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Towards a Conceptual Framework for Studying Hausa Film Series in Kannywood

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Abstract

This study develops a conceptual framework, Domestication, Seriality and Cultural Continuity, for analysing the recent serial turn in Kannywood. Guided by Domestication Theory, the article asks how technological adoption, institutional commissioning and household practices have jointly produced Hausa film serials. A mixed-methods design combines a proportionately stratified survey of 400 undergraduatestudents in Kano with 16 semi-structured interviews with Kannywood producers, directors, scriptwriters and actors. Findings indicate that serialisation consolidated between 2012 and 2016, driven by broadcaster commissioning, sponsorship logics and digital distribution, and that serial formats have been appropriated into domestic viewing routines while remaining coded by Hausa cultural signifiers (proverbs, ritual scenes and costume). The study shows how domestication stages: appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion, explain both continuity (moral pedagogy and cultural fidelity) and change (professionalised writers' rooms, technical upgrading). Theoretically, the study advances domestication literature by linking media-industry institutional change to household mediation in a regional African screen ecology.

Keywords: Domestication, Seriality, Institutionalisation, Affordances, Cultural-continuity, Piracy

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Introduction

Over the last decade Kannywood, the Hausa-language film cluster centred on Kano and adjacent Nigerian cities, has undergone a marked shift from short, self-contained video dramas to returning, season-based serial productions. Flagship programmes such as *Kwana Casa'in* and *Dadin Kowa* exemplify this serial turn, now institutionalised through dedicated Hausa channels and online distribution windows (Arewa24, 2024). The shift raises theoretically and policy-relevant questions: how have new production infrastructures, funding arrangements and viewing practices combined to produce durable seriality? And why do serials, even as they professionalise, continue to foreground explicitly Hausa cultural forms and moral pedagogies? Existing literature documents Kannywood's history and the pressures of piracy, censorship and market change (Ibrahim, 2019; Premium Times, 2021), but it lacks an integrated conceptual account that links technology adoption, industry restructuring and domestic reception. This thesis addresses that gap.

To explain Kannywood's serialisation, the study adopted Domestication Theory as the organising lens. Domestication research foregrounds the staged processes through which technologies and media forms are acquired, reconfigured, normalised and given social meaning within households (Haddon, 2018; Haddon, 2023). Recent advances, including multi-site and multi-actor treatments, emphasise that domestication is not confined to the private sphere but is shaped by institutional actors and transnational flows that mediate what is adoptable and meaningful locally (Johannessen, Nordtug & Haldar, 2023). Applied to Kannywood, this approach facilitates an account in which broadcasters and sponsors supply artefacts and schedules (objectification), producers adapt narrative grammars (appropriation/objectification), households incorporate serial viewing into routines (incorporation) and communities mobilise serial content as social capital in moral debates (conversion).

The objective of the study is to theorise the co-production of seriality in Kannywood by tracing how technologies, institutions and domestic practices have interacted to generate contemporary Hausa film series. Aligned with this aim, Research Question asks: How do undergraduate audiences in Kano remember and interpret the formal features of early Hausa films, and in what ways do those memories inform their reception of contemporary serial formats? This objective locates audiences as active mediators in domestication, testing whether historical memory structures contemporary incorporation and conversion of serial narratives.

Empirically, the study provides novel mixed-method evidence from both demand (400 university undergraduates) and supply (16 practitioner interviews) sides of Kannywood's ecology. Conceptually, it extends domestication literature by explicitly linking industry-level commissioning and sponsor practices to household mediation in a way that demonstrates domestication as an inter-institutional process rather than purely a homebound negotiation (Haddon, 2018; Johannessen et al., 2023). Practically, the framework has policy relevance: broadcasters and regulators seeking to promote culturally resonant yet commercially viable content must recognise that seriality's sustainability depends on interventions across the production-distribution-consumption chain (e.g., anti-piracy measures, training, consultative censorship procedures) rather than on platform investment alone.

Methodologically, the thesis uses a proportionately stratified survey to capture patterns of recollection and preference among young audiences, while semi-structured interviews with directors, producers, scriptwriters and actors reveal the institutional logics underpinning serial production. In combining these data with a domestication perspective, the study shows how Kannywood's serials have been domesticated, materially and symbolically, within northern

Nigerian households, producing an explanatory account of continuity in cultural messaging amid substantive industry transformation (Ibrahim, 2019; Arewa24, 2024; Premium Times, 2021). The following sections outline the theoretical framework, methods and empirical findings that substantiate this argument.

The article is organised to lead the reader from context and evidence to conceptual innovation and analytical application. Following this introduction, Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on Kannywood, regional seriality and theoretical approaches to media change, and identifies the empirical and conceptual gaps the paper addresses. Section 3 develops the core conceptual framework, Domestication and Seriality, translating domestication's phases (appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion) into the specific processes that produce Hausa film series.Section 4 describes the methodological alignment used to operationalise the framework, explains the rationale for a mixed-methods design and shows how theoretical constructs were translated into survey items and interview prompts. Section 5 applies the framework to the empirical dataset: it presents the quantitative anchor (survey patterns), the qualitative anchor (practitioner testimony) and a cross-method synthesis that tests the framework's explanatory leverage. Section 6 offers an analytical discussion that advances theoretical claims about multi-scalar domestication, the dual nature of seriality (technological adaptation and cultural negotiation) and the intermediary role of broadcasters and sponsors, policy implications for broadcasters and regulators, and proposes avenues for future research. The article concludes with Section 7, which summarises key findings.

