UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

INFLUENCES OF POPULAR CULTURE IN THE GHANAIAN

FILM INDUSTRY

JEREMY YAO OLYMPIO

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JEREMY YAO OLYMPIO

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Jeremy Yao Olympio, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original concept, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: ……………….

Date: ……………………..

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. (Mrs.) Faustina Brew (Principal Supervisor)

Signature: ………………..

Date: ……………………...

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Rev. Sylvester Yao and Mrs Philomena Olympio,

and also to my siblings, Sylvester Jr. and Yvonne Olympio.

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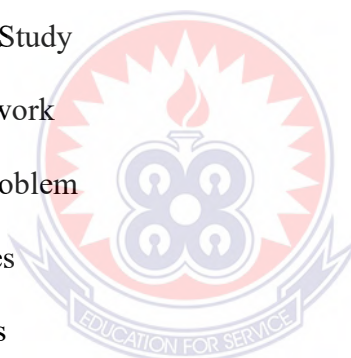
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ABSTRACT

Globalization has facilitated the adoption of new trends that are influencing and challenging existing structures in a variety of world disciplines, including the arts and sciences. Popular culture, which arose as a result of the globalization drive, is a major factor influencing patterns of change in existing cultures and systems. The popular culture movement has also had an impact on Ghana's film industry, influencing some new developments. The study sought to investigate how popular culture has influenced filmmakers, film development, audience preferences, and the film industry's marketing and distribution structures in Ghana. The study used a qualitative method and was based on the Social Influence Theory. Data was collected from directors, actors, and scriptwriters from Ghana's two main film industry blocs in order to answer the four research questions. Audience members and a distributor across both industries were also polled for their opinions. The main findings suggest that filmmakers mostly incorporate elements of popular culture into their films for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to meeting audience demands, attracting actors to their projects, and breaking into some viable markets. Although some filmmakers recognized the value of cultural representation in films, popular culture came to the fore as the driving force behind the majority of informed decisions made during the development and creation of film content. The study made recommendations for additional investigation and engagements to examine additional film industry sectors where popular culture has taken a dominant role and what can be done to ensure that indigenous culture is not ignored in the creation of films.
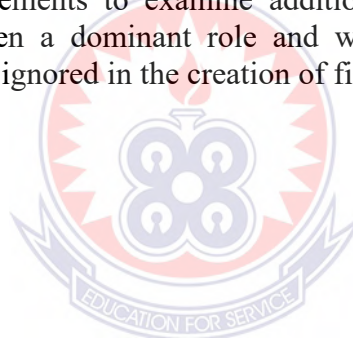
CHAPTER 1

1.0 Overview

The study is aimed at exploring the extent to which popular culture has influenced the film industry in Ghana, and also to detail the roles of various individuals in the industry and how they have contributed to the dominance of popular culture in the industry. This chapter focuses on the background of the study, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, research objectives and research questions. This chapter also presents the significance of the study, delimitations, and summary of chapters.

1.1 Background to the Study

Over time, globalization has given way to the adaption of trends and styles that are influencing and challenging the already existing structures in the various world disciplines such as the arts, and sciences among others. A popular culture that was birthed out of the globalization drive is one major factor that influences change patterns in the already existing cultures and systems. The proliferation of pop culture has touched contemporary generations and has served as a major influencer. Most thriving industries in the world today rely on the tenets of pop culture to create brands, products, and strategies that target the already existing consumer base which also aligns with the nuances of popular culture. Products such as Coca-Cola are well known to adapt popular trends in their advertisements to reach their targeted market. To affirm this, Labas and Mihovilović (2011) as cited by Kos-Lajtman and Slunjski (2017) suggest: "Popular culture is an essential component of modern society, which has integrated into all its pores - media presentations, films, fashion, all kinds of art, technology, design, sports, food and entertainment" (p.74).

The entertainment industry, with specific reference to the film industry, cannot be overlooked in the assessment of pop culture as a major influence on trends and tastes, popular among social groups and institutions (Howard, Ayesu & Amoah, 2017). New thematic issues in films are generated often to serve the ever-growing demands of the audience. For instance, to address the issues of corruption and police brutality in the black community in America, the movie, *Black and Blue,* was produced to address this. In the case of the Western world, most major film productions in modern day touch on various pop culture issues in an attempt to align with the taste of their audience. Some industries, such as the Chinese film industry, have set up organizational bodies to oversee the content of films, ensuring that some relatively sensitive issues are not addressed in the films. The case for the African film industry, however, is different from the rest of the world. Africa is known for its rich indigenous culture, which marks almost every society, thereby making them unique. The portrayal of various forms of culture has been bedrock for various thematic concerns treated in films. Although the genesis of film in Africa saw a calculated effort to wipe away the effects of colonialism, various film industries emerged with a new crop of filmmakers who either told African stories or created stories based on other cultures that were seemingly popular. These events were eminent in most film industries and the Ghanaian film industry is no exception.

A film can be described as a medium for the transmission of moral, ethical, and cultural ethics. Film like any other discipline of art can have both positive and negative influences. The film industry in Ghana, to attest to this description, was used by the colonial government to churn loyal citizenry by portraying their purported successes and achievements through film, with Boy Kumasenu as a classic example (Sandon, 2013). Post-colonial governments, outstandingly the government of Kwame Nkrumah,

made a conscious effort to undo the effects of colonialism. He adopted film as a medium to achieve this and in his bid to promote the local film industry; some local filmmakers were sponsored to learn the trade abroad. This was because Ghana did not have a well-established filmmaking school. The state of the Ghanaian film industry as seen in modern times is thriving, although it is faced with some setbacks that have challenged its progress and development. The industry continues to produce films that serve the interest of the audience base. The early film industry in Ghana among other things aimed at wiping away the effects of colonialism and therefore had a fulcrum of cultural elements running through their productions. Language, mode of dressing, stories, legacies, and communal relations among a host of others as cultural elements influenced the film industry in Ghana. The films that were produced were streamlined to fit the cultural standards without little or no infiltration of cultures that were alien to and could affect the state and standard of indigenous culture. The development and advancement of society, technology, and trends among a host of other factors are gradually competing with the already existing role of indigenous culture as a major influence on thematic issues treated in films produced by the film industry in Ghana.

The trend of popular culture is playing a significant role in influencing the dominating themes in films. Rather than attempting to advance and promote a kind of national cultural heritage through films, most filmmakers, suggestively, per the current trend of films produced in Ghana, have aligned to treating issues of pop culture in films over indigenous culture to serve the interest of the contemporary audience as well as for gross economic benefits, driven by modern day society. Akrofi (2013), for example, identified the influx of sexual-based themes in Ghanaian films as a worrying trend. Akrofi's concern possibly highlights the dangers associated with exposing young adults

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to sexually explicit material which may tend to corrupt good morals among a host of other implications, if not checked.

There have been other concerns raised as to the content produced through films lately with most audiences pushing for content influenced most by popular issues driven through the media and the internet as a medium. These defining moments alter some highly critical structures in the industry and in turn affect the responsiveness of outside markets in receiving or accepting this change.

In an attempt to satisfy the global drive and industry demands, producers are gradually shifting their attention to solely seeking content that suits the modern-day audience. The industry at a point seems to target the young and middle class in society, as perceived to be the main audience that drive the film industry. Pop culture is a major element of the lifestyle of most youth which has given most filmmakers the lead to inculcating these elements in their films to pull their audience along. This process has seen a gradual decline in culturally based issues eminent in films as most of the audience do not often relate to with such content.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The thesis is hinged on Kelman's Social Influence Theory. The theory will aid the researcher understand how culture and its nuances affect the behavioural patterns and ideologies of the film industry and some key personnel involved in the study.

Social influence denotes the process through which individuals change behaviour, norms, and beliefs among others to meet the demands of new or evolving trends. Social influence is evident through compliance, peer pressure, socialization, leadership, and obedience as well as sales and marketing. All these may tend to influence an individual into aligning with a set of beliefs or ideologies to be accepted or seen as part of society.

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Individuals form a core part of society and therefore are prone to change. However, the factors that influence change can be negative or positive, and maybe for the individual's gains or the gains of the society involved.

Social Influence Theory as propounded by Kelman (1958) theorizes that an individual's attitudes, beliefs, actions, or behaviours are influenced by others through three processes: compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance occurs when individuals accept influence and take on the adapted behaviour to gain approval or disapproval. Identification is said to happen when individuals adopt a kind of behaviour to create or maintain a desired and beneficial relationship with a person or a group of people. Internalization is presumed to occur when individuals accept influence after observing the content of the adapted behaviour is rewarding, as judged by the opinion of others. Kelman opined that his work on social influence is linked to other traditions in social psychology (Katz, 1960; Kelman, 1974; Smith, Burner & White, 1956). There have been further studies that have built on the theory of social influence.

Martin and Hewstone (2003), in a study on social influence, made use of the Social Influence Theory. However, the study by Martin and Hewstone (2003) detailed other forms of social influence derived from Kelman's (1958) study. The other emergent forms, according to Martin and Hewstone (2003), are incidental social influence and deliberate social influence. Incidental social influence, according to Martin and Hewstone (2003), occurs when the presence of people may influence the behaviour of another person. Deliberate social influence however happens when the individual decides to change based on personal choices (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004).This affirms Kelman's (1958) assertion of compliance that, an individual chooses to comply with norms to gain approval or disapproval. Martin and Hewstone's (2003) study on social

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influences made use of the theory of social influence by Kelman (1958), Kelman (1974), and Kelman (2004). Inferences can be drawn from both studies that correlate which each other. A given example is detailed in compliance as a branch of Kelman's (1954) theory on social influence as against Deliberate Social Influence Theory by Martin and Hewstone (2003).

Detailed below is the explanation of the three processes as stated by Kelman (1958). The detailing of the processes will establish the rationale behind this theory and how it was used to guide the entire study to affirm or disprove if indeed popular culture has proliferated the film industry in Ghana or not.

The compliance: This phase centres on the individual's susceptibility to influence by accepting the influence and as a result exhibiting a new behaviour that is not part of the person's set of beliefs or ideals. The process usually connotes individuals being accepted as part of a society or group. In dealing with changes in the film industry based on influences and what have systematically become ideals, this process can resonate with film industry players and practitioners and how they begin to adapt to new trends in the industry to belong to the industry and be recognised. Compliance usually influences choices when individuals want to gain approval or disapproval.

Identification: Identification centres on individuals adopting behaviours to establish and maintain a desired beneficial relationship with a group of people. This process is highly important in exploring the influences in the film industry because it will possibly help explain reasons why industry players tend to adopt certain trends–achieve and maintain a relationship with the end users (audience). Identification as a branch of Social Influence will also determine if the film will again sell because it is serving the interest of the audience. Identification as part of the social influence theory will give an

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understanding of how certain trends in the industry developed and possibly give reasons as to why such trends have influenced and informed change among the individuals and the industry at large.

Internalization: Internalization mainly espouses the idea of individuals accepting influence or change by recognizing that the content of the behaviour is rewarding based on judgments generated from the opinions of others. The process will possibly explain how feedback in general terms may influence changes in the film industry and how the industry practitioners respond to this by either accepting and aligning to the trends or not. This is important because it will possibly explain how market forces may also contribute to the growth and development of the industry as they (market forces) deal directly with the audience who are mostly at the centre of feedback and opinions.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Film, as a medium, possesses inherent pedagogical potential, serving as a powerful tool for transmitting the essential values crucial for societal development. Throughout Ghana's cinematic history, from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial eras, the film industry has played a pivotal role in conveying moral, ethical, philosophical, and culturally rooted ideologies. This cinematic narrative was designed to foster a sense of national patriotism and cultivate cultural ambassadors.

However, the emergence of popular culture as a dominant influence in the Ghanaian film industry has introduced a concerning trend. This shift has led to the marginalization of indigenous cultural elements and values, posing a critical problem that jeopardizes vital aspects of the nation's cultural heritage. This issue extends to the realms of identity, traditional norms, beliefs, and communal bonds, highlighting the urgent need for

research that comprehensively addresses the influence of popular culture on Ghana's film industry and its implications for the preservation of national and cultural identity.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To assess how popular culture has influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers.
2. To explore how popular culture has influenced the marketing and distribution structures of the Ghanaian film industry.
3. To find out how popular culture has impacted on the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films.
4. To investigate the extent to which popular culture has affected audience expectations in Ghanaian films.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How has popular culture influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers?
2. What are the influences of popular culture on the marketing and distribution structures of the Ghanaian film industry?
3. How has popular culture impacted the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films?
4. To what extent has popular culture affected audience expectations in Ghanaian films?

1.6 Significance of the study

The research will be relevant to the film industry in Ghana. The findings of the study will provide credible information for the industry players in the Ghanaian film industry, film and acting students in training, and film investors. It will also be relevant in skills development and upgrade of personnel in the film industry. The study will prompt the film industry players to appreciate the need to inculcate Ghanaian cultural practices in their films.

1.7 Delimitation

The research is focused on a select group of directors, actors, scriptwriters, and distributors who belong to the two main blocs of the Ghanaian film industry, which are the *Kumawood* and *Ghallywood*. This will serve as the boundary for the research. These individuals selected play significant roles in the creation, development, and promotion of contemporary Ghanaian films. The study is also limited to a select group of audience members based on their general knowledge of the Ghanaian film industry.

1.8 Summary of Chapters

The study is categorized into five (5) chapters. The first chapter gives a background to the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, the theoretical framework, the significance of the study as well as delimitation of the study.

The second chapter reviewed literature related to the study and guided the discussions to identify emerging topics and some gaps in previous studies that this study will address. The discussions were done under various topics such as the world history of film, the history of African cinema, the birth of film industry in Ghana, marketing and distribution: the case of films and art, culture, and globalization driven films.

The third chapter captures the methodology used to achieve the objectives of the study. This chapter highlighted the research design, the population, the sample, and sampling technique. The chapter also described the various instruments used in data collection, the process of data collection and analyses as well as issues of ethical consideration.

Chapter four (4) presents' findings from the data gathered from respondents and other sources and analysed the data in line with the research objectives, questions, and relevant literature. Various themes were generated to guide the analyses and discussion of the data.

The last chapter summarizes and concludes the findings presented in chapter four (4). The chapter further espouses the limitations and challenges associated with the study as well as recommendations for future research in the field of study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

The film industry in Ghana, Africa, and the world at large has provided a base material for most researchers who are interested in studying the industry. Various studies have been conducted about the general structures of the industry which include economic structures, political catalyst roles, and audience impact among others. Some researchers have also done comparative studies to compare some film industries with other creative industries in a bid to explore the possible differences and similarities among them. This review focuses on the history and emergence of film in Africa. The review will also highlight the role of marketing and distribution as an emerging force in the film landscape. The review again will explore the subject of art, culture, and globalization drive-in films and their contributions to the film scope. Literature relating to the study will be reviewed under the following topics, with sub-areas under each topic.

1. The world history of film.

2. The History of African Cinema.

3. Filmmaking in Ghana

4. Marketing and Distribution of Films

5. Popular Culture, Globalization, and Indigenous Narratives in Film

2.1 The world history of film

The film industry, in general, has marked some unswerving achievements and impeccable developments in the relation to technology, artistic presentations, impact, and influences among others all over the world. The genesis and development of the film have traceable influences on the filmmaking culture of the modern age. Dixon and

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Foster (2018) attest to this by highlighting traceable influences of the themes in Edison's early films visible in the modern-day Hollywood film industry. "Edison set down the basic precepts upon which commercial Hollywood movie production, distribution, and exhibitions are still based: give the audience spectacle, sex, and violence, yet simultaneously pay lip service to the dominant social order." (p 10). The researcher agrees with the assertion as it justifies the notion that film thrives on influences. This sets the tone for the development of this research.

2.1.1 Early evidence of film

The advancement of cinema globally can be traced to the 19th century when European inventors developed various technologies that created the illusion of movement in pictures (Bordwell & Thompson, 2014 cited by McMahan, 2014). By the year 1894, Louis and Augustus Lumiere had invented the 'cinematographe,' a device with the capacity to record and project recorded events and materials. In March 1895, the Lumiere brothers recorded a short slice of life that displayed workers leaving the Lumiere factory in Lyon, France. The brothers subsequently filmed *The Waterer Watered, Feeding the Baby*, *L'Arroseur Arose,* and other short films that enjoyed wide exhibition in different parts of Europe and elsewhere. The first public screening of their short films took place on the 28th of December 1895 in France at the Paris Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines and the Saloon Indien which seated 120 people with as many as 20 shows a day (Barnouw, 1993). Cinema's ability to attract and entertain people was immediately recognized. Enthusiasts observed that it had the potential to attract audiences far beyond any other art form before it.

2.1.2 Technological advancements

Overtime, the film process changed significantly to match up to the demands of the global drive for change and evolution. George Huaco, whose extensive research focused on the sociology of film, highlighted some imperative reasons for the change in film processes. Among the lot, four of the reasons will be highlighted for this study as per the discretion of the researcher to drive the discussion of the study. Huaco (1965), among a host of philosophers, identified the events and changes in world politics, the creative skills of filmmakers, and their role in influencing the team of craftsmen in film, as some major influences that changed the film production process. Again, Huaco (1965) identified technological developments and the general reactions and responses of audiences as influencers that changed the processes in filmmaking.

Providing the basis for further development and research, Nowell-Smith (1996) also emphasized the importance of technological advancements in the development and artistic appreciation of film in the context of creativity and aesthetics. He suggested that "none of this would have happened without technology, and cinema is, in fact, unique as an art form in being defined by its technological character that brought the cinema into being and helped rapidly to turn it into a major art form" (p.18). This assertion by the aforementioned explains how cinema and new technologies spread over time and became a vital tool for the audience, by giving them various media platforms and devices to access films, thereby increasing the demands for the film.

2.1.3 Film as a lucrative venture: The search for new territories

The exploration of film as a money-making venture significantly contributed to the widespread of film production and the emergence of new filmmakers who tapped into the green area to make a fortune from it. Captured in history, as the first man to explore

the business of film is Edison who created more bizarre films that excited audiences. His 1896 sensation *The Kiss* did not only thrill the audience but paved the way for the transformation of film as an economic venture. Vitkauskaitė (2017) highlights the potency of film as a business by reiterating that film companies must strategically plan the film process in order to make profitable gains. The aforementioned among others are likely reasons why the film industry has evolved inculcating other relatively important factors such as acting, themes, and reliability, and pedagogy among others.

Nonetheless, some African scholars have suggested that storytelling is the bedrock of cinema and as such, has a universal inclination. This suggestively explains the reason for African filmmakers creating films that were based on the culture of the people. Ukadike (1994) asserts that Africans have engaged in storytelling as a socio-cultural activity long before the introduction of cinema technology by European groups. From a highly post-modernistic perspective, he argues that there existed a system of "sophisticated communication" which incorporated dance, folklore, sculpture, songs, rites, and ceremonies into holistic entertainment, educational and informative pieces. Frank Ukadike also identified similarities in "structure, dramatization, plot, and continuity between indigenous African storytelling and modern forms of storytelling in cinema" (Ukadike 1994 p. 22) to support his arguments. This assertion could account for the fast-spreading and development of film in Africa. This is because the process of storytelling was not alien to the African as it had been part of the bedrock for the advancement of many African societies.

2.2 The history of African Cinema

Filmmaking in Africa has served as the ethos of communities, thus enshrining the norms, ethics, and morals of various societies. The film industry initially was used as a

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tool by the colonial powers to indoctrinate and control the Africans, in a bid to make them loyal citizens. Nevertheless, the quest to restore the African identity which was propounded by radical Africanized leaders saw most filmmakers take advantage of the pedagogical nature of film to transmit the needed values for societal development, in an attempt to wipe off the effects of colonialism and restore the seemingly dwindling African Identity.

2.2.1 The colonial propaganda

Although global cinema began as an entertainment medium, its early use in Africa after World War II (WW II) was far from entertainment (Holt & Perren 2011). Cinema was the flagship channel for 'education', reorientation, and propaganda for easing the 'the white man's burden' Kipling (1899) as cited by Schewar (1997), which was the feeling of a burden of responsibility European colonialists took upon themselves to justify their invasion and 'civilization' of Africans. According to Ukadike (1994), the main ideology of European colonialism was to cut off Africans from their traditional roots and cinema was one of the main channels for the success of this agenda.

After the Berlin conference of 1884-1885, Africa was partitioned amongst the European powers, and each took upon itself a moral duty to civilize the indigenous African people they were entrusted with (Diawara, 1992). The rush for a share of Africa between 1870 and 1890 also coincided with the period of European construction and invention of their social-cultural traditions such as formal education, monarchy, and military institutions. It was thus natural for them to import these ideologies and structures to the colonies (Ranger 1997 p. 450). Cinema facilitated the easy dissemination of these ideas, eventually entrenching their philosophies as the main yardstick for determining civility.

2.2.2 Emergence of cinema in Africa: A tool for colonialist

The African continent was introduced to the concept of cinema around the same time film screenings were spreading in Europe and other parts of the world. Rouch (1962) postulates that cinema first appeared in Africa when a magician stole a theatre graph projection machine and later used it to project short films to audiences in South Africa in 1895. Nevertheless, the first African to feature in cinema was a Senegalese Wolof woman engaged in pottery making, who was filmed by the ethnographer, Felix-Louise Regnault, in 1895 (Weinberger, 1992) the year in which the Lumiere Brothers showcased their short films around the world. In effect, the African continent played a significant role in the evolution and development of cinema around the world except that like the Wolof woman's example, it seems the idea of showcasing 'others' to Western people was innate to those who engaged in early cinema.

