasting despite its deregulation because it took away the freedom it had given in the first place in the constitution. It is a ruse. But that is the nature of the Nigerian constitution.

Therefore, with TV reality shows like Big Brother Nigeria (BBN), the Nigerian government through National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) ordinarily has the power to sanction it if the programme is deemed offensive to the viewers' sensibilities. This is debatable, though. How do we assume that programmes like television reality shows are objectionable to the audience when usually there is a high level of engagement with such programmes when aired on television? After all, one of the instruments NBC uses to sanction media content and portrayal is regulation (Abubakar and Hassan 2017).

Moreover, Abubakar and Hassan (2017) argued that the Nigerian government's regulation began with the print media. It was due to the way politicians used the newspapers for political purposes and influence

as far back as when *Iwe Irohin* for the Egba and the Yoruba people was established in 1859. They also explain that this prompted the colonial government to introduce the first media regulation called the newspaper ordinance in 1903. Relating this to electronic broadcasting, however, neo-liberal ideals that permeated privatization and commercialization have reinforced the need to regulate media contents because of the deluge of sub-standard media programmes found vent in public space. Thus, Rauf et al. (2013) blamed the ineptitude of regulatory and professional bodies for the unethical practices in the Nigerian media industry. Supporting this point, Akashoro et al. (2013) maintain that the stakeholders of the Nigerian media industry should attend to the dynamics of social forces that affect operations, creativity, and potentials of media operatives.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The socio-cultural dynamics in every human society cannot be divorced from the nature of every media establishment that manifests in such a society. Mass media activities can only mirror what a society looks like. It appears globalization may have come to fulfil the yearnings and aspirations societal people are nursing secretly or overtly and their natural inclination to associate with other humans elsewhere. In recent history, the television reality show BBN has become a parameter for measuring both media influence on people and the need for self-censorship in the media industry.

Thus, this realization brings up the agenda-setting power of the Nigerian media industry and the issues related to adhering to the social responsibilities, the media is obliged to carry out in the society. Accordingly, Baran and Davis (2012) argues that media practitioners are expected to be the watchdog of societal people, especially elites, as relates to social responsibility theory. The media industry is expected to be independent such that it would be able to scrutinize social institutions and provide objective, accurate news reports about their activities. It is also responsible for fostering productive and creative communities of people.

On the whole, social responsibility theory encourages the media to prioritize cultural pluralism in society. On the other hand, agenda-setting theory affirms the influence of media empire in any society. The idea of the media setting agenda stems from the fact that the media do not just offer people information, education, and entertainment, but tell them what and how to think about specific issues (Baran and Davis 2012). The world is so vast that people cannot grasp the whole reality at a time. It is the media that help package these realities in different programmes

which unsuspectingly form their opinion and perceptions on so many issues. However, concerning the advent of television reality shows, the capacity of the Nigerian media industry to perform social responsibility is somewhat enhanced such that it has been able to provide entertainment programmes that the majority of media audiences want. Still, it has, in the process, embraced foreign cultural values that are inimical to ours or that the ones that reinforce the latent ugly aspects of our cultural values.

The Nigerian television stations have since used Big Brother Nigeria (BBN) reality shows to set agendas for their audiences. After all, ever since the reality shows have landed in Nigeria, they have had an admixture of controversies that have made people to talk about moral, ethical, political, and economic issues that emanate from the shows almost every year. Incidentally, this does not deter the programme's audience from eagerly awaiting its staging on television every year. One wonders, suppose the Nigerian government has banned the television reality show after the outcry of some public section, will the action have reduced the level of moral problems in the Nigerian society as a whole? Notwithstanding, television reality shows staged anywhere in the world usually generate different shades of arguments.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST BIG BROTHER NIGERIA (BBN)

Big Brother (BB) television reality shows have become contentious since they were aired in Africa in 2003. The same trend has followed in the respective African countries where they are being shown to media audiences. Most of this contention has been centred on the shows' perceived flagrant promotion of immorality which moralists have argued opposes African values. This objection has been voiced vociferously among the religious class, especially touting the terrible effects on African youths' morality. Of course, African cultural values are essential but are not static. Idang (2015: 110) posits that culture connotes a system of adaptation of values, belief system which sustains and gives uniqueness to a society. Thus, he encourages the continuous re-examination and regeneration of African cultural values in the face of changing dynamics in the world. Conversely, some have supported the broadcasting of BB shows, advancing different reasons they think that the BB shows have helped the society.

Similar controversies have also besieged Big Brother Nigeria (BBN) that created these two camps of opinion. Mudzanire et al. (2016) aver that BB television reality shows have brought strange cultural practices to African countries. Arguing that BB is not strictly a reality show, they posit that this foreign concept is full of rampant inglorious depiction of African culture. They explain that harlotry, excessive alcoholism, illicit sexual liaisons, nudity, foul language, self-indulgence, among other vices, are displayed to viewers the world over to portray a culture that is not sincerely representative of the African cultural philosophy. Therefore, they recommend that because BB shows depict the Western lifestyle, there is a need to screen TV programmes that define African culture due to the influence of the media that can affect people's cultural attitudes. Likewise, following the idea that BBN TV reality shows are inimical to people's beliefs and behaviour, Olarinmoye and Odunaike (2016) examined the impact of the BB show on the socio-cultural value system among undergraduate students of the Lagos State University. Findings of the report suggest that a large number of undergraduate students advise the organizers to ensure that they project films and programmes that are capable of adding cultural value to their lives and the society. This assertion is against the backdrop of the belief that reality shows negatively influence Nigerian people.

In the same vein, Onebunne and Okeke (2019) explored the newspaper's criticisms about BBN and concluded that the show in the guise of entertainment is an embodiment of loss of sense of shame and human values. They further explain that the level of its immorality display is such that it can cause deterioration in Nigeria, and the government should consider censoring such reality shows for public consumption. Similarly, Okpara (2019), after examining the moral contradictions displayed by the contestants in the reality show, discovered that there was a significant discrepancy or variations in terms of the expected moral values that are considered acceptable or vice versa among Nigerians. This contestation explains the reason why the BB show has continued to attract a large followership despite condemnation from a section of the country. Within this context, she submits that the BB show was only disappointing to those who had high expectations, as the programme was never designed to promote morality. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that the reforms that reflect acceptable social, cultural, and religious values are adopted by the organizers.

Furthermore, Egbunike (2017) posits that the organizers of the BBNaija show failed to consider the disparities and effects of intercultural communication dynamics in TV reality shows on African audiences. He believes their lack of balance and moderation in programme contents led to parochialism and ethnocentrism in intercultural communication. Also, he concludes that unlike what is obtainable in the Western world, organizers of the show are not in tune with the existing cultural norms and values that hold societies like Nigeria together.

Nwafor and Ezike (2015) investigated the BBA viewership level and the programme's impact on the moral disposition of students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. The results point out that though the programme was popular among the students, it negatively affected their sense of morality and decency. Their findings also showed BBA taught the students kidnapping skills and how to have a joint household with the opposite sex among many residing outside of the university. For them, this has increased rape, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, homosexuality, teenage pregnancy, and other social vices. Using Big Brother Africa as a case study, Oloka-Onyango (2005) proposed the role of transnational corporations, families, and communities in preserving African cultural rights amidst disastrous consequences of globalization. He argued that state and non-state actors need to collaborate to sanction violators of peoples' right to individual cultural life in Africa. He avers that achieving this goal is the only way the processes of globalization can be attained.

On the other hand, Lwahas (2017) argues that programmes like BBN are inevitable in the Nigerian media landscape, coupled with the winds of globalization blowing across the world, aided by the internet and information communication technologies. She strongly believes that Nigeria stands a lot to benefit from supporting the show, especially with its potentials to promoting small and medium scale businesses. Additional benefits include recognition of creativity and innovative ideas of producers who are projecting local contents into the regional and international scene. However, she warns that the goals are not likely going to be a reality if the persistent problems like lack of infrastructure, capital, unavoidable broadcasting laws that do not support global competition are not addressed.

Examining the perceptions of television reality programmes on Nigerian university students, Wilfred et al. (2019) notes that a large section of TV viewers believes the programmes aired are real-life situations. Within this context, they argue that the programmes rolled out on the basis of

educational contents pose the capacity to enrich the Nigerian audience with new skills, lifestyles, and other people's culture. Furthermore, Okorie (2020) reflects on the nature and uniqueness of the BBNaija show across a section of Nigeria respondents. He observed that a large number of the country's population watched the programme, with many pointing to the fact that the show promoted the Africa Identity. Therefore, he advocated for more such programmes to bridge the gap in indigenous languages and communalism in the country. For Akinola and Ogunnubi (2020), BBN can be used as a soft power to launder the image of Nigeria. They further argued that the quest for global relevance should not be predicated only on achieving military power alone but also on using the soft power or goodwill generated abroad for dominance and influence. So, they believe that using Afrocentric foreign policy affirmation and celebrity diplomacy derived from the influence of BBN can make Nigeria attractive and admirable in the international scene. Dolby (2006) declares that the influence of popular culture is inevitable in public space in Africa. She believes that this is exemplified in the success of the television reality show *Big Brother Africa*. Also, she says understanding public spaces and citizen practices in Africa should be based on their engagement with popular culture, and television is one important avenue.

SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The *Big Brother Naija* show has generated huge followership due to the nature of the show. The housemates, tasks, and the winning prize have made the show one of Nigeria's most-watched reality TV shows. One of the significant factors that contributed to the success of the show is the considerable followership. In 2020, the managing director of Multichoice Nigeria, Mr. John Ugbe, stated that the show gathered over 900 million votes across all platforms, breaking previous records (BBC 2020). In the fourth Edition in 2019, the BBNaija show recorded over 240 million votes, with over 50 million votes recorded in the final week (Ajala 2019).

Apart from voting, the BBNaija show also has large followership across all social media platforms, including Twitter and Instagram, and events on the show have generated debates in the Nigerian polity. It is also imperative to note that the majority of the BBNaija voters are youths. Despite the numerous attempts by some sections of the media and the Nigerian population to exalt the BBNaija show, more criticism and condemnations have been poured on the programme with no end in sight. One of the

main arguments against the BBNaija show is its apparent debasement of moral values in place of liberal Western ideas.

It is within this context Nwafor and Ezike (2015) observes that the open display of immoral acts, the show of nudity, and the likely tendency of the infection of sexually transmitted disease via programmes like the BBNaija TV represent a neo-colonial policy by the West to have influence and firm grips on traditional colonial territories perpetually and by so doing watering down the Africanization policy. Apart from the fact that the organizers of the BBNaija TV show are unknown, the seemingly open support for shocking public amoral attitude by the organizers not only weakens the moral standing of a majority of the viewers but also leads to a significant setback in the human community (Ojoko 2013). In a similar vein, Nwafor and Ezike (2015) concludes that BBNaija show has resulted in the worsening reinterpretation of moral values, belief systems, and myths, language, culture, and other social vices among the youths.

There is a high insecurity rate, bad leadership, corruption, insufficient and inadequate infrastructures, and many other social problems. Moreover, one significant way Nigerians can change all these is through voting during elections. The voting turnout of Nigerians during elections is meagre, and that has limited the capacity to bring about the desired leadership change in the country. According to Kingsley Moghalu, a former presidential candidate, the total votes cast on Big Brother Naija 2018 was 170 million, while the entire vote cast in the 2019 general election was 27 million (Egbas 2019).

The 2019 presidential elections witnessed the lowest turnout of voters in Nigeria's history, with only 34.75% voting out of the total registered (Adigun 2020). These contrasting figures are very alarming and show the voting apathy during elections. Elections are essential ways to achieve social change, but there is apathy towards the voters in Nigeria. Voting registration and accreditations in Nigeria are free; hence, the electoral system can be enhanced from the lessons learned from Big Brother Naija. This lesson is crucial because half of the 84 million reregistered voters in Nigeria are youths, and low voting turnout means the youths are not voting (Egbas 2019). Also, the youths may prefer what they sell on television reality shows to what politicians are selling them. Programmes like BBA do not fail them; they derive some level of satisfaction from what they watch, compared to broken promises that confront the polity after elections.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of these implications as mentioned above of the BBNaija TV show, a more visible reason the Nigerian governments and its contemporaries across Africa appear to be hindered in cancelling the show is the political economy dimension to the show. In an attempt to corroborate this position, Orodare (2020) notes that apart from the fact that the International Momentary Fund acknowledged the contribution of approximately 65% of the country's Gross Domestic Production (GDP) in 2017, the informal sector equally provides employment opportunities to a majority of Nigerians. Suffice to say, successive governments have been left with no choice due to this economic opportunity with the BB TV Naija show via Multichoice company.

The Big Brother Naija show is a platform where Nigerians from different parts compete for the winning price. For three months in the house, these housemates tolerate each other, new things about different Nigerian cultures are learned, and the housemates are engaged in public opinions. This goes a long way to unify the Nigerian state. These types of shows are needed as they help to create new friendships in terms of tribal and religious affiliation. The fifth edition of the show witnessed a female housemate (Kaisha) from Sokoto state, which is rare and her appearance helped to project her state in a positive light. Ethnicity and tribalism are significant problems facing the Nigerian state, and shows like Big Brother Naija have helped to unify Nigeria through the creation of friendship. Hence, the socio-political implications of the Big Brother Nigeria show are majorly one of positivities, and this goes a long way to unify the Nigerian polity. Through the performances, friendships are made irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliations; different cultures are showcased; behaviours and opinions are formed based on these interactions.

However, the concerns regarding the moral depravity that television reality shows engendered need to be addressed. It can be counter-productive to forgo the significance of preserving African cultural values at the expense of economic gains. Therefore, those who have argued for the cancellation of the shows on moral or religious grounds have genuine reasons for taking the stand as much as those who have advocated for continuing the shows. Globalization dynamics are like a gyre that has caught everybody in its motion and brought different issues like this Big Brother reality show. African nations cannot escape its entanglement, but they need to domesticate these reality shows using their cultural laws,

ethics, practices, and institutional frameworks in tandem with acceptable standards. This regulation can be made without scrapping the economic advantages the reality shows bring with them.

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Cultural Interrogations and BBN Impact on Youths: A Study of BBN Season 5: “Lockdown”

Francis Adelodun Olowolafe and Nicholas C. Akas

INTRODUCTION

Due to the emergence of television reality shows, which have become the most popular trend in television programming, television has maintained its place as the dominant form of media. Reality-based programs have dominated television programming in the twenty-first century, as anyone who has regularly watched television over the past decade can confirm. Nwafor and Ezike (2015) assert, “Recently, a new television phenomena has emerged: reality television shows, a sort of television programming that captures unscripted situations and authentic occurrences and often utilizes an unknown cast” (p. 1). Consequently, it is evident that these programs are immensely popular among adolescents.

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According to Chikafa and Matweke (2015), “reality television is proven to be a popularity among young people, particularly those between the ages of 18 and 25” (p. 1). Due to their entertainment value, reality television exposes viewers to a variety of unanticipated problems, making them both interesting and enticing.

Due to the increasing popularity of this style of performance, television networks are continuously searching for new reality shows to fill the hole. As diverse lifestyles proliferate and demand for satellite and cable televisions develops, especially in big cities, according to Sarpong (2018), “local TV companies have been driven to adopt numerous TV formats of popular western programs in order to remain competitive in terms of ratings” (p. 3). Aside from their entertainment value, it is crucial to evaluate the impact of viewing reality television performances on its viewers due to their popularity and public demand. Therefore, the producers’ ability to combine the educational and entertaining needs of their audiences is essential to the success and sustained support of this developing performance genre. According to Patrice Pavis (2006), “the role of the researcher is to adopt an analysis model that combines production and reception aesthetics and studies how they interact dialectically, or to evaluate both the production’s anticipated reception and the relationship between that production and the spectators’ behavior during the reception process” (pp. 26–27). This study will investigate the cultural effects of Big Brother Naija (BBN), a renowned Nigerian reality television show.

The BBNaija housemates are compelled to coexist while being cut off from the outside world and constantly observed on television. According to the conditions of the competition, the grand prize is awarded to the final contestant who avoids elimination. Cameras record competitors conversing freely while engaging in activities such as dancing competitions, doing Big Brother’s assignments, and going about their regular lives. Alabi (2017) asserts on the Africa Magic website that participants utilize the diary room or confession room to reflect on their own and others’ conduct. “People feel a range of recognizable and intriguing emotions in the house, including happiness, irritation, disappointment, worry, friendship, opportunity, and love” (p. 1). The manner in which a roommate responds to these feelings determines how other roommates and viewers regard that individual’s decision to remain in the house. The house also offers a selection of alcoholic beverages, food, and indoor entertainment of the highest caliber. Therefore, even if eviction is inevitable, no roommate will consent to it.

Despite the fact that the concept's originality has been widely lauded, Big Brother Africa's arrival on the African market has elicited a wide range of reactions. Despite the reactions of critics of all ideologies to the way it handles entertainment and cultural concerns, "few people are able to avoid watching it. Some have even questioned the credibility of the reality show" (Mudzanire et al. 2016, p. 74). Consequently, it is difficult to overlook the threat that this type of reality television entertainment poses to the morals and values of a substantial percentage of Nigeria's population, especially the youth. This type of performance threatens the moral and cultural underpinnings of the nation. This essay addresses the moral degeneration caused by the hybridization of Nigerian culture, as well as the alarming degradation of Nigerian moral and ethical norms brought on by immoral and unethical entertainment.

The "hybrid generation" perceives the performance as a place of delight, self-discovery, and indulgence, whereas autochthons of African culture view it as demeaning to their cultural history. The vanguard of African moral norms views the program as a covert instrument of cultural imperialism, resulting in the breakdown of African morality, but the "culturally ignorant" see nothing but fun and fulfillment. (Mudzanire et al. 2016, p. 76)

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CULTIVATION THEORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY THEORY

The "cultivation theory" examines the long-term effects of television viewing on viewers. Gerbner wrote in 1969, "Cultivation is a strategy for evaluating the impact of television viewing on beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes" (p. 438). "It is a sociocultural theory about how television influences the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values of viewers," he explains (Gerbner 2002, p. 2). The longer the viewers "live" in a medium,

the more likely they are to accept the depiction of social reality on television. "According to the cultivation hypothesis, the more individuals watch television, the more likely they are to adopt a view of reality that resembles television's depiction of reality" (Gerbner 2002, p. 2). Additionally, Gerbner et al. (2002) claimed that "the more inconspicuous television develops, the longer we will live with it" (p. 1). This reveals that the more individuals watch television, the less they recognize that its material is fabricated.

According to the argument, television constitutes a threat since it has the potential to impact people's moral standards and broad worldviews rather than a particular viewpoint on a single subject. Several concepts, such as narrative storytelling, television's symbolic role, television attributes, the cultural model, the creation of a value system, the multidirectional process, and cultural indicators, serve as the foundation for the theory.

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Thus, prior to the period of George Gerbner, numerous theories centered on how performances affected audiences. The theory of Gerbner, on the other hand, is applicable to this study because it goes deeply into the nurturing potential of television watchers.

The accumulation of television viewing leads to a sort of incidental learning called as cultivation. The individual's mental image of the socially practical status of values, population features, and the countless cultural standards shared by the classes, categories, and persons of the society is based on what they see on the screen. (Moshara 2015, p. 2)

According to cultural specialists, those who watch a great deal of television are more inclined to share the messages and worldview of television (Shanahan and Morgan 1999, p. 17).

The cultivation hypothesis, which is concerned with how television influences viewers, lays a greater focus on self-identification or a sense of

belonging to a self-confirming group than the cultural identity theory. In terms of behavior, communication, psychology, and sociology, this indicates the extent to which an individual is a cultural representative. In addition, it takes into account the meanings, values, customs, and beliefs utilized to interact with the outside world. Consequently, it is assumed that a group's language, attire, cuisine, and artistic expression must serve as a way of identification. While Gerbner's concept does not apply to this study, it contributes to the controversy surrounding the allegation that Nigerians who watch BBN reality television show on a regular basis may develop mental pictures and physiological arousals, hence lowering their moral standards. Using students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, as a case study, the validity of this hypothetical assumption is tested. The BBNaija reality show, which strives to showcase Nigerian culture, should not include activities that oppress the native culture of the public; rather, it should be a place where the native culture of the populace is respected and promoted. The cultural identity hypothesis supports this.

BBN AND REALITY TELEVISION SHOWS IN NIGERIA

Currently, reality television programs are prominent in the entertainment sector. In Nigeria, reality television programs such as West African Idol, Gulder Ultimate Search, Amstel Malta Box Office, MTN Project Fame, and Maltina Street Dance Africa have gained popularity. One such program is the highly respected Big Brother reality TV series, which is recognized as the largest reality television program in Nigerian history. According to a Backup Author quoted by The Nation, it is one of the largest reality shows ever devised, with various countries doing their own versions (no page). Undoubtedly, Nigeria is not immune to the Big Brother obsession. In 2006, M-Net launched the Nigerian version of the program, ushering in a new era of reality television in the country. Reality television has the ability to launch an individual to fame. The Kardashians and their 2007 reality television series *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* are a prime example. They are known as America's most famous family, and have amassed a vast global empire through a series of lucrative sponsorships and merchandise deals.

Some of Nigeria's most famous personalities have emerged from reality television. Iyanya, the 2008 winner of MTN Project Fame, is currently one of Nigeria's most popular and sought-after performers. After placing second in the inaugural West Africa Idol competition, Omawumi Megbele

soared to stardom. O.C. Ukeje is without a doubt the most well-known actor to emerge from a Nigerian reality television show. Ukeje's winning of the Amstel Malta Box Office (AMBO) prize paved the way for his acting career. Before entering the Big Brother Africa home, Uti Nwachukwu participated in the prestigious Next Movie Star competition. Uti is now well-known and co-hosts the popular African magic show Jara, in addition to organizing various events. Big Brother Nigeria returned with a new moniker after ten years since today's youngsters desire fame and television appearances. Many individuals are glad to have something to entertain them for the next three months despite their worries regarding the return of what they perceive to be a controversial show.

Big Brother Africa, an African adaptation of the iconic Big Brother television series, is commonly cited as the basis for Big Brother Naija. Big Brother was inspired by George Orwell's 1984 novel "Fictional Dystopia Oceania," in which he envisioned a society with permanent surveillance. Big Brother was the name of the dictatorial ruler in the book who watched over the citizens of Oceania, and his terrible motto was "Big Brother is watching you." "Big Brother debuted in the Netherlands in 1999, but it wasn't until 2003 that it arrived in Africa. After nine seasons, the program was unexpectedly canceled" (Clayton-Miller 2005, p. 45). The Big Brother Naija show returned to the airwaves in 2017 after a decade-long absence for unknown reasons. Due to the expansion of satellite television in Africa, it has now captured the attention of the Nigerian audience and has become an annual event.

The winner of the second season of "See Gobe," which debuted on January 22, 2017 and continued for 78 days, was awarded \$25 million in cash and a brand-new SUV. More than 170 million votes were cast during the third season of "Double Wahala," with Miracle Igbokwe emerging triumphant. This study focuses on the most current episode, "Lock-down," which aired in 2020 and featured 20 housemates. It was the season with the highest viewership and ratings, as over 220 million votes were cast by fans across numerous platforms. In addition, the housemates of this season are more well-known than those of prior seasons. Many individuals have shared their opinions on the Big Brother Nigeria reality program. Others believe that "the show displays indecent activities which are in direct contravention to Nigerian cultural values and the Nigerian Broadcasting Code" (NBC 2017, p.7), including nudity, vulgarity, alcoholism, and sex, among others.

BBNAIJA AND CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION

Numerous individuals have condemned the BBNaija reality program, notably specific housemate activities deemed to be under the moral norms of Africans, especially Nigerians. The promotion of more foreign cultures and the subjugation of Nigerians' distinctive cultural values are two frequent complaints of the BBNaija program. According to Mudzanire et al. (2016),

Others, such as the “hybrid generation,” view the festival as an opportunity for enjoyment, self-discovery, and indulgence. According to the progenitor of African ethics, the endeavor undermines African principles by serving as a conduit for cultural imperialism. (p. 76)

Hence, in order to appeal to the conscience of a wider audience, the Nigerian culture suffers a hybridization.

In Nigeria, cultural hybridization refers to the presentation of two distinct cultures centered on Western ideas. “Examining the national or cultural identity of a Postcolonial immigrant in the West requires abandoning the traditional notion of culture and examining it from a global viewpoint” (Shah 2016, p. 80). This definition is inadequate because it lacks a basis or starting point. The assumption that culture is “holistic” has been rejected by psychologists. According to Julian and Kornblum (1986), culture is “that blend of behavioral standards and inspirations that generates conduct, sustains existing behavior, or stimulates future behavior irrespective of situational incentives and constraints” (p. 222). This notion implies that cultural elements can change and that, unless the entire culture changes, behavior results from the interaction of cultural and environmental factors, a phenomenon known as cultural hybridization today.

