STREAMING PLATFORMS AND GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF NOLLYWOOD AND NIGERIAN MUSIC: A STUDY OF OMONI OBOLI'S LOVE IN EVERY WORD AND DAVIDO'S 5IVE

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital streaming platforms has significantly transformed the global circulation of Nigerian creative industries, particularly Nollywood films and Afrobeats music. This study examined the viability of streaming platforms in the international distribution of Nigerian media, using Omoni Oboli's Love in Every Word and Davido's 5ive as primary case studies. It explored how algorithm-driven platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Music have reshaped access, visibility, and revenue generation for Nigerian contents within the global digital economy. Adopting a qualitative analytical approach, the study drew on media industry data, streaming metrics, and existing scholarly literature to assess both economic and cultural implications. Findings revealed that Love in Every Word achieved rapid viral circulation on YouTube, accumulating tens of millions of views within a short period, while Davido's 5ive recorded hundreds of millions of global streams across major platforms. These metrics demonstrated the capacity of streaming infrastructures to amplify Nigerian media beyond traditional geographic and industrial constraints. However, the study also identified structural limitations embedded within platform economies, including algorithmic gatekeeping, uneven revenue distribution, and dependency on engagement-based visibility. The study concluded that streaming platforms are both enabling and restrictive forces in the globalization of Nigerian media. They enhance cultural reach and economic potential while also introducing new forms of inequality and dependency within digital cultural production. Ultimately, the research highlighted the dual role of streaming as a transformative yet ambivalent infrastructure shaping the future of Nollywood and Nigerian music in the global creative economy

Key Words: Streaming Platforms, Distributions, Nollywood, Nigerian Music

Introduction

The rapid digitization of media production and consumption has significantly altered the dynamics of cultural dissemination across the globe. In recent years, streaming platforms have emerged as dominant channels through which films and music circulate beyond their countries of origin, enabling industries once considered regionally confined to attain unprecedented global visibility. Within this evolving media ecosystem Nollywood and the Nigerian music industry particularly Afrobeats have experienced remarkable international expansion. This transformation is closely tied to the affordances of digital platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Spotify, and Apple Music, which have redefined access, distribution, and audience engagement (Lobato 45; Cunningham and Craig 63).

Historically, Nollywood films were distributed through informal networks, including DVDs, VHS tapes, and terrestrial television, which limited their reach and revenue potential. Similarly, Nigerian music circulated primarily within domestic and diasporic communities through radio airplay and

physical sales. However, the emergence of streaming platforms has disrupted these traditional models, offering creators direct access to global audiences while simultaneously introducing new economic structures and visibility metrics. Scholars such as Ramon Lobato argue that digital distribution has "deterritorialized" media flows, enabling content to transcend national boundaries, while Kojo Baffoe highlights how streaming has amplified African cultural exports in the global creative economy (Lobato 67; Baffoe 112).

This study interrogates the viability of streaming platforms as mechanisms for the global distribution of Nigerian audiovisual and musical content, with particular focus on Omoni Oboli's film *Love in Every Word* (2025) and Davido's album *5ive* (2025). These case studies are emblematic of the convergence between local storytelling and global consumption patterns, illustrating how Nigerian creatives leverage digital infrastructures to transcend geographical boundaries. As noted by Jade L. Miller, streaming services have reshaped Nollywood's industrial practices by introducing new financing models and global distribution pipelines, while music scholars such as Kemi Adeyemi emphasize the role of platforms in globalizing Afrobeats through curated playlists and algorithmic promotion (Miller 89; Adeyemi 134). Despite these advancements, the global success of Nigerian content on streaming platforms is not without challenges. Issues such as platform gatekeeping, revenue inequities, algorithmic bias, and the digital divide continue to shape the extent to which African content can compete within the global media marketplace. David Hesmondhalgh contends that digital cultural industries often reproduce existing inequalities, even as they promise democratization (Hesmondhalgh 156).