In West Africa, Christian Missionary groups were instrumental in introducing cinema to the sub-region. The earliest known photographs in the Gold Coast were produced by missionary workers attached to the Basel Mission (BM), a Christian society founded in 1815 in Switzerland (Jenkins & Geary, 1985). Jenkins claims that the BM has in its archives pictures of a young girl named Wilhelmine Locher dating as far back as 1857. The pictures were taken by Wilhelmine's father who was on a mission to the Gold Coast. The BM archives also hold other pictures of indigenous people mostly on the Gold Coast (Jenkins, 1993). Apart from taking photographs of indigenous people, missionary workers propagated their faith armed, not only with the Bible, but also with cameras, projection machines, and audio-visual images that showed the birth and death of Christ, interspersed with capturing images of the indigenes (Ukadike, 1994). Eventually, the missionary groups did not only succeed in spreading their gospel but

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also paved the way for a successful colonization of the entire continent of Africa, as Africans became more tolerable to European visitors.

2.2.3 The issue of presentation and identity of the African

The era of experimentation of cinema soon succeeded with many narrative stories in which Africa and its people formed the backdrop as unusual subjects mostly for anthropological purposes. McDougall (1997) describes the sentimentalized nature in which most anthropologists approached their work. According to him, "an early remedy, as we know, was to bring exotic people to museums, lectures and such popular venues at world fairs and colonial expositions" (MacDougall, 1997, p. 276). He suggests that by displaying indigenous people, the anthropologist brought scientific authenticity to the practice of anthropology (MacDougall, 1997). The role of anthropologists and other explorers in presenting indigenous people as exotic objects has contributed to recent discourse about the merits of anthropology as a discipline in Africa (Bates, Mudimbe & O'Barr, 1993).

Although Africans on the continent may not have had the opportunity of serving as audiences for early non-religious cinema, their race and kind were subjected to scornful caricature depictions in many early films (Murphy, 2000). One such example is D.W Griffith's 1915 film, Birth of a Nation which is considered the most controversial film in history because of its depiction of black people played by white people with caricatured faces acting out bizarre roles (Stokes, 2007). According to Diawara (1993), scenes of black depiction in Birth of a Nation are what have continued to define black people's roles in Hollywood to date. The Blackman is only important, within the context of second fiddle to the Whiteman who is almost always the center of attention in films (Diawara, 1993). Other cinema presentations like 'King Solomon's Mines'

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produced in 1937and based on Rider Haggard's 1885 novel were also considered racist and a misrepresentation of the African people. Unlike Birth of a Nation, which used white people acting as black people and filmed in the United States, King Solomon's Mine had black actors acting out barbaric roles. Generally, the portrayal of Africans to a largely western European audience was under the philosophy of 'others' and was designed to reinforce Europe's notion of a 'dark continent' (Murphy, 2000). The aim of these films was also to prove to their audiences that there were 'uncivilized' societies in 'other' parts of the world. Cinema, like other forms of cultural productions portraying other peoples as uncivilized, served as a justification for colonialism in totality. Unknown to the inventors of the cinema apparatus, the technology may have just presented the power to a few to satisfy a glorifying feeling of superiority over others.

After the postcolonial era, most filmmakers used the medium of film to attempt to erase the long-lasting effects of colonialism on communities. Having a sense of awakening has propelled most filmmakers to pursue the African identity through their films, thereby rolling out a pedagogical process to instill a kind of Africanisms in Africans. Although there has been some influx of alien cultures seeping through the industry in Africa, the filmmakers are engaged daily in ensuring that the ideals of Africanism survive. This is an endless process that requires so much effort.

2.3 Filmmaking in Ghana

According to Meyer (1999), Ghanaian popular cinema was born out of people's desire to see their own culture depicted through a television or cinema screen, a trend that is prominent in many other parts of the world where "people struggle to add local images to the flood of Western images, or even replace the latter with the former" (Meyer, 1999, p. 96), a trend that is often encouraged due to an increasingly globalized media.

Ghanaian cinema can be traced back to the 1910s, when Christian missionaries first used slides and later films as evangelical tools (Nanbigne, 2011). The Basel Missionaries who settled in present-day Osu, in Accra, introduced films to the natives. Colonial authorities recognized the power of the visual medium and adopted it as political propaganda and indoctrination tools (Nanbigne, 2011). The medium of film was introduced to the Gold Coast by private businessmen, who opened cinemas in urban areas and employed cinema vans to tour the countryside (especially the cocoa-growing areas) in the course of the 1920s.The Gold Coast Film Unit was established by the colonial authorities in the 1920s, and in 1948 the Unit had begun film production (Meyer, 1999). However, as a result of a shortage in funds and investment, only 13 celluloid feature films were produced by the Film Unit between 1945 and 1980, a thirty-five-year period (Meyer, 1999).

2.3.1 The politics of film education

There is evidence to prove the existence of filmmaking in Ghana before the attainment of independence. In 1948, the Accra film school was set up, with the first batch of students taken from Achimota Secondary School and others from Nigeria. Similar film units existed in other parts of British colonial Africa, and their products were mutually exchanged and shown to audiences all over British colonial Africa. The unit also started to produce educational films and several feature films that were screened in Britain's African colonies. There were also pre-independence classics like ―*The Boy Kumasenu"* (1952), a film about city life and post-independence. Garritano (2013) describes *The Boy Kumasenu as* a Gold Coast Film Unit Production that "allegorized Ghana's evolution from primitive tradition to modern nationhood", fueled this nationalistic fever (Garritano, 2013, p. 41). This led to the film medium playing a vital role in the achievement of independence in 1957 when the film industry was used to

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consolidate political liberation from colonialism and to serve the interest of the new nation (Nanbigne, 2011). The film industry thus was closely related to governmental and imperial interests and employed to create loyal subjects (Diawara, 1992, Ukadike, 1994).

Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of Ghana, was convinced that the creation of a new African personality following Ghana's independence could be best achieved using the media and film as critical instruments for political education and mobilization" (Biney, 2011). His ideas for using film within political spheres were radically dictated by the postcolonial prescriptions on the structure of the independent State (Fanon, 1963). Nkrumah's government thus bought existing cinema houses in the country and aligned them to the GFIC (Diawara, 1992).

2.3.2 The quest for survival: The technology era

The focus on nationalization and ideological concerns after independence grew great and tipped the balance between nationalism and economic requirements (Nanbigne, 2011). The state's neglect of the economics of cinema meant that individuals had to take upon themselves the responsibility of growing a national cinema. (Nanbigne, 2011). Thus, after the military coup d'état of 1966, the state's involvement in the country's film sector declined.

This situation led to people turning towards a new format of filmmaking to satiate their craving for images to which they could relate: the video format. Video technology, spurred a major cinematic revolution in Ghana in the late 1980s, allowing video producers to create a "tremendously popular cinema" for local audiences at much lower costs (Meleiro, 2009). Thus, the proliferation of locally produced and consumed video films that satisfied the tastes of African viewers counterbalanced the production of more

expensive and immersive filmmaking, revolutionizing the cultural landscape (Meleiro, 2009).

Productions of the GFIC included *Africa Reborn*, a documentary film encompassing the different speeches, interviews, and proceedings reinforcing why Africa must unite at the May 1963 Africa Unity conference in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Other films like *Towards* a *United Africa* and *Operation Congo* which Heymann (2009) as cited by Ohene-Ansah (2018) notes as important films, showcased some of the atrocities that culminated in the murder of Patrice Lumumba, Joseph Otiko, and Maurice Mpolo during the Congo crises. Films of continental interest included *Ablode*and *Uhuru,* both highlighting the independence struggle of Togo and Kenya respectively.

2.3.3 Private filmmaking: A new phase

In the early 1980s, there were private initiatives by filmmakers who utilized the crew and facilities of the GFIC to produce films. Titles such as *Love Brewed in the African Pot* (1980) and *Heritage Africa* (1989) both by Kwaw Ansah, *His Majesty's Sargent* (1983) by AtoYarney, and *Kukurantumi*(1983) by King Ampaw were intellectually engaging and framed within the prescriptions of the postcolonial theories much to the disappointment of some Western European critics (Murphy 2000). GFIC initiated co-productions with foreign companies also led to the production of *Contact and African Timber*. These films were distributed widely, won international awards, and placed Ghana on the global cinematic map.

However, the ever-increasing cost of celluloid production amidst the lack of state support could not sustain the demands of the vast number of cinematic audiences in the country. The activities of the GFIC's leadership had assumed the epitome of the

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underdeveloped bourgeoisie who Frantz Fanon suggests are without economic power (Fanon, 1963)

Over time, Ghana's film scene has changed both in subject matter and in methods of production. Due to a high demand and an initial struggle to meet such demand, film production has traversed from the economically formalized structure of the 1950s and 1960s to the more unregulated structure of the informal sector. With the emergence of an industry that aimed at serving the somewhat elite and middle class in Ghana, the *Ghallywood* industry started producing films in English with subject matters that were relatable to that specified class of people. This industry thrived on actors who had some kind of formal education due to the language of communication. To do away with the bias, another industry emerged. The *Kumawood* industry rising through the ranks of popularity delivered movies to their audience in the local Akan dialect, *Twi*, which makes it easy and accessible to many (Meyer, 2003).

The discourse generated by the portrayal of social classism in films is a pool of controversy as to whether it is indeed helping in the promotion and development of the film industry in Ghana (Tamakloe, 2013). Some schools of thought are of the view that films in Ghana should be aimed at portraying and promoting the indigenous culture of the people of Ghana since the film industry is a major medium for the transmission of values, cultural traits, lifestyle, language and nationalism, and history among others. Others are also much concerned about the monetary components of the film as it is a major avenue to make money through the promotion and sales of films produced. The concern is the issue of funding which isn't efficient for the sustainability of the industry. Filmmakers are bothered with what will sell rather than what will sell us as a country.

2.4 Marketing and Distribution of Films

Marketing is a highly important face in the sale of a product. Askegaard (1999) emphasizes the importance of marketing as a key tool in understanding the demands of the consumer. Thus, to effectively sell, you must first know what the customer wants and meet that demand. Film as an art form can also be seen as a product because of the various processes involved in arriving at the final product. The film industry is competitive and just as any product must sell. Ulker-Demirel, Akyoland Simsek (2018) highlight the importance of meeting the customers' needs:

> Over the past two decades, art organizations have shown a growing interest in the marketing concept. Because of the increased competition in the entertainment industry, the adoption of marketing strategies has taken a crucial role in reaching art consumers for industry professionals (p. 80).

Marketing, distribution, and promotion play a significant role in film production. The market demands influence the choice of themes as well as the general output of films. The emergence of new media has also provided a more streamlined means of collecting data on preferences of what audiences want and how to easily access them. Academic discourses have been eminent on this subject by attempting to focus on the factors that influence film production. Generally, filmmakers take into consideration the market demands in the film planning process to ensure that their films meet the demands of their audience (Yang & Zong, 2016). This is a relatively important factor because it mainly gives a lead into the kind of audience that is being targeted, their preferences, taste, and kind of culture they associate with, which when taken into consideration, can relatively provide filmmakers with some ideas of the industry demands. Livingstone (2013) further asserts that although there may be, mass audience interest, there is also a possibility of having small audience groups with varied interests too. It is therefore

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imperative that filmmakers and distributors consider all possible influences before engaging in a film production process.

2.4.1 Development and modernization

Rapid growth and modernization coupled with the advancement of technology, according to Mauyakufan and Padhan (2018), have suggestively altered the structures of distribution and marketing of films across the world at large, especially in Africa. In the past, Cinema halls in   Ghana were the major means through which films were screened to an audience, as most people could barely afford the technology in their homes. These cinema halls targeted mostly the affluent who could afford the luxury. Moving cinema vans, also contributed greatly to the vast spread of films across the country as they were used mainly to access rural communities. This advancement increased the number of people who patronized films, according to Garritano (2013). Films began to reach the average people, and not just the elite who could afford the luxury of visiting cinema halls, thereby brewing a general interest in the film among audiences.

The advent of home video systems however changed the phase of film production in Africa. In his research on African television, Adejunmobi (2015) as well as Jedlowski (2012), who shared similar views, suggested that more people could now have access to this relatively inexpensive means of watching films which saw most homes readily having access to films. They further opined that the demand for more films shot up and some filmmakers took advantage of this phenomenon by venturing into the production of commercial films with the sole aim of raking in large sums of profit. This significantly increased the demand for films by the audience, which spurred filmmakers to produce films to satisfy the audience's demands.

2.4.2 The role of technology in film marketing and distribution

Technological advancements have also paved the way for a lot more experimental filmmaking. The barriers limiting new entrant filmmakers have reduced according to Garon (2013), and Araujo (2018). Technological advancements have made various easy-to-use film production equipment such as cameras and sound recorders, readily available to individuals who wish so to pursue filmmaking either as a career or just a hobby. People can now view films wherever they are, on the go. This phase of the new era has allowed more filmmakers to explore more subject matters either of personal, national, or cultural interest. Various genres of films with varied themes have become more accessible to the audience and this has promoted the idea of commercializing films. Just with any other business, films must generate income for the personnel involved in the process as well as the investors. Ebekue (2018) highlights the subject of profit gain in films. He asserts that:

> Filmmaking is just like any other business venture. Every business investor strives to maximize profit. In line with this, every filmmaker strives to maximize profit and to be appreciated by consumers of his product. It is therefore pertinent that every film is painstakingly marketed and made available to viewers through whom the film maker realizes his goal of profit- making and artist appreciation (p. 90).

The quest to meet those demands led to the creation of companies that were responsible for marketing and distributing films, which in turn improved the accessibility largely due to the availability of walk-in shops that allowed people to walk in and purchase the films on various mediums such as the video cassette and/or compact disk (CD). However, according to Waterman (1993) as cited by Oh (2001), due to the structure of the economy in film distribution the market is typically dominated by a small number of distributors. Nonetheless, filmmakers as well as marketing and distribution, companies have had a fair share of the profit generated by the lucrative business of film.

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2.4.3 Patronage and the influx of foreign cultures

The influx of western films also dictated the pace of film production in Ghana and Africa at large. Technology meant that more people had access to films and for local filmmakers to keep up in sales, the influx of foreign or alien cultures into locally produced films became a worrying trend due to the kind of themes portrayed. As Akashoro (2010) puts it, "the pervasive influence of western culture in the African continent through the influx and exhibition of foreign films, as in the past, is still a recurring phenomenon" (p.85). He further linked this to the possibility of the unavailability of industry structures and regulations that guide the production of films, with regard to the content.

This suggestively is a reason why most filmmakers inculcated foreign themes into their films, simply to make money. Bakupa and Kanyinda (2002) as cited by Akashoro (2010) further assert this as he opines.

> If one is concerned about the alienation of Africa, which is currently saturated with foreign and strange films produced elsewhere, then production issues are not limited only to financial support, technical expertise, or artistic passion. Financial success at the box office or in the bank is not the only goal of production. Television and movies are the best means of conveying memory and popular culture. (p. 85)

The focus of film production is gradually changing from being a medium through which morals and values are promoted, to taking up a new form as revenue-generating venture. This has suggestively changed the narrative in the space of themes and subject matters treated in films. Most filmmakers possibly think of gains rather than impact. However, to maintain film as an important channel for the promotion of morals and values, filmmakers can consider the idea of telling cultural stories the "modern way" carefully

creating each element artistically to suit the taste and also promote cultural philosophies and ideas.

2.4.4 Bridging the gap: The integration of ICT

Technological advancements also influenced a drive towards the use and integration of ICT infrastructure into the new media space, which embodied growing industries such as the film industry. Esipisu and Kariithi, (2007) aver that:

> ...while mainstream mass media outlets harnessed ICTs to achieve significant efficiencies and economies of scale, the period saw the emergence of pioneering grassroots media initiatives leveraging ICTs. Integrating ICTs in traditional media offered a diversified media and medium (p. 21).

This suggestively gave film marketers a new medium to explore, thereby having access to a larger audience base. This also meant the efficient tracking and generation of direct feedback from audiences, thus improving communication between the audience and the marketers, who in turn relay information to the filmmakers. The introduction of new media, the internet, and advancements in technology also changed the approach to film distribution and marketing. Kassam et al. (2013), and Jacobs (2017) as cited by Cox *et al*(2018)in the UNDP report on social media in Africa briefly highlights the positive side of social media. The report posits:

> The growing use of Facebook, Twitter, African news apps, and other forms of social media in Africa has increased citizens' awareness of political events, changing perceptions both nationally and internationally and giving 'less celebrated actors' a voice in global and local discourse (p. 8).

Although the advent of social media may have some good sides, according to the UNDP report, there is also a possibility of social media negatively influencing individuals through the consumption of unwholesome content, which may promote social vices,

and increase crime rates among others. The advantages however are what distributors as well as filmmakers can capitalize on to reach a wider audience and as well start a process of informed thinking among audiences. With more people having access to the internet, personal computers, and mobile phones, among others, the trends have been altered significantly, with increased demand from a much younger audience base. According to West (2014), "the biggest growth area in Internet usage has been video streaming. There has been tremendous interest among consumers in watching movies on-demand and viewing video content on every device: television, video players, and desktops" (p. 2).

2.4.5 New media developments

Digitization has changed the way films are mostly consumed in the world today. There has been a shift from the convention of Digital Versatile/Video Discs (DVDs) and cassettes to a more advanced medium of patronizing films (Gaustard, 2019). The introduction of film streaming sites was an added advantage to the marketing and distribution business. Squire (2017) as cited by Gaustad (2019) opines online streaming services have successfully marginalized the previous dominant channels such as DVDs, etcetera, to become a leading force in the patronage of films across the world. This way, filmmakers benefit when their films are streamed mostly, in the case of "entertainment and commerce" (West, 2014, p.1)

From the aforementioned, a case can be made that the new media of film distribution can help promote the indigenous cultural ideals to a wider audience, thereby teaching them about the unique culture that we have as a people, however, the issue of profiting from films takes a major stride forward, placing it at an advantage over the pedagogical potentials that film has.

2.5 Popular Culture, Globalization, and Indigenous Narratives in Film

There have been varied attempts by scholars at defining what culture is and under what context culture can function efficiently, how culture can be expressed and how culture relates to and affects the lives of individuals. Idang (2015) describes culture as a total embodiment of the behaviours and characters that are unique and mark out people from others. Idang further gives due credit to Edward Taylor as being the first person to have developed a definition of culture in Primitive Cultures (1871). According to Taylor as cited by Idang (2015), culture can be described as a complex whole that include knowledge, beliefs, morals, art, and customs that individuals acquire in a bid to be identified as belonging to a society. The globalization drive has also significantly altered how films are patronized. A host of factors have accounted for the mass patronage of films across the globe by different audiences, which come along with a set of prospects, challenges as well as disadvantages. Some of these factors impact audiences differently based on some factors which include but are not limited to their cultural dispensations, national heritage, ethics, and morals among others.

In an attempt to define Popular culture, Fiske (2010) avers that popular culture can be seen as a reflection of our society, combining trends, beliefs and expressions that capture people's attention. An important aspect of popular culture is its impact on the media. Influencers from fields like music, film or social media become trendsetters who redefine what's considered cool or trendy (Nguyen, 2020). Social media platforms for instance have made it even faster for these influences to spread globally creating a world where new trends such as fashion choices and lifestyle preferences know no boundaries.

However, it is imperative to recognize the nature of popular culture. While it can promote inclusivity and shared experiences there's also the risk of reinforcing

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stereotypes and certain norms. The commercialization of cultures often prioritizes profit over authenticity, which leads to trends being turned into commodities and genuine artistic expression being diluted.

Assessing the point of convergence of popular culture and indigenous cultural expressions in film production, has become a focal point of scholarly investigation. This section of the literature review highlights the relationship between popular culture and its influences on indigenous cultures, with a specific emphasis on film production. Exploring the relationship between global influences and traditional storytelling in indigenous films offers insights into how popular culture shapes and, in turn, is shaped by indigenous narratives.

2.5.1 Authenticity in Indigenous Filmmaking and Global Industry Dominance

The medium of film as an art form is created for the end-user, thus the audience who will patronize the products (film). Scholarly engagements have mostly posited that the American film industry has been dominantly present in most film markets across the globe. About 90% of shares in world film markets as suggested by Stille (2001) are enjoyed by the popular Hollywood industry, which has been seen as a major factor for the marginalization of most films in their respective traditional markets. This form of cultural imperialism as averred by Stille (2001) is a worrying trend. Scholars such as Arjun (1996) and Hannerz (1992), as sited by Hassi & Storti (2012) posit that globalization often leads to cultural homogenization, where global influences converge with local cultures, potentially diluting distinctive indigenous expressions. Most film markets across the world have had to institutionalize laws to protect the content of the films. The film industries of China, India, and Germany are blueprints of this assertion

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which has been affirmed by Hafeez and Ara (2016), Dastidar and Elliot (2020), Zhu and Nakajima (2010), and Jordi (2015).

In the context of indigenous filmmaking, this raises questions about the preservation of traditional storytelling methods, cultural practices, and the authenticity of narratives in the face of external influences. Some film markets took up the challenge to also produce films to meet up with the competition. Filmmakers in Ghana and Nigeria are cited as examples of such individuals who capitalized on technology to meet the demands of an ever-growing film industry, which according to Ukadike (2000) was a more impressive response to globalization. The latter was not free of scores of criticisms as the demand to produce more films resulted in the emergence of some themes that were seen as problematic. Although the filmmakers argued that the films treated social issues, Nanbigne (2011), and Croffie (2016) posited that there was a general concern about the treatment of morals and ethics. The problem however is not with the portrayal of themes such as spirituality, money and crime, and love, and romance (Nanbigne, 2011), because it serves as a kind of sensitization tool to educate the masses.

