

Photography and the use of photographs in photoplay magazines: An analysis of *Atóka*, a photoplay magazine

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Received: 15 August, 2022 | Accepted: 13 October, 2022 | Published: 18 November, 2022

Abstract: Right from primitive times to date, the means of communication among men have been changing. The circle of change entails the period pictorial representations were used to communicate. It gravitated to the use of the photographs to pass messages when the first clear and permanent photographs were made in 1839. Today, photographs still communicate. At a time in Nigeria, drama was transmitted through the photoplay magazine. This has warranted this study which focused on *Atóka*, a Yorubá photoplay magazine produced in Lagos, Southwest Nigeria from 1967-1991. It is a quantitative study that was hinged on Lookism theory. The study set out to ascertain if *Atóka* photoplay magazine performed the functions of photographs in print communication; determine the extent photoplay magazine is a viable tool for drama presentation, and confirm if magazine design principles were adhered to in *Atóka* photoplay magazine. The study period was 1984-1989. Results revealed that *Atóka* photoplay magazine played the role of photographs in print communication. Also, the photoplay magazine remains a viable tool for drama presentation. The study concluded that the place of drama and communication in the life of man can never be wished away due to their importance. Therefore, it was recommended that photoplay magazines should be resuscitated, and there should be English and various language versions, and that play texts for schools, particularly secondary and tertiary institutions, should be made into photoplay magazine forms.

Keywords: *Atóka*, Drama, Photograph, Photography, Photoplay, Magazine

1. Introduction

Drama, on its own, is a means of communication (Ibagere, 2010; Guanah, 2021a; Nwabueze, 2019). However, its communicative prowess is further enhanced when it is presented through media like radio, book (text), television, or film. Drama is a branch of the traditional media. It is a powerful force and a social transformer, as well as a helpful weapon in the national debate and social criticism. According to Ayakoroma (2022), drama is vital to national development and every dramatic production tackles social, cultural, political and religious concerns in specific countries, among other subject preoccupations, to offer the audience something to think about. According to Aristotle (as cited in Ayakoroma, 2022), drama is someone in a circumstance who expresses something in some way someplace. Drama has previously been broadcast to audiences by radio, book (text), television, or cinema.

Another means of presenting drama, which is seldom explored today, but which possesses the ability to expand otherwise limited viewing performances to broader audiences is through the photoplay magazine. According to Miller (2002), the term *photoplay* was first coined in the early Hollywood film industry and used from the 1910s through the 1940s to describe primarily literary novels that were adapted from popular *films* and sold to audiences as aftermarket merchandise. This effective means of presenting drama is unique because of the elaborate use of photographs. Photoplay magazines reproduce the photographic exactitude of a drama performance.

Note that a photograph is so powerful that it qualifies as both a medium and a message in communication. As a 'medium' it is a means through which information can be passed, and as a 'message' it can communicate on its own easily. It can entertain, inform, educate, as well as persuade (Guanah, 2014). Television or film is motion while a photograph is 'still', hence it is called 'still photograph.' Photographs make a book, newspaper, or magazine to be attractive to media content consumers because of the beautiful photographs their covers are always adorned with. A photograph possesses the seven Cs that make communication to be attained, as espoused by Okoro (as cited in Nwanne, 2011) thus: Candidness, Clarity, Completeness, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, and Courteousness.

Just as art can be used as a tool to question ones curiosity about the society he finds himself (Oppong, Adom & Azaglo, 2022), and pass information, photographs do not only pass information, they also serve as historical materials. The same way sculptures carry the rich cultures and identities of the indigenes, and can last for many years (Appiah, 2022), which, according to Hall (1997, as cited in Azaglo, Adom, Adu-Agyem & Opoku-Mensah, 2022), is important in the preservation and promotion of cultural values and knowledge, so also, old photographs enable us to go back memory lane to recount where we were as per historic visual records which serve as a historical document of a person, city, or nation. That is to say, a photograph today becomes a document tomorrow. This makes Don Barber, a Nigerian veteran photographer declares that "photography is a form of documentation; it is the best form of documentation compared to writing and others" (Mbamalu, 2008: 57).