Furthermore, the tension between cultural specificity and global appeal raises important questions about authenticity, representation, and commodification. As Nigerian creators increasingly tailor their content for international audiences, there is a need to critically assess whether streaming platforms facilitate genuine cultural exchange or merely reinforce dominant global media hierarchies. By situating Love in Every Word and 5ive within broader debates on digital media, globalization, and cultural production, this paper contributes to ongoing scholarly discourse on the intersection of technology and African creative economies. It evaluates not only the economic viability of streaming platforms but also their role in shaping narratives, identities, and cultural flows in the twenty-first century. Ultimately, this appraisal foregrounds both the opportunities and constraints inherent in the global circulation of Nollywood films and Nigerian music, offering critical insights into how digital platforms are redefining the contours of cultural production and consumption in Africa and beyond.

Streaming and Global Reach of Nigerian Media

The rise of digital streaming platforms has profoundly transformed the global circulation and consumption of Nigerian media, particularly within Nollywood and the contemporary Afrobeats music industry. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Spotify, and Apple Music have redefined the structures of distribution by eliminating many of the geographical and infrastructural barriers that historically constrained African creative outputs. In earlier decades, the circulation of Nollywood films and Nigerian music was largely dependent on localized systems such as physical media (DVDs, VCDs), informal markets, and limited broadcast networks. These systems not only restricted audience reach but also affected revenue generation and global recognition. The transition to streaming, therefore, represents not merely a technological shift but a paradigmatic transformation in

how Nigerian cultural products is positioned within the global media landscape (Lobato 74; Cunningham and Craig 61).

Nollywood's integration into global streaming ecosystems marks a critical turning point in its industrial evolution. Traditionally characterized by rapid, low-budget productions distributed through informal channels, Nollywood has increasingly adopted more formalized and globally oriented distribution strategies. According to Jade L. Miller, streaming platforms have facilitated the "platformization" of Nollywood, a process through which its production, distribution, and exhibition practices are restructured to align with global digital standards (Miller 110). This shift has enhanced not only the accessibility of Nollywood films but also their perceived legitimacy within international film circuits. Films such as Love in Every Word, directed by Omoni Oboli, illustrate how Nigerian filmmakers are increasingly creating content with transnational audiences in mind. Through streaming platforms, such films are no longer confined to local markets but are algorithmically distributed to viewers across Europe, North America, Asia, and other parts of Africa, thereby expanding their cultural footprint.

Furthermore, streaming platforms have introduced new modes of discoverability that significantly enhance global reach. Algorithm-driven recommendation systems, personalized user interfaces, and curated content categories enable Nigerian films to be positioned alongside international productions, increasing their chances of being discovered by non-African audiences. Ramon Lobato emphasizes that such digital infrastructures contribute to the "deterritorialization" of media, wherein content is no longer bound by national borders but circulates within a global network of consumption (Lobato 68). This deterritorialization is particularly significant for Nollywood, as it allows narratives rooted in Nigerian culture to gain visibility within a global cultural economy that has historically been dominated by Western media industries.

A parallel transformation is evident in the Nigerian music industry, where streaming platforms have played a pivotal role in the global rise of Afrobeats. Artists such as Davido have leveraged platforms like Spotify and Apple Music to reach millions of listeners worldwide. Davido's album 5ive exemplifies how digital distribution facilitates immediate global accessibility, allowing releases to debut simultaneously across multiple regions. This simultaneity contrasts sharply with earlier distribution models, where international audiences often experienced significant delays in accessing African music. As Kemi Adeyemi notes, streaming platforms act as cultural gatekeepers and intermediaries, shaping global musical tastes through curated playlists, featured artist promotions, and algorithmic amplification (Adeyemi 145).

In addition to expanding reach, streaming platforms have transformed patterns of audience engagement. The interactive features embedded within these platforms such as sharing, playlist creation, commenting, and real-time streaming metrics have fostered a participatory culture that enhances the visibility of Nigerian media. Henry Jenkins' concept of "convergence culture" is particularly instructive in this context, as it highlights the active role of audiences in the circulation and reinterpretation of media content (Jenkins 3). Nigerian films and songs can achieve viral status through social media integration, user-generated content, and transnational fan communities, thereby amplifying their global reach beyond the confines of the platforms themselves.