2.5.2 Balancing Cultural Representation: Challenges and Responses in Indigenous Filmmaking

The representation of indigenous identities in popular culture, especially film, has been a subject of ongoing discourse. Scholars like Smith (1997) argue that cinema serves as a powerful medium through which indigenous communities can assert their identities or challenge stereotypical portrayals. Despite the quest to educate the masses through films, there is an emergent problem that is gradually seeping into the film industry. The challenge as identified by Udomisor and Sonuga (2012) in Croffie (2016) is when

themes such as but not limited to occultism and spiritualism, love, and romance among others become rampant and dominant in films.

This may tend to negatively influence the various audiences that patronize the films. Valkenburg and Piotrowski (2017) identify that "over the past few decades, there have been several studies about the effects of media on youth" (p. 14). They further aver that there is a possibility of a range of aspects associated with motion pictures, such as the specific content affecting the youth. A much younger audience, who according to Lev (2003) as cited by Dupont (2013) became a target of the film industry, stands at risk of being institutionalized by such themes, which may form part of their cognitive and largely become part of their lifestyle. The trend can harm the potential audience as it exposes them repeatedly to some ills in society.

In pursuit of globalization and a quest to meet the global demands of films; a kind of genre experimentation was birthed in the African film industry, specifically the case of Ghana. Filmmakers began to explore various subject matters to gain the approval and appeal of the masses both locally and internationally. Ukadike (2001) in *Correspondence: An International Review of Culture and Society* stated that: "…this commercial approach has paid off. And although many directors work in English to draw the broadest possible audience, the low cost of videos has also spawned a great many films in various local languages…" (p. 13). Some of these films as aforementioned treat some delicate subject matters that are alien to and challenge the indigenous cultural narratives, which are gradually influencing some trends and lifestyles in society.

However, as a counter to combat external cultural influences, indigenous filmmakers often engage in acts of cultural resistance (Appadurai, 1996). This involves using film

as a tool for asserting cultural autonomy, preserving traditional knowledge, and challenging dominant narratives.

The freedom to experiment should be guided by rules and regulations in a bid to check the content produced, ensuring it is appropriate for public consumption. Some countries have sets of the legislature which guide the production, classification, censorship, sales, and distribution to ensure a well a functional film industry.

2.5.3 Globalization and African Cinema: Navigating Opportunities and Challenges in the Digital Era

The emerging trends of African films dominating the world stage have been characterized by the debuting of some films on global streaming giant Netflix. Amenyanyo (2020) opined: "There is a growing list of African content on Netflix, and that is quite commendable, and is drawing enormous attention. However, this is probably because of the depth of culture and uniqueness of African diversity they portray. The accessibility of indigenous films to global audiences, facilitated by digital media and online platforms, raises questions about the impact of global viewership on indigenous cultural narratives. Ghana as a case, has had a good representation on the world film stage by having some of its productions featured on the global streaming platform, Netflix. The likes of Ghanaian film directors Peter Sedufia, Kwabena Gyansah, Pascal Amanfo, and Blitz the Ambassador among others, have had their films featured on Netflix, which has helped boost the image of the film industry of Ghana. The big deal for Ghana in a quest to keep up with the global trends is the setting up of a Film Classification Committee, under the National Film Authority, backed by the Film Bill of 2016. The Committee is responsible for benchmarking the categorization, classification, standardization, and preview of film content intended for viewership.

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The former minister of Tourism and Creative Arts, Hon. Barbara Oteng Gyasi in her inaugural speech at the official outdooring of the committee stated that:

> …Film making is an act with a universal communication power and has a transformational impact on the human mind as they portray and influence society. The work of the classification committee would ensure that the impact of cultural, economic, historical, political, and technological dimensions would change the narratives of filmmaking in Ghana thus enhancing the quality and classification of film to protect viewers in the best of the country.

The passing of the Film Bill and the presence of the National Film Authority as well as the Film Classification Committee will suggestively strengthen the structures of the film industry in Ghana by equipping filmmakers with not just the right tools to function, but legal backing to aid their work. The presence of such bodies and authorities not only enhance the image of the industry but also equips the industry to become a major force in the world dictates of film. The globalization drive can be of immense benefit to film industries if harnessed well. It provides a platform for growing film industries to connect with the world and sell their products (films) to a broad range of audiences. The Ghanaian film industry is growing steadily and is expected to soon become a major competitor in the world film industry.

The literature presented herein suggests that the filmmaking process has overtime changed significantly. The premise has been established that film can be used as a medium to propagate the change, ideals, and philosophies among others.

The premise also establishes the importance of the filmmaking process which highlights the development of themes as a critical phase. The themes birth the focus of the film and therefore determine the effect the film will have on the audience.

The aforementioned set the tone to further discuss the current state of the film industry in Ghana against the ideal situation of film as a worldwide concept. Further discussions will explore

in detail how popular culture has affected or otherwise on the film industry in Ghana which includes but is not limited to the filmmaker, themes development, and the audience as well as marketing and distribution structures.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The research aimed at exploring the issue of Influences of popular culture in the Ghanaian film industry. The study explored some factors that may have contributed to popular culture becoming a major influence in the creation, promotion, and sale of Ghanaian films, as well as the role of indigenous culture in the film industry. The chapter presents the various methods used in conducting the research. This chapter highlights the research approach, the instruments used in collecting data, sample and sample size, data collection procedure, method of data analyses as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Research paradigm

The researcher adopted the qualitative research paradigm for the study. The study focused on thoughts, feelings, and understanding of phenomena hence the choice of paradigm. Notwithstanding the researcher came across some numerical data but were all converted into accessible qualitative data to suit the purpose of the study. Qualitative data provides information about the human side of issues (Kuada, 2015), thus producing rich emotions, thoughts, and feelings. This assertion by Kuada (2015) guided the researcher to adopt this paradigm for the study due to its nature and the expected outcome.

3.2 Research design

The researcher adapted the case study for the research because the study was aimed at exploring individuals in the film industry and the nature of their work which deals

mostly with thoughts, opinions, ideas, and feelings and how the aforementioned are translated into their work.

The case study approach guided the researcher to critically analyze and assess the data provided by the respondents to understand how popular culture has influenced the film industry in Ghana, concerning the content produced and how the content in hand affects the target market (audience) and the industry as a whole. The data collected mostly dealt with the thought, feelings, and opinions of the respondents about how popular culture has influenced the production of films in Ghana. This justified the use of the case study approach because the information provided by the respondents needed to be put through critical reasoning, by comparing various scenarios against each other (Simons, 2009 as cited by Starman, 2013).

3.4 Population

The population for the study was the individuals that collectively constitute the Ghanaian Film Industry, which comprises two main blocs; the *Kumawood* Film Industry and the *Ghallywood* Film Industry. The primary population was made up of industry professionals including directors, actors, scriptwriters, and a distribution company. The secondary population consisted of audience members who have no professional duties in the film industry but still relevantly function as the end users of the films produced in the industry. The table below shows a breakdown of the population.

Table 1: Distribution of the population

Category	Description
Primary Population	1. Directors
	2. Actors
	3. Scriptwriters
	4. Distribution company
Secondary Population	1. Audience members

3.5 Sample size

The sample size for the study was a total of eleven (11) people. The sample was made up of Directors, Actors well as Script Writers, and a Distribution Company under the classification Respondent A, Respondent B, Respondent C, and Respondent D, with one (1) each from the main blocs of the film industry, that is the *Ghallywood* and *Kumawood* film industries (Table 2), and a Distribution Company that functions across both industries. The group classified as Class F constituted a total of four (4) individuals who formed a focus group for the study. The table below shows a breakdown of the classification and the exact numbers and groupings.

Table 2: Distribution of the sample size

Classification	Description	Ghallywood	Kumawood	Total
Respondent A	Directors	1	1	2
Respondent B	Actors	1	1	2
Respondent C	Scriptwriters	1	1	2
Respondent D	Distribution Company	0	0	1
Class E	Audience	0	0	4
Total				**11**

3.6 Sampling techniques

Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select the participants for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents from the primary population considering their expertise and experience in the film industry (Taherdoost, 2016). This process helped the researcher settle on the total number of seven (7) individuals, which can be further broken down into two (2) directors, two (2) actors, and two (2) scriptwriters as well as one (1) distribution company.

Convenience sampling was used to select participants from the secondary population who were readily available for a study (Taherdoost, 2016). The researcher approached some individuals in person and via social networking platforms and introduced the research topic to them. The researcher further inquired about their interest in either partaking or decline to participate in the discussion. Initially, a total number of Six (6) individuals accepted to partake in the study. However, the researcher narrowed it down to four (4) individuals who were available to partake in the study when the date for discussion was due. The individuals collectively formed a focus group discussion. The selection approach by the researcher was justified by the nature of the secondary population, who had to be random individuals with no specific expertise in the film industry.

3.7 Data collection instruments

For the study, the researcher used interviews, observations, and focus group discussions to collect the needed data to achieve the purpose of the study, which is to explore the extent to which popular culture has influenced the production of films in Ghana. Stated below are the individual instruments used by the researcher.

3.7.1 Interviews

For the research, semi-structured interviews were used by the researcher due to the nature of the study which focused more on exploring the issue of popular culture and its influences on the daily work-related activities of the directors, actors, scriptwriters, and distributors involved in the study. The researcher put together a set of questions created from the research question guiding the study. The line of questioning was aimed at getting the respondents to talk about issues relevant to the study. Also, semi-structured interviews were chosen because of the flexibility involved (Ryan, Coughlan& Cronin, 2009). Although there were guiding questions, the researcher also followed up on spontaneous issues raised by the respondents and also asked follow-up questions based on the responses. The researcher interviewed the directors, actors, and scriptwriters whose answers to the questions provided the relevant data for the study.

3.7.2 Observation

For this study, the researcher used direct participant observation to collect data for the study. The researcher was granted access to witness and participate in two different film production processes. The researcher observed the film production process and took notes on some relevant happenings during the filming process that espoused the role of influences on the development and production of the films.

3.7.3 Focus group discussion (FGD)

The researcher used focus group discussion to interact with the respondents identified as the audience and explore their thoughts and ideas on the topic of the research. The discussions were centered on some guiding questions developed out of the research questions for the study. The focus group discussion explored group thoughts and through this, the researcher gathered information on popular themes in films, societal

trends, types of films they resonate with, their understanding of the roles of filmmakers, and the issue of popular culture as an influence in the film industry in Ghana.

3.8 Data collection procedure

The collection process involved gathering firsthand information from respondents and also soliciting information from already existing sources such as online news, radio interviews, and articles relating to issues about the film industry in Ghana, some influences of films produced, dominating themes, audience feedback and challenges within the industry among others.

3.8.1 Observation

For the observation, the researcher observed the work process of two different film Respondents. The period of observation was from July 2019 to November 2019. During the four (4) months period, the researcher employed direct participant observation to study and record some key details in relation to the filming process, the influences that drive the process, the choice of costumes concerning the themes, the stories, and the development of ad scenes as well as the roles of the actors, directors and crew members involved in the process.

The first observation period lasted for one month on set with S&L Production (a film production company) in Kumasi. . Before the process commenced, the researcher interacted with the cast and crew to understand the concept and process involved in the process, the motive for choosing the story, costumes, locations and even the actors playing various roles. The researcher was also granted access to the script for the film. The researcher randomly interacted with some cast and crew members on their experiences during the entire filming process to verify some information gathered

during the observation process. All the experiences were documented for the sole purpose of the research.

The second film which lasted for close to three months was a more detailed process. The observation happened on set with Ghana Casting, a film production house in Accra.

The crew was first assembled and a casting notice was put out for actors to apply. The first phase involved auditions, which the researcher was allowed to sit in and observe. The actors were given various scripts to act out the roles. After the audition, the actors who were selected were taken through a one-week boot camp training where they were trained in various disciplines such as swimming, self-defense, dance, and acting. During this process, the researcher was allowed to facilitate an acting session and interact with the actors. This enabled the researcher to gather information on some influences that guide their work as actors and the exact type of scripts they will accept or otherwise, based on their preferences, background or training, and morals among others. The boot camp process was used to cast the actors, thus assigning them to various characters. The aforementioned processes took place within one month.

The film was shot during two months at various locations within the capital city, Accra. The researcher was again granted access to witness the process. Through this, the researcher was able to observe firsthand, the various processes, the experiences of the cast, and how the script was interpreted, among other processes. The researcher also observed closely the creation of extra scenes which were not initially included in the script. The researcher was also allowed to interact with the director, who doubled as the writer of the project. Through this, the researcher gained a firm understanding of the influence behind the creation of that project and the intended outcome of the project. . It is important to note that the two different film processes the researcher observed,

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happened within the two main blocs of the film industry in Ghana. The observation process helped the researcher shape the focus of the study and test some of the data collection instruments such as the interviews because of the experiences gained during the process.

3.8.2 Interviews

The primary data was collected through interviews mainly with the directors, actors and scriptwriters, and the distributor. The information gathered from the directors, actors, scriptwriters, and distributors mainly comprised their work experience, influences, views, and challenges with the industry, challenges with the work process, and some film projects they have produced. Furthermore, the general response and feedback from the audience as well as other relevant industry players after the film was released to the public for viewing were also looked at.

To get access to some directors, and actors, the researcher contacted an executive of the Film Crew Association of Ghana (FICAG) who in turn requested a list of individuals the researcher had identified as possible participants for the study. The executive contacted the individuals on behalf of the researcher and after getting their consent, forwarded their details to the researcher to establish contact with them. Some of the other respondents were identified during the observation period which preceded the interviews.

 For the directors, actors, scriptwriters, and distributors, the researcher first spoke on phone with them and sent them informed consent forms for them to prepare ahead of time. The informed consent form was necessary to allow the respondents to participate freely in the study knowing that their identity was protected.

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The first Respondent interviews was initially scheduled to take place in March 2020; however, the outbreak of Covid-19 in Ghana altered the schedules due to the restrictions on movements and in-person meetings. The interviews were re-scheduled and were conducted between July and August 2020. The first interviews focused on individuals who constituted the *Ghallywood* bloc of the film industry, predominantly in Accra.

The interviews were conducted through phone conversations as well as interviews via virtual platforms such as Zoom because of individual precautions taken to avert the possible contraction of COVID-19 which was still rampant during the period. The researcher then created a unique meeting identity code and password for each meeting. The virtual interviews mostly took place during the evenings because of the schedules of the participants, who mostly had to combine work schedules with family life.

Telephone conversations and e-mails were used to follow up and clarify some issues the researcher had challenges with.

The scriptwriter under the *Ghallywood* bloc of the film industry, however, was contacted through Facebook, a social media platform, and later gave out his number to the researcher. The respondent was on set filming and did not have access to a stable internet connection. Based on this, the interview was conducted via a phone call that was recorded.

For the last batch of interviews, the researcher travelled to the Ashanti region of Ghana after the researcher was granted access to a filming village that hosted the production house the respondents belonged to. The respondents from the Kumawood bloc of the film industry were engaged in different projects in the film village. This made it easier for the researcher to access the respondents. The interviews were conducted in person while strictly adhering to Covid-19 protocols. The interviews took place during the

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latter part of August 2020. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Follow-up interviews were conducted via phone calls due to the challenges with the distance and schedules of the participants.

3.8.3 Focus group discussion

The selected respondents were sent an informed consent form a month before the scheduled date of the discussion. The researcher periodically contacted the respondents during this period to clarify whatever concerns they had and also confirm their availability for the discussion. The initial Respondent date for the discussion was postponed due to challenges with time schedules. The researcher together with the participants agreed to discuss via an e-conferencing platform, Zoom. This was because the participants were in various locations across the country and meeting in person was difficult because of differences in schedules.

On the day of the discussion, the researcher created a meeting identity code and password and sent it to the participants to join in. The researcher allowed the participants to talk about some films that may have been of interest to them by highlighting elements such as the costume, storyline, acting, language, and general views of the films. The researcher engaged the participants on their knowledge of some current issues in the film industry, which consisted of but were not limited to the presence of a structured and functional film industry in Ghana, the role of the director in determining the outcome of a film, the role of the actor in the output of a film, the functions of a producer, some major influences of films in Ghana, the role of culture in the creation of films in Ghana, popular culture and its influence in film production in Ghana and the role of the scriptwriter among others This was aimed at exploring the subject of the proliferation of popular culture in the film industry from the perspective

of the audience, by taking into account what their views are as non-professionals in the film industry. The entire discussion was recorded with the permission of the participants. Follow-up emails and messages were sent to the participants to seek clarification on some issues that emerged out of the discussion.

The focus group comprised mainly of audience members, which the researcher described as "film lovers" who were not professionals in the film industry and did not have expert knowledge on the film production process. The discussions were further opened to varied views on other topics relating to the film industry in Ghana. These significant topics helped generate some relevant data for the study.

3.9 Method of data analysis

The responses generated by the participants were analysed using the thematic analysis method to effectively categorize and explain data according to the thoughts derived from the respondents. According to Braun and Clarke (2012) as cited by Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017), thematic analysis "is a method for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data respondent" (p. 2). In applying thematic analysis to the study, the researcher was guided by Braun and Clarke (2012)'s process of thematic analysis which explores six phases of thematic analyses. Braun and Clarke (2012) detailed the processes as familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining themes and producing the report. This process guided the researcher to efficiently analyze and discuss the data gathered.

To begin the process, codes were assigned to the data generated and all the data that had similar codes were collated together and the themes were generated out of the data for analyses. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) simplified coding as reducing lots of data

into small chunks of meaning. This process helped the researcher organize similar data and place them under various themes generated for the study. The researcher defined the main themes and further created subthemes under the various main themes to further explain the data generated from the respondents. The discussions were done under the various themes and the researcher explained the various responses in line with the respondent aim of the study.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher took into consideration the issue of privacy and confidentiality of the respondents involved in the study to ensure the respondents freely and willingly agree to participate in the study and give out the needed information. According to Arifin (2018), "the protection of human subjects through the application of appropriate ethical principles is important in all research studies. In a qualitative study, ethical considerations have a particular resonance due to the in-depth nature of the study process" (p. 30).

Based on this, the researcher created an *Informed Consent Form* (see appendix) *which* highlighted some key issues such as the protection of the identity of the respondent, the privacy of information shared, and the safety and confidentiality of the respondent among others. Fleming and Zegward (2018) highlight the significance of seeking the consent of participants by stating that "the research design needs to consider the potential of harm to the participants, the researcher, the wider community, and the institution. The harm can range from physical, resource loss (including time), emotional, and reputational" (p. 211).

The introduction of the informed consent form was a key to accessing some vital information needed in the study due to the delicate nature of some of the information needed to facilitate the study. According to Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009),

> Protection of participants' rights is a fundamental aspect of conducting an interview, and the issues of informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality are of paramount importance. Potential participants should be given full explanations as to the nature of the research and the format the interview will take (p.312).

Based on the above-mentioned, the respondent was entitled to keep a copy of the form which bore their signature and was at liberty to pull out of supplying information to the researcher whenever, as per the details of the informed consent form. This enabled the researcher to get access to the needed information for the study with the consent of the participant. The introduction of the informed consent form also gave the researcher full permission and access to the information given by the respondent which was used to facilitate the discussions in the study.
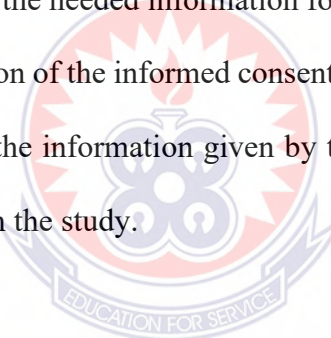
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Overview

In this chapter, the researcher will present data gathered from respondents through interviews, focused group discussion, and field observations. The various questions that constituted the interview guide were generated out of the set objectives and research questions and the participants were guided through one-on-one interview sessions.

The data therein has been classified thematically for purposes of analysis. The various themes were derived from the objectives of the study to effectively drive the discussion for the study. The data gathered for the study was obtained from various respondents whose individual roles collectively make up a functional film industry in Ghana. The data from a selected number of individuals is suggestively representational of the current happenings in the film industry due to the selection criteria which were carefully chosen to ensure that representatives are drawn from the various bodies that make up the entire film industry in Ghana.

The analyses and discussions were guided by the various themes generated out of the various objectives for the study and the themes guided the focus of the study. Inferences were also drawn from the literature reviewed to support/affirm the findings generated by the various respondents. This collectively constituted a detailed study to explore the stated research objectives.

4.1 Demographics

The participants/respondents of the study were grouped under age, roles in industry, and years of experience in a bid to corroborate the relevance of the data gathered. The various groupings are captured in the following tables. The tables capturing the

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demographics labeled *roles in industry* and *years of experience* will apply to only seven (7) of the eleven (11) respondents. The other four respondents were selected to form part of a focused group discussion. There was no industry experience required. This explains the exclusion of their data from the tables labeled *roles in industry* and *industry experience*. However, the data for the respondents for the focus group discussion will be captured under the tabled labeled age. The tables below show the breakdown of the respondents according to the grouping.