Therefore, when drama and photographs are combined in communicating a message, the effects are bound to be positively effective, resounding, and lasting. Further, communication becomes a three-pronged-tack-team (drama, photograph, and magazine) when it is presented through the print magazine. When a play is presented via photographs in a print magazine, it automatically becomes a photoplay magazine. Simply put, a photoplay magazine is a magazine that explicitly presents drama/play through photographs. In photoplay magazines, photographs showing the actors are used in the frames provided on each page.

In Nigeria, in the late 1960s into the 1970s, and late 1980s, the Yoruba genre of photoplay magazine held sway, especially in the South-west part of the country. The most popular one was called *Atóka*. Popular dramatists of that time, including Hubert Ogunde, Lére Paímó, Is o lá Ogúns o lá (Dr. I Sho Pepper), Kólá Ogúnmólá, Dúró Ladipo, Adébáyo Fáléti', Akin Ogúngbe, and Babá Salá (Moses O láiyá), and others featured in most of this publication. Taiwo Obe attests that *Atoka* was a veritable platform for the works of Yoruba travelling theatre (Alárinjó) icons such as Kola Ogunmola, Oyin Adejobi, and Isola Ogunsola. Akangbé (2012) notes that *Atóka* was well circulated all over Nigeria and across the West African Coast. Its circulation and consumption extended to urban areas, semi-urban areas and rural areas. Though the era of *Atóka* photoplay magazine tends to have elapsed, however, this write-up took a retrospective look at the use of photographs in *Atóka* when it lasted.

Apart from the now common means of using the stage, film, radio, and television to display drama, photoplay magazine seems to have been neglected. This is in spite of the fact that is a perfect means of passing salient messages through drama. Added to this, the ease to snap photographs nowadays, and utilise them in various forms, like in producing photoplay magazines, made available by new media technologies are not being adequately explored by dramatists. This paper highlighted the importance of photographs and their uses in communication. The objectives were to: (i) ascertain if *Atóka* photoplay magazine performed the functions of photographs in print communication, (ii) determine the extent photoplay magazine is a viable tool for drama presentation, and (iii) confirm if magazine design principles were adhered to in *Atóka* photoplay magazine.

2. Theoretical infrastructure

This study is guided by Lookism theory. According to the Collins English Dictionary (2014), the term *Lookism* is prejudice against a person based on their physical appearance, and it occurs in practically every field of human

endeavour. Though the word "lookism" is a new creation, Tietje and Cresap (2005) argue that civilisations and traditions all around the globe have long advised against placing disproportionate weight on physical beauty. Lookism, according to Hosoda, Stone-Romero and Coats (2003), has received less cultural attention than other forms of discrimination (such as racism and sexism), and it often lacks the legal protections that other forms do, but it is still widespread and has a significant impact on people's romantic relationships, job opportunities, and other aspects of life.

The word "lookism" gained popularity in the 1970s amid the "fat acceptance movement," (Ayto, 1999). It was first used in 1978 in The Washington Post Magazine, which claimed that the phrase was coined by overweight individuals to allude to "discrimination based on appearance." Fatphobia, teratophobia, cacophobia, and lookism are all names that have some overlap with lookism (Scherer, 2017; Narozny, Kuczkowski & Mikaszewski, 2005). Lookism is a kind of oppression that entails placing an excessive amount of value on one's physical appearance (Beck, 2020), and Smith College used the word "lookism," as used in Baird, Thonssen, Braden and Peterson (1942), to warn new students in 1990.

Physical beauty is linked to good characteristics, whilst physical unattractiveness is linked to bad characteristics. Many individuals form opinions about others based on their physical appearance, which has an impact on how they respond to them. According to research on the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype, those who are physically handsome benefit from their good looks in general: physically attractive people are seen more favourably, and physical beauty has a considerable impact on a person's competency evaluation (Eagly, Makhijani & Longo, 1991). Furthermore, research reveals that handsome people have more friends, have greater social skills, and have more active sex lives on average (Rhodes, Simmons & Peters, 2005).