However, the expansion of global reach through streaming is not without its limitations and contradictions. While these platforms provide unprecedented access to international markets, they are also embedded within structures of digital capitalism that shape visibility and profitability. David Hesmondhalgh argues that cultural industries, even in their digital forms, continue to reflect and reproduce existing inequalities, often privileging content from dominant regions and well-resourced producers (Hesmondhalgh 170). For Nigerian media, this means that global visibility is frequently mediated by platform algorithms, licensing agreements, and corporate interests, which may not always align with the goals of cultural representation or equitable distribution.

Moreover, issues such as digital infrastructure disparities, data costs, and limited internet penetration in parts of Africa pose additional challenges to the full realization of streaming's potential. While global audiences can access Nigerian content with relative ease, local audiences may still face barriers that limit their participation in this digital ecosystem. This paradox underscores the uneven nature of globalization, where increased international visibility does not necessarily translate into equal local accessibility. Streaming platforms have become central to the global expansion of Nigerian media, fundamentally reshaping how Nollywood films and Afrobeats music are distributed, discovered, and consumed. By enabling borderless access, enhancing discoverability through algorithms, and fostering participatory audience cultures, these platforms have positioned Nigerian creative industries within the global cultural economy. Nevertheless, this expanded reach must be critically understood within the broader context of structural inequalities and digital constraints that continue to influence the trajectories of African media. The case of Nollywood and Nigerian music thus illustrates both the transformative potential and the inherent complexities of streaming as a tool for global cultural dissemination.

Algorithmic Distribution and Audience Access

The proliferation of streaming platforms has not only expanded the global reach of Nigerian media but has also fundamentally reconfigured the mechanisms through which content is distributed and accessed. Central to this transformation is the role of algorithmic systems, which determine the visibility, recommendation, and circulation of films and music within digital ecosystems. Platforms such as Netflix, Spotify, and Apple Music rely heavily on data-driven algorithms to curate personalized user experiences. These systems analyze user behavior such as viewing history, listening patterns, and engagement metrics to recommend content that aligns with individual preferences, thereby shaping patterns of consumption in profound ways (Cunningham and Craig 72).

For Nigerian media, algorithmic distribution presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, it enhances discoverability by introducing Nollywood films and Afrobeats music to audiences who may not actively seek them out. For instance, a user watching romantic dramas on Netflix may be algorithmically recommended films like Love in Every Word by Omoni Oboli, thereby facilitating cross-cultural exposure. Similarly, listeners of global pop or hip-hop on Spotify may encounter tracks from Davido's album 5ive through curated playlists such as "Discover Weekly" or "Global Hits." This form of algorithmic mediation enables Nigerian content to penetrate markets that were previously difficult to access through traditional distribution channels.

Scholars have noted that algorithms function as powerful cultural intermediaries, shaping not only what audiences consume but also how they perceive cultural value. Ted Striphas introduces the

concept of "algorithmic culture" to describe how computational processes increasingly organize cultural life, influencing taste, preference, and exposure (Striphas 395). In this context, Nigerian media's visibility is contingent upon how well it performs within algorithmic systems that prioritize engagement, retention, and user satisfaction. Content that generates higher interaction through streams, likes, shares, and completion rates is more likely to be promoted, creating a feedback loop that amplifies already visible material. However, this reliance on algorithmic distribution also introduces structural biases that can limit equitable access for Nigerian creators. Algorithms are not neutral; they are designed within specific commercial frameworks that often prioritize content with proven popularity or mass appeal. As Taina Bucher argues, algorithmic systems embed "programmed sociality," wherein certain types of content are systematically favored over others (Bucher 87). For Nigerian films and music, this means that only a select number of productions often those with higher production values, international collaborations, or strong marketing support gain significant visibility, while others remain marginalized within the platform's vast catalog.

Audience access is further shaped by the interplay between algorithmic recommendation and digital infrastructure. While streaming platforms enable global access in principle, actual consumption is influenced by factors such as internet connectivity, data affordability, and device availability. In regions with limited digital infrastructure, including parts of Africa, access to streaming content may be constrained despite its global availability. This creates a paradox in which Nigerian media achieves widespread international exposure while remaining less accessible to some local audiences. Ramon Lobato highlights this unevenness by noting that digital distribution often produces "geographies of access," where availability does not necessarily equate to accessibility (Lobato 91).
Moreover, algorithmic distribution has implications for cultural representation and identity. As Nigerian creators seek to optimize their content for platform visibility, there may be a tendency to align with global tastes and trends, potentially at the expense of local authenticity. David Hesmondhalgh observes that cultural industries frequently operate within a tension between creativity and commercial imperatives, a dynamic that is intensified in algorithm-driven environments (Hesmondhalgh 178). Consequently, the need to "perform well" within algorithmic systems may influence narrative choices, genre conventions, and musical styles in ways that reshape the cultural identity of Nigerian media.

