

Multimodal Interaction and Audience Engagement in MTN Project Fame West Africa

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Abstract

This study identifies and analyses the stages of engagement in music reality shows using MTN Project Fame West Africa as a case study. It extends postulations on stages of engagement and engagement spectrum to music reality shows' research by investigating levels of audience involvement in MTN Project Fame West Africa. Two recorded videos are selected from each of seasons five and six of the show to make a total of four videos for analysis. The tools of Multimodal Interaction Analysis are used to interpret stages and spectrum of engagement found in the data. The study identifies critical, performative, and mediated modes of engagement with positive and negative spectrums. The study asserts that multiple modes are used to express modes and spectrums of engagement which are dependent on each other in the show. It concludes that audience engagement is the lifeblood of reality shows and that language is crucial to the construction of its narratives.

Keywords: Audience engagement; Media Studies; Multimodal Interaction Analysis; Music Reality Shows, MTN Project Fame West Africa

Introduction

Music Reality Show, henceforth (MRS) is a domain of interactive discourse that engages the attention of the media audience through the use of both verbal and visual arguments. It is a pervasive medium in which real people are put in a music academy and the audience watches how these people handle the environment and the different challenges presented to them especially as these relate to music. As a form of MRS, MTN Project Fame West Africa is an entertainment program and a social interactive discourse 'produced by the people, for the people and it typifies the essence of a people's way of life' (Andrejevic, 2004 p. 13). This implies that MRS content is co-created by the audience and producers through the use of multiple modes. Therefore, the otherwise passive audience become active and important participants in MRS (Griffen-Foley, 2004; Michelle, 2009, Garcia-Aviles, 2012; Hill, 2017).

Like every other form of media interaction, MRS employs a complex meaning-making process which is inherent in the performance and participation in the show. Audience members are invited through multiple platforms to partake in the shaping of the narrative through different levels of participation and modes of communication. As part of the show, audience members are engaged at different levels for different purposes as 'performative and interactive practices develop within the broader transformations taking place in production, consumption, and social relations' (Hill, 2017, p. 3). Just like Norris (2004) states 'no matter where a conversation takes place, one is always aware of the involvement of other participants whether in close proximity or otherwise and this instinctively shape how the conversation evolves. It then follows that

performance is dependent on the nature of participation in all forms of interactive discourse and for MRS, entertainment is at the centre of audience media engagement (Boyle and Kelly, 2012).

The involvement of the audience is needed to complete the communication chain in the show, their participation is monetised for the continued production of the show and they are needed for the production, evaluation and ratification of the show content. Therefore, there is the need for a constant contact between the audience, the producer and the media. This is described by Corner (2011) as exposure, engagement and involvement. The amount of energy transmitted by the audience of MRS across multiple platforms brings the participation framework alive and is very crucial to the success of MRS. Also, audience participation is integral to MRS because 'much of the participation in reality TV is aimed at a certain kind of recognition of the self' (Turner, 2006, p. 154). These facts necessitate the need for investigating the mode of audience engagement in MRS.

Obviously, the mystery of the popularity and wide acceptance of music reality shows lies in the content, mode of delivery and the display of self permitted in the shows. Since, the content of the show becomes complete through audience participation, it is important to find out how audience members make use of multiple modes while engaging in the co-creation of contents in MRS. Although a number of media scholars have hinted at the peculiarity of the participation configuration in reality generally and MRS particularly by stating the types of audience (Goffman, 1981; Holmes, 2004;) and the nature of audience involvement (Skeggs 2010, Hill 2017), they did not necessarily explore audience engagement especially in relation to multimodal interaction. Therefore, this study investigates audience engagement in MTN Project Fame West Africa with the aim of unravelling how audience involvement shape the content of the show and how audience members are systematically drawn into the show by the producers for economic gains.

MTN Project Fame West Africa (MTNPFWA) is an African regional music talent reality TV that brings together the English-speaking West African countries. It is a talent show where people who are talented in music are selected from regional auditions across English speaking countries in West Africa. The show is unique because talents are taken from these auditions to be trained in an academy specially designed for the show for the maximum period of ten weeks to become music super-stars. They are exposed to crucial training from members of the faculty who are professionals in different aspects of music as dance, voice training and so on. MTNPFWA is a reality show because contestants are filmed continuously for the period of their stay in the academy, and a thirty-minute show is aired from their daily activities from Monday to Friday during the competition. Live shows are aired on Saturdays and Sundays. On Sunday evenings, contestants are allowed to showcase their talents by performing for a live audience (studio audience and overhearing audience). The faculty and judges make their comments and corrections based on what they feel the contestants have done well or otherwise. Then the members of the audience are allowed to vote for the contestants they wish to retain in

the academy. This is done from the Sunday of the performance to the Saturday when the Eviction Show takes place. Saturday evenings feature the Eviction Show where four contestants with the lowest votes are put up for eviction. Three of them are usually 'saved' by the faculty, the judges and the other contestants respectively. The contestant not 'saved' is usually automatically evicted.