Lookism, according to Grollman (2018), has attracted scholarly attention from both cultural studies and an economics standpoint. Lookism refers to preconceived ideals of attractiveness and cultural stereotyping based on appearance, as well as gender roles and expectations, in the former context. The subject of pay disparities based on appearances, as well as enhanced or decreased productivity from people deemed attractive or ugly by their co-workers, are all important economic factors. According to Etcoff (2000), author of *Survival of the Prettiest*, human preference for attractiveness is rooted in evolutionary instinct, and preventing it from influencing people would be "telling them to stop enjoying food, sex, novelty, or love," and thus "being beautiful and being valued for it is not a social evil" (Etcoff, 2000).

This theory is relevant to this study because magazines emphasise beauty and aesthetics just like lookism. In fact, Christian, Adom and Adu-Agyem (2022) affirm that chiaroscuro technique (interplay of light and shade to achieve a three-dimensional effect; Adom, 2014 and Luzi (2017), as cited in Christian, Adom and Adu-Agyem, (2022: 45) has been used as a stylistic and narrative device of aesthetics throughout art since the 17th century, to help define several artistic genres and movements, and "has been experimented with, for several purposes in different fields, from imaging through; drawing, painting, photography, and time-based media such as movies and animations".

Photography and photographs are about beauty. A photograph can beautifully capture an 'ugly' object and situation, and bring the beauty out of them. The fact that magazines like *Atoka* emphasise beauty/aesthetics is confirmed by Nwanne (2011) who avows that a badly produced newspaper or magazine would greatly jeopardise the publication in question with the result that readability is impaired while readership may reduce. The theory is also applicable since the print media (magazine inclusive) appeal to the sense of sight (Nwagbara, as cited in Nwudu, 2011). The 'sharpness' and 'beauty' qualities of a photograph make it attractive and desired by people. When these qualities are seen in the photographs used in the photoplay magazine, it makes potential readers be attracted to the magazine, and cause them to prefer them on the newsstands more than other magazines on display. Photographs make photoplay magazines arresting, attractive and memorable.

2.1. Photography and photographs in communication

Photography is a modern means of visual communication. The term 'photography' was first used by Sir John Hershel on March 14 1839 in a lecture for the Royal Society (Bittner, as cited in Nwudu, 2011). The first clear and permanent photographs were made in 1839 by William Fox Talbot in England and Louis Daguerre in France. These two European inventors worked independently. Picture writing (or pictography), which is the first stage of true writing, consists of drawings displayed one after another to form a narrative or a chain of ideas. According to Barry, Bronowski, Fisher and Huxley (Guanah, 2016), the pictures themselves are simple, and show clearly what they represent- a man, a fish, a mountain, or whatever the subject is.

A pictograph is made up of chains or sequences of drawings that must convey concepts in the same way as languages do. As a result, when a culture reaches the level of pictography, it has attained genuine writing and the ability to record and communicate related concepts. Pictography was employed by many prehistoric peoples in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and it is still utilised in Central Africa, Siberia, and other places (Barry, Bronowski, Fisher & Huxley, as cited in Guanah, 2016). However, the arrival of photography and photographs has altered the status quo.

Today, photographs are utilised in all fields of human endeavour, be it engineering, journalism (photojournalism), advertising, tourism, oil and gas, and sundry others. Photography is an important tool, especially in the hands of the journalist. It is perhaps this tool that is facing the best and worst effects of modern technology in journalism (Matthew, as cited in Guanah & Ojo, 2018). Camera electronics now help with exposure and focusing by setting the best aperture and shutter speed combinations for almost any given situation with or without flash. It can also read the film speed automatically and do the settings accordingly. Also, digital cameras free users from darkroom processing and time-consuming manipulations with the enlarger.

Photographs communicate non-verbally. History has it that the ecclesiastical (Church) and the Secular (laity) were alleged to be the two worlds that existed in Europe, from the fall of the Roman Empire until toward the close of the Middle Ages. According to Barry, Bronowski, Fisher and Huxley (as cited in Guanah, 2016), the main medium of communication between them was the spoken word, alongside pictorial representations. According to Gbadegesin (2019), photos were more common in popular print media throughout Africa by the 1950s. Photographs were used to accompany graphic books that recounted dramatic pulp stories based on American models, and they were commonly seen in "modern" periodicals.

