

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK  
AND THE CHALLENGES OF ENFORCEMENT FOR  
BREACH OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN THE  
ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA**

**Isa Yusuf\***

**Abstract**

Entertainment law involves a dexterous interplay of contract law, labour or employment law, fashion law, intellectual property law, sports law and many others. This paper discusses intellectual property rights in the entertainment industry in Nigeria with the objective of analysing existing rights and the various legal remedies (both civil and criminal) in an event of breach. Therefore, the article's method of research which is doctrinal highlighted laws relevant for the protection of intellectual property in entertainment industry such as the provisions of the Copyright Act, Trademark Act and Patent and Design Act, with a view to finding the challenges of enforcement for the breach of the rights. It is the finding of this paper that, there is dearth of judicial decisions on enforcement of intellectual property rights in the entertainment industry; and the lack of forethought on the part of legislators to develop an up-to-date and robust entertainment law; that necessitated lawyers to utilize a combination of intellectual property laws and principles of contract to depend the interest of their clients. Hence, this paper recommends for the need to have a specialised law on entertainment industry that reflects on national values, religion and local cultures.

**Keywords:** Challenge, Enforcement, Entertainment, Framework, Regulatory

---

\* PhD, (ABU) Zaria; senior lecture, YSU/Head corporate practice, Ibrahim Muaz & Co; +2349077214250, yusufisakano77@gmail.com.

## 1.1 Introduction

Over the past decade, the understanding of intellectual property and its economic benefits to the society have increased significantly. This is largely due to the expansion of research conducted across all disciplines.<sup>1</sup> One of the strengths and foundation of every civilization is its creativity, innovation and invention, which will invariably boost the economy of a nation.<sup>2</sup> Copyright is one of the fields of intellectual property dealing with creative works of human intellect. Copyright protection exists from the moment a work is created in a fixed and tangible form of expression and it is original. It relates to literary and artistic works. The aim of such protection is ensuring that no one reaps the fruits of another man's labour without authorization.

Entertainment law, also commonly referred to as media law or media and entertainment law is the entire collective mass of legal framework and services devoted to the entertainment industry. It involves the representation of artist and producers, the negotiations of contract and the protection of intellectual property rights.<sup>3</sup>

Entertainment law at its early stages of development is used to be considered indistinguishable from intellectual property law but in reality, the two are not conterminous; because intellectual property law is only an ambit of entertainment law. In theory and practice, entertainment law involves a dexterous interplay of contract law, labour or employment law, fashion law, intellectual property law, sports law, censorship law and many others.<sup>4</sup>

This Paper, therefore, discusses the various intellectual property protections in the entertainment industry in Nigeria, and examines the frameworks provided for an effective enforcement of rights as well as roles of statutory institutions in the industry.

---

<sup>1</sup> Xuan L, (et al) *Intellectual Property Enforcement: International Perspectives*, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 1999), Pp3-4

<sup>2</sup> Nwogu I.O. 'The Challenges of the NCC in the Fight against Copyright Piracy in Nigeria' (2022), *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, Vol.2 No 5, Pp 22-34

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pg. 38

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 13

## 1.2 Entertainment Law

Entertainment law is a broad area of law (with sub-areas) that regulate the activities and relationship, contractual otherwise within the entertainment industry. This part of the paper gives a general overview on the meaning of Entertainment law, types and areas of law closely associated with it. The Black's Law Dictionary defines Entertainment Law as:

the field of law dealing with the legal and business issues in the entertainment industry (such as film, music and theatre) and involving the representation of artists and producers, the negotiation of contract and the protection of intellectual property rights.<sup>5</sup>

It can be gleaned from the foregoing, that, Entertainment Law goes beyond intellectual property. It is the entirety of legal services devoted to the entertainment industry. Some writers like Jon M. Garon, see entertainment law from the perspective of regulations specifically designed to regulate the entertainment industries. It encompasses the entire legal framework and issues associated with the entertainment industry.<sup>6</sup>

The entertainment industry includes, *inter alia* (among others) the film, television, music recording, radio, theatre, publishing, and sports industries. These industries are often faced with certain commercial and business obligations and liabilities that necessarily involve various areas of law including, copyright, trademark, trade secret, rights of privacy and publicity, labour and employment, securities, tax, tort, corporate law, constitutional law and international law.