In *MTN Project Fame West Africa* (MTNPFWA), there are the studio audience who can be co-participants or on-lookers, and the overhearing audience who are viewers in their respective homes. So, when meaning is articulated, the speaker takes up different personalities and addresses different members of the audience per time.

Audience Engagement in Reality Shows

The multi-dimensional nature of reality shows has made it a research focus for many media and language scholars. It is a popular culture 'whose content attracts a range of audiences, including television and social media viewers, studio audience, judges, and contestants in the competition among others. Audience members are invited through multiple platforms to partake in the shaping of the narrative through different levels of participation and modes of communication. As a feedback mechanism, the meaning of audience participation has been pushed beyond audience attention to accommodate social and cultural values of audience engagement (Hill, 2017). During reality shows, audience members are engaged at different levels for different purposes as 'performative and interactive practices develop within the broader transformations taking place within production, consumption, and social relations' (Hill, 2017, p. 3). This makes audience involvement in reality shows complex and dynamic.

Audience engagement is defined as the active and intentional exposure of audience members to media content and totality of audience experience with such content which includes cognitive, emotional and affective experiences (Broersma, 2019). This definition of audience engagement establishes viewership as an active involvement with media content. Such active participation is more evident in talent hunts where live shows are integral dynamics contributing to successful broadcast. According to Hill (2017, p. 7), 'the intensity of a live audience, the adrenalin-fuelled participation of a large crowd, and their immediate reactions to performers on stage are crucial to the media content. This is what drives a live talent show and is part of its mass entertainment appeal'. Lunt (2004, p.329) confirms this when he states that 'reality TV is based on live, real time, relatively unconstrained, apparently spontaneous social interaction'. The fact that it involves social interaction implies the use of communicative resources as no interaction can take place without the use of language and/or other communicative modes.

Audience participation manifests in forms of comment, sharing, labelling, criticism and reactions (Jakubowicz, 2008) in reality shows. For Corner (2011), audience contact with the media can be described as exposure, engagement and involvement while Boyle and Kelly (2012) places entertainment at the centre of audience media engagement. Hill (2005) also

agrees that audience participation is a unique feature of reality programming and for Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007), reality TV places the audience members on the opposite side of the entertainment arena, providing all viewers with the possibility of becoming potential entertainers. Griffen-Foley (2004, p. 544) asserts that 'audience participation provides a more comprehensive coverage of the lives of real people and deploy more sophisticated technology' and Garcia-Avile (2012, p. 430) describes participation as feedback empowered by technological innovations which enables a great variety of audience contributions 'like voting on a reality show or calling in a talk show to give an opinion'. The description of audience activities in reality shows reveal that it is a complex phenomenon activated through language and manifesting at different levels of engagement on different platforms enabled by the show producers. Holmes (2004) suggests that there is a network between the industry (judges), the participants and the audience.

Some studies have emphasised that audience participation is not as new as it is presented especially in relation to reality shows (Griffen-Foley, 2004; Michelle, 2009), although Michelle (2009) points to the fact that many scholars believe that audience engagement is being altered irrevocably'. A number of studies have investigated reasons for audience participation in reality programming and discover that people watch for fantasies (Reiss and Wiltz, 2004), gratifications (Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2007) surveillance purposes (Andrejevic, 2004; Nabi, et al. 2003) and to have the opportunity to participate (Andrejevic, 2009). Alongside these studies is the investigation of audience engagement with reality shows (Griffen-Foley, 2004; Michelle, 2009; Garcia-Aviles, 2012; Hill, 2017). These studies have as their focus the different ways audience members get involved in reality shows and conclude that audience and their involvement vary across reality TV.

Jermyn and Holmes (2006) study the notion of new generation audience and the advent of the multi-platform interactive media. They argue that interactive technologies have blurred the notion of the traditional concepts of production and consumption and centralises interactivity as one of the defining features of media cultures making the audience more active participants. The study also notes cultural acceptability of media content by the audience and the new modes of engagement with reality TV contents. This study aligns with Michelle's (2009) assertion that the nature of audience participation has been altered in reality TV and Garcia-Avile's (2012) position on the use of advanced technology to enable different kinds of audience engagement. In Hall's (2009) study, audience perception of authenticity is related to their involvement in reality shows. She states that audience engagement with reality TV has to do with their perception of cast members. Closely related to Hall (2009) is Michelle (2009) on audience reception of reality TV. The study highlights four modes of audience reception which are transparent, referential, mediated and discursive and states that audience respond to reality TV content within established interpretive frames.