Photography as broad-based categories of specialisation, include portrait, fashion, underwater, weddings, product, freelancing, publications photography, photojournalism, and a lot more. In Nigeria, most photographers are into assignment photography whereby they get paid instantly for jobs done rather than practicing stock photography where they carry out their shootings based on speculation and hope that their products will be sold for profit-making. Photography is unique, because, as a photographer, you are solely in charge; you have independent control of what you are doing, though you may sometimes need one or two helping hands. It is not like in television or film where you work with others to achieve your goal. For this reason, a photographer should be skilled in using photographs to communicate.

For communication to be effective, the sender (encoder) and the receiver (decoder) of the message must depend on the same code. It must be a communication code both of them understand clearly. Every piece of information has to be turned into a code understood by both the sender and the receiver to bridge the distance between them. In the case of a photograph, it serves as both the code and the message because the meaning portrayed in the photo can be easily understood, especially if it is an action photo, as mostly used in photoplay magazines. The photograph fits well as a mode of communication because what people see informs and convinces them more than what they hear. The caption/cutline given to a photograph further gives meaning to it, making it a double-barrel information dispenser.

A newspaper or magazine intends to create an impact by attracting and catching the interest of readers at the first glance. Therefore, photos that captivate are those that bring out full dramatic effects. They must capture the mood of the subject matter, and the various moods if the subjects are more than one. A photo tells news stories via the camera. This is true about the photoplay magazine that tells its stories through photographs. Hence, Adéléké (as cited in Akangbé, 2012) recognises that the concept of photoplay is high and admirable since it demands less mental work in reading because it is pictorial, which improves non-literate audiences' comprehension. As a result, photoplay was able to reach out to towns and hamlets where no theatres existed. It acted as a filler between the audience and the dramatis personae.

2.2. Photoplay magazine and overview of *Atóka*

The English term *magazine* originally referred to a warehouse or storage facility, particularly for weaponry and ammunition. In the 18th century, the term "magazine" came to mean "a storehouse of knowledge or pleasure," particularly in the context of a periodical (Partridge, as cited in Okoye, 2004). The word is said to be etymologically derived from the French Arabic word 'Makhazine,' which signifies a storehouse containing a compilation of facts and fiction packed into one package. As a result, its application in journalism implies a content storehouse, so "a collection of published pieces."

A magazine, according to Akakwandu (2017), is just a periodical that is issued regularly and contains news, photographs, and advertisements. According to Wiki (as cited in Akakwandu, 2017), magazines are normally issued regularly and feature a diverse range of information. Magazines are popular press periodicals that feature articles authored by journalists or freelancers that gather material from a variety of sources and combine it into stories or reports. Magazines, then, are periodic periodicals that contain in-depth information on a topic or topics, as well as validating photographs and advertisements.

Nwabueze (2011) claims that magazines in Nigeria did not enjoy early popularity in the media industry, as newspapers did, and that it was not until the 1970s that magazines began to get a foothold in the nation. During the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, early magazines such as *The Nigerian Gazette* (first published in 1900D), *The Nigerian Magazine* (1927), *The African Challenge* (1947), *The Drum* (1964), *The African Mirror* (1960), *Africa* (1960), and *Spear Magazine* (1961), among others, had little impact as viable mass media tools (Nwabueze, 2011). Some of them were only temporary.

Magazines began to have an influence in the media circle in the 1970s, according to Nwabueze (2011), as they increased and became stronger by the day. They began to appeal to a broader range of people. *Modern Women* (1970), *Today's Woman* (1970), *Happy Home and Family* (1971), *Lagos Life* (1972), *New Breed* (1972), *Times International* (1974), *African Concord* (1986), *African Science Monitor* (1986), and *African Economic Digest* (1986) were among the titles that not only established but also nurtured true magazine journalism in Nigeria.

For the photoplay magazine, it gives drama an added dimension of performance by allowing dramatists' actions to be captured in 'still' form, which can later be viewed, unlike the stage drama that is transient when not recorded with a motion camera, or any other form of storage. The types of photographs used in photoplay magazines are mainly the aware photo, the semi-aware, the arranged photo and dramatic photo while the actors are naturally playing their roles without taking into consideration per se that they are being photographed. They perform their stage delivery acts the way they should be done professionally, purposively not giving a hoot to the clicking cameras so as not to get out of character. Akangbé (2012: 141) cites Ogúndeji as recounting his interview with Eniolá Adéyemi, the editor of *Atóka* in July 1981, where he revealed that, "when photoplay magazine started, the dramatic dialogue was usually recorded on a tape while the play was being shot and it was later transcribed and slotted into proper positions when coordinating the pictures".

