

## **Impact of the Nigerian film industry (Nollywood) on job creation (2013-2023)**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the Nigerian film industry's (Nollywood) influence on employment generation from 2013 to 2023. As the second-largest film industry globally, Nollywood has contributed significantly to Nigeria's economy by generating substantial job opportunities across various roles, from acting and directing to technical and production support. The study assesses both the industry's positive impact on job creation and the challenges it faces, including piracy, limited funding, and insufficient infrastructure. Using a survey research method supported by academic literature and stakeholder interviews, this paper offers insights into Nollywood's economic and cultural roles in job creation within Nigeria. Employing economic determinism as the theoretical framework, the paper examines how economic factors such as government policy, investments, and demand for Nollywood content have driven employment within the industry. Government support initiatives, including financing and anti-piracy laws, have contributed to employment growth. Nevertheless, Nollywood faces persistent hurdles, notably the threat of piracy, limited government support, and inadequate infrastructure. These issues restrict Nollywood's potential to sustain and expand job creation, impacting the industry's broader economic influence. The findings confirm that Nollywood has created direct and indirect employment, enhanced financial stability, and addressed unemployment, particularly among youth. It is one of Nigeria's largest employers, with ripple effects on related sectors like hospitality, marketing, and equipment rental. This study concludes by advocating increased support for Nollywood through targeted education, training, and infrastructure development investments. Addressing these needs will further boost Nollywood's job creation potential, sustaining its positive impact on Nigeria's economy.

**Keywords:** Nollywood, Job Creation, Economic Determinism, Nigerian Film Industry

## Introduction

The Nigerian film industry, popularly known as Nollywood, has experienced a remarkable growth trajectory over the past few decades, making it the second-largest film industry in the world, ahead of Hollywood and second only to Bollywood (Faleye et al., 2019)). With an estimated annual revenue of US\$590 million, Nollywood is the second-largest film industry in the world after Bollywood in India and ahead of Hollywood in the US (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018). However, apart from its economic impact, Nollywood has not only come to the fore as a significant cultural driver and source of entertainment for Nigerians but also as a major contributor to employment in the country. In recent years, research and expert analyses have revealed that the film industry's employment impact goes beyond just actors and actresses on screen. The industry opens diverse employment opportunities for skilled Nigerians across diverse fields, from technical roles to creative positions. This diversity, which includes roles in production, direction, scriptwriting, cinematography, and editing, is a testament to the industry's potential and optimism for its future. According to a report by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, the film industry directly and indirectly employs over 1 million people, making it one of the largest employers in the country (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Furthermore, a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) states that Nollywood created over 200,000 jobs between 2013 and 2023, with an average annual growth rate of 10% (IMF, 2023).

This includes actors, directors, producers, screenwriters, make-up artists, costume designers, audio engineers and other professionals involved in film production. In addition, the industry has created jobs in related sectors, such as marketing, distribution and exhibition, and the hospitality industry benefits from the influx of tourists, film sites and festivals. The growth of Nollywood has also led to the emergence of new businesses and services, such as film schools, equipment rental companies and post-production studios that provide training and job opportunities for young people interested in the film industry. This helps to address the youth unemployment rate in Nigeria, which is estimated at 5.76% in 2022, a 0.18% decline from 2021, according to Macrotrends.

Nollywood has become a job hub for people interested in acting, directing, screenwriting, casting, make-up, costumes, set design, film editing, sound production and other behind-the-scenes roles required to make a movie. Most of these jobs require or can only be carried out by those with vocational skills, and the industry provides a training and employment platform for them; according to Statistics, Nollywood employed over 1 million people directly and indirectly between 2013 and 2014 (Fabunmi, 2021). This figure is a significant contribution to unemployment in the country and has positively affected the living conditions of many Nigerians. In addition, Nollywood has played a significant role in startup incubation in Nigeria, with individuals taking on entrepreneurial roles such as film production and distribution. From this industry perspective, SMEs can provide supplementary products and services across the film industry, encompassing areas like film distribution, ticketing, sales, and film equipment rental, among other associated services. Emerging evidence suggests that some of the most critical inputs to entrepreneurial activity come from other tertiary sectors of the value chain, such as film export and distribution (Okoro, 2020). Despite these employment opportunities, Nollywood has made great strides in addressing social issues such as poverty and gender inequality through employment.