As a result, cultural hybridization happens when people merge characteristics of a foreign culture with the culture of a particular people, resulting in a new method for people to show identities that differ from those for which they are recognized. “Cultural premises are the patterns of conduct or beliefs that audiences have been taught by their culture or society” (Larson 1992, p. 122). “These patterns of behavior or beliefs are almost articles of religion for them” (Shah 2016, p. 147). The competitors on the reality program BBNaija exhibit qualities that are not typical of

Nigeria's indigenous population. BBNaija was filled with immoral activities that are not typical of Nigerian society, given that morality is one of its identifying characteristics.

ANALYSIS OF UNAFRICAN ACTS IN THE BBNAIJA 5 “LOCKDOWN”

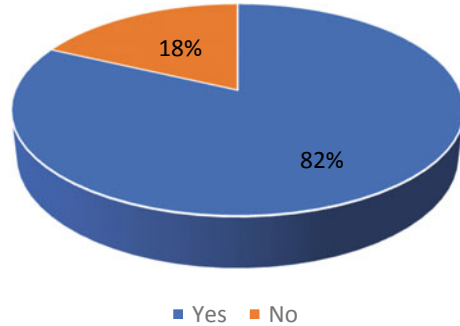
Using the *mise en scène* method, an examination of Big Brother Naija 2020 reveals a variety of unethical and immoral activities that are unAfrican to the Nigerian people and, therefore, unAfrican to the Nigerian people. These unethical and immoral activities will be investigated using photographic evidence from the program as part of this study component. In order to support this visual analysis, 100 copies of a questionnaire were distributed to undergraduate students at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka in order to solicit their feedback on the activities and performances of the BBNaija Season 5 housemates, especially the immoral and unethical acts discussed below.

Kissing

Every single housemate in the 2020 season of BBNaija was caught kissing at some point, causing viewers to question whether the contestants are there to entertain the public or to mirror true happenings. In contrast, kissing is a learnt aspect of African culture. Kissing and public displays of affection are now regarded as indicators of promiscuity in Nigeria. The housemates kiss each other in public to get to know one another in order to prevent an early eviction, which is considered a promiscuous act on this program.

According to the majority of respondents, housemates kissing on the BBNaija show is immoral and undermines their moral upbringing as Nigerians, which is backed up by evidence (see Fig. 11.1). This reveals that a sizable proportion of Nigerian teenagers, as revealed by the housemates on the BBNaija reality show, are opposed to the act of kissing.

Fig. 11.1
 Respondents' view on
 Kissing as seen in
 BBNaija Season 5
 (Source Authors'
 compilation)



Research Question 1: Does Kissing as Seen in the BBNaija Show Look Immoral to You?

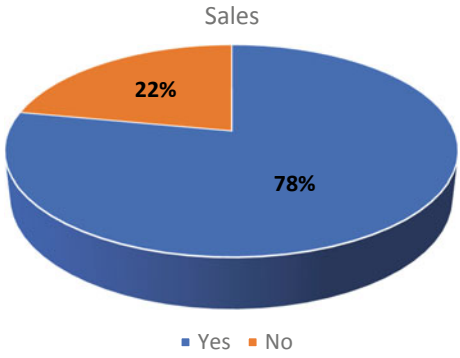
Figure 11.1 shows that among the 100 respondents that responded to this survey, 82 (82%) of the respondents claimed that kissing as seen in the BBNaija show looks immoral to them while 18 (18%) respondents claimed it is not immoral which highly reflects that kissing as evident in the BBNaija show is immoral. However, as it became evident to the housemates that everyone came into the house with the same mindset, they moved into another game plan which is more immoral than the initial kissing.

Indecent Dressings

Another example of foreign culture in the BBNaija program is indecent dressing. Given that competitors for shows such as BBNaija are selected from around the nation, they should not be utilized to promote immoral behavior. Through such activities, the Nigerian culture should be encouraged, particularly in terms of apparel. Although the organizers arranged performances in which applicants were expected to dress in the attire of numerous tribes from across the nation, this did not accomplish much because no safeguards were made to prevent the display of unclean apparel within the home. In an effort to corrupt the minds of the audience, contestants frequently wore miniskirts and other revealing clothes.

While dressing indecently has become a tradition among a segment of the Nigerian community, it cannot be forgotten that the majority of respondents to this poll believe that doing so is an unethical behavior that

Fig. 11.2
Respondents' view on
Indecent dressings as
seen in BBNaija Season
5 (*Source* Authors'
compilation)



should be removed from the television show. Figure 11.4 depicts a chart displaying the survey of respondents' responses (see Fig. 11.2).

Research Question 2: Do Indecent Dressings as Seen in the BBNaija Show Look Immoral to You?

Figure 11.2 shows that among the 100 respondents that responded to this survey, 78 (78%) of the respondents claimed that nudity, as seen in the BBNaija show looks immoral to them while 22 (22%) claimed that it does not look immoral. This is an indication that the display of indecent dressings as seen in the BBNaija Season 5 negates the moral and ethical standard of a large section of the Nigerian TV audience. Yet, series of campaigns have been aired on how indecent dressings should be jettisoned in the society as it is capable of leading to rape and other sexual assaults on the wearer. Among these campaigns is the one carried out by the Lagos state government where Dr. Charles Obaze, a psychologist, notes that when a lady dressed to seduce in the public, she might be susceptible to rape. "We see indecent dressings all over the places; social functions, weddings, churches ladies that are almost nude in the name of fashion; this behaviour promotes rape and violence against women" (The Nation Newspaper 2021, p. 3). These acts before the show have been creating social sickness among youths in the country and this show has done nothing but to promote it the more at the expense of our cultural identity.

Lying

Lying is another unethical act observed in the BBNaija reality program. According to Isenberg, as described in Zalta et al. (2022), “a liar is someone who makes a statement with the intention of persuading another person that they believe it” (p. 2). Consequently, it is evident that the liar is attempting to deceive others by making a false claim. In Nigeria, lying is considered unethical. In Nigeria, lying is regarded as dishonest, and the culture firmly condemns it. The behavior is so despised by society that proven liars run the risk of being isolated and outcast. To make false comments about oneself is one thing, but to do so in public is quite another. However, lying is an undesirable practice in all levels of Nigerian culture. In their struggle for the cash prize, the contestants of BBNaija 2020 relied heavily on deceit. They were self-centered and indifferent to their housemates, not just because they lied about themselves but also because they told each other life-threatening lies. When asked if lying on the BBNaija program is immoral and unethical, the majority of respondents disapproved of how housemates lied about their personalities before entering the house and how many of them lied inside the house. Figure 11.3 demonstrates

Research Question 3: Does Lying as Seen in the BBNaija Show Look Immoral to You?

Figure 11.3 shows that among the 100 respondents that responded to this survey, 71 (71%) of the respondents claimed that lying as seen in the BBNaija show is immoral to them while 29 (29%) respondents claimed it is not which shows that these acts seen on the BBNaija show are highly

Fig. 11.3
Respondents' view on
Lying as seen in
BBNaija Season 5
(Source Authors'
compilation)

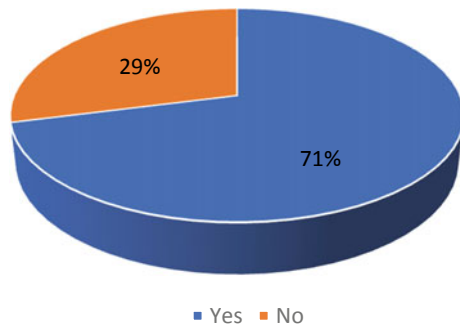
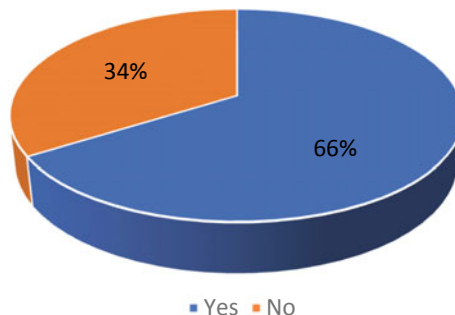


Fig. 11.4
 Respondents' view on
 Nudity as seen in
 BBNaija Season 5
 (Source Authors'
 compilation)



immoral. To this effect, incorporating this act of dishonesty into Gerbner's cultivation theory, viewers may conclude that lying can help someone to become wealthy or fulfill his/her aspirations.

Nudity

Another instance of immoral and unethical behavior in the BBNaija reality program is nudity. In contemporary Nigerian society, displaying one's body to the public is deemed impolite and unethical. Despite the fact that displaying one's body in public is not intrinsically wrong, the public always questions the sanity of individuals who do so. Throughout the BBNaija 2020 season, the housemates showed their nakedness multiple times. Despite the cameramen's efforts to decrease viewer consumption of these acts, the male housemates' aid with the female roommates' dressing and the swimming activities drew additional attention to their nudity. The following question is whether contemporary Nigerian culture permits strangers or persons of different origins to bathe together; this is foreign to the majority of the populace.

To support this, responses from respondents show that many of the students see some of the activities displayed on the BBNaija show as immoral and negates their moral upbringing. Figure 11.4 shows the students' response when asked whether Nudity as seen in the BBNaija show look immoral to them.

Research Question 4: Does Nudity as Seen in the BBNaija Show Look Immoral to You?

Figure 11.4 shows that 66 (66%) of the respondents claimed that nudity, as seen in the BBNaija show looks immoral to them while 34 (34%) claimed it does not look immoral which greatly attests to the fact that nudity in the BBNaija show is highly immoral. To corroborate this, nudity did not go well with Yaro (2018) who condemned the show by showing dissatisfaction with how the show allows youth to expose their bodies. In his words, he states that “unashamed youths too will start displaying their bodies which should be their private part and property of their husband and wife. The thing is killing the minds of the young generation that is coming up” (p. 3).

Fighting

Due to a lack of mutual understanding, individuals engage in conflict. Fighting is inevitable among humans, but society places a higher value on self-control than on fighting itself. As a result, Nigerian culture opposes public fighting vehemently since it damages the reputations of the combatants and their immediate families, particularly when adults are involved. Due to multiple confrontations between roommates during and after the program, however, public fighting was one of the immoral behaviors that characterized the 2020 season of the BBNaija reality show. Lucy, TolaniBaj, Kaisha, Laycon, and Erica, along with others, fought to varied degrees inside the house. Similarly, rumor became an integral part of the show throughout this season.

According to the survey, the majority of respondents did not view the fighting on BBNaija Season 5 as immoral or unethical. As a result, they were disappointed in the show’s amount of violence.

Research Question 5: Does Fighting as Seen in the BBNaija Show Look Immoral to You?

The result from the Fig. 11.5 is from the survey conducted and it indicates that 78 (78%) respondents claimed that fighting as seen in the BBNaija show looks immoral to them while 22 (22%) respondents claimed it is not which brings to the conclusion that fighting as evident in the program is highly immoral.

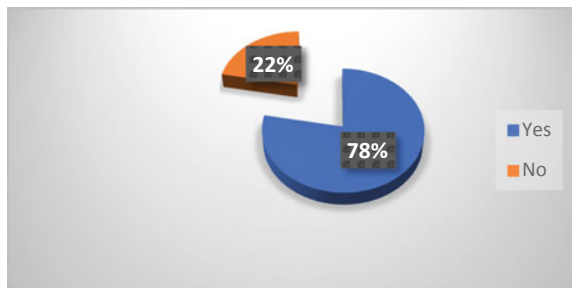


Fig. 11.5 Respondents' view on Fighting as seen in BBNaija Season 5 (*Source* Authors' compilation)

CONCLUSION

This study concurs with Yaro's conclusion that BBNaija has reached a level of maturity where culture should be emphasized rather than minimized, notwithstanding the show's entertainment value. This research aims to investigate the relationship between culture and entertainment, as well as the consequences of BBNaija's Westernized content on young people, in addition to bridging the gap between cultural degeneration and the production of BBNaija content. Despite the fact that BBNaija entertains and encourages togetherness among Nigerians in the midst of repeated cries for segregation, there is a severe conflict of interest regarding the accuracy of the show's portrayal of Nigerian cultural norms and values. According to studies, BBNaija features a lot of foreign cultures that are alien to Nigerians and have a propensity to erode Nigerian cultural values and standards.

According to research undertaken for this study, the BBNaija reality television show has distorted the essential values of the Nigerian population, including decency, sexuality, morality, dressing, language, respect for elders and indigenous cultures, and perceptions of women and violence against them. BBNaija may unwittingly promote unmarried young people to cohabit, in addition to rape, gangsterism, and other forms of misbehavior, as well as teenage pregnancy, the spread of STDs, abortion, and other immoral actions. Inadvertently, encouraging immoral behaviors such as public body exposure, unrestricted alcohol consumption, lying, and gossiping are other potential problems, as is teaching an excessive number of immoral activities such as lying and gossiping.

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PART III

Socio-Political, Cultural and Economic
Diplomacy



Big Brother Naija: A Catalyst for Nigeria's Orange Economy

Dare Leke Idowu  and *Olusola Ogunnubi* 

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian cultural and creative industries (CCI) boast of enormous creative resources with significant orange economic value and multi-dimensional impacts on individuals, the Nigerian private sector, and indeed the Nigerian state. The multi-dimensional economic effects of the Nigerian CCI are evident in its invaluable contributions to Nigeria's

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Gross Domestic Product (GDP), youth empowerment, and creation of job opportunities for many unemployed Nigerians. Apart from engendering the development of the Nigerian private sector, the Nigerian CCI has a laudable value-chain effect and celebrity-making potential that arguably pave the way for numerous endorsements and contracts awarded to iconic stars in the Nigerian CCI. Despite these and other non-material contributions of the Nigerian CCI such as its rich cultural and educative contents, the potentials of the industries are relatively under tapped and underutilized.

The Nigerian CCI is a multibillion-dollar sector with enormous financial fortunes, wealth, and job creation prospects capable of turbocharging economic development if properly harnessed with the appropriate policy, human capital development efforts, and financial aids. Nigeria's resource rich CCI is also capable of alleviating poverty and diversifying Nigeria's unidirectional economy. It is intriguing that despite the minuscule governmental support to optimize its operations, productivity, and profitability, the contributions of the CCI to Nigeria's economy are perpetually on the increase. Existing data indicates that the Nigerian creative industry contributed US\$16.4 billion and \$11.8 billion to Nigeria's total GDP in 2015 and 2016, respectively (Nwankwo 2018). In 2020, the Nigerian CCI contributes N730 Billion, or \$1.8 billion to Nigeria's GDP (Sasu 2022). The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sectors contributed NGN239 billion to Nigeria's GDP in 2016 (PwC 2017). Motion pictures and music production alone contributed \$4 billion to Nigeria's GDP in 2016 (The National Bureau of Statistics 2016). Nollywood added N270 billion to Nigeria's GDP in 2016 (Akinyele 2020). While the Nigerian media and entertainment industry generated \$4.46 billion in 2018 (Agbakosi 2021). In 2020, the motion picture and music recording contributed \$780 billion to the Nigerian economy, telecommunications and information services contributed N8.5 trillion, publishing contributed N18.8 million, and the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector contributed N158 million (Sasu 2022; The Sun Nigeria 2021).

Apart from its significant contributions to Nigeria's GDP, the Nigerian CCI boost remarkable employment prospects and job creation prospects for the teeming population of unemployed Nigerians. Amid Nigeria's worrisome unemployment rate which increased from 27.1% in the fourth quarter of 2020 to 33.3% in the first quarter of 2021 (Emejo 2020; Sasu 2022), the Nigerian CCI is adjudged the second largest employer of labor

in Nigeria following only after the Agricultural sector (Jobberman 2021; Oluwole 2021).

Regrettably, despite its laudable contributions in boosting Nigeria's GDP, employment opportunities and job creation prospects, the Nigerian CCI is a relatively untapped and undervalued sector that is yet to receive sufficient governmental support, financial aids, and policies requisite for engendering its development and optimization especially in boosting Nigeria's ailing economy and serving as a viable tool of diplomacy. One major reason for the underutilization of the Nigerian CCI and the insufficient governmental support is the paucity of data and policy documents on each subsector of the Nigerian CCI. The paucity of data on each subsector of the Nigerian CCI makes it almost impossible to outline the economic potential of the different subsectors of Nigeria's CCI with a view to proposing content-specific policies requisite for optimizing productivity and profitability. The British Council (2013) also bemoaned the dearth of studies that unravels the "character, size and contributions of the cultural industry to the Nigerian economy (British Council, 2013, p7)." This informed the mapping of the Nigerian CCI into ten categories or subsectors which are the:

home video/film/television and radio, performing arts (theater, festival, carnival, dance, drama, standup comedy), Music, visual art and animation (photography, painting, graphic design, drawing, sculpture, etc.), Tourism and hospitality (museums and monument, cuisine, night clubs, events managements, etc.), Arts and crafts, fashion and design, Publishing (literature, book fairs, e-resources, etc.), Architecture (interior décor, landscaping, etc.), Advertising. (The British Council 2013, p. 10)

Other major challenges are the dearth of data on the actual material and non-material contributions of each subsector of the CCI to the Nigerian economy and the failure of the Nigerian foreign policy experts to identify and establish the utility of Nigerian cultural and creative goods as non-traditional tools of diplomacy. Apart from Nollywood and the Nigerian music industry, there is meager data on the actual contributions of the Nigerian digital comedy industries, fashion, and more recently reality TV shows including Big Brother Naija, to the Nigerian economy. Furthermore, apart from Nollywood, the Nigerian Afrobeat, and the arts (Ogunnubi and Isike 2017; Tella 2017), scholarly articles that unpack the prospects of other sectors of the Nigerian creative industries as tools of

diplomacy are scanty. A recent study by Idowu and Ogunnubi (2022) provided some insight into this area of study by establishing the soft power and diplomatic prospects engrained in the global admiration of the Nigerian digital comic skits. Undeniably, this paucity of data largely obscures and undermines the real potential of Nigeria's booming CCI. As we argue in this chapter, this signals the need for the scholarly interrogation of the financial and non-material contributions of the Nigerian CCI to the Nigeria State.

The Big Brother Naija (BBNaija) reality television show with a verified record of over 40 million views across Africa (Plaquad 2021) is undoubtedly Nigeria's most-watched reality TV Show and one of the most viable sectors of the Nigerian CCI with a widespread and long-term impact on the Nigerian economy. Its short- and long-term economic impacts are widely felt by housemates, producers, content creators, service providers, the private sector, artists, and organizers. Although the BBNaija show debuted in 2006, there is no single scholarly article that examines its creative economic capability and potential as a catalyst for Nigeria's Orange Economy. This is unsurprising because the major attention of investors, the Nigerian private sector, the government, and the academia largely center on Nollywood and the Nigerian Afrobeat music. Hence, the meager data on Nigeria's creative economy as a whole center on the contributions of Nollywood and Afrobeat to Nigeria's GDP. For this reason, this study builds on the existing literature on CCI and Orange economy to interrogate and establish the probable creative economy of the BBNaija show and especially its contributions to the Nigerian economy. Several studies have already focused on the negative aspects of Big Brother that are often uncritical and fail to establish any value about the BBN show. In this study, the authors take a different turn by looking at the connection between the Show and Nigeria's Orange Economy. Is BBN making any contribution to Nigeria's nascent Orange Economy? If so, why is this contribution important for Nigeria's creative industry.

THE ORANGE ECONOMY OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (CCI)

Cultural and creative industries emerged as a buzzword with the increasing global recognition of the enormous contributions of the creative economy to the national economy of states and the world economy. The origin of the term creative industries is traced to Australia

from where it extended to the United Kingdom (DCA 1994; Department of Culture Media and Sports 1998). The coinage of cultural industries is credited to two German Philosophers and Critical theory scholars named Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer in 1948 (Adorno and Bernstein 2020). Although the origin of CCI is traceable to the 1940s, it did not emerge as an issue of scholarly and policy scrutiny until the 1990s and 2000s (Flew 2017).

The creative industries are commonly referred to as cultural and creative industries, “the creative industry, or the creative sector” (Boix-Domènech and Rausell-Köster 2018, p. 21). Although ‘creative industries’ is a popular term, it lacks a generally accepted definition. The existing definitions of creative industries are hinged on the emphasis authors place on the features of the term (Daubaraitė and Startienė 2015). Following the debate on the meaning and content of the creative industries in mid-to-late 1990s in Britain, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport described the creative industries as ‘those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2001, p. 5). The Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (1998) further defined ‘advertising, architecture, art and antiques, market crafts, design designer, fashion, films, and video music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio as those activities that have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent.’ Creative industries constitute those activities that “range from folk art, festivals, music, books, paintings and performing arts to more technology-intensive subsectors such as the film industry, broadcasting, digital animation, and video games, and more service-oriented fields such as architectural and advertising services” (UNCTAD 2008, p. 6). Creative industries also refer to “those industries that are based on cultural values, cultural diversity, individual and/or collective creativity, skills and talent with the potential to generate innovation, wealth and jobs through the creation of social and economic value, in particular from intellectual property” (Morgano and Ehler, 2016, p. 10). Cultural industries constitute the industries that create, produce, commodify, and commercialize intangible cultural content, goods, and services which are often protected by copyright (Moore 2014). Cultural industries account for the aspect of the creative economy that deals with the creation, commercial reproduction, and largescale distribution of cultural works

(Tremblay, 2015). Cultural industries have developed over time through the appropriation of the proceeds of digital information and communication technology, and it currently incorporates tech-driven production processes to engender largescale production and distribution to reach the global markets. Creativity is an innate human resource with invaluable economic potential for generating employment and creating wealth capable of boasting the personal economy of artists, the national economy of States, and the global economy. Creativity serves as a leveler because it holds a competitive advantage for less developed economies susceptible to natural, political, and economic constraints characteristic of the global market. Evidently, the CCI embodies those sectors of the modern economy which is based on the appropriation of the creative potentials of humans in producing and distributing valuable cultural products with significant commercial value derived through intellectual property or direct sale (Flew 2017).

Globally, the CCI has emerged as a booming economic sector and a major catalyst for turbocharging economic growth, job creation, poverty eradication, and human development. The European Union underscored the immense economic potential of creative industries in boosting GDP growth, creating jobs, fostering development, economic growth, and social well-being, and promoting inclusive growth (European Union 2017). The CCI creates jobs and wealth globally by harnessing and exploiting intellectual property rights and the innate creative talents and skills of creative individuals (Boccardelli 2016). The creative economy which consists of the CCI generates annual revenue of \$2,250 billion and global exports of over US\$250 billion (UNESCO 2017). The CCI contributed \$2.3 trillion to the global economy in 2013 (UNESCO 2015). The G20 Insights estimated that the contribution of the CCI to the global economy could amount to \$985 billion and account for 10% of the global GDP before 2023. Despite the loss of 10 million creative jobs and the dwindling of digital revenue because of the ravaging effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Bateman 2022), “it is estimated that an overall US\$750bn contraction of the gross value added by cultural and creative industries has been experienced globally in 2020” (UNESCO 2021 paragraph 4, line 5).

The CCI accounts for the creation of about 30 million jobs globally (UNESCO 2017). The United Nations estimates that the creative industries contribute \$2.25 trillion and not less than 30 million jobs to the global economy (The Policy Cycle 2021). Arts and Culture contributed

\$876.7 billion to the GDP of the United States in 2020, created 4.6 million jobs, and provided \$446 million in wages (National Assembly of States Art Agency 2020). It also accounts for over 10% of the GDP of the United States and Brazil (Inter-American Development Bank 2021).

In the European Union, it is estimated that the creative industries create 12 million jobs (constitute the third-largest employer of labor), account for 500 billion euros annually, and account for 5.3% of the total GDP of the European Union (The Policy Cycle 2021). The regional economic bloc has also underscored the potential of the creative industries in serving as a catalyst for innovation and economic transformation (Boix-Domènech and Rausell-Köster 2018). Beyond their well-known job creation and production capabilities, creative industries spur technological advancement that promotes long-term development in the European Union (Boix-Domènech and Rausell-Köster 2018). Foray et al. (2012) aver those creative services; a subset of creative industries could foster smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the European Union.

China's creative industries contributed over \$460 billion (4% of GDP) to its booming economy in 2020 (The Policy Cycle 2021). In the United Kingdom, the creative industries contributed £115.9 billion or 5.9% to the UK economy in 2019 (Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport 2021). In Africa, the 2018 Economic Mapping Study of South Africa's creative industries indicates that the industries contributed R63 billion (1.5%) to South Africa's GDP in 2016 and R74.4 billion (1.7%) in 2018 (South African Cultural Observatory 2020). South Africa's cultural goods exported is valued at US\$446.5million in 2018 (South African Cultural Observatory 2020). Nigeria has a booming and robust CCI with notable economic value. The contributions of the of CCI to the Nigerian GDP is valued at US\$16.4 billion and \$11.8 billion in 2015 and 2016, respectively (Nwankwo 2018; Agbakosi 2021). Two major subsectors of the Nigerian CCI; motion picture and music industries contributed about 730 billion Naira to Nigeria's GDP in 2020. Deducing from these available data, it is indisputable that the CCI possesses verifiable global economic value capable of spurring sustainable development.