According to Miller (2002), even though the photographic panels were sorted in order, multiple appeared on a single page at the same time, ready to be seen concurrently and quickly. In reality, this was one of the primary

differences between photoplays and other types of story creation at the time. They allowed viewers greater freedom in how they interacted with the story since they gave them immediate access. Each photoplay began with a brief written prologue that explained the story's concept in a third-person perspective, addressed an external audience, and set the stage for the rest of the story. Photoplays have an integrating aspect; they may make esoteric content accessible to a "common" audience (Karin Barber, as cited in Gbadegesin (2017)). The photographer must communicate and bridge the gap between the audience and the actors in photoplay magazines. Hence, Guanah (2021a) posits that a photograph serves as a medium of communication to promote the creative industry. Through it, creative artists create buzz about their acts and connect with fans on a personal level.

The West African Book Publishers Limited-WABP (2022) pioneered the publishing of books and magazines of international standard in Nigeria. In 1964, it published 'Yoruba Ronu', a photoplay magazine edited by the late dramatist, Hubert Ogunde. Following the success of this entertainment publication, two other photoplay magazines, *Atoka* and *Magnet*, were introduced to the Nigerian market in 1967 (West African Book Publishers Limited- WABP, 2022). *Atoka* was published by West African Book Publishers (WABP) and printed by their sister company, Academy Press in Lagos, Nigeria. Ogundeji (as cited in Akangbé, 2012) affirms that *Atoka* photoplay magazine, was also referred to as *iwé eré oní fótó*. Roland Barthes (as cited in Gbadegesin, 2017) refers to it as '*iwe ere alaworan*', this indicates a creation that is more linked with the methodological area that Barthes has described as "texts," rather than the traditional concept of a literary work. The terms *iwe* (or "book"), *ere* (or "book of watching a play"), and *alaworan* (or "book of watching a play") identify the many expressive forms at work in photoplays, as well as photoplay as a "book" through which one may experience a play, comparable to a live interaction, a cross-genre inference.

Atoka started with Ogunde's topical political play *Yorubá Ronú* in 1967. The plays in *Atoka* were broadly categorised into historical, mythical, love, religious and political plays. It was a bi-monthly magazine that ran virtually uninterrupted for 22 years before it went defunct having produced numerous plays which included *Akọ wé Elépo*, *Alaáfin Aganjú*, *Aṣí'ri' Babá Ibeji*, *Baṣ ọ run Gáá*, *Béyíi o se*, *Fári'oro*, *Ile kun Aṣ eju*, *Iyá Aláduúra*, *Iyako Abẹ ró*, *Ọ ba Mọró*, *Obinrin Asiko*, *Yorubá Ronú*, *Alaáfin Aganjú*, *Basorun Gáá*, *Oba Mọró*.

The Yorubá Photoplay Series, according to Gbadegesin (2017), arose from the junction of print and visual culture, another synthesis of genres. He claims it arose from a variety of literary and non-literary materials, methods, and situations that resonated profoundly with pseudo-literate, yet intensely involved, co-creative audiences at the time of colonial independence. The readers of *Atoka*, who were mostly Yorubá native speakers or those who chose Yorubá as a second language, could read and write, at least to some extent, particularly in Yorubá. This gave them access to *Atoka* publications and allowed them to interpret the publications (Akangbé, 2012).

Photoplay magazines have the potential to be great forums for nation-building. If their potentials are effectively utilised, they can contribute appropriately to the growth of any given civilisation, just like any other medium of communication. This is because development communication encompasses all forms of communication that might aid in development. A good photograph may transmit crucial information easily and successfully pass over a message that several writings in text form and spoken word cannot give owing to its aesthetic qualities, depending on how it is shot and positioned in the photoplay magazine.