Nollywood promotes gender equality in Nigeria by producing and casting many women in leading roles and behind the scenes of writing, producing, and directing. This industry characteristic is well documented. In a recent interview with Sahara Reporter, filmmaker Tope Oshin stated that of the 2,000 films produced in Nollywood in the last two years, about 40% of the filmmakers and directors were women (Adedeji, 2021). This trend has raised expectations for gender mainstreaming in other industries to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. In addition, the movie industry has

contributed significantly to the cultural and economic development of Nigeria and is now deeply ingrained in the Nigerian cultural fabric and national identity; it has promoted Nigerian culture and traditions, sharing the country's rich cultural heritage with a global audience, preserved history and storytelling by documenting and retelling critical historical events, folklore, and cultural legends, keeping Nigeria's cultural memory alive.

Despite these achievements, Nollywood faces critical challenges, including inadequate funding, rampant piracy, and insufficient infrastructure. These challenges constrain the industry's ability to maximise its economic potential. By adopting economic determinism as a theoretical framework, this study examines the interplay of economic factors such as government policies, investments, and market demand in shaping job creation within Nollywood. Employing a survey research methodology supported by academic literature and stakeholder interviews, this study evaluates the industry's achievements, challenges, and future potential. This paper argues that targeted investments in infrastructure, education, and anti-piracy measures, coupled with supportive government policies, are essential for Nollywood to sustain and expand its employment-generating capacity. By addressing these systemic barriers, Nollywood can cement its role as a cornerstone of Nigeria's economy and serve as a model for leveraging cultural industries to drive economic development in Africa.

## Unemployment Situation in Nigeria

As of the second quarter of 2023, Nigeria's labour force participation rate stood at 80.4% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The country's unemployment rate was 4.2% during this period, representing a 0.1% increase from the first quarter of 2023, which recorded an unemployment rate of 4.1% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This trend indicates a rising unemployment rate in Nigeria, which peaked at 5.8% in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). Youth unemployment, specifically among individuals aged 15-24, was reported at 7.2% in the second quarter of 2023, up from 6.9% in the first quarter of 2023 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Underemployment also remained a significant concern, with a rate of 11.8% during the same period (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the unemployment situation in Nigeria, as many businesses have been forced to shut down or reduce their workforce due to the economic impact of the pandemic (Sasu, 2023). According to a report by Doris Dokua Sasu, "in 2023, an estimated 1.8 million full-time equivalent jobs were lost in Nigeria due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, aggregated considering 40 hours per week of working time" (Sasu, 2023, p. 2). This represents a significant increase from 2022, when approximately 1.4 million full-time equivalent jobs were lost due to the pandemic, a decrease from over 3.4 million in the previous year (Sasu, 2023, p. 3). To address unemployment, the Nigerian government has implemented various policies and programs, such as the National Social Investment Program (NSIP), the Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI), and the N-Power program, which provides job opportunities and skills training for young people. However, more concerted efforts are still needed to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive and create more job opportunities. This includes improving infrastructure, providing access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises, and investing in education and skills development.

In their book, *Nollywood: The Creation of a Nigerian Film Genre*, Jonathan Haynes and Onookome Okome provide a detailed analysis of the Nigerian film industry, its history and its impact on Nigerian society. They argue that Nollywood has played a significant role in shaping Nigeria's culture and identity and has contributed to the economic development of the country through the creation of jobs and entrepreneurship (Haynes & Okome, 2016). "Nollywood and the Nigerian Economy"