BIG BROTHER NAIJA (BBNAIJA) SHOW: 'WASTEFUL ENTERTAINMENT' OR AN UNDERUTILIZED CREATIVE ECONOMY?

The creative economy of the BBNaija show is engrained in the money amounting to millions generated through votes, employment creation, sponsorship, and the value-chain effects of the show and endorsement for ex-housemates. One very intriguing component of the BBN show is the power given to viewers and fans to evict their less preferred housemates or prevent the eviction of their favorite housemates by casting votes. The 2018 Season 3 of the BBN Show 'Double Wahala' received over 170 million votes which were done through online and SMS voting platforms. If all the over 170 million votes took place via the SMS platforms alone, organizers of the show would have accrued not less than N5.1 billion (170 million multiplied by N30). Voting in Season 4 'Pepper Dem Gang' of the BBN Show took place via the BBN 2019 voting websites (Mobile site and the desktop site) and SMS voting platform. The SMS voting platform allowed viewers and fans the liberty to vote for a single eviction up to 100 times and each vote attracts a charge of N30 only on one phone number. The BBN Season 4 'Pepper Dem Gang' had over 240 million votes. Assuming all the 240 million votes were SMS votes, organizers of the BBN show accrue not less than N7.2 billion from the votes apart from other channels. Laudably, the BBN Season 5 which received over 900,000 votes across all voting platforms is a clear indicator of the laudable economic prospects of the BBN show. Furthermore, apart from returns in form of brand sponsorship and equity of the BBNaija show, MultiChoice also generated a yet-to-be estimated revenue but taxable from the sale of decoders and subscriptions from first-time viewers activating subscriptions to gain access to voting for their preferred housemates (Plaqaad 2021).

Another indisputable economic contribution of the BBN to Nigeria's economy is the creation of different kinds of jobs for the teeming population of skillful but unemployed Nigerian youths. A recent research by Jobberman (2021) established that the Nigerian CCI employs millions of Nigerians and created new jobs in the Art, Entertainment, media, and other subsectors of the Nigerian CCI. As of 2021, the Nigerian creative industry employs over four million Nigerians and has the capacity to create additional 2.7 million jobs (Talmage-Rostron 2021; Oluwole 2021). Jobberman's report also indicates that about 4.2 million persons are currently employed across the Beauty and Lifestyle, Entertainment,

Media, Visual Arts, and Tourism and Hospitality subsectors of the Nigerian CCI (Jobberman 2021). The research also shows that the Nigerian CCI has the potential to create additional 2.7 million jobs by 2025 (Jobberman 2021).

MultiChoice, the organizers of the BBN show claim that since its inception, the BBNaija show has created over 10,000 creative jobs. John Ugbe, the Chief Executive of MultiChoice claims that ‘cumulatively over the years, Big Brother Naija has provided over 10,000 jobs for fashion designers, content creators, interior decorators, logistic companies, prop makers, make-up artists, photographers, housekeepers, carpenters, caterers, and many more’ (MultiChoice 2020). Beyond these, the BBNaija created jobs for accountants, ancillary and freelance staff, DJs, entertainers, videographers, producers, directors, digital marketers, social media content writers, service providers, janitors, sound and lighting experts, security, and vendors among others. Overwhelmed by the size of the crew members of the BBNaija #PepperDem season, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu with the Twitter handle @Ebuka uploaded a picture tagged “Just a few of the crew members who made the #PepperDem season work. It really does take a village...” (Obi-Uchendu 2019). Additional data indicates that over 1000 persons were employed in the production process of the BBN Season 6 ‘Shine Ya Eye’ edition alone (Plaquad 2021). MultiChoice’s John Ugbe further discloses that the BBN Season 6 created a total of 12,000 direct and indirect jobs (Plaquad 2021). Arguably, the BBNaija show has come to stay as an annual employer of labor in the Nigerian CCI. Beyond this, organizers of the BBNaija have imperceptibly empowered the BBNaija crew members to acquire skills and work experience no doubt putting them in a more vantage position to secure more lucrative gigs and negotiate a favorable pay when engaging in similar projects in the future (Olapoju 2019). For instance, Ebuka a former housemate has clung to several brand endorsements alongside different TV hosting gigs. He has also been the host of the last 5 seasons of the BBNaija show (Plaquad 2021).

Taking the BBNaija as a microcosm of the Nigerian CCI, it is deducible that if properly developed with appropriate public policies and financial support, the BBNaija and other subsectors of the Nigerian CCI are a viable tool for job creation and poverty alleviation (Fig. 12.1).

The implications of the production cost of the BBNaija TV for Nigeria’s economy is also worthy of mention. John Ugbe, the Chief Executive of MultiChoice reveals that the production cost of the BBNaija Season 5

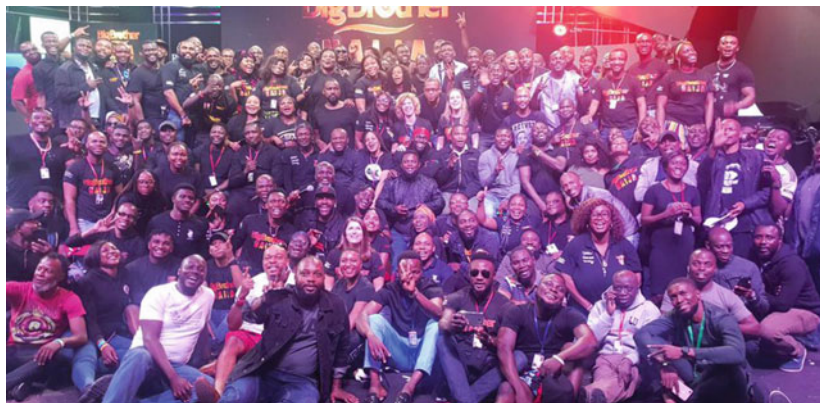


Fig. 12.1 Snapshot crew members of the BBNaija #PepperDem season (*Source* <https://twitter.com/Ebuka/status/1180483456406626305>)

is valued at N3.5bn while the Season 6 gulped 4.3 billion Naira (Plaquad 2021). A sizeable amount of the production cost went into earnings by Nigerians employed in the BBN production process. The 2020 #BBNaija house was constructed and furnished with N2.5 billion (Omokri 2020).

The capabilities of the BBNaija Show to catalyze and drive socio-economic development through advertisement, marketing, and promotion of visibility for the local brands and businesses owned by the organizer (MultiChoice), Nigerians, and sponsors of the show are worthy of note. The BBNaija has to its credit large debates about the show and housemates. It also generated a large volume of tweets and social media engagement that boasts of significant economic value for MultiChoice, brands, Nigerian businesses, and sponsors of the Show. By reason of its creative tasks and humor-loaded entertainment, the BBNaija has attracted over 40 million viewership and increased the virtual followership of the social media handles of the organizer, housemates, and sponsors of the Show. Unsurprisingly, the BBNaija became a social media sensation and consequently “trended No. 1 on Twitter’s global trends” in 2019 (Plaquad 2019, p. 26). The laudable social media engagement, online traffic, and viewership volume created by the BBNaija Show engendered the placement of adverts and the promotion of awareness for brands, products, and services. This arguably engenders increased visibility, popularity, turnover, and profitability for the organizer and sponsors of the Show. For instance,

a BBNaija Season 4 report by the Future of Work reveals that 214,388 Twitter accounts posted 6,223,189 tweets about the BBNaija housemates in 2019 (Future of Work 2019; Faniyan 2019). MultiChoice was very apt in exploiting the Show's increased viewership traffic and social media engagements as a leveler to boost earnings by creating different sponsorships opportunities for brands to create awareness and increase direct sales among the over 40 million viewers of the show. The top-ranked sponsorship levels created by MultiChoice are headline sponsors and associate sponsors who presumably pay sponsorship fees that amount to Billions of Naira. For instance, ABeg Technologies (a mobile payment application) purportedly paid a sponsorship fee of N2 Billion as the headline sponsor while Patricia (a secure payment platform) paid N1 Billion as an associate sponsor of the show in 2021 (Biggie 2021). The previous edition of the show featured Payporte as the headline sponsor for the 2017 and 2018 editions. Bet9ja took over as headline sponsors of the show in the 2019 edition of the show while Betway came top as the headline sponsors of the 2020 edition (Biggie 2021).

Similarly, seven brands; Bet9ja, Dano, Heritage Bank, Pepsi, Munchlt, and Oppo were mentioned in 206,905 tweets about the BBNaija show in 2019 (Olapoju 2020). In all, the Bet9ja received the highest mentions primarily because it was a title sponsor and supplier of the keenly contested game coins to the housemates (Olapoju 2020). Additionally, the sponsorship of prizes for the weekly tasks undertaken by housemates also promoted the increased visibility, social media mentions, and turnover of brands like Boom Play Music, Darling Hair, Eva, Forte, Gulder, Indomie, Innoson, Legend, Lumapil, Oppo, IVM, Jonnie Walker, Revolution Plus Property, Super Commando Energy Drink, Travelbeta, Zaron, and other notable brands among the over 40 million viewers of the BBNaija Show across Africa. Laudably, the increased visibility effects of the BBNaija Show translate into increased patronage, turnover, and revenue count which underpins the recurrent sponsorship of different activities of the show by these brands (Ogunnubi 2021). This position is substantiated by Plaquad report which indicates that not less than 55.7% of survey respondents indicate that "seeing a brand sponsor BBNaija influenced their patronage of the brand" (Plaquad 2021, p. 40). This arguably substantiates the efficacy of the sponsorship of BBN Show for sponsors and particularly for expanding the depths of Nigeria's creative and orange economy.

Corroborating this position is a recent report about ABeg, a tech payment app that experienced a skyrocketing increase in the download rate of its app. ABeg, the Headline Sponsor of the BBNaija Season 6 bankrolled some of the tasks executed by housemates and branded the BBNaija currency as ‘Abeg Naija.’ The tech payment app also decorated some sections of the BBNaija house with its logo and ran advertisements during the commercial breaks scheduled in the Show. In the aftermath of the BBNaija Season 6 show, ABeg “experienced an 8900% increase in app downloads moving from just 20,000 downloads at the start of the Big Brother Naija Season 6 show to 1.8 million app downloads” (Plaquad 2021: 39). Beyond the astronomical surge in acquisition numbers and sales experienced by brands, an increase in brand revenue also indicates an increase in taxes signifying an annual increase in the indirect economic contribution of the BBNaija show to Nigeria (Plaquad 2021). The creative economy of the BBNaija show is also exemplified in the astronomical increase in revenue accruable to telecommunications companies consequent upon regular airtime, data, DSTV, and GOtv subscription by viewers seeking to stream the BBNaija show and vote for favorite housemates.

Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (SMEs), vendors, and unpopular businesses were not left out in the visibility prospects and the sales boasting impact of the BBNaija show. Many of the SMEs, vendors, and unpopular businesses became suppliers of food, drinks, consumables, and branded wearables consumed daily by housemates. Deducing from this, the BBNaija provides a ready market for vendors, entrepreneurs, and business owners especially those in the fashion industry (Olapoju 2019). Unsurprisingly, vendors supplying fashion goods such as clothes, jewelry, and shoes used by housemates for special events and parties quickly became popular on social media and recurrently sold out their stock (Olapoju 2019) due to the increasing demand by the viewers of the BBNaija show. Arguably, this bandwagon effect of the BBNaija show in catalyzing increased demand for, and sales of fashion goods supplied for the use of the BBNaija housemates exemplifies the creative economy of the BBNaija show.

The BBNaija also has a remarkable celebrity-making potential that bolsters the positive public acceptance and adulation of ex-housemate who have thereafter experienced increased social media followership making them incontestable social media influencers who are widely sought after by brands seeking to popularize their businesses. A sample of

the social media followership increase experienced by BBNaija housemates indicates that the Instagram followership of Liquorose an ex-housemate rose to 1 million followers less than two weeks into the BBNaija Show. Similarly, Laycon's Instagram followership rose astronomically from 3,835 followers prior to the show to 1.1 million followers in three months (BellaNaija 2020). As of 12 May 2022, Laycon has 3.5m followers on his Instagram @itslaycon handle. Terseer Waya who had 2,522 followers on his @kiddwaya handle before the BBNaija show recorded a remarkable increase to 938,000 followers in less than three months (BellaNaija 2020) and now has 1.5 million followers as of 12 May 2022. Erica Nlewedim had 23,000 followers on her Instagram handle @ericanlewedim before becoming a BBN Housemate. Her followership rose to 905,000 in less than three months (BellaNaija 2020). Erica currently has 3.2 million Instagram followers as of May 12, 2022. Rebecca Nengi Hampson who had 12,700 followers on her @nengiofficial before becoming a BBNaija housemate experienced an Instagram followership increase to 902,000 followers in less than three months (BellaNaija 2020). As of May 12, 2022, Nengi currently has 3.1 million followers on Instagram.

Consequent upon the celebrity-making effects of the BBNaija show and increased social media followership by Nigerian and foreign viewership of the show, many ex-housemates have emerged as brand and product ambassadors for brands such as GetFit Technologies, Patricia NG, House of Lunettes (Anita Natacha Akide), Campari, Mypaddi, Bobo Food and Beverages (Alex Asogwa), the United Nations Education Ambassador (Bisola Aiyeola), Remy Martin (Ike Onyema and Kim Oprah), Marymic beauty skincare brand (Beatrice Agba Nwaji), Nigeria Distilleries Limited (Tobi Bakare), Wanimglow skincare company (Yerimene Abraham Saibakumo), Fair and White international beauty brand (Jackie Lureino Bent), Omnichannel fashion store (Omotolani Shobajo), PayPorte Global System (Omotolani Shobajo and Esther Agunbiade), Diamond Bank, Globacom, Hollandia, Jumia, Nature's Gentle Touch Peak Milk, Stanbic IBTC Bank, Travel Beta and Zaron Cosmetics (Erica Nlewedim), Lucious Virgin Hair, Urban Vibes London, Mapia Tea, and VSP Botanics (Dorathy Lynda Bachor), Itel, Boz Jewelries, Get Glow, Guinness Nigeria, Remy Martin and Senior Special Adviser to Bayelsa State Governor (Nengi Rebecca Hampson) Ciroc and Mr Taxi (Mercy Eke), Oppo, Orijin, Gotv (Olamilekan Agbleshe), GoTv, Jenny's Glow, Binance Africa, GetFit, Techno Mobile, Nigson Group, Hero Lager (White Money). The net effect of the appointment of BBNaija

ex-housemates as brand ambassadors bolsters economic fortunes for ex-housemates who are paid to use their social capital and attraction of their personality and public acceptance to promote brands while the brands continue to experience increased patronage, sales, and revenue.

Additionally, through the show and the celebrity status of its winners over the years, BBN and MultiChoice has used the brand to bring to the fore the diverse issues to the Sustainable Development Goal. The United Nations announced 2021 as the year of the Creative Economy with the orange economy at the center of the search for creative solutions to actualize the sustainable development goals. Nigeria's creative economy piloted by BBN brand, its sponsors and producers play an undeniable role in the sustainable development agenda of the country. With a population that already has the ignoble tag as the poverty capital of the world, BBN's ability to provide opportunities for talent and entrepreneurial development especially for the young population will go a long way to address the issues of poverty and unemployment that plague the country. Beyond the pilloried commentary against the BBN show, there is no gain-saying its enormous contribution to pivot the growing orange economy of Africa's most populous country in its contribution to the country's GDP. For instance, in the 2017 edition, popular Nigerian celebrity artiste and philanthropist Omotola Jalade-Ekeindein came on the BBN show to discuss the ONE campaign's 'Poverty is Sexist' which focused on changing the narrative of girls' education where 130 million girls are out of school worldwide. ONE's campaign to get every girl in school by 2030 is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (ONE 2017a). During the BBN episode, Bisola who won ONE's Back to School presentation task where Housemates were asked to compile a presentation "based on information and statistics about girls' education in Nigeria from ONE's Poverty is Sexist policy report" (ONE 2017b). Bisola was eventually selected to represent ONE at the UN General Assembly to promote the #GirlsCount campaign. This collaboration between Big Brother Naija and ONE is a powerful indication of the profound utility of the creative industry to champion the full actualization of UN's sustainable development goals. Deducing from the above, it is indisputable that the BBNaija is an underutilized creative good with laudable potential to serve as a catalyst for promoting socio-economic development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria is a resource vault of cultural and creative goods with multi-dimensional economic effects and soft power value. Some of the notable economic value of the Nigerian CCI are its invaluable contributions to Nigeria's GDP, skills and talents discovery, youth empowerment, and creation of job opportunities for the teeming population of skillful but unemployed Nigerians, poverty alleviation and the diversification of Nigeria's unidirectional economy. Regrettably, the Nigerian CCI remains underdeveloped, undervalued, and underutilized despite being a multibillion-dollar sector with enormous financial fortunes and the capability to turbocharge sustainable development if harnessed with the requisite policies, financial aids, and human capital development efforts.

The underutilization of the Nigerian CCI and the minuscule government support it has experienced is not unconnected with the dearth of data and policy documents on each subsector of the Nigerian CCI. Consequently, it has become almost impossible to outline the components and economic potential of the subsectors of Nigeria's CCI. Arguably, this has impeded the proposition of content-specific policies requisite for engendering optimum productivity and profitability of the Nigerian CCI. In this study, we argue that apart from the meager data that exist on the economic contributions of Nollywood and Afrobeat to Nigeria, the economic value of other viable but undervalued sectors of the Nigerian CCI is unknown. This underpinned our interrogation of the controversial and keenly debated *Big Brother Naija* TV reality show beyond its pedestrian construction as profligate entertainment and semi-packaged porn detrimental to Nigeria and its teeming youthful and teenage population.

There is scant literature on the *BBNaija* show, existing studies have largely concentrated on the negative aspects of *Big Brother* and unsurprisingly portrayed the show in a negative light without establishing attempting a critical examination of its probable values. Our study took a detour from the raging and often uncritical negative narratives that fail to situate the probable economic and diplomatic values of the *BBNaija* show. Our study anchors on the established literature on CCI and Orange economy to interrogate and establish the probable value of the *BBNaija* show and especially its contributions to the Nigerian economy. We utilized data extracted from secondary sources to establish the economic contributions of the *BBNaija* to Nigeria's economy and make a case for the Nigerian government to take the show seriously.

Our result shows that contrary to the pedestrian construction of the show as wasteful entertainment, the BBNaija is an undervalued and underutilized multibillion Naira creative good with enormous revenue generation capabilities. Beyond its underestimated revenue creation capabilities, the show's economic value abounds in the thousands of jobs it creates annually for the teeming population of Nigerian youths employed in the different production processes of the Show. From inception, an estimated 10,000 Nigerians have been employed. A total of 1,000 Nigerians were employed in the production process of the BBN Seasons 6, and not less than 2,000 direct and indirect jobs were created for Nigerians. In addition, the production cost of the show yields enormous economic implications for Nigeria's economy. Valued at N3.5bn and N4.3bn, the production cost of the BBNaija Season 5 and Season 6 implies more earnings for Nigerians, brands, SMEs, business outlets, service providers, and the Nigerian government. Additionally, the multiplier effects of the Show's capability as a strong catalyst for brand and product visibility through advertisement and marketing are evident in the increased turnover of goods and products experienced by sponsors of the show, the brands, and businesses-providers contracted to supply the essential fashion goods, foods, and other items consumed by the housemates. Beyond these, the value-chain effects of the celebrity-making potential of the BBNaija show in bolstering the positive public acceptance, admiration, and adulation of ex-housemates and increased social media followership paved the way for previously unpopular Nigerian youths to become widely sought after as brand ambassadors for many Nigerian and foreign-owned brand, startups, companies, and established businesses. Evidently, the BBNaija is an underestimated and underutilized creative good with enormous economic values for boasting Nigeria's GDP, diversifying Nigeria's unidirectional economy, creating jobs for the teeming population of the unemployed, and promoting sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

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Subjectivity and Social Order: What Can *Big Brother Naija* Teach Us About the (Rule of) Law?

Ogochukwu Ukwueze  and *Reginald Anosike Uzoechi*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter casts a critical glance on the potential of Big Brother Naija show as a reinforcement of the necessity of (rule of) law, referred to as the “Big Other” or symbolic authority in psychoanalysis, especially in present-day Nigeria where, in practice, precarity, arbitrariness, and vulnerability characterize social interaction and citizenship. This precarity is largely consequent on a latent decline in the disposition of subjects to defer satisfaction, and accede to the binding function in sociality. The founding of the show on rules, judgment, and sanction, its recognition and reward

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of compliance and industry, and the various instances of manifestation of human excesses often checked by the house rules demonstrate the sustainability of social relations through the instrumentality of the law. The show re-presents the law as a constraining mechanism on individual and institutional behavior. For this chapter therefore, the show is more than a source of entertainment: it has socio-political significance which includes emphasizing and propagating the importance of law in human relations.

Big Brother Naija (BBN) ranks as the most popular surviving reality TV show in Nigeria today for which it expectedly generates attention variously. It is an adaptation of the Big Brother franchise adopted by over 20 countries of the world. With its metaphor of total surveillance borrowed from George Orwell's novel, *1984* (Bignell 2005), it subsists as a form of popular culture which the common people do not just find interesting for its entertainment value but identify with because it shows regular members of a society striving to balance their selfish interest with communal interest while pursuing a goal (of winning the staked prize or potential investors' attention). In other words, it's a microcosm of human society. As a reality television show, it brings to the screen time-bound scenes of human subjectivity: subjects negotiating the frames of constraints and prohibition, and defining themselves through them while in pursuit of personal satisfaction/enjoyment. Jonathan Bignell (2005) considers *Big Brother* as 'a metaphorical staging of the tension in social relation' (p. 71), 'an experiment about how human society works' (p. 108).

The correlation between the *Big Brother* show and reality has persisted in literature. Paddy Scannel (2002) argues that the show understood as an event corresponds to the structure of life span. Just like in life, housemates live in a community, engaging in interpersonal relationships with the attending pleasure, interest, excitement, tension, and laughter. As they live, the 'little other' and the 'Big Other', in this case, fellow housemates, and the spectators and the Big Brother respectively, assess their lives and make judgments that affect them through voting, punishment, or reward. Just like no human stands outside their own life to see it as others do, the housemates are vulnerable to the audiences' and Big Brother's surveillance and evaluation. Andy Lavender (2003) offers that even though the show's correlation with reality reveals the banality of the show, its fascination and success as well as the authenticity lie in the banality. It merely transposes reality. The show observably recalls the naturalist theater of the nineteenth century which according to some scholars is deceased or 'may

have never lived at all' (Link 2004, p. iv). Kenneth Pickering and Jayne Thompson (2013) however insist that the form persisted even after its supposed demise. *Big Brother* show seems to be a screen resuscitation of the same attempt to represent uncensored and deglamorized life in real time though challenged by the kind of plot structure of literature, 'with a beginning, middle and an end' (Aristotle). Like naturalism, *the Big Brother* show portrays life with little or no censorship and romanticization.

Despite these acknowledgments that the show merely transposes what obtains in contemporary society, there has been expressions of dissatisfaction over taste and decency in the show around the world. The show met with severe opposition in Arab and Italy (Bignell 2005, p. 37). The Turkish version was banned for 24 hours over the issue of morality and decency on screen (Lavender 2003, p. 15). Similar criticism trails the Nigerian version, BBN. Apart from some dissatisfying comments and reactions from individuals, groups, and government against the show in Nigeria, some literature on BBN conclude that the show threatens moral values and national integrity and suggests either censorship or an outright ban (Onebune and Okeke 2019; Amadi et al. 2019; Folayan et al. 2019; Obi-Nwosu et al. 2020). This, however, seems a misplaced worry. Since the show merely presents 'images of what living is now like' (Couldry 2002, p. 283), the interest should not be on censorship thereby fictionalizing reality; rather, attention ought to be geared toward solving the issues of ethics and others which the show has revealed about contemporary society. In other words, a proper application of social policy accruing from the findings of such a social experiment should be directed on society, not the screen representation.

Nevertheless, amid the negative opinions on BBN, Folayan et al. (2019) admit that the show serves as an instrument for the promotion of Nigerian culture and identity through the fashion, music, and food available on the show. The strength of the show is further highlighted by Akinlolu and Ogunnubi (2020) who consider the show as a soft power mechanism for Nigeria's diplomatic relations. For them, the celebrity-making potential of the show offers Nigeria the opportunity to produce individuals who can stand as unifying figures in Africa. Additionally, the semantic affirmation and acknowledgment of the show and the housemates by a large pool of Africans suggest a wide-ranging acceptance and admiration of Nigerians and Nigeria by extension. As such, Nigeria can function as a 'big brother' who protects and ensures fairness among African nations.

Perceiving this significance in the show speaks to the nature of the show as an element of popular culture: one which, by transposing human society on screen, engenders thought on human subjectivity and provokes an avalanche of possible interpretations. This is a common feature of all human creative acts. Warren (2014) remarks that TV screens cannot transmit bullets, and they cannot transmit dollars; they can only transmit symbols. As a symbolic object, the show gives rise to thought (Ricoeur, p. 15). Therefore, in thinking about *Big Brother Naija* and observing the gap in the existing literature on it, this chapter considers the show significant in terms of its communication of the necessity of (rule of) law in human relations.