2. Review of Relevant Literature and Positioning

2.1 Scholarship on Kannywood and Hausa film history

Foundational studies of the Hausa film cluster have emphasised Kannywood's emergence from oral, radio and televised drama traditions, the home-video boom of the 1990s, and the divergent institutional pressures that have shaped production practices (Ibrahim, 2019). Recent empirical work extends those accounts by documenting an observable "serial turn" since the 2010s, driven by the entry of dedicated Hausa broadcasters, increased commissioning of long-form drama and new digital distribution windows that allow episodes to circulate beyond local markets (Arewa24, 2024; Ibrahim, 2019). Industry reporting and practitioner studies highlight frequently interacting constraints, such as piracy, precarious finance and state or religious censorship, which have conditioned both form and content in Kannywood (Broadcast Media Africa, 2024; BusinessDay Nigeria, 2024; Premium Times, 2021; PwC, 2024). Scholars have traced how piracy and the collapse of the cassette retail model accelerated producers' orientation toward broadcaster and sponsor revenue, thereby encouraging formats that can sustain repeat audiences and advertising (Ibrahim, 2019; Muhsin, 2019; Iwuh, Patrick, Fayenuwo, Anaemene, Uwadinma-Idemudia & Robbin, 2023).

Concurrently, analyses of content show continuity in didactic aims and explicit cultural marking: proverbs, ritual scenes, sartorial signifiers and moral resolutions persist even asserials professionalise their cinematography and narrative complexity (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021). The literature therefore frames Kannywood as a hybrid formation, i.e., industry innovation operating within tight moral economies, rather than as a simple imitation of Nollywood or Bollywood. Where earlier studies concentrated on production histories and controversies, the most recent scholarship (2018–2024) maps institutional change (broadcasters, commissioning practices), technological enablers (HD cameras, online platforms), and shifting audience practices that together explain the rise and consolidation of serial production in northern Nigeria (Arewa24, 2024; BusinessDay Nigeria, 2024).

2.2 Theoretical Approaches to Media Change in Regional Film Industries

The study of regional film industries has drawn on several complementary theoretical traditions. Cultural political economy shows how capital flows, regulatory regimes and market structures shape production decisions, distribution reach and labour regimes (Christian, 2019; Lobato, 2019). Production studies focus on the micro-practices of creative labour, namely writers' rooms, continuity editing and contract regimes, and highlight how organisational cultures and technological affordances produce textual form (Christian, 2019; McCain, 2013). Reception studies, in contrast, centre audience meaning-making, emphasising how viewers interpret and re-use media content in everyday life (Nwafor & Odoemelam, 2019). Each approach contributes critically: political economy explains incentives, production studies explain craftsmanship and organisational change, and reception studies explain audience interpretation and social circulation.

Yet used in isolation these approaches are limited for explaining Kannywood's serialisation. Cultural political economy can show why broadcasters commission serials (advertising, sponsorship logic) but tends to underplay how households and local cultural repertoires shape narrative uptake. Production studies richly describe on-set changes but may not explain how episodes are re-anchored in domestic routines and moral frameworks. Reception studies foreground viewers but risk under-specifying the institutional structures that supply particular formal affordances (writers' rooms and scheduling). Recent literature therefore advocates integrative perspectives that link institutional incentives, production labour and household practices to produce a fuller causal account of media change (Adamu, 2024; Christian, 2019). This multi-level requirement motivates the present study's choice of a domestication lens, because domestication explicitly theorises interactions between artefacts, institutional forms and everyday practice.

2.3 Domestication Theory

Domestication Theory originated in media and science & technology studies as a way to explain how technologies and media forms are not simply adopted but actively "tamed" and given social meaning within everyday life (Silverstone & Haddon, 1996; Silverstone, Hirsch & Morley, 1992). The core model traditionally articulates four interrelated phases: appropriation (acquisition and access), objectification (placing and material negotiation), incorporation (routine use and scheduling) and conversion (the outward signalling and identity work that technologies enable) (Silverstone et al., 1992; Haddon, 2023). Domestication emphasises user agency, symbolic meanings, and the mutual shaping of artefact and social context, features that render it particularly suitable for analysing media forms that travel from institutional production into household life.

Contemporary scholarship has refined and extended the framework in several respects relevant to Kannywood. First, the "multi-site" turn recognises that domestication often occurs across multiple institutional settings (e.g., producers, broadcasters and households), not solely within private homes; technologies and media are "tamed" collaboratively across these sites, producing co-domestication dynamics (Johannessen et al., 2023). Second, scholars emphasise the iterative nature of domestication in platformised and data-rich environments: incorporation and conversion can feed back rapidly into production and platform algorithms, altering objectification strategies and appropriation incentives (Haddon, 2023). Third, empirical work on digital media shows that domestication must account for affordances of sharing platforms (WhatsApp, YouTube, broadcast and VOD windows) and the social practices they enable, especially circulation practices that support appointment viewing, social discussion and re-use (Boczek & Koppers, 2019; Christian, 2019).

Applied to Kannywood, domestication's phases map usefully onto observed processes: broadcaster commissioning and platform scheduling supply the artefacts and temporal slots (objectification); producers' formal innovations (writers' rooms and multi-camera shoots) facilitate appropriation at production and object levels; households and youth audiences incorporate serials into leisure routines (incorporation); and communal conversation, moral adjudication and celebrity circulation perform conversion, reshaping identity and public discourse. Recent refinements therefore, allow domestication to bridge institutional, industrial and domestic scales, making it a strong conceptual frame for explaining why seriality in Kannywood both changes production practices and preserves cultural continuity (Haddon, 2023; Johannessen et al., 2023).

3. Developing the Conceptual Framework: Domestication & Seriality

3.1 Translating Domestication Phases to Serial-Film Production

Domestication Theory offers a processual schema that is particularly useful for mapping the movement of media forms from institutional production into everyday life. The four canonical phases, appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion, can be translated into specific, observable stages in the life course of Hausa serial films. Doing so exposes how technological affordances, industrial organisation and household practices co-produce the formal and cultural features of Kannywood seriality.