Hill (2017) asserts that audience are engaged with reality shows at different levels while they co-construct the actions in the show with the producer. This is a direct assertion of what many

studies on audience participation have implied. Her study concentrates on dance reality show. The fact that dance reality show has complex but describable modes of engagement enable us to infer that investigating audience engagement in music reality show will also offer interesting discoveries. Also, Hill's study did not establish any connection between communicative resources and modes of engagement despite the fact that communication is integral to audience engagement in reality shows. Therefore, this study fills the gap in audience engagement research by examining how MTN Project Fame West Africa's (MTN PFWA) audience engage with the show at different using both embodied and disembodied modes of communication. MTN PFWA is a music reality show hosted in Nigeria but involving contestants from English speaking West Africa countries.

Since there are different conceptions of what audience refers to, this study uses audience to refer to everyone receptive of the content of a performance in reality show. Therefore, in MTN project Fame West Africa from where the data for this study is taken, the audience include the judges, the faculty members, the studio audience, other contestants, the television and social media audience. The uniqueness of MTN PFWA as a talent hunt reality show necessitates the complexity of its audience and its selection for this study.

Theoretical Background

Audience Engagement

This study is eclectic in orientation as it employs Corner's (2011) and Hill's (2017) engagement concept alongside Norris' (2004, 2011) Multimodal Interaction Analysis henceforth (MIA). Corner's (2011) study on audience engagement posits that media audience who are actively engaged with media contents 'are aware of the events in the wider contexts of production. Audience reception is conceived as interactive with different stages and spectrum of engagement and disengagement which could result from different external factors such as boredom or other perceptions of deficit. There are different ways to describe stages or types of engagement. In Hill's (2017) study, reference is made to communicative engagement, critical engagement, and performative engagement among others. She specifically identifies subjective mode and objective mode as modes of engagement According to Hill, objective modes of engagement can include the construction of performance and authenticity while subjective mode the gratification associated with a live television experience

Hill (2017) describes a spectrum of engagement as the cognitive and affective work of producers and audiences. This explains the way producers are involved with each other in the construction of engagement with creative values, or how viewers engage with specific performers. It basically describes the different ways participants engage with a production and the core elements involved in such engagements which includes socio-economic and cultural values of engagement. This engagement covers a range of emotional reactions which could be positive and negative engagement, or disengagement. An engagement is positive when a participant identifies with performers by cheering them or sending positive messages and negative when the audience negatively evaluate a performance and take actions like voting the

contestant out or sending negative comments. Disengagement, however, refers to an assessment of performative failure which could lead to loss of interest in the show. , A spectrum of engagement also involves the use of multiple modes of communication and various discourse contexts. Communicative engagement is an interplay of responses to performances such as looking, listening or a more absorbing engagement or participation (Corner, 2011). However, critical engagement describes a form of engagement which involves ‘the genre knowledge of producers and audiences, truth claims within a series, or issues of morality and ethical treatment of participants’ (Hill 2017, p. 6). Performative engagement on the other hand is used in this study to mean the actions performed by studio audience as a result of being part of the live performance and which conveys their attitude to a performance on the show. It is the action performed in real time exclusive to the studio audience. The idea of performative engagement combines Austin’s (1962) conception of performatives and Hill’s (2017) idea of engagement. Austin describes performatives as utterances which are acts and are performed under felicitous conditions while Hill (2017) describes engagement as a series of relationships between creative and executive producers, broadcasters, performers, and audiences. Mediated Engagement is used in this study to mean audience actions that comes across through mediated means such as television or other technologies such as phones, social media platforms and so on. The TV/social media audience participation are feedbacks such as votes and comments.

The description of spectrum of engagement as accommodative of the multidimensionality of engagement in the media is instructive for this study. This study acknowledges that audience varies across media genres and for reality shows, different group of viewers qualify as audience. While some audience members experience the show directly, others have their experiences mediated either by the television or internet. The way the audience experience the performance of a reality show goes a long way in determining their mode and spectrum of engagement. Hill (2017) asserts that there is the need to establish a point of convergence to capture the interaction between varieties of audience and their spectrum of engagement. This is done in this study by identifying and analysing the different modes of audience engagement found in the data and audience spectrum of engagement with the content of the show using Multimodal Interaction Analysis.

Multimodal Interaction Analysis (MIA)

MIA is a multimodal approach and a methodological framework that focuses on interpretation of interaction in real time events using multiple communicative modes. It makes provisions for the analysis of all communicative modes contributing to meaning making in an interaction. These modes are referred to as embodied and disembodied modes. The unit of analysis in MIA is action, therefore, an engagement is taken as an action and is described and analysed based on the communicative resources used to encode meaning.

