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THIS EDITION

Our editorial team took over after the 30th anniversary of the Journal. Coming thus far in a turbulent academic publishing environment like Nigeria's – modest as it relatively is by global standards – calls for a celebration. Students of academic journal publishing have the unflattering term, *volume-one-number-one syndrome*, which connotes the tendency for journals here not to survive their very first edition. For being among the exceptional few, the *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*' place in the history of journal publishing in these parts seems secure. Its first number with the name, *The Nigerian Journals of Social Studies*, appeared in December 1984, edited by the anthropologist, Professor Azuka Dike. One account holds that Dike's was actually a rebirth of a precursor named *Journal of Social Sciences* said to have been first published in 1976. We will be grateful if anyone could give us a copy of that, so that we may set the records straight. Although Dike's journal was of a very humble sub-editorial quality, the same cannot be said about its contents. As was the case of most other journals in this University at the time, every article was written with a painstaking attention to accuracy of facts, grammar and style.

We recall this so as to plead with contributors to take the issue of quality seriously when thinking of sending us manuscripts. One of the reasons we brought out this number later than we would prefer is because some of the writers whose articles received reviewers' conditional approval were less than thorough in correcting their works. We still are not satisfied with some of the articles as they stand, not least at the levels of use of language, but we have to move on: Ours is a world of global competition for excellence, and the worse we could do is rest on oars. The strongest proof that the Nigerian intelligentsia can pull their weight in such a struggle is that they have done so in the past. In matters of African study, some journals here used to set the pace for the rest of the world not too long ago. It only takes proper orientation and determination to do so. We see the enabling environment emerging in the efforts of the University's current leadership, starting from the Deanship of our Faculty all the way up to the Vice-Chancery. We feel encouraged and will do our own best.

Although the Faculty of Social Sciences is the publisher of the journal, we are determined that contributions should be as broad as possible, in terms of specialisations, topics, institutional and geographical provenance of articles. As far as logistical constraints did allow, we have already started implementing this wish from the previous number. The present number completes volume 11. We hope that the improvement will continue.

P-J Ezeh, PhD, FRAI
Editor

Reality TV Shows and the Shifting Youth Identity in Nigeria:
Maltina Dance All as a Case

Chinyere Ukpokolo and Mary Okocha

Abstract: This paper examines the shifting identity of youth as reflected in the role they and adults play in *Maltina Dance All*, a Nigerian reality TV programme. Besides the globalisation thesis, the paper pays attention to the roles the young people and their adult relatives play in *Maltina Dance All* reality TV show, bringing out the meanings invoked in parents participation in the programme, and the implications of this on youth identity, and on the Nigeria social space. The study adopts Schechner's performance theory as a framework to interpret the patterned behaviour of youth and adults in the show. Qualitative methods of in-depth interview, focus group discussion and observation were used for data collection. Informants included 45 undergraduate students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria, who are regular viewers of *Maltina Dance All*, and 25 adults who are parents. Older adults were interviewed to discover their perception of adults' participation in the programme, and what it portends for youth identity and the socio-cultural change in Nigeria. Analysis of data involved descriptive and interpretive analyses. Participation in reality TV programmes offers the youth the opportunity to create hegemony of power and presence, establish their autonomy and circumvent the control of the adult. Capitalising on the periphery, through centring the youth culture, young people emerge as leaders while parents learn from their children the dance steps and the expectations of the panel of judges. This cultural reversal demonstrates the shifting identity of youth as occasioned by the influence of media-led globalisation and innovations in information technology on Nigeria's socio-cultural development.

Key Words: Youth marginality, *Maltina Dance All* Reality TV show, youth shifting identity, hegemony of power and presence, Nigeria's socio-cultural development

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Introduction

African youth emerged from the twentieth century into a world beleaguered by helplessness. hopelessness and uncertainty. The struggle for survival in their socio-political and economic milieu requires agency and resilience, and the imagining of alternative space for production to overcome their marginality and in the process redefine the trajectories for their survival. The media, which have come to play strong roles in the globalisation processes, become readily available options for the youth to overcome their marginality. Indeed, African youth have appropriated the media as 'spaces of production' (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005). For these youth, participation in reality TV programmes, for instance, is a viable option to connect to the social world and generate necessary social and economic capitals essential for success in life. Reality TV is, thus, beginning to hold much attraction for many young persons in Africa, creating for them the avenue for developing alternative hegemony of power and presence with implications for the redefinition of their identity. Reality TV programmes project the contestants both locally and internationally, and subsequently enhance their positioning in the social world beyond their local communities, particularly for those who emerged as winners. Winners, for instance, may become brand ambassadors, budding artists, or masters of ceremonies in public functions. Indeed, the media are platforms for self-projection. These media houses are predominantly located at the urban centres in Nigeria.