Table 3: Age distribution of respondents

Age	No. of Persons
20-30	5
30-50	6
Total	**11**

The table above explains the age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study. The data presented in the table above can suggestively be an indication of the individuals and their ability to make informed choices. The age distribution is a clear indication that a greater number of respondents for the study were between the ages of 30-50 years, and if matched against years of experience in the industry, the respondents were of good standing to give contributions towards arriving at the set objectives for the study.

Table 4: Roles of participants in the industry

Roles in Industry	*Kumawood*	*Ghallywood*	Across both industries	No. of Persons
Director	1	1	0	2
Actor	1	1	0	2
Scriptwriter	1	1	0	2
Distributor	0	0	1	1
Total	**3**	**3**	**1**	**7**

The table above gives a breakdown of the various roles of individuals in the film industry which constitute the major population for this study. Out of a total of eleven (11) respondents, seven of the respondents as captured by the table were selected at the discretion of the researcher based on their various professional roles in the industry. The other four respondents were not captured because their selection criteria were based on their availability to participate in the study and not their professional roles or experiences relating to the film industry. The study examined the main blocs of the film industry in Ghana, therefore, it was a point of call to access professionals from each industry (as seen above). However, the role of the distributor functions across both industries, which explains the categorization of the distributor as "across both industries."

Table 5 Years of experience in the industry

Years of experience	*Kumawood*	*Ghallywood*	Across both industries	No. of Persons
5-10	2	3	0	5
10-20	2	0	1	3
20 & above	0	1	0	1
Total	4	4	1	9

This table highlights the data showing the number of years the respondents have worked in the industry. The table, however, does not capture the data for the respondents who took part in the focus group discussion, due to their selection criteria, which were not matched against any professional standards or requirements. The data however shows that majority of the respondents have worked in the industry for a minimum of five years and a maximum of above twenty years. This is a significant factor in validating the data obtained from the respondents. The indication available is that the main respondents have worked a significant period in the industry and have the needed

experience to serve suggestively as authorities in the various fields within which they function.

4.2 Introduction

The Ghanaian industry has evolved through various phases and there is a need to explore the state of the industry, to determine how functional the industry is. The exploration, through analyses, examined the film industry in terms of the proliferation of popular culture and how it has influenced the film industry in Ghana.

The early periods that saw the film industry being used as a medium to create loyal citizens in the British colonies, herein, specific reference to Ghana, is evidence of the powers of influence film possess. The British colonial government used the medium of film to propagate and instill the ideals they deemed to fit into their citizenry (Meyer, 1999, Nanbigne, 2011). After successful attainment of independence, the first Ghanaian government, led by Kwame Nkrumah again tapped into the potencies of film in a frantic effort to erase the lasting effects colonialism had on the citizenry. This process led to the creation of some policies that saw the establishment of the Ghana Film Corporation among others. This phase also saw some filmmakers sent out to be trained. The likes of Kwaw Ansa, who produced works such as Heritage Africa and Love Brewed in the African Pot, are clear examples of works that sought to clear the seemingly lasting effects colonialism had on Ghanaian citizens. Set in colonial Ghana, Heritage Africa captures the struggles of a colonial officer Quincy Bosomfield, who was entangled in a struggle of regaining his African heritage which he sold to the white man for his respect of him. The film is a parody that speaks to the effects of colonialism as well as pays homage to the struggles before, during, and after the fight for independence in Ghana. This espouses the potency of film to act as a critical tool for

change (Garritano, 2013). Ansa's film did due diligence to establish a national heritage by contributing to the discussions visually through the medium of film. However, it is indeed important to establish the premise that individual preference can or may override national agenda. Not all filmmakers may be interested in pursuing the national agenda, for reasons best aligning with their personal and individual interests. The case of King Ampaw's Kukurantumi: Road to Accra can be a major reference point. Kukurantumi, which was produced in 1983, around the same period Heritage Africa was produced took a detour from the dialogues to reconstruct a national and cultural heritage, to provide some sort of comic relief and entertainment to its audience. Classified in the genre of comedy/drama, the film is centered on a love story between Abena and Bob. Abena's father Addey, after losing his job as a lorry driver arranges a between his daughter and a middle-rich man to secure some financial prowess for himself. In an attempt to prevent this set marriage from happening, Abena elopes with Bob to Accra, where their lives take an unexpected turn. The theme and subject matter of the film although may feature the Ghanaian culture, did not make that a highlight, even though it was produced during a period when filmmakers were encouraged to produce films to re-establish the cultural and national heritage. The case of Kukurantumi is a clear indication that individual preferences are also a key factor in the film production process. The issue of environmental influences also plays a key role in influencing the individual's thoughts and behavioral patterns that can affect the output of works, in this case, the film. A critical look at both filmmakers in question: Kwaw Ansa and King Ampaw suggestively affirm the environmental influence. Trained in England and Germany respectively, both filmmakers were exposed to different environments during their training, which contributed to the input and output of their films. This premise establishes the fact that although there may be lurking issues of identity and

reconstruction of national/cultural heritage that have to be addressed possibly through the medium of film, the filmmakers may not be obliged to focus on the treatment of such issues in their films. Individual differences and preferences also play a significant role in the choice of material that influences the films produced. Individual preferences can be generated from the various materials around the filmmaker such as art, cultural dispensations, and language among others.

4.3. Influence of popular culture on the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers

The first objective of the study sought to examine how popular culture has influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers. Popular culture herein referred to as "pop culture" can be looked at not just from the perspective of western cultures, but against the parameters of lifestyles that have become accepted internally by the masses (Tamakloe, 2013) which may not be part of, agree or align with the tenets of our indigenous culture as Ghanaians. The issue of pop culture dominating the film space through content has been a worrying trend, taking into consideration the effects the trend has had and continues to have on our national and cultural heritage. In justifying the need to explore how popular culture has influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers, it is again imperative to note that filmmakers are creative individuals who craft a piece of art (film) together to make a complete work (Mano, Agina & Knorpp 2017). To explore this objective, the roles of the director, scriptwriter, and actor will be looked at critically. Although the audiences play a significant role, the objective herein is focused on the creation and execution of the art piece which is the film. Essentially, the input of the scriptwriter plays a significant role in determining the end product of the script. Factors such as the background of the scriptwriter, influences, environment, and materials of inspiration among others, as per responses from

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respondents, can be alluded to as major contributors in determining the output of their works. Essentially, the artistic vision of the director can be alluded to as one of the major factors that drive the direction in which a film will go. Factors around the director as well can contribute to the general output of a film because the film mainly hinges on the vision and direction of the director. The actor is again an essential character in exploring the cultural tenet of the filmmakers. The actor can be seen as the link that joins all artistic processes in film. The audience mainly sees and understands the content of a film through the actor's role.

The data gathered from the respondents suggestively gives an incline that most filmmakers sampled, that is, the directors, the scriptwriters as well as the actors agreed individually that culture is indeed an important factor for both the individual and the collective process of the film. When asked the question: does culture matter to you as a person and should cultural elements be factored into films, four out of six respondents agreed that culture indeed matters as it plays a significant role in our daily lives, in establishing the identity of a person, gives meaning to human experiences. The four respondents went on further to affirm the need for incorporating cultural elements into films stating that cultural elements help establish our national and cultural identity. Two out of the six respondents however did not agree that culture or cultural elements should be factored into films, stating that films are mainly for entertainment and the content should be geared towards entertaining the audience, although it may possess some educational content, to raise awareness on certain issues. On this basis, the researcher explored the various factors that suggestively informed the filmmakers' cultural alienation or activeness.

In a bid to explore how popular culture has influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers, the themes below highlight the findings from the participants aforementioned, in an attempt to extensively explore the research question: how has popular culture influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers?

4.3.1 Cultural Inclination and relevance to national development

Culture, an important facet of our daily lives encompasses our way of life and defines the key structures that identify an individual or society at large, affirming Idang's (2015) assertion of culture as an embodiment of behaviors. The tenets of culture are highly important in assessing the state of an individual or society's progression or otherwise, thus to know whether an individual or a society is progressing or not, one must match up the characteristics of human behaviors against the structures of the particular culture the individual finds himself. However, cultural representation, when done wrong can send the wrong message to the intended audience. The pedagogical potency of should be paid critical attention to. Over time, foreign cultures have seeped into our film industry (Akashoro, 2010) and have influenced the thinking and creative abilities of the filmmakers who tend to create material that can suit the taste of the audience who has also come to align with these cultures. It cannot be overlooked that film has the potential of reaching a wider audience thereby placing it as a powerful tool when it comes to selling a particular message to an intended audience. In tracing the effects of popular cultures on the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers, suggestively, it has been identified that most films produced lately seem to have semblances of other cultures. It was therefore imperative to, first of all, explore how culturally informed filmmakers in Ghana, in an attempt to explore the roots of these thematic presentational faults currently a worrying trend in the film industry. Telling a good story of a country's history, legacies, cultural heroes, and national and cultural

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heritage are all critical factors to consider when producing films aimed at promoting national development. Good films can bring in good investors and good investment can mean quality and guarantee a wider audience reach. It is therefore important to pay critical attention to the cultural inputs which will keenly promote our national and cultural heritage. One participant spoke about the importance of paying attention to culture when you want to sell your country. Culture according to her is what we have, and we must therefore promote that as it defines us. According to her:

> *...as an actor, you need to sell your country and that cannot be done just by being black or African, no, sometimes as a marketer you do not always have to scream what is being sold, so how you carry yourself, speak and act could even indicate your origin (Respondent B- Kumawood)*

The above statement from the respondent indicates a clear stance on the importance of culture and being culturally aligned in a bid to sell your country. The respondent herein states that very few traits such as how you talk or your mannerisms can spell out where you come from. Therefore, it is highly critical to pay attention to the seemingly minute details when selling something, in this case, culture.

The respondent further affirms her inclination to culture by indicating her Ghanaian heritage which places her at an advantage of being highly culturally aware. Stating her affiliation to various ethnic groups in Ghana, the respondent opines her stance of being responsive to culture, when asked if culture matters to her as a person, she further stated that: *Yes of course. I am African and Ghanaian. "Even when it comes to being Ghanaian, I am very diverse; I am partly Krobo, Ga and Ashanti so it does."* *(Respondent B- Kumawood)*

The respondent here emphasizes her affiliation with culture as being diverse due to the various cultural backgrounds she belongs to. The individual accepting and giving regard to the ethnic group of origin is an important factor in assessing the cultural

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orientation of a person. Cultural can be seen as an institution that instills morals and values of a particular society into the individual that belongs to the particular society. In this case, the respondent fully acknowledges her background and describes herself as being Ghanaian, and this aids in identifying as a culturally informed person who pays critical attention to cultural details and/or elements.

4.3.2 Cultural identity and globalization: Uniqueness and originality

To explore if popular culture has influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers, it is important to examine how advantageous our film industry is on the world stage. Globalization is gradually changing the face of many institutions and the kind of services they render, in dealing with clients. In the case of film, many industries worldwide have used the medium of film to push an agenda that seeks to popularize their culture in diverse cultural dispensations worldwide (Akashoro, 2010; Stille, 2001). The medium of the film makes this highly achievable due to the nature of its output and how the audiences receive the film. In a growing film industry such as Ghana, with the issue of cultural presence and identity being a challenge, it is paramount to dialogue with filmmakers to understand their level of cultural awareness and how it may influence their works, thereby promoting, projecting, and preserving our national and cultural heritage. In exploring this phenomenon, one of the respondents opined on the importance of factoring cultural elements into the films produced as an industry. The respondent stated that it is important to compete on the global stage not with the content already available, but with original content created on the creed of our indigenous culture. This, the respondent affirmed, will help strengthen our identity as a people. Captured below is what the respondent said, considering the aforementioned issue. In answering the question does culture matters to you as a person and should cultural elements be factored into films, the respondent stated that:

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Well, it does certainly matter, especially given the fact that whether we are becoming a global community or otherwise, I think that it is important for identity I think, which is key because I think every corner of the world has something to offer on the global stage and when you look at the history of film in its self and to date your realize that there is this new craving for authenticity. (Respondent B- Ghallywood).

Another respondent also gave his view on the importance of cultural identity when competing on the global stage. In affirming the response from the respondent, the participant opined that:

This is very critical and I need to speak on it because culture must be educated in our screenplays. It must be the major elements we should focus on because that is what we have and not just attachments. That is what makes us who we are and gives us an identity. It helps us know the type of people we are and how to deal with each other, how to walk with each other, and dealings of one another. So I think culture shouldn't be exempted from our screenplays or in the use of art. (Respondent C- Kumawood)

The respondents espouse the need for culture to be factored into the filmmaking process as an important element when dealing with the competition on the global stage. The focus of the film industry is gradually shifting to establishing identity through films and as a way to market various cultures there are. The respondent further affirms that industry players have recognized the need for authenticity and have made that a key highlight in some areas of the industry. In citing examples, the respondent talks about how a particular film award shows recognize films produced in the indigenous languages of the people.

What they (industry players) haven't seen is our authentic stories and that is the identity they are looking for, that is why there is a category in the Oscars where foreign movies are awarded and the criteria are that about 70% of the medium of communication should be in the local language and some mixture of English. (Respondent A- Ghallywood)

The aforesaid explains further the issue of identity and authenticity, considering the importance and relevance in the filmmaking process and the various film industries worldwide. Globally, the trend of stories has changed to focus more on the human side

of issues, and this is a key factor in carving a niche of authenticity and identity for ourselves. Although globalization and pop culture are seeping into the industry, industry players duly recognize that authenticity is highly critical in distinguishing the structures of the film industries therein and the contents associated with them. The respondent again emphasized the need to focus on the human-centered stories that make us unique as a people.

> *It is all because of identity and I think that it is very key and culture is indeed very key and one way of making your way of life known and culture known is through this medium of film... Some time back, we were trying to copy form the western world because we thought by identifying with them, we could identify with their flashiness of great infrastructure, flashy cars, rich mansions, etc., but we have realized that we can't show flashy cars more than they do, we can't show mansions better than they can, they are way ahead of us and so we must use what we have so I believe strongly that we are now gradually getting to that terrain where people are beginning tell stories not just for its sake but stories that have an impact in the public or society.(Respondent A- Ghallywood)*

The respondent, who has over 10 years of experience in the industry, speaks to the issue by first acknowledging that there was a time when filmmakers sought to copy from the western world, ignoring the human and authentic stories that we have as a people. The respondent affirmed that there was no way we could keep up with that trend and there was a need to look back at our human-centered stories which place us at a better advantage over others. The cultural orientation of the respondent makes it possible for him to acknowledge that culture is indeed paramount and plays a significant role in the industry. The respondent further reiterated that his cultural values and perceived impact of his work as a societal influence guide him in even choosing the kind of roles to accept. The respondent admitted that his early days saw him accept any role but with time and experience, as well as education, he came to understand how and why one must consider carefully before choosing a role.

> *Well, when I started, it was virtually any role and I think for a young actor or any young actress, there is this drive and passion about everything and wanting to be there and what you find fulfillment in you just go for it and so I was virtually doing almost everything but I think it is part of the growth where you start like that and as you gain experience and as your journey begins to tell, you begin to place yourself and you must have an identity as a performer as well and therefore you begin to become selective and factor in why you want to consider a movie so for me, it has changed over the years and today, for example, I just wouldn't jump onto any script, definitely there are certain criteria that it will have to meet. (Respondent B- Ghallywood)*

This again captures the need for and importance of industry experience and education\training in film, which guides the individual to know what is good for his\her identity or otherwise. Individual identity can sum up generally to collective identity. Therefore, the individual's cultural awareness can go by far to influence the cultural identity of the industry and the image that the industry has out there.

4.3.3 Culture and individual-related experiences

In understanding the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers by exploring the possibility of popular culture being a major influence or otherwise, it is again relevant to explore the issue of individual identity by exploring the various individual experiences. Individual experiences are relatively important in identifying the cultural setting an individual belongs to. Since culture is the total way of life of a people, suggestively, various individual experiences may highlight the cultural background individuals may come from.

One respondent emphasizes the influence of society and the environment on his work, affirming that the environment a person finds himself can go by far to have a toll on what the person produces, in this instance, specific reference to his work. He states:

> *When I talk about society, I understand it as the way we live. For example, where I live comes with its mood which mostly could influence someone brought up there, in another part of town; those things would not be done there and would influence inhabitants differently so the way they live and how the things around them influence id is what I mean by society. That strongly influences my writing. In the environment, I mean the things we see around us (Respondent D- Kumawood)*

The environment, which is driven strongly by cultural faucets, plays a key role in influencing an individual and their work. In this case, the respondent who is a scriptwriter in the film industry agrees not only that culture is important, but the environment also plays a crucial role in informing the works that he comes out with. In affirming this, the respondent being oriented on the value of culture, and knowing the importance of culture in society, inputs these elements into his work.

Another respondent, expressing his views on and aligning with being culturally informed highlighted that culture is indeed relevant to the film industry, as it fuels the stories that emanate from individual experiences, what the respondent chooses to refer to as human stories. The respondent again reiterates the fact that stories told should have a personal connection with the individual, have morale and the morale should be culturally informed.

> *Yes, I think it is very important. Like I said because of the morale if the story doesn't mean anything to you, then obviously you will be wasting your time because if you are going to spend 2/3 years on a film and it doesn't mean anything to you, time will come you won't find the energy to continue because it doesn't mean anything (Respondent A- Ghallywood)*

This highlights the importance of telling human stories, which can be done best by individuals who have had some sort of personal experiences, with a keen interest in the cultural setting in which they find themselves. The human-centered stories provide the various moral lessons that hold certain key values the society needs to progress. Another respondent also affirmed this by stating:

> *Culture matters to me as a person, because of where I am coming from, my place of birth, and my origin, or the place I come from. Because the elders teach us and put into us the importance of embracing culture so we do not twist and turn it. Culture carries something that gives us a birthright and identity, it enables us to view the kind of person we are, who we truly are, the language we speak, the ideas and mindset we have, and what we want to build and achieve in life. So culture matters to me as a person and in general too. (Respondent A-Kumawood).*

The respondent highlights the importance of cultural awareness as an important factor in individual and societal development. Cultural awareness is a key component of national development and cannot be overlooked. It helps us reconstruct the past and prepare for future happenings. Human-based stories will always evolve around communities and people and these may be useful in developing societies because of how relatable and practical the stories will be. These experiences which are culturally driven also help shape society by correcting some ills pertinent in society. When asked if culture matters to him as a person, one respondent highlighted the need to focus on culture in a bid to correct societal ills. He emphasized the importance of showcasing what we also have to counter the rippling effects of what other cultures have brought into the industry. In answering the question, does culture matter to you as a person, the respondent stated that:

> *Why not? Because due to the Nigerian influence, there were a lot of things we used to do in our movies that were neither historically correct nor culturally accurate. Because looking at the Akan culture, Princes and Princesses aren't pampered as we used to portray. But in Nigerian films, those are prominent. (Respondent A- Kumawood)*

Here, the respondent accepts that some kind of pop culture influenced the film industry at a point and altered the original ways of doing things properly as a society. For some time, those standards became accepted in the society although they were not right. Being well informed on the importance of cultural values, as per the statement of the respondent led him to begin to pay attention to details, and through research, he realized that there was a need to correct certain ills in society. The respondent further stated:

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So with films like Sankofa, Ahintasεm, abuburokosua, and what we are currently working on, susu pre. We researched well into the culture and history before doing them and found out some things we used to do were wrong even down to the dialogue. We even go down to make the wife of the King the Queen which isn't culturally correct as she is not royalty. So we are correcting those cultural nuances that we had wrong and currently portraying them the right way. (Respondent A- Kumawood)

The respondent agrees that this trend has been a challenge, however, there is a conscious effort to try and correct these seemingly wrong elements in the films produced. The respondent acknowledges here, the importance of research, which can be tied to education, be it formal or informal, that is, either by reading or just merely asking the relevant questions. Culture is a major correctional element in society therefore when the filmmakers are culturally informed and know the importance of culture and factoring cultural elements into a film; it will place our film industry at a strategic point in terms of marketing what we have to the world.

4.3.4 Individual preferences and commercialization

Exploring the influences of pop culture on the cultural orientation of filmmakers in Ghana, it is again important to take into consideration individual differences and preferences. Although almost all the respondents were affirmative of the importance of culture and the need to factor it into the filmmaking process, one respondent, however, did not agree with that stance. The respondent stated that: "*Culture is important, yes. It defines who we are and tells the origin of the story but that should not be the focus of the film. Comedy and entertainment should be. I believe people want to be entertained."*
(Respondent D- Ghallywood)

Although the respondent affirms the importance of culture, he does not entirely agree with the idea of factoring such elements into the film. The respondent's view is akin to the commercialization of the films however, the aforementioned responses prove that

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it is highly important to have an identity associated with your film. Film serving the purpose of entertainment is good. However, the film must also inform and educate. A respondent affirmed to the possible influences and traces of pop culture and the need to refocus our attention to the very Ghanaian stories we have as a people:

> *We could look at the stories and at least quit the copy and pasting. Adaptation is indeed allowed but at least we should give them real stories. It's like we paint Ghana in a different picture. We should give authentic Ghanaian stories. It can be spiced up a bit, but overdoing it is also not advisable. There are some movies that you see and ask, can this be real in Ghana? It's like we are painting ourselves differently which looks foreign. From food to the feel of the film to everything. (Respondent B- Kumawood)*

Although the respondent acknowledges the fact that commercialization may be an influence in choosing to have what may be referred to as less Ghanaian stories, to sell to a wider market by adapting their stories and styles, it is equally important to maintain a high level of authenticity with our films as it is the surest way that we can ensure our films reach a wider audience, thereby ensuring our culture is cleverly spread to a wider audience reach.