The term ‘embodied’ is used with modes that are active resources involved in the construction of meaning in interaction. Such modes represent actual performance or actions that are mediated and fluidly performed at the scene of interaction. They consists of series of action

performed using body parts such as the lips, for intonation units, or hands, arms, head etc. for manual gestures (Norris 2004). While disembodied modes are seen as meaning potential resources used in interaction but do not actively evolve during or as a result of the interaction. This suggests that disembodied modes are resources that have been produced through the use of some embodied modes at a time before the present interaction. Therefore, the actions carried out in the production of the disembodied modes are frozen in them. Some embodied modes are; proxemics, posture, and gesture among others while disembodied modes could be prints, colour, layouts among others.

Proxemics as an embodied mode describes how individuals arrange and utilize their space while posture refers to how people position their bodies during interaction (Norris 2004). The distances used in proxemic studies are intimate distance, personal distance, social distance and public distance. While closeness signals intimacy distance indicates formality. Posture is however capable of exposing the level of engagement or disengagement of an individual in an interaction. A posture is open when arms, hands, knees and legs are apart and separated, and closed when arms are folded and legs crossed.

A gesture is a conscious and unconscious movement of the body that is capable of conveying meaning. This implies that gesture is expressive. Norris (2004) identifies four types of gestures which are: iconic gesture which possesses a pictorial content that imitates what is conveyed verbally, metaphoric gesture has a pictorial content that are abstract in nature, deictic gestures point to objects or people in the physical world or to abstract concepts and ideas as if they had a physical location and beat gestures look like beating musical time. Hand and arm movement as well as head movement are sub-categories of gestures. Gaze refers to the organisation, direction and intensity of looking which could be structured or unstructured. For Norris (2004), the structure of the gaze is determined by the structure of the interaction. Such that the more structured the interaction is, the more structured the gaze will be.

Methodology

The data for this analysis are audience responses to the content of MTN project Fame West Africa as captured in the live performances of the show. MTN Project Fame West Africa was selected because of the dynamic nature of audience involvement in the show. The selection of the episodes used was purposive as they capture the nature of audience engagement needed for the analysis in this study. While audience response seems fussy, this study specifically captures the reactions of studio audience to the performances in the studio, the appraisal of the judges and the faculty members and the involvement of other contestants who are not performing at that particular time. Also, the involvement of television and social media audience are captured in the choice of their preferred candidate through voting and social media comments. All these are taken from two recorded episodes of the show selected from each of seasons 5 and 6 of MTN Project Fame West Africa to make a total of four videos. The videos were collected from Ultima studios alongside other videos used for another research. Excerpts and video stills that capture different levels of engagement are identified and used for analysis.

Specifically, video stills of critical engagement, performative engagement and mediated engagement were taken from the videos.

The analysis was done using principles from Corner's (2011) and Hill's (2017) concepts of audience engagement while MIA is used to analyse communicative modes such as gaze, posture, proxemics and gesture among others. The analysis focuses on the levels of engagement in relation to the modes of engagement which could be positive engagement, negative engagement or audience disengagement with the content of the show. The communicative modes used in the interactive process and how the use of the modes culminate in the different modes and spectrum of engagement were also analysed.

Modes of Audience Engagement in MTN Project Fame West Africa

This aspect of the study explains the mode of engagement and the spectrum of engagement in the data as used by Hill (2017). These are explained using the communicative resources available for the audience while responding to the show. In MTNPFWA, the participants present in the studio have first-hand experience of any higher-level action performed in the studio. Also, they are affected and are able to respond directly to these actions through critical engagement, performative and mediated engagement. The availability of prompt and face-to-face feedback allows the audience to engage with the performance at these levels.

Critical Engagement

Critical engagement is applied to the activities of judges and faculties who, though members of the audience, have the crucial task of appraising the performances of the contestants based on their knowledge in the music industry. As ratified recipients of the contestants' performances, they are expected to be actively involved in listening and evaluating the performances especially because they have contact with the performance. Formal appraisal is done in the show using the verbal mode. However, there are instances that other embodied modes enhance the messages in the appraisal. Examples of critical engagement are discussed below:

Excerpt one

Judge: Wow, Niniola, to be honest with you.

The first thing that caught my attention was (erm) the first thing that caught my attention was your song writing like its beyond average, I must say.

Audience: applause

Judge: yea, absolutely. I also like the fact that the title of the song is Itura as opposed to Igi Inu Igbo. You know whatever phrase comes up ermerm. The most popular phrase in the song becomes the title of the song. And so I was happy about the fact that the title was different. Then erm... to be honest with you, I wasn't expecting anything less from you because that is your zone. you keyed into

that song, you delivered it and you were absolutely believable.
Well done, well done.