Appropriation: In domestication accounts appropriation denotes the initial acquisition and access practices that bring a technology or media form into a social field. For Hausa film serials this stage is manifest in a sequence of material shifts: the diffusion of VCRs and cassette networks in the 1990s; the later uptake of satellite distribution and the institutional emergence of dedicated Hausa broadcasters; and, most recently, platform and streaming availability that includes Arewa24's broadcast and on-demand windows. Each technological inflection reconfigures what kinds of textual forms are viable. Where cassettes encouraged one-off, portable titles, scheduled satellite channels and on-demand services make serial scheduling, seasonality and episode hooks commercially and technically practicable (Arewa24, 2024). Appropriation therefore includes both household acquisition of receiving devices and the institutional procurement of commissioning and scheduling slots by broadcasters and platforms (Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021).

Objectification: Objectification refers to the ways artefacts are placed, named and made meaningful through routines of display and use. For serials this phase encompasses the sedimentation of cultural artefacts and industrial practices: costume conventions, recurrent proverbs, ritualised scenes and recognisable star personae become stable elements of the serial form. Simultaneously, industry practices like writers' rooms, continuity editing, episode outlines and cast contracting objectify serials as reproducible cultural commodities. The mutual reinforcement is critical: formal signifiers (like dress codes and dialogic motifs) ground audience expectations, while institutionalised production processes stabilise those signifiers across episodes and seasons. As domestication scholars stress, objectification is not merely symbolic but materially organised; the serial's visible codes are inseparable from the production routines that reproduce them ((Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021; Haddon, 2023).

Incorporation: Incorporation captures how a media form is routinised into domestic timetables, interpersonal exchange and everyday uses. Hausa serials have been incorporated into domestic life in multiple ways: appointment viewing on satellite, synchronous household viewing during scheduled broadcast, and asynchronous catch-up via mobile and on-demand services. Crucially, the proliferation of social messaging platforms (like Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram) mediates rapid social circulation,

cliff-hanger clips, episode summaries and heated plot discussions travel within friend networks and market forums, reinforcing appointment habits and communal viewing rituals. Incorporation operationalises domestication's emphasis on habitual use: serials shape and are shaped by weekend leisure, market conversations, religious study schedules, and intergenerational viewing habits ((Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021; Yola, 2018).

Conversion: Conversion denotes the outward signalling and identity work that follow domestication. For Kannywood serials conversion is visible when serial consumption becomes a form of social capital (such as knowledge of plotlines and star affiliations), when serial moral debates enter mosque-courtyard or market deliberations, and when audiences use serial referents to perform moral competence. Conversion also, now, includes new patterns: bingeing on on-demand services, genre identification among youth cohorts and civic talk that references serial narratives. Importantly, conversion produces feedback to producers and platforms (what audiences convert into social value influences commissioning choices, content moderation and marketing strategies) so domestication becomes a dynamic loop rather than a terminal stage ((Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021; Johannessen et al., 2023).

Altogether, the four phases form a heuristic that captures how seriality is both technologically enabled and culturally anchored. Domestication does not imagine linear causality from technology to meaning; rather it attends to recursive processes in which producers, distributors, households and peer networks co-domesticate the serial form. This multi-site perspective is essential for Kannywood where broadcasters, studios and households participate in a collaborative domestication of serials (Johannessen et al., 2023; Haddon, 2023).

3.2 Interaction with Institutional and Economic Vectors

Domestication phases are influenced and constrained by institutional and economic forces that mediate how each phase unfolds. Four vectors, namely sponsorship, piracy, censorship and labour regimes, are especially consequential.

Sponsorship and commissioning operate as enabling infrastructures. Regular broadcaster commissioning (Arewa24 and similar outlets) and sponsor funding turn appropriation into sustainable production cycles; they convert episodic formats into monetisable schedules and thereby make writers' rooms and contracted labour economically viable. Sponsorship also conditions textual micro-structures: public-health partners or advertisers may require visible messaging placement, which influences objectification (e.g., motifs and microplots) and the incremental pedagogy built into serial arcs (Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021; McCain, 2013).

Piracy functions as a restraining and reconfiguring force. The collapse of cassette revenues under pervasive duplication networks pushed producers toward broadcast and platform windows that offer stronger control and repeat revenue. The piracy pressure thus catalysed appropriation of new distribution technologies and re-shaped objectification (shorter clips, platform-friendly episode hooks, etc.), while simultaneously narrowing producer risk appetite and influencing what narratives are commissioned (Adamu, 2024, Yola, 2018).

Censorship and community guardianship mediate conversion and incorporation by delimiting what may be publicly signalled. Recent episodes of state intervention, such as the Kano State Censorship Board's 2025 suspension of multiple Hausa series, show how regulatory actions can abruptly reconfigure the domestication loop, prompting pre-emptive self-censorship and altering what audiences see and discuss (Punch, 2025). Censorship therefore acts as a top-down limit on conversion (public identity work) and shapes objectification by enforcing visible codes of propriety (Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021; McCain, 2013).

Labour regimes determine the practicable scale of serial production. Writers' rooms, continuity editors and trained crews require predictable funding and institutional support; where labour markets are precarious, serial production may default to truncated seasons or uneven quality. Conversely, stable commissioning enables the formalisation of labour practices that underpin the objectification and incorporation phases. Thus, the political economy of sponsorship, rights enforcement and labour conditions jointly configures domestication's trajectory: they determine which technologies are appropriated, which artefacts become salient, how serials enter domestic routines and how they are converted into social capital (Adamu, 2024, Aichatou, 2021; McCain, 2013).