Photoplay magazine has a place in promoting and bringing about achievements in all facets of life, for instance, when citizens glean development information from them, and align themselves with such information, it brings about the rapid growth of the society. This assertion agrees with the position of Guanah, Obi and Osafire (2019) who declare that national language newspapers, for instance, bring about bonding between the readers and the newspapers, because the readers see them (the papers) as their own. Since they are published in their native dialects, they consider them as authentic sources of information they can rely on.

Photoplay magazines can be used to promote the spirit of *Ubuntu*, which is an African philosophy on the practice of humanity and social affection for one another (Chukwuere, 2022). Just as the speeches of great African leaders like Obafemi Awolowo, Leopold Sengor, Kwame Nkrumah, Nyerere, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nelson Mandela, and many others, which were laced with the spirit of *Ubuntu*, were broadcast through the radio, television, printed newspapers, magazines, and other outlets, so too can the photoplay magazine perform the same feat.

3. Research methodology

A survey research design was utilised for this study. For the fact that *Atòka* magazine is now defunct, there was the need to look for only those in the academia who read it while it existed and still have old copies in their libraries.

Through rigorous search, five lecturers each from the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Lagos-Nigeria; University of Ibadan (UNIBAN), Ibadan-Nigeria, and University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), Ilorin-Nigeria, were purposively selected for this study. Two of the lecturers from UNILAG are from the Department of Theatre Arts while two are from the Department of Mass Communication, and one from the Department of Linguistics, African and Asian Studies (with a specialty in Yoruba). Two of the lecturers from UNIBAN are from the Department of Theatre Arts while two are from the Department of Communication Arts, and one from the Department of Linguistics and African Languages (with a specialty in Yoruba). Two of the lecturers from UNILORIN are from the Department of Theatre Arts while two are from the Department of Mass Communication, and one from the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages (with a specialty in Yoruba). These three universities are located in the Yoruba-speaking region of Nigeria where *Atòka* photoplay magazine was very popular. The magazine was published in the Yoruba language.

These fifteen lecturers formed the population as well as the sample size of the study, and these were the respondents given copies of the questionnaire (data collection instrument) to fill. The decision to use this small figure of the population is justified by a scholar like Guanah (2021b: 46) who opines that "... when an entire population is not very large, it doubles as both the population and the sample of the study". This view is also supported by Ifeakor (Ifeakor, 2009).

In the quarter of a century that *Atòka* existed (1967-1989 = 22years), WABP produced a total of one hundred and twenty (120) volumes which numbered four hundred and thirty (430) editions. However, the period of this study is from 1984-1989. A total number of 100 copies of *Atòka* photoplay magazine were analysed. The results were presented in simple percentages and frequency.

4. Data presentation and analysis

Table 1: Performance of the functions of photographs in print communication by *Atòka* photoplay magazine

Responses	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	12	80
Agree	2	13.33
Undecided	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	1	6.67
Total	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 indicates that the photographs used in *Atòka* photoplay magazine performed the functions of photographs in print communication. What this implies is that there are some specific functions that photographs are expected to perform when they are used in newspapers, magazines, books, newsletters, and

other print communication, and these functions were achieved by *Atòka* photoplay magazine. This is buttressed by the record of 93.33% of the respondents who agreed to the postulation that the magazine indeed performed the functions of photographs in print communication.

Table 2: The extent photoplay magazine is a viable tool for drama presentation

Responses	Frequency	%
Very High Extent	11	73.33
High Extent	2	13.33
Undecided	0	0
Low Extent	1	6.67
Very Low Extent	1	6.67
Total	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data from Table 2 show that the photoplay magazine is a viable tool for drama presentation. Usually, drama are presented via the stage, films, live streaming on social media, radio, television, and so on; this makes the photoplay magazine a unique way of presenting drama. The interpretation of this table is that photoplay magazine can still be effectively used to present drama just as much as the other above mentioned avenues.

Table 3: Maybe magazine design principles were adhered to in *Atòka* photoplay magazine

Responses	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	8	53.33
Agree	3	20
Undecided	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	6.67
Disagree	3	20
Total	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The data gleaned from Table 3 imply that 73.33% of respondents agree that magazine design principles were adhered to in *Atòka* photoplay magazine. To achieve effective communication through photographs in print, there are some design principles like placement, contrast, and others that must be followed; the table above revealed that these design factors were adequately taken into consideration in the *Atòka* photoplay magazine.