Image one: Gaze and gesture in judge's appraisal



Excerpt two

Judge: Ok. You know, it takes certain dexterity to be able to write one's own song. So I applaud your effort. The least I can say is at least your song is very catchy. It is a kind of music to play and sing and probably dance to. Must dance too in a club. So criticizing somebody's composition is not always that easy. I will say for maybe a first effort, it sounds like that is the first time you are doing this. So, well done. Thank you.

Image two: Gaze enhancing judge's appraisal



Excerpt three

Faculty: okay first of all, I love the fact that you captured us in that moment. This is a song we don't even know, we've not heard before but hearing it for the first time, we felt, we are in the same spirit of the pain, the agony and the feeling of the song as you were you know delivering to us and it was so believable as in we can just we are just watching for you to release the album and we just going to buy you understand. Well done, that was absolutely beautiful, well done!

Excerpt four

Faculty one: I am going to do this TY mix's way. You know breaking down the technical part of what you did. Vocally you were there, performance you were there, your transition, you were just...

Faculty two: you were decent

However, West Africa has no choice.

Season 5

Image three: Hand movement, gesture, posture in faculty's appraisal



Excerpt five

Judge: You know, watch your moves when you are entertaining. You got a bit sexy, that is not a sexy song. Your beautiful dress and the way you move is very important to what you are singing because those songs here a meaning and people know those songs. Other than that you've got a beautiful voice ad thank you. That was lovely.

Excerpt six

Judge: Omolayo, I got lost somewhere with the highlife and everything. It was entertaining but what you have to understand is the history of the song. This song was done during the civil right movement. The lyrics are very very important. It is part of the black liberation struggle and you didn't seem to connect to that.

The level of involvement of the judge in excerpt one is revealed in the content of his appraisal. He starts his assessment of the performance from the song writing skills of the performer and

her creative way of giving a title to her song. He also assesses her delivery of the song and affirms that she performed well. This appraisal as captured in his choice of words such as 'honest' (lines 1 and 11), 'absolutely' (line 6, 13) shows that the appraisal is not an impressionistic one but a reflection of what happened on the stage. The judge repeats 'caught my attention' twice at the beginning of his assessment, this implies that he did not just listen to the song just to be entertained, but paid attention to the technicality of song writing and delivery which assists him in giving an appraisal of the whole performance. At the critical level of engagement, the judge deploys his knowledge about song writing and performances. While the engagement is critical, it is also objective because it includes an authentic evaluation of the performance. His rating of the song writing skill as beyond average and use of expressions such as 'like', 'happy', 'you keyed', 'you delivered' expresses his positive engagement with the performance. The subjectivity is captured in the physical involvement of the judge and positive engagement is revealed in his satisfaction of the performance. Image one reinforces the critical engagement of the judge as he uses his closed gesture, head movement and hands together to depict the formality of his action. The straight gaze adopted also corroborates this.

Excerpt two is another instance of critical engagement from a member of the panel of judges. She gets involved in the performance by deploying her knowledge about music, assessing the performer's knowledge and skills and making some claims about the performance like the judge in excerpt one. She examines how much the performer knows about song writing and implies that she is a learner as seen in lines six and seven. Her use of 'dexterity' with 'original composition' implies that she paid attention to the skills deployed by the participant and the choice of 'criticising' as a mode of assessment of the performance signals her critical engagement with the song. In image two, she uses straight gaze and body posture to communicate the seriousness of her assessment and engagement with the performance. Her positive engagement with the song also reflects in her assessment. For instance, she asserts that the song is very catchy and good for clubbing and she uses 'well done' and 'thank you' at the end of her assessment to boost the self-image of the performer. In excerpts three and four, faculty members who are also saddled with the responsibility of appraising the contestants' performances adopt a critical engagement strategy by assessing the skills deployed by the contestants into performing the songs. In excerpt 3, the faculty member captures the skills with the expressions 'you captured us', and you were delivering to us. The fact that the contestant is the agent signals what she has done what is considered correct which makes the performance acceptable.

The appraisal also captures the emotional effect of the song on the audience as seen in the use of expressions like 'felt', 'same spirit', 'agony', 'pain', and 'feeling'. These are words that capture the emotional state of a person. It also points to the faculty member's subjective mode of engagement with the performance as she identifies with the sensations attached with the life performance. The positive evaluation that proceeds from the critical and subjective mode of engagement places the assessor's involvement on the positive side of the engagement spectrum. Her use of words such as 'like', 'beautiful' and 'love' reinforces this assertion. In excerpt four,

the faculty member decides to engage in a technical assessment in which all the qualities expected of a good performance like vocal dexterity, performance, and interaction with the audience are checked and found to have been used appropriately.

The critical assessment leads to a positive engagement signalled by the declarative statement 'West Africa has no choice'. What the statement implies is that the performer has met all the criteria for becoming a star and so the region has to accept him as one. The critical engagement is reinforced by the gesture of the speaker who uses a metaphorical hand movement to represent 'breaking down' which the hand movement coincide with. While the positive engagement is reinforced the subjective mode of engagement employed signalled by the friendly facial expression and the informal body posture of two other faculty members.