While subscribing to the findings that the show is a microcosm of society, it is argued that Big Brother embodies law and restricts the excess in housemates in their relationships with others. In this postmodern era characterized by poor accession to and subversion of authority, and, particularly in Nigeria where in practice, precarity, arbitrariness, and vulnerability characterize social interaction and citizenship, the show subtly reinforces the need for symbolic authority/law in human subjectivity. Drawing from events on the show's 2019 and 2020 seasons, the chapter reflects on the need for law and the difficulty in contemporary subjects' relations with the law and how this difficulty anticipates disintegration of community and chaos. In sum, the article argues that the show serves as a mechanism for reiterating the need for law in society. This argument draws insights from psychoanalytic and legal frameworks.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Psychoanalysis studies human actions and inactions as a consequence of the unconscious formation. The unconscious is a fundamental concept in psychoanalysis. It houses the desires, wishes, ideologies, and prejudices of an individual. It determines and manifests in speech and actions. Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan are the major psychoanalysts whose ideas are largely followed here. Although Lacan was a student of Freud, he extends his master's teaching by finding the unconscious more in speech than in dream. Both however understand that a subject is a product of socialization, of some kind of unwritten cultural law which in democratic societies takes the form of a constitution. For them, society cannot successfully be instituted and sustained without law given human's inclination toward selfishness and disorder.

The law is often designated in Psychoanalysis as the Big Other. The Big Other is variously represented in Lacan as Law (unwritten, unseen, and untouchable), Language (a symbolic law), and Name-of-the-father imbibed through socialization, with the father as its material figure, the real presence. He writes:

It is in the name-of-the-father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law. This conception enables us to distinguish clearly, in the analysis of a case, the unconscious effects of this function from the narcissistic relations, or even from the real relations that the subject sustains with the image and the action of the person who embodies it; and there results from this a mode of comprehension that will tend to have repercussions on the very way in which the interventions of the analyst are conducted. (1966, p. 50)

The first big Other, the symbol of Law, to whom the child is exposed is usually the mother whom the child makes effort to understand her desires and fulfill them. He consequently sees in the mother a lack, a desire for the phallic object. This gap is what he tries to fill; a response regarded as Oedipal Complex. Complication here is caused by the presence of the father who seems to intervene in this desire to meet the desire of the mother. He interferes by filling the gap, as the child eventually discovers, and in making the child see such incestuous feeling as taboo, thereby leading to what Lacan has identified as castration; the giving up of this desire of the mother under the prohibition of the father. Lacan insists that, in fact, it is the mother that reserves this place for the Name-of the father in the promulgation of law (1966, p. 166). It is at this moment that the child observes that the mother's desire too is that of a higher Law represented by the father. The child is, therefore, introduced into this order of social relation through his accession to this symbolic father. His entry into the order, the cultural world, through the legislative and prohibitive functions of the real, imaginary, and symbolic presence of the father marks a successful socialization process into reality. The father as law, therefore, 'sustains the structure of desire with the structure of law' (1998, p. 34). He ensures that what is desired is what is permitted.

The Big Other is a symbolic authority from where meaning proceeds. It is represented as the law which over-determines subjectivity and intersubjective relations. By the virtue of this over-determination, the subjects'

social relation is an avowal of this authority. This is why Lacan teaches that the ‘unconscious is the discourse of the Other’ (1966, p. 16). This means that the subject’s external character presupposes the influence of this authority. As the locus of all acts, speech and bodily expressions, it denotes the source of a subject’s performance as a subject. Lacan notes that the Other is merely a symbolic presence, a function which can be embodied by another subject (2011, p. 202). This is why the father or any other person can be presented as the figure of law, the embodiment of the Other to whose authority the child must accede to become a member of society. The mother occupied this position until the moment of the Oedipus castration which introduces the father as the source of prohibition and his name (Name-of-the-father) signifies ‘no’. The prohibition of incest is symbolic of the prohibition of enjoyment, a sacrifice of self-interest that establishes and maintains inter-subjectivity.

From the legal dimension, the theory of rule of law suggests that the human society is governed by law without which there will be anarchy predicated on arbitrariness. Rule of law ‘is the application and respect for civil or regular law...that is, laws that are reasonably justifiable in a democratic society, as opposed to draconian, oppressive, and arbitrary law’ (Malemi 2008 p. 174). Rule of law simply means the observation of the supremacy of civilized law and the absence of arbitrary action. The opposite of rule of law, therefore, is rule by force, arbitrariness, despotism, dictatorship, tyranny, and ultimately, anarchy and chaos (p. 74). According to Locke, “Freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to everyone of that society and made by legislative powers created in it, and not to be subjected to the inconstant, unknown arbitrary will of another man”.

According to Dicey (1950), rule of law entails supremacy of the law, equality before the law, and the predominance of legal spirit. While the most prominent proposition of rule of law is credited to A. V. Dicey (Bingham 2010, p. 3), however, the development of the legal concept throughout human history is traceable to many ancient civilizations like the ancient Greece and Roman civilizations (Black 2009).

Rule of law consists of a wide range of concepts which are not only limited to ‘supremacy of the law’ and ‘equality before the law’, but extends to ‘dispensation of justice by the courts’, ‘respect for the decision of the courts’, ‘government according to civil law’, and ‘respect for human rights’ (Malemi 2008, pp. 74–80).

On the whole,

The Rule of Law comprises a number of principles of a formal and procedural character, addressing the way in which a community is governed. The formal principles concern the generality, clarity, publicity, stability, and prospectivity of the norms that govern a society. The procedural principles concern the processes by which these norms are administered, and the institutions - like courts and an independent judiciary that their administration requires. On some accounts, the rule of law also comprises certain substantive ideals like a presumption of liberty and respect for private property rights. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2016)

The rule of law principally dictates that people in positions of authority should exercise their power within the ambits and framework of well-established public norms rather than in an arbitrary, ad hoc, or purely discretionary manner on the basis of their own preferences or ideology or whims and caprices. 'It insists that the government should operate within a framework of law in everything it does, and that it should be accountable through law when there is a suggestion of unauthorized action by those in power' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2016). The rule of law is, however, not only concerned about government. 'It requires also that citizens should respect and comply with legal norms, even when they disagree with them. When their interests conflict with others' they should accept legal determinations of what their rights and duties are. Also, the law should be the same for everyone, so that no one is above the law, and everyone has access to the law's protection' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2016).

Whereas law in psychoanalysis is unwritten and conditions the subject through the figure of the Big Other, the rule of law in legal parlance is written, a kind of social contract whereby every member of the democratic entity is bound by the responsibility enshrined in the constitution. Both frameworks meet at the point where they agree that social relations depend on a third force, an authority from which signification proceeds. The necessity for deploying the two frameworks in the study lies on the fact that while Psychoanalysis provides the primitive and universal model of the big Other, the theory of rule of law allows for a contemporary and particular association of the Big Other with a democratic setting as Nigeria.

BIG BROTHER AS 'THE BIG OTHER'

Big Brother's house is a replica of the society of prohibition, an organized social space with Big Brother as the symbolic paternal authority. The Big Brother is the figure of law, and the law itself. Just as entry into the symbolic world through Oedipal castration introduces a subject into the social world, the entry of the housemates into Big Brother's house subjects them to the structuring force of Big Brother. The game displaces subjects of excess and deposes them into a created society of prohibition which is a world of total surveillance by the big Other and others whose recognition they are bound to pursue through their activities. Big Brother is the recipient of the activities in the house as the Law, the big Other to whom the housemates endeavor to appeal. Hence, Big Brother's usual first statement on speaking to the new subjects is, 'Housemates, welcome to Big Brother's house'. The emphasis on 'Big Brother's house' in this instance and many other instances of his correspondence with the housemates reflects the ownership or authority of the father, the big Other over the subjects. He embodies the ideological values of law, prohibition, and legislation. Hence, he can judge cases and administer punishment and rewards accordingly.

The confessional nature of the diary sessions reflects subjects' relation to the big Other. It is an instance where subjects, housemates, in this case, pour out their hearts to the big Other. The assumed privacy of the diary room further increases the sense of security in the housemates during this session. They share their fears, frustrations, desires, and wishes with trust believing that Big Brother can facilitate or assuage them. Even without the assurance of the intervention of Big Brother, certain satisfaction comes from sharing one's innermost contents with the agency that assures the security of the information. In other words, this function of the big Other is significant in human subjectivity. It obtains in religion too when the faithful commend their hearts to God and go home relieved. In line with this thought, Žižek teaches that 'to fully exist as individuals, we need the fiction of a big Other. There must be an agency which as it were, registers our predicament, an agency where the truth of ourselves will be inscribed, accepted. An agency to which we confess' (2012, p. 107). Big Brother serves this function in the house, and this further proves his position as the big Other in the game. Significantly, Big Brother rarely refers to himself

with first-person pronouns. Emphasis is always placed on the Name-of-the-father, Big Brother, which shows that it is more of a function than a human entity. Hence, he remains ‘anonymous’ throughout the show.

The paternal figure is symbolically distanced from the subjects to maintain its symbolic function. Žižek notes in this regard that ‘the moment I know with scientific certainty who my father is, fatherhood ceases to be the function which grounds social-symbolic Trust’ (2008, p. 33). Big Brother’s invisibility, therefore, results from this need to sustain the significance of paternal authority. The big Other of every structure maintains this distance from and mysterious air for the subjects. God, being the big Other in His own right, as a master-signifier stays out of immediate involvement in human affairs. Chances are that had housemates known who acts as Big Brother or met him in the course of the show, the extent of their accession to his authority might be reduced. So, sustaining the housemates’ trust in Big Brother consists in preserving and never satisfying their wonder over who Big Brother is. Reverence and admiration of the big Other often drive subjects to imitate this function. Just like humans sometimes play God, the housemates, at least, in the Lockdown Season (5) played Big Brother: a period in which they wished they had all the powers in Big Brother’s possession and revealed what they would do in such a situation. This aspiration to be like Big Brother is prompted by his seemingly privileged position of all-knowing and unknown and this maintains his relevance as the big Other. To be entangled in the activities of the subjects is to become like them, weak, limited, and struggling. This distance also accords the big Other the opportunity to see the subjects from an unbiased and holistic viewpoint. This validates Big Brother’s insightful statement in the conversation he had with the housemates after his long silence in the 2020 edition:

Big Brother: Long time. (*It’s been a while*).

Housemates: (chorus) No see (*Yeah, we have not met for a long time*).

Big Brother: No, Big Brother always sees.

While this statement impairs the popular Nigerian saying which the housemates meant to draw from, it also reveals the omnipresence of the big Other. Big Brother, like the big Other, was always watching even

while on vacation. To prove this, he commented on the various behaviors of the housemates during his 'absence' and rewarded and punished them accordingly.

The conducts of the housemates under the surveillance of Big Brother do not translate to their desire. They are conditioned to act only in accordance with the dictates of social relations instituted and sustained by the Big Brother. Their true desire often conflict with these dictates, and in such moments, the rules of the father triumphs. Desire, having been prohibited but not abolished, emerges as an upsurge of actions that break the rules and earn strikes or as a hidden expression akin to recession into the imaginary order. Big Brother, like the big Other, does not sanction anyone for covertly giving expression to some desires so long as it does not threaten the social. Sex, which constitutes a major contestation on the game, may be considered an otherwise prohibited act in the house, but 'traditional symbolic authority permits such transgressions [such as sex in the house] as long as the enjoyment in them remained hidden and underground [not spoken about]' (McGowan 2004, p. 48). It is the public pursuit of enjoyment that the law frowns at. Sexual intercourse can happen but under the cover of duvets and darkness.

Those who maintain the repression of desire find inspiration in the need to pursue the recognition of the Other and others through self-control. In a discussion with Laycon, Vee revealed how difficult it had been living in 'the house' without sex. She said, 'you need discipline not to have sex, it's so hard not to have sex in this house. I and Neo came close to having sex. He stops mostly before we begin and I'm thankful for that'. A number of the housemates reportedly had sex during the show such as Kid and Erica, Khafi and Gedoni, Praise and Ka3na, Miracle and Nina, Eric and Lilo, and so on. Nengi is one housemate who impressed viewers, the other, by her constant effort to maintain decorum in her expression of sexual passion. The urge was observable. On one of the nights she slept close to Ozo's bed, she sat up in the dead of the night, stared at Ozo, caressed his hand, and lay back, placing her hands on his.

Many viewers acknowledged and commended her for self-restraint on Twitter: 'Nengi is struggling with her feelings for Ozo...self-control is not common in our society. When you see someone who possesses it you have to commend them for the effort' (@ ultimate_ kombo 27 August 2020); 'She is a strong girl. I wish every girl would be decent and strong as Nengi' (@ PricelessMuna 27 August 2020). These and many more of such comments refer to the subject's repression of desire in accession

to the big Other. The subject seeks the recognition of the Other, and by so doing, invests themselves in the Other, thinking about what the Other thinks about them. By extension, thinking about the Other implies thinking community since the Other is social. Big Brother, like the big Other, is not insensitive to desire but only tames its expression. Miracle, despite having sex, but under the cover of the duvet (hence, hidden), still won the 'Double Wahala' season. In other words, though prohibited, enjoyment does not attract punishment if done within the limits of the law.

In human inter-subjective relation, the big Other serves as the third figure. The Lacanian algebra, $1 + 1 = 3$ expresses the presence of this function. It is the symbolic mediator that makes for safety in human to human (and even human to non-human) interactions. As a reference point of intelligibility and locus of knowledge, the big Other is implicated in every speech and action of the subjects. When the housemates speak audibly, even about issues they would ordinarily have preferred to whisper to the target auditor, they presuppose the presence of the Big Brother who forbids speaking in a hushed tone. Even though there can't be any direct relation to the big Other, just as Big Brother is only symbolically present by being heard and not seen, he provides the coordinates of every other relations. On many occasions, housemates reminded each other of the instruction of Big Brother and were restrained from behaving in certain ways in acknowledgment of the law's prohibition.

During the 2019 edition titled, "Pepper Dem", in one instance, two housemates, Mercy and Tacha were seen exchanging words but Mercy strategically held her hands at the back to stop herself from using them in the course of the confrontation being that such physical assault is prohibited in the house. The opponent, Tacha, eventually fell into this temptation of using her hands on Mercy and it earned her a strike, and eventual disqualification, having exhausted all her warning strikes. Tacha made a clearer remark in recognition of the constraining power of the law's presence. She told Diane, her fellow housemate, 'outside this house, you cannot even ask me what the time is'. The statement proceeds from the recognition of the difference in their status outside the law.

In other words, the instrumentality of law, symbolized in the Big Brother's house levels the ordinarily unequal nature of their relation. The shared sacrifice of law binds and creates the equality implied in the deprecating statement. Notably, the discontent of this nature always attends the relation of subjects to law, otherwise regarded as civilization by Freud. He

argues that ‘cultural frustration’ comes with the insistence of law on non-satisfaction of instincts (1961, p. 44). Tacha was frustrated because the law forbids her expression of certain instincts such as fighting Diane. It is this frustration that informs some transgressions and foreclosure of the law, a certain kind of return of the repressed.

Yet, the absence of law takes away meaning, direction, and field of appeal in subjectivity. Subjects can hardly make their way through life without the fiction of the big Other. Life becomes bland and terrifying without the overarching and comforting presence of the big Other through whom and in whom subjects have their being. They define and determine their existence by the big Other. The housemates need that figure that determines, directs, and judges their activities. The 2020 edition of the show, Lockdown Season, saw an unusual silence of Big Brother for about six days. Within this period, the housemates were left on their terms and the Head of House was charged with the responsibility of maintaining order. Amid the chaos and lack of direction, housemates began to yearn for the return of Big Brother. Various, they remarked that they miss Big Brother. Dorathy, one of the housemates, went as far as asking the ‘absent’ Big Brother to forgive them and speak to them, assuming therefore that they lost him for a fault of their own. In essence, his vacation and the resulting consequences point to the necessity of law and the risk of arbitrariness in human subjectivity.

The implication of this connection is that Big Brother is the figure of Law to whom the housemates accede. Their accession to the law entails order and successful relation. What follows is an examination of the incidents that show the necessity of law in human relations as instantiated in the show with Big Brother as the Big Other.

BIG BROTHER NAIJA AND THE NECESSITY OF (RULE OF) LAW

The *Big Brother* reality TV show portrays and reinforces the necessity of rule of law in human society and existence. The ‘absence’ of Big Brother, an unknown fictional figure of law in the game, for six days in the 2020 Lockdown Season of the reality TV show is an important experiment to this study. It depicts the chaos and disorderliness, arbitrariness that characterize subjectivity in the absence of the symbolic paternal figure of authority. In Big Brother’s ‘absence’, the housemates unleashed the excess in their subjectivity. They turned their gym time to nap time because

no one controlled their actions and compelled them to act according to their schedule. Only Prince, among all the housemates, retained a sense of the big Other effect and therefore maintained this schedule. The housemates also failed to pamper Prince whom Big Brother had instructed them to pamper as a reward for his winning the previous arena game. Prince catered for himself and others during the period of the vacation. All the housemates flouted social order in Big Brother's 'absence', and this turned the house into a place of disorder. This shows that the absence of the law or its enforcement significantly threatens social co-existence. The law, therefore, ensures order and compliance. It maintains a state of equilibrium in inter-subjectivity. Once there is a disruption in this order, society becomes dysfunctional. Even when an external force threatens the stability of a society, law, through all its instrumentality, restores order. This absence of law resembles the present state of lawlessness, failing, collapsing structure in Nigeria where the central powerful authority (Leviathan) has gone weak and irresponsible. The housemates' quest to have the Big Brother back to the house echoes the call for restructuring and referendum, a social contract to ensure accountability of the government and citizenry in Nigeria. On his return, Big Brother once more demonstrated the supremacy of the law and that the housemates were all subject to the rules of the Big Brother house. In punishing all the housemates including the Head of House, Kiddwaya who was supposed to maintain order, Big Brother showed sensitivity to the equality expected among subjects before the law. Though the HoH and his deputy were institutions under the law, they were treated as subjects within the ambit of the authority of the supreme law. This portrays that the principle of equality before the law is an essential component of rule of law. This is part of what the Nigerian people clamor for and why the BBN show is a complementary voice in this call.

Through the principle of equality before the law, the supreme law ensures that the excesses in human subjects are tamed across all levels of citizens, bearing in mind that as Freud teaches, 'if one person succeeds in gratifying the repressed desires, the same desire is borne to be kindled in all the other members of the community' (1950, p. 83). Law ties subjects together in a responsive community through 'shared sacrifice' that is, 'something that must be given up by those who enter a society, a societal entry fee' (1950, p. 12), of personal instincts and desires which ordinarily threatens the unity and sanctity of sociality. Hence, prohibition and law aim to organize, and this assures survival and sustenance.

The society without the law is ‘the body without organ’ of Deleuze and Guattari, which is unhinged, chaotic, and in flux.

Although Deleuze and Guattari and other scholars continue to advocate a free rein of desire on the basis that productivity proceeds from this excess, on the contrary, it is observable that lack propels production. No one seeks what they have. A balance between desire and prohibition drives and sustains productivity. Absolute satisfaction breeds complacency. This is why Lacan teaches that enjoyment does not bother itself about sustenance; it wants to exhaust itself. Irigaray (2019) on her part suggests that laws thwart our growth. Agreeing with her, Sidesinger (2021) also claims that ‘no change to a corrupt system could be accomplished without going in excess of it’ (p.7). Protest consists of an instance of excess in her argument. But does not protest come within the permit of law? To what extent is protest forbidden? What the positions of those who advocate a return to the excess misses is that prohibition does not abolish desire. It keeps the subject desiring by deferring satisfaction. It subsumes enjoyment, not the absolute of it, within the deferment. In other words, enjoyment consists in maintaining law and order.

(The rule of) law plays a fundamental role in controlling the congenital predisposition to selfishness in humans. Biological species share the egoistic tendency which seems to follow from the characteristic of their basic make-up, genes. Genes, including the ones considered law-abiding, are selfish. Each gene (and by extension, every human subject) attempts to perpetuate itself by creating and maintaining conditions favorable for this purpose at the expense of others. Adrian Bird (2019) has observed that the genes which follow conventions also tend to pursue absolute self-propagation. Hence, the selfishness of humans is genetic. However, organismal fitness, which relates to social stability, results from cooperation among the functional units within the genome. Bird (2019) notes that any ‘system with so little apparent regard for the “common good” surely risks collapse under the pressure of mass self-interested exploitation’ (p. 11). Law, therefore, intervenes by introducing and enabling this cooperation and shared sacrifice, the absence of which the evolutionary logic of the survival of only the fittest and strongest holds sway thereby rendering the social dysfunctional if not impossible. Evidence from the field of Economics also suggests that social cooperation as against the natural narcissism in human societies depends on social norms and legal enforcement of rules (Fehr and Fischbacher 2004; Fehr et al. 2002). Social cooperation becomes impossible if the excess, the selfishness of

subjects are given free rein. Law serves as a structural necessity in every social exchange, otherwise, cheating becomes inevitable.

The various tasks and games assigned by Big Brother to the housemates significantly emphasize collaboration and cooperation irrespective of one's perception of other members of the group. Hence, those tasks, and the dependence of the housemates' welfare in the house on their performance momentarily lift their focus from the individual egoistic desires to the collective, the altruistic. Erica during a diary session revealed that she would not ordinarily want to be in the same group with Lucy whom she thought naturally had an opposing perspective to hers but she had been enlisted with her for the wager presentation and she had to cooperate. In the end, there was evidence of that shared sacrifice of individual differences. She reported to Big Brother at the diary session that, 'the presentation was organic', implying that each unit or member of the group was functional, and together the synergy paid off. This implicates the issues of managing diversity in Nigeria. Here is an encouragement of patriotic participation in achieving a national goal, and against ethnic bigotry. At the center or better still, the base of this relation is the Big (Br)other whose instruction creates and sustains the nation. The possibility and success of such a cooperative relation depend on the prohibition of exempting oneself from the national body to form ethnic cliques, and disapproving of another's membership.

This explains why humans have always relied on penal systems to organize themselves and control their desires. Freud notes that taboos constitute the oldest form of law among humans and it evolved from prohibitions for fear of the wrath of the demons; then there were social customs and finally law (1950, p. 28). He remarks that a 'taboo is a primeval prohibition forcibly imposed (by some authority) from outside, and directed against the most powerful longings to which human beings are subject' (pp. 40–41). In essence, it has been characteristic of every structure of order and moderation to target the excess in humans which threatens cooperation. Law is considered an external obstacle to the subject's desire.

Be that as it may, the externality of law consists only in its formation, for in its relation to the unconscious, the law constitutes the foundational principle upon which reality is established. It is a fiction that reality depends on, including the reality of our supposed intrinsic freedom. Law creates freedom through constraints (McGowan 2018, p. 51) and primarily ruptures the animalistic instincts so that the subject may emerge

as a speaking subject, a social being. This terrible animalistic instinct is a threat to social co-existence as evinced in Marina Abramovic's performance art, *Rhythm 0*. The artist, investigating 'how far the public can go', placed 72 objects on a table including rose, feather, perfume, honey, bread, grapes, wine, scissors, scalpel, nails, metal bar, a loaded gun, etc., and asked spectators to treat her as they desire with any of those objects. The spectators, assured that they were not responsible for their actions and that nothing they did was prohibited, unleashed unprovoked terror on her. By the end of the six-hour, she was already unclad, bruised, sexually assaulted, and almost shot but for the intervention of some onlookers. This demonstrates the animalistic instinct that law suppresses in human subjectivity. Hence, the freedom to exist unharmed by others finds its resources in law, a law that holds subjects responsible and accountable.

Law itself is necessarily nonsensical for being a signifier without an obvious signified. Although functional and consequential, the law, if probed, cannot eliminate the tendency it prohibits. There would seem to be no basis for the rule that no housemate who is not a Head of House or a deputy sleeps in the head of house room, and that the two must sleep there. This rule does not erase the desire in the housemates to go against it. But this is a law that if broken, like in Erica's case, attracts a consequence. Such a law, though adequate in itself may be rationalized only based on its signifying and structuring role, as a means of sustaining the hierarchies of sociality. However, every attempt to rationalize law doubly works against it. McGowan has observed that the superego's first step toward subversion of the law is by trying to make sense of law and that the 'only way to have law without the burden of its superegoic underside is to accept the law as nonsensical' (2020, p. 149). The law is only nonsensical in its nature as a myth, a fiction that structures our perception of reality (Hassler-Forest 2015, p. 102). As a structural necessity, it is itself a structure that stands on and preaches a certain essence.

In Bultman's philosophical-religious discourse on the New Testament, the idea of demythologization aims to access this essence in religious myths and structures. This essence is what he calls kerygma. The kerygma is the truth that can sustain belief for the post/modern subjects. Therefore, the law, like other structures such as literature and religion, proclaims an essence lost to immediate sensibility. It is the essence submerged in the structure that gives law intelligibility. Some of the house rules seem ridiculous but they are justified by the kerygma they announce. They maintain social order and determine reality in human subjectivity. The

absence of the law spells doom; a doom understood in psychoanalysis as ‘mass psychoses’, a break with the signifying chain and consequently loss of touch with reality.

