

# GLOCALIZING THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CONCEPT: IDENTIFYING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NIGERIAN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Ijeoma Onyeator

Pan-Atlantic University NIGERIA  
ionyeator@pau.edu.ng

## ABSTRACT

The creative industries are the fastest growing sectors of the world economy in terms of business opportunities, employment generation and earnings. This paper examines this global industry, but from the perspective of its local impact in developing countries like Nigeria. It traces the trajectory of the creative concept in first world countries where it has been highly successful and builds on this background to analyze the characteristics of Nigeria's creative space. A number of scholarly debates have plagued the emergence of the creative industries, particularly division over definition and scope. While these are discussed, the paper argues that greater attention should be given to the local adaptation of the creative concept. The central argument running through the paper is that the creative industries are distinctive and unique to the societies in which they exist. For this reason, the Nigerian government could consider going *glocal*, by appreciating the influence of local characteristics on the adoption of global paradigms. The paper suggests that the earning potential of the creative industries in Nigeria may not be maximized until her local realities are considered and weaved woven into the fabric of strong policy and legislation.

**Keywords:** Creative industries, Glocalization, Localization Nigeria's creative industries.

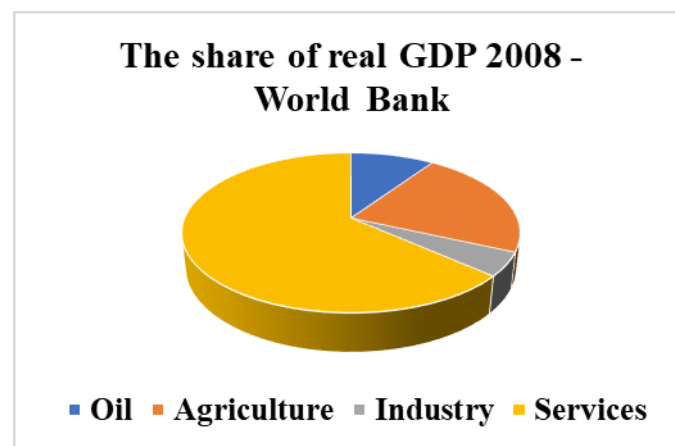
## INTRODUCTION

The global concept of the creative industries was first elaborated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and it was conceptualized to include those industries that not only require creativity and skill; as well as but also those which have the capacity to create wealth and jobs (DCMS, 2001). The overarching idea was that adopters of the concept could transform their economies financially and reposition their countries for increased trade and investment on the world stage. Early adopters like the United Kingdom have been so successful that the creative economy is the main driver of the UK economy (British Council, 2017). Following reports of international success, many governments around the world now recognize the creative industries as key ingredients for the accomplishment of their national economic plans. Nigeria has also adopted the concept, albeit in the last six to seven years. Today, prominent sectors of Nigeria's creative industries prominent sectors – film, music and fashion - are the fastest expanding major markets globally. As at 2016, Nollywood (the Nigerian film industry) was raking in a profit of \$500 million per annum (PWC, 2016). The music industry, which has gained traction all over Africa and overseas, was worth \$40 million in 2011 and \$47 million in 2015. The projection for 2020 is this for this figure to reach \$86 million (PWC, 2016). Also, fashion and design earnings are put at slightly over ₦2 trillion of Nigeria's rebased GDP (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). With these impressive figures, the creative industries have been viewed as a sector that could help the federal government reach its goal of diversifying the nation's economy away from oil

exports, making it a stronger force to reckon with on the global stage (National information, communication policy, 2012).

### Problem Statement

Although the discourse around the monetization of creativity through the creative industries seemed to be a priority, Nigeria's creative industries have not mirrored the level of success recorded by first world economies, many of which have used the creative concept as a launch pads. Success in this paper is conceptualized as achieving of the results wanted or hoped for. In line with this understanding, it is necessary to find out why Nigeria's creative industries have not achieved the results which the government anticipated, following the adoption of the creative concept. One study points to the fact that in comparison to other sectors of the economy, the creative sector still has a relatively low profile. As at 2008, the creative industries were not listed among the sectors that contributed significantly to the country's GDP (World Bank, 2008).