The sub-areas of entertainment law such as music law, art law, sports law and others are usually identified based on their respective roles in the entertainment industry; and the interplay of entertainment law with intellectual property law play a significant role in the protection of

---

<sup>5</sup> Bryan, A. G., *Black's Law Dictionary* 9th edn, (USA West Publishing Co, 2004) 611

<sup>6</sup> Jon, M. G., 'Entertainment Law' 76 (TULANE L. REV, 2002) 559, 561.

creative rights, such as copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets and patents.<sup>7</sup>

Legal issues may also arise as the result of an emergence and application of digital technology in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century in Nigeria that has not been adequately addressed by law/policy in the making of entertainment works. This spans from the production stage where formal contracts are drawn to set forth the respective rights of the parties involved in an entertainment work, to the licensing and distribution stage.<sup>8</sup>

### **1.3 Regulation of Entertainment Industry under Islamic Law**

Nigeria is a nation that comprised of different ethnicity and people practicing majorly Islam, Christianity and few practicing traditional worship. Therefore, it will never be out of place to mirror an entertainment industry under Islamic law. The regulation of the entertainment industry in Islam is guided by principles that promote modesty, morality, and the well-being of individuals and society. Here are some key aspects:

#### **a. Prohibited Content**

1. Obscenity and nudity: Depictions of explicit sexual content, nudity, or suggestive material are forbidden.
2. Blasphemy: Content that mocks or disrespects Islamic values, prophets, or sacred texts is prohibited.
3. Promotion of vice: Entertainment that encourages or glorifies sinful behaviour, such as gambling, alcohol consumption, or drug use, is not allowed.

#### **g. Permitted Content**

1. Educational programs: Content that promotes knowledge, skills, and moral values is encouraged.
2. Cultural and artistic expressions: Traditional Islamic art, music, and literature that adhere to moral guidelines are permitted.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 562

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 601

3. Entertainment with moral lessons: Programs that convey moral messages and promote virtuous behaviour are acceptable.

#### **c. Guidelines for Entertainment Venues**

1. Segregation: Separate areas for men and women are often required in public entertainment venues.

2. Modest dress code: Patrons and performers must adhere to modest dress codes.

3. No alcohol or gambling: These activities are strictly prohibited.

#### **d. Censorship and Regulation**

1. Government oversight: Many Islamic countries have censorship boards that review content for compliance with Islamic values.

2. Industry self-regulation: Some entertainment companies voluntarily adhere to Islamic guidelines to maintain social responsibility.

#### **Examples of Islamic Entertainment**

1. Halal film industry: Produces movies and TV shows that adhere to Islamic values.

2. Islamic music and nasheeds: Promote spiritual and moral messages through music.

3. Islamic art and calligraphy: Traditional art forms that reflect Islamic culture and values.

#### **e. Challenges and Controversies**

1. Balancing freedom of expression with moral guidelines: Regulators must navigate the fine line between artistic freedom and adherence to Islamic principles.

2. Cultural and social changes: The entertainment industry must adapt to evolving societal norms while maintaining Islamic values.

3. Globalization and foreign influence: The impact of international entertainment on local cultures and values is a concern.

#### **Notable Islamic Countries' Regulations**

1. Saudi Arabia: Strict regulations govern entertainment content, with a focus on promoting Islamic values.
2. Iran: The government closely monitors and censors entertainment content to ensure adherence to Islamic principles.
3. Malaysia: A mix of Islamic and secular regulations govern the entertainment industry.
4. Nigeria: A bicameral laws at national and sub-national level, almost secular in context, although consideration is sometimes giving to national values and standards or local cultures and setting.

#### **1.4 Entertainment Industry in Nigeria**

While the past decade proved favourable for the entertainment sector in Nigeria, the next promises to be even more favourable. The Nigerian Film Industry, popularly referred to as Nollywood is globally recognised as the second-largest film producing industry in the world.<sup>9</sup> The music industry which is manned by thousands of talented artists is projected to rise from 13.4% Compound Annual Growth Rate of \$73 million in 2021 to \$86.4 million in 2025.<sup>10</sup> The radio, video games and television aspects of the industry, have played their own roles in ensuring the industry's significance in the Nigerian economy.<sup>11</sup> The Entertainment Industry like every other industry with contractual and financial obligations requires law and lawyers to fulfil these obligations.