4.3.5 Cultural inputs in the work processes

After a calculated attempt to understand the influences or otherwise of popular culture on the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers, it is again important to explore some work- related stories/experiences that affirm or disprove both the importance of culture and factoring cultural elements into films and the said influences of pop culture and its effects as well. The stories presented are from respondents and are influenced by some factors such as industry experience, education/research, personal values and experiences, industry timeline, and structures among others. This theme will collectively house the stories shared from the experience of the respondents herein. The stories will emanate from the main blocs of the film industry, which are *Kumawood* and

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Ghallywood, in an attempt to espouse how culturally diverse the country is and highlight some possible distinctive work processes present in both industries. The stories will furthermore attempt to establish whether Ghanaian filmmakers are culturally informed, by detailing their daily experiences working in the industry.

Through their various work processes, the respondents were faced with various instances that sought to either challenge or inform their thinking patterns and beliefs/ideals. These experiences may have, over time been a strong force to reckon with in aligning themselves to a particular style or brand that is presently associated with their work or that has influenced a greater majority of their works. On the other hand, these experiences may be seen as the reasons that led to an informed reform of their already existing working ideals, whereby the individuals became more aware of happenings around, and decided to pursue a change process.

4.3.6 Content and sensitivity

Below, one respondent recounts the challenges encountered with working with a script that was seemingly against his ideals/morals. The respondent recounted that:

> *The most challenging script probably was a production that had a lot of intimacy and the whole idea was for the director to translate what was on paper onto the scene honestly, I am one person who would be so uncomfortable with the way we want to graphically represent intimate scenes on our screens. Look, the film is an art and therefore there are ways in which we can represent modes and things without necessarily showing the obvious or showing details and so intimate scenes, I think what we are failing to do is, for example, to establish a scene where two characters are in love the best way is to find them in bed making love, that for me is the easy way and a lazy way.(Respondent B-Ghallywood).*

The respondent here recounts an experience of having to work with a script that detailed and presented intimacy graphically. The respondent expressed challenges working with such a script due to the respondent's cultural alignment and the ideals that the culture preaches, where certain issues such as sex, and romance should be treated with caution,

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and not giving off a lot of graphical representations. The respondent found it challenging because the said work process did not align with his set cultural values and as such had to negotiate with the director for a better way to play the scene. The respondent further goes on to possibly give reasons why this trend of graphical representation of some delicate issue have been eminent, suggestive of the influx of pop culture in our film industry because such graphical representations of a delicate issue are not characteristic of our culture. The respondent highlighted that:

> *I think that sometimes our minds are a bit walked we want that kind of scene because that is what will bring the guys to the cinema and that will have a telling on our box office returns but we have lost the art to a more easy way of making revenue or making income and therefore the art does not grow because we are not allowing our actors to really search deep to build up chemistry and therefore give us something beautiful to see other than this physical activity and therefore that was a challenge for me in terms of why the director will want to really focus on the physical, this lovemaking, kissing where there was other ways in which you can still establish that strongly and that happens when our value systems have become tainted/compromised and that speaks to, we now begin to question what our identity is and all these little elements, if we had factored our culture and cultural evidence in to it, it would speak volumes in preventing some of these excesses and so for me, I found it very tough, we had a lot of tough time negotiating not just what will seat well with me as a performer but I also have my limits, you don't have to do everything that the director says because if it's not comfortable with you, you are going to send that energy across and the audience are going to have that negative energy therefore it will take something away from the production itself and so it was really tough trying to find a way around, it was really tough.(Respondent B-Ghallywood).*

The respondent highlights the importance of being culturally informed, which may be a measure to check the influx of foreign cultures into our film industry. Based on the respondent's cultural orientation, the respondent stated that he had a challenge with the kind of details the script sought to portray. The respondent herein again highlighted the problem of our value system and identity being compromised due to the influx of foreign cultures. The respondent, being culturally informed was able to identify the challenge within the particular work environment which had to do with dealing with

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the rippling effects of foreign cultural influence. The scenario by the respondent also gives a hint that although most filmmakers may be culturally informed and uphold cultural values, there may be some who still do not regard the importance of factoring cultural elements into their works to achieve a set purpose of re-strengthening our cultural values and promotion, thus establishing a national heritage as a people. The respondent further expresses how actors/performers should be able to speak up about what they feel comfortable with or otherwise because it may affect their output and possibly send the wrong messages, which may defeat the purpose of their established brand and/or identity. This experience and more help give an understanding of the current perspective of the industry and the state of issues revolving around the industry.

4.3.7 Personal interests and conflicts

In dealing with some personal conflicts established by an attempt to work in a different environment, the respondent espouses a seemingly delicate issue that also emanates when dealing with the proliferation of pop culture. One dominant trait that pop culture bears is the issue of religion. Religion, for a while, has been matched against the traditional belief system, classified under the indigenous culture. Religion can be classified under pop culture because it has been accepted by the people as a standard way of doing things over time. The tenets of religion have become the set ideals that guide the behavior of people. Below, the respondent espouses this seemingly persistent inner conflict in dealing with such delicate issues as per industry standards/demands. The respondent stated that:

> *I have worked on several scripts; one was about this fetish priest system. I wrote the entire story, almost through with it but I realized that if I want to pursue it, the kind of demons I'll encounter in my life because for films you need to be authentic I realized that if I want to shoot this thing to b real, the demons I will encounter in my life? What happened was I was writing, and I began to grab stills so when I see an image that maybe I feel can work in the film, I grab it. I*

think I was on charleworte, I was going through their Instagram page and I saw an image of a fetish they had set in James town and there were some whites in there who were watching I saw this and I said no, I can't be in this environment and you need that environment to achieve authenticity so when I realized that I can't shoot in such environment and at the end of the day which of the environment am I promoting, that was the film and I wanted to as an African, a Ghanaian and I wanted to bring the fetish system and the Christianity bring them on a level 4that says that eventually we can coexist but as a Christian, I realized though this is a system that is almost dying down, and I am more or less going to bring it up the devil and on top of that I was going into an environment that I wasn't okay with. (Respondent A- Ghallywood)

From the above, being culturally informed may not necessarily influence the outcome of all the works. Some aspects of pop culture will be dominant in the works, which may be due to the schooling processes by which some aspects of other cultures or some major influences will become accepted as part of the individual's already existing beliefs. Here, the respondent espouses the challenges faced with pursuing the traditional system are gradually dying and need to be given attention. Being culturally informed, the respondent was able to identify the need and importance to give attention to some gradually ailing indigenous cultural traits however the respondent, having been institutionalized into the beliefs of a religion, which can be alluded to as being a tenet of popular culture, had a personal conflict which hindered the interest to execute this particular project which could've been a good avenue to highlight and promote aspects of the indigenous. This scenario suggestively exposes the challenges faced in the film industry concerning the state of indigenous culture as a dominant feature in our films produced in a bid to promote and highlight our national and cultural heritage as well as our identity. This gives a clear incline of the state of other cultures influencing the film industry.

4.3.8 Culture and entertainment: The balance

The genre of comedy is one major area when it comes to entertainment. It is an exciting element, when executed, leaves the audience with lasting impressions. One respondent briefly shares the experience of working with such genres:

> *Treating a sensitive topic such as adolescent reproductive health in a lighter and more comedic tone requires a lot. How do you make it entertaining enough for your target audience to watch, create aspiring characters as well as deliver the key messages? (Respondent D- Ghallywood)*

The experience shared above opens for discussions around the issue of comedy and entertainment when dealing with a much younger audience. Young people are mostly captivated by pop culture as it mainly targets them. The subject matter must resonate with the audience therefore most of the themes are picked from issues within their circle. As identified by the respondent, the issue of adolescent reproductive health overtime became a pertinent issue in society and as such, there was a need to address it however the comic treatment suggestively caused the subject matter to be treated on a lighter note without paying attention to some key cultural elements. This stance is apt because the respondent identifies as not being culturally aligned and does not really consider the treatment of thematic concerns along the lines of culture. The main aim is for comedy, entertainment, and education that a much younger audience can relate with. This trend suggestively shows how pop culture has institutionalized some industry players and industry structures whereby much attention is not given to culture. A much younger audience may not be culturally informed, thereby treatment of issues for a much younger audience may have to dwell heavily on comedy. The scenario can be reworked gradually when industry players begin to recognize the need for and importance of cultural presentation and detailing, although individual interests are paramount, the issue of identity is key and is better achieved collectively.

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Although there may a be a progressive effort to weave cultural elements into the films we produce, there are still some instances that have seen pop culture alter our normal way of doing things and make pop culture look like the standard way. One respondent shares the experience working on what they refer to as a "historical project". Below the respondent recounts the experiences:

> *Our current historic projects speak about culture. It touches on Puberty rights, and marriage rights within various tribes. This we used to do in the past that we no longer do, even the type of food that we used to eat during that time. It was previously that in a Ghanaian movie, a King would be dressed up as an Egyptian but that is not our culture now we are finding them out. Even the types of Kente, when and where to put on Kente. How to dress up as a woman or when sitting before a King, how to sit, how to carry yourself. All these are things that we missed but now we are paying attention to them. (Respondent A-Kumawood)*

From the above, the respondent acknowledged the fact that some of the traditional practices are gradually fading off, therefore the need to pay for it, which informed the current project they worked on. In recounting her experience, the respondent duly mentioned that some elements were present in previous films that did not belong to our cultural setting. This affirms that indeed pop culture did have a toll on influences. Suggestively, the respondent attributes the influx of foreign cultures to foreign films that dominated our industry for some time. Another respondent affirmed this by saying:

> *Bollywood movies do a good job of portraying their culture and even though when you try to understand it, it may not be nice, they are showcasing it and it is very beautiful. Some of us are even adopting it. Look at Nigerians. Now we know how they dress during festive seasons, we know about their festivals, and we know how their King and royalty dress in their royal regalia. We know all this, but we have not visited the place, but we have a sense of their style, fashion, and culture through exhibitions in movies and in music. (Respondent B-Kumawood)*

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Here, from the respondents' statement, the power and potency of the film industry can be seen. The respondents, however, being aware of the importance of culture in society realized the need to relook at the receding cultural elements in films by carefully reconstructing films to wipe away the seemingly lasting effect of other cultures and gradually replacing them with the very Ghanaian cultural elements in an attempt to reestablish, promote, protect the national, and cultural heritage.

4.3.9 Detailed scripts, documentation, and personal preferences

Dealing with the issue of personal interests, a respondent recounts how, the personal interest of some directors overrides the entire process of the film, thereby altering some key elements. Understanding that influence of pop culture may come from the individual, it is important to also explore the cultural orientation of an individual and how it may influence the filmmaking process. The respondent who has worked in the industry for over ten years recounts some key experiences below:

> *I have been on different sets and noticed that mostly, the directors tend to not like to go by the script. They follow the script in the beginning, and somewhere down the line, you find the director creating some extra scenes which are not in the script attaching them to the script while a fully detailed script had been provided to them. Stating all props, special effects, and the like needed, but because we mostly do not follow the script and freestyle somewhere down the line, we tend to bring in foreign ideas and this is killing our industry, it is depriving us of reaching our goal. So my issue is we do not follow scripts. If we did, we would have had a lot of good stories out there. Good stories are manifested through the kind of script. (Respondent D- Kumawood)*

The account from the respondent raises an important issue of working with detailed scripts which provide a basis for documentation. In this scenario, the respondent espouses the need to work with detailed scripts in a bid to achieve all the set objectives associated with a filming process. In a bid to avoid individual interest overriding the general film objectives, a detailed script should be followed religiously to protect content. An individual's interest may come to play in terms of influences and to avoid

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that; the script should be there to guide the process. In dealing with cultural preservation and establishing a national identity, detailed scripts are one way to assess the cultural orientation of the filmmakers and to serve as a kind of reference material for culture. When cultural elements are well researched and factored into scripts, the scripts eventually become good reference material that can inform research and decision-making as well as influence industry players to begin to pay attention to the need to factor culture or cultural elements into films, by looking at the success and achievements of the film, which can be a source of motivation to influence other works.

4.3.10 Historical antecedents and modern-day influences

In understanding the current cultural orientation of the filmmakers and the film industry in general, as well as the state of influence in the film industry, it is important to have a critical look at historical antecedents that characterized the evolution of the film industry in Ghana. The respondent, who has worked for a long period in the industry, gives an account of some of the happenings that have led to the industry today taking its current form. Below, the respondent recounts that:

> *Ok, I was a cinematographer in the times of celluloid films, and it slowly transitioned to cassettes. During this period, I worked with Miracle Films and we saw a lot of partnerships with Nigerian filmmakers that produced films such as Hope, Mother's Heart among others. The Nigerians later left but before they did, they had already taken over the industry during their affiliation with Miracle Films. I was somewhere when he called me that we should do something about this takeover. At the time we had some actors like King Brenya, Bill Asamoah etc. at the time the likes of Nana Ama McBrown hadn't yet come into the industry. There were also some actors at the cultural center doing their comedy shows, so I advised him that if we will succeed, we should go there, take the comic actors, and makes films with them. At the time we had the Likes of Mercy Asiedu, Agya Koo, Akrobɛto, Santo and Judas etc. after that, we made a film like Asoreba, of which I wrote the screenplay, andwe also did Odo Ntia which I directed. Later I also went ahead to direct Obinim for Nakwadus Production. So when these films were released, they were liked and so slowly we took away the control the Nigerians had over the industry. (Respondent A-Kumawood)*

The above possibly explains how and why pop culture became a dominating force in the film industry and why most filmmakers at a point resorted to factoring elements of pop culture into their productions. The respondent recounts how comedy was used to win over most of the audience that had begun to align with the Nigerian films that dominated the industry. In a bid to achieve this, comic actors who featured in the already popular Keysoap concert party were robed into the industry to purposely serve the audience's interest. Most filmmakers by then had the aim of recouping the funds they had lost to the dominance of the Nigerian films on the market. Therefore, the main aim was to commercialize the movies, and the popular culture at the time, was the major source of material needed to fuel the industry. Tracing down to today's industry, the issue of pop culture being a dominating force can again be linked to the quest to commercialize and sell films made however, in a bid to meet up with global demands and project a national identity, filmmakers must be culturally informed to be able to understand the importance of factoring culture or cultural elements into films through good storytelling or other artistic elements. There is no doubt that there may be traces of popular culture in the films produced however, the indigenous cultural elements should be paramount.

Having culturally informed industry players can guarantee to have a unified body that will have the progress and development of the film industry at heart. This will ensure more informed decisions that will shape the image of the film industry. The unified body of like-minded filmmakers will create a channel through which the filmmakers can push for the relevant structures and legislature to protect the content of films, the image of the film industry and in turn, protect and preserve the national and cultural heritage, thereby reinstating our identity as a people and in the long run, aid in national development. When the citizens of a country are aware of its rich culture and history,

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knowing the values it holds for them, they will strive to uphold it. The film industry is one medium through which this schooling process can be achieved.

However, the schooling process to eventually have cultural elements embedded in films is a gradual process. Although industry players may recognize the need and importance of being culturally aware with a heightened sense, the process that ensures the individual makes a conscious effort to factor in these elements is yet to catch up with the masses. The work-related stories emanating from the experiences of various industry practitioners indicate that, although filmmakers in Ghana may be aware of the relevance and importance of culture, it is yet a progressive situation to have culture fully embedded in films produced. This may be dependent on a host of issues which may include but are not limited to the preference of the audience, financial gains, and global competition among others. These factors are mostly inherent in the industry and drive most of the critical decisions that affect the pre-production, production, and post-production phases of the film process. If a film will do fairly well, how the audience will receive it matters. Financing and sales of the film count as well as how the film will thrive in a competitive environment. All these factors will contribute to the elements that get factored into films.

Critically assessing the influence of popular culture on the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers has given a clear indication of the stance of the filmmakers and the possible direction in which the film industry is headed. The majority of the filmmakers now are aware of the importance of culture as an element and the need to weave our films around it. This process, when adhered to religiously will place us at a better advantage in terms of selling our culture to the world and maintaining healthy competition on the global stage with regards to what our films produced will offer, not

just sticking to the status quo and following the trends, but offering a unique style to serve the interest of the audiences not just locally but globally.

4.4 Influence of popular culture on the marketing and distribution structures of the Ghanaian film industry

Market forces are responsible for the marketing, sales, and distribution of films to ensure that they reach the targeted audience (Adejunmobi, 2015). These channels are available and accessible to all persons who wish to capitalize on its prowess for their film gains. Likewise, these market forces are open to all manner of contents usually dependent on what the market demands is (Ulker-Demirel, Akyol & Simsek, 2018). The availability and accessibility of various media also play a significant role in the patterns of marketing and distribution. In a bid to explore the kind of influences dominating the film industry, and if indeed popular culture has had a toll on the film industry in Ghana, it is imperative to explore marketing and distribution as a force, and understand how market forces reach the audience first-hand and serve the interest of the audience. The market forces know exactly what the audience demand and they (market forces) may also contribute to what becomes the ideal or not in terms of content because the market forces are responsible for packaging and selling the finished product, thus the film to the audience. This objective sought to explore how and if indeed market forces succumb to the demands of popular culture or otherwise. The analyses will be done based on the responses generated from the various respondents who partook in this research. Popular culture, through a host of factors, may determine how marketing and distribution structures are influenced in the Ghanaian film industry. The outcome of the influence on marketing and distribution may in turn influence the content of films produced in Ghana.

4.4.1 The story and actors

In accessing how popular culture can influence the marketing and distribution structures in the Ghanaian film industry, one factor that can highlight the demands of pop culture on marketing and distributions is the actor (popular faces) and stories factor. The actor (popular faces) and story are most likely to promote a film depending on the demands and preferences of the audience. The kinds of stories that are popular may become accepted by the audience. This is highly dependent on societal trends and availability as well as access to media and content. The audience may tend to align with popular thematic issues. One respondent involved in the marketing and distribution explained this. The respondent espoused that:

> *Fundamentally, taking it from the Ghanaian perspective, our Ghanaian audiences have been a lot more skewed toward the faces and the names they see in our films. It is one of the key factors that has driven the marketing and distribution of films in Ghana, our film space. So aside from the names and the faces, many are being much appreciative of a story. Such that if a story, even after the face, if the story is not very good the film will suffer after the first initial rounds that it makes but once the story is good, beyond the names and beyond the faces that are in it, you will see that the subsequent rounds that you make with that same film will still have some interest in the market and so it rises above the ordinary distribution or the first round distribution of some films. Critically it's the story, the names, and the faces that we put in a film that can influence the distribution. (Respondent D)*

The faces (actors) and stories in films can determine whether the audience will accept the film or not. The film making rounds is key to the financial plan as that, the film must sell to the targeted audience for the investors to regain their monies. Impacting on culture, when the audience becomes used to content that is not culturally skewed, thus through the constant appraisal of stories and characters in some films with popular content, the demand will increase thereby pushing more filmmakers to adopt such trends. The respondent also affirmed the aforementioned statement further by saying:

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Going back, when I got into film, some years back down the lane, I will say that the trend has generally been influenced by markets, audience appeal, audience run for something and so our markets have gone in that rounds. The trend has been to pick up, possibly a story or a face. Much of our marketing has been driven by the faces who can present on the screen, so to some people, you might even have a good story, but the faces and names that you have put in that film affect the audience patronage. (Respondent D)

The issue of the faces and story is crucial in determining what may or may not become a norm in the film industry. If the audience is constantly exposed to a particular kind of content, they may tend to accept it and whatever the influence is may become a trend in the industry. Filmmakers may be pushed to accept such trends because they resonate with the audience. Depending on the factors that influence the actors and the stories, culture may or may not become a dominant force or influence if the individuals involved are not culturally informed and pay attention to cultural elements. The potency of the faces and stories present in films as a strong market force has been explained by the respondents.

The industry has been dominated by most content from foreign industries and the push towards such content has also in a way influenced the content preference to the extent that a majority of the audience may want to follow the general trends which may imply that if culture or cultural elements embedded in films is not a popular issue, the audience might be slow to accept it. However, filmmakers can capitalize on the prowess of the faces (actors) and begin to create culturally informed content around popular faces so that the audiences will eventually come to appreciate such stories.

4.4.2 Technological trends

In understanding how popular culture can influence marketing and distribution structures, it is imperative to understand how technological trends have changed in

terms of how audiences appreciate and patronize films. Technology provides various media through which people can access films and how far the film can reach diverse audiences (Mauyakufan & Padhan, 2018). Globalization and technological advancements have changed the way the audience accepts change and the developments that come with change. Technology has also made it possible for audiences to access content from all over the world due to availability on various platforms such as the internet and streaming websites or web-based applications. In explaining this phenomenon, one respondent explained:

> *At that time, cassettes were used for recording, and slowly it became popular. And so as a consumer with a TV and deck at home, it begged the question, why should I go to the cinema to watch a movie when I can do so at my convenience and in the comfort of my home? That made cassettes popular, then it changed to CDs which equally became popular too, and currently, we have entered the digital realm where most people can even watch films on their phones, with the emergence of YouTube and other websites taking screening to another level. (Respondent A- Kumawood)*

The respondent explained how the trends in technology have changed and how there is the availability of enough media to ensure that a variety of audiences are served with what their interests align with. This will possibly provide a basis for understanding of how technological trends and geographical locations can affect the content based on the audience preferences depending on where the environment demands and how aware they are of technological advancements and developments.