THREAT OF MASS PSYCHOSIS: PURSUIT OF ENJOYMENT

The function of law is to defer enjoyment, for enjoyment outside the law is chaotic. To enjoy is to pursue self-aggrandizement, ‘to use [something] to the point of abusing it, the abuse being precisely what the law seeks to delimit’ (Andre 1999, p. 230). Law, therefore, reconstitutes satisfaction to inhere in altruism. Enjoyment under the law, according to Lacan necessarily involves ‘suffering for my neighbour’ (McGowan 2004, p. 117). Social order, therefore, is built on the promise of enjoyment. Obedient to the law promises freedom, and the sacrifice of enjoyment is enjoyment itself. The feeling of security constitutes the propelling force to earn enjoyment. Law prolongs and sustains enjoyment through difference because absolute enjoyment wants to exhaust itself; it does not think about sustenance hence its otherness to social order. This self-exhaustion is contrary to what reality stands for: reality ensures the propagation of life through security. Mass psychosis proceeds from subjects throwing caution to the wind and sliding down the path of destruction of sociality. Life becomes arid and bland without deferment of enjoyment for when subjects see through life and exhaust the so-called impossible, they realize the absurdities which hitherto had been shielded by social structures, and would lack faith in existence and possibly commit suicide. The path to enjoyment has always been the path to self-annihilation.

The rule of law is the big Other that obtains in democratic nations like Nigeria. This is the law that all subjects identify themselves through and acceded to. According to Dicey (1950), the rule of law implies that ‘all people are equal before the law and that all, particularly government officials and clergymen, must be tried under the same law in the same courts as ordinary men’ (p. 27). The idea of being tried in the court also displaces arbitrary use of power which features sometimes in the form of extra-judicial actions such as killing or maiming or torture. Just like the Head of House in the *Big Brother* house was judged by the same standard of law and regulation as other housemates, the rule of law upholds the principle of equality of all subjects before the law and thereby assures the common man of security from the oppression of the powerful members of society. Discussing the Nigerian situation, Haruna and Yusuf (2017)

remark that this principle only obtains on paper. They observe that rule of law in Nigeria is constantly threatened by aberrant application against the less privileged. This issue compounds as mass distrust in governance. In fact what McGowan observes about the fictional world of the movie, *Lost Highway* now clearly defines Nigeria: 'whereas authority previously had to make at least the pretense of preventing corruption and eschewing criminality, now it is openly corrupt and criminal. It is openly on the side of enjoyment, not prohibition' (p. 53). Psychoanalysis reveals that any lack in the Big Other leads the subject to resort to the fantastic, the superegoic. With the law and its custodian going effete, it leaves the masses to continually return to the superego for guide, and this entails moving further away from order, from reality into the imaginary order, the place of disorganization.

Suffice it to say, the neglect of the rule of law, which presently characterizes Nigerian polity results from the difficulty of subjects, especially the figures of authority, to acknowledge the supremacy of the law and their pursuit of absolute enjoyment. Like in postmodern societies, the imperative to enjoy holds sway. In a society of commanded enjoyment, enjoyment becomes an obligation. There begins to emerge such self-directed ideologies as 'do you', 'do what makes you happy', 'it is your body, your life', 'you owe yourself the best', 'you don't owe anybody anything'. This sensibility results in subversion and neglect of codes of conduct and the law. This disregard for the law makes accountability and responsibility impossible, and as Darius Ishaku, the Executive Governor of Taraba State laments, 'Nigeria is sliding into anarchy' (Interactive Session, 30 May 2021). Anarchy is akin to mass psychosis. It is a situation whereby subjects act without the guide of law, and the superego, the selfish element that claims kinship with the law takes over the control of the ego. The danger is that the superego is attuned to enjoyment. It does command but not prohibit; instead, it commands enjoyment. The imperative to be satisfied reigns supreme under the rule of the superego. To be satisfied implies egoism and a dearth of cooperation. The superego is individual; hence, sociality breaks, and trust ceases to exist in the government. Mass pursuit of personal interest necessarily amounts to transgression and demise of law, and a break in the signifying chain.

Collective renunciation of enjoyment through the instrumentality of the law distances an otherwise life and death struggle for enjoyment where the strongest enjoy all and the weakest remain at the periphery. But with the absence of this symbolic function, clashes of personal interest abound.

The distance mediated by the symbolic closes up, and the life and death struggle resumes. The symbolic pact which hitherto restrains a subject's enjoying encroachment into another's space is lifted. Subjects then feel surrounded and trapped, and they seek to escape and actual isolation from people that may become only possible through the elimination of other seemingly impeding subjects. In the event of the break, 'rather than being tied together through shared sacrifice, subjects exist side by side in isolated enclaves of enjoyment' (McGowan 2004, p. 2). Without the symbolic mediation of law, every inter-subjective encounter becomes necessarily violent. Subjects are trapped in social demands, and they become paranoid. The other and Other become external and manipulative in that the symbolic mediation has been removed.

The society of enjoyment, where the law is undermined, is characterized by apathy, aggressiveness, and cynicism. There is always justifiable lack of trust and faith in others and the Other (the constituted authority) that consolidates the recourse to the private, the self, and betrayal of collective interest. *Big Brother Naija* is, therefore, a timely intervention at a time like this in Nigeria when lawlessness threatens the unity and sustainability of relations. The show, properly speaking, subtly preaches a return to the rule of law and social cooperation while offering entertainment value.

CONCLUSION

Big Brother Naija is certainly a creation of the postmodernist sensibility, an attraction to enjoyment as well as the shrinking world of surveillance. But it holds a contradiction within it, one that draws a sublime mind back to the root of tradition, of law. While it entertains and promises financial return for the capitalist investors who also enjoy the returns of the show differently, the culture of social cohesion through the instrumentality of law is diplomatically being reinforced. This reading aims to call attention to this potential of the show, and set the stage for perceiving the show in the light of a national cultural diplomacy for the local and international audience. As the reading has shown, the show realistically fictionalizes human society and its dependence on law.

The researchers therefore recommend that Nigerian government and citizens pay attention to this aspect of the show. It is imperative, at a time like this, to maximize the instructional potency of the show. While the show obviously stages the weaknesses of the time, it simultaneously

presents the solution to this weakness. It is important that those who frown at the show look beyond its surface configuration to its depth semantic wherein lay its essence and teaching. Reinforced constitutionally based governance that holds people accountable and constitutes the locus of truth remains the way out of the precarious situation of Nigeria. Fortunately, *Big Brother Naija* provides an interesting sensitization for the masses on the urgency of enthroning the law again. It is hoped that every concerned party (leaders and the led) will make the most out of this offering of the show.

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The Poverty Card in *Big Brother Naija* and Nigeria's General Elections: A Reflection on the Voting Attitude of Nigerians

Aina Akande and Vincent Idoko

INTRODUCTION

One can hardly talk about the history of *Big Brother Naija* without mentioning *Big Brother Africa*. Generally, the idea of “Big Brother” has its origin in George Orwell’s epic novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* published in 1949. While the Big Brother reality TV franchise started in the Netherlands, African adapted its first edition of the show in 2003. Africa’s edition of the show, which was termed *Big Brother Africa*, went on for nine seasons before suddenly coming to an end (Folayan, Folayan and Oyetayo 2019).

Hitherto branded as Big Brother Nigeria, the Big Brother Naija is an entertainment reality TV programme which is part of the worldwide franchise of the Big Brother Television Series. The contestants, tagged

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“Housemates” vie for cash prize of \$100, 000 and winners emerge after they must have successfully evaded evictions. Housemates are usually evicted either for flouting the BBNaija House Rules, or by votes of viewers who determine who continues in the game. Part of the game is a complete cut-off of contestants from communication with the outside world. This favourite reality show is patterned after the themes in George Orwell’s novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The show employs the use of live cameras and personal audio microphones to put the activities and engagement of the housemates on display for public scrutiny (Akinola and Olusola 2020).

The prerequisites for choosing contestants are only known to the organizers; however, we reasoned that successful applicants are those with skills and entertainment qualities who are generally within their early twenties to late thirties, already in the entertainment industry or aspiring to make their marks there. Akinola and Olusola (2020) reiterate that the show is a platform for showcasing and discovering new talents, as well as for providing entertainment in real time to viewers.

The show is aired by DSTV, which is a South African satellite television company, to a global audience covering 49 African countries, and other international viewers. Participants are usually encouraged to create entertainment contents. So, as the show progresses, those considered obscene, are likely to elicit reactions and backlash from the more conservative audience while some judge it as depicting contemporary modernist reality. As such, the BBNaija reality show has come to be one of the most controversial shows in the history of the entertainment industry in the country. However, the fact that the show has survived despite criticism and continues to thrive reveals its significance to its larger patrons (Amadi et al. 2019).

Hence, in this work, firstly we seek to examine how the show has been able to stand the test of time by exposing an underlying factor that can militate against its progress. We reflect on how this psychology also plays out in Nigerian general elections, whereby voters tend to vote for politicians who feign to sympathize with the poor and/or portray themselves as coming from humble backgrounds in order to gain the support of the masses, who would now consider these politicians as individuals like themselves and consequently vote for them.

In the final analysis, the goal of this comparative exploration is to improve, give stability and ground the voting consciousness of Nigerians on fundamental qualities such as character rather than fixating on the

financial status of contestants in any form of electoral process. This is because, in the case of BBNaija, if this voting procedure is not improved, the show might deemphasize revealing contestants with the right skills and capabilities, and frustrate the need to motivate many Nigerians to aspire for success in every area of life. This will be the case if eventual winners do not always make impact in society once they are outside the house.

As we have observed in recent times, the attitude of many in the audience or viewers is to vote for contestants with poor backgrounds because of the belief that BBNaija is a platform for making money rather than for character modelling, moulding, or skill building. A somewhat similar pattern of the masses positioning themselves alongside politicians who portray themselves as coming from poor backgrounds and willing to serve the poor is often noticed in the Nigerian general elections. In political elections, Nigerians vote more for contestants who pretend to be economically affiliated to them or share in their financial disadvantage or sentiments during campaigns rather than the ones with a track record of good character or leadership skills. In either cases, the endemic problem is that other fundamental qualities for voting a winner or leader such as character, integrity, virtue, honesty, responsibility, accountability, and the likes, are sacrificed on the altar of economic affiliations.

HISTORY OF BBNAIJA WINNERS

The study looks at the economic and social backgrounds of the winners of the BBNaija show in order to show that they were average Nigerians. As we shall see, most of the winners of the BBNaija show came from humble backgrounds (as their fellow housemates) and this is not a coincidence since 40% of Nigerians (83 million people) are below the poverty level as at 2019/2020 (Nigeria Bureau of Statistic, 2020). However, people who can afford three meals per day, university education and house rent, are not within this scope. A majority, if not all, the housemates belong to this category.

The winner of the first season of the BBNaija series that aired in 2006 was Katung Aduwak. He later revealed that the key to his victory was being strategic and also being oneself. Katung Aduwak was born on March 21, 1980. He is from Zonkwa ethnic extraction of Kaduna State and is a producer, scriptwriter, and director. He is a graduate of political science and formerly a media panelist at the Harvard Africa Business

School Forum. For many years, he also served as a senior manager at MTV Base, Creative Director at VIACOM International and Executive Director at Chocolate City. Currently, he is the CEO of One O-Eight Media and African Partner for Campfire Media. After the show, Aduwak went to New York to advance his studies at the Digital Film Academy, which saw him graduate with degree in Directing. This launched his career fully and encouraged him to venture into full-time filmmaking. He has since produced films like: *Unwanted Guest* (2012), *When Love Happens* (2014), *Heavens Hell* (2019), and *Not Supposed to Be Here* (2020) (Bob 2018).

The winner of the second BBNaija franchise was Ejeba Efe Michael who was born on February 25, 1993. He is from the South-South region of Nigeria. He is a graduate of Economics from the University of Jos, Plateau State but veered into rap music. Before his entry into BBNaija, he released an album titled *Lagos*. He became a sensation during the show, especially for the coinage, “Based on Logistics”. So, despite being nominated for possible eviction, the support he enjoyed from the greater majority of the audience ensured his stay in the house till his eventual victory (Bayode 2017).

Miracle Igbokwe Ikechukwu was the winner of the third season of the BBNaija series that was held in 2018. Miracle was born on February 17, 1995 in Lagos. He obtained his West African Senior School Certificate from Dee Unique International High School in Lagos before proceeding to Nigeria College of Aviation in Zaria, Kaduna where he was trained and became a licensed pilot. Before entering the show, he revealed that if he won, he would use the money to further his career as a pilot and also support his family. He is reputed for being very handsome, charming, and calculative. After the show, Miracle maintained a low profile and later travelled to South Africa where he advanced his career as a certified *Instrument Rated* pilot (Ikeru 2017).

Mercy Eke, popularly known as Lambo was born on September 29, 1993 to parents from Imo State. After her secondary education in Egbu Girls Secondary School, she proceeded to Imo State University where she graduated with a degree in Psychology in 2014 at 21. Thereafter, she started off a career as a video vixen. It is on record that she auditioned for the popular franchise up to four times before she was eventually selected as a contestant. She entered the BBNaija House on June 30, 2019 and in October of 2019 declared the winner, with the added honour of being the first female to win the BBNaija show. Since her victory, she has featured

as an influencer and ambassador for different organizations and brands. She has also made appearances in Nollywood and comedy skits (Osadebe 2020).

The fifth edition of BBNaija was won by Olamilekan Agbeleshe, popularly known as Laycon. He was born on November 16, 1994 and hails from Ogun State. Laycon was born and bred in Lagos State. He attended the University of Lagos from 2012 to 2016 and graduated with a degree in Philosophy. He has always had a strong passion for rap music. While developing his musical career on the side, he worked for several companies and establishments, even as an undergraduate. He set a record as the first housemate to hit 1 million followers on Instagram while still in the show. At the season's finale on September 2020, Laycon was declared winner with 60% of the total votes. After the show, he was appointed as the Youth Ambassador by the Governor of Ogun State. He has since become an ambassador and influencer for different companies, organizations, and brands (Ikeru 2020).

The sixth and most recent edition of the BBNaija (*Shine Ya Eye* edition, 2021) franchise was won by Hazel Oyeze Onou, commonly known as Whitemoney. His birth date is July 6, 1992 and he hails from Enugu State. He had a challenging childhood in Enugu with his mother who was a food seller. In pursuit of greener pastures earlier in life, Whitemoney left Enugu for Lagos where he lived under Lagos Bridge for a while, before a stint as *Okada* rider (commercial motorcyclist). Expressing his struggles to find meaning in life and survive, Whitemoney noted that "I've done photography, fixed tiger generators, and fixed telecommunications mast; all because of hustle and bustle" (Izuchukwu 2022). During the show, there were even pictures of him as a barber going viral. Since leaving the show, he has bagged several ambassadorial deals, including dealing in the importation of designer shoes, with unflagging interest in music.

The essence of going this historical route is to underscore that many of the contestants or winners cannot be said in Nigeria context to be poor, though they may not be millionaires which the show eventually made them. But since Efe's period, the tactics of playing the poverty card has been a major winning factor. Also, some of the winners who did not play the poverty card have been doing well after the show unlike Efe and Laycon who played the poverty card to win. The next section will be devoted to how they played the poverty card.

EXPOSITION OF VOTING PATTERNS AND THE POVERTY IMAGE IN BBNaiJA

The resolve of Big Brother Naija organizers to inculcate democratic voting pattern in who becomes the winner of the show is a welcome development. Democracy seems to be the ideal political system that fits the current world of growing knowledge. In other words, in communities where intellectualism and education is prized, it will be abnormal to adopt an autocratic system of decision making. The essence of democracy is the ability to make informed choices; and these choices must be from an informed perspective. The majority should not just make choices but should make choices that will be beneficial to the society.

Julius Nyerere cited in Oladele Idowu opine that “the crucial task of post-independence politics is that of constituting a legitimate communitarian system of government that will involve everybody” (2019: 25). Nyerere said this to propagate the communitarian attitude of mind which traditional Africa is known for. Inculcating this attitude of mind in a democratic setting is an attempt to moralize democracy, such that individuals, in making decisions, will think about the interest and welfare of others. What this implies is that individuals should choose leaders, who can impact the society positively rather than voting for someone who can throw money around. Democratic rights should not be abused to favour individual electorates who think that they should be redeemed from poverty with public fund but should serve the interest of the majority.

The tragedy of making voting decisions based on economic sentiments has dashed the expectations of those who were voted to win. Chris Osegenwune argued that it is “the inappropriate conceptualization of democracy that is responsible for rights abuses both domestically and globally” (2017: 59). In the case of the BBNaija show, most of the past winners that won based on their skills and character, having gotten a glimpse of hope in acquiring the necessary resources to pursue their life goals, became absorbed in their own vision. Katung Aduwak is still in the entertainment industry and has produced many films. Likewise Miracle Igbokwe and Mercy Eke. However, Efe who won because he played the poverty card cannot be said to be a success after the show. It is observed that since the show, other Efe’s housemates like Bisola, Uriel, and Tboss have become more influential and involved in building other talents (Kabir 2021). His album released since then has not enjoyed public patronage. One can hardly mention his impact in the larger society.

The same way the beginning of Nigeria's democracy prioritized values like character, intellectualism, and exposure as the prerequisites for elective positions especially during the first republic, BBNaija too enjoyed such rosy start. Though beauty and elegance worked for some housemates, some of the winners were considered based on their skills and character. It was during season two when Efe Ejeba won that we discovered the introduction of solidarity by the poor masses. Ayo Osisanwo (2017) did a survey of selected social media comments on BBNaija and discovered that Efe Ejeba got sympathetic votes to win the show because he was a street boy and a symbol of poverty, a typical representation of the average Nigerian young lad. It was easy for Efe to latch on to this strategy because at this point, most young men were already seeing themselves in Efe (Osisanwo 2017: 251).

Aside the fact that BBNaija show is an entertainment programme, it also intends to improve society by showcasing the right values and attitudes necessary for human development. A reality show of that magnitude, watched all over Africa and some parts of the world cannot but call attention to how to behave in the public sphere. For this reason, the roles of virtue or character cannot be relegated to the background. If character or virtue is relegated and money (lack of it or surplus) is promoted, the resultant effect will be that BBNaija winners will become losers in the larger society and such leaders will not be able to impact in the larger society. According to Osisanwo's analysis of the winner as a struggler/hustler, Efe is a symbol of a hustler; "someone who put so much of great efforts into surviving, yet often finds it hard to survive" (2017: 252). Voting for him to win was therefore an attempt to save him from poverty. In season 2, many people felt that Efe needed the cash prize more than many of the housemates. Being a Warri boy, a city in Delta state, normally seen as a slum but with rugged and smart kids, his image elicits compassion and pity. A lot of entertainers who were from such background garnered enough supports and resources to help Efe during the eviction process. After many years, one can hardly say Efe has done the expected good to himself, let alone to society.

Laycon exploited this strategy of playing the poverty card in BBNaija 2020 by telling sad tales about his health and parents. In one instance, he narrated an emotional story to Prince, a fellow housemate, recanting how his dad died. He further stated that he was dedicating his painting to his late dad, and added that winning the show would give him the needed push to achieve a breakthrough in his music career and make his mother

proud (Jonson 2020). In another instance, he was revealed to Dorathy as someone with a Sick Cell (Sickle Cell Anaemia carrier) genotype. In his words, “My Blood group is Sick Cell, I don’t like to tell people my genotype because I feel they will think I’m sick”. Responding to this, Dorathy said, “Guess that is why you are thin” (Ikeji 2020). The Daily Post newspaper of August 26, 2020 reported how some Nigerians had accused this Big Brother Naija housemate of putting up a “pity card” strategy like Efe. Laycon has since fizzled out from the entertainment industry. He declared his intention to use BBNaija show to promote his album and launch himself into the music industry but since he left the house, his impact has not been felt in the society.

Kiddwaya who was his fellow housemate was evicted when Nigerians learnt of his status as the son of a billionaire. Kiddwaya explained to the host of the show after his eviction that the housemates nominated him for eviction because they thought he did not need the money (Odeh 2020). Lending credence to his claim, Samkleff, a music producer argued that Kiddwaya’s eviction from the house came early because Mr Terry Waya (Kiddwaya’s father) claimed in an interview that it is not only the poor that needs BBNaija’s money since “the rich also contribute to the show through their votes...” (Kehinde 2018). Samkleff argued further that “Nigerians do not like to see a rich man’s child competing for something where poor people are” (Kehinde 2018).

In the last edition of the show too, same strategy was adopted by Whitemoney in order to evoke the sympathy of Nigerians to identify with him. He painted himself as one who had struggled through several menial jobs just to survive and fulfil his dreams. In his words, he noted that “I’ve done photography, fixed tiger generators, and fixed telecommunications mast; all because of hustle and bustle” (Izuchukwu 2022). This was followed by his Instagram handler releasing pictures of him doing several menial jobs such as hair cutting. This became a selling point for Whitemoney during the show as his supporters increased. It became obvious that Nigerian masses have the mindset of sidelining the rich in their elections. Many of us are watching how life will turn out for Whitemoney since he won the show in 2020. So far, his musical album released after the show has met with mass mockery for its lack of musicality.

What this points to is that subsequent housemates may prey on this revealed pattern to win the competition. If this trend continues, it will give the programme bad publicity because of its monotonous nature, which may eventually make the programme monotonous and may lead

to loss of interest from viewers or sponsors. This will be the case because people always lose interest in films and shows they can predict its outcome easily. The suspense in a show of that nature is the reason many people are glued to their television sets for weeks.

It is not our argument in this work that Efe, Laycon, and Whitemoney do not have skills or intelligence; many, if not all the housemates from inception are skilful. However, we posit that the trade-off between the consideration for their economic situation and their possession of solid virtues and character for quality leadership beyond the game is too wide. Their condition is now made worse when they are made to believe that they can be successful in life without cultivating the required character.

VOTING PATTERNS IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE POVERTY IMAGE

In the last 50 years, many countries have come to embrace democracy of some kind. However, findings reveal that only about 13% of the populace that have embraced democracy practise it in full (Ijere 2015). Huntington (1991) described this increased adoption of democratic governance as the third surge of democratization. This increased adoption and acceptance of the democratic system of governance immobilized and dissolved a lot of authoritarian and military regimes. In Nigeria, it brought the long reign of tortuous and barbaric military dictatorship to a halt in 1999. The re-introduction of multiparty democracy rekindled hope in the dream of a better Nigeria with high hopes for increased attention to the plight of the people, provision of basic infrastructures, enhanced standard of living, human and capital development, respect for the rule of law in all strata of the government, and the likes. However, 22 years on, Nigeria is still struggling with providing basic amenities for her citizenry, bribery and corruption is still on the rise, institutions are weak, governance is still very poor, compliance with the rule of law is still a mess, and poverty still consumes a greater portion of the populace, despite the abundant mineral and human resources available at her disposal to catalyse development.

Globally, election is considered the hallmark of representative democracy. Credible elections ensure the legitimacy of political leadership and maintain the democratic order. Elections open the opportunity to the citizenry to elect their leaders in the decision-making process of public policies. Hence, in a functional democratic system, citizens who are legally qualified possess the right to exercise this franchise by willfully choosing

between options to express their preferences in leadership. In a multi-party system, the choice is made between competing parties and their candidates as they compete in the election market. The place of election in democratic governance fulfils the following functions: it is a tool employed by voters in demanding accountability from their elected leaders; it enables political enlistment; it enables the citizenry to express their freedom of choice; and it accords moral authority to the political leaders (Ijere 2015).

While there exists a plethora of causes accounting for the predicament of the electoral system in Nigeria, the mentality of the voters, which is a salient factor, has not been hitherto taken into serious account. This paper probes the endemic crisis of the electoral system, paying attention to how the psychology of the electorate has contributed to the malfunctioning of the electoral system and the selection of incompetent leaders. Precisely, we seek to show how the consideration of the social and financial status of the contestants affects the voting attitude of Nigerians, often in favour of those who pretend to identify with the poor during campaigns or carry out public stunts to show alliance with the grassroots.

