ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Moving with the Times: Evolution Dynamics in the Art of Film/Television Production Credits

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Abstract

Since the feature of production credit was introduced to film and television, the way movies are viewed have been changing. This paper focusedits searchlight on the noticeable changes on the art of production credits. One research question and one hypothesis were raised to guide the study, with the hypothesis tested at 0.5 level of significance. A survey design was employed. The sample consisted of 120 media students of three tertiary institutions in Jos, Plateau State selected through stratified sampling. The respondents were found to be eligible for the study being both students of Film and Television Studies on the one hand and critical viewers of industry programmes on the other hand. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, which was close structured on a five-point Likert scale with a 3.0 mean value. Mean scores, standard deviation, percentages and frequency counts formed the statistical tools for the analysis. The research revealed that there is a significant advancement in innovation in production credits and a significant difference between the traditional way of executing production credits and the modern way, which imply that production credits are evolving. The paper concluded that students of film and television production are aware of the changes going on in their field of study which suggests that their work will adapt to the current trend in the art of production credits. It recommended among others that film and television students should be exposed more to the digital templates of production credits.

Key words: Film, Television, Production Credits, Evolution.

Introduction

Change is a constant for a progressive nation and venture, and film and television are not exceptions to this rule. Movie watchers especially in the twenty-first century have had the privileged of being entertained by movie directors and film production companies who have made it their goal to disrupt the competitor. This healthy rivalry has produced amazing films that have given the viewer enough to chew from the technological innovations to an array of film celebrities. Old movies are today experiencing a resurrection as a second coming:

> Over the past few decades, film technology has made major advancement. Just compare the original "King Kong" made in the 1933, to the recent remake made in 2005… there are other factors that have played a part in how film has evolved such as Blu-ray discs and IMAX theatres. Audiences can now watch movies on smart phones, tablets, and computers, and stream movies through platforms such as Netflix. (New York Academy, 2017, p.1)

In the world's history books, film premiered in Paris (Philips, 2003) and television debut in England (Davis, 1981). In Nigeria however film was lunched in Lagos (Olubomehin, 2012) and television broadcasting in Ibadan (Kinnebrew, 2015) while colour television transmission was celebrated in Jos, Plateau State (Nwulu et al., 2010). The home video-film popularized by Kenneth Nnebue's 'Living in Bondage'birthed the Nollywood industry as it is known today (Olayiwola, 2011). Nigeria had always led the African continent in the creative industries even though this comes with a lot of responsibility and pressure to continue to lead. The production credits in all of these novelties of screen entertainment (film, television and video) were at best in their crude form. Indeed it was not just the production credit component alone but other elements of production like cinematography, lighting, sound and editing were still in their

developmental stages. Yet, they dazed their viewers who watched every part of the movie as belonging to a whole. Later on the concept of production credits began to be known more popularly as opening and closing or end credits.

Film which is sometimes referred to as movie or a motion picture is a screen medium with a mixture of image, story, and sound. The initial description of film lies heavily on the material medium of saving the photographed images unto celluloid. The movies so produced at the early years were stored in reels and were projected on a white screen for the audience to watch. Today this medium of film has seen innovation that has made it possible to watch films on VHS, DVC and DVD. Today film as we know it has emerged to be fully domesticated with the manufacturing of the VHS machines, DVD players and even watching film on demand over the Internet. You can even copy films in a flash and view it either in your laptop or behind the modern smart television set. Film has genres like drama, documentary and musical films. All these genres explain approaches to capturing images and sound, and telling stories.

Television is viewed in this paper as a broadcast system that creates its own content or broadcast contents from individual producers. The storage device for television content began with celluloid and then moved to magnetic tapes, but today they are digitally stored using internal and external hard drives. Innovations have also come to the rescue of traditional television by way of television applications (Apps) which now allow the viewer to watch television on the go without necessarily sitting before a television set. The Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Africa Independent Television (AIT), Channels Television and TVC News all have their apps that allow all subscribers access to their content and other contents from affiliated foreign television stations across the globe. Television also has its genres to include drama, news, magazine, musical, documentary and reality TV.