In further exploring how marketing and distribution can be affected by technology and geographical locations as a factor under popular culture, it is important to understand how this factor affects, resonates with, or is influenced by the audience. This will also be keen to understand how this factor may affect cultural inputs because the audiences are central to film sales, marketing, and distribution. One respondent shared some

experiences gathered through working under the marketing bloc of the film industry. The respondent shared that:

> *Technology has changed drastically but you see to a large extent, I had this challenge with the majority of us in the cities Much as the technology has changed when you look at the big areas of our country which is the hinterlands where internet penetration is still very slow, where there are no cinemas for premieres and the likes a lot of people out there still depend on the CD medium and so it is meant for us to look at our peculiar situation, our geographic location, to develop further on the exhibition that can reach these people with our content.(Respondent D)*

The respondent raises a critical issue as to how some people may not have access to the popular media and may still rely on some very traditional media such as Compact Disks and Televisions. It can be said that such a group of audiences may not be necessarily updated on the current happenings and trends and may be aligned with most of their indigenous ways of living and executing their daily activities. The respondent further explained that such audiences may tend to be left behind in terms of how the distribution patterns go. The respondent detailed this by saying:

> *...there is an elite majority that is accessing/patronizing films via the internet and some category of that same majority accessing content via the premiers in the cinemas and the likes but there is a whole lot of audience that we are leaving behind who do not have access to the internet, to the live premiere halls and still depend on their VCDs and DVDs, some very few VHS to be able to get the content.*(Respondent D)

Dealing with market forces and influences on stories, since the people do not have the privy of technology, they may be used to the original way of living, therefore, to reach them through films the content must be based on their culture because they will need reasons why they should patronize the film. This issue may tend to positively impact the cultural presence in films as filmmakers may want to produce content that will

resonate with the people and this kind of content is likely to be based on their culture, which may include but are not limited to language, way of living, beliefs, customs and traditions among others. Filmmakers must constantly be aware of such parameters and how they may affect or not the cultural inputs in films. This can be used as an advantage to get most audiences to accept culturally informed content and also draw awareness to other cultures that may not be popular, based on the pedagogical potencies of film and how impactful the medium of film is.

4.4.3 Cultural orientation

Another factor associated with popular culture and its impact on marketing and distribution is how culturally informed the film distributor or marketer is. The film distributor has the sole responsibility of ensuring that the film reaches the targeted audience across all accessible media. The success in sales of the film or not largely depends on the sales and marketing strategies of the distributor and also how the market will accept the film. How culturally informed the distributor is, may go far to affect the kind of content the distributor will choose to associate with. However, in dealing with such situations, individual views must be respected (Kieran, 2006).One respondent shared his experience working as a distributor and the kind of content he usually prefers. The respondent explained that:

> *The fundamental thing that gets me to market the film is the story and that cuts across my team, we will have to look at the content, understand that the story resonates with our audience and then we will pick It up and distribute so I hardly will want to pick up a film that is influenced by a foreign culture or a story that you have picked it and try to wind it to become a Ghanaian story by having a Ghanaian cast and location, it wouldn't match for me because it is not something that will work.(Respondent D)*

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Having an understanding of how important it is to maintain identity and culture is highly critical to understanding what will resonate well with a group of audience or not. This can be achieved mainly if the individuals involved in the marketing process are culturally informed and are ready to push for content that promotes culture. From the above, the respondent stands out as being culturally informed and explains how this orientation affects the work he does. The respondent further gave insight into preferences and choice of films to sell in terms of marketing and distribution. The respondent stated that:

> *I do a couple of push of content towards the outside market so I look out for things that will promote Ghana, things that will tell a better story of our identity as Ghanaians will confirm the notion of positive things people know about Ghana and will again promote humanity from the Ghanaian perspective, Ghanaian hospitality, the Ghanaian culture, values, and norms. So those are the things I look out for in the next production that I want to be part of in terms of distribution and marketing.(Respondent D)*

The respondent gives insight into what informs the choice of films that make the list for their marketing and distribution. The respondent here also aligns with the ideology of being culturally informed and also states some benefits associated with having more culturally informed content. Maintaining a positive image is a good way to sell your country according to the respondent, the film industry is one of the mediums through which this can be done and ensuring that they push towards content that is culturally informed works better for them.

Film marketers and distributors are important in the film process and they generally determine if indeed the film will sell or not or if the film will reach the intended audience. How culturally informed film marketers are, tend to influence cultural inputs in films. If the trend develops, marketers and distributors will appreciate the authentic content and commit resources to promoting such content. Filmmakers will also begin

to focus on imputing cultural elements into their works or will begin to generally develop stories that promote culture because that will eventually become the trend among audiences. If the majority of distributors are culturally akin and tend to readily push cultural content, the trend of film production and theme choice in films will also change because the market forces determine what will sell or not. This will eventually check the issue of popular culture becoming a dominant force as an influence in the Ghanaian film industry.

4.4.4 Legislature and structures

The role of popular culture as an influence on the marketing and distribution of films can or may also be affected by legislature and content/distribution and protection. This is equally an important aspect of market forces that ensures that the content produced is monitored mainly to ensure that the right content is reaching the audience and the image of the film industry is protected. The laws that tend to control or restrict some kind of content are important if indeed cultural elements will dominate in films produced. However, the ideals remain that most of the content produced is not regulated therefore there has been an increase in some kind of foreign content A respondent shared some sentiments on this issue.

> *We have no laws governing who gets into it, who doesn't, and so people get up, as much as they have money, yes you have the money you want to go into something, that's fine but more than having money, there should be structures, there should be guidelines about how we go about the thing, that is partly the reason why distributors at a point get greedy and want to have everything to themselves, so they will go into producing some kind of content and dubbing some people's content.(Respondent A- Ghallywood)*

The respondent here attributes the dominance of foreign content to the lack of legislation that controls the channels of distribution and content as well as the financial gains and percentages that are associated with film production, distribution, and

marketing. The issue of the legislature, when taken into serious consideration will aid in protecting the end user by protecting the content produced.

In wanting to have more culturally informed productions, this aspect of the marketing and distribution can again be utilized to ensure that laws are set to guide the content of films by ensuring that films produced do portray aspects of the Ghanaian culture. This will also guarantee that filmmakers become more culturally informed as they will not only know the benefits of promoting a kind of national and cultural heritage but will also be guided by structures that will regulate their operations. Again, another respondent shared how the issue of having legislatures can help deal with content protection. Another respondent again spoke about the dominance of some telenovelas and the effects they are having on people. The respondent stated:

> *we must have some structure, not an industry where anyone just comes in, there must be some kind of qualification, especially a medium like this that impacts nations, the governance, whatever and so structure is very key I think that when you have good structures and the policies in place, it is good to look at this identity and therefore what we allow on our screens, now the telenovelas from Mexico, from other parts of the world have taken over screens, you go to saloons and everybody is passionately looking at this and they are selling their cultures to us , cultures that people find very new, now they are fascinated with the white skin and that we have this mentality that everything that comes in the person of a white skin is more superior and therefore now seeing these people speak twi, is fascinating, it's intentional: we are fascinated and they are selling their cultures to us and people are picking up habits and all sorts of strange cultures to the detriment of our own culture and identity. (Respondent B-Ghallywood)*

 The respondent here also raises a concern with the kind of content that is dominating and what industry plays must begin to consider as changes that must come with growing and developing the industry. The legislature can also guide the education and training of industry players and give a standard as to what should go into their training to protect that industry and the content produced. The respondent also spoke about how some foreign content has seemingly dominated and equally suggested how the legislature can

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deal with the issue. The issue of the legislature is gradually being looked at by the creation of the National Film Authority which is a regulatory Ghana. This shows how powerful the issue of the legislature can be. If used right, the legislature can guide content preferences and ensure that good content is churned out through the films produced.

Marketing and distribution play a significant role in the film industry. Market forces are the bridge between the audience and the film (product). What may or may not become a trend is partly dependent on the marketing and distribution forces. Market forces may also influence the content production of films as they constantly work closely with the production process by giving critical feedback as to what the market demands and what sells or not. Filmmakers must pay attention to market forces to ensure that culture becomes a dominant force in terms of influencing the content produced in films. Understanding how the faces and stories, the issue of technology and geographical locations, the cultural awareness of filmmakers as well as the issue of the legislature can affect the cultural inputs in films will aid the filmmakers to understand the audience and their demands and can streamline cultural content into film production and help improve the image of the film industry.

4.5. Impact of popular culture on choice of themes in Ghanaian films

The third research question sought to explore how popular culture has impacted the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films. Exploring this is an important factor in understanding how the industry evolves and what accounts for the trends in the industry, how the audience will align with or disassociate themselves from a film. Yang and Zhong (2016) aver that filmmakers consider market demands in developing films. It will also possibly explain why a film will perform well or fairly well on the

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international market. Stories are the major base material for the creation of films. Every film must have a story that will inform the script and all other technical processes. The story again will inform the choice of actors that will feature in the film. Having established the relevance of a story to the film process, it is important to note that stories are built around themes, which provide the central idea around which the story revolves. Themes can be generated from a lot of factors. The society or environment, individual experience, trends, world history, cultural antecedents, historical legacies, and individual heroism among other possible material that themes can be drawn from. The themes therein become the major highlights that a story hinges on.

4.5.1 The creative process: Themes and thought development

In a yet growing industry, it is important to critically assess some key factors that influence the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. The question sought to explore the nuances of filmmakers and whether the tenets of popular culture influence them to choose some themes. In an attempt to answer this research question, views were sought from industry players who were categorized under pre-production, production, and post-production.

4.5.2 Pre-production

The pre-production category housed the scriptwriter and the audience mainly, with supporting views from other players such as the director and actors. The justification of this categorization is that one of the critical phases of the film is pre-production where the film is birthed and the creative process strung together (Gurskis, 2006; Hoggan, 2017). The audience demands play a vital role in influencing the various thematic issues treated in films. It can be assumed that the audience makes up the society and if there is any trending issue in society, it will be driven by the human factor in society.

Although influences may emanate from inanimate factors, there will still be a human influence on them. This trend of audience demands may influence the stories produced. These can be identified through market research. The scriptwriter also has the daunting task of producing material that will be accepted easily by the masses. A film must appeal to the audience and must generate the desired feedback. The scriptwriter has to produce a good script, which may be the basis for a good film.

4.5.3 Production

The production process is also an important phase in assessing the extent to which popular culture can influence the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. This is the stage where the film is developed into a partially finished product (Rabiger & Hurbis-Cherrier, 2013). The output will depend on the elements the director adds to the process to achieve a realistic presentation of the themes. The actor is also important personnel in this process and they also constitute the human factor. The actor's role herein is crucial because the actor translates the text into actions for the audience to understand the film better (Weston 1996). The influence of popular culture on the choice of themes may also apply to the actor due to reasons such as the environment the actor belongs to, cultural norms and values, and individual preferences. All these may contribute to how easily the actor will relate to the issues being treated and how well the actor can achieve realism depending on the demands of the director.

4.5.4 Post-production

The post-production stage, although encompasses various stages such as editing, screening, distribution, and marketing, herein for this study will focus on the distribution, marketing, and screening of the film. To do a detailed exploration of how popular culture may influence the choice of themes, the film and audience/market

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relationship must be looked at to possibly understand why some films will perform well on the market and why others may not. This will then aid in explaining why some factors will influence the preference of some particular themes that will dominate the film industry and how good the market will be in receiving the finished product. The role of the distributor and the audience will be looked at critically here. The distributor's role is keen because they have the responsibility of ensuring good sales and distribution of a film (Ascher & Pincus, 2007; Hoggan, 2017).They have to make sure that the film will reach the targeted audience and generate the needed feedback so desired. The audience again comes to play here because their reception and feedback will again determine whether the film achieved its intended purpose or not.

4.5.5 Choice of themes and influences on content

Having had an understanding of the various individuals and their roles in the film industry as well as how their inputs may affect the film process, the various factors will be presented subsequently in a bid to understand how popular culture may influence the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. These factors were generated from feedback given by the respondents and the researcher classified and categorized them for purposes of discussion and analysis. For the purposes of this study, the possible influences of popular culture on the choice of themes in Ghanaian films will be classified under various factors. The factors listed will contribute to understanding the role of pop culture in influencing the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films.

Below are some factors identified by the researcher as possible means by which popular culture can influence the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films. Responses from the respondents will be presented in a bid to explain/justify how the factors listed below may serve as influences.

i   Society, societal trends and influences.

ii   Investment/ financing.

iii   Research/Education.

iv   The actor factor.

4.5.6 Society, societal trends, and influences

Through interaction with the respondents, one factor that came out strong as a possible means through which popular culture may influence on the choice of themes in Ghanaian films is the issue of society, societal trends, and influences. Popular culture mainly deals with issues, behaviors, and traits that are not originally part of the indigenous culture of a people but have become part of the people's lives eventually. Culture mainly revolves around society therefore, exploring society, societal trends and its influences is important in understanding how pop culture functions as a source of influence on the choice of themes.

Societal trends have to do with the current happenings in society and how such trends influence lifestyle or are influenced by lifestyle (Gibson, 2016; Hauser, 1999). Societal trends mostly are the issues that are popularized in a society within a given time and may tend to have an impact on society. Influences of societal trends in the film industry can be traced as far as to the early nineties in Ghana when ritual killing became rampant in Ghana, especially in the capital Accra, which then influenced the production of "Accra Killings", a film that sought to address the issues that were happening in society. Likewise, some industry players in the modern day have reiterated that indeed societal trends influence the contents that they look out for or tend to factor into the films they have worked on.

A respondent who mainly works with teenage content highly affirmed the case of societal trends influencing the themes that form part of his work. In a bid to ensure that the target audience accepts and patronizes the work, the respondent stated:

> *Societal trends usually influence my work. I want my stories to be accepted by the young people. It should be something they can relate to and young people tend to align mostly with the popular or current happenings in society. I have them in mind whenever I write. (Respondent C- Ghallywood)*

The respondent here espouses the idea of how popular culture may influence the society and how in turn the society influences the content produced through films. The current happenings in society, which over time become popular among the masses tends to drive the demands of the audience, and depending on the cultural orientation of the filmmakers, such topics or issues are most likely to dominate the content in the industry. It is important, however, that filmmakers tend to be aware of this trend, considering the effects of the gradual decline of culturally based material incorporated into films as part of a schooling process to create a more culturally informed citizenry. In considering commercialization, there should be a balance however but carefully to ensure that films produced do not pose a harmful threat to the audience by protecting the content produced.

Having worked in the industry for almost ten years, one respondent highlighted how societal trends have at a point influenced the works produced, with specific reference to content. The respondent stated:

> *When I am writing a script or when a story is given to me to screenplay, I look inside the society; I search within the environment and find the reactions with some people and dealings of people. How the people relate with each other. The reactions that come with actions, the consequences that come with what we do and I put all those things into a script because those things influence my writing, society, environment, and people.(Respondent C- Kumawood).*

The popular culture revolves around society and society, from the aforementioned plays a significant role in influencing the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. The respondent herein talks about how he draws material from the daily interactions people have among themselves and the environment in which they find themselves. The respondent espouses how he takes time to factor all experiences into a script. The script is the base material for the development of a film and the idea starts with a story. From the aforementioned, society plays a major role in deciding the elements that go into a script, thus the themes that make up a good script, and if popular culture influences society, it is most likely that popular culture may influence the choice of themes since society forms a major part of the base material of influences. The discretion however is for the filmmaker to decide the final output of the film. It must be reiterated that some trends or popular issues in society may constitute the daily interactions people have among themselves and by so doing may become a part of society and in turn influence the content produced. The onus here lies on the filmmaker to decide what goes in and that may partly depend on how culturally informed the filmmaker is, to critically propagate the issue of cultural promotion, ensuring that culture still plays a critical role in the stories or content churned out.

Societal trends also can be driven by external factors that may over some time become part of a society and be accepted as the popular view by the people. External influences may come from other cultures and can become a dominant force in a particular culture. In tracing back to how the trend of popular culture became a dominating force in the film industry in Ghana, the trend of how societal trends from other cultures at a point dominated the film industry, a respondent highlighted on this by stating:

> *For some time, a lot of our Ghanaian films were influenced by our counterparts in Nigeria and the kind of stories that they were telling: the witchcraft, voodoo and stuff like that influenced their stories, and that trend was able to hit us. A lot of their films penetrated the market in Ghana so our films also began to tow the same line because we thought that was what was making the films sell. (Respondent A-Ghallywood)*

The aforementioned response indicates how the trends in the film industry in Ghana were at a point in time influenced by content from the Nigerian film industry which became popular among the masses in Ghana. According to the respondent, filmmakers had to turn towards this particular trend because it highly determined whether a film will sell or not. In order not to lose their audience and also to make returns on the film produced, those themes from the popular Nigerian films became the bedrock for films produced in Ghana, a clear indication of how societal trends can become a major influence in the choice of themes. Presently, the Ghanaian film industry is still rigged with influences from societal trends that make up the films produced. Influences from the dominating western productions have seen some filmmakers adapt some of their content and give it a Ghanaian feel. However, it is again important to tell the Ghanaian story amidst all the influences therein and this was affirmed by a respondent who opined:

> *I am in touch mostly with outside markets in terms of film sales and promotion. I have recommended quite several films to be promoted outside the country but I do not just look at any content. The content must be authentic and tell a Ghanaian story with the cultural identity of the people present in the film.(Respondent D)*

Herein, the respondent captures the importance of still maintaining the original Ghanaian stories and still being able to sell films produced to the outside world. This again shows the importance of maintaining authenticity in terms of the content produced because there are some individuals involved in the film process who are equally culturally informed and will want to associate with culturally induced content.

Although society, societal trends, and influences seemingly influence the choice of themes dominant in the film industry, filmmakers should be informed to critically assess content before aligning with it. Although the aim may be to make gains on the film and to satisfy audience demands, filmmakers should also consider the issue of identity and cultural promotion and begin to explore the potencies of culture and how beneficial it may be to society in terms of development. The film industry has the potency to cross borders and reach a wide range of audiences therefore the kind of content produced is important in telling a good story or not about the country. Commercialization is important, however maintaining a good image and telling a positive story about your culture are equally important, thus the need for filmmakers to be more informed when making choices of what material to pick as influences in terms of themes, story development, and the final finished film product.

4.5.7 Investment and financing

After exploring society, societal trends, and influences, another factor that emerged as a possible reason why popular culture may influence the choice of themes is an issue of investment and financing. Investment and financing play a significant role in the film industry and the content produced. Investment and financing partly determine the general output of the production, who or what goes in, or not. This highly important factor also determines the kind of audience the film is targeted at and how well the film will be marketed and distributed across various media and channels ensuring the film reaches a wider audience. Various productions that have done exceedingly well on the market have mostly been run on significantly huge budgets.

The role of finance and investment in a production cannot be overlooked and for this discussion, the role of finance and investment was explored as a possible influence on

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the choice of themes in Ghanaian films, confirming the assertion by Meyer (2003) in the earlier chapter. In the film production process, the producer is usually the person responsible for providing the funds to run a production and the producer usually selects the various persons they want to work with on the project (Bordwell & Thompson, 2014). In some instances, some directors double as the producers because they have the money to execute the production. For this study, the directors selected as respondents doubled as the producers for the majority of their projects, with support from external funding programs. This enabled the researcher to understand how financing is done in the industry, how it affects the content produced, and how the audience or the market may respond to the film. The importance of financing again can be seen in how some large productions have also engaged the services of executive producers who also contribute financially to the realization of the entire project's set outcome. The set ideals, values, beliefs, and preferences of the producer are most likely to influence the choice of content the producer will want to associate with. Most often, the producer may suggest what specific content that should be dominant in the film. The discussion sought to ascertain if indeed investment and finance play a major role in influencing themes and if indeed this feat has contributed to or not to popular culture is a dominating force in the film industry.

The importance of the role and the influence of producers on the outcome of film projects were highlighted by one of the respondents who stated:

> *The producer is the one who brings out the idea as to what the movie is going to be about. The producer is responsible for finding the right cast, director, and others for the film. The outcome of a film largely depends on the producer. (Class E)*

Here, the role and the importance of the producer are affirmed by one of the respondents. This justifies how or why the output of a film, and the choice of the content may depend on financing, which is largely provided by the producer in most cases. To this extent, it can be established that financing is one major factor that may impinge on how popular culture may influence the choice of themes in Ghanaian films, dependent on the trends that influence the preferences of the individuals at the helm of financing films. Some responses from other respondents also affirm this. One respondent shared an opinion that also avows the issue of finance and investment being an important factor in the film industry. The respondent opined:

> *We need investors because that would increase the products out there. Currently, we have fewer people producing because there are no investors and so fewer products. When investors come in, I feel the industry will be rebranded as the slight dunk has offered the majority of its players to learn and assess their mistakes and loopholes, so people are definitely ready to bring out good and quality work but lack the push. (Respondent B- Kumawood).*

From the aforementioned, financing and investment play a major role in the film industry. The availability or otherwise of investors may influence the outcome of films produced and the number of films produced. Churning out good stories largely depends on the financing available for the project. The respondent affirms this by admitting that there are people ready to bring out quality work, but the financing may not be available. Having culturally informed and aware film stakeholders can go far to improve the content quality of films ensuring that culture plays a significant role. In affirmation of the aforementioned point, another respondent suggested:

> *That I mean is the only way you can get the film authority to finance you because they also want to promote Ghana so if you want them to support you, you need to put in those cultural elements into your film. (Respondent A- Ghallywood)*

The respondent here touches on the importance of factoring cultural elements into scripts to get the film authority, which is the government to support film projects. This

also affirms the importance of financing. Without financing, a good project may never reach the targeted audience. To attract investors, the content of the film must be good. Investors should also be informed and pay critical attention to content that promotes the culture and national identity of the country. As long as finance remains the bedrock of many productions the orientation and preferences of the individual who functions as the financier comes to play therefore there should be a conscious effort to improve the content produced by encouraging that most film investors and stakeholders pay more attention to culture.