At the same time, audiences are not merely passive recipients of algorithmic recommendations; they actively engage with and, to some extent, influence these systems. Through actions such as playlist curation, content sharing, and user reviews, audiences contribute to the data that algorithms use to refine their recommendations. Henry Jenkins' participatory culture framework underscores this dynamic, emphasizing the collaborative relationship between producers, platforms, and consumers in shaping media circulation (Jenkins 6). Nigerian content that resonates with audiences can thus gain momentum through grassroots engagement, sometimes bypassing traditional gatekeeping mechanisms. Algorithmic distribution plays a central role in determining the accessibility and visibility of Nigerian media within the global streaming ecosystem. While it offers powerful tools for enhancing discoverability and expanding audience reach, it also introduces new forms of gatekeeping and inequality that shape the trajectories of Nollywood films and Nigerian music. The cases of Love in Every Word and 5ive illustrate how success in the digital age is increasingly tied to performance within algorithmic systems, highlighting the need for a critical understanding of how technology

mediates cultural production and consumption.

Economic Viability and Cultural Impact of Digital Streaming

The expansion of streaming platforms has generated significant debate their economic viability for content creators and their broader cultural implications, particularly within emerging creative industries such as Nollywood and the Nigerian music sector. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Spotify, and Apple Music operate on subscription-based and data-driven revenue models that differ substantially from traditional distribution systems. While these platforms provide unprecedented global exposure, questions persist regarding the sustainability of their economic structures for African creators and the extent to which they ensure equitable compensation (Hesmondhalgh 184).

From an economic standpoint, streaming platforms have introduced new revenue streams for Nigerian filmmakers and musicians, including licensing deals, streaming royalties, and international distribution agreements. Nollywood filmmakers, for instance, increasingly negotiate licensing arrangements with global platforms, allowing their films to reach wider audiences while securing upfront payments. Jade L. Miller notes that such arrangements have contributed to the formalization of Nollywood's industrial practices, encouraging higher production standards and more strategic financing models (Miller 118). In this regard, films like Love in Every Word by Omoni Oboli can be understood as products of a shifting economic landscape in which global platforms play a central role in funding and distribution.

Similarly, in the music industry, streaming has redefined revenue generation through per-stream payments and digital monetization strategies. Artists such as Davido, whose album 5ive enjoys global accessibility, benefit from increased listenership and international recognition. However, the financial returns from streaming are often uneven and relatively low on a per-stream basis, raising concerns about long-term sustainability. As David Hesmondhalgh argues, the digitalization of cultural industries frequently shifts economic power toward platform owners, who control distribution channels and revenue structures (Hesmondhalgh 190). Consequently, while top-tier artists may achieve substantial earnings through high streaming volumes and brand partnerships, smaller or emerging artists often struggle to derive meaningful income from streaming alone.

Beyond economic considerations, streaming platforms exert significant influence on cultural production and representation. The need to appeal to global audiences and perform well within platform algorithms can shape the content and aesthetics of Nigerian media. Filmmakers and musicians may adopt narrative styles, genres, or production techniques that align with international expectations, potentially leading to a homogenization of cultural expression. Kojo Baffoe observes that while globalization offers opportunities for cultural exchange, it also risks diluting local identities as creators adapt their work for broader markets (Baffoe 129). This tension is evident in the balance Nigerian creators must strike between maintaining cultural authenticity and achieving global marketability.

At the same time, streaming platforms have facilitated the global dissemination of Nigerian culture, contributing to what can be described as a form of digital cultural diplomacy. Through films and music, international audiences gain exposure to Nigerian languages, traditions, fashion, and social

realities. Henry Jenkins' framework of participatory culture highlights how audiences engage with and reinterpret these cultural products, often integrating them into global popular culture (Jenkins 8). The widespread popularity of Afrobeats, for example, has influenced global music trends, with international artists incorporating African sounds into their work, thereby reinforcing Nigeria's cultural presence on the world stage.