Source: World Bank, 2008

By 2011, the main sectors contributing to the Nation's GDP were listed as agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, crude petroleum and gas, the movie industry, as well as finance and insurance. This issue was a key topic of discourse at the National Economic Summit Group conference in 2011, where there were calls for optimizing the creative potentials of the creative industry through global partnerships and increased local funding (NESG, 2011). Another reason lies in the suggestion that much of the information about the creative industries is not collected in a systematic manner and sometimes, the information is dated. (The Work Foundation, 2010). This is one of the reasons the British Council in collaboration with local partners carried out a mapping of the Nigerian creative industries to gather empirical data on its dynamics (The Nigerian Creative Economy Report, 2013). One key finding from the study was that creative businesses are excluded from data on the major economic sectors of the Nigerian economy. It also discovered that much of the problem had to do with the structure of the industry which functions in a disconnected manner as a result of arranging its activities around formal, informal and non-formal activities simultaneously.

Years later, the industry still grapples with the same issues even in the face of impressive statistics that show great potential for the sector in monetary terms. Furthermore, according to the World Bank 2013 economic report on Nigeria, growth in the non-oil economy jumped, implying that the Nigerian non-oil economy at that time was 240% times higher than it was at the last recording in 2010 (World Bank, 2013). What this suggests is that while the non-oil economy which comprises industries like the creative industries are growing, they are not

necessarily developing at the same speed. This paper argues that the answer may lie in understanding the peculiarities of Nigeria's creative industries.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The creative industries: A Conceptual Review

The creative industries concept has a long history of definition and redefining around the idea of arts as an industry sector or a cultural industry. The cultural industries were popularized by Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) and its proponents conceptualized culture as a well-established instrument for promoting a country's image, appeal and economy (O'Connor, 1999; Thorsby, 2001; Jeffcut & Pratt, 2002; Cooke 2008).

The cultural industries are therefore the forerunners of the creative industries - the latter born out a shift in ideology about cultural forms and their economic worth. This new way of thinking regarded cultural products more as objects of commercial value than mere artefacts. The idea was that the *generation and exploitation of intellectual property* was more commercially viable. Since this discovery, there has been a growing realization by governments globally of a direct link between the monetization of creativity and economic prosperity. Similarly, Okpamen (2014) argues that creativity becomes even more desirable, when it crystalizes into economic wealth. From this perspective, the creative industries are seen as those industries that produce and commercialize creative goods and services. The Creative Economy Report explains the essence of the creative industries as the creation, production, and distribution of goods which are not limited to the arts. Such goods also have the potential to generate revenue from trade and intellectual property rights (UNCTAD, 2010). While there are those who disagree with this position, it is still a major reference point for research into the impact of the creative industries on the economy of nations.

Galloway and Dunlop (2007) have a different argument regarding the creative industries concept. They talk about a gap that occurs between the creatives (creative workforce) and policy makers as a result of inability to correctly conceptualize the terms 'creativity' and 'culture'. Those who argue about the supremacy of creativity describe it as an essential ingredient for the success of the creative economy. Also, O'Connor (1999) argues that producing culture is now more about the way countries communicate some kind of meaning with their symbolic goods, while the economic value of these goods he argues, is inherent in their cultural value. However this paper agrees with Thorsby (2011) who suggests that together, the culture and creative industries are responsible for 30 million jobs worldwide, representing the employment of 1% of the world's active population. (UNCTAD, 2010).

In spite of the divisions over clear cut definitions and scope, the creative industry concept has been majorly largely successful in some countries. In Australia where it was first introduced in 1994, the creative industries have produced a prosperous ripple effect in the wider economy for two decades. It Today, the sector contributes \$90 billion to the national economy annually and adds around \$46 billion in GDP. (CCII, 2014). The creative industries template was therefore founded on the principles of technological enthusiasm, formal structure, funding and dynamism. (Higgs, Stuart & Cunningham, 2008). But for many countries, the creative industries were founded on 'monetization fever' – a concept which suggests that massive investment in the creative industries is directly linked to economic prosperity (DCMS, 2008; NESTA, 2010).