4. Methodological Alignment

4.1 Rationale for a Mixed-Methods Design

This study employs a convergent mixed-methods design to capture both the distributional patterns of audience perceptions and the production-side mechanisms that generate those patterns. Quantitative survey data (n = 400 university undergraduates) provide generalisable measures of recollection, preference and behavioural indicators (e.g., appointment viewing and clip-sharing), while qualitative interviews with 16 practitioners (directors, producers, scriptwriters and actors) supply processual explanations about commissioning, production practice and regulatory negotiation. Mixed methods are appropriate where complex social phenomena, here, the domestication of serial media forms, entail both measurable prevalence and situated interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The complementary data streams are integrated through the conceptual framework (appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion), enabling theory-driven triangulation: the survey identifies which domestication indicators prevail at population level; interviews explain how institutional and economic vectors produce those indicators (Haddon, 2018; Johannessen et al., 2023).

4.2 Sampling and Recruitment

The survey used proportionate stratified sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) of 400 undergraduates across five universities in Kano State to ensure demographic spread and institutional coverage (male:female = 227:173). The universities with their respective sample sizes are: Bayero University, Kano (BUK – 38,829 students), North West University, Kano (NWU – 9,496 students), Skyline University Nigeria (SUN – 3,012 students), Maryam Abacha American University, Kano (MAAUN – 8,510 students) and Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology, Wudil (ADUST – 7,985 students). Sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula (1973), which is suitable and precise for large populations, the overall student sample was calculated with a 5% margin of error (e = 0.05):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{67{,}832}{1 + 67{,}832x(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{67{,}832}{1 + 169.58}$$

$$n \approx \frac{67832}{170.58} \approx 400$$

The sample size was 400 respondents to facilitate proportional allocation.

Within each university, respondents were selected randomly to ensure generalisability. Proportionate stratification reflected each institution's share of the total population. The resulting allocation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportionate Population of Respondents based on University

Institution	Total Enrolment	Proportion of N	Sample Size
Bayero University, Kano (BUK)	38,829	57.2%	229
Northwest University, Kano (NWU)	9,496	14.0%	56
Skyline University Nigeria	3,012	4.4%	18
Maryam Abacha American University, Kano (MAAUN)	8,510	12.6%	50
Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology, Wudil (ADUST)	7,985	11.8%	47
Total	**67,832**	**100%**	**400**

Source: Research Data, 2025

This sample size balances statistical precision for descriptive and subgroup analyses with feasibility given resource constraints (Cohen, 2019). Practitioners were recruited purposively to represent production roles and geographic nodes (Kano, Kaduna and Jos) and supplemented by snowball referral to identify senior professionals with serial experience (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Noy, 2008). A target of 16 interviews selected from among a total of 56 practitioners (directors, producers, scriptwriters and actors) provides analytic saturation for industry practices while permitting variation across production contexts (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2020).

4.3 How the Conceptual Framework Structures Data Collection and Coding

The domestication phases were mapped onto both instruments and the coding schema prior to fieldwork (a deductive start-codebook), with allowance for inductive codes emerging from the data. Survey constructs operationalise appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion as discrete indicators (see below). Interview coding applies a two-tier approach: (1) deductive nodes aligned to domestication phases and institutional vectors (sponsorship, piracy, censorship, labour), and (2) inductive thematic nodes capturing emergent practices (e.g., "clip-editing for WhatsApp", "writers' room routines"). Data management and coding were completed in NVivo with double coding on a 20% subsample to estimate inter-coder reliability (Cohen's kappa target ≥ .70) and to refine category definitions.

4.3.1 Operationalising the Domestication Constructs

Survey items and interview prompts were derived from the framework so empirical indicators map directly onto theoretical constructs:

- Appropriation (access & uptake) — Survey items: "My household has access to satellite TV or on-demand platforms" (Yes/No); "I first watched Hausa serials on: (a) cassette, (b) satellite, (c) YouTube/streaming." Interview prompts: "Describe when and how serials became feasible as a production model in your experience (devices, commissioning)."
- Objectification (artefacts & production practices) — Survey items: Likert agreement with "Serials consistently use traditional dress, proverbs and ritual scenes"; "I recognise recurring motifs/characters across seasons." Interview prompts: "How are costume, proverbs and ritual scenes planned and standardised across episodes? Describe your writers' room and continuity practices."

- Incorporation (routine use & circulation) — Survey items: Frequency scales for "I watch serials live" / "I catch up online" / "I share serial clips on WhatsApp." Interview prompts: "How do viewers' watching routines (appointment, catch-up) shape your episode structure and release timing?"
- Conversion (social capital & identity work) — Survey items: Agreement with "Knowing serial plots or characters is a topic of social discussion in my community"; "I use serial references in moral conversations." Interview prompts: "Do you observe serials being used as conversational or reputational resources in communities? Give examples where plotlines have entered public debate."

Survey response scales are 5-point Likert measures for attitudinal items and frequency bands for behavioural items; demographic controls include age, gender, university and device ownership. The interview guide followed semi-structured protocol to permit comparability and depth.

4.4 Data Analysis and Issues on Ethical Concerns

Quantitative analysis comprises descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations by demographic groups. Qualitative analysis uses framework-thematic analysis, iterating between deductive domestication nodes and inductive emergent codes. Integration occurs at interpretation: survey patterns identify salient phenomena that interviews explain causally; interview claims are validated against population prevalence.

Ethical approval was secured from the Postgraduate Examination Board in the Department of Mass communication, Bayero University, Kano. Participants provided written informed consent, with clear statements about recording, anonymity and data security. Given the bilingual context and the prevalence of code-switching, interviews were conducted in English, Hausa, or a combination according to participant preference; interviewers were bilingual and locally competent. Transcription protocol follows best practice: (1) verbatim transcription preserving code-switches; (2) production of original-language transcripts and parallel English working translations; (3) independent back-translation of a purposive sample of key excerpts to check fidelity; and (4) maintenance of a translation log documenting decisions (Yunus, Olde, Hartman, Lucassen, Barton, Russell & Sturgiss, 2022; Schumann, Dennis, Leduc & Peters, 2025). Audio files and transcripts are stored encrypted and access-restricted.