Production Credits in this paper includes all names of film or television houses (production companies), names in recognition of actors, actresses, crew members, and musical score. It also captures the names of support or sponsoring institutions and the licencing and regulating bodies in the film and television industry.

Evolution is interpreted here as the coming of age of the medium of film and television. It traces the slow but steady development of phenomena like film and television. The History of film and television shows how these two mediums have metamorphosed into a very sophisticated enterprise. This becomes possible with the help of technology and the creativity of those who produce such contents for the screen.

Statement of Problem

The evolution of production credits can be tracked. However, there seem to be some level of ignorance among students of film and television regarding the changes that have occurred in this area, looking at the technological innovation that has come to help reduce the cumbersome task of assembling the opening and closing credits. However, some movie makers still do not follow the standard way of applying production credits. This paper seeks to ascertain if students of television and film are able to recognise that the approach to executing production credits has changed and is still changing. The objective of the research is therefore to specifically ascertain the level of awareness students of film and television have about the evolution dynamics of production credits.

Research Question

The question below guided the research:

a. What are the evolution dynamics in the art of production credits?

Research Hypothesis

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the traditional way of executing production credits and the modern way.

Review of Literature

Production credits also known as opening and closing credits have evolved over a five major time periods. According to Inceer (2007), these periods are 1. Pre- Credit Era; 2. 1920s; 3. 1930s-mid 1950s;

4. 1955-1970s; and 5. 1980-present. The importance of production credits cannot be wished away even though it was not accorded the respect it deserves at the pre-credit era. Inceer notes that:

> At a time when copyright issues are so central in the entertainment industry, film credits are likely to become more and more important. Furthermore, in an environment full of clutter, the first impression of the film in the movie theatre, or on the television screen, prepares the viewer for what is to come just like a book. In this respect, film credits fulfil the important role of outlining the filmmaker's intentions and setting up the expectations of those watching (p.6).

The production credit art and practice has influence on the viewers. From the title of the film or television programme the audience is able to sustain their interest to want to see the actions that align with the title. They also go further to match their favourite actor or actress with the theme of the movie. So film and television celebrities add value to the production as seen in the posters advertising the film. The evolution of production credits can be seen in the following areas:

i. Black and white screen

At the inception of film, colour had not been introduced which explains why most production credits appear superimposed on a black background. Only two colours were available for the film maker to use – the black and white. Television also witnessed its share of the white on black screen so much that when colour was introduced, the viewer got fascinated by just watching the colour bars. Commenting on this transitioning from black and white to coloured, Matamala and Orero (2011,p.35) observe that "the opening credits of film have developed from simple credits on black frame to artistic typography or stylish complex narrations in its own right." Today directors and editors have a variety of colour options to choose from. End credits now come on orange, red and purple colour backgrounds. This colour phenomenon is driving the film industry now with amazing colour additives to get the attention of the viewer to wait and savour the information at the end of the movie.

ii. Typography in film title sequence and design

Typography is the ordering or arrangement of letters of the alphabet together with text with the sole aim of making the production credits readable, legible and visually appealing to the viewer. In the beginning the letters on the board were written with hands since the computer as we know it today was not available to the early film maker. It was therefore left to the individual graphic artiste to impress the production company with his or her calligraphy arts. A lot of factors are considered for the production credit design. The major ones include font type (typeface), size and style. (Faramazi, 2017) These factors put together have some effect on the viewer's psychology. With the invention of the computer it is clear that this aspect of writing credits and titles have progressed over the years. It is very rare to see production credits that are hand drawn today.

iii. Animation effects on letters and object

Animation within our context does not refer to one of the genre of film. This animation is concerned with letters and word transition on screen. It looks at the manner in which the letters fly in and out. Before now the only transition available was the cut and this was done by pausing the camera recording knob while someone else removed the slide already captured and replaced it with the next slide. Another way it was done in television was to arrange two to four slides in a roll as the camera simply pauses and pans to the next slide. This however was stressful to say the least. The computer technology has now made the work easy with room for correcting errors without condemning the whole work as was the case when it was manually done. An examination of films like Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe attributes this evolution to 3D compositing, High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging, Rotoscoping and much

more (Brinkmann, 2008).

