

NETFLIX FILM STREAMING AMONG SMARTPHONES USERS IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, BENIN CITY

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Abstract

The study examined the technological convergence of the audio-visual qualities of smartphones to ascertain whether residents of Oredo Local Government Area use them to watch films streamed on Netflix. The study's objectives were to; identify the nature of cinema streamed on Netflix among residents of Oredo Local Government, ascertain the factors that influence viewers' preference for films streamed on Netflix through smartphones, and identify the benefits of engaging media convergence through smartphones among residents of Oredo Local Government Area. The study's population consisted of 553,600 residents of Oredo LGA (NPC, 2025), with a survey research design involving a sample size of 384 respondents. The theoretical framework for this study was Diffusion of Innovation theories. The findings of this study showed that people use smartphones to watch more foreign films than local content films on Netflix. In addition, the study also discovered that, smartphones are used to watch streamed films on Netflix more than other mass media channels. In conclusion, the primary factor influencing viewers' preference for smartphones over other media for Netflix films is that, smartphones incorporate all the characteristics of other media in one media device. Due to these findings, the study recommends among others that, Netflix ensure that registered viewers be guided on the nature of films through thorough censorship.

Keywords: Film streaming, Mass media, Media convergence, Netflix, Smartphones and Technological Convergence

Introduction

Films combine audiovisual characteristics to tell stories or convey information through moving images. They are monitored through mass media channels that feature audiovisual content. With today's advanced media technology, there is a technological convergence of the media channels. People can now watch films on the go, whether at work, at home, in banks, hospital wards, on airplanes, in cars, in bars, and lounges, amongst other places where a television set cannot be mounted. With smartphones that have internet access, users can operate from anywhere, whether recorded or live.

For such users to be entertained through a smartphone or television, there are film streaming platforms like iROKOTv, Netflix, Showmax, Prime Video, Hulu, FilmOne, and Disney+ that can be used to watch films when subscribed to the service (Vanderhoef, 2019). This is known as film streaming. Film streaming gained popularity in the 20th century, driven by the increasing demand for film entertainment through digital communication. Thompson (2010) argues that films are complex media that involve artistic and technical elements, including visual design, cinematography, sound design, editing, and narrative structure. Streaming of

an artistic venture is not just peculiar to films alone. Streaming can be noticed on specific news channels (like Arise TV and Channels News Live) and programme streams like Al Jazeera streams, where issues are discussed worldwide through Skype. There is also social media streaming on YouTube and Facebook, where events such as weddings or naming ceremonies are aired live as they occur, allowing an audience from anywhere in the world to watch, share, and comment on them. Against this backdrop, the study examined the technological convergence of smartphones' audio-visual capabilities to ascertain whether residents of Oredo Local Government Area use them to watch films streamed on Netflix.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that people have, over the years, used television to watch films. Although movies are watched through television, people still find the need to relax during free periods at an eatery, during break time at the office, in their bedrooms when they want a spare time to themselves without going to the cinemas, in their cars, among others, they still prefer the convenience that they get from their smartphones in watching films spontaneously through Netflix and other streaming platforms since all media features are embedded in smartphones (Tomi, 2002). Smartphones have media features that are audio-visual, which can be easily accessed by users to watch films streamed on Netflix at any time, rather than waiting to get home or get a television to watch a film of choice. In addition, the rise of film streaming, which can be attributed to the growth of digital technology, has made it easier and more affordable to distribute films worldwide (Smith & Johnson, 2018).

This rise of technological innovations and streaming services like Netflix, Showmax, Hulu, Prime amongst others have revolutionised the entertainment industry,

offering viewers an unprecedented level of convenience and choice. With millions of subscribers worldwide and Nigeria in particular, Netflix which is the focus of this study, has become a major player in the global entertainment market. However, this raises the question: What is the most significant medium or channel that the people in Oredo LGA, in Benin City, use to watch films aired on Netflix?

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What kind of films are streamed on Netflix among Oredo Local Government residents?
2. What factors influence viewers' preference for films streamed on Netflix through Smartphones?
3. What are the benefits of engaging media convergence through smartphones among Oredo Local Government Area residents?