5. Empirical Synthesis Regarding Applying the Framework to the Dataset

5.1 Quantitative Anchor Regarding Key Survey Patterns

The survey conducted among 400 undergraduate respondents across five universities in Kano State, northern Nigeria, provided a quantitative anchor for testing the conceptual framework. The items were designed to map onto the four phases of domestication, namely appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion, while probing audience understandings of Hausa film seriality. The ranked agreement results (see Figure 1) reveal patterned orientations that show the cultural embedding of Kannywood serials in everyday media practices.

i) Episodic flexibility (appropriation): A striking 78% of respondents strongly agreed that the episodic format of Hausa serials allows them to adapt viewing around domestic and academic schedules. This result resonates with the appropriation phase, where new technologies or formats are adopted based on their practical fit with everyday routines (Haddon, 2023). Respondents noted in open-ended survey comments that serials provided "manageable doses" of entertainment that could be paused and resumed, particularly on Arewa24 on Demand and

YouTube platforms. The emphasis on control and flexibility demonstrates that domestication begins with the acquisition of not just content, but an adaptable narrative form compatible with students' time-constrained lives (Ibrahim, 2019).

ii) Producer centrality (objectification): 72% of respondents agreed that the reputation of a producer or director shaped their decision to follow a series. This finding highlights objectification, wherein cultural artefacts acquire meaning through association with specific individuals, institutions or stylistic brands. In Kannywood, prominent producers such as Falalu Dorayi or Aminu Saira function as symbolic anchors, conferring authenticity and prestige on a production. The survey results suggest that undergraduate audiences invest trust in these figures as guarantees of quality and cultural legitimacy, thereby elevating the series from mere entertainment to objects of discernible cultural value (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021).

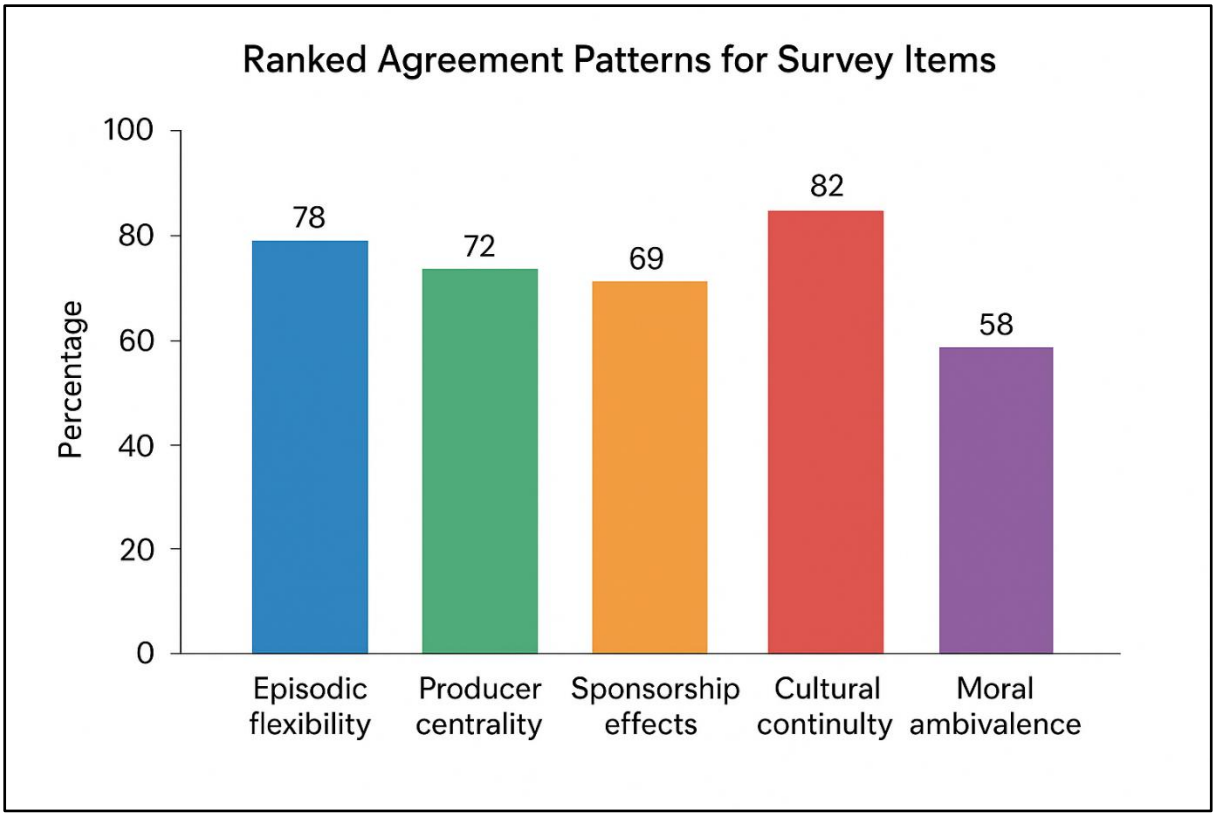


Figure 1. Ranked Agreement Patterns for Survey Items (n = 400).
Note: Bar chart showing agreement distribution across five constructs: episodic flexibility, producer centrality, sponsorship effects, cultural continuity and moral ambivalence.

iii) Sponsorship effects (incorporation): 69% of respondents indicated that knowledge of commercial sponsorship influenced their perception of the integrity of serials. Here, sponsorship serves as an institutional filter within the incorporation phase. On one hand, sponsorship enhances production values, improving continuity, sound quality and set design. On the other, students expressed ambivalence about overt product placements, with 41% reporting that it "distracted from storytelling." This demonstrates that incorporation is negotiated rather than automatic: students integrate sponsorship cues into their interpretation of serials, mediating between the commercial imperatives of producers and their own expectations for cultural resonance (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021).