4.5.8 Research, education, and story development

Another factor through which popular culture may influence the choice of themes was the issue of research and education. Some respondents shared their views on how this influences their work.

Research and education, as per the purpose of this study and according to responses generated from the respondents deal mainly with executing an extensive study into some issues or doing extensive checks on some subject matters before using them in a creative process to come out with a film. Research may also help in determining material influenced by popular culture and how it may influence trends, lifestyle, and behavior which may eventually influence the content of films.

Education also, thus mainly film education, also has to do with how aware and/or informed the filmmaker is in knowing and understanding his craft and the factors that may influence the work done or produced. This factor has to some extent influenced the choice of themes in films and below is the responses from some of the respondents that will attempt to affirm the aforementioned point. In sharing the process of what goes

into developing a script specifically for his working style, one respondent espoused that:

> *In terms of the story, and materials, for the screenplay I'm doing, I'm even done with it; I didn't just let's say focus on pop fiction but research into how he did it. I think overall I had about 20 scripts that I was reading back and forth to be able to identify a trend that runs through. (Respondent A- Ghallywood)*

This excerpt from the respondent sought to explain how the issue of research may affect or not the themes in a film. According to the respondent, through the process, he had to read through some scripts to identify some possible themes that run through which informed the theme of the project he worked on. The respondent, having some film education background and understanding of the process of the film industry saw the need to do some research into the project to identify some possible popular themes.

Another respondent, however, espoused how research and education did indeed influence the themes and promote the cultural factor in their work process. Being culturally informed, the respondent through the work process sought the assistance of a trained individual to assist in the process. Sharing the experience, the respondent stated that:

> *Before a film is done now, we do a lot of research, and go to the cultural center to take their input and we currently even have a cultural director on this set who used to be at the cultural center, who even wrote this story. So, you can see that the culture is very well depicted correcting things that were done wrong and also educating us on history. He even taught me about Aban which is performed for twins which even I didn't know. (Respondent A- Kumawood)*

The respondent, according to the aforementioned stated clearly how the issue of research and education is important and how it contributed to their current work. The aforementioned also details how research and education influenced culturally driven thematic issues. According to the respondent, the work process led them to new discoveries and learning thereby correcting some of the purported wrongs they had

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become used to. This was made possible by researching and also engaging the services of a trained person, who for their work was referred to as a cultural director. The education and training of that individual made the person an authority in the said field thereby being in a state to make certain significant inputs in the work process to achieve the set objectives for the production process and to serve the audience with the product (film) that they can appreciate and relate with.

Research and education do play a critical role in the development of a story which is usually driven by themes. Research and education expose the filmmaker to various issues that are happening in society and what may affect the film process or not. Research and education may serve other purposes in the film industry such as knowing audience tastes and demands but for the study, the purpose of research and education was linked to making informed choices about thematic issues in films. Education, thus film education on the other hand ensures that the filmmakers are aware of the choices they make and what can affect the choice of themes and the effect certain subject matters may have on some of the audiences. The education factor also makes it possible to have individuals who are experts on certain issues to handle the areas. As in the case of one of the respondents who engaged the services of a cultural director to check all cultural elements in the film and ensure that the right thing is done. Research and education indeed play an important role in determining the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. If paid attention to this factor can contribute significantly to ensuring that culture becomes a dominant force in the content produced in the film industry in Ghana. Popular culture may have influenced some trends in the development of themes, but the issues of research and education have also contributed to correcting some ills that have been featured in films produced over some time. Some filmmakers are now

aware of the importance of culture in films, and this has been made largely possible through exposure they acquire through research and film education.

4.5.9 The actor factor

In exploring ways by which popular culture possibly influence the choice of themes in Ghanaian films, one aspect that was also identified is the issue of the actor factor. The actor factor sought to explore how the actor or the actor's orientation can become a factor that can inform what influences the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. The actor is usually the person that brings the story to life. The actor's role mainly is to translate the script into a performance for the audience to understand and appreciate a good story (Dede & Ihunwo, 2014; Yudelson, 2011,). The orientation of an actor deals with the actor's beliefs and ideals and what the actor stands for. This is also an important factor because the audiences usually resonate with and look up to the actors as their role models.

Before exploring in-depth how the actor and the actor's orientation can influence the choice of themes, the importance of the actor's role was explored and some inferences from the audience resonate with this fact of the importance of an actor, describing the actor as the backbone of a production. In highlighting the essence of the actor, one respondent stated that: "*The actor brings out the emotions. A good actor will eventually take people's attention off bad lighting." (Class E)*

Here, the respondent talks about how the actor can eventually become the main focus of a film, thereby the audience's mind off some failed elements. When the acting is good, the audience will tend to focus more on that the actors and the acting. Another respondent also opined that: "*The actor is the one bringing out the story, so the actor*

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is very important. If the story will be well appreciated, much of it depends on the actor and how well the actor interprets the story" (Class E)

The above responses from the respondents affirm how important the actor and the actor's role are in the film industry. The above responses give a basis to launch into exploring how the actor and the actor's orientation can influence how themes are developed in Ghanaian films. Concerning the actor's role/orientation and the choice of themes, one respondent highlighted the role of the actor in terms of developing stories. The respondent espoused:

> *Mostly I target the actors and fashion the story around the actor that I would like to see play or like to work with. For example, Azonto Ghost was written and made particularly for Lilwin. Sometimes I also write the story and after completing it, I select who best suits the role, sometimes the person may not have even acted professionally before. Like Ellen White, Wayoosi, and the like. So, it depends on the story, I can even see someone on the street, fashion a story around them and convince them to play the role. (Respondent A- Kumawood)*

From the above, the respondent gives a clear example of how actors play a major role in deciding the content of a film. With some examples, the respondent further affirms this by giving an example of a project that was influenced by a particular actor. Based on this, it can be affirmed that the actor's orientation may become a dominant feature in the film because the actor is mainly the base for the story development. Based on this the actor again must be particular in choosing some particular elements that characterize their lifestyle as it may directly or indirectly impact the audience and the feedback that the film will receive. The actor's orientation is also important when dealing with influences on themes. If the actor as a person can be a major influence, then the actor's lifestyle and set beliefs may also be a factor because the content creator will want to create a story that will resonate with the actor.

One key issue raised by a respondent in this scenario will be examined. The respondent raised an issue concerning the process of training actors which may affect their orientation. The respondent explained that:

> *Fortunately, I am a part time lecturer and so I have students who come in and for them it is just putting something onto the market and making ends meet or becoming famous and popular and for me it is more of being responsible for the choices you make as an actor and therefore, for example you don't position yourself whereby you want to do anything as an actor and so when the script comes, what are the boxes you are ticking to know if this is something I want to get myself involved in, of course you're going to have good scripts, you are going to have bad scripts but when it comes to bad scripts you should know that the choice I make in coming on board is going to set a precedence, if I am not careful the message is that would come out of this production may have a direct impact on society and people are going to consume whatever I put in there just because I have used myself as a vessel to transport/transmit this message so these are a few of the things that would influence me as an actor, content is very key for me and yes, we want to make ends meet and earn a living out of this but content is always crucial.(Respondent B- Ghallywood)*

The above statement from the respondent highlights training actors to take up jobs in the industry and possibly become the center of focus of some story developments. The orientation of the respondent is crucial. For the respondent, the focus is not about the remuneration solely but also on the impact of the actor's role on society. The respondent talks keenly on how the actor must be particular in choosing the kind of productions and content to associate with. In the scenario, if the actor is well informed and is particular about the orientation, the quality of content may significantly improve, and the audience will be treated with better stories. The actors thereof must begin to understand how crucial their role is in determining the outcome of a project and must pay particular attention to their orientation, thereby ensuring that they influence the audience and society at large positively.

The second objective sought to explore how popular culture has influenced the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. The factors generated in the discussion of this research question were suggestive of the various means by which popular culture may influence theme generation. The factors highlighted proved that indeed popular culture may end up becoming a preferred influence because it mainly deals with what society identifies with, what the market demands, and what audiences prefer. Some responses above affirmed the extent to which pop culture influenced some films and themes. However, other factors give an incline that the role and importance of culture are gradually gaining relevance and some filmmakers are making conscious efforts to make culture a key component in the generation of themes. Some filmmakers have taken a further step and created films that project the indigenous cultures of various Ghanaian societies. All these efforts have contributed to checking the issue of popularity becoming a dominating force in the creation of themes in films produced.

4.6. Popular Culture and audience expectation in Ghanaian films

To explore Influences of popular culture in the Ghanaian film industry, it is also important to explore the audience expectations and how they are most likely to contribute to this subject matter or otherwise. Audiences over time have been the bedrock for most entertainment or art-related fields (Kerrigan 2016). They are mostly the target for the content produced and their feedback or responses, either negative or positive may influence or otherwise, how well the content produced under various art forms will thrive. The film industry is no exception to this, and the audiences are again a highly important factor as all films are made with the audiences in mind.

The audiences are a key part of the film process and without them, the film cycle will remain incomplete. The audiences are important because of their strategic role as the

end users who patronize the finished product (film). In exploring culturally driven influences in the film industry, be it indigenous or popular culture, audience influence is an important factor. The psyche of the audience was then explored to have a firm grasp on how the audience's expectation has been influenced by popular culture or otherwise. If the audience does not accept and patronize a film, the film may suffer the rippling effects hence to explore the proliferation of pop culture, the audiences were explored to understand how they contribute or not to this trend in the film industry.

4.6.1 Audience and cultural awareness

The audience understanding what culture is and its value is highly critical in assessing if indeed they may contribute to the cultural presence in the film industry. What the audiences want or otherwise may contribute to what might become the accepted norms or not. Interactions with some audience members revealed that they had some knowledge and appreciation of culture. Highlighting a few responses from some audiences, the view was however diverse but with an iota of similarities. One respondent stated that: "*To portray your culture, then there should be a good story to bring out the culture of the people. Culture and content should work hand in hand.*" *(Class E)*

The above response raises the issue of having a good story and factoring the issue of culture into the story. The audience member duly acknowledged that good stories can indeed portray the culture of a people if handled well. This response details how the understanding of the audience towards culture may contribute to cultural elements becoming dominant in films. Such an audience is most likely to push toward cultural content. Another respondent, however, gives a different view on the cultural perspective. The respondent was of the view that: "*Culture should not be the focus of a*

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production. The way movies are made is not about our culture but about how it will sell." (Class E)

The response raises the issue of diversity in thought and belief with the audience member not agreeing with the fact that culture must be the sole focus of films made in Ghana. To the respondent, the film must sell and that is what is important. Whether or not culture is important does not stand out as an important factor. The respondent was then asked about his view of foreign cultures influencing the local content and the respondent had this to say:

> *Now the foreign culture does not look foreign anymore. It has been accepted by the people with a lot of traces in Ghanaian films. Popular culture is neither good nor bad. We should adopt all cultures. The story being told should be creative because marketing should be considered. (Class E)*
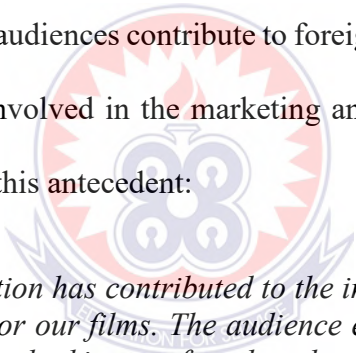
The above gives a possible reason to why foreign content has become dominant in the film industry in Ghana. Some audiences choose to resonate with the popular content and generally patronize that more. An audience member duly acknowledged this by stating: "*The way of life of Ghanaians is highly influenced by popular culture and popular culture is influenced by the media.*" (Class E)

The issue of popular culture dominating the film industry is a worrying trend and the views from the audience give an understanding of how this trend has developed through. The audience members sampled espoused various views on culture and popular culture and their possible preferences. The levels of cultural awareness of the audiences influence the cultural inputs in films as the audiences are the key figures that are at the centre of film patronage. Their demands will gradually influence the trends in the film industry.

Again, in exploring the possibility of popular culture influencing the audience expectations in Ghanaian films, views were sought from other industry players such as directors, writers, film distributors, and others whose work is greatly dependent and influenced by the audience perceptions, demands, beliefs, and ideologies. The views shared will possibly give further understanding of this subject matter for discussion.

4.6.2 The power of audience demands.

The power of audience demands in determining the dominant trends in films can be traced back to a period during which the film industry in Ghana was greatly influenced by the trends in Nigerian films because the audience has access to such content, and they became accustomed to it (Nanbigne, 2011). This affected the film landscape in Ghana. Through to now, audiences contribute to foreign influences dominating the film industry. A respondent involved in the marketing and distribution of films in Ghana shared the experience of this antecedent:

> *Audience expectation has contributed to the influence of the outside culture on our film industry or our films. The audience expectations, you will always see what audiences are looking out for when they switch towards outside films that are coming in, the Nigerian films that are coming in, or even some western television series, western productions that begin to rise within our markets to our audience, then it begins to influence the kind of presentation. At times the story might be Ghanaian but the packaging the presentation, and the piece at which you are presenting could turn to give it that foreign appeal but most definitely the audience have an influence on our films whether being authentic or foreign driven. (Respondent D)*

The audience expectation indeed influenced the content and trend and content by determining what will sell or not in the film industry. The trend has continued to date and currently, the audience demands mostly determine what the majority of the content that is produced speaks about. The audience may accept or otherwise the content if it resonates with them or not. An industry player involved in the script and story development process explained why he chose the specific genre that characterizes most

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of his writings. The respondent stated that: *The Audience is the major reason why I use a lot of comedy in his writings. It is easy to treat serious issues on a lighter note and most people easily resonate with comic issues. (Respondent C- Ghallywood)*

Exploring the trend today, the audience indeed plays an important role in determining what becomes the norm or otherwise in films in terms of content. The issue raised with regard to the dominance of Nigerian influence dominance linked to the audience depict how popular culture can influence audience expectations and how that in turn can influence trends or otherwise. Currently, most audiences choose to align with the popular trends although there may be a number that is culturally aware and may tend to push for culturally infused content, the majority still choose foreign content more. The audiences can inform choices in the film based on the trends to align with.

4.6.3 Audience and content appreciation

Although the majority of the audience still prefers foreign content, the issue of content protection is an area that should be looked at. Content protection will gradually regulate the kind of content produced and the audience will gradually come to accept the change (Dastidar & Elliot, 2020; Hafeez & Ara, 2016; Jordi, 2015; Zhu& Nakajima, 2010). Involved in the industry as an actor, a respondent shares the need for content protection and awareness:

> *where your target audience is very sensitive to certain subject matters, you cannot be very graphic, or loud because it may backfire and we have an industry to protect and make sure that the audience does not lose faith in what they are building, and we have to go along with them and not move too far ahead else we're going to lose them and so for me, content is very key. (Respondent B-Ghallywood)*

Audiences are an integral part of the film industry. Their contribution toward the growth and development of the industry is an important factor needed to ensure that the films produced perform exceedingly well on the market. Assessing how popular culture has influenced audience expectations in Ghanaian films, it is evident that Ghanaian audiences have not generally pushed toward culturally informed content but are still dealing with the rudiments of foreign cultures that largely have influenced their lifestyles and beliefs and have eventually seeded into the film industry due to the calculated effort by filmmakers to serve the audiences. To gradually bring audiences to begin to appreciate culturally informed content, filmmakers must ensure that there are structures to protect the content and the audiences as well. If filmmakers tend to slowly push for an attempt to induct the audiences into content with cultural elements, the audiences will over time come to accept such content and the demand will increase.

This feat will ensure that Ghanaian films will be of more quality and the international audience will have the opportunity to access the content, thereby learning about the culture of the people of Ghana. Audiences must also make a conscious effort to become more culturally aware and appreciative. If audiences begin to understand the film process and how potent it is, they will better understand the importance of a push towards culture and cultural content.

4.7 Summary

The chapter presented the various classifications, themes, and sub-themes that were developed from the data during the study. The findings indicate that the Ghanaian film industry has been to some extent influenced by popular culture and content produced by the industry gives evidence of this. The findings further identified from data gathered that some industry players within the Ghanaian film landscape acknowledge the

influence and dominance of popular culture in the industry and on their works, partly due to audience demands and the emergence of global trends and sensations. Furthermore, from the data gathered it is evident that filmmakers in the Ghanaian film landscape have recognized the importance of culture and are making conscious efforts to inculcate cultural elements into films produced.

In conclusion, although the Ghanaian film industry in recent times has seen some significant growth and development, the industry has suffered the effects of the dominance of popular culture which has been a major influence on the content produced. Filmmakers, however, are making attempts to restructure the industry by ensuring that culture becomes a major influence on content produced to ensure the promotion and development of national and cultural heritage.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to summarize the entire study by highlighting the relevant details in the various chapters. The chapter further summarizes the main findings of the study as well as the themes generated from responses from the participants to answer the research questions that facilitated the study. The chapter goes on to provide recommendations for each research question. The study was faced with limitations and this chapter also highlights some limitations of the study and finally gives suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary

The research sought to explore Influences of popular culture in the Ghanaian film industry by possibly examining the state of the industry in terms of influences and what has informed the changes in the industry today. The first chapter set a premise for the work by explaining the key terms involved in the study. The issue of popular culture and globalization was examined and brought to light as having influenced the trends in most industries around the world with the film being no exception. Popular culture was explained as a set of beliefs, ideologies, or behavioral traits, originally not part of the people's set beliefs but gradually become accepted as the norm or ideal, the chapter again espoused some details of the Ghanaian film industry and the current state. The chapter again stated the problem that informed the study and highlighted how beneficial the study will be to the various individuals directly or indirectly in the study.

Relevant literature was reviewed to guide the study and give a premise to the findings and discussion of the study. Some topics were selected to explain the current trends and

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happenings in the industry as well as establish historical antecedents that have contributed to the current state of the film industry in Ghana. For the study, literature was reviewed under the following topics: The world history of film, the history of African cinema, filmmaking in Ghana, Marketing and distribution of films and Popular Culture, Globalization, and Indigenous Narratives in Film. Under each main topic, some sub-topics sought to give further details on the subject.

The third chapter detailed the methodology used for the study. The study was qualitative because the nature of the research sought to explore the thoughts, feelings, and expressions of individuals. The study adopted both case study approach, which was used to understand the various phenomena in the industry by exploring the structures and the processes involved. The population for the study was the individuals in the Ghana film industry and the study sampled some directors, actors, scriptwriters as well as marketers and distributors, and audiences. Data was obtained from the respondents through interviews and focused group discussions. The data obtained therein were analyzed mainly through thematic analyses that aided the researcher draw themes from the various responses given by the participants.

5.2 Main Findings

The fourth chapter presented the findings generated by the participants as well as the discussions generated from the various responses guided by the literature review. The chapter through analyses and discussion sought to answer the following research questions for the study:

1. How has popular culture influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers?

2. What are the influences of popular culture on the marketing and distribution structures of the Ghanaian film industry?

3. How has popular culture impacted the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films?

4. To what extent has popular culture affected audience expectations in Ghanaian films?

The first question sought to explore how popular culture has influenced the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers. This was to aid in understanding how well-acquainted Ghanaian filmmakers are with either popular culture or indigenous culture and cultural elements and further explore if the acquaintance or otherwise influences their work process and output, that is the content they (filmmakers) produce. The main themes generated from this question were

1. Cultural inclination and relevance to national development
2. Cultural inputs in the work processes.

The first main theme, Cultural inclination, and relevance to national development explored how important culture is to the development of a country, and how popular culture has influenced or otherwise. Furthermore, some subthemes were generated that also guided the discussion of the study in-depth. The subthemes generated under the first main theme as listed below:

a. Cultural identity and globalization: uniqueness and originality

b. Culture and individual- related experiences

c. Individual preferences and commercialization

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The second main theme, Cultural inputs in the work process also generated subthemes that aided in the discussion of the study to come up with the main responses in answering the research questions. The subthemes are as follows:

a. Content and Sensitivity

b. Personal interests and conflicts

c. Culture and entertainment: the balance

d. Detailed scripts: documentation and personal preferences

e. Historical antecedents and modern-day influences

The responses from the participants indicated that the majority of the respondents sampled were culturally aware or informed as they understood the value and importance of culture and its relevance to development. Although the respondents affirmed the importance of culture, there was a general challenge of inculcating cultural elements into the works and content produced. This challenge suggestively was attributed to the non-receptiveness of the audience and other industry players towards cultural elements and the value of culture and the inability to enforce legislature to protect content. Some respondents also gave accounts of instances that suggested how popular culture became a dominant force in the industry becoming the preferred element of most filmmakers. The cultural orientation of the filmmakers sampled enabled them to identify the challenges with the industry in terms of cultural presentation and identity. A section of respondents also affirmed that although culture is an important element, the focus of films should be mainly on entertaining the audience. This divergent view also gave an incline into the current state of the industry and how the various industry players understand and contribute to either the growth and/or decline of the industry and the issue of cultural presentation.