Majority of the youth who participate in reality TV programmes in Nigeria live in the urban centres, which also are places where most of the higher education institutions in the country are located, institutions populated by young people, many of whom are from poorly paid working class families and those whose parents work in the informal sector of the economy. So, the poverty in the larger society is manifested in the lived life of the youth in the higher education institutions. The young people who participate in reality TV programmes are drawn from these educational institutions. This, thus, suggests that these youth may be imagining the possibilities of transcending their positionality through the instrumentality of the media, with implications on the production of popular culture. Barber et al. (1997) in their widely celebrated text, *West African Popular Theatre*, explore popular travelling theatre, popular music, and concerts in three West African countries - Nigeria, Ghana and Togo respectively. They argue that these three West African popular theatrical performances "simultaneously confront and sell 'modernity', taking up a self-conscious and selective relationship to 'tradition' while operating, in many respects, within the parameters of longstanding indigenous art forms" (p. xii). Selling 'modernity', as the scholars contend, aptly captures the reality in contemporary Africa, where the media, particularly the TV and the cable network, are key platforms for that transaction, and the spaces for cultural production and reproduction for the marginalized African youth, youth who are imagining a new way of being, of recreating their identity.

Earlier anthropological studies on non-Western societies tend to suggest that identity is fixed, immutable and unchanging (see, for instance, Mead, 1928). In such studies, youth have been portrayed, based on their identity in the society, such as their position in the family, their ethnic group, the lineage, age grade, among others. Initiation rites, marking *rites de passage*, also feature, prominently, in some of these works to indicate the transition from one age group to another. The complexities of population movements and inter-group interactions and encounters in contemporary times have also affected certain constructs that define identity in general, and for young people in the society in particular. In the past, as Kellner (1995) rightly argued, if identity was 'mobile' at all, its destination was predetermined and so being a young person automatically circumscribed the individual into certain constraints and way of 'being', with all the rigid social expectations from the world of adults.

Identity takes different forms, comprising career, family, skills, gender, and cultural, social parameters and so on. Human beings do not just possess a single definite identity. In different situations, identity may be altered according to the environment and the people. This could be as a result of the innate desire to belong; sacrificing or amending one's identity in the

process. Belonging suggests a sense of welcome and acceptance to someone or something. As suggested by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a psychological theory centred on humans' innate desire for fulfilment, belonging is a need that we naturally seek in order to feel loved. For the Nigerian youth, the search for belongingness has become a driving force if one must acquire the social and economic capital necessary for meaningful living. And so, citing Castells (1997), Samovar et al. (2009) argue that an important function of identity is that it provides meaning by serving as a source of self-definition. They further contend that identities "provide a foundation for meaning due to their origins, which can stem from a variety of influences, such as geography, history, fantasies, religion", among others. Besides, "identity also takes various time- and scenario-dependent forms, to include nation, region, religion, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic status, profession, and others" (Samovar et al., 2009: 65). Whatever forms identities have taken, the fact is that the boundaries of possible identities, of new identities, are continually and increasingly expanding (Kellner, 1995: 231). For Kellner, modernity ushered in leeway for the individual to continue to re-examine the self for the purpose of redefining one's identity. Postmodernity further opens up the possibilities of seeing things in a new way and, in fact, of accepting difference. In Africa, youth identity is in a state of flux, ever shifting, and popular culture has become an arena of identity formation for the African youth. The media platforms offer the youth the opportunity to redefine their identity not as a collective but as individuals based on the mantra of independence, self-determination, achievement.

Research on 'youth', as a social category is a relatively recent development in the Social Sciences. Prior to this period, youth research has been marginalized, just like other disadvantaged groups such as women and children, where these had appeared as footnotes to 'more serious' research. According to Klouwenberg and Butter (2011), studies on youth in Africa have progressed within diverse trajectories, varying from youth as phenomenon, where the young people are perceived as 'at risk', and 'as risk' itself; youth as 'concept' where attempts are made to situate youth within age and historical scapes; and youth as 'ideology' where an alliance is formed between youthfulness and some form of 'becoming', a process of identity formation (see van Dijk et al., 2011: 2). In line with Klouwenberg and Butter's position, it is argued in this paper that youth in Nigeria are changing the way they were traditionally perceived, by repositioning themselves as a 'force', a 'hegemony of power', and in so doing, they reconstruct their identity by capitalising on the periphery. Put differently, conscious of their marginality, the youth reposition their youthfulness and agency in cultural production and reproduction. They achieve this through the instrumentality of media globalisation (Barnett, 2002), hip hop music genre (Siziba, 2009), and reality TV programmes, among others. Young people in Africa capitalise on the social transformation evolving across the globe to reposition the self within socio-political and economic contexts. Comaroff and Comaroff (2005: 19) have rightly argued that, "the way in which young people are perceived, named, and represented betray a lot about the social and political constitution of a society". They contend that youth in Africa operate in 'interstitial space', and within this constricted space they must negotiate the trajectories of their existence. For Abbink (2005: 7), "[t]o be young in Africa came to mean being disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginal in the political and economic sense".