Towing the same line of playing the poverty card as a winning strategy, a classic demonstration of this phenomenon was expressed by Former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who is accidentally from the South-South region as Efe. Jonathan, during his campaign rally in 2010, after lamenting about the woes of the country and maladministration of past governments, asserts:

I was not born rich, and in my youth, I never imagined that I would be where I am today, but not once did I ever give up. Not once did I imagine that a child from Otuoke, a small village in the Niger Delta, will one day rise to the position of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In my early days in school, I had no shoes, no school bags. I carried my books in my hands but never despaired; no car to take me to school but I never despaired. There were days I had only one meal but never despaired. I walked miles and crossed rivers to school every day but never despaired. Didn't have power, didn't have generators, studied with lanterns but I never despaired. In spite of these, I finished secondary school, attended University of Port Harcourt, and now hold a doctorate degree... My story holds out the promise of a new Nigeria... I have come to say to all of you, that Goodluck Ebele Azikwe Jonathan is the man you need to put Nigeria right. (NBF News, 2010)

While the above speech sounded motivational, it does not fit as a proper argument to warrant any support for a presidential candidate. It appeals more to the emotions of the electorate than to their reason. There was no tangible proof of his transparency, honesty, and leadership potential from past public positions he held. More so, little was said about his capacity or strategic steps he intended to take to achieve development. For a former deputy governor and vice president, his pedigree should have been the basis to endear himself to the people rather than making his poor background as the basis for qualification. One can say Jonathan kick-started the use of poverty imagery by politicians during campaign in 2010.

Over the years, this has become an entrenched strategy employed by various politicians during election campaigns. All of a sudden, politicians who cared less about the welfare of the people, who oppress the people and live aloof from their suffering become lambs and carry out all manners of ludicrous publicity stunts during election campaigns to claim the grassroots. To cite some examples, the erstwhile governor of Lagos State, Akinwunmi Ambode during his electioneering campaign, was seen in pictures happily bargaining and buying roasted plantain commonly known as *bole* from a street trader. However, at one time he banned street trading after winning, in spite of the cry of the people to reconsider the decision in light of their present economic downturn. It became obvious that initial solidarity with the masses was targeted to endear him to the poor masses and also show that he identifies with the common man on the street.

In another instance, when El Rufai was contesting for the Kaduna gubernatorial seat, a picture of him eating sugarcane in the public was released on various social media platforms, tagged as a grassroots man. When Adams Oshiomole was contesting for the gubernatorial seat of Edo state, he was captured patronizing fried plantain from a street hawker. But in a video that went viral after becoming governor, the same person personally supervised the confiscation and demolition of merchandise of some street vendors. In response to a widow who begged to be spared so she and her children could survive, his response was “you’re a widow, so what, go and die” (Osewa 2016). During the 2015 elections in Rivers State, Rotimi Amechi was captured playing the role of Jesus on Good Friday and eating in local cafeterias. The most ridiculous of the publicity stunts he pulled was taking over the plaiting of a woman’s hair in a local market. Similarly, in the same 2015 re-election campaign, Rochas

Okorocha was captured showboating when he took over the roasting of corn from a street vendor, took the woman's child on his laps, and helped to roast as many corns as possible for himself and for other passersby (Osewa 2016). Prior to the 2015 presidential elections, Hajia Aisha Buhari took to several publicity stunts to boost the chances of her husband winning elections. One that stood out was her assisting some women frying bean cakes (*akara*) by the roadside. Buhari was touted as poor with only one hundred and fifty cows in his farm. Ebunoluwa Olafusi (2018) reported Atiku Abubakar to have boasted of founding many successful businesses and this separates him from Buhari who always talked about having "150 cows that never increase in number, year in year out". Buhari with 150 cows received massive voting because the masses thought that being a poor person, he would understand the plight of the poor and make eradication of poverty a priority but this does not obtain in his government. Atiku who is and presented as a successful business executive lost that election because of the assumption that he must be corrupt to be rich.

More recently, prior to the 2019 general elections, Atiku Abubakar of PDP almost replayed same appeal to pity employed by Goodluck Jonathan in his election campaign. He was captured saying that, "I started out as orphan selling firewood on the streets of Jada in Adamawa, but God, through the Nigerian state, invested in me and here I am today. If Nigeria worked for me, I owe it as my duty to make sure that Nigeria also works for you" (Olowolagba 2018). Often times, this is always followed up by buying bags of rice, salt, and other foodstuffs or sharing money among the poor. In recent preparation to 2023 elections, Atiku including some aspirants still playing the poverty card announced that their forms were bought for them, pretending they cannot afford the forms (although this is also meant to give the impression of being a choice candidate). Yet money and food items were always distributed during election since they are aware of the poverty state of the masses. Emmanuel Onah and Uche Nwali (2018: 1–22) catalogued the woes of this problem and concluded that "money politics is at the heart of the general crisis of democracy and governance in Nigeria, and unless this is mitigated, reforms aimed at bringing about good governance and curbing other anomalies ...may not produce the desired results". It has been argued by some that politicians deliberately make Nigerians poor so that they can be manipulated during elections. The basis of this argument is that instead of focusing on factors like character, intelligence, and competence which are the hallmarks of

good leadership, Nigerians are giving consideration to money (lack or surplus). This is disastrous in a democratic process since it does not prioritize consideration of important leadership skills and this has been the bane of Nigerian's development.

CONCLUSION

Almost all cultures in Nigeria emphasize the importance of good character. The Yoruba traditional system of beliefs holds firmly the role of character (*iwa*) in human failure or success. Though success or failure can be an issue of destiny (*ori*) or luck, such success or failure is temporary. A socially significant success is the one borne out of human character since character (*iwa*) is the only virtue one can rightly own. It is the only thing that follows us both here on earth and there in heaven (Abimbola 1975: 393–394).

We have highlighted the significance of how the voting attitude of Nigerians during the BBNaija reality TV show and the choice of which contestant is produced within Nigeria's democratic system are a product of a mindset. One observation in the two voting systems is the consistent attitude of the masses in positioning themselves to vote housemates and politicians who can project poverty status. In both elections, character, capability, and virtues of contestants are compromised in exchange for the economic status of their choice winners. With this consistent attitude, we argue that the resultant effect is the same: inert leadership or winners.

Consequently, this work recommends a two-pronged voting pattern where quality and quantity will meet. In this sense, a panel of successful leaders who can spot good character from the quality of participation by the contestants in the show should be set up behind the scene to contribute 30% while the audience will have 70% of the votes because of the overriding economic interest. This model is like the system in some democratic society where votes are shared between the masses and the electoral college of elites. In this way, quality leadership or winners will emerge.

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Youths, *Big Brother* Reality Show and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria: Lessons for the Nigerian Government

Olusola Olasupo and Christopher Isike

INTRODUCTION

Voter apathy has characterized the political behaviour of Nigerian citizens since the advent of the fourth republic in 1999. And this apathy is prevalent across all social groups, although it is more prevalent among the youth (Ekwenchi and Udenze 2014). As a result, the Nigerian government and candidates for political office must find new and innovative ways to engage eligible voters to take part in the politics and governance of the country, particularly, among the youth and first-time voters (Ekwenchi and Udenze 2014). In response to the challenge, the Nigerian government has engaged in political awareness to ignite the interest of its citizens and most importantly the youth. One of such efforts by

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the Federal government was the establishment of the National Orientation Agency (NOA). Unfortunately, it has not been successful in getting the Nigerian youths to participate in politics as expected, especially in terms of going out en masse to vote during the general election. As reported in *Business Day*, 14 December 2021 Nigeria has 61.3 million youths between the ages of 19 and 35, but they are completely under-represented in government. This means that 33% of the population of the federation is underrepresented in government. Ironically, the volume of the vote recorded by BB Naija in recent times has been attributed to the same set of youths that usually shows apathy during the general election. For instance, the total votes cast on Big Brother Naija 2018 edition according to the former presidential candidate Kingsley Moghalu was 170 million, whereas the overall vote cast in the 2019 general election was 27 million (Egbas 2019). Only 34.75% of Nigerians registered to vote in the 2019 presidential elections, making it the lowest voter participation in the country's history (Adigun 2020). According to the BBN Report of 2021, Nigerian youths (between the ages of 18 and 34) constituted just over 80% of the total number of those who watched Season 6 of the BBN edition in 2021.

The discrepancies between the number of youths who participate actively in BBN voting and voting during general elections is disturbing and demonstrate a voter disinterest in general elections. The level at which Nigerian youths go all out to vote their preferred candidates from the first edition of BB Naija in 2006 to the sixth edition in 2021 has not been replicated in the Nigerian general elections since 1999.

With a high level of insecurity, a bad economy, a low standard of living, a high rate of youth unemployment, bad leadership, corruption, insufficient and inadequate infrastructures, and a slew of other social issues in Nigeria, one might believe that the only significant way Nigerians, most importantly the youths that represent the larger percentage of eligible voters, can change all of this is by voting in large numbers during elections. Consequently, the percentage of Nigerian youths who vote during elections till date is low, limiting the country's ability to influence the desired change.

Holding on the above background, the authors seek to find out the factors that constitute voting apathy among the Nigerian youths as against their active participation in BB Naija voting.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Big Brother Naija

Big Brother Nigeria, as popularly called during the first edition and later coined into a more indigenous name BB Naija, is a reality television show that began on 5 March 2006 in which housemates are separated from the Nigerian society for three months to participate and compete in a variety of activities. Contestants' eviction is decided by both the audience and the show's organizers. The vote is conducted via youths' compatible media platforms such as website, mobile site and through Apps on MyDStv and MyGOtv. The BBN show's concept is premised on the idea of George Orwell's novel 1984, which emphasizes all-encompassing supervision and the necessity of proof and facts. During the duration of the presentation, a hidden supervisor monitors the complexity of contestants' attitudes and thinking patterns using CCTV. The maiden edition involved fourteen housemates who competed for the first position. The final episode of the maiden edition took place on 4 June 2006 with Katung Aduwak, a 26-year-old Nigerian who hails from Kaduna, emerging as the winner while Francisca Owumi, a 21-year-old lady from Lagos, emerged as the runner-up. Five other editions of BB Naija have been held since its inception in 2006 totalling six editions. The six editions of BB Naija are summarized in the Table 15.1 that comprises the year, locations, slogan and winners.

The success of electronic voting in BB Naija through the use of social media platforms is one thing that distinguishes the show and cut the interest of the audience. The importance of social media and how it influences voting behaviour in Nigeria is therefore discussed in what follows.

Table 15.1 Summary of six editions of BB Naija

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Slogan</i> | <i>Location</i> | <i>Winner</i> |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2006 | - | Nigeria | Katung Aduwak |
| 2017 | See Gobe | South Africa | Efe Ejaba |
| 2018 | Double Wahala | South Africa | Miracle Igbokwe |
| 2019 | Pepper Dem | Nigeria | Mercy Eke |
| 2020 | Lockdown | Nigeria | Laycon |
| 2021 | Shine Ya Eyes | Nigeria | Hazel Oyeze |

(Source Wikipedia)

Social Media

The advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), specifically the advent and integration of computers/smartphones and the internet with the use of social media has resulted in a substantial shift in the way people connect throughout the world. With most African countries having access to the internet and social media, this innovation does not leave Nigeria behind, being Africa's greatest economy and the world's most populated black nation.

Lately, social media has attracted a lot of attention, particularly, from young people who want to get involved in politics. With the emergence of youth-friendly internet/social media platforms like Google, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and others, Nigerian youth's political indifference has significantly decreased (Olasupo et al. 2022). This development can be traced back to Barack Obama's world-record-breaking use of social media to promote his political ambitions as a US presidential candidate in 2008. Several countries, political scholars, students of politics and politicians globally, have maintained the use of the internet and social media platforms to encourage citizens, particularly the youth, to actively participate in political processes.

The advancement in social media has made it universally available and accessible on a worldwide scale. Democracy benefits immensely from the opportunities given by new media, which attracts active young people who participate regularly across multiple platforms. In today's Nigeria, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and others are so popular among the youth and general public that the political class feels compelled to embrace them to remain relevant. Consequently, concerns have been raised on how the Nigerian youths have diverted their energy in the use of social media from benefitting the Nigerian voting process to actively participating in the BB Naija show through electronic voting. The same Nigerian youths that show apathy towards vote during the general elections in Nigeria have now constituted the larger percentage of voters during BB Naija shows through the use of social media platforms. The reasons behind voting behaviour exhibited by the Nigerian youths during general elections will be shown by the authors as it is unfolded by this paper.

Voting Behaviour

In the literature on political behaviour, voting behaviour is a significant issue, and its investigation has long been one of the central priorities of political scientists. The study of factors that influence individual and group electoral choices is fundamental to the origin and foundation of political behaviour (Guardado and Wantchekon 2017; Heywood 2013; Diener 2000). The need to learn more about and comprehend how people make political decisions led to an interdisciplinary synthesis of political science and psychology, resulting in the formation of political psychology as a field of study. The study of what motivates voters to make more educated electoral choices is one of the key concerns of political psychology (Diener 2000).

Voters may use ‘affect’ as a result of political sophistication and have political stimuli that may result in an emotional political bias as theorized by scholars such as Healy et al. (2010). Surprise, wrath, worry, fear and pride are just a few of the processes of ‘feeling’ that might influence voting behaviour (Gomez et al. 2007). Researchers such as Miller (2011) and Gomez et al. (2007) have stressed ‘emotion’ as a driver of voting behaviour with the belief that anger may prevent individuals from voting, particularly, for a government in power whose policies or acts do not make them happy and drive them to rage. This behaviour was exhibited on a large scale in Nigeria’s 2019 presidential election as the voter turnout was considered the lowest since the beginning of the fourth republic.

According to Richey (2008), in his study “The autoregressive influence of social network political knowledge on, voting behaviour, social media has a considerable consequence on voting behaviour”. In particular, discussants’ knowledge influences voting behaviour in a way that is similar to Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague’s autoregressive influence of political preference. When voting, citizens immersed in networks appear to evaluate a variety of viewpoints. According to Igbinudi (2011), the increased usage of Internet and telephone technology has resulted in widespread adoption of social media platforms by Nigerian electorates, particularly the youth, who are becoming increasingly energetic and tech-savvy. The Nigerian government will have no choice than to use the available media platform to interact with this target audience who have already diverted their skills in the use of social media platforms towards their active participation in electronic voting during BB Naija shows while showing apathy towards voting during the general elections in Nigeria

due to lack of electronic voting. From the foregoing, voting behaviour can only be successfully measured during the election. This, therefore, dictates the authors' desire to interrogate the concept of election.

Election

Elections are regarded as the core of the political system. Perhaps no subject in politics is more important than whether or not we elect the officials who govern us. In practice, elections are regarded as nothing less than a form of democracy. It is a way through which the citizens influence their government by eradicating the bad elements from the helm of affairs. According to Heywood (2004), an election is a method of occupying a position through the selection of a group of people. Elections may not be an adequate prerequisite for political representation in and of themselves, but they are unquestionably a required requirement. However, elections are frequently performed in private organizations such as corporations, church groups and labour unions to elect leaders or resolve specific policy issues. Elections can also take place within certain governmental bodies or institutions, such as when members of the legislature elect House Officers or when electorates elect their representatives in state and national assemblies, as in Nigeria. The interest of this paper is centred on the voting behaviour of the Nigerian youths during the general elections vis-a-vis voting during BB Naija shows.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical underpinning for this paper is largely based on Max Weber's theory of social action as referenced in Adeleke (2016), which states that people act according to their definitions of situations (Mughan, 1990). This comprises willingness to act or refrain from acting, as well as active or passive acquiescence, and it might be based on other people's past, current or predicted future behaviour. According to Weber, referenced in Adeleke (2016), not all human behaviour is action, and not all human action is 'social'. As a result, in this situation, one may say that electorate's voting behaviour in general elections is based on a solely rational understanding of the political process. Laws and customs, educational content and currents of opinion are all common social truths in any community, and they all contribute to a people's (political) culture. Each individual behaves differently depending on their culture, and some

forms of behaviour uniformity may be discerned in groups or a whole community.

The social action theory is appropriate for this study because it considers both exterior (i.e. institutional) and internal (i.e. age, sex, religion, tribe, education, perception, etc.) elements in understanding electorate voting behaviour. The importance of this theory is still premised on the reality that in every liberal democracy such as Nigeria, voters are seen as the soul and role models. Furthermore, there are numerous motivators for citizens to vote, including material, social and economic rewards; so, voter turnout in elections remains a severe danger to the democratic system of government.

Voting in this capacity refers to the act of formally stating one's choice of candidate or political party in an election by combining individual preferences into a collective decision. Voting during an election does influence one's likelihood of voting in the next, depending on how the political climate answers to one's degree of political engagement and social and economic necessities. Citizens are frequently compelled to take action as a result of a perceived economic or social benefit. This, from time to time, reflects on Nigerian voting behaviour. Citizens cast votes based on specific criteria that influence people's voting behaviour, not on whether the country's economy is strong or if the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigerians is growing. Consequently, both the opposition and the ruling parties take advantage of the electorate's indecisiveness to manipulate election results and participate in vote-buying, a relatively new problem in the area of political science when it comes to elections.

The 2019 presidential elections saw the lowest voter turnout since the beginning of the fourth republic in 1999. According to data, 69% of 61 million qualified voters cast their votes during the presidential elections in 2003, but this percentage fell to 57% in 2007 and 54% in 2011, before slipping to 44% in 2015.¹ Only 35% of registered voters cast ballots in the 2019 general election, out of a total of 84 million qualified Nigerians with the political right to decide the political leaders for the country. This is contrary to the actions put forward by Nigerians especially the youths in their participation during the BB Naija shows since inception in 2006. The show has been experiencing higher votes year after year until the last

¹ <https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/158/>.

edition that was held in 2021. The authors present the details of increased voting in what follows.

METHODOLOGY

The authors settled for the desktop research method by making use of the available secondary data on Big Brother Naija and Nigerian elections. Existing documents, information and statistics on BB Naija show since 2006 with much attention on the 6th edition held in 2021 which is the most recent and the Nigerian general elections since the beginning of the fourth republic in 1999 with much emphasis on the 2019 presidential election were reviewed. Published data by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Big Brother Naija over the past years were found useful by the authors. Using the desktop research method assisted the authors in easily generalizing and making a conclusion based on desk-based sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Youth Participation in BB Naija

Because of the nature of the show, Big Brother Naija has attracted a large audience that is largely youth following. The show's housemates, tasks and attractive winning prizes have made it one of Nigeria's most popular reality television shows. The show's large audience was one of the most important factors in its success. The total votes for the 2021 edition of BB Naija according to the show's headline presenter, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu are estimated to be around 1 billion. Mr John Ugbe, the general director of Multichoice Nigeria, revealed in 2020 that the show received over 900 million votes across all platforms, shattering previous records (BBC 2020). The BB Naija show received over 240 million votes in its fourth edition in 2019, with over 50 million votes cast in the final week (Ajala 2019). Besides voting, the BB Naija show has a big audience following on all media platforms, including Twitter and Instagram. It is worth noting that the bulk of BB Naija voters are youths.

The result of season 6 of BB Naija shows high level of participation among the audience through massive vote that was estimated to be 1 billion as reported by the presenter, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu. The results of other editions of the show and voters' massive turnout have been

reported earlier. The number of votes has been increasing since the first edition held in 2006. The show has enjoyed the highest percentage of the Nigerian youths being the major audience and greater number of voters. The voters' turnout enjoyed by the BB Naija reality show mostly among the youths has not been the same during the Nigerian general elections since the commencement of the fourth republic in 1999. Instead of Nigerian democracy gaining more popularity through voter turnout as is the case with BB Naija, citizens' enthusiasm to vote during the general elections has been reducing drastically thereby leading to voter apathy in the country.

For instance, Fig. 15.1 below shows the number of registered voters across the country to be 84 million.

The number of registered voters for the 2019 general election was meant to be good news when compared to registered voters during the previous elections as shown in Fig. 15.2 below. However, despite the higher number of registered voters recorded, the 2019 election has the lowest voter turnout when compared with previous elections in Nigeria. The percentage of voting apathy recorded was huge.

In a bid to identify, the percentage of the age group that has the lowest voter turnout during the 2019 general election, the authors analysed from

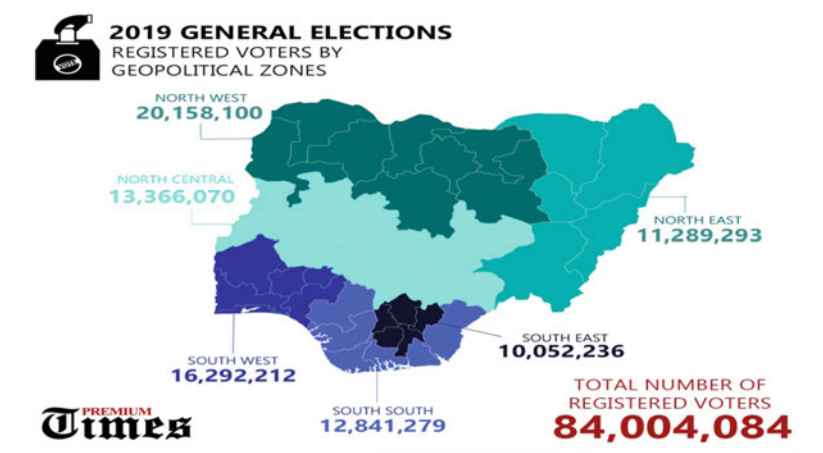


Fig. 15.1 2019 Registered voters by geopolitical zones (*Source* Premium Times Nigeria)

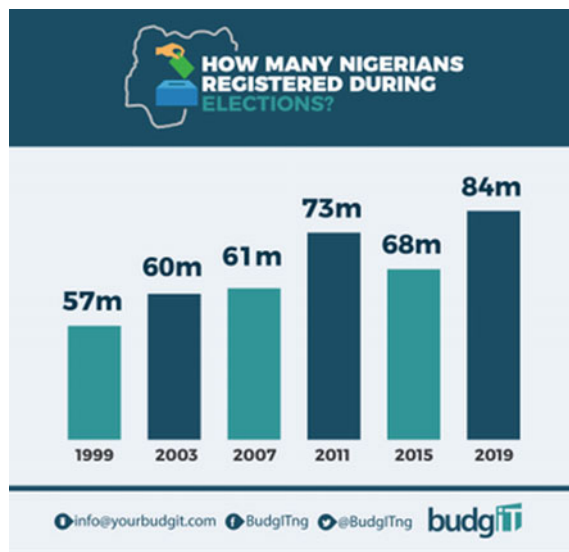


Fig. 15.2 Registered voters since 1999 (Source BudgIT Nigeria)

the viewpoint of the registered voters based on age group and the final percentage of the vote cast. It was noticed that the Nigerian youths have the highest voter registration of 51.11% as shown in Fig. 15.4 below followed by the middle-aged 29.97% registration, elderly 15.22% registration and old age 3.69% registration, respectively. Consequently, the youth's highest voter registration recorded by INEC does not reflect in the final election result that shows a high level of apathy with the that only 35% of registered voters voted in the 2019 presidential elections. This implies that the highest level of apathy was exhibited by the Nigerian youths (Fig. 15.3).

Details of the 2019 presidential election results are shown in Fig. 15.4 below. The figure presents the results of votes for the two major political parties that took part in the election namely, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC).

According to data given by the Independent National Electoral Commission, only 35% of registered voters voted in the 2019 presidential elections. The percentage indicates 28,614,190 persons who voted in the elections, which is 0.19% less than accredited voters, who made up

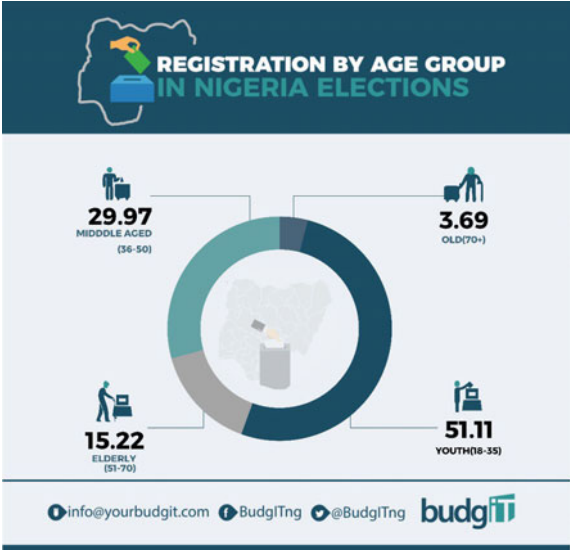


Fig. 15.3 2019 Registered voters by age group (Source BudgIT Nigeria)

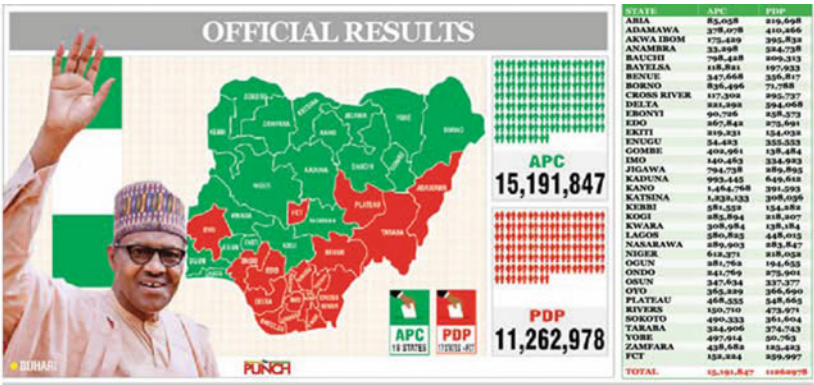


Fig. 15.4 Official results of 2019 presidential election (Source Punch Newspaper, 28 February 2019)

35.66% of the total registered voters, or 29,364, 209 people. Furthermore, the data revealed that only 33.18% of the 82,344,107 registered voters, or 27,324,583, were valid votes that influenced the final decision (Punch, 28 February 2019).