iv) Cultural continuity (incorporation/conversion): A high 82% of respondents strongly agreed that Hausa serials preserved proverbs, songs and rituals reflective of their cultural heritage. This overwhelming affirmation points to the domestication process as one of cultural continuity. Incorporation is evident as students describe how proverbs or songs introduced in serials are re-circulated in family conversations or online memes. At the same time, conversion emerges as respondents deploy these cultural fragments as social capital, performing knowledge of Hausa traditions in peer networks both online and offline. This dual resonance confirms that serials are not merely media texts but vehicles for reproducing and renewing collective memory (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021; Ibrahim, 2019).

v) Moral ambivalence (conversion): Interestingly, 58% of respondents expressed mixed feelings about whether Hausa serials uphold moral values. While many endorsed the didactic function of storylines promoting respect, honesty or communal solidarity, others questioned the portrayal of romance or gender roles. This ambivalence is integral to the conversion phase, where serials circulate as moral reference points in debates about contemporary Hausa identity. Students frequently referenced WhatsApp group discussions where serials were evaluated in terms of religious appropriateness or social propriety. Thus, serials become platforms for collective moral arbitration, allowing young audiences to situate themselves within contested cultural discourses (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021).

Summary of survey patterns: The survey findings confirm that Hausa serials operate simultaneously across all phases of domestication. Flexibility of episodic structure underpins appropriation; producer reputation anchors objectification; sponsorship and cultural traditions mediate incorporation; and moral ambivalence underscores conversion. Importantly, the high levels of agreement suggest that seriality has become a deeply embedded cultural practice among university students in Northern Nigeria, shaping their routines, conversations and sense of identity.

5.2 Qualitative Anchor of Practitioner Testimony

The 16 interviews with Kannywood practitioners, including producers, directors, scriptwriters and actors, provided qualitative depth, revealing the institutional and creative logics underpinning Hausa serial production. The thematic synthesis aligns with domestication phases, highlighting how seriality is shaped not only in households but within the industry's professional routines.

a) Institutionalisation (appropriation): Practitioners consistently emphasised the role of broadcasters, particularly Arewa24, in stabilising serial production. As one producer explained: "When Arewa24 came with commissioning contracts, we could plan long-term stories. Before, we were surviving project to project." The appropriation phase is therefore not only about households adopting serials, but about production houses appropriating institutional infrastructures that render serial storytelling economically viable (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021).

b) Writers' rooms (objectification): Interviewees described how the move toward serialisation necessitated new collaborative formats such as writers' rooms. A scriptwriter noted: "We used to write as individuals, but serials forced us to sit as teams, aligning plots over 26 episodes." This practice constitutes objectification at the production level: the serial becomes a material artefact structured through collective labour. Writers' rooms also function as symbolic sites, embedding the professional identity of serial production within Kannywood's evolving industrial culture (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021; Yola, 2018).

c) Technical upgrading (objectification/incorporation): Directors spoke of investment in better cameras, sound equipment and editing software to sustain audience attention over

multiple episodes. Such upgrading was not only technical but cultural: "Audiences compare us with Netflix; we had to raise the quality to keep them," observed one cinematographer. Here, objectification occurs as equipment embodies new standards of legitimacy, while incorporation is reflected in audiences embedding these aesthetic improvements into their evaluative frameworks (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021; Ibrahim, 2019).

d) Regulatory negotiation (incorporation): Several practitioners highlighted tensions with censorship boards. One director recalled: "They asked us to remove a whole subplot because they felt it portrayed political leaders negatively." Regulatory encounters shape the incorporation phase by directly influencing the narratives that reach households. This dynamic shows that incorporation is never neutral but filtered by institutional negotiations that reshape what can be domesticated by audiences (Ibrahim, 2019).

e) Gendered labour (conversion): Female actors and writers recounted the challenges of negotiating moral and cultural expectations. One actress stated: "My family supported me, but some relatives said acting in serials was dishonourable. I prove myself by choosing roles carefully." This reveals conversion in action: practitioners themselves become sites of moral debate, embodying contested identities that audiences debate in wider society. The circulation of their work thus becomes inseparable from the circulation of their personal reputations (Adamu, 2024; Aichatou, 2021).

Summary of practitioner testimony: The interviews demonstrate that domestication is not confined to audiences but operates across the entire production ecology. Appropriation occurs through institutional partnerships; objectification through writers' rooms and equipment upgrading; incorporation through regulatory filters; and conversion through gendered labour and moral reputations. The qualitative testimony thus enriches the survey findings by showing how cultural continuity is materially produced within the industry itself.

5.3 Cross-Method Synthesis

Bringing the quantitative and qualitative strands together demonstrates the explanatory power of the domestication framework. Survey results revealed that undergraduate audiences emphasise episodic flexibility, cultural continuity and moral ambivalence. Practitioner interviews explained how these outcomes are structured by industry practices such as commissioning, writers' rooms and regulatory negotiation.

For example, survey respondents affirmed that proverbs and cultural rituals in serials preserved collective memory. Interviews showed that this was intentional: scriptwriters described deliberately embedding proverbs to "anchor stories in tradition." Similarly, while survey respondents reported ambivalence about sponsorship, producers explained that sponsorship was critical to sustaining long-term production, even if it risked narrative distraction.

The convergence of methods also shows how appropriation functions at both ends: households appropriate flexible serial formats while producers appropriate institutional infrastructures. Objectification emerges in the audience valorisation of producers' reputations and in the professionalisation of writers' rooms. Incorporation occurs in domestic routines of viewing as well as in regulatory filtering. Conversion manifests in students' moral debates and in the reputational negotiations of female practitioners.

Concisely, the survey and interviews demonstrate that seriality in Kannywood is a co-production of domestic audiences and industry practitioners, mediated by technologies, institutions and cultural repertoires. The triangulation of data confirms that domestication

theory provides a robust framework for understanding the rise and consolidation of Hausa film serials.