Marginalization of the youth in the developing world like Africa has become a major issue in the discourse on social exclusion, a complex concept encompassing "the marginalization of individuals from society through economic and social deprivation, the emergence of new dualism, and the breakdown of social cohesion" (Gopinath, 1998: vii). Social exclusion of the youth can arise as a result of unemployment over a long period of time, which re-enforces economic deprivation and social isolation. Subsequent upon these are disparities in economic and socio-political spaces, manifesting in the constrictive structures represented in vertical and horizontal restrictions that limit youth participation. Participation in reality TV programmes, therefore, offers the young people in Nigeria the opportunity of re-positioning youthfulness, defining it as privilege through the youth culture repositioned in the mainstream cultural processes. This repositioning of the periphery is occasioned by technological development and,

principally, media globalization. Nigerian youth who buy into the new media forms engage in contestations for space to overcome their marginality in the mainstream economic, social and political spaces by engaging in cultural production and reproduction that reshape their identity in the social world as the programmes create opportunities and possibilities for young people.

By definition, 'reality TV' indicates a live television programming aimed at capturing and relating the lived-life of participants as they occur. Participants are expected to be real by creating a sense of actuality. On the part of the viewers, as a result of the participatory nature of the programmes, viewers can be directly involved in TV programming. This, McLuhan (1994:349) acknowledges as "mass media" stating that "they are an indication, not of the size of their audiences, but of the fact that everybody becomes involved in them at the same time." Furthermore, Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007: 356) argue that reality TV programmes "place the audience on the opposite side of the entertainment; providing viewers with the possibility of becoming potential entertainers themselves". Although reality TV shows enjoy vast spectatorship, cutting across viewers of different ages and statuses, the most prominent group of viewers who relate more easily with the content of such programmes are young people (Hill, 2005: 4). Participants in reality TV programmes place themselves in the public space, sacrificing their rights of privacy for the sake of fame and the possibility of financial rewards. Reiss and Wiltz (2004: 373) conclude that status-oriented people are more likely to watch reality TV shows where contents border around hyped experiences of participants. Viewers who are persuaded by motives of status imagine gaining similar celebrity status, which the participants on reality TV shows are supposed to have attained. Thus, adverts calling on prospective participants to send in their entries never fail to attract the sentiments and expectations of intended aspirants with catch words like 'Make your voice to be heard' (Etisalat, Nigeria), and so on (see also MTN advert in Fig. 1 below).

Often, for participants in reality TV programmes, preparations for eventual appearance starts long before the opportunity to participate turns up. Within this period, aspirants engage in the presentation of their talents at local engagements, availing themselves of opportunities offered by church programmes, children's birthday and students' social events, to showcase their talents. Such occasions are most desirable and believed to signal one's acceptability in the local community, and that self-inscription is being achieved by the aspirants. Thus, places of rehearsal, which could be family compounds, and at times isolated public spaces are utilized for preparations. Aspirants could likely be seen performing to an imaginary audience, in anticipation of performing to 'real' audience in the nearest future. In recent times, national/multinational conglomerates in Nigeria have initiated and/or sponsored reality TV programmes that focus on the youth, most of whom are undergraduates in higher education institutions. For these young people, participation in these TV programmes represents viable options to connect to the social worlds and generate social and economic capitals necessary for success with greater implications on popular culture production. Whether as contestants and/or consumers, the TV medium has become alternative space for production. As key players in shaping the urban popular culture, Nigerian youth, through the media platforms, are both consumers and conduits of modernity and the emerging media culture, and increasingly shaping values and are being shaped by the ever-shifting popular culture propagated through the media. Taking a look at the emerging scenario, our focus in this paper is on the shifting identity of the youth, as reflected in the role they and adults play in Maltina Dance All, a reality TV programme in Nigeria. The paper therefore examines Maltina Dance All Reality TV programme by ascertaining the role young people and their adults play in Maltina Dance All reality TV show, and the meanings invoked in parents' participation in the programme. Finally we intend to establish the implications of these on youth identity and the Nigerian socio-cultural space. This article is in five sections. The first section, the Introduction, which includes literature review and theoretical framework, presents the thrust of our argument and problematizes the research subject matter. The second section is the Methods of data generation, while the third is Results. The last two sections are Discussion, and Conclusion.