However, the cultural impact of streaming is not entirely positive or unproblematic. The dominance of global platforms raises concerns about cultural sovereignty and the potential marginalization of local distribution systems. As Ramon Lobato points out, digital distribution often centralizes control within a few multinational corporations, which can dictate the terms of content availability and visibility (Lobato 105). This concentration of power may limit the autonomy of Nigerian creators and industries, making them dependent on external platforms for global reach.

Furthermore, the metrics-driven nature of streaming platforms where success is measured through views, streams, and engagement can influence creative decision-making in ways that prioritize commercial performance over artistic innovation. This dynamic reflects broader trends within digital capitalism, where cultural products are increasingly evaluated based on quantifiable data rather than qualitative impact. As a result, there is a risk that Nigerian media may become overly commodified, reducing its cultural richness to market-driven formulas. The economic viability and cultural impact of digital streaming platforms present a complex and multifaceted landscape for Nigerian media. While these platforms offer significant opportunities for global exposure, revenue generation, and cultural dissemination, they also introduce challenges related to income inequality, cultural homogenization, and platform dependency. The cases of Love in Every Word and 5ive illustrate both the promise and the limitations of streaming as a transformative force within Nollywood and the Nigerian music industry. A critical appraisal of these dynamics is essential for understanding how Nigerian creators can navigate the evolving digital economy while preserving the integrity and diversity of their cultural expressions.

Analysis, Metrics and Revenue Dynamics of Omoni Oboli's *Love in Every Word* (2025) and Davido's *5ive* (2025)

Omoni Oboli's Love in Every Word and Davido's 5ive provide a concrete basis for evaluating the economic viability of streaming platforms within Nigeria's film and music industries. Both works demonstrate how digital metrics particularly views, streams, and engagement translate into measurable cultural reach and financial outcomes, albeit through different platform logics and monetization structures. Love in Every Word exemplifies the success of Nollywood's direct-to-digital distribution model, particularly through YouTube. Upon release, the film recorded over 2 million views within 24 hours, surpassed 11.5 million views within a week, and exceeded 20 million views within approximately three weeks. It later crossed 30 million total views, positioning it among the most-watched Nollywood films on the platform. These figures indicate rapid audience aggregation, driven by algorithmic recommendation, social media amplification, and Nollywood's existing fan base. The performance also highlights the scalability of digital distribution, where content continues to accumulate views long after release without the spatial and temporal constraints of cinema exhibition. From a revenue perspective, YouTube operates primarily on an advertising-based model, where earnings are generated through Cost Per Mille (CPM) and Cost Per Click (CPC) mechanisms.

While rates vary depending on audience geography and engagement quality, industry estimates place average earnings between $1 and $3 per 1,000 monetized views. Based on its reported performance, Love in Every Word likely generated substantial revenue in the hundreds of thousands of dollars range, particularly when combined with additional monetization streams such as brand placements, channel growth, and secondary licensing opportunities. This indicates that Nollywood filmmakers can achieve significant financial returns without traditional cinema distribution, although profitability remains highly dependent on virality and sustained audience engagement.

In contrast, Davido's 5ive, released through major music streaming ecosystems such as Spotify and Apple Music, illustrates the global scalability of Afrobeats within subscription-based streaming economies. The album reportedly achieved approximately 15 million global streams within its first 24 hours, with strong regional performance including over 9 million streams in Nigeria on release day. Within a broader timeframe, 5ive accumulated over 200–300 million streams globally, reflecting sustained consumption across multiple markets. It also attained high chart positions, including number-one rankings on Apple Music in multiple countries and appearances on global charts across Europe, Africa, and North America. These metrics demonstrate not only high consumption volume but also strong transnational penetration. Revenue generation for 5ive follows a per-stream royalty model. Streaming platforms typically pay between $0.003 and $0.005 per stream, depending on subscription type, region, and licensing agreements. At the lower and upper bounds of its estimated 300 million streams, the album's streaming revenue could range from approximately $900,000 to $1.5 million, excluding ancillary income from touring, endorsements, publishing rights, and synchronization deals. This highlights a key structural difference from film streaming: while per-unit earnings in music are lower, the repeatable and playlist-driven nature of listening enables significantly higher aggregate consumption. A comparative reading of both case studies reveals distinct yet complementary economic logics. Love in Every Word benefits from high-impact, view-based monetization, where viral performance drives immediate revenue spikes. Conversely, 5ive operates within a cumulative consumption model, where repeated streaming across global audiences produces long-term revenue accumulation. The difference is largely shaped by platform design: video streaming prioritizes episodic engagement, while music streaming encourages repetitive listening through algorithmic playlists and personalized recommendations.