## METHODOLOGY

The paper leveraged on a review of existing literature to examine the peculiarities of Nigeria's creative industries. From findings in the literature, similar challenges appear to cut

across all sectors of the creative industries. In addition, the study reviewed 50 online articles about the development and structure of the Nigerian creative industries were selected using purposeful sampling. Nigeria's creative industries are largely under-represented in the literature, and this made it a task to select relevant studies. Findings are presented below.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **THE PECULIARITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NIGERIA'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

The literature shows that developing countries like Nigeria are still plagued with the problem of finding the right kind of strategy to deliver the dividends of the creative industries as a result of local peculiarities. Lobato (2010) and Nwankwo (2018) emphasize the importance of harnessing the potentials of Nigeria's creative industries. Other scholars examine the structure, funding, policy formulation and infrastructure concerns hampering its progress.

#### **Structure**

Nigeria's creative industries are a product of the interplay among creativity, culture and commerce. Her products like designer fashion have gained international recognition in recent years, with Nigerian brands are being seen on runways in Milan and Paris. Nigerian movies and films feature at international film festivals in New York and Nigerian music can be heard on the airwaves all over Europe (PWC, 2016). Although film, music and fashion gain a lot of media attention, Nigeria's creative industries include many more sectors. While there is no consensus as to what strictly defines the creative industries in Nigeria, there is some agreement that it comprises: architecture, the performing arts (standup comedy, drama, dance, and theatre); television and radio; tourism and hospitality; visual art and animation (photography, painting, and graphic design), arts and crafts; as well as publishing and advertising (Nigerian Creative Economy Report, 2013). The creative sector in Nigeria is therefore broad (Offiah, 2017).

The various sectors of Nigeria's creative economy operate largely in the informal sector, thereby making it difficult to define its scope (Alakwe, 2018). Unlike in developed nations where the sectors fall within the urban service industry economies, closer scrutiny reveals that Nigeria's creative industries are organized around three systems – the informal, non-formal as well as the formal sector. For this reason, the creative sector is heavily flawed structurally, with each sector establishing its own rules of engagement. Often times, there is lack of synergy among the various sections, a situation which hampers the growth and development of the entire system.

#### **Infrastructure**

Nigeria has been plagued by unstable power supply for decades, which either raises the cost of doing business or shuts down the business entirely. The requisite infrastructure to support the super-structure of the creative industries is not within the reach of majority of the workforce, a situation which causes many creative regions to collapse. For instance, the UK creative space has no shortage of high-tech manufacturing industries; yet but the reverse is the case in Nigeria where the manufacturing sector is in a dire state. Some place the blame squarely at the feet of successive governments at the federal level, who failed to maximize profits from the oil boom of the 70's. Today, with dwindling oil prices and lower foreign exchange earnings, the government of the day is looking to the creative sector; yet the power to drive the sector is still elusive. It is important to note that one of the reasons Spain is successful in its creative enterprise is the government's commitment to provision of access to

physical, digital and communications infrastructure; as well as power which drives the machines and other hardware used in different sectors of the creative economy.

### **Funding Concerns**

One major characteristic evident in the UK and Australia example, is their government's financial commitment to consistently and systematically fund the creative industries through research grants, sponsored programs in partnership with the private sector and direct investment. However, public sector funding of Nigeria's creative industries is not encouraging (Uzor, 2019). There are very few concerted efforts by the Nigerian government at both federal and state level to fund the creative industries. Industry watchers accuse successive governments of not considering funding of the creative industries as a priority. For instance, the federal government under former president Goodluck Jonathan was heavily criticized for releasing funds to the entertainment industry without critical consultations with operators of the industry who were in a better position to advise on policy direction and spending. A case in point is the infamous \$200 million fund which was reportedly appropriated for Nollywood and the entertainment industry in 2015. The disbursement process was the source of a public controversy between the Nigerian Bank of Industry and practitioners in the movie industry, the government didn't give Nollywood \$200m Nollywood funds (Bank of Industry, 2015).