Methods
Qualitative approach was adopted for this study, employing such data collection techniques as in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and observation. Informants included 45 undergraduate students of the University of Ibadan who are regular viewers of Maltina Dance All, and 25 adults who are parents. Older adults were interviewed to discover their perception of adults ('parents') participation in Maltina Dance All reality TV show, and what it portends to youth identity and socio-cultural development in Nigeria. Schechner's performance theory was adopted as a theoretical framework. Analysis of data involved descriptive and interpretive analyses, which entails capturing and describing observable phenomena, and interpreting actions and oral texts in order to generate cultural meanings and their implications on youth identity. The authors acknowledge that youth is not a homogeneous group, and have, therefore, delineated the category to focus on youth in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria as they constitute the predominant category that participates in reality TV programmes in Nigeria. The fieldwork for this paper was carried out between September 2013 and July, 2014.

Results
Maltina Dance All Reality TV Show and Performativity
In Nigeria, reality TV has contributed to the production of popular culture in unprecedented proportion. As significant key players in shaping the urban culture, and social world in Nigeria, Nigerian youth have also, through their participation and consumption of reality TV shows, shaped and are being shaped by the ever-shifting popular culture propagated through the media. Among the indigenous reality TV shows in Nigeria are Street Dance Africa, Maltina Dance All, MTN Project Fame, Nigerian Idol, Nigeria's got Talent, and Gulder Ultimate Search (see Appendix for more). These have become annual features on the free-to-air TV and DSTV in Nigeria, with ripple effects on the identity and social worlds of youth in urban Nigeria. Maltina Dance All reality TV show is anchored on dance performance that focuses on youth culture and values – transient, changing and temporal -- in contrast to the adult dance mode that is traditional and more static. The two cultural paradigms represented in the traditional conception of youth culture as the 'Other', and the adult culture as the mainstream and more stable, find expression in Maltina Dance All reality TV show, with youth culture drawing attention to the evolving cultural shifts in the society. Although the show tends to suggest that it is a mere play, it however points to something much deeper. As Schechner (1988:11) rightly notes, the separation of performance activities from productive work is a most interesting, and unifying factor of play, games, sports, theatre, and ritual. Summing up the formal characteristics of play (including all performative genres), he defines them as a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time deeply absorbing the player. Although Maltina Dance All may be considered outside 'the defined goals of life', there is no doubt that it is also a serious activity and total commitment is accorded to all rehearsals and performances on stage. Parent-participants are likewise absorbed in it and as they learn the dance steps and routines. Most of these dance routines are 'modern' and outside the 'traditional' dances which most parents are accustomed to. Yet, they are totally absorbed in it achieving what Schechner calls 'performance magnitude'. The basic paradox of performance magnitude, according to Schechner (1988: 348), is that:

> Humans are able to absorb and learn behaviour so thoroughly that the new 'performed' behaviour knits seamlessly into on-going 'spontaneous' action. Performance magnitude means not only size and duration but also extension across cultural boundaries and penetration to the deepest strata of historical, personal, and neurological experience. (p. 348)

Whether within the period of the rehearsals, dance performance, or lived life experiences, both youth and adults are engaged in some form of performativity, for life itself is a performance. As Carlson (2007: 70) rightly notes:

> The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as 'performance', or at least all activity carried out with a consciousness of itself. (p. 70)

What attracts attention here is the cultural shifts and meanings that this performance seems to point to. This, indeed, shapes and re-defines youth identity; the role parents and the young people play in the dance performance.

A regular and keen viewer of *Maltina Dance All* programme instantly observes the presence of adult in what ordinarily ought to be solely a youth affair. Children in the 'family' take up leadership role, employing their energy and knowledge of the expectations of the panel of judges to instruct their parents on what is expected of the team/'family'. According to an informant:

> The children are the ones to lead and push the moves so that the parents can follow. So, if the child in the family does not do it well the whole family would not do it well. So, the child is more like the engine in that show. (Abiola, Personal Interview May, 2014)

The informant acknowledges that the dance is "more of youth thing". The programme, thus, thrusts up power dynamics, which to another informant, "demystifies" the power parents have over their children, as power shifts from the parents to the children, suggesting some form of change in the dynamics of power and the level of participation in decision making at the home front. Another informant, Adebusayo, expatiates on the idea of 'demystification'. According to him:

> A typical Nigerian child is expected to be self-effacing in the presence of adults. In the case of *Maltina Dance All*, I believe that the family structure is getting better. From the traditional belief, the father is first, his wife or wives and then the children are just there. But this kind of programme is bringing everybody on the same platform - they see eye to eye and nobody is scared of evaluation or being checked. With this, the children are brought up to have good self-identity. They can stand up for themselves, speak out and be heard. And, at the same time, not necessarily becoming rude. (Adebusayo, Personal Interview May 2014)
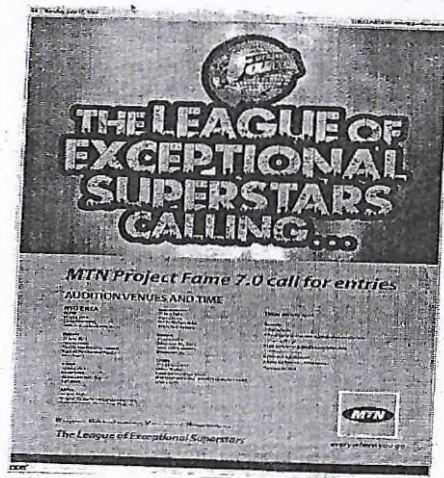

Fig.1: An *MTN Project Fame* advert calling on prospective participants in a reality TV show to apply (*Guardian* Newspaper, 17 June, 2014: 44)

Maltina Dance All is a reality TV programme initiated and sponsored by Nigerian Breweries Plc, the owners and producers of Maltina, a non-alcoholic malt drink in Nigeria. According to Mr. Kufre Ekanem, the Corporate Affairs Adviser of the company, "Maltina is about sharing happiness. If you impact the family positively, which Maltina is doing, you touch the whole of Nigerian society"[1]. For the Marketing Manager of Non-alcoholic Nigeria Breweries Plc, Mr. Samson Oloche, "Maltina is about the family, which Nigeria holds dear. Maltina, right from when it was introduced in 1976 till date, has always been about the family. ...*The Maltina Dance All* is a platform to show what the brand stands for".[2] Janell Bugess, a professional dancer from the USA and one of the judges, notes that the essence of the programme is "to promote family values, bringing families together through dance".[3] While the producers of the show focus on the promotion of family unity, the employment of youth culture to achieve this purpose provides for culture studies scholars like anthropologists the opportunity to critically interpret the embedded meanings and values inherent in such performances. Besides, 'promote family values' as indicated in the above statement points to emerging cultural shift that give voice to the children more than ever before. Indeed, adults' inclusion in the programme represents a transgression of cultural boundaries. For the young people, the programme provides for them the opportunity to capitalise on their peripheral positioning and redefine their identity. This dimension shall be revisited later in this paper.

Matina Dance All reality TV programme is characterized by series of rehearsals and dance performances that situate the show within the orbit of performance. Schechner in his performance theory states that "for performers to effect transformations of self, they go through the process of deconstruction/reconstruction" (Schechner, 1985 as cited in Schechner, 2004: 321), a form of "ritual process". He explains that from a theatrical perspective what happens is that a person enters training or workshop as a "fixed" or "finished" or "already-made" being (Schechner, 2004: 321). The training of the individual consists of specific methods of "breaking down" the neophyte, of rendering her/him psychophysically malleable. What then follows is that the performer-in-training is deconstructed into 'bits', which is a 'venerable theatre term meaning the smallest repeatable strip of action'. Bits are important to performance because it is at the 'bit' level that acting can be "worked on" from the outside and this is the reason directors are always telling actors to repeat a particular bit. Once bits are freed from their attachment to larger schemes of action, they can be rearranged to make new actions, in a self-conscious, reflexive process (Schechner, 1988: 321-322).

In *Maltina dance All*, the competition starts with auditioning at the regional level where intending youth participants compete for a place in the Academy, from where they can participate in the *grand finale*, depending on their successes. At the regional auditioning, only young people between the ages of 20 and 29 who performed creditably are selected. Those selected at this stage are to be supported by their family members, including their parents for contests at the national level. At times, those that function as 'parents' may not actually be the biological parents of the young people but they are nevertheless adults and old enough to be parents to some of the family members. Usually, the total number of selected contestants at the regional level is about fifteen, making up fifteen families. The selected families are subsequently subjected to another round of screening at the national level where the number is reduced to ten and these will be admitted to a music Academy, similar to Schechner's workshop. The selection involves scrutinizing the credentials of the applicants and the confirmation of their dancing abilities through dance performances. The training sessions at the Academy are handled by professional dance instructors who teach the families several dancing techniques, which they rehearse as often as they can. Such rehearsals were intended to 'deconstruct' the participants as they learn the dance steps in what may be referred to as Schechner's 'bits' and 'strips' where certain steps may be repeated until the learner gets it right. With the mastery of specific dance steps, the next stage, the process of 'reconstruction,' begins, having gained capacity through dancing skills. From deconstruction to reconstruction the adult participants unlearn culture, until they are able to dance like the young

family members who are both models and co-instructors on the 'new culture'. The nature of the relationship between parents and their children change at this point as role swap becomes obvious.