DISCUSSION

The popularity of the BB Naija show is due to a well-designed voting system that assures that favourite contestants are retained in the house until the overall winner emerge. As a result, people all over the world feel emotionally attached to their favourite contestants, and they utilize their voting power to keep their favourite in the competition. Even after the show is over, most viewers remain loyal to their favourite celebrity.

Bisola, Cee-Cee, Tacha, Mercy, Erica, Laycon, and most recently, Liquorose, Cross and Whitemoney were some of the housemates who received a lot of votes in previous seasons. Many people, most notably youths, spent large sums of money on recharge cards and subscriptions to keep the voting numbers high and ensure that their favourite contestant get the prize.

Consequently, BB Naija is broadcast in Nigeria, a country known for the notorious electoral process such as Vote-buying, bribery, utilizing public funds for campaigns, extensive media campaigns, voter intimidation, spending beyond permissible bounds and manipulation of election results. All of these repercussions are unjust and morally reprehensible, and they undermine the country's good governance. This makes Nigeria to be perceived as the complete opposite of the BB Naija voting procedure.

Nigerian electoral process is marred by entrenched corruption on the one hand and needless tribal and religious conflicts which dictate the country's electoral process on the other hand. There is no doubt that Nigeria has lots to learn from BB Naija's voting process.

The use of website and mobile Apps for electronic voting, like the BB Naija show does, will not only enhance voters' turnout but will also make Nigeria a true democracy where people's choice will always prevail in elections as it is in BB Naija. The former SMS voting system in BB Naija was abandoned due to several cases of vote buying by rich supporters. This was done to discourage vote-buying which is prevalent in the Nigerian voting system. This is what Ayeni et al. (2019) described as stomach infrastructure.

Africa Magic's online voting poll, which is open to potential voters across the world, Africa Magic's mobile and websites, and MyDstv and MyGotv applications, which are exclusively available to Nigerian users, are now accredited ways to vote for your favourite contestants.

BB Naija's voting method is tenured, meaning it opens every Monday night and ends by 9 p.m. on Thursday. Mobile and website voters can cast a total of 100 votes. This open voting process is renowned for producing trustworthy results that are void of any discrimination. Before the results are being presented for the first time by a prominent announcer, a credible body openly acknowledges outcomes. This transparency in the voting process made people vote more. For instance, in 2019, almost 240 million people voted in favour of the programme. Over 900 million votes were cast by 2020. The total votes for the 2021 edition of BB Naija according to the show's headline presenter, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu are estimated to be around 1 billion.

Nigeria's electoral system has a lot to learn from BB Naija's voting procedures and outcomes. The high turnout on BB Naija's show, as well as the apathy shown in the country's general elections, especially the 2019 presidential election, make a solid case for electronic voting.

The elections in Nigeria in recent times have been marked by apathy with prevalence among the youths. Fear of conflicts that usually leads to loss of lives and properties, bullying by political thugs, lack of trust in Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), suspicion of results manipulation, fear of ballot snatching, inducement of electoral staff, delay in the voting process and failure of accrediting machines are all factors that contribute to voter apathy, especially among the Nigerian youths that this paper focus on during the general elections in Nigeria.

For instance, only 29.3 million voters were accredited at the 2019 presidential elections, representing 35.6% of the entire voting population (Punch Newspaper, 28 February 2019). The overall number of votes cast was 28.6 million, with 27.3 million legitimate votes at the end of the election. This indicates that 33.1% of eligible voters in 2019 voted during the presidential election. This same pattern was observed across the 36 states of the nation.

If the country's political process is to witness a true resurrection of democracy, it should replicate and support the electronic voting system as exemplified by BB Naija in their reality shows since 2006.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that Nigeria's paper-based voting system is costly and inefficient as it encourages voting apathy most importantly among youths due to several constraints attached to the process as was the case during the 2019 general election. Learning from BB Naija's innovative electronic voting system will not only usher Nigeria into a new democratic dispensation of an inexpensive, quick, effective, reliable, and reputable electoral process that will herald the best and deserving leaders for the nation but will also allow for a participatory democracy where voters apathy will become history. Examples of countries where electronic voting is practiced to good effect globally include Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Pakistan, Philippines, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, United States of America, and Venezuela. There is a correlation between the ease, reliability and fraud-proof factors of electronic voting and a high number of voter participation especially amongst the youth population in these countries. For example, the success of the electronic voting system in India, the largest democracy in the world with 814 million voters and incredibly diverse culture, linguistics, terrain, and socioeconomic conditions, is worthy of emulation for Nigeria as a country which share some similarities with India in terms of being the largest democracy in Africa with 84 million accredited voters and a heterogeneous society with diverse cultural groups and languages.

The magnitude of India's 2019 general election attests to how electronic voting combats election rigging and simplifies the electoral process. Nearly, 900 million eligible voters cast ballots in 542 parliamentary constituencies, resulting in an unprecedented 67% voter turnout. Electoral fraud is a major worry in a democracy of this size with a complicated multi-party system such as Nigeria. However, the adoption of electronic voting in India's electoral process has given citizens confidence that their votes count in election results and democratic governance.

There is, therefore, no doubt that the adoption of electronic voting as exemplified by BB Naija and India with the massive turnout of the electorates and free and fair election will serve the Nigerian polity better if adopted. It must be noted that the electronic voting system has its challenges as experienced by many countries that adopted it and later settled for the paper voting system. However, we encourage the Nigerian government to learn from BB Naija and the success of the Indian electronic

voting system as discussed above and avoid pitfalls that can discourage its adoption and successful practice in Nigeria.

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Connecting Them with Home: *Big Brother Naija* and Nigerians in Diaspora

Ruth Oore-Ofe Ogunnowo 

INTRODUCTION

At a particular time in the past three years, the Nigerian entertainment industry keeps a large percentage of the Nigerian population at home and in diaspora spellbound with the Big Brother Nigeria (BBN) reality show. The BBN reality Television show is not just a competition; it gradually became a show sponsored by companies with prospects for huge returns (Kenneth and Azika 2015). The BBN show was first aired on March 5, 2006, running through to June 4 of the same year. It was aired and viewed on M-Net and DSTV Channel 37 with an unprecedented viewership of five million Nigerians, residing in Nigeria and many in the diaspora (Nwafor & Esike, 2015). The five million votes were verified by Alexander-Forbes, the voting techniques and voting patterns released by Forbes birth results afterward (Nation Newspaper 2019).

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Nigeria's entertainment industry is the second money generating revenue aside crude oil and has been valued in millions of dollars (Endong, 2014). Nollywood has been established by experts as Nigeria's leading cultural export to the Global North and the world at large since it is the second movie industry in the world (Punch Newspaper, 2017). *The New York Times* (2018) also reports that the BBN show generates \$700 million yearly and predicts that it will hit a whopping \$900 million by 2020, interestingly, about \$900 million was attained by 2019. Excitingly also, the Big Brother Nigeria show fetches sponsors worth over \$1 billion after each episode since 2018. The 2020 edition realized about \$2billion as companies synergized to achieve this with Betway company leading as frontline settlers in the sponsorship of the reality show (Okorie, 2020). Considering these financial feats, the BBN reality show has made so far, it becomes a potential for investment not just for Nigerians at home but those in the diaspora, further connecting them with home. Commendably, participation in the show is not limited to only Nigerians at home. In the past three editions, Nigerians in the diaspora have been duly represented. This could present an opportunity for willing participants from the diaspora to have a sneak peek of potential investment prospects and possibly exploit it.

The Big Brother Nigeria show has overtime harnessed a laudable audience strength. Chikafa and Mateveke (2012) note that the BBN show is the new big thing attracting over 30 million viewers, with the 2020 edition having about 45 million viewers and voters. The voting was cast online even from Nigerians in the diaspora. In view of this, it is pertinent to note that, there is a growing interest of Nigerians who live abroad and who might want to invest in this show and this has a potential for capital flight in Nigeria. This study explores the possibility of linking the diaspora with Nigeria by virtue of the BBN reality Television show, thereby unveiling the potentials of the show as an avenue for creating job opportunities, investment for local and foreign investors, and in the long-run increasing Nigeria's Gross National Income (GNI). It is therefore important that the diaspora participation in the BBN reality show is encouraged.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE TO THE BIG BROTHER REALITY SHOW

The concept of the BBN show is derived from an ideology of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which primarily focuses on an all-inclusive surveillance and the importance of evidence and facts. The novel considers the possibility of the government monitoring the aspects of the lives of citizens via a form of technological innovation—the concept of totalitarianism, where individuals may be deprived of their independence because ‘the Big Brother is watching you’ (Olaopa, 2019). The revered Big Brother is unseen, yet he controls the very existence of the housemates, such that even when a foot is set wrong, he knows of it. He doles out punishments or gives privileges when there is a need for it. He is the one person housemates may communicate with that is not himself visible among the housemates (Luci Post, 2019). Daniel (2016) explains that in the course of the show, the nuance of people’s attitudinal and thought pattern are monitored through surveillance, screens, cameras, and sensors by an invisible superior.

Various movies and songs have hitherto represented Orwell’s idea. Such songs as David Bowie’s and the British Band’s in the ‘70 s. The movie, *Dr. Who*, also describes the notion of totalitarianism as described in Orwell’s novel. The Big Brother Television Reality Competition was first aired in Netherlands by John de Mol in 1999. In the course of the show, individuals lived in a secluded house under hidden technological surveillance. They were referred to as housemates and evicted based on the voting of viewers. The last housemate in the house gets a cash prize. The Big Brother Franchise is present in over 54 countries around the globe (Olaopa, 2019; Pico, 2021). Several versions of the Big Brother Show now exist, such as; Celebrity Big Brother for Netherland and Teen Big Brother for Britain. Others include: Big Brother Germany, Big Brother Switzerland, Big Brother Sweden, Big Brother Italy, and Big Brother Nigeria (Nwafor & Esike, 2015, p. 4).

The Big Brother Africa version was introduced in 2001, produced by Endemol of South Africa. The first edition of the Big Brother Africa show featured 12 housemates from 12 different African countries (Chikafa & Mateveke, 2012; Nwafor & Esike, 2015). The Show lasted for 106 days. The fifth edition in 2010 saw a Nigerian—Uti, emerge the winner with a grand prize of \$180,000. By 2014, the show had had about nine seasons. As at the third season, about 170 million votes were cast, with Nigerians

expending about 7.2 billion naira on voting housemates, an approximation of 5.2 billion naira of profits (DBpedia n.d; Olaopa, 2019). The Big Brother House is located and produced in South Africa. Housemates from different parts of Africa live together in a house for about 3 months. The Big Brother House in South Africa majorly produces and hosts most editions across the continent of Africa.

BIG BROTHER NIGERIA REALITY TELEVISION SHOW AND ITS POPULARITY EVEN BEYOND NIGERIA

In Nigeria, the show started off as Big Brother Nigeria but was later changed to Big Brother Naija—an indigenous synchronization of the series. As stated by *The Nation newspaper* (2019), it is a subordinate of the global franchise of the Big Brother TV series that is aired across Europe and Africa in which housemates compete to win a grand prize at the end of the series, by striving to avoid eviction from the house. The contestants are kept in the house by viewers who vote to either evict or retain housemates who have given them reasons to be saved in the house. An announcement of the show's host that in the last week of the 'Pepper Dem' Season of 2019, about 50 million votes were recorded is to a large extent an affirmation that every vote counts (Ajaja, 2019).

The Big Brother Naija reality television series premiered on March 5, 2006, where a number of Nigerians were isolated for three months and were made to compete in various activities. This first episode featured fourteen contestants and saw Katung Aduwak, a 26-year-old Nigerian from Kaduna state emerge winner. During the Show, viewers may vote to keep their favorite housemates through the; Big Brother Naija Voting Poll Site, Big Brother Naija mobile site, Big Brother Naija website, and the My DStv app or My GOTv app available to subscribers only (Africa Magic, 2021; Martinez, 2021). From the sixth edition, voting may not be done through the Short Message Service (SMS) as it used to be (Showmax, 2021). Nigerians in the diaspora are not exempted from viewing and voting to either keep their favorite participants in the contest or to evict them.

Millions of Nigerians are entertained by the Show as it distracts them from the daily struggles that characterize existence in the country. Many stay glued to their television sets throughout the duration of the Reality TV show, watching the antics of the housemates (Olaopa, 2019). Largely, the show propels intensive subscription particularly for DStv and GOTv

where the Africa Magic stations are found, thereby contributing, however little, to the economy of Nigeria.

The traffic driven by the participation of Nigerians is also commendable as this helped companies make a profit margin of over \$1 million dollars from participation and interrelatedness. The social media platforms also devoted official pages for the Big Brother Naija show. According to Nwafor and Esike (2015), the Twitter official page, for instance, had over fifty thousand followers from the onset, connoting intense followership. Somewhat impressive is the constant increase in participation from Nigerians in the diaspora and their confidence to put in all it takes to participate in the show within the purview permitted by the management of the show. More so, as a result of the clamor from Nigerians particularly those in the United Kingdom, to watch the show live, the show is now aired on ShowMax, MultiChoice's online video-on-demand platform (Idris, 2020).

Below is a table that shows at a glance the participation of Nigerians and Nigerians in the diaspora in the past five seasons of the BBN reality Television show.

Table 16.1 shows that the first two seasons had no presence of Nigerians in the diaspora despite the creation of awareness of the show by the media. By the third season, 25% of participation was recorded; two of the three participants from the diaspora made it to day 70 before they were evicted. Munirat Antoinette Lecky popularly called "Anto" made it to day 77, few days before the final day of announcement (DStv, 2019). Anto, a 28-year-old sport manager from United States of America made her family and friends within and without Nigeria cast votes. Largely, a huge awareness for the show was created, particularly in the black community of the United States.

Table 16.1 Participation of Nigerians in diaspora in BBN from Season 1–Season 5

| <i>Seasons</i> | <i>Season 1</i> | <i>Season 2</i> | <i>Season 3</i> | <i>Season 4</i> | <i>Season 5</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Local | 14 | 14 | 15 | 22 | 18 |
| Diaspora | - | - | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Total No of Contestants | 14 | 14 | 20 | 26 | 20 |
| Percentage | 100% | 100% | 25% | 15.4% | 10% |

Source Compiled by the Author

The second edition of the BBN reality Television show took place in 2017, eleven years after the first was staged. It was tagged “See Gobe” and saw an increase in viewership and followership on social media platforms suggesting that partnering companies also witnessed economic increase. The third edition witnessed more followership. The diaspora participation of 25% suggests that the show had reached to a large extent global prominence. In 2020, a media and technology company revealed that the BBNaija eviction show on August 19, 2020, had 1.6 billion impressions on the social media, and about 380,000 posts from audiences around the world (BI Africa, 2021).

In the course of the fourth edition, in a bid to ensure international participation alongside seeking an all-encompassing way of integrating Nigerians in the diaspora into the show, a sports betting company based in Nigeria but with a wide scope of coverage abroad came on board with sponsorship plan that incorporates all and sundry. The company named Bet9ja, introduced a crypto-coin called Bet9ja coins which was awarded each time tasks are given as a price tag for anyone (Zimwara, 2020). Furthermore, it was used as a means to evict participants who were not actively utilizing it. There was also the Big Brother Naira, a virtual currency used by housemates to get whatever they needed in the course of their stay in the house. This idea was introduced at a time when debates were on in Nigeria as regards the acceptance of crypto-currency as a legal tender for businesses. This medium therefore aided many crypto-currency trading companies. These were some of the avenues through which the show gained global audience and awareness in the fourth edition (Edeme, 2021; Zimwara, 2020).

For the fifth edition of the BBN Television reality show, Betway Group—company headquartered in Malta, partnered with BBN. More gift items were won by the leading participants in the fifth edition in 2020. In the previous editions, winners won prizes that totals around two hundred million naira, the 2020 edition saw the winner walk home with; thirty million naira cash prize, a trip to Dubai on the account of Travelbeta, a 2-bedroom apartment by Revolution Plus, home appliances courtesy Scanfrost, a year supply of Pepsi, an Oppo Reno 3 mobile phone by Oppo Mobile, a top range SUV by Innoson Motors, a trip to Dublin by Guinness, a year supply of Indomie, Munch it and Colgate as provided by Tolaram group (Augoye, 2020). These gift items were provided by companies operational within and outside Nigeria. About

Table 16.2 Companies partnering with BBN operational in Nigeria and in the diaspora

| <i>Nigeria</i> | <i>Diaspora</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| TravelBet | Tolaram Group |
| Innoson Motors | Guinness Company |
| Revolutionplus | Oppo Mobile |
| | Pepsi Company |
| | Scanfrost |
| Total = 3 (37.5%) | 5 (62.5%) |

Source Compiled by the Author

30% of these companies are operational in Europe and Asian continents (BBC Nigeria, 2020; Olapoju, 2019). The table below shows the percentage of foreign companies' sponsorship as against Nigerian-based companies.

Table 16.2 shows that 62.5% of the total partnering companies in the fifth edition in 2020 were from diaspora as against the 37.5% of companies operating in Nigeria.

During the grand finale and in the course of the presentation of awards, for instance, the world had the opportunity to view the newest product of Innoson Motors, an opportunity to sell Nigerian products to the world at large. Moreover, Revolution Plus witnessed a massive increase in sale as Nigerians in the diaspora were encouraged to gift their loved ones with landed properties as gifts. Pepsi products also had increased patronage in Nigeria in the course of the show (Olapoju, 2019).

One may refer to the economic potentials of Nigeria as soft power, a phenomenon Joseph Nye (2011) describes as the possessions that generate interest for a state with a view to attract foreigners into seeing a contextual offer. This may be cultural, mental, educational, or entertainment related. He noted that an upheld culture or norm if projected to an international audience will facilitate and compel foreign attention to such state.

Table 16.3 shows that 75% of the diaspora BBN housemates from the third series worked in the entertainment industry. This to a large extent influences the number of viewers the show has. According to Ogbona and Ogunnubi (2018), there were about 39,884 tweets and over 544,040 persons following on Twitter between January 28 and March 28, 2018, as friends and relatives of housemates stayed tuned in ensuring their loved ones emerge the winner and are awarded the grand prize. Other social

media platforms such as the BBN Instagram page had over one million posts and 645,000 followers keeping the page active all through the course of the show. According to Wikipedia (2018), in 2020 alone, there were over thirty thousand applicants; of the thirty thousand, only twenty people were selected to participate after proper scrutiny of their video clips sent to the management of BBN Television reality show, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BBN Television reality show since inception has entertained many young Nigerians at home and in the diaspora. To a large extent, many have seen what Nigeria is worth as well. The cash prizes and gift items won have largely increased the interest of many Nigerian youths (home and abroad) who come out in large numbers to apply for the screening exercise of the BBN show. A few of the several applicants make it to the house after strict scrutiny.

Table 16.3 Profession of BBN housemates from the diaspora since season 3

| <i>Housemates</i> | <i>Profession</i> | <i>Age on entry</i> | <i>Residence</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Munirat Antoinette "Anto" Lecky | Sports Manager | 28 | United State of America |
| Leo Babarinde Akinola Dasilva | Managing Director | 25 | London |
| Princess Linda Onyejekwe | Unspecified | 25 | New York City |
| "Rico Swavey"—Patrick Fakoya | Singer, Rapper | 25 | New York City |
| "Teddy A"—Temidayo Adenibuyan | Singer, Song writer | 29 | United States |
| Oluwatobi "Tobi" Bakre | Photographer, Investment Banker and Actor | 23 | South Africa |
| Mike Edwards | CEO and Athlete | 28 | Manchester |
| Steve "Ike" | Model | 26 | Texas/Imo |
| Ikechukwu Onyema | | | |
| Khafi Kareem | Police Officer | 29 | London/Ekiti |
| Venita Akpofure | Actress | 32 | UK/ Delta |
| Victoria "Vee" Adeleye | Musician | 23 | Lagos/ London, UK |
| Florence Wathoni Anyansi | Fashion entrepreneur and parenting blogger | 29 | Karatina, Kenya |

Source Wikipedia, 2020

Table 16.4 Winners of the Big Brother Nigeria show between 2006 and 2020

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Slogan</i> | <i>Location</i> | <i>Winner</i> |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2006 | - | Nigeria | Katung Aduwak |
| 2017 | See Gobe | South Africa | Efe Ejaba |
| 2018 | Double Wahala | South Africa | Miracle Igbokwe |
| 2019 | Pepper Dem | Nigeria | Mercy Eke |
| 2020 | Lockdown | Nigeria | Laycon |

Source Compiled by the Author

The Table 16.4 gives a list of the winners since the inception of the BBN show.

The winners of the BBN show are often treated to juicy cash prizes and packages. Some get endorsements internationally and locally, increasing their fame and positioning them among the elites in the society. The grand prizes since the inception of the show has ranged from 25 to 90 million (Ogunnubi, 2021).

For instance, having emerged winner of the BBN show, Katung Aduwak returned to his kinsmen in Kaduna state, Nigeria to celebrate and empower some of the people. The state government further sponsored some more shows by virtue of his victory. Katung diverted some of his funds into his film production career. This afforded him the opportunity of directing musical videos and hosting top-notch TV series and movies that were aired on Africa Magic (Bada, 2019).

In the second edition tagged “See Gobe” which lasted for 78 days in 2017, Efe a 23-year-old, emerged winner. He came into the house with lots of distinct Warri slangs and techniques that helped him get the grand prize. After winning the prize, his music career received a boost as he got more endorsement and featured more artists that helped him attain much in his career. He featured music artists such as; Iceprince, BOJ, Olamide asides other upcoming artists. Warri was showcased to the world through Efe; the culture, the great sense of humor, and the economic potentials inherent in Delta state, Nigeria, were unveiled. While in the house, social media platforms went wild because of him as Nigerians were intrigued about the way of life of the Warri people (*Vanguard*, 2017).

Miracle Ikechukwu Igbokwe emerged winner of the season 3 of the BBN show in 2018. The season lasted for 85 days. Then came season four tagged “Pepper Dem” held in 2019. It witnessed more media coverage and social media followership, thanks to the inclusion of more Nigerians

living in diaspora. Mercy Eke emerged winner of this season. This episode had a handful of the housemates with rare gifts and intellect. The Mercy Eke vs. Anita Natacha Akide (well known as Tacha) controversy was the major highlight of the episode as their faceoff became a discourse on many radio and television programs nationwide. Contrary to the rules of the house, Tacha was involved in a fight, and that saw her ejection rather than being evicted from the house, giving Mercy Eke the platform to emerge the winner (Akanbi, 2019). Mercy became the first female to win the Big Brother Naija show.

The fifth edition was tagged the “Lockdown” edition since it took place during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. After seventy (70) days, Laycon a 26-year-old Lagos-based rapper and music artist emerged winner with a cash prize of eighty-five-million-naira (BBC Nigeria, 2020). In Ogunnubi’s (2020) opinion, by virtue of the BBN show, the ideology that Nigeria is indeed the business hub of Africa is established. The BBN may be regarded as a soft power tool (Ogunnubi & Akinola, 2020) to harness wealth for a developing economy as Nigeria’s. The government has allowed for an initiative that not only engages Nigerians but empowers them annually.

THE BIG BROTHER NIGERIA SHOW AND ITS INFLUENCE ON NIGERIA’S ECONOMY

The BBN reality Television show is aired on DStv and GOtv Channels for an average of 70 days—about three months of a given year. Except an individual pays subscription for his cable Television, such individual may not be able to view the show. This subscription must be made consecutively for at least three months to enjoy the BBNaija show. The funds accruable to MultiChoice Nigeria is enormous with about five million viewers subscribing monthly to catch up on the show.

More so, viewers both at home and in the diaspora on a regular basis cast votes to keep their favorite housemates in the competition. For instance, during the 2020 ‘Lockdown House’ edition, the organizers of the show shared that the show recorded about 900 million votes from viewers around the world. Votes cast via SMS come with a cost of 30 naira each (Idris, 2020). Prior to the fourth edition, the third edition saw about 170 million votes, amounting to 5.1million naira at 30 naira per SMS vote. Though the organizers claim that the telecoms industry held back a substantial part of the profits made from the votes cast, the grand

prizes given to the winner as well as sponsorships suggest the organizers have made gains from the show (Adeyemo, 2018). To a large extent, the Nigerian economy is boosted with subscriptions and votes casts for as long as the BBN show lasts.

The organizers of the show have agreed that the customers of DStv and Gotv will be given preference during the audition, those who pay their subscriptions early enough will also be allowed early auditioning. The opportunity to participate in the show is availed to every Nigerian nationality who has a valid Nigerian passport, those in diaspora are not restricted from participating (*The Culture Newspaper*, 2021). This development will in no small measure increase the capital base of MultiChoice Nigeria who will in turn contribute to Nigeria's economy directly or indirectly.