Theoretical Framework

The Diffusion of Innovation theory explains how new ideas, innovations and technologies spread throughout a population in a society from introduction to widespread adoption. This theory was developed by E. M. Rogers at the University of New Mexico in 1962 (Clay 2023). The theory states that the stages of adopting an innovation are exhibited by people when they are exposed to a new idea, and how they start using it for their benefit are only known and understood when they are exposed to the new idea (Roseberry & Vicker, 2009). According to Rogers, the persons involved in the innovation processes are as follows:

The first set of persons are called the innovators. These are people who are willing to try new ideas and be among the first to implement them before others. They are the risk-takers in all stages of innovation. In addition, they are the early adopters, a set of

individuals interested in trying out new inventions and advancing their lifestyle in society. The early majority are those who strive to support the use of a new invention within the society. They also recommend it for other members of the society as part of the general population. The late majority are the people who follow the early adopters in adopting an innovation as part of their daily lifestyle in society. Finally, the laggards are referred to as such because they comprise the general populace that do not adopt the new ideas of innovation in the society. They choose not to participate in any new invention.

It is worth noting that innovators and early adopters are adept at taking risks with new inventions, technologies, and ideas (Vivian, 2009). Unfortunately, these risks expose them to dangers associated with such trials, as opposed to the Laggards, who are very averse to trying out a new idea in the society. The factors that can affect the art of innovations in society are, but are not limited to, society's level of education, development, industrialisation, accessibility and familiarity with technological change (Rogers, 1962, cited in Clay, 2023).

The Diffusion of Innovation theory is relevant to this study as it helps to illustrate the extent to which human progress has been driven by the acceptance and adoption of innovations, from the printing Press to the internet, occasioned by technological convergence. This convergence has influenced the media convergence attributes on smartphones, as evident in the new invention of live streaming of films.

Literature Review of Related Concepts

Film Streaming: An Overview

Film streaming refers to the exhibition and dissemination of films or movies over the internet, allowing viewers to watch them in real time without downloading (Thompson,

2010). Film streaming is a very popular phenomenon, especially with the rise of digital platforms and internet technology in the 21st century. Another reason for this advancement is that film streaming is convenient and flexible, allowing users to watch films anytime and anywhere with an internet connection on a mobile device, such as smartphones (Tomi, 2002). Thompson (2010) notes that film streaming in Nigeria has gained significant popularity, thereby transforming viewers' access to both locally produced and foreign films.

The streaming of films has, in no small measure, encouraged content creators and filmmakers as it allows the distribution of films to be easier and to profit from the "sales" of films. Vanderhoef (2019) also stated that film streaming provides personalised experiences best enjoyed by the specific viewer, which may not be the case when watching television at home with family members, for instance. Based on this relevance, these researchers aim to determine whether residents of the Oredo Local Government Area prefer using smartphones for streaming their preferred films.

Factors that Influence Viewers' Preferences for Films Streamed on Netflix

The way films are viewed in recent years has been influenced by certain factors. Some of the reasons range from better opportunities to reach a wider audience through media content creation to generating more profit by licensing and distributing content to streaming platforms on a local and global scale (Iheanacho, Okoli & Jumbo, 2022). In addition, high internet connectivity with the aid of mobile devices like computers and smartphones has aided the shift in film consumption habits as many Nigerians opt to stream movies online with the assistance of smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs rather than rely on the conventional screen like the

physical viewing of television at a particular location (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

The convenience of viewing streamed films has increased the rate at which people patronise them, as viewers can watch films at their preferred time and place. The ease of watching a movie, whether a Nollywood epic, a Hollywood blockbuster, or a Bollywood Indian film, indicates the high interest that viewers of such films have in staying home rather than going to a cinema.

Moreover, Mandela (2022) expresses that film streaming has contributed to the high level of film appreciation and critique in the film industry. Through film critique, areas for improvement will be identified, while areas of appreciation will be strengthened. This has become the order of the day, as exposure to digital forums (such as online forums, social media platforms, and review websites) and the viewership of diverse genres of film and literature have exposed audiences to discourses and analyses of literary works more than ever before.

Media convergence, Media technologies, and their Benefits

Media or technological convergence is the process that involves the usage of computer technologies and digitalisation together through various media technologies. Media convergence is driven by computer technologies, which are largely predominant today ([www.https://study.com](https://study.com)). Media activities are now more converged into a single device than they had been in the past decades. Smartphones now feature technological convergence, unlike the separate devices they used to be, such as GPS, wristwatches, televisions, radios, newspapers, magazines and mobile banking, which are now integrated into one mobile phone (Mandela, 2022). Smartphones are an example of a computer that allows different people to share content, regardless of

distance, as well as to make and receive calls, which is their primary role (Nwokoro, 2023).

In a related study in 2016 on how Netflix is capturing the hearts of Nigerians, it was noted that, Nigerians are now drawn to Netflix with its strategic partnerships with local content creators, ability of the Nigerian viewers to pay with the local currency (Naira) with the relative ease, created features on its platform that encourages loyalty as well as the use of good stories to capture the hearts of the audience worldwide ([www.https://selar.com](https://selar.com)).