In some cases, the dance styles originate from the contestants and are modified or enhanced by the instructors or *vice versa* to achieve the level of professionalism that the panel of judges expect, and at the same time offer the audience a thrilling experience and maximum satisfaction. Audience participation begins from this point as they cheer the dancers, and the magnitude of such cheering indicates the acceptability of a particular set of performers and the extent to which they are satisfied with their performance. The dancers are expected to learn the dance styles, and it is based on this they are graded. The grading leads to the eviction of families, one after another, until they are reduced to three for the *grand finale*. At the initial stage, the eviction is based on the performances of the families before the judges whose prerogative it is to decide on the family to be evicted. Later, the audiences (stage and off-stage) participate in the decision making.

The categories of dance performances in *Maltina Dance all* include pantomime, hip-hop, gumboot, contemporary dance, *salsa*, and *wazobia*. *Wazobia* is a coinage that represents Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo musical genres from which the participants can select. At the Academy, the participants learn about the art of dancing; twists and thrills, movement of their bodies to different types of music, dance styles and patterns, etc. The family representative, a young person, plays a key role, leading the dance and guiding the family members, including their parents, during the rehearsals and the show. An informant who is a regular viewer of *Maltina Dance All* noted:

> *Maltina Dance All* is a fantastic programme. It actually brings out the talents we have in society; people who are talented and gifted. So, it gives people the opportunity to showcase their dance skills. But the most important thing from it is the family aspect. It brings together the family under one roof to dance, and the unity. One sees parents doing things they have never done in their lives just because there is unity and in a bit to do something for entertainment sake or for family prestige (Adaku, Personal Interview, May 2014).

For this informant, *Maltina Dance All* addresses certain critical social needs, such as offering people the opportunity to showcase their talents, and enhancing bonding among family members as they share quality time together. In the contemporary society characterized by 'absentee parents' in most homes, where parents are engaged in economic activities that keep them away from home for the greater part of the day, the opportunity provided by *Maltina Dance All* for families to share quality time becomes remarkable.

Presently, the programme, which started in 2007, is in the eighth season. In the premier edition in 2010, five million Naira and a brand new family SUV were given to the winning family. The cash prize has increased in subsequent years (see Table 1). The first and second runners up got one million and five hundred thousand Naira respectively. According to the 2011 winner of the show:

> We came here to win the five million Naira and the SUV and I am very happy that today my family is crowned the number one dance family in Nigeria. It is a thing of joy and we only have Maltina to thank for this. They have given a very humble family like ours *the platform to shoot ourselves to stardom* (emphasis mine) and we will ensure we are everything ambassadors of the brand (Glory Ekudo, Internet Source, May 2014).

Audience participation as observers and commentators in the programme goes beyond the physical presence at the auditorium to interactions within the cyberspace. Indeed, the audience participation can affect the fortunes of a family in the competition. For instance, the cheering, clapping and hailing of a set of performers in addition to the number of text messages received from audience both at the auditorium and elsewhere determine the level of acceptance and evaluation of a set of performers. Scholars like Atkinson et al. (2007) have noted that ethnographers in the contemporary society must take cognisance of the impact of technological development on the concept of 'space' or 'field' in anthropology, as a result of how technological evolution has affected our everyday life. Such media as email, facebook, twitter, and so on can

bring both the researchers and research participants together and thus become sources of ethnographic data, they note. On the Facebook, *Maltina Dance All* programme also enjoys large followership, as viewers comment on the performances of the participants, and their desire to be part of the show. Some of the comments go this way:

> So happy seeing guys like me dancing here. It's a sure say from me that I am going to be in the next season....so help me God (Madu Patrick, Facebook comment: accessed, June 2014).

'This show is a must watch for families who want to stick together' (Christy Walter, Facebook comment, accessed June 2014).

Text messages from the audience play a key role in determining the family that finally emerges as the overall winner. These text messages are sent to the numbers shown on their television screen, indicating the participants they believe have been outstanding.

Table 1: Previous winning families, prizes and family representatives in the MDA Reality Show

S/N	Year	Winning family	Prize	Family Representative
1	2007	Onye	N2M and a family car	Chukwuma Onye
2	2008	Opuwari	N2.5M and a family car	Ukalina Celine Opuwari
3	2009	Ibiam	N2.5M and a family car	Queen Ibiam
4	2010	Adejo	N2.5M and a family car	Mariam Adejo
5	2011	Ekubo	N5M and a family car	Ebimele Ekubo
6	2012	Green	N6M and a family car	Ibiba Green
7	2013	Briggs	N6M and a family car	Sotom Briggs
8	2014	Utere	N10 and a family car	Wilfred Utere

Table 1 above indicates the previous winners in the *Matina Dance All* reality TV shows. Evidence from the table is the progressive appreciation in the amount of money allocated as prizes for the winners, which contribute to the appeal the programme continues to draw on young people as it provides the youth some reasonable amount of money and visibility that turn out to be the needed social and economic capital with which to navigate their marginality.