Apart from using the positive spectrum of engagement with critical engagement, audience also disengage emotionally from a performance leading to negative spectrum of engagement. In Excerpt five and six, the judges assessing the performances disagree with the mode of delivery of the songs while assessing the knowledge of the performers about the songs they perform. Excerpt five centres on the assessment of the body language as essential to performance. This is reflected in the expressions, 'watch your moves', 'you got a bit sexy' and 'your beautiful dress and the way you move are very important to what you are singing'. These comments encode the fact that performance is not just about the voice but also the use of the body. Stating that the songs have meaning and people know them establishes that she is not impressed by the inability of the performer to enact the appropriate mood and evoke the right emotion associated with the songs. Here, her critical engagement births a negative spectrum of engagement reflected in her emotional disengagement from the performance.

Another incident of negative spectrum of engagement is captured in excerpt six. The judge expresses his emotional disengagement from the song by using the expression 'I got lost'. This means that he could not place the choice of highlife genre of music as a cover version of a liberation song. While he asserts that the song is entertaining, his critical assessment goes beyond entertainment to the performer's knowledge of the history of the song which he faults. By faulting the performer's knowledge of the song, he disengaged emotionally and this results in a negative engagement with the performer.

While it is not impossible for the audience outside the studio to get involved by using their limbs through dancing, standing, clapping or the verbal mode by singing alongside with the contestant, these actions do not serve as immediate feedback to the contestant since they cannot be captured. The television audience only give responses through their votes and online comments. The difference between the studio audience and those outside the studio is the immediacy of the experience gotten as against the mediated experience of the TV audience.

Performative engagement

In this study, performative engagement refers to actions which convey the disposition of the audience to a live performance and which portrays where the audience are on the engagement spectrum. These actions are enabled by the audience presence in the studio and cannot be performed by the audience not present.

Image four: Posture and print as performative engagement



Image five: Cheering and dance as performative engagement



Image six: Other contestants voting to save their favourite contestant



Excerpt seven

Judge: who sang for their super? Sonia

Excerpt eight

Faculty: Good evening erm. We did agree with you Sonia did fight for her life and she did very well. ehm. I must say this is a really difficult decision because I know for some of you there you've wanted this so badly and in a way you let your emotions get the better part of you. You know, instead of giving it your all, letting the emotion come through the song, it kind of held you back and you didn't do as well as you could have done. In the circumstances, we have no choice, it has to be Ayo

In images four and five, some of the studio audience and faculty members used the print mode and their posture to portray their impression of the contestant performing at that time. The production of the printed materials is disembodied because the action is already frozen in the signs produced with writings and pictures identifying and acknowledging the performer. This disembodied mode is however, used in real time to show solidarity and this establishes the performative nature of the audience involvement in the performance. These modes reveal that the audience are positively engaged with the performance and since they have no opportunity to present a structured talk in the studio, they express themselves through print which co-occurs perfectly with spoken language used by the performer without interrupting the performance.

The studio audience and faculty members also join in the co-construction of the higher level action, singing with the contestants by standing, clapping and dancing. The use of their body in the process signals a subjective mode of engagement which captures physicality and sensations associated with the performance. In these images, the audience adopts open posture and gesture which reveal the intensity of their engagement with the performances. Faculty members, who usually get involved at the critical level, also join in the use of their body to show how impressed they are about the performance.

Image six is an example of performative engagement where contestants not on probation are given the opportunity to vote for the candidate they will like to retain in the academy. As captured in the image, each contestant has a board on which they are to write the name of the person they want to save. By writing and revealing the name as seen in the image, the co-contestants identify with the performance of the contestant on stage and in the academy and therefore are involved at a level of engagement which is termed performative. This cannot be regarded as critical engagement because there is no form of verbal assessment or explanation provided for the choice. Therefore, it is believed that their assessments are impressionistic and are most likely determined by relationships with the candidates in the academy. The choice of a candidate as worthy of continuing in the academy implies being positively engaged with the activities of the contestant on stage and in the academy and the person with the highest number

of vote can be identified as the person with more positive engagement index. Such a contestant is saved and allowed to continue in the academy.