Media convergence has numerous strengths, including enhanced speed in sharing media content, making it easier to produce and review (Bamidele, Mary, and Bolu, 2021). Users can access diverse media types and content on different sites or channels, thereby breaking distance barriers. Contrarily, media convergence has adverse effects ranging from an increase in the piracy of media content as contents are now easier to access and distribute which also give room to fake contents like fake news, breach of privacy of the lives of individuals, encourages fraudsters, crooks and the widening of the gap or divide between the haves and the have-nots in the society.

But from statistics gathered in related works, it is out of place to insinuate that there may be a time when media usage will be supplanted by other means of communication now and in the future with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This is so because, AI drives the economy, business and health of the members of the society and the use of digital media like Smart TVs, Tablets amongst others that have made life easier in many ways than traditional means of communicating (Nwokoro, 2023).

Review of Empirical Studies

The study by Gabriela (2021) focused on 'The influence of social networks on film

selection among youths in the Netherlands', investigating the role of social appraisal in the decision-making process of young viewers when selecting films on streaming platforms such as Netflix. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, collecting data purposively from 398 respondents in the selected country, with the questionnaire serving as the research instrument. The gathered data were described using statistical techniques, such as descriptive statistics. The study found that young viewers are more likely to watch films recommended by their social network, even if these films do not align with their preferences. As a result, the research suggests that social media networks for film streaming should check their content before disseminating it to the audience.

In addition, a relevant study was carried out by Bamidele, Mary, and Bolu (2021), entitled "Cultural Relevance and Film Evaluation on Streaming Platforms in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Enugu and Osun States," which examined how cultural relevance influenced the assessment of films by viewers in Enugu and Osun States. The researchers observed that films streamed in these two States were based on local content, hence the need to employ a comparative method on 288 respondents using the Taro Yamane formula. The findings showed that viewers strongly preferred culturally relevant films that aligned with their background, status, language, and other aspects of their identity. From the foregoing, it can be stated that the studies reviewed indicate a gap in knowledge that this current study addresses, as the aforementioned studies did not examine the residents of Oredo LGA or the use of smartphones as a medium for watching streamed movies; hence, the need for this investigation.

Methodology

The study employed a survey research design to gather data through copies of the questionnaire, which served as the research instrument. The study's population consisted of 553,600 residents of Oredo LGA (NPC, 2006). To use more accurate data, the researchers employed the Projection Population formula to project the population (Owuamalam, 2012).

The formula goes thus:

$$\begin{aligned} G_p &= \frac{P \times P_i \times T}{100} \\ &= \frac{553,600 \times 2.28 \times 19}{100} \\ &= 239,819.52 \end{aligned}$$

Approximately = 239,820

This projected population, calculated over 19 years (2006-2025), was added to the 2006 population of 553,600. Therefore, 553,600 + 239,820 = 793,420. This population is too large to administer copies of the questionnaire, as a result, the researchers opted for the sample size determination table cited in Krejcie and Morgan (1970) at www.kenpro.com/2012. According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, for every 100,000 population size or above, the sample size is 384. With this, the researchers designed a well-structured questionnaire based on the study's objectives and distributed it to the residents of Oredo LGA in Benin City.

The sampling techniques used for this study were convenience and stratified sampling techniques. This was to ensure that the people administering the questionnaire had a fair knowledge of the study's subject and were distributed to three major roads that make up the Oredo LGA of Edo State. The itemised streets were Akpakpava, Sakponba, and Forestry roads. To ensure practical

computation of data gathered, the researchers used Weighted Mean Score (WMS) and simple frequency tables to present and analyze data. A WMS of 3.0 or less was a negative response, but any score above 3.0 was a positive rating.

Research question 1: What kind of films are streamed on Netflix among Oredo Local Government residents?

To answer this question, the researchers used responses to question number 6 and 7 to gather data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

6. What type of film content is streamed on Netflix?

The data gathered was presented in the table below:

Table 1 *Nature of films streamed on Netflix*

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Movies	98	27.1
Drama series	74	20.4
Documentaries	49	13.5
Reality shows	67	18.5
Comedy shows	74	20.4
Total	362	100

Anthony Mekwunye & Nwanne, 2025

The table above indicates that respondents prefer to watch movies streamed on Netflix by a margin of 98 (27.1%) over other preferences. The responses on media content streamed on Netflix as gathered on table 1 shows that most residents of Oredo LGA have easy access to the Netflix platform.