The story is the same at other levels of government like the state. In 2016, the Lagos State government in partnership with the Bank of Industry (BOI) launched the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF, 2016). The fund was set up under the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund Law 2016 to provide financial support to residents of Lagos State, for job, wealth creation and to tackle unemployment. Creative workers were also encouraged to apply for the fund, going by certain provisions which stated the state government's commitment to support the creative hands and minds of all Lagos entrepreneurs, by making funds available to them through the loan worth ₦25 million. According to the LSETF rules of engagement, the amount was to be disbursed to workers who could prove that their businesses were commercially viable, and the plan was to support over 90,000 micro small and medium enterprises in Lagos state. However, there are a number of challenges associated with the disbursement process, leading to many residents becoming highly critical of the entire process. Feedback from unsuccessful applicants give reasons ranging from a cumbersome online application process and stringent requirements, to bureaucracy regarding the processing of the loan through BOI (Field of Skills and Dreams, 2016). There are also allegations of nepotism, with the fund managers accused of giving priority to members of their families. The Fund has therefore not met its target of creating a million jobs within three years. Overall, Nigeria's creative industries have limited access to government finance, and this has severely hampered the growth of the industry.

Private sector funding has also been poor over the years. Most of the funding remains informal across multiple sectors of the creative economy with many creatives resorting to self-funding. The music sector is badly hit, although data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), which cites the industry's massive contribution to Nigeria's GDP, may suggest otherwise. Offiah (2017) argues that funding of the local music business is so fragmented that it has a negative impact on the development of the business in terms of production, packaging and distribution of the industry's products. This lack of structured funding is particularly worrying for the distribution aspect of the business, which is cited as an extremely important factor in the success of many of Nigeria's creative sectors.



### **Nigeria's Creative Workforce**

Ideally, the creative trident model describes a form of segmentation of the creative workforce globally. It classifies three sorts of creative employment including: specialist artists (professionals who do creative jobs); support staff who are found in managerial, secretarial or administrative roles; and the embedded creatives who work creative jobs outside the creative industries (Higgs, Cunningham & Bakhshi, 2008). Together, the creative trident model refers to this as the creative workforce. While this may be the case in the developed world, the Nigeria's creative workforce does not strictly operate this way. Many of the roles overlap as workers in the specialist artist category often double as embedded creatives and support staff. The problem is exacerbated by the large number of new entrants into Nigeria's creative space, many of whom are neither captured nor classified because of the fragile structure of the creative industries and the manner in which its participants operate. Many enter and exit at will, with no record of the current state of the creative workforce. For this reason, there is more of a fragmentation of the workforce than segmentation of creative jobs and roles (Onyeator, 2019). The dearth of research and mapping of Nigeria's creative industries also makes it difficult to have an idea of total number of workers in the workforce. As a result, many of the statistics concerning Nigeria's creative workforce cannot be verified. For this reason, it is difficult to plan for the industry with information gaps regarding size of the workforce, creative incomes and creative employment figures.

Furthermore, there are few formal training institutes to address education of the workforce. For instance, in the fashion sector, many of the schools of fashion available are vocational training institutes and colleges that cannot be compared to formal schools of fashion like the Pratt Institute in New York, the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Nigerian fashion designers who want to compete favorably on the world stage end up travelling abroad in search of these expensive degrees. Those who cannot do so are left with fewer options. This is not necessarily the case for the film and television industry where the options for formal training are not so limited, but class distinctions among the workers exist among technical workers and non-technical workers. Nigeria's creative industries therefore suffers from inadequate number of technically competent people to drive creativity and ideas on a commercial level.

### **Policy and Regulation**

Protection of intellectual property under the appropriate legislation has been a major concern for researchers and industry participants. The film and video industry are the second largest video industry in the world. Yet its creative workers lead those whose businesses are negatively affected by the weak structures surrounding the regulation of intellectual property (Nwogu, 2014). One study suggests that failure by the federal government to establish and maintain proper distribution channels in this regard has opened the door wide to piracy (Ridwan, Akashoro & Ajaga, 2013). According to the study, video pirates continue to thrive owing to lack of political will, weak legislation and poor implementation of existing laws established to eradicate piracy. The peculiarity of the Nigerian film industry makes many film makers and talents not only skeptical but weary of the claim that the adoption of the creative concept leads to handsome rewards for the commercialization of their intellectual property. Their argument is that the structure of the industry does not encourage returns on their heavy investments in time, creativity and craft (Brizbee Solutions Report, 2016).