The judges and the faculty members in the show use performative engagement when they need to save a contestant. Usually, the name of the saved contestant is mentioned and this can be accompanied by an explanation which often serves as critical engagement. In excerpts seven, the judge asks a question whose answer will be the candidate they have saved. The question is supposed to be rhetorical but by answering it, he combines critical engagement with performative engagement. One important point here is that the outcome of the judges' critical engagement with the performances of the contestants determines their performative engagement. On the engagement spectrum, the judges only save a candidate who has impressed them by their performance. Therefore, they are positively engaged with such performance. The faculty also get involved at the performative level when they have to save a contestant from eviction. In excerpt eight, a faculty member designated to express the opinion of the faculty engages in a discussion which also models after a general assessment of the performances. Her explanation captures the fact that their performative engagement has to be a product of their critical engagement. Therefore, their other engagement which could be interactive and emotional has to be put aside. Positive engagement spectrum in performative engagement indicates negative engagement with the other contestants on probation because the choice of one excludes the others.

Mediated Engagement

Television and social media audience of the show have indirect experiences of the performances in the show. This is because the content of the performances is mediated by the television or other technologies such as the social media, phones and so on. Despite the fact that they do not participate in the live performances, their role and responses as participants cannot be overemphasized. The TV/social media audience affirm their participation in the show through their feedback which is mediated. The feedback is given in the form of votes for their favourite contestants and sometimes comments through the social media. Voting for a contestant is a very crucial form of engagement in the show because it is one of the ways contestants are eliminated from the show. Judges place contestants on probation or sometimes contestants go on probation if they have lower votes compared to that of the other contestants in the show. Hence, the television audience have the power to place on probation and also to save their favourite contestant when the judges place on probation. The result of the voting is usually announced by the anchors by showing the printed name of the contestants saved or with the list number of votes. What this means is that every other form of engagement which the TV/social media audience may have with the performance is frozen in the disembodied mode; print which summarises the impression of the TV/social media audience about a particular contestant. Some of these are captured in the images below:

Image ten: Print presenting mediated engagement



Some members of the audience monitor the contestants from social media through live streaming and comments from other people. These help shape their opinion about the contestants and the show and it also allows them to participate more actively by stating individually what they think about the show or the contestants. Some of the comments are captured in the images below:

Image Seven: Mediated comments on Facebook

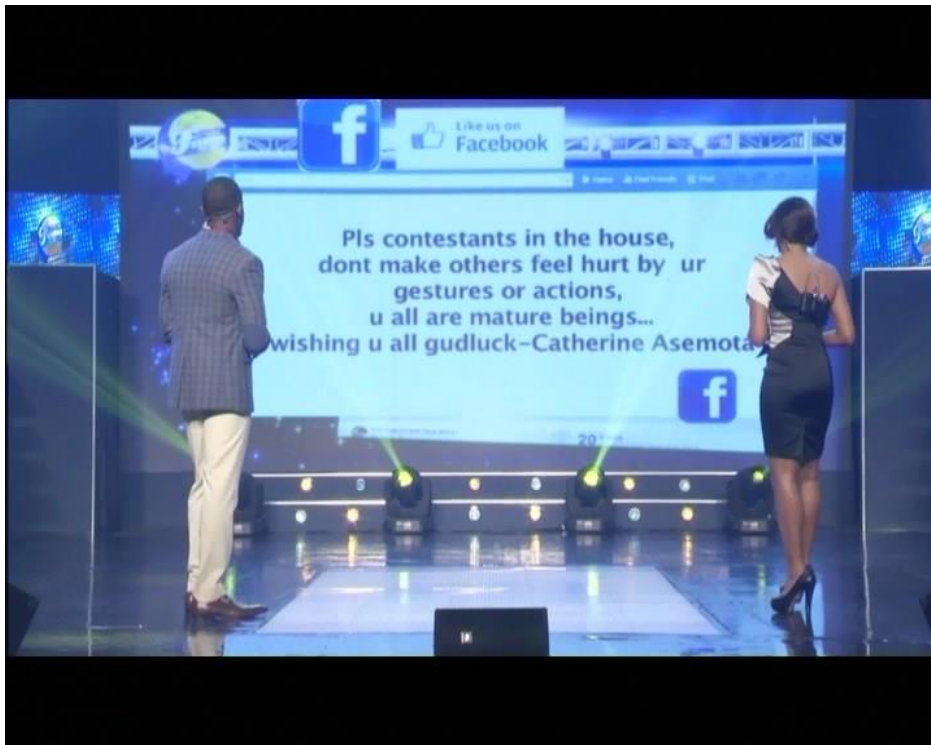
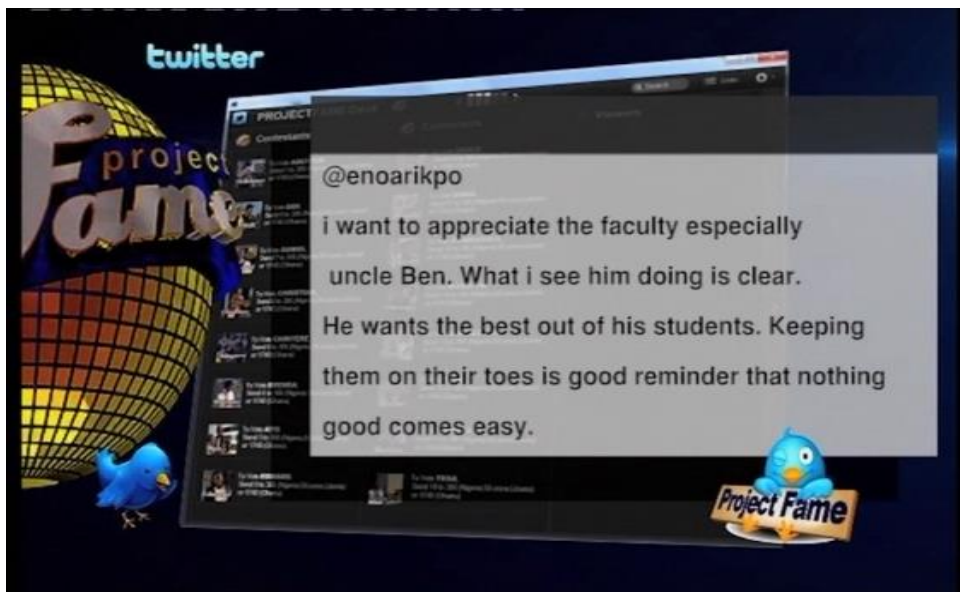