In the fourth edition, for example, a crypto-currency was introduced and this changed the face of the series and took it to a larger global audience. This also afforded it the opportunity of deciding who leaves and who stays in the house strictly on social media while the crypto-currency called Bet9ja coin was strictly used for rewarding housemates who excel in each task given. This also brought to the audience the relevance of currencies like Bitcoin, Tron Coin, and Etherun (Edeme, 2021; Zimwara, 2020).

In the fifth edition of the BBNaija Show, Betway, an international betting company came on board with huge financial sponsorship, as well as Pepsi and Innoson Motors—multimillion dollar companies. The presentation of the SUV from Innoson Motors in 2020 revealed that the Nigerian manufacturing sector has recorded progress. Other brands showcased in the course of the show include; Indomie, Gulder, Pepsi, Oppo, Darling hair among several others. Largely, this has increased the visibility and engagement of these brands and there is a possibility of attracting investors and buyers to the country thereby promoting Nigeria and enhancing its economy (Olapoju, 2019).

More so, in the course of the BBNaija Show, there is always a need to contract vendors and service providers to make available items such as food and wears to the housemates and other crew members. This allows for the publicity of brands of entrepreneurs on a small and large scale, such that the demands for certain goods as jewelries, shoes, and clothes increased with vendors even running out of stock (Olapoju, 2019).

However, infinitesimal it may seem, the fact remains that the BBN reality Television show when featured in Nigeria provides for employment opportunities for certain individuals in the country. Some of such groups

who will benefit from this development include the; artisans—photographers, cameramen, electricians and other technicians, Information Technology personnel, music artistes, hoteliers, caterers, food vendors, and home keepers (Bada, 2019; Olapoju, 2019). In the 2019 edition, for instance, about 100 crew members were employed to work behind the scene to ensure viewers enjoy the show (Orodare, 2020). Many artisans take up jobs on large and small scale capacities for as long as the show lasts. What this means is that many of these groups of people may continue to leverage on the experiences gained on working for the success of the BBNaija show to boost their businesses (Olapoju, 2019). In the long-run, many family units by virtue of these job opportunities have the rare opportunity to make ends meet.

It is interesting to note here that the producers of the BBNaija show in the first edition in 2006 made certain that only Nigerian music was played in the course of the show. The rule did not change in subsequent editions (Ogunnubi & Akinola, 2020). Different Nigerian artistes perform on the show especially on Saturday nights and eviction nights. Innocent Idibia—popularly known as *2baba*, launched his merchandize on his visit to the house. As the whole of Africa watched, the Oraimo neckband in-ear Bluetooth headphones were lunched. Also, MI and Adekunle Gold also had the opportunity of performing on the show ahead of the launch of their music. This has allowed for popularity and global patronage of the Nigerian music industry (Olapoju, 2019). Many foreigners and Nigerians who view the show in the diaspora are connected to Nigeria by virtue of the Nigerian music always featured on the BBNaija show.

However, profitable or entertaining the BBNaija show may seem, it is not without its criticisms. Some Nigerians are of the opinion that the show promotes immorality. For instance, the contestants are seen kissing or making love on the show (Agency Report, 2018). The show largely displays indecency, nudity, and may be pornographic in nature, not usually suitable for under-aged persons. Some others are of the opinion that the show is not educative and of no value to Nigeria (Yaakugh, 2021). Many Nigerians have suggested that the organizers of the show make it more educative as many teenagers and youths watch the show. Contrariwise, Dike (2021) believes a closer observation of the show reveals that it is very educative. Ogunnubi (2021) also opines that the show portrays elements of human social interactions.

The organizers of the show have further focused on the strengths of the show than its criticisms. The Big Brother Nigeria house is situated in

an unknown location in Lagos with more Nigerian involved in making the show a success and capital flight to South Africa returning to the country (Bada, 2019). The Nigerian entertainment sector in recent times is finding a global audience (Adeoye, 2020). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) records that in 2016, the creative sector of Nigeria where BBNaija show is categorized, contributed 2.3% to Nigeria's GDP (BI Africa, 2021). The BBNaija show in the long-run has the potential for economic growth and development. International investors like the Universal Music Group may find more local record deals through the show.

CONNECTING NIGERIA'S DIASPORA WITH HOME VIA THE BIG BROTHER NIGERIA SHOW

Nigerians in the diaspora may be described as a population of people who share a common heritage with Nigerians at home but are scattered in different parts of the world. These group of people have a good memory of home, they consider their original homeland as true home and look forward to an opportunity to keep in touch with this homeland. The fact remains that these group of people left their homeland due to political, economic, and social factors.

The BBN reality Television show not only entertains Nigerians in the diaspora, but gives them an opportunity to reconnect with their home countries physically and virtually. While many come into the country to audition for or participate in the show, others connect via the internet to cast their votes and keep abreast of events in the country. In some cases, some Nigerians around the world tune in to the reality television show specially to have a feel of Nigerian music (Ogunnubi & Akinola, 2020). Also, to the amazement of Nigerians at home, many Nigerians in the diaspora are willing to be a part of the BBN show. For instance, the fourth edition of the BBN reality television show was described as 'more foreign than Nigerian' as about three of the housemates were from the diaspora while thousands of people had applied to be auditioned (Agencies, 2019).

In my opinion, extending participation opportunities to the diaspora is a commendable feat of the organizers of the BBN reality television show. The fact remains that many Nigerians in the diaspora are willing to return to their homeland, even if not permanently, but to contribute to the growth of the society, community, or place where they originated from (Butler, 2003, p.319). Hence, if given an opportunity to have a

feel of the country, people from the diaspora may observe sectors where investments may be made to better the homeland. Butler (2003) emphasizing on the concepts of social and cultural goods and capital submits that,

the return to homeland allows the traveler to display the goods and capital in both social and cultural forms, and terms of tangible wealth that he/she has accumulated to those remaining, and can thus reinforce distinction, and reveal gained prestige to the old society. (Butler, 2003, p. 319)

Nigerians in the diaspora if allowed to have a sense of belonging, to identify with events in the homeland, and given a safe environment to explore, have the potentials of contributing in no small measure to the growth of the country. One of the BBN housemates from the diaspora—‘Anto Lecky,’ for instance, expressed delight in the opportunity to be back in Nigeria, and her intentions to contribute to the progress of the country (Ayoola, 2020).

The government institution pioneering the diaspora scheme and strategy should give more credence to the Big Brother Naija reality Television show, particularly, to ensure that Nigerians in the diaspora are well incorporated into the structure, and contribute to Nigeria’s creative industry. The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), for instance, may device the Diaspora Tourism and Diaspora Direct Investments schemes (Boyle & Kitchin, 2013, pp. 321–322).

With the Diaspora Tourism scheme, the BBNaija show will be referred to as home coming for the diaspora; Nigerians from the diaspora have the privilege to tour around the country, cement long-term relationships between Nigeria and the diaspora. Erica Nlewedim, one of the housemates of BBNaija show in 2020 under the auspices of Legend Extra Stout and Star Radler brands of the Nigerian Breweries, as an Ambassador of the company made a home coming tour around Abia state, Nigeria where she originally hails from. The company launched its new improved brand of the product, and encouraged the youths of the states to be bold and adventurous. Erica was excited about this experience as she saw it as an opportunity to connect with her root. She told personal stories of her resilience to her fans, and admonished them to be authentic, to understand who they really are and embrace their culture (Onikoyi, 2020).

The Diaspora Direct Investment scheme also allows for the diaspora who having toured and observed the business trends in the country, locate opportunities for investment in the society. Joint venture capital funds may be created between entrepreneurs in Nigeria and selected members of the Nigerians in the diaspora. As many young Nigerians devise several means to sail through the economic challenge in the country without necessarily depending on the government, support from the diaspora via the BBNaija show may experience growth in their businesses. In sum, diasporic connections give different means of mobilizing people and capital as well as suggests ideas by which social organizations can cut-through the boundaries of nations (Kalra et al. 2005, p. 25).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

MultiChoice Nigeria has to a large extent got the Nigerian economy working through the BBNaija Television reality show. The ability to incorporate Nigerians in the diaspora is a credit to the organizers of the show. The benefit of the show with the inclusion of Nigerians in the diaspora cannot be overemphasized. The informal and formal sectors alike have so far been beneficiaries of the show such that one may refer to the BBNaija show as another oil well of Nigeria.

It is pertinent therefore that the organizers of the show in collaboration with the Nigerian government allow for an increased participation of Nigerians in the diaspora, not only to show case Nigeria to the world as the real giant of Africa, but to also give a better image of the country that must have been tainted in the past. Rather than having the notion that Nigeria is perpetually backward as regards its economy, the diaspora may with the BBNaija show come to the understanding that the creative industry in Nigeria is making a lot of progressive efforts. Multinational organizations and skilled workers in the diaspora may realize opportunities for investment in Nigeria if they have a sneak peek of happenings in the country.

Most importantly, as earlier suggested, the Nigerians government through NiDCOM must promote diaspora participation in the BBNaija show adopting the Diaspora Tourism and Diaspora Direct Investments schemes. Nigerians in the diaspora should have reasons to reconnect with their roots and implement positive changes. The annual BBNaija show can be employed as a platform to attract diaspora contributions to the development of Nigeria

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INDEX

A

Adaptation, 4, 7, 46, 48, 51, 58, 66, 71, 190, 226
Africa, 6, 7, 9, 23, 51, 53, 55, 66, 71, 72, 84, 85, 87–89, 94, 104, 112, 116, 133, 163, 170, 173, 176, 178, 179, 181, 186, 189, 190, 206, 209, 213, 215, 216, 227, 247, 249, 250, 252, 253, 266, 275, 276, 281–283, 287, 288, 290, 291, 293
African identities, 7, 116
African Magic, 136, 156, 190
Agenda-setting theory, 175
Anarchy, 230, 242
Apparatus of power, 34, 39
Art, 2, 3, 32, 37, 38, 65, 68, 135, 205, 207, 210, 211, 240

B

BBNaija, 6, 7, 32, 34, 36, 37, 40, 55, 85, 87–106, 132, 133, 144, 159, 161, 162, 164, 186, 191–198, 206, 211–215, 217, 218,

248–254, 259, 265, 270, 275, 284, 288–293

BBN housemates, 8, 9, 117, 133, 143, 145, 215, 285, 286, 292

BBN winners, 153, 155, 161, 165

Behavioral identity, 121–123

Behaviour, 8, 65, 66, 111–116, 119, 122, 125, 160, 163, 177, 193, 194, 267–269

Benthal, Jeremy, 33, 34, 39

Betway, 213, 280, 283, 284, 289

Big Brother Africa (BBA), 2, 26, 46, 51, 55, 66, 71, 116, 134, 170, 171, 178–180, 187, 190, 247, 281

Big Brother Nigeria (BBN), 51, 86, 132, 136, 155, 156, 171, 174, 176, 177, 181, 190, 247, 265, 279, 280, 282, 287, 290

Big Other, 225, 226, 229, 231–233, 235, 236, 241, 242

Blair, Arthur, 33

C

Capitalist mode, 70
 Commercialisation, 175
 Communication, 5, 18, 21, 33, 35, 37, 40, 44, 48, 54, 74, 76, 112, 155, 156, 172, 178, 189, 208, 228, 248
 Comparative, 9, 11, 154, 248
 Computer-mediated discourse, 131
 Conflict discourse, 131
 Constructed reality, 8, 71
 Content creation, 10
 Contestants/participants/housemates, 2, 8, 11, 26, 27, 32, 33, 36, 37, 46, 47, 53, 56, 57, 66, 71, 72, 74, 75, 86–88, 90, 94, 96, 99, 100, 103, 111–116, 118–122, 125–127, 132, 134–136, 142, 154–157, 163, 170, 171, 173, 181, 186, 192, 193, 195, 210, 213, 214, 216, 226, 227, 232–237, 239, 247–249, 251, 254–256, 259, 265, 274, 275, 280–282, 284, 285, 289–292
 Corpus linguistics, 133, 136, 137, 149
 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), 118, 131, 132, 138, 139
 Critical stylistics, 9, 132, 137, 138
 Cultivation theory, 10, 187, 196
 Culturacide, 36
 Cultural homogenisation, 56
 Cultural hybridization, 191
 Cultural identity, 189, 191, 194
 Cultural infusion, 59
 Cultural interrogation, 185
 Cultural pluralism, 58, 175
 Cultural proximity, 44, 48, 49, 51, 55, 56
 Cultural studies, 2, 36
 Culture, 2, 6, 7, 10, 36, 44, 48, 49, 53, 57, 58, 65–70, 72, 77, 87,

88, 112, 126, 155, 176, 177, 179–181, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 196, 198, 207, 208, 227, 259, 268, 285, 287, 292

D

Democracy, 8, 25, 35, 252, 253, 255, 258, 266, 268, 269, 271, 274–276
 De Mol, John, 1, 32, 86, 132, 155, 169, 281
 Desire, 43, 49, 50, 58, 66, 120, 124, 149, 160, 190, 228, 229, 232, 234, 235, 237–240, 268
 Diaspora, 2, 3, 11, 279, 280, 282–286, 288, 290–293
 Diaspora Tourism scheme, 292
 Dicey, A.V., 230, 241
 Dike, Kenneth, 39, 290
 Dominance, 67, 77, 143, 149, 179
 Dreams, 153, 154, 165, 228, 254, 255

E

Editions, 9, 11, 32, 37, 46, 47, 68, 71, 76, 87, 93, 114, 116, 153, 154, 157, 160, 163–165, 181, 213, 216, 236, 247, 251, 264, 265, 270, 271, 280–282, 284, 285, 288–291
 Efe Ejaba, 265, 287
 Eke, Mercy, 47, 76, 87, 157, 215, 250, 252, 265, 287, 288
 Election, 3, 9, 11, 23, 35, 180, 248, 249, 254–259, 264, 266–272, 274–276
 Elite, 2, 23, 74, 75, 77, 175, 259, 287
 Enjoyment, 191, 226, 230, 234, 238, 241–243

Entertainment, 2, 3, 5–7, 10, 25, 40,
45, 47, 51, 53, 59, 69, 74–76,
84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 94–99,
102–105, 111, 115, 155, 172,
173, 175–177, 186, 187, 198,
204, 210, 212, 218, 226, 247,
248, 253, 285, 291

Entertainment industry, 6, 58, 117,
204, 248, 252, 254, 279, 280,
285

Ethical, 3, 57, 161, 176, 187, 194

Eviction, 53, 74, 86, 87, 94, 99–101,
103, 105, 125, 156, 170, 186,
192, 210, 248, 250, 253, 254,
282, 290

Experiences, 3, 11, 33, 45, 49, 68,
88, 101, 115, 153–155, 165,
173, 211, 216, 290, 292, 293

F

Facebook, 8, 88, 112, 114, 116, 118,
123, 126, 127, 136, 139, 143,
266

Facebook comments, 136

Fashion, 7, 53, 54, 58, 73, 74, 194,
205, 207, 211, 214, 215, 218,
227, 286

Female housemates, 8, 113, 114,
116–127, 135, 181

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis
(FCDA), 114, 118

Fighting, 10, 123, 197, 236

Foucault, Michel, 6, 17–22, 25, 27,
34, 39, 40

Franchise, 1, 5–7, 32, 43, 45, 46, 50,
51, 55–59, 75, 86, 112, 132,
169, 173, 226, 247, 250, 251,
281, 282

Freud, Sigmund, 228, 235, 237, 239

G

Game(s), 9, 27, 46, 67, 74, 86–88,
96, 99, 101, 135, 158, 193, 207,
213, 232, 234, 236, 237, 239,
248, 255

Gazing eyes, 4, 25

Gender, 3, 47, 91, 92, 113–118, 120,
124, 126

George Orwell's novel, 171, 226,
248, 265

Global citizen, 59

Globalization, 56, 58, 67, 70, 178,
181

Glocalisation, 3, 43, 44, 48, 56, 58

Government/governor, 20–25, 76,
77, 158, 159, 161–163, 165,
171, 174, 175, 177, 181, 194,
206, 217, 227, 230, 231, 241,
242, 251, 255, 257, 258, 264,
267–269, 281, 287, 288, 293

Grand prize, 10, 75, 76, 86–88, 170,
186, 281, 282, 285, 287, 289

Gross National Income (GNI), 280

H

Halliday, M.A.K., 138

Hazel Oyeze, 87, 157, 251, 265

Hegemony, 3, 69

Heterogenization, 44, 58

High culture, 2, 3

Human relation, 3, 5, 10, 226, 228,
236

I

Identity, 8, 47, 53, 56, 58, 69, 88,
113, 114, 117–122, 126, 127,
149, 179, 191, 227

Ideology, 5, 8, 49, 65–67, 70, 71,
74, 75, 77, 138, 170, 187, 228,
231, 242, 281, 288

Immoral, 57, 85, 88, 105, 124, 125, 135, 161, 180, 187, 192–198
 Indecent dressing, 10, 193, 194
 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), 270, 272, 275
 Indigenous culture, 10, 36, 198
 Indoctrinated, 70, 71
 Information Communication Technology (ICT), 69, 172, 266

J

Jeffries, L., 132, 138–140

K

Katung Aduwak, 75, 87, 157, 249, 252, 265, 282, 287
 Kissing, 192, 193, 290

L

Lacan, Jacques, 4, 228–230, 238, 241
 Laycon, 72, 74, 76, 87, 158, 159, 162, 197, 215, 234, 251, 253, 255, 265, 287, 288
 Lockdown, 9, 10, 68, 72, 74, 85, 87, 154, 157, 165, 190, 233, 236, 265, 287, 288
 Lying, 10, 35, 195, 196, 198

M

Manipulation, 36, 57, 75, 274, 275
 Marina Abramovic's *Rhythm 0*, 240
 Marxists, 70, 71
 Mass media, 35, 36, 67, 70, 175
 McGowan, Todd, 234, 239–243
 Media, 3, 11, 19, 23, 24, 35, 43–46, 48, 49, 51, 56–59, 66–71, 73, 75, 88, 112, 117, 133, 134, 161, 164, 169–176, 178, 179, 185,

204, 207, 209–212, 249, 265–267, 270, 274, 283, 284, 287

Media contents, 44, 49, 51, 55, 75, 174, 175

Media criticisms, 5

Mental identity, 119, 120

Miracle Igboke, 87, 190, 252, 265, 287

Miracle Ikechukwu Igboke, 9, 154, 157, 163, 165, 287

Moral identity, 124, 125

Morality, 3, 37, 47, 68, 116, 135, 160, 176–178, 187, 192, 198, 227

Moshood Olamilekan 'Laycon' Agbeleshebioba, 9, 154, 157, 163, 165

Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), 154, 160–162

MyDStv, 265, 275

MyGOtv, 265, 275

N

Naming strategies, 8, 132, 133, 140
 Narratives, 9, 33, 40, 54, 188, 216, 217

National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), 160, 174, 190

National Orientation Agency (NOA), 264

Nigeria, 1–3, 5–11, 32, 35, 40, 45–47, 53, 55, 57–59, 67, 69, 74, 75, 77, 85–89, 99, 100, 112, 117, 126, 132, 133, 135, 136, 154, 155, 158, 171, 174, 177–181, 189, 190, 192, 195, 204–206, 209, 214, 216–218, 225, 227, 231, 237, 239, 241–244, 249–251, 255, 256, 258, 259, 264–266, 268, 270,

271, 274–277, 279, 280,
282–293

Nigerian government, 11, 24, 174,
176, 181, 217, 218, 243, 263,
267, 276, 293

Nigerian reality show, 112

Nigerians, 1–3, 5–7, 10, 11, 23, 25,
28, 32, 40, 43, 47, 51, 53–55,
57, 58, 66, 70–72, 74, 75, 84,
85, 87–89, 99, 103, 105, 114,
116, 117, 122, 124–127, 133,
134, 136, 148, 154, 158,
171–175, 177–181, 186, 187,
189, 190, 192–194, 196–198,
203–206, 209–212, 216–218,
227, 237, 241, 242, 248, 249,
253, 254, 256, 258, 259,
263–267, 269–272, 274–276,
279, 280, 282, 283, 285,
287–293

Nigerian television broadcasting, 173

Nigerian T.V. shows, 169

Nigerian youth, 7, 9–11, 66–72, 74,
76, 77, 85, 102, 116, 153, 154,
165, 210, 218, 264, 266, 268,
272, 275, 286

Nineteen Eighty-Four, 33, 71, 248,
281

Nudity, 9, 10, 47, 57, 69, 85, 102,
103, 105, 117, 160, 171, 177,
180, 190, 194, 196, 197, 290

O

Orwell, George, 33, 71, 75, 86, 190,
247, 281

P

Panopticon, 6, 17–21, 25–28, 34,
38–40

Participation, 9, 11, 66, 69, 74, 88,
113, 154, 239, 259, 264, 267,

269, 270, 276, 280, 283, 284,
291, 293

Paternal figure, 233, 236

Pepper Dem, 87, 121, 157, 210, 235,
265, 282, 287

Pere, 121, 122, 133, 136, 137,
140–149

Politics, 3, 75, 84, 252, 258, 263,
264, 266, 268

Popular/low culture, 2, 3, 25, 28,
68–70, 179, 226, 228

Prison, 17, 18, 20, 21, 25, 26, 28,
33, 34

Privatisation, 175

Psychoanalysis, 225, 228, 229, 231,
241, 242

Psychological, 19, 90, 173

Psychosis, 241, 242

Public/public perception, 5, 9,
18–20, 23, 26–28, 33, 46, 50,
67, 74, 86, 88, 112, 134, 146,
153, 154, 160, 164, 165,
175–177, 180, 186, 192, 194,
196–198, 211, 214, 216, 218,
231, 234, 240, 248, 252, 253,
255–257, 266, 274

Q

Qualitative content analysis, 136

R

Reality television (RTV), 2, 3, 43, 45,
46, 53, 71, 86, 111, 185–187,
189, 198, 226, 265, 270, 279,
280, 283, 288, 291, 292

Rebranding, 2, 58

Regimentation, 75

Representation, 44, 47–50, 53, 56,
57, 91, 92, 114, 131–135, 149,
227, 253, 268

(Rule of)law, 10, 230, 231, 236, 237,
241–243, 255

S

Self-other relation, 4

Showmax, 85, 282, 283

Sinclair, Stéfán, and Rockwell,
Geoffrey, 136

Social identity, 118, 123

Socialization, 69, 228, 229

Social media, 8, 19, 20, 36, 47, 67,
84, 112–114, 117, 121, 126,
127, 133, 134, 136, 162, 164,
172, 211–215, 218, 253, 257,
265–267, 283, 284, 287, 289

Social order, 18, 35, 237, 241

Social relations, 38, 48, 226, 229–231

Social responsibility theory, 175

Society, 3, 5–7, 9, 10, 18–20, 22, 23,
25, 28, 32, 34, 38–40, 44, 57,
58, 65, 68, 70, 71, 114, 115,
154, 164, 175, 176, 178, 188,
191, 194, 196, 197, 226–228,
230–232, 236–238, 242, 243,
249, 252–254, 265, 287, 292,
293

Soft power, 3, 47, 179, 206, 217,
227, 285, 288

Spiritual identity, 125

Subjectivity, 3, 35, 226, 228, 229,
232, 236, 237, 240

Superego, 240, 242

Surveillance, 4, 5, 18–22, 25, 26, 28,
34, 37, 39, 45, 46, 75, 86, 88,
170, 190, 226, 232, 234, 243,
281

Symbol(ic), 4, 68, 188, 225,
228–230, 232–236, 243, 253

T

Tasks, 84, 86, 88, 93, 94, 96, 97,
99–101, 103–105, 112, 132,
216, 252, 289

Taxation/tax, 154, 158, 159, 164

Television reality show, 71, 86, 153,
165, 171–174, 176, 177, 180,
181, 185, 284, 286, 293

Television series, 86, 189, 190, 247,
282

The punch, 274, 280

Totalitarianism, 75, 281

Traditional/conservative/religious,
20, 21, 36, 47, 53, 56, 112, 117,
125, 132, 160–162, 176, 177,
180, 181, 191, 234, 240, 248,
259, 274

2019 general election, 180, 258, 264,
269, 271, 276

2021 housemates faceoff, 288

U

Uses and Gratification, 75, 76

V

Value, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 23, 28, 36, 37,
40, 44, 57, 59, 76, 86–88, 95,
97, 102, 105, 177, 186, 188,
197, 206–209, 212, 217, 218,
226

Vanguard, 85, 136, 187, 287

Variation Theory, 9, 153, 155, 165

Voting apathy, 180, 264, 271, 276

Voting behaviour, 11, 265–269

W

Whitemoney, 87, 133, 136, 137, 140,
141, 143–146, 148, 149, 157,
251, 254, 255, 274

Wilde, Oscar, 31

Word cloud analysis, 136, 137

Y

204, 217, 251, 263, 264, 266,
269–271, 290, 292

Youths, 3, 6, 8, 11, 24, 25, 66, 70,
71, 74, 76, 77, 112, 117, 126,
160–162, 169–172, 180, 197,

Z

Zizek, Slavoj, 232, 233