The second research question examined the influences of popular culture on the marketing and distribution structures of the Ghanaian film industry. The responses generated by the participants in involved in the study were classified under four main themes for discussion and analysis. The themes developed were:

1. The story and actors

2. Technological trends

3. Cultural orientation

4. Legislature and structures

The themes represented various aspects of marketing forces and how such factors can individually be influenced by popular culture. The first theme the story and actors sought to explain how popular culture impacted the story and the actors. It also sought to explain how the story and actors in turn affected the marketing of films. The story is what gets the audience interested in a film, followed by the actors. This may contribute to determining what will become a popular trend or not. Since the market forces deal directly with the audience, the kind of stories produced through films may become popular and if the right actors are selected, the audience will appreciate it. Against this premise, most of the respondents sampled for this question indicated that most of the stories churned out have had some influence from other cultures which are not Ghanaian. Therefore, the narrative of the story and actors has not contributed significantly to cultural inputs in films. However, the story and actors can also be used as a pivot to gradually push for more culturally based content in the films. Popular faces can be featured in culturally based films and the audience over time will come to appreciate it.

The second theme, technological trends sought to explore how popular culture became a mainstream influence in films through the various advancements in technology. The theme also helped explain how the lack of exposure to some new forms of technology can play a pivotal role in advancing culture as a major influence in Ghanaian films. According to the responses sampled, technological trends overtime gave people access to various media in terms of film patronage. The advancement of technology meant increased and easy access to more content. Against this premise, the issue of technology trends did not also promote the cultural presence in films. One respondent however suggested that although the technology narrative favors the masses, there are some sets of audiences who still do not have access to new media and rely on traditional media. The respondent suggested that filmmakers can make a conscious effort to create films based on their culture and sell to them. This process can contribute to cultural inputs becoming ideals in film and ensure that majority of the content produced is culturally informed thereby promoting culture and reestablishing the ailing national and cultural heritage.

The theme of cultural orientation also guided the discussion on how culturally oriented the individuals involved in film distribution are and how likely popular culture can influence them or otherwise. The findings revealed that cultural orientation also contributed to the process of culture becoming a significant input as the respondent sampled indicated that culture plays an important role in choosing the kind of projects to distribute. For some of them, the content was important and they needed to know if indeed the content will promote the Ghanaian culture or identity. This factor contributed significantly to ensuring that cultural promotion becomes paramount in films produced thereby aiding to reestablish the national and cultural identity and heritage respectively.

The issue of legislature and structures also housed responses on how the creation of structures and legislature to guide and protect the content produced can help to promote the culture and national heritage. The respondents shared views on how laws can be created to ensure the content produced speaks well of the country at large. The legislature according to the respondents will also check already existing content and ensure that the content is suitable for audience patronage and will not have an effect on them. The issue of structures also came up as a suggestive measure to regulate the operation of individuals involved in the filmmaking industry in Ghana and ensure that they are regulated, and their content is checked.

The third question was focused on verifying how popular culture has impacted the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films. This research question led the researcher to explore some key individuals involved in filmmaking and film development and how they come by their stories or thematic issues treated in films, examining if indeed popular culture has played a role in the process. The responses from the participants were explored and analyzed and some factors were identified as possible means through which popular culture can influence the choice of themes or not. Two main themes were generated for discussion. The themes generated are stated below:

1. Creative Process and thought development
2. Choice of themes and influences on content

The two main themes guided the discussions that answered the second research question. The first theme aided in explaining the various stages in film production and the individuals involved in a bid to understand the nature of influences involved in creating or developing films. The three main processes identified were Pre-production,

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Production, and Post-production and the individuals involved in the various processes include the director, actor, scriptwriter, audience, and film distributor. The roles of these individuals were explored in an attempt to discuss the factors around them that may influence the content of films. The second theme guided the discussion to identify if popular culture influenced the choice of themes in Ghanaian films. The factors were generated from the responses given by the participants. The factors identified as influences on the choice of themes in Ghanaian films were then developed into subthemes under the main theme. The subthemes generated are listed below:

a. Society, societal trends, and influences

b. Investment and Financing

c. Research and Education

d. The actor factor

The findings from the respondents indicate that the various factors that influence the choice of themes came up mostly due to individual happenings and contributions. Some of the factors also emanated from historical antecedents that preceded the establishment of a film industry in Ghana. Under the society, societal trends and influences, some points that emanated were the influence of the environment that is the views and beliefs of the people, the trends from other film industries such as the Nigerian film industry, and the influences it had on the growing film industry in Ghana. Under investment and finance, it was discovered that the people who finance film projects mostly determine the kind of content that goes into the films based on individual or collective interests. Responses from some of the participants gave an incline to this as some of the respondents cited instances where films were financed solely for gaining profit. Research and education also contributed to the choice of themes in films. The research

factor meant that filmmakers did some background checks and investigations into content to identify some key issues that may influence the reception/acceptance or otherwise of the films they produced. The education factor also helped the filmmakers to understand the film industry and structures and know the content that will aid in the growth and development of the film industry in Ghana. The actor factor also exposed the study to issues of stories created or developed around some actors based on their popularity and familiarity with audiences. It was also discovered that the stories that serve such purposes are usually created around the lifestyle of the actors which implies that the lifestyle of the actor may indirectly contribute to the choice of themes in films. The aforementioned explains how popular culture played a role in impacting the choice of themes in Ghanaian films by examining the phenomenon in the light of various factors that espouse the trend to various individual roles in the industry. Findings generated to indicate that the industry generally has towed the lines of popular trends as major content with cultural elements gradually fading away. However, factors such as research and education have indicated that there have been efforts by some filmmakers to pay attention to the content and what generally influences the themes created. Research aided some filmmakers to correct some wrong visual presentations such as costuming, and artistic symbols that have been used in contemporary Ghanaian films. Gradually, the film industry in Ghana is undergoing some critical phases of reconstruction which is geared towards carving a unique identity, to possibly correct the menace created by the dominance of popular culture.

The fourth research question was aimed at exploring how popular culture has impacted audience expectations in Ghanaian films. A detailed exploration of this set question was to discover if indeed the audience expectations are influenced by popular culture or not.

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The findings from the respondents were presented and analyzed under three main themes:

1. Audience and cultural awareness
2. The power of audience demands
3. Audience and content appreciation

The findings indicated that popular culture in a way impacts the audience expectations, which contributes to the kind of content that is seen mostly in the film as their interest is mostly considered in the film creation and development process because audiences serve as the end users of the film. Under the audience and cultural awareness, most of the audience members sampled came out as being culturally informed and they knew the importance of culture. A few of the respondents, however, did not entirely agree to culture is an important factor. Although the audiences sampled did have an appreciation of culture, most of their content preference was geared towards other content, which led to the exploration of the second theme, the power of audience demands. The demands from the audience are mostly attributed to the presentational faults in most of the films produced. The theme housed responses from some key individuals in the film industry whose work was linked directly to the audience. The responses indicated that some audiences were slow to accept content that was culturally informed and this affected the trends because the filmmaker sought to pursue audience interest. The third theme, audience, and content appreciation also explained how audiences accepted or otherwise various kinds of content. This contributed to various influences on filmmaking, with regard to what the audience's demands were. This also helped identify the various trends or patterns eminent in the film industry and suggestively guided the filmmakers as to the type of content that will resonate with the audience.

The audiences generally, according to those sampled indicated that cultural presentation has not been a major element however efforts are being made to gradually reestablish the cultural presence in films by first getting the audience to understand and appreciate culture, its value ,and importance.

The main findings indicate that the film industry in Ghana is gradually progressing with individuals contributing their quota to the growth and development of the industry. The findings also establish that popular culture amidst foreign cultures or influences has dominated the film industry in Ghana as major influence on the content produced. There has been a conscious effort to gradually establish an indigenous cultural presence in films. Although the process has been slow, filmmakers are gradually becoming aware of the importance and relevance of culture and the need to have an identity and are gradually pushing for more cultural content to ensure that films produced become more culturally informed. The audiences too are gradually being rolled in this process to ensure that they come to term s with and appreciate the importance and relevance of culture. The Ghanaian film industry has identified the need for and importance of culture and identity and efforts are being made to reconstruct the national heritage through films.

5.3 Conclusion

Filmmakers in Ghana experienced a significant shift in their cultural orientation due to the infiltration of foreign cultures into the film industry. This influence was evident in the themes, narratives, and character portrayals within contemporary Ghanaian films.

Also, the infiltration of foreign cultures through popular culture has not only affected the content of Ghanaian films but has also shaped the marketing and distribution structures within the industry. Filmmakers, cognizant of audience preferences

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influenced by popular culture, have adjusted their strategies to align with these trends to enhance the commercial success of their films.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that popular culture played a pivotal role in shaping the choice of themes in contemporary Ghanaian films. Filmmakers were observed to align their content with popular culture trends, responding to audience preferences and demands. This alignment led to a transformation in the thematic landscape of Ghanaian cinema.

Lastly, the audience, identified as a significant influencer, shaped filmmakers' decisions as they strived to produce content that aligned with popular culture trends. This dynamic interaction between filmmakers and the audience resulted in a shift in the cinematic landscape with focus on producing more content influenced by elements of popular culture.

5.4 Limitations

Limitations are inevitable in research and this study, just as all other research was faced with some challenges. The study set out to examine the Ghanaian film industry in the context of the proliferation of popular culture. The study sought to seek the views of industry players from the two main blocs of the film industry, that is the Kumawood (Kumasi- based Film industry) and Ghallywood (the Accra-based film industry). One major limitation was getting access to some of the individuals due to the busy nature of their schedules. The persons involved in the filmmaking process often had tight schedules and most of the appointments had to be rescheduled altering the dates for the set timeline of the research.

Another limitation of the study was the outbreak of the novel corona virus pandemic which struck the nation. The ban on all public gatherings meant that film productions

had to break due to the restrictions. The interviews that were scheduled to take place within the period of the outbreak were also canceled because most of the participants declined to have one-on-one meetings with the researcher. This also affected the set timeline for the research and the researcher had to come up with new strategies to conduct the interviews, thus resorting to virtual meetings via zoom.

Another limitation of the research was the issue of piracy and inaccessibility to most of the content produced. Most of the films selected for the study were not available on free-to-all platforms and the researcher needed to get firsthand access to them by contacting the filmmakers. Most of the filmmakers were reluctant to give out their films to be used due to the fear of the films being pirated. Some filmmakers also directed the researcher to paid streaming sites such as Netflix and Iroko Tv to access the content This factor also reduced the number of films the researcher had access to, thereby altering the research process.

Issues of misunderstanding among some filmmakers in the industry also challenged the research process as most of the filmmakers were not willing to give out some important information. However, some of the respondents later became comfortable to partake in the study after the researcher introduced an informed consent form to protect the identity of the respondents. Some respondents still did not give out all the information needed although they agreed to partake in the study.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The researcher recommends that other researchers should individually explore some components of the study such as the industries explored that is both Kumawood and Ghallywood film industries, the roles and functions of the individuals involved in the filmmaking process such as the director, producer, actor, scriptwriter as well as the

audience and how they contribute either individually or collectively to the film industry in Ghana. Marketing and distribution of films is also major element in the film industry. The researcher recommends that further research should be geared towards distinctively exploring the structures of marketing and its impact on the film industry in Ghana.

5.6 Recommendations

With specific reference to the discussions and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered to ensure that the issue of popular culture becoming a dominating force in the film industry in Ghana is checked.

To address the profound influence of popular culture on the cultural orientation of Ghanaian filmmakers, it is recommended to institute comprehensive and detailed cultural immersion programs. These programs should be meticulously designed to connect filmmakers not only with local artisans, traditional storytellers, and cultural experts but also with the broader Ghanaian communities and facilitate immersive experiences within these communities, enabling filmmakers to actively engage with and observe traditional practices, folklore, and various artistic expressions.

Encourage deep and meaningful partnerships with local artisans specializing in traditional crafts, musicians contributing to indigenous music, and experts in traditional clothing. These collaborations should extend beyond a superficial level, allowing filmmakers to gain a profound understanding of the intricate details of Ghanaian cultural elements.

Filmmakers are also encouraged to participate in community events, rituals, and daily life activities, fostering a genuine and mutual exchange. This hands-on approach aims to infuse a heightened level of authenticity into their work, ensuring a more nuanced and genuine portrayal of Ghanaian cultural elements in films.

This approach seeks to counterbalance the influence of external factors, ultimately enriching the portrayal of Ghanaian culture in films.

With regards to the second research question, considering the recognized influences of popular culture on marketing and distribution structures, it is recommended to intricately weave cultural sensitivity into our marketing approaches. This involves the careful crafting of promotional campaigns to authentically showcase the cultural elements embedded in our films. Collaborating closely with cultural experts and local influencers is imperative to ensure that our narratives genuinely resonate with the values of our target audience.

Furthermore, recognizing the influence wielded by popular actors and recognizable faces in films, these actors should be featured in films centered on Ghanaian culture to strategically leverage their appeal. This move is not only anticipated to enhance the attractiveness of our content but also aims to establish a more intimate connection with the audience, fostering a sense of familiarity and relatability.

Equally critical is the reinforcement of existing legal frameworks governing film marketing and distribution in Ghana. The research underscores the necessity not just for the presence of these laws but for their robust enforcement. Establishing a stringent monitoring system is pivotal in evaluating compliance with cultural sensitivity standards. For those flout these laws, the researcher advocates for the imposition of stiff penalties to serve as a deterrent. The researcher firmly believes that the combined implementation of culturally informed marketing strategies and a fortified legal framework will not only safeguard the authenticity of cinematic narratives but also significantly contribute to the success and reception of culturally informed films in the Ghanaian market.

Considering the third research question, it is crucial to implement a varied approach that empowers filmmakers, including scriptwriters and directors, to explore a diverse range of themes deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture. There should be a creation of an ongoing series of immersive workshops conducted by cultural experts, historians, and local storytellers, providing filmmakers with extensive insights into lesser-explored aspects of Ghanaian heritage. These workshops should not only serve as educational platforms but also facilitate direct interactions between filmmakers and cultural practitioners, ensuring an authentic portrayal of cultural nuances.

A grant program specifically tailored to support filmmakers embarking on projects that delve into and celebrate the lesser-known aspects Ghanaian culture should be instituted. This will encourage collaborative ventures between filmmakers and local communities by fostering a co-creative process that reflects the genuine essence of Ghanaian traditions.

Also, there should be a feedback mechanism involving cultural scholars and community representatives to critically evaluate and refine thematic explorations. This iterative process aims to enhance the authenticity and accuracy of cultural portrayals in films.

Given the fourth research question and the responses gathered therein, the researcher proposes a comprehensive initiative aimed at fostering a more nuanced and culturally informed audience engagement. Despite existing cultural awareness, an obvious trend indicates a preference for alternative themes among audiences, influencing prevailing filmmaking trends.

To address this, the researcher recommends the implementation of targeted campaigns utilizing workshops, seminars, and digital platforms. Collaborative efforts with cultural experts and influencers will play a crucial role in crafting narratives that emphasize the

richness and importance of Ghanaian culture. These campaigns aim to cultivate a heightened cultural appreciation among audiences, bridging the gap between cultural awareness and content preferences.

Furthermore, the researcher suggests strategic measures, including pilot screenings and symposiums developed based on detailed analysis of audience feedback. This will enable filmmakers gain valuable insights into preferences, guiding the tailoring of content that not only authentically represents Ghanaian culture but also aligns seamlessly with audience expectations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for Directors

TOPIC: INFLUENCES OF POPULAR CULTURE IN THE GHANAIAN

FILM INDUSTRY

For Film Directors

1. Name

2. Age

3. Qualification (You may attach CV)

4. Industry experience (how long have you been working in the industry?)

5. History of the film industry (yours specifically)

6. Your works and influences

7. What styles do you adopt in your work?

8. Does culture matter to you as a person?

9. Should culture or cultural elements be factored into screenplay

10. What is your best project and why

11. Do you write your own scripts?

12. Who does your casting? Self or others?

13. What will you want to see changed or improved in the industry and why?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Actors

TOPIC: INFLUENCES OF POPULAR CULTURE IN THE GHANAIAN

FILM INDUSTRY

For Actors

1.   Name

2.   Age

3.   Qualification (You may attach CV/Resume)

4.   How long have you been in the industry?

5.   How did you start your career?

6.   What influences you as an actor?

7.   Does culture matter to you as a person?

8.   Should culture or cultural elements be factored into films?

9.   What kind of roles do you usually accept and why?

10.   What is your most challenging project so far and why

11.   What is the most challenging script you've worked with and why?

12.   Who will you describe as the most difficult director you have worked with*?*

13.   What will you want to see changed in the film industry?

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide for Scriptwriters

TOPIC: INFLUENCES OF POPULAR CULTURE IN THE GHANAIAN

FILM INDUSTRY

For Script Writers

1. Name

2. Age

3. Qualification (You may attach your CV)

4. Industry experience

5. Does culture mater to you as a person?

6. What influences your writing?

7. What genres do you prefer and why

8. Should culture or cultural elements be factored into screenplays?

9. What type of films interest you?

10. What is your most challenging work and why

11. Do industry players recognize the importance of detailed scripts?

12. What are your views on Improvisation?

13. What do you want to see changed about the industry?

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide of Distributor

TOPIC: INFLUENCES OF POPULAR CULTURE IN THE

GHANAIAN FILM INDUSTRY

For Distributors

1. Name

2. Age

3. Qualification (You may attach CV)

4. Industry experience (how long have you been working in the industry?)

5. What factors influence marketing and distribution of films in Ghana?

6. Will you describe Ghanaian films as authentic or influenced by other cultures?

    a. b. Does the audience expectation contribute to this?

7. What has been the trend of film marketing in Ghana?

8. . Which media do people mostly patronise films through? (internet, live premiers, etc)

9. . What is the state of financing in the film industry?

10. What influences the kind of films you choose to market/distribute?

11. How lucrative is film marketing and distribution in Ghana?

12. What are some challenges with film distribution and marketing in Ghana?

13. What changes do you want to see in the film industry?

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APPENDIX E

Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussion

TOPIC: INFLUENCES OF POPULAR CULTURE IN THE GHANAIAN FILM INDUSTRY

Focus Group Discussion

1. Do we have a film industry in Ghana?

2. Does the outcome of a film depend on the director?

3. How important is the actor in determining the final output of a film?

4. What role does the producer play in determining the outcome of a film?

5. Does culture matter in films?

6. What are some of the major themes that run through films produced in Ghana?

7. Will you describe films made in Ghana as authentic or influenced by popular culture?

8. Have you identified any traces of foreign or popular culture in Ghanaian films?

9. What will you want to see changed in the Ghanaian film industry?
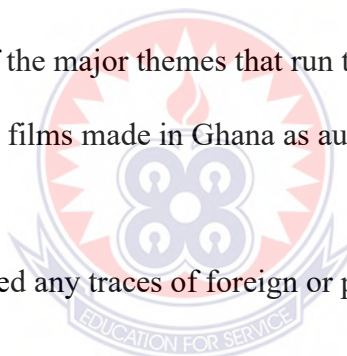
APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form

Project Supervisor: Dr. (Mrs.) Faustina Brew

Topic: Influences of Popular Culture in the Ghanaian Film Industry

Researcher: Jeremy Yao Olympio (8181750006)

M.Phil. Arts and Culture

University of Education, Winneba

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research was intended to critically examine the Ghanaian film industry by exploring the extent to which popular culture influences the production process and outcome of films produced in the industry. In addition, the research is important to the development of arts in Ghana, specifically the film industry as it intends to highlight on some key issues affecting the film industry in the area of influences and possibly suggest ways to solve them.

Respondent Expectations

If your consent is given to contribute in this research, you will be taken through a guided interview with the researcher and the interactions will be recorded n a digital format. It is estimated that the research will take approximately forty-five (45) minutes of your time.

Right to Confidentiality

The data you provide will be treated with all confidentiality. A random letter or number will be assigned to you in the study to conceal your identity, unless you wish to personally disclose your identity for authentication. In that case, you will be required to fill a form stating your assent to disclose your identity.

Right to Withdraw

Accepting to participate in this research is voluntary. You may suspend, withdraw or otherwise. You can also skip questions you prefer not to be asked. You may also request for the data you have given to be destroyed without any consequences. In a situation where you feel intimidated or harassed during the time of interview, you are at liberty to refrain from answering any questions if you wish.

Right to Ask Questions

You have the right to seek further clarification with regard to the research or add on to your data at any time by emailing the researcher at ayamdela@outlook.com or on telephone via the number +**233 542- 107-909 / +233 500-006-672**

Benefits of the Research

The research will be relevant to the film industry in Ghana. The findings of the study will provide credible information for the industry players in the Ghanaian film industry, film and acting students in training, film investors, which will be relevant in skills development and upgrade of personnel in the film industry. The study will help re-establish the needed national and cultural heritage embedded in films by encouraging filmmakers and actors to pay attention to cultural elements in the process of filmmaking and execution of roles.

Dissemination

The results will be published as an M.Phil. Thesis and may be presented at conferences and in journals.

Respondent Consent

- You agree that you have read and understood the above, that you have been given satisfactory answers to questions concerning the research, that you are aware of your freedom to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation in the research at any time.
- In case you have any questions about your right as a respondent in this study or any concerns or complain, please contact the office of the Dean of School of Creative Arts, University of Education, Winneba.

- **Respondent:** I have read and understood the above information and that the interview will be audio-recorded and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

_____

Name

_____

Signature   **Date**

Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.