While there is no specific legislation on entertainment law in Nigeria, other legislations ancillary to the activities connected therewith give force of law to the entertainment industry. Some of these legislations include: The Copyright Act,<sup>12</sup> The Trade Marks Act,<sup>13</sup> The Patent and

---

<sup>9</sup> Adodeji, A. Optimizing the use of Copyright and International Communication Technology (ICT) in Nigerian Banks (2022) *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce* 5(3), 55-57

<sup>10</sup> Femi, O.; The Business of Entertainment Harnessing growth opportunities in entertainment, media, arts and lifestyle', (InfoComms, Entertainment & Media National Branding Conference October,2022) p. 10

<sup>11</sup> Femi O., op cit. 12

<sup>12</sup> Cap C28 LFN 2004

<sup>13</sup> Cap T13 LFN 2004

Design Act,<sup>14</sup> The Companies and Allied Matters Act,<sup>15</sup> the various Income Tax Acts,<sup>16</sup> and most importantly, the Constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### **1.5 Classes of Entertainment Law in Nigeria**

At this juncture, the article discusses the various classifications of entertainment law that are derived from various sectors in the industry in Nigeria as follows:

#### **1.5.1 Sports Law**

The legal framework at work in the world of both amateur and professional sports is collectively referred to as sports law. It refers to a specialized practice focused on sports industry. The sports industry with an economic dimension, offers products, services, places and ideas related to sport, fitness or leisure time to its consumers. Sports law, which is sometimes considered as an important aspect of entertainment law relates with labour law, contract law, antitrust law, and tort law. Issues like defamation and privacy rights are also an integral aspect of sports law.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of sports law as a separate area of law goes back only a few decades, and is attributable to the rise of player/agent relationship, increased media scrutiny of sports law topics and increased audience and interest in sports competitions. Sports law refers more to the target industry rather than a separate body of law-with only a few unique legal issues arising in professional sports leagues.

In Nigeria, Sports which have had a significant impact on the social and economic life of the citizens have overtime been regulated by a series of frameworks.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Cap P2 LFN 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Cap C20 LFN 2004

<sup>16</sup> The Companies Income Tax Act Cap C21 LFN 2004 and Personal Income Tax Act Cap P8 LFN 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Akunne, O. 'Sport Law and Music Art Industry in Africa', (2019) *The Journal of the World Intellectual Property* ; Vol. 2, Issue (1), p. 109

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 20

The framework began with the Sports Development Policy of 1989, aimed at promoting the development of sports in Nigeria. The federal laws which have a bearing on sports are the: National Institute for Sports Act,<sup>19</sup> Social Development Act<sup>20</sup> and Nigeria Football Association Act.<sup>21</sup> These enactments, however, provide less comprehensive platform for the practical pursuit of sports development.<sup>22</sup> The National Institute for Sports (NIS) Act establishes the National Institute for Sports, with the objectives of advancing learning in specialized areas of sports development, conducting professional coaching courses, seminars, workshops, including the advancement of sports knowledge and skill; but paucity of funds militated against its mandate.<sup>23</sup>

### **1.5.2 Music law**

Music Law simply refers to the legal aspects of the music industry. The industry includes record labels, music publishers, merchandisers, the live events sector and of course performers and artists. Indeed, music law covers a range of traditional legal subjects including intellectual property law (copyright law, trademarks, image publicity rights, patent & design rights), competition law, bankruptcy law, contract law, defamation and, for the live events industry, immigration law, health and safety law, and licensing.<sup>24</sup>

### **1.5.3 Art Law**

Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Art law, simply put, is the body of laws, involving numerous disciplines, that protects, regulates and facilitates the creation, use, marketing and distribution of art. Although "art" in the

---

<sup>19</sup> Cap. N52, Vol.14, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Cap. S7, Vol.14, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004

<sup>21</sup> Cap N110, Vol.12, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004. This act which is considered as the most elaborate effort in terms of sports development, but sadly, only limited to regulation of football.

<sup>22</sup> Kelvin, C. O. *The Legal Framework for Sports Development in Nigeria*. (Star Publishers, Enugu 2018). P. 27

<sup>23</sup> Section 5, of the National Institute for Sports Act

<sup>24</sup> Kumu, A. *Understanding the Legal Aspects of the Music Industry*. (Newly Publishers Lagos, 2019), p. 83.



broad sense of the term includes "the arts" (music, film, theatre, literature, et cetera), art law as traditionally defined, concerns only works of fine art and/or the visual arts.<sup>25</sup>

#### **1.5.4 Censorship Law**

Nigeria has various laws and regulations governing censorship across different level of government and media platforms:

##### **a. National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) Act 1993:**

1. Regulates film and video content to ensure conformity with national values and standards.
2. Prohibits content that promotes violence, obscenity, or undermines national security.

##### **b. NBC Code:**

1. The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) regulates broadcast content.
2. Prohibits content that promotes hate speech, violence, or obscenity.