iv. Graphics, still and motion picture

The style of inclusion that now combines the production credit text with graphics, still and motion picture has bought in some spice potent enough to sustain the viewers' interest even when the acting or performance of the movie is over. Apart from the animation genre which most times animate their production credits, feature films have also introduced the spilt screen approach where the still or motion picture is on one side of the screen as the credit text rolls up or fades out. This window of inserting graphics, still and motion pictures was not available to the early movie goers of the 1930s-1970s but today it has been incorporated into the options to use in working around the production credit space.

v. Production credits and music

The silent film era delivered film with no sound and as they progressed sound was added to film, making it now an audio visual medium. Even at that, most films of those epoch could at best accompany production credit with instrumental music. The reality today shows that musical scores have advanced and the songs sung by notable music icons now accompany the movie. This development has engendered a collaborative relationship between the music industry and the film industry in working together in a way that it is mutually beneficial to both parties.

vi. Production credit template

Technological advancement has been recorded in the area of giving everyone involved in the film or television production their due. Beyond the standard dichotomy between the Above The Line(ATL) and the Bellow The Line (BTL) personalities, the stress involved in capturing all cast and crew can be a nightmare. Today the Adobe editing software makes provision for a more orderly end credit that is stimulating to watch. Studio binder has free film credit orders and worksheet to help the film makers navigate the delicate process respecting hierarchy in the line-up of names. These film and television templates are suggestive of the evolution of production credits from manual to digital capturing.

Research Methodology

The study employed a survey method. The population was composed of students of the National Film Institute (NFI) Jos, Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Television College Jos and Department of Theatre and Film Studies University of Jos. A sample of 120 respondents were drawn from the population through stratified random sampling technique. These respondents were deemed eligible to participate in the study since they are both students of Film and Television Studies on the one hand and critical viewers of industry programmes on the other hand. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire which was close structured on a 5-point Likert scale with a 3.0 mean value. This instrument was validated by experts and pilot tested to ensure its validity and reliability. Copies of the validated questionnaire were administered to the respondents to gauge their opinion on the place of production credits in media practice, scholarship and audience appreciation. The analysis was made using mean scores, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviation statistical tools and presented in tables.

Results and Discussion

The total response and return rate for the completed and coded copies of the 120 copies of the questionnaire administered was 100%. Thus, the analysis is based on the 120 valid questionnaire copies returned.

Where the collective views expressed on a variable had a mean score more than 3.0 for section B, the views were considered statistically significant and the deductive remarks made in accordance with the aggregated mean values. The acceptance of the results of the hypothesis was premised on both the critical and p-value being at 95% confidence level or 0.05 level of significant. Lastly, the presentation and interpretation of the quantitative data was done in line with the research question and objectives.

Table 1: SECTION A: Respondents Socio-demographic characteristics

S/N	Variable	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Male	57	47.5
		Female	63	52.5
		Total	120	100.0
2.	Age	16-19	42	35.0
		21-25	57	47.5
		26 -30	13	10.8
		31-35	05	4.2
		36 and above	03	2.5
		Total	120	100.0
3.	Level	100	30	25.0
		200	30	25.0
		300	30	25.0
		400	30	25.0
		Total 120		100.0

Source: researcher's field study, 2019

Section 'A' deals with the respondents' socio-economic characteristics. From Table 1 the Gender variable reveals that out of the 120 degree students that participated in this survey fifty-seven of them representing 47.5% are males while sixty-three representing 52.5% are females. The female cumulative population is slightly higher than the male cumulative figure in this research. The age distribution index from the group shows that 35.0% fall within the 16-20 age bracket; 47.5% are between 21-25 years old; 10.8% represent the 26-30 age group; 4.2% of the entire one hundred and twenty respondents are between 31-36 years old while 2.5% of them fall under the 36 and above age range. Each of these groups fall under four levels or stages of their academic pursuit. From the 120 respondents, Table 1 shows that thirty respondents representing 25.0% are of the 100 level class; thirty respondents representing 25.0% come from the 200 level class; another thirty respondents representing 25.0% belong to the 300 level class while thirty of the respondents representing 25.0% are in the final year class, 400 level. Every level was adequately and equally covered as representing the whole.