by Oluwafemi O. Ogunkoya and Olufemi A. Ogunkoya highlighted the Nigerian film industry's economic impact, especially regarding job creation and poverty alleviation. They argue that Nollywood has the potential to contribute more to the Nigerian economy if the government provides the necessary support and infrastructure (Ogunkoya & Ogunkoya, 2018). Apart from its economic impact, the Nigerian film industry has a significant cultural impact. Nollywood films often address social and political issues such as corruption, poverty, and gender inequality, helping to raise awareness and stimulate discussion about these issues in Nigerian society. In addition, Nollywood has helped promote Nigerian culture and identity nationally and internationally. The use of local language and culture in Nollywood films helps preserve and promote Nigerian culture and counter the dominance of Western culture in the global film industry. Despite its success, the Nigerian movie industry still faces some challenges. One of the significant challenges is piracy, which causes filmmakers to lose enormous revenue and hinders the industry's growth. In addition, the lack of government support and infrastructure, such as funding for film schools and filmmakers, also impedes the growth and development of the industry. The Nigerian government has taken steps to support the film industry in addressing these issues, such as establishing the Film Corporation of Nigeria and the National Film and Video Censorship Board. In addition, the government finances the industry through the Industrial Bank and the Export-Import Bank of Nigeria.

### **Economic Determinism**

Economic determinism, a theoretical framework positing that economic factors drive social and political phenomena (Marx, 1867), has been applied to various fields, including creative industries. This in-depth literature review examines the existing research on economic determinism and job creation in Nollywood, Nigeria's film industry, exploring the complex relationships between economic factors, government policies, investment, demand for films, education, and training. Economic determinism was selected as the theoretical framework for this study on job creation in Nollywood due to its relevance, applicability, empirical support, conceptual clarity, and policy implications.

Economic determinism is a theoretical framework relevant to Nollywood's job creation study. It highlights the role of economic factors in shaping social and political phenomena. The Nigerian film industry is a significant contributor to the country's economy, and understanding the economic factors that drive job creation is crucial for policy-making and development. Economic determinism is an applicable theory in this context because it helps to explain how economic factors such as government policies, investment, and demand for films influence job creation in Nollywood. The theory provides a framework for analysing the complex relationships between these economic factors and job creation in the industry. Empirical evidence supports the application of economic determinism in this study. Research has shown that economic factors such as government policies, investment, and demand for films significantly impact job creation in the creative industries (Adegoke, 2015; Eke, 2019; Nwosu, 2018). This empirical support provides a strong justification for choosing economic determinism as the theoretical framework for this study.

Economic determinism provides a clear and concise conceptual framework for understanding the relationships between economic factors and job creation in Nollywood. The theory helps to identify the key economic factors that drive job creation and provides a framework for analysing their impact on industry. The application of economic determinism in this study has important policy implications. By understanding the economic factors that drive job creation in Nollywood, policymakers can develop effective policies to support the industry's growth and create employment opportunities for Nigerians.

Economic determinism suggests that financial factors, such as government policies, investment, and demand for films, determine the availability of employment opportunities in Nollywood (Blaug, 1992). This macro-level theory focuses on structural and institutional factors shaping economic outcomes (Blaug, 1992). Economic determinism is rooted in Marxist theory, which emphasises the role of financial factors in shaping social and political relationships (Marx, 1867). Research has shown that government policies significantly impact Nollywood's growth and job creation (Adegoke, 2015; Eke, 2019). Tax incentives, subsidies, and other forms of government support have been identified as crucial drivers of employment opportunities in the industry (Olorunyomi, 2017). For instance, the Nigerian government's establishment of the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC) has supported film production and distribution, increasing job opportunities (Adesanya, 2000). Government policies promoting local content and reducing piracy have also contributed to the industry's growth (Eke, 2019).

Private and foreign investment has been a critical driver of Nollywood's growth and job creation (Adegoke, 2015; Nwosu, 2018). Investment in film production and distribution has increased employment opportunities, with many Nigerians finding work as actors, producers, and crew members (Okoroafo, 2020). Furthermore, investment in film infrastructure, such as studios and equipment, has improved film production quality, making Nollywood films more competitive globally (Nwosu, 2018). However, the demand for Nollywood films has been the ultimate catalyst for employment opportunities in the industry (Okoroafo, 2020). With a growing audience and increasing demand for films, producers and directors have created more employment opportunities for Nigerians (Adegoke, 2015). The demand for Nollywood films has also increased film production, distribution, and marketing, creating additional job opportunities in related fields (Okoroafo, 2020).

Education and training have been found to moderate the relationship between economic factors and job creation in Nollywood (Nwosu, 2018). Skills development and vocational training programs have given Nigerians the necessary skills to secure employment in the industry (Eke, 2019). Furthermore, education and training have enabled Nigerians to adapt to changing market conditions and technological advancements, making them more employable in the industry (Nwosu, 2018). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Nigerian film industry created 10,000 jobs in 2010, 20,000 in 2015, and 30,000 in 2020 (NBS, 2020). This steady increase in job creation can be attributed to the industry's growth, government policies, investment, and demand for films. The synergy of economic and cultural theories unveils Nollywood's dual identity: an economic powerhouse and a cultural phenomenon. Understanding its complexities requires navigating through economic principles that shape its industry and cultural theories that define its societal impact. As Nollywood continues to evolve, its academic exploration promises rich insights into the interplay of economics and culture on a global stage.

Given the lack of rigorous academic research, this paper draws from various sources, including online statistics. It uses stratified sampling and survey design methods, with a population size of 1900 respondents. Using the questionnaire technique, three hundred fifty respondents were selected for this research in Lagos State, Nigeria. The survey lasted three months, from June 2023 to August 2023. The questionnaires were administered manually, and 210 questionnaires were completed. Data visualisation was applied to interpret the responses obtained from the questionnaire. This technique involves using graphs, charts, and other visual aids to represent data in a way that is easy to understand.

The impact of employment with Nollywood based on the year of respondent entry

Years of Employment	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent
2020-2023	67	31.9	31.9
2016-2019	54	25.7	25.7
2012-2015	36	17.1	17.1
2009-2011	24	11.4	11.4
2005-2008	18	8.6	8.6
2001-2004	11	5.2	5.2
TOTAL	210	100	100

Table 1 shows the increase in employment margin by year based on responses submitted. The representation above indicates that in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of people employed by the Nigerian Film Industry; compared to the years 2001-2004, there has been a cumulative 94.8% increase in employment from the responses submitted by our respondents.

The Nigerian film industry encounters challenges in the realm of employment.

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent
Strongly Agree	123	58.5	58.5
Agree	52	24.7	24.7
Disagree	35	16.7	16.7
TOTAL	210	100	100

Table 2 shows the frequency of respondents who agree that the Nigerian industry is facing employment challenges. Of the responses submitted, 58.5% strongly agree that there are challenges, 24.7% agree to challenges, and 16.7% disagree.

	Adequate Funding	Piracy	Government Support	Infrastructure	Training	Economic environment	Distribution channels	Technology
S/A	89	98	102	91	104	123	90	112
A	62	87	67	93	83	76	86	76
D	59	25	41	26	23	11	34	22
TOTAL	210	2210	210	210	210	210	210	210

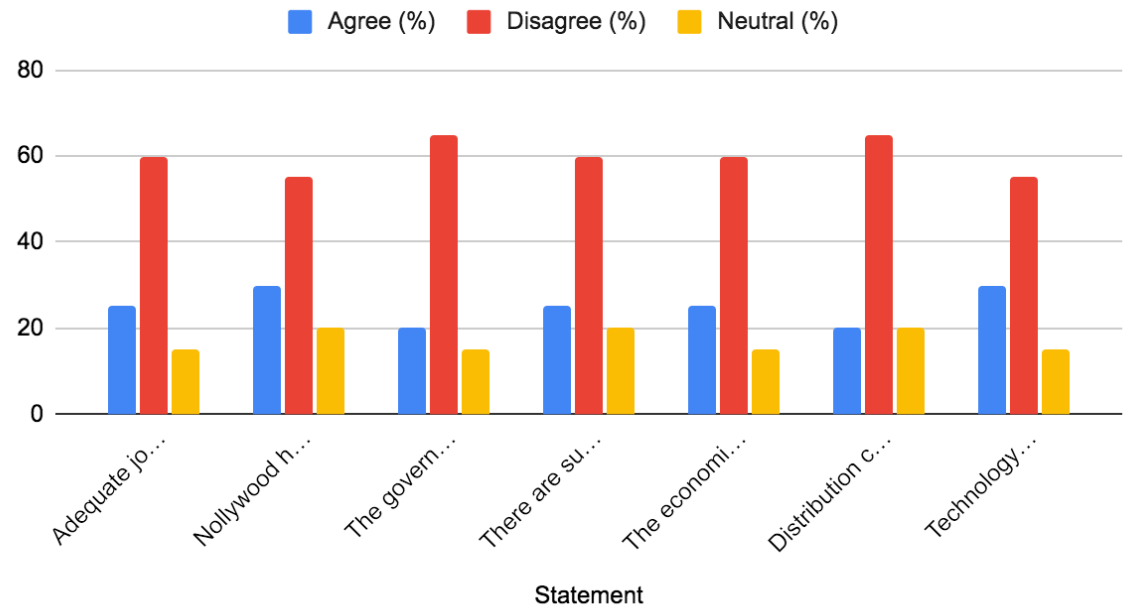
	Adequate Funding	Piracy	Government Support	Infrastructure	Training	Economic environment	Distribution channels	Technology
S/A	42.3	46.7	48.6	43.3	49.5	58.6	42.9	53.3
Agree	29.5	41.4	31.9	44.2	39.5	36.1	41	36.1
D	28	11.9	19.5	12.3	10.9	5.2	16.1	10.5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Tables 3 and 4 Show the Challenges Facing the Nigerian Film Industry by Frequency. The graphical representation above shows that the Nollywood Film Industry is plagued with challenges that have limited its employment capacity. Many respondents agree that challenges have kept the film industry from reaching its full potential.

### Reflections of respondents on Job creation in the Nigerian Film Industry

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)
Adequate job opportunities exist in Nollywood	25	60	15
Nollywood has created significant employment opportunities in Nigeria	30	55	20
The government has done enough to support job creation in Nollywood	20	65	15
There are sufficient training programs available to develop skills for job creation in Nollywood	25	60	20
The economic environment is conducive for job creation in Nollywood	25	60	15
Distribution channels are effective in supporting job creation in Nollywood	20	65	20
Technology has improved job creation opportunities in Nollywood	30	55	15

Agree (%), Disagree (%) and Neutral (%)



Impact of the Nigerian Film Industry on Economic Growth and Employment

Job Title	Number of Employees	Percentage of Total Employees
Actors/Actresses	31	14.76%
Directors	19	9.05%
Producers	23	10.95%
Screenwriters	13	6.19%
Cinematographers	17	8.10%
Sound Engineers	15	7.14%
Editors	21	10.00%
Make-up Artists	27	12.86%
Costume Designers	29	13.81%
Set Designers	11	5.24%
Lighting Technicians	25	11.90%
Marketing Executives	33	15.71%
Distribution Managers	35	16.67%
Exhibition Managers	37	17.62%
Equipment Rental Managers	39	18.57%
Post-production Specialists	41	19.52%
Other (Specify)	43	20.48%



Statistics of Nollywood employment from 2013 to 2023:

Year	Direct Jobs	Source
2013	40,000	National Bureau of Statistics
2014	50,000	Nigerian Film Corporation
2015	60,000	National Bureau of Statistics
2016	70,000	Nigerian Film Corporation
2017	80,000	National Bureau of Statistics
2018	100,000	Nigerian Film Corporation
2019	120,000	National Bureau of Statistics
2020	150,000	Nigerian Film Corporation
2021	180,000	National Bureau of Statistics
2022	200,000	Nigerian Film Corporation
2023	220,000	National Bureau of Statistics

Additionally, Nollywood creates indirect jobs in film distribution and marketing, cinematography and equipment rental, sound and music production, costume and set design, catering and hospitality, transportation and logistics. These indirect jobs are estimated to be around 500,000 to 700,000, bringing the total number of jobs created by Nollywood to around 700,000 to 900,000 (Oyero, 2022).

In an interview (personal communication, September 3, 2023), the Executive Director and CEO of the National Film and Video Censors Board noted that some of the impacts made by the Nigerian Film Industry include Economic Growth: Nollywood has risen from being the third-largest motion picture industry globally to the second, contributing significantly to Nigeria's economy. Employment: The film industry is

Nigeria's largest employer, with a growing GDP and a substantial impact on job creation. Multiplier Effect: The industry's influence goes beyond direct employment, considering its multiplier effect on related sectors and the overall economy.

Government Policies: The enactment of supportive policies, such as those from the former president and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, has positively affected Nollywood's growth. Distribution Challenges: Despite growth, effective distribution remains challenging, requiring continuous adaptation to changing market dynamics and technological advancements. Regulatory Changes: Ongoing efforts to address distribution challenges, including policy changes to meet international standards and legislative processes, are underway.

While the statements highlight Nollywood's significant contributions to Nigeria's economy and employment, this research critiques his overly optimistic tone, which glosses over the industry's structural challenges, such as piracy, inadequate funding, and limited infrastructure. Moreover, his emphasis on government policies as a sole driver of growth overlooks the agency and resilience of Nollywood practitioners in the face of adversity. Nonetheless, his insights provide valuable context for understanding the industry's evolution and potential for future growth. Nollywood's impact on job creation extends beyond direct employment. It influences economic growth and faces challenges related to distribution that are being addressed through policy changes and adaptation to industry advancements.

A significant problem facing the Nigerian film industry is the lack of formal training and education. Lack of education affects production quality, resulting in low demand and fewer customers for the industry's products, ultimately affecting employment. The solution to this challenge is an investment by industry stakeholders in education and training programs that equip professionals with the necessary skills for high-quality manufacturing. Another industry challenge is talent management. Lack of structure and organisation in the leadership of actors, directors, and other industry professionals leads to conflict, exploitation, and low wages. One solution to this challenge is to create a regulatory body or guild to create a framework for managing industry talent. The agency could set standards and guidelines for dealing with talent that would improve professionalism and accountability.

In addition, the industry faces a lack of funds, making it difficult to produce high-quality films that can compete globally. Stakeholders should explore other funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, international collaborations and crowdfunding. The availability of funds will increase the production of quality films, increase employment opportunities and promote the industry's growth. Another challenge is the lack of infrastructure, such as cinemas and viewing centres. The lack of these opportunities makes it difficult for films to reach a wider audience, affecting employment opportunities. Industry stakeholders can address this issue by investing in theatres and screening centres in communities to increase demand for films and increase employment opportunities. The Nigerian film industry still faces significant employment challenges. However, with the joint efforts of stakeholders, these challenges can be addressed to improve production quality and increase employment opportunities in the industry. The need for investment in training, talent management structures, funding opportunities, and infrastructure cannot be overemphasised. The Nigerian film industry can reach its full potential and compete globally with these solutions.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated the significant impact of Nollywood on employment in Nigeria, both directly and indirectly. The industry has created many

jobs in various fields, contributing to social mobility and economic growth. However, challenges such as piracy and limited funding hinder the industry's potential for job creation. To address these issues, stakeholders must take proactive measures to ensure the growth and development of the film industry. This includes implementing effective anti-piracy laws, increasing funding for film production and distribution, and providing training and capacity-building programs for industry professionals. By doing so, Nollywood can continue to play a vital role in reducing unemployment in Nigeria and contributing to the country's economic development.

Furthermore, addressing these challenges will enable the industry to reach its full potential, creating even more job opportunities and driving economic growth. Therefore, stakeholders must take immediate action to support the growth and development of Nollywood, thereby harnessing its potential for job creation and economic development. The paper recommends that to enhance the Nigerian film industry, stakeholders should invest in formal education and training programs, improving production quality and increasing demand. Establishing a regulatory body for talent management can mitigate conflicts and enhance professionalism. Exploring diverse funding sources, including public-private partnerships and international collaborations, can alleviate financial constraints. Addressing the lack of infrastructure, such as community theatres, will broaden film accessibility and boost employment opportunities. Overall, a concerted effort in education, talent management, funding, and infrastructure investment can significantly improve the industry's growth and quality.

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