5. Discussion of findings

In the attempt to ascertain if *Atòka* photoplay magazine performed the functions of photographs in print communication, the finding affirmed that, of a truth, it did. This is consistent with the stand of Nwanne (2011) who declares that, indeed, photographs, in addition to passing across vital information which words might not capture, provide great relief and entertainment to the readers which no amount of description would adequately portray. This finding is also in tandem with the position of Bell (as cited in Nwudu, 2011) that, “pictures show things happening or the effect of something that has just happened or even the actors of a particular action” (p. 19). This implies that the roles and functions of photographs in the dissemination of information cannot be overemphasised.

The functions of the photograph in print communication include the beautification of a newspaper, newsletter, or magazine page; enhancing believability and credibility of the story it complements, adding value to a news story, and making a clear meaning in the context of use. Levin (2000) lists other functions of photographs in print the print media to include: communication, credibility, virtual appeal, and vitality. With the volume of photographs in a photoplay magazine page, monotony is broken, and the dialogue that comes under the photographs in form of cutline is complemented. The *Atòka* photoplay magazines that were analysed were found to have performed these functions.

Photographs have an impact on readers, and at first impressions, they must be able to attract their interest and hold their attention immediately. Therefore, photographs in all print communication, including photoplay magazines, should be able to pass information in simple forms for the readers to comprehend easily. As Nwanne (2011: 13) rightly observes:

Nobody is compelled to read any newspaper or magazine or to listen to radio, or watch television. However, the audience can be encouraged to expose themselves to the various media if they find them aesthetically pleasing.... on the whole, the media should encourage their audiences to read, listen or watch them with pleasure; not with pain.

The second objective of this study was to determine the extent photoplay magazine is a viable tool for drama presentation. It was discovered that photoplay magazine remains a worthwhile avenue through which drama can be presented. This finding agrees with the outcome of the study of Akangbé (2012) who reports that notable theatre troupes and companies like Kòlá Ogúnmolá, Akin Ogúngbe, Hubert Ogunde, Léré Paí mó, Iş olá Ogúns olá, Dúró Ladipò, Adébáyò Fáléti', and Babá Salá (Moses O láiyá) performed in the photoplay magazine.

It is not only a viable tool for drama presentation, but also a means through which drama propagates our culture (Obe, 2021; Akangbé, 2012), and brings to the front burner of national discourse salient issues that affect the well-being of citizens. Gbadegesin (2009: 2) asserts that *Atòka* was part of a continent-wide phenomenon of "photonovels" that stood out by using:

photographs to address local audiences through sensory (visual, oral, etc), didactic (moral, comedic, etc.) and discursive (political, religious, etc) registers. Amid historical debates about modernist consciousness, class, consumerism, and nationalism, *Atoka* offered an informal and highly dialogic space for public discourse.

During the early days of *Atòka* in Nigeria, film was rarely available, apart from the stage and television. It was the major alternative to access drama, especially for Yoruba literate in rural areas from where people ordered copies from the cities.

Just like film, TV, stage, and radio, photoplay magazines cannot only be used to present drama, but also to preserve it. Unlike the transient stage drama and films, TV and radio drama that cannot be accessed without electricity (even when it is stored in an electrical device, the device also needs to be powered by electricity), photoplay magazine can be retrieved and referred to at any point in time. An advantage is that lack of electricity does not affect the photoplay magazine because it is already in printed form. Its tangibility puts it far ahead of others.

The third objective sort to confirm if magazine design principles were adhered to in *Atòka* photoplay magazine. Data gathered from the field showed that 73.33% of respondents agree that magazine design principles were adhered to in *Atòka* photoplay magazine. This is akin to the way Brako and Gilbert (2022) analysed the aesthetics in the elements and principles of design in scenic design for TV3 Ghana's Most Beautiful 2017 reality TV show. Azaglo and Kemevor (2022) also agree that analysing and appreciating a work

of art requires evaluating the work in the context of some elements and principles, to ensure they are well organised.