Image eight: Mediated comment on Twitter



The show producers make available feedback mechanisms other than voting to know how involved the audience are and what they think about the program. Image seven reflects the comment of a member of the audience on facebook which centres on the behaviour of the contestants. Before this comment can be made, the encoder must have seen the behaviour of the contestants through a mediated mode either television or life streaming of the daily shows and make a critical assessment of the behaviour. This mediated experience engenders mediated engagement through which critical engagement and positive engagement spectrum are revealed. This mediation is very important as it presents the only avenue for audience members to verbalise their thoughts on the content of the show.

Image eight is a comment from twitter. Image eight has the content that focuses on a members of the faculty. One of the faculty members is applauded for the effort expended on the contestants. The reference to the contestants as students reinforces that MTN PFWA engages the contestants in teaching and learning which gives the show an interesting outlook, especially in the star making process. The mediated engagement here also reveals positive engagement through positive identification with the faculty members. It is important to state that this type of engagement by the audience is indirect as they neither experience the performances first hand nor concentrate on assessing the performances of the contestants. Therefore, mediated engagement serve as feedback for the entire show and not just the performances of the contestants.

Conclusion

The study concentrated on the modes of engagement found in MTN PFWA, a music reality show in West Africa. It identifies three unique modes of engagement in the show. The first is critical engagement which is evaluative in nature while the second is performative and it reflects the emotional response of the audience to the show. The third mode of mediated engagement whose content comes through to the participants through a mediated means. The study identifies that before audience members can engage with the performance or the show at any of these levels, they must identify with the content on a spectrum which can be positive or negative. We also found out that there is a connection between the mode of engagement, the spectrum of engagement and language use. It is clear from the analysis that participants rely on both embodied and disembodied modes to express the nature of their engagement with the show. Without these resources, audience will not be possible to express what they feel about a performance of the show in general. Therefore, we aver that language is an important tool for constructing audience engagement narratives and to the understanding of modes and spectrums of engagement.

In addition to this, a connection between modes and spectrum of audience engagement is established. When audience members are involved in critical and performative engagement, both the negative and positive spectrums of engagement are revealed. This is because they can either identify emotionally with the performance or get emotionally disengaged. This study has expanded Hill (2017) by investigating similar concerns in a different form of talent hunt which

is music reality show. While the spectrum of engagement remains positive or negative, this study found modifications to the modes of engagement in MTN PFWA. This asserts that the type of talent reality show and the audience it attracts determine the modes of engagement by the audience of the show and confirms Michelle's (2009) submission that audience may adopt different modes of engagement in the media.

Like Lunt (2004, p. 329), we assert that liveness in reality TV engenders the display of 'live, real-time, relatively unconstrained and apparently spontaneous social interaction'. Much more than this, the structure of music reality shows as seen in the data analysed is such that there are more structured reactions than the spontaneous interaction. Critical engagement and some performative engagement are crucial evaluative engagements not done haphazardly but is allowed to emerge from a holistic evaluation of a performance. Also, mediated engagement is not spontaneous since the audience evaluates different aspect of the show before sending in their comments. This study argues that audience engagement is the life blood of reality shows because the show thrives on feedbacks from different categories of audience without which the show cannot progress or be successful. In addition, the findings of this study imply that audience perceive the content of the show as authentic; this is why they can adopt the different modes of engagement found in the study. This is a departure from the pessimism reported by some studies (Hill, 2005; Mathjs & Hessel, 2004) about the authenticity of reality shows' content in audience response.

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