Both cases also underscore the central role of algorithmic systems in determining visibility and financial success. Content that performs well in early engagement metrics is more likely to be promoted by platform algorithms, thereby amplifying reach and revenue potential. However, this also introduces volatility, as underperforming content may struggle to gain visibility regardless of production quality. In this sense, both Oboli's film and Davido's album demonstrate that success in the digital economy is increasingly tied to algorithmic performance rather than traditional distribution guarantees. In conclusion, the performance of Love in Every Word and 5ive provides strong empirical evidence of the economic viability of streaming platforms for Nigerian creative industries. While Nollywood and Afrobeats operate under different monetization structures, both demonstrate that digital platforms can generate substantial global reach and revenue when content successfully aligns with algorithmic visibility, audience engagement, and transnational appeal. At the same time, the disparities in revenue models and dependency on platform metrics highlight the need for strategic adaptation by Nigerian creators navigating the evolving digital economy.

Conclusion

This study has examined the viability of streaming platforms in the global distribution of Nigerian film and music industries, with specific reference to Omoni Oboli's Love in Every Word and Davido's 5ive. Across the analysis, it is evident that digital streaming ecosystems have fundamentally transformed how Nigerian cultural products are produced, distributed, consumed, and monetized. Platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Music have dismantled traditional geographic and industrial barriers, enabling Nigerian creatives to access global audiences at an unprecedented scale. The findings from the case studies demonstrate that both Nollywood and Afrobeats have achieved significant global penetration through streaming metrics. Love in Every Word achieved tens of millions of views within a short period, illustrating the viral potential of digitally distributed Nigerian films, while Davido's 5ive accumulated hundreds of millions of streams globally, reflecting the repeat-consumption nature of music streaming economies. These figures confirm that streaming platforms are not only distribution channels but also powerful engines of visibility and cultural circulation. However, the study also reveals that this global success is structurally dependent on algorithmic systems and platform economics. Visibility is largely determined by engagement metrics such as views, streams, watch time, and playlist placement, which in turn influence revenue generation. While this system enables rapid scalability and international exposure, it also introduces volatility, as content performance is heavily shaped by platform algorithms rather than purely artistic merit. Consequently, success in the digital economy is increasingly contingent on algorithmic favorability and audience interaction patterns.

Economically, streaming platforms present both opportunity and limitation. On one hand, they provide alternative revenue streams through advertising, royalties, licensing, and global distribution deals, allowing Nigerian creators to bypass traditional gatekeepers. On the other hand, the per-unit value of digital consumption remains relatively low, particularly in music streaming, where high revenue is only achievable through massive volume. This creates a dual structure in which top-performing creators benefit disproportionately, while smaller or emerging voices may struggle to achieve financial sustainability. Culturally, the global circulation of Nigerian media through streaming platforms has enhanced the international visibility of Nollywood narratives and Afrobeats sounds, contributing to a broader redefinition of African cultural presence in global media. However, this visibility is accompanied by tensions around cultural adaptation, platform dependency, and the risk of homogenization driven by global market expectations.

Finally, streaming platforms are best understood as transformative yet ambivalent infrastructures. They have expanded the global reach and economic possibilities of Nigerian media industries while simultaneously embedding them within algorithm-driven, competitive, and uneven digital economies. The cases of Love in Every Word and 5ive ultimately illustrate that the future of Nollywood and Nigerian music will continue to depend on how effectively creators navigate the opportunities and constraints of global streaming ecosystems while maintaining cultural authenticity and economic sustainability.

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