6. Analytical Discussion on Contributions to Theory and the Study of Regional Seriality

This study extends the theoretical purchase of Domestication Theory by demonstrating how Hausa-language serial production in Kannywood is shaped by a multi-scalar interplay between households, industries, and intermediaries. The framework advanced here suggests that domestication is not merely a household-centred process but one that connects micro-level practices with meso-level industry organisation and macro-level policy and economic conditions. Through applying this approach, the discussion highlights three central contributions: (a) domestication as a multi-scalar process linking household practices to industry organisation; (b) seriality as both a technological adaptation and a cultural negotiation; and (c) the pivotal role of intermediaries such as broadcasters and sponsors in influencing domestication trajectories.

6.1 Domestication as a Multi-Scalar Process

Traditionally, domestication scholarship foregrounds the household as the primary site of analysis (Haddon, 2018; Haddon, 2023). In this thesis, however, survey and interview data demonstrate that the domestication of serial production unfolds across interconnected scales. At the household level, students and viewers integrate Hausa serials into daily routines, through appointment viewing, family debates over moral storylines, or binge-watching on Arewa24's digital platforms. At the industry level, practitioners adapt by formalising production practices such as writers' rooms, contract-based casts, and continuity management. At the policy-economic level, regulatory interventions, sponsorship contracts, and piracy collectively constrain and reshape how serials circulate and are consumed.

This multi-scalar framing allows for a deeper appreciation of how individual practices aggregate into institutional shifts. For example, the audience demand for episodic flexibility, demonstrated in the survey results, encouraged broadcasters to commission serialised formats, which in turn stabilised the industry's labour markets. Domestication, therefore, cannot be fully captured if confined to household-level analyses. Rather, it is best conceptualised as a recursive process that links micro-level cultural embedding to broader industry transformations.

6.2 Seriality as Technological Adaptation and Cultural Negotiation

The serial turn in Kannywood must be understood as both a technological adaptation and a cultural negotiation. Technologically, Hausa filmmakers transitioned from film-based production in the early 1990s to video technologies, satellite broadcasting, and, more recently, digital streaming (Adamu, 2019; Krings & Garritano, 2024). Each technological layer enabled new serial possibilities: satellite expanded reach; streaming created binge cultures; and low-cost digital cameras facilitated faster production cycles. These innovations map directly onto the appropriation and incorporation phases of domestication, where technologies are acquired, adapted, and embedded in daily practices.

Culturally, however, seriality is negotiated through the deployment of moral lessons, proverbs, and ritualised storytelling. Interviews reveal that directors intentionally pace narrative arcs to align with Hausa communicative traditions, allowing moral lessons to unfold incrementally. This shows that serialisation is not merely a technological by-product but a cultural form that enables continuity with Hausa oral performance traditions while adapting to contemporary consumption habits (Musa, 2017; Musa-Olomu & Olomu-Bello, 2019; Ibrahim, 2023). Thus, seriality operates at the juncture of innovation and tradition, balancing

the technical affordances of digital media with community norms about morality, propriety, and cultural identity.

6.3 The Role of Intermediaries in Steering Domestication

A third major finding is the centrality of intermediaries, broadcasters, sponsors and regulatory bodies, in influencing the trajectories of serial domestication. Survey results highlight that sponsorship significantly influences both the production and reception of Hausa serials. Practitioners confirm that sponsorship determines narrative framing, character inclusion, and even moral emphasis. For example, serials funded by NGOs frequently embed public health or development messages within plotlines, subtly shifting the balance between entertainment and social education.

Broadcasters such as Arewa24 not only provide platforms for circulation but also impose institutionalised quality control measures. These requirements, while raising production values, also constrain creative flexibility, often prioritising advertiser-friendly content. Similarly, censorship boards and regulators exercise gatekeeping power, occasionally suspending or banning serials deemed culturally inappropriate (Yunus et al., 2022). These examples underscore that domestication is not a neutral or linear process but one shaped by power asymmetries and institutional negotiation.

Through foregrounding intermediaries, this study extends Domestication Theory beyond its traditional focus on households and technologies to include the institutional actors that mediate access, legitimacy, and sustainability.

6.4 Comparison with Other Theoretical Traditions

The analytical strength of domestication becomes evident when compared with other theoretical traditions. Reception studies capture how audiences interpret Hausa serials but often underplay the industrial and institutional conditions of production (Livingstone, 2019; Lobato, 2019). Political economy approaches highlight issues such as piracy, sponsorship, and regulation but tend to treat audiences as passive recipients rather than active participants (Lobato, 2019). Production studies document the routines and constraints of practitioners yet lack the conceptual tools to link household consumption with industry restructuring (Caldwell,2008).

By contrast, domestication provides a unifying framework that bridges these gaps. It conceptualises media change as a process of techno-cultural embedding, connecting how technologies are appropriated, negotiated, and re-signified across households, industries, and institutions. This makes it particularly useful for analysing regional film industries such as Kannywood, where cultural traditions, economic precarity, and technological change intersect (Caldwell, 2008; Livingstone, 2019).

6.5 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes three theoretical claims. First, domestication should be reconceptualised as a multi-scalar process rather than a household-centric model. This reframing allows for greater explanatory power in contexts where cultural industries are rapidly professionalising. Second, seriality in Kannywood exemplifies how media forms can serve as both technological adaptations and cultural negotiations, preserving indigenous traditions while leveraging new affordances. Third, intermediaries must be recognised as active steering agents that shape the conditions under which domestication unfolds, influencing both cultural outcomes and industrial trajectories.

Together, these contributions refine Domestication Theory and expand its application beyond Euro-American media contexts, making it more responsive to African media industries and their complex negotiations of continuity and change.