##### **c. Nigeria Press Council Act 1992:**

1. Regulates print media content.
2. Ensures accuracy and fairness in reporting.

##### **d. Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act 2015:**

1. Regulates online content and social media.
2. Prohibits cyberbullying, hate speech, and online harassment.

---

<sup>25</sup> Robert, C. et al, *Art and Museum Law: cases and materials*, Durham, N C: (Carolina Academic Press 2002). Pp.72-80.

**e. NCC Guidelines on Online Advertising:**

1. Regulates online advertising.
2. Ensures compliance with national laws and guidelines.

**f. Censorship Enforcement**

1. National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB)
2. Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC)
3. Nigerian Press Council
4. National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)

**g. Challenges and Controversies**

1. Balancing censorship with freedom of expression.
2. Effective enforcement of censorship laws.
3. Adapting to emerging technologies and social media platforms.

**h. Recent Developments**

1. The Nigerian government proposed a Social Media Bill in 2019 to regulate online content.
2. The NBC issued a directive in 2020 to regulate online broadcasting.

**i. International Perspective**

1. Nigeria's censorship laws have been criticized by international organizations for restricting freedom of expression.
2. The country ranks 113 out of 180 in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index.

**1.6 Regulatory Frameworks for the Protection of Creative Rights in Entertainment Industry in Nigeria**

It should be noted that, every major area of law has a set of rules or enactments which make up its regulatory framework. Therefore, at this juncture the paper highlights more on the regulatory framework for the

protection of copyright, trademark, patent and design in the entertainment industry in Nigeria.

### 1.6.1 The Copyright Act

Copyright is one of the four major areas of intellectual property law,<sup>26</sup> which serves as an important aspect of entertainment law. It is a right granted to the author or originator of certain literary or artistic productions which actually covers musical, literary, artistic and cinematographic works, sound recordings and broadcast rights over all these sorts of works., whereby the producer/author is invested, with the sole and exclusive privilege of multiplying copies of the literary or artistic works and publishing or selling them.<sup>27</sup>

Copyrights are a group of exclusive rights granted by the federal government, which can be obtained for a variety of intellectual works from movies to literature.<sup>28</sup> Copyright law strives to balance two competing interests: the interests of authors in protecting their works from unauthorized copying and the interest of the public in having the greatest possible access to works of authorship. Copyright laws create automatic protection for major works created by authors in the entertainment industry, ranging from movie scripts (literary works), to cinematograph films, musical works, sound recordings, and broadcasts.<sup>29</sup>

The Entertainment industries have perhaps been the most obsessed with copyright protection. Often, at the beginning of movies or music videos, warnings are displayed like: “This film and soundtrack have been licensed under the copyright laws of Nigeria. No duplication, rental or broadcast of the contents of this video-tape or Compact Disk or Digital Video Disc should be done without the permission of the copyright owners. Pirates Beware!” Their insecurities are not unfounded. The prevalence of piracy of entertainment works has rendered authors who invested time and money; reap little or no gain from such investment .Therefore, the whole essence of copyright laws

---

<sup>26</sup> Alongside patents, trademarks and industrial design.

<sup>27</sup> Bryan, A G., *Black's Law Dictionary* 9th edn, (USA West Publishing Co, 2004). 611

<sup>28</sup> Sandi, T. R. *Media and Entertainment Law* (Delmar, Cengage Learning, 2009). P. 73

<sup>29</sup> Deborah, E. B., *Intellectual Property: the Law of Trademarks, Copyrights, Patents, and Trade Secrets*, (4th edn, (Delmar, Cengage Learning, 2013) p. 213

is that “a man should not be allowed to appropriate the results of another man’s sweat”.<sup>30</sup>

In the case of *Liberty Williams (A.K.A. Pupayannis) vs. MTN Nigeria Communications Limited & Ors.*<sup>31</sup> Pupayannis (the Plaintiff), a musician, filed a Suit at the Federal High Court in Abuja on October 12, 2016, against MTN Nigeria Communications Limited and others. The subject of the suit was Copyright Infringement of his song “Love is Everything”. In his Statement of Claim, the Plaintiff alleged that MTN has been collecting money for caller tunes for his song and had not compensated him for its use. The Plaintiff indicated that although he had a relationship with a record company, he did not give copyright to his past works including ‘Love is Everything’ and that the sale or offer for a fee of the Plaintiff’s song to MTN subscribers or customers without his consent constituted copyright infringement. The Plaintiff asked the court to award the sum of N200, 000,000 as general damages and N100, 000,000 as aggravated and punitive damages. Unfortunately, the parties have settled out of court which deprived the public the outcome of the judgement, its dimension and effects. In the case, the parties entered into consent judgement which the court enforced based on the admission of the dependent of liability.