### **DISCUSSION: GLOCALIZATION THE KEY?**

To situate the working definition of localization in this paper, it is important to refer to the concept of globalization. A definition of globalization is not agreed upon in the literature, but

most definitions refer to a process where all levels of human organization are interweaved interwoven into one system; and where space is broken down such that interactions can be increasingly described as global.

It transcends cultural differences and creates one seamless global system (Castells, 1996). The features of globalization include: unification, quantity, mass demand, undifferentiation and convergence. For this reason, Muhammad (2011) notes that globalization has resulted in the consumption of globalized products, practices and ideas like the creative industries concept. However, there are those who criticize globalization for exacerbating economic inequalities around the world and creating unevenness in development (Krugman & Venables 1995). This uneven development is also seen in the adoption of the creative industries concept. Lovink and Rossiter (2007) argue that while there is much exhilaration over the creative industries in the West, few studies focus on local differences or the economic sustainability of the concept. This call for greater attention on the local rather than the global is the crux of the localization concept. Proponents of localization argue that rather than international integration and blended cultural consumption of foreign ideas, product or service should be adapted to suit specific local cultures (Luigi and Simona, 2016). However, this study argues that the solution may lie in the glocalization of the creative industries to suit specific societal realities. The idea is to adopt the global but adapt it to local situations and circumstances. One of the distinctive things about glocalization is its focus on satisfaction of local needs by considering differences in culture, income and other specific characteristics across target countries.

## CONCLUSIONS

The creative industry concept may have a prosperous ripple effect on the wider economy in the developed world, but there is a need to do a post mortem of its efficacy in other parts of the world. This has been part of the focus of this paper. The creative industries model is not a magic bullet as there are a number of challenges still being experienced by many countries that have adopted the model.

Nigeria for instance, is still grappling with creating jobs for its teeming young population. While the underlying concept of globalism suggests the integration of national economies as well as cultural products, it must be noted that the global creative economy is not a single superhighway. Rather, it is a collection of different local trajectories which must be considered if it is to succeed (UNESCO & UNDP, 2013). These include considering the peculiarities of specific nations which could be education needs, social inequality, politics and environmental concerns. Each country must develop their own creative industries in line with its unique conditions and circumstances before it approaches the global market place. For Nigeria, this means that international concept of creative industries is better served when applied to the empirical data on critical aspects of the Nigerian economy. While it is necessary to encourage governments to think local, this paper recommends a more 'glocal' approach to the adoption of the creative industries concept. The concept of glocalization is a slightly different from the local strategy approach, mainly due to the different outlooks on local adaptations of products and business activities. Glocalization connotes co-presence or simultaneity. The term was first introduced into the lexicon of sociology by Robertson and Bauman who did extensive work on the need for companies not to jettison globalization, but rather find ways to adapt it within the context of both global and local trends (Luigi & Simona, 2016). Therefore, while the local strategy highlights the need to focus on local adaptations in relation to the local market place, the glocal strategy focusses on local

adaptations in relation to the global market place. Glocalization blends both globalism and localism and its key feature is that it operates within the global as well as local niches.

Other recommendations of include the provision of tax incentives for creative entrepreneurs to discourage them from tax evasion and the inaccurate declaration of incomes. In Nigeria particularly, there should be increased research funding for regular mapping of the contribution of each creative sector. A global creativity index could also measure the real contribution of the sector to the wider economy.

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## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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### About the Author

**Ijeoma N. Onyeator** is a member of faculty in the School of Media and Communication, Pan-Atlantic University. She holds an M.A. in Media Communication and Technology from Brunel University Uxbridge, United Kingdom in 2003; and a BSc. in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos, Nigeria in 1999. Ijeoma became a member of the Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria in 2013. She is also a member of the International Association for Media and Communication Research. Her main research interests include alternative media, citizens journalism, human communication and media philosophy.