6.6 Policy and Practice Implications

The conceptual framework adopted in this study, which is grounded in domestication, seriality, and cultural continuity, provides several significant implications for policy and practice within the Nigerian media and cultural industries. A central finding is that Hausa film serials thrive when they are able to negotiate global media forms through domestication while simultaneously sustaining cultural markers relevant to their audiences. This recognition suggests that both industry practitioners and policymakers must intentionally design supportive structures that consolidate the gains of Kannywood's growth while addressing its persistent vulnerabilities.

First, capacity building and training remain crucial. Many Kannywood practitioners are self-trained, which limits their ability to adapt to the rapidly changing media environment. A structured training agenda, integrated into film schools, universities and vocational academies, would equip actors, directors, editors and scriptwriters with technical, artistic and managerial competencies. Such training should not only focus on production technologies but also on narrative construction that retains cultural depth while appealing to diverse audiences. Furthermore, knowledge-sharing initiatives, industry fellowships, and mentorship programmes should be strengthened to ensure continuity of expertise across generations.

Second, the framework highlights the necessity of investment in infrastructure. Inadequate studio facilities, weak distribution channels and the absence of archival systems impede both the quality and the longevity of Hausa film series. Public-private partnerships could be established to support the provision of sound stages, digital editing suites, and film villages in northern Nigeria. Equally important is the development of secure and affordable distribution platforms (both terrestrial and online) that expand access while protecting producers from piracy.

Third, anti-piracy measures must be prioritised in cultural policy and enforcement strategies. Piracy undermines revenue streams, discourages investment and compromises the sustainability of the film industry. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, establishing specialised anti-piracy units and supporting the deployment of digital rights management technologies would protect intellectual property. Moreover, advocacy campaigns are needed to sensitise audiences about the cultural and economic harms of consuming pirated films.

Fourth, consultative censorship procedures should be institutionalised. While regulation of film content is necessary in contexts of cultural sensitivity, current approaches are often perceived as arbitrary and restrictive. Policymakers should adopt consultative frameworks where filmmakers, religious scholars, cultural custodians and civil society groups jointly deliberate on standards. Such an approach would balance creative freedom with cultural responsibility, ensuring that Hausa film serials retain legitimacy within their communities.

Fifth, archiving and cultural preservation are urgent. Many early Kannywood productions are either lost or inaccessible, undermining the ability of future generations to study and learn from them. A systematic archiving programme, whether led by the National Film and Video Censors Board, universities, or regional cultural institutions, would ensure the preservation of these works. Digital repositories could also facilitate academic research and broaden access to the historical trajectory of Hausa film series.

Finally, the framework has implications for broadcaster strategy and cultural policy. Broadcasters and streaming platforms can draw from the domestication principle by investing in programming that reflects local values, languages and social concerns while maintaining professional quality. Similarly, cultural policy at state and federal levels should make domestication an explicit objective of intervention. This would involve recognising indigenous serials as vital cultural industries, integrating them into creative economy plans, and providing incentives such as tax rebates, grants and co-production schemes. In doing so, policy can safeguard Kannywood's dual role as a cultural guardian and as an engine of socio-economic development.

6.7 Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Although this conceptual framework advances understanding of Hausa film series production, several limitations must be acknowledged. The first concerns methodological constraints. Being primarily conceptual, this study did not involve empirical testing through field data, audience surveys or production ethnographies. As such, while the framework is theoretically robust, its applicability to specific contexts requires further empirical validation.

Second, there are concerns of generalisability. Kannywood's trajectory is shaped by unique socio-cultural, linguistic and religious dynamics, which may not be directly replicable in other Nigerian or African film industries. Future research could apply comparative analysis to Nollywood sub-industries, Francophone West African cinemas, or diasporic media cultures to assess the wider utility of the framework.

Third, the study is time-bound. Domestication and cultural continuity are dynamic processes that evolve with technological change, political contexts and generational shifts in taste. Consequently, the empirical findings presented here may not fully capture future transformations in Hausa serial production as digital platforms expand, artificial intelligence reshapes content creation, and transnational collaborations intensify.

To address these limitations, future research should adopt longitudinal designs to track the evolution of Hausa film serials over extended periods. Such studies would reveal how domestication strategies adapt to technological disruptions and cultural negotiations across decades. Additionally, comparative studies, both within Nigeria and across other African and Asian film traditions, could refine the framework's explanatory power. A third promising direction is platform-centred research, focusing on how YouTube, Netflix or regional streaming services mediate the serialisation and circulation of Hausa films. This would shed light on how digital logics reshape domestication practices, distribution models, and audience engagement.

7. Conclusion

This paper has advanced a conceptual framework that integrates domestication theory, seriality, and cultural continuity in order to explain the emergence and evolution of Hausa film series within Kannywood.Foregrounding the domestication of media technologies and practices, this study underscores how Hausa audiences and producers negotiate global cultural forms and adapt them to local socio-cultural realities. Seriality, in this regard, is shown not merely as a narrative device but also as an industrial and cultural strategy that sustains audience engagement, ensures economic viability, and reinforces familiar cultural patterns across productions.

The conceptual contribution of the framework lies in demonstrating how the triadic interaction of domestication, seriality, and cultural continuity provides a nuanced lens for understanding the dynamics of regional film industries. Empirical validation, drawn from the

historical trajectory of Kannywood and its shift towards serialised storytelling, shows the applicability of this model to concrete media practices. In particular, it highlights how Kannywood's creative adaptation of indigenous norms, religious sensibilities, and linguistic identities enables the industry to resonate deeply with its primary Hausa-speaking audiences while still engaging with global cinematic conventions.

Beyond Kannywood, the framework holds wider relevance for scholarship on African and other regional film industries. It challenges universalist accounts of media globalisation by showing the agency of local actors in shaping and sustaining cultural forms through domesticated serial production. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing debates on media localisation, cultural identity, and the negotiation of modernity within the global South.

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