### **1.6.2 Trademark Act**

Trademark as defined under the Act, means a mark used or proposed to be used in relation to goods for the purpose of indicating or so as to indicate, a connection in the course of trade between the goods and some person having the right either as proprietor or as a registered user of the mark.<sup>32</sup> It is a mark or sign that is designed by a manufacturer or even a supplier for the sole purpose of identifying his product and differentiating it from the products of other manufacturers or suppliers especially, his competitors.<sup>33</sup>

The entertainment industries makes resort to trademark in protecting the goodwill of their brand from exploitation by the competitors. Trademarks in entertainment especially in sports, music and film are the emerging big markets which give huge profits to the entertainment

---

<sup>30</sup> Per Wilberforce in *LB (Plastics) Ltd v. Swish products Ltd* (1979) FSR, 145 at 619.

<sup>31</sup> Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/799/2016. (unreported)

<sup>32</sup> Section 67, Trade Marks Act, Cap T19, LFN, 2004

<sup>33</sup> See *LB (Plastic) Ltd. v. Swish Product Ltd.* (1979) FSR, 148

industry. Entertainment company names, record label names, performers' monikers, and, more can be protected under the Nigerian Trademark Act.

Like other businesses, entertainment entities have an interest in preventing others from using names that are so similar to theirs as not to cause confusion among consumers as to exactly who is delivering certain products or services. Therefore, many entertainment entities register their names under the Act thereby claiming the exclusive right to use their names.

Protection of commercial rights and interest for a song and film title plays a vital role when such legal issues arise. The paradigm shift surrounding the intellectual property issues plays a significant role surrounding various controversies relating to trademark issues such as deceptively similar songs or film titles, unauthorised use of film titles falling within the ambit of infringement of trademarks and remedy of passing off.<sup>34</sup>

Use and ownership of trademarks by members of a record label or other band is usually a source of great controversy especially when the entity dissolves. If, prior to dissolution, the owners or members of the entity have not agreed. The best option suggested here, is to adopt what will be a neutral ground to balance all possible means of conflict in the trade mark among the members.

This is for need to determine who may use the trademark after dissolution of the entity, with the view to avoiding lengthy legal battles as different members or factions may try to use and prevent the other members from using the trademark. However, the article suggest that agreement should be made on how the partnership should look like especially in the event of conflict after dissolution.

### **1.6.3 Patent and Design Act**

Patent is a government authority or licence conferring an exclusive right or title for a set period, especially the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention, without permission or consent of the licensee during the lifespan of the patent. Patent has its origin in

---

<sup>34</sup> Trademark law in the Music and film industry  
<<http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/2067/TrademarkLaw-in-Music-and-Film-Industry.html>> Accessed on August 20th 2019

the idea of conferring a form of monopoly on inventors for the result of an intellectual voyage of discovery as an incentive to innovation or research.<sup>35</sup> It is a right granted under the law to protect an invention that is novel or basically an improvement over some existing processes.<sup>36</sup>

The law governing patents differ from one country to another, thus what can be protected in one country might not enjoy the right of protection in another. Sometimes encounter with individuals who claim to be inventors with new ground breaking discoveries which they claim can solve certain problems. As soon as they conceived inventions, they immediately consider obtaining a patent for these so-called inventions. Some of these "inventors" believe that most ideas and dreams can be registered as a patent, on the contrary however, a lot of these ideas, dreams and imaginations lack the status of qualifying for a patent license under the Nigerian Law.

Patentability simply means, suitable to be patented under the law, entitled by law to be patented by the issuance of a patent. The concept of patentability is such an important concept in the sense that provisions made for it in the legal regime of a country's patent system go a long way in determining how effective the system would be. Consequently, it is usually the first issue to be addressed in the legal framework governing the operation of the patent system in many jurisdictions.<sup>37</sup>

### **1.7 Remedies for Breach of Intellectual Property in the Entertainment Industries in Nigeria**

Having discussed the regulatory framework for the protection of Intellectual Property rights in the entertainment industry, the article will now highlight the various remedies available whenever the protected rights are breach. Thus, for every wrong-civil or criminal act, there must be a remedy.<sup>38</sup> Broadly speaking, there are two types of remedies namely, penal and civil. That is, civil remedies and criminal remedies which are herein discussed.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ayoyemi, A. *Intellectual Property rights Traditional Knowledge Systems and Jurisprudence in Africa* (Ibradan, Abba