In magazine production, design is a plan or scheme that helps to define the communication objective of the magazine. A good design (layout), can do wonders with an uninteresting photograph just as a bad layout can equally murder good pictures. The design identifies the target audience of any particular magazine. Design helps to illuminate the communication strategy of the magazine, and also presents the magazine in an unambiguous perspective.

In a newspaper or magazine, photos are used to decorate their pages or break up columns of type in an article. Page design is achieved by varying the sizes, shapes, tones, contrasts, borders, and positions of a photograph concerning other photographs. Nwammuo, Nwanolue and Obi (2019) identify the principles that help page designers in designing pages of all print publications and the web as balance, contrast, focus, proportion, unity, and motion or rhythm. However, Akakwandu (2017) lists the following as principles of design for magazines: contrast, balance, repetition/consistency, proportion, dominance, unity, and colour.

Contrast is achieved by using different typefaces, columns, italics, and other elements to distinguish one material from another to establish emphasis. It occurs when distinct columns are employed to illuminate their meanings to increase aesthetic value and content understanding. Size, tone, and subject contrast may all be used to create contrast. The arrangement of words and pictures in composition under their visual weight is referred to as *balance*. Balance is aesthetically pleasing; it enhances the page's appeal by making it more intriguing and appealing. *Repetition* or *Consistency* of styles or formats helps to tie and integrate body text and pictures. Repetition aids in the management of the reader's eye and the retention of their attention in the magazine page's visual subject. The color, aesthetics, and typefaces are all heavily influenced by this.

On a page, *proportion* refers to having one prominent element that aids in achieving focus. This prominent element must be placed in the optical viewing center, which is two-thirds of the page that is the most visually lively. It controls the eye's mobility. The accentuated text or picture is referred to as *dominance*. It's the varying degrees of design attention. This is why a certain photograph or image dominates a magazine's cover page.

The use of the same fonts and colours to convey the same message is referred to as *unity*. It implies that contrast may be utilised to promote unity as well. *Colour* is used to draw attention to certain parts, such as headlines and subheadings. Colour draws attention, indicates where the reader should look first, produces a picture or a mood, connects the layout, organizes, groups, or isolates items, and elicits emotions. From the foregoing analysis, as they relate to copies of the *Atòka* photoplay magazines studied, it can be said that they largely adhered to the principles of magazine design.

6. Recommendations

- i. Photoplay magazines should be resuscitated, and there should be English and various language versions.
- ii. Play texts for schools, particularly secondary and tertiary institutions, should be made into photoplay magazine forms.
- iii. Playwrights should adopt photoplay in publishing their works as an alternative to the book form they use at present. This will encourage and attract more readers as it enhances readers' friendliness and easy comprehension of plays.
- iv. Modern technologies should be utilised in producing photoplay magazines, and the magazine should be used to promote, sustain, and preserve our culture and traditions.
- v. Further research areas should be on how photoplay magazines can survive in the midst of technology, and how up-coming dramatists can revive photoplay magazines.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown that the place of drama and communication in the life of man can never be wished away due to their importance. It showed that through the use of photographs and photoplay magazines to present dramas that discuss salient issues that affect society, our culture and traditions can be sustained and preserved. This aligns with the position of Anyanwu, Chukueggu and Orubu (2022) that traditional motifs and their cultural meanings can be used to conserve, preserve, and arrest drifting cultural values and traditional cultural properties.

Albeit Lére Pai mó, one of the dramatists that were actively involved in Atóka photoplay magazine production before it went moribund, revealed to Adéoye (as cited in Akangbé, 2012), that he (Lére Pai mó) was discouraged about Atóka photoplay because much energy and time was wasted and less amount was realised, and that Atóka took more effort, and its production was slow, time-consuming and very cumbersome, yet its production can be sustained with the advent of new technologies like the digital camera which can make the production of photoplay magazines easier with better quality of photographs, even with phone cameras.

The limitations of this study included that there were not enough old editions of the **Atóka photoplay magazines** for the researcher to study and analyse. Added to this was the non-availability of ample respondents to react to the questionnaire; some of them that were initially selected neither spoke nor understood the Yoruba language with which the magazine was published.

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