7. How often do you watch films streamed on the Netflix platform?

Table 2 *Periods taken to watch films on the Netflix platform*

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	181	50
Weekly	76	21
Monthly	61	16

Rarely	31	9
Total	362	100

Anthony Mekwunye & Nwanne 2025

The data gathered above suggests that, most of the respondents use Netflix regularly (daily) and on a weekly basis. This indicates that Netflix is an excellent channel for watching films due to its ease and affordability. Other respondents also indicated their interest in using the platform every month, while a few others stated they rarely use it for streamed films.

Research question 2: What factors influence viewers' preference for films streamed on Netflix through Smartphones?

To answer this question, the researchers used responses from question number 10 and 11 to analyse the data gathered.

10. What are the factors that influence your choice of films streamed on Netflix through smartphones?

Table 3 *The factors that influence one's choice of films streamed on Netflix*

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Contains all media features in it	107	30
Accessibility	87	24
Affordability	90	25
Familiar language	78	21
Total	362	100

Anthony Mekwunye & Nwanne, 2025

Table 3 above indicates that most respondents (107) were influenced by the fact that smartphones contain all the media features of television, radio and the internet, which significantly enhances ease due to their portable nature. The other three factors that influenced the respondents that were analysed include affordability, Accessibility, and Familiar language in that order.

To what extent do any of these factors influence your choice of films streamed through Netflix on smartphones?

Table 4 *The extent of influence on one's choice of film streamed on Netflix through smartphones*

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	WMS	Remarks
1.	High influence	31	43	3	2	261	3.3	Positive

2.	Medium influence	22	11	5	2	133	3.3	Positive
3.	Low influence	3	5	8	19	62	1.7	Negative
4.	Very low influence	2	3	5	5	38	2.5	Negative

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Table 4 above identifies the level of influence that the four factors mentioned earlier (in Table 3) have on respondents. Most of them stated a WMS of 3.3 for each high and medium-level influence. This shows a good level of influence among the residents of Oredo LGA.

Research question 3- What are the benefits of engaging media convergence through smartphones among the residents of Oredo Local Government Area?

To answer this question, question number 15 on the questionnaire was used.

What benefits of media convergence through the smartphone appeal to you the most?

Table 5 *Benefits of media convergence through smartphones*

Benefits of media convergence through smartphones	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Generates customised content	63	17
Enhances interactivity among the audience	91	25
Enhances the wider reach of media content	111	31
Faster production and circulation of films and other content	97	27
Total	362	100

Anthony Mekwunye & Nwanne, 2025

Table 5 demonstrates that the respondents with the highest number (111) were those who are of the view that, the most beneficial use of media convergence through smartphones was that, it enhances wider reach of media contents (31%) while other respondents with varied opinions on the benefits of media convergence through the smartphone were; Faster production and circulation of films and other contents, enhances interactivity among the audience and it generates customised content.

Discussion of Findings

The study indicated that respondents prefer to watch movies streamed on Netflix rather than other types of film content, such as comedy shows, documentaries, reality TV shows, and

drama series due to the compatibility of smartphones and the ease of usage. This aligns with the diffusion of innovation theory, which posits that people tend to adopt

new technologies and enjoy their benefits (Rogers, 1962).

In addition, the study found that for the residents of Oredo to be influenced (which can be at diverse levels), certain factors are crucial. These influences include: smartphones offer all media features, are affordable, accessible, and use familiar language. For the audience to enjoy smartphones over conventional media, it means that, what they enjoy from the use of smartphones outweighs that of the television and radio. Tomi (2002) agrees with the respondents' use in this regard that, smartphones contains all media features found in other media gadgets, as they support audio-visual, textual, and other services that can be conveniently run on one portable media device. For example, through the use of smartphones, booking tickets online for a premiere movie is easily done through online banking and sit placements at the cinema without physically been present at the ticket office.

The research also showed that the most significant benefit of media convergence through smartphones is its broader reach of

media content enjoyed by the receiving audience. The ideology posed in Diffusion of Innovation theory that technological advancements enhances the way to sharing and receiving information, aligns with this finding by the researchers.

Conclusion

The study found that, the residents of Oredo Local Government Area's viewer preferences tend to lean more towards using smartphones for Netflix films than relying on conventional means of mass media, as smartphones incorporate all the media characteristics of television, radio, and the internet.

Recommendations

Arising from the above findings, this research recommends (I) that Netflix ensure that registered viewers be guided on the nature of films through thorough censorship. In addition, it should be noted that, despite the benefits of media convergence, the place of the traditional media cannot be completely replaced.

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