Discussion
Maltina Dance All, Youth Agency and Shifting Identity

Anthropological engagement with theatrical paradigm as a tool for the interpretation of human behaviour is not new. Scholars like Erving Goffman as far back as 1959 in the work *The presentation of Self in Everyday Life* was one of those who pioneered this disciplinary 'transgression'. For Goffman, it was to establish the extent to which our everyday life follows an established pattern, paying attention to the use of theatrical language to describe "the various expressive tools which individuals employ to indicate social status, noting that these everyday life performances" were intended to achieve various purposes such as to deceive or to reflect reality (Bial, 2007: 59). Such works reflecting cross disciplinary borrowings threw up discourses that focused on what Clifford Geertz later referred to as 'blurred genre' (1983), where he demonstrated the implications of interdisciplinary borrowing on performance. Scholars of performance studies, though, have many explanations for the meaning of performance, and agree that a performance is never a static or finished product. Rather, performances are "always in-process, changing, growing, and moving through time" (Bial, 2007: 263), from rehearsal, to presentation on stage, to packaging and so on. The bottom-line is that life itself as a patterned and routinely acted behaviour is also a performance, and when this is taken to stage it demonstrates and suggests something deeper, reflecting roles, values, in other words, the realities which we cherished or those which are, in fact, evolving. Turner and Turner (2007) report how they had taught students of anthropology with performance of ethnography. In such cases 'strips' or 'bits' of behaviours from other cultures are taken out and acted. Hence Turner was popular for his postulations on social dramas.

Maltina Dance All is a programme that reflects the arts of postmodernity in the ways postmodernism represents people's beliefs, values and lifestyles. The postmodern world is in an incredible change and transition. The flux that characterizes the era has turned the world into a place of 'all things are possible' in the globalised world. African youth demonstrate their agency by transforming their experiences of globalisation into multiple identities in their local community, determining inclusion and defining exclusion in the process. Siziba (2009: 19) contends that "until recently, the production and reproduction of culture has been a gerontocratic enterprise firmly in the hands of the adult. This, of course, is changing, as the author subsequently states that:

> Young people due to their experiences ......as well as exposure to globalization and technology have engaged in struggle for visibility and simultaneously contested for participation in the production and reproduction of culture. The end result is that young people have generated new identities as well as successfully penetrated the domain of the production and reproduction of culture. (p. 19)

From their privileged positioning n terms of a better mastery of the new technologies, and their youthfulness, the youth appropriate the media space to inscribe and reconstruct their identity, expressing themselves in lifestyles, dance steps, verbal and non-verbal languages, dressing, tastes of all forms. Identity in the post-modern era is very mobile indeed, and various media serve as the platforms. Not only are the youth stamping authority on their culture, but they are bringing the adult generation to the point of ascribing values that signify acceptability of that culture through participation in the making of the culture as demonstrated in adult participation in *Matina Dance All*. Technological innovations and development in information technologies have brought about cultural transformation, and the youth are conduit pipes of both the transformation and transmission. 'Traditional' meanings associated with youth culture, characterized by devaluation and dependence, have shifted, creating space for acceptability and autonomy. Increasing participation of the youth in reality TV shows and other manifestations of media globalisation contribute in shaping culture and indeed raise critical questions on the place of the adult in cultural transmission, and in the moulding of the young people in the norms and values of the society. Paradoxically, many adults are seen adopting the dance styles characteristic of youth culture and publicly displaying these styles at social events. For the Tanzania youth for instance, Suriano (2011) maintains that the new generation of Tanzanian artists employ Bongo Flavour and hip hop to "affirm their autonomy, articulate their agency, and express a plurality of meanings" (Suriano (2011: 123). What then are the meanings expressed in the *Maltina Dance All* that have implications on youth identity?

Findings from this study indicate that the informant acknowledges the power of media programmes in general, and in this case, reality TV programmes, in identity transformation. It further suggests that in the contemporary reality, self-determination, assertiveness and individual achievement may be more paramount for social mobility than ascription. Importantly also, societal values and norms must accommodate the new reality. Research participants agree that in Nigeria, parents are becoming more flexible and tend to respect the opinions of young people in the family more than before. Could such flexibility be informed by the technological development where young people tend to have more knowledge of its applications? There is no doubt that there is an increasing cultural shift generally, where parents look up to their children for instructions and directions, particularly on issues relating to the application of communication technologies such as computers, all forms of Internet technologies, phones and so on. Parents and children participating in such programmes as *Maltina Dance All*, similarly represents a new development in the socio-cultural reality of the contemporary Nigerian society. Nigerian youth are active participants in the cultural flows that have come to characterise our world, irrespective of how distant one's society is from the Centre. Media globalisation and its cultural hybridity negotiate the identity formation for modern youth both in Africa and elsewhere. Little wonder that Barnett (2002: 97) states succinctly that:

> The globalization of media can be understood as a process that re-articulates the domestic space of the home with a variety of cultural flows operating at various spatial scales, from local, regional, national, to the global. Satellite, video, and Internet technologies have emerged as cultural mediums that transgress the stable national regimes of policy and regulation that have historically characterized broadcast radio and television. (p. 97)

Increasingly, the possibility of any country controlling or curtailing cultural flows negotiated through technology across national boundaries has become dimmer. Countries particularly in the developing world must be prepared for cultural shifts marked by fluidity and indeterminacies. As Samovar et al. (2009: 65) rightly state:

> Today, all of us are living in an especially dynamic era of social transformation – the old is being transformed by the new more rapidly than ever before. Globalization is exerting enormous social, political, and economic pressures on the existing nation-state geopolitical order. Institutions have fostered an environment where electronic labor, capital, and media content flow nearly seamlessly across national borders. (p. 65).

Torn apart by globalisation and localisation, Nigerian youth are increasingly exploring the platforms provided by the media for self-affirmation, individual achievement and redefinition of their identity through cultural production, reproduction and transformation. Adults' participation in the programme, which ordinarily ought to be a youth culture, represents a collapse of boundaries, a shift from the norm, and points to social transformation, and the adult's salient acknowledgement of the repositioning of the youth as an ideology of 'being' and 'becoming'; inclusion, and, at times, exclusion for those that fail to 'belong'. In so doing, the youth have created their form of autonomy, of hegemony and power. For Dauncey (1986: 84), reality TV "modernizes the notion of culture while challenging traditional values". What one sees are the contradictions that have come to characterize the contemporary African society. As the images of foreign culture floods the Nigerian air waves and social life, mingled with local culture, reality TV programmes open up a new space for the Nigerian youth to express themselves. As an embodiment of ambiguities and contradictions, the youth find in the reality TV programmes the platform to express multiplicities of identity. The criss-crossing of frontiers and collapse of boundaries between the values of the older and younger generations, symbolise a silent protest against gerontocratic rule, marginalization and other forms of exclusion. The new reality consequently foregrounds the new ideology, which privileges youthfulness, an ideology which depends "more on intellectual and social capital than it builds on 'real' capital; that it constructs networks instead of ties; and that, finally, because of its fluidity, escapes much of the control of an elderly generation" (van Dijk et al., 2011).

The new ideology created by the youth, according to van Dijk et al., represents a form of counter culture, counter movements and ideas, "attempting to disqualify the structures that were once dominant in their lives by bringing them under new checks and balances" (p. 11). What these thrust up are youth agency and resilience, which turn this agency into a counter hegemonic force that operates on youth-scapes, created through media scapes, to signal a detachment from the entanglement of the agents of their marginalization, or even gerontocratic rule, while creating its own hegemony and a shift in their identity.

Conclusion

This paper examined youth shifting identity using *Maltina Dance All* reality TV programme as a case. The paper argued that the marginalization of the youth in the mainstream economic space in Africa generally, and in Nigeria in this case, have engendered in the youth the need to search for alternative space for production, and new trajectories for their survival. With media globalisation the young people exploit the opportunity provided by the media platforms to redefine their identity through cultural production and reproduction. Youth agency and resilience coupled with the new ideologies of 'being' and 'becoming' challenges the conventional models and traditional values that deny them autonomy through gerontocracy. By their action, they question traditions and its

embeddedness, suggesting new possible ways of viewing reality. Through the performances of both parents and youth, the role swap in *Maltina Dance All* indicates cultural reversal, and points to the shifting identity of youth, informed by an ideology which capitalises on youthfulness in the reconstruction of identity. Parents' participation in a 'youth affair' has created a paradigm shift. For the young people, being young is privileging and can be 'centred' to achieve autonomy, power, and establish one's presence through the accumulation of social and economic capitals, which the media spaces offer. Reality TV programmes, therefore, provide the platform for collapse of boundaries, cultural reversals and identity shift.

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Notes

1. Internet source http://www.maltinadanceall.tv/contestants_season1.html
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

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Appendix

Some Reality Shows in Nigeria

i. Nigerian Idol
ii. West African Idol
iii. Gulder Ultimate Search
iv. Star Quest
v. Next Movie star
vi. Peak Talent Show
vii. MTN Project Fame
Viii Koko Mansion
ix. Big Brother Nigeria
x. The Debaters
xi. House 4
xii. Maltina Dance Hall
Viii Malta Guinness dance all stars
xix MTN Soccer show
xx. Street Dance Africas