Table 3: Respondents views on the evolution/dynamics in the art of production credits

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agreed (%)	Agreed (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagreed (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total (%)	Mean	Remark
1.	Production credits come in different font types and sizes	81 (67.5)	30 (25.0)	2 (1.7)	4 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	120 (100.0)	4.5167	Accepted
2.	The dominant back-ground colour for end credits is black	52 (43.3)	35 (29.2)	9 (7.5)	9 (7.5)	15 (12.5)	120 (100.0)	3.8333	Accepted
3.	Opening credits come in various style /approaches	77 (64.2)	39 (32.5)	4 (3.4)	0 (0)	0(0)	120 (100.0)	4.6083	Accepted
4.	Graphics, Still / motion Pictures can accompany some credits	58 (48.3)	53 (44.2)	3 (2.5)	4 (3.3)	2 (1.7)	120 (100.0)	4.3417	Accepted
5.	Music must accompany production credits	58 (48.3)	37 (30.8)	4 (3.3)	16 (13.3)	5 (4.2)	120 (100.0)	4.0583	Accepted

Source: researcher's field study, 2019

On the evolution/dynamics in the art of production credits, respondent's performance on the Five interrogating statements showed: (i) 92.5% agreement that Production credits come in different font types and sizes with a 4.5 mean; (ii) 72.5% agreement that the dominant background colour for end credits is black with a mean score of 3.8; (iii) 96.7% support that Opening credits come in various style /approaches with a mean score of 4.6; (iv) 92.5% support that Graphics, Still / motion Pictures can accompany some credits with a 4.3 mean score; (v) 79.1% opinion that Music must accompany production credits with a 4.0 mean score. Since all the mean scores are above the 3.0 mean given, all the statements were accepted as the evolution dynamics in the art of production credits. This implies that the evolution/dynamics in the art of production credits has changed and is still changing.

Testing of hypothesis

The hypothesis below is tested at 0.5 level of significance:

H0: There is no significant difference between the traditional way of executing production credits and the modern way.

Decision rule

i. If the P value calculated is greater than the level of significance, accept null hypothesis (H_0); otherwise reject null hypothesis.

Table 4: PCD * DBC Cross tabulation showing test of null hypothesis

Count		DBC SA	A	U	D	SA	Total
PCD	SA	52	29	0	0	0	81
	A	0	6	9	9	6	30
	U	0	0	0	0	2	2
	D	0	0	0	0	4	4
	SA	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total		52	35	9	9	15	120

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics

Table 5: showing Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	150.349[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	141.215	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	78.867	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	120		

Source: IBM SPSS Statistics

From the Chi-Square test table above, it can be seen that the P value is 0.000. The level of significance used for this study is 5% (0.05). In order to know whether to reject the null hypothesis or not, a comparison is made between the obtained P value (0.000) and the level of significance (0.05) according to the decision rule. Since the P value (0.000) is lower than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant difference between the traditional way of executing production credits and the modern way. This implies that production credits are significantly evolving.

Conclusion

This work has shown that contrary to the assumption that the evolution of production credits has occurred unnoticed the reverse is the case. Students of film and television are aware of the changes going on in their field of study. This is encouraging and suggestive that their work will also adapt to the current trendin the art of opening and closing credits.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students of film and television should be exposed more to the digital templates of production credits.

2. Film and television houses should upgrade on the way they apply production credits.
3. Television stations especially should allow for the full play or roll of production end credits to afford students of television the opportunity to observe this evolving trend.
4. Teachers of film and television production should spend more time in teaching production credits rather than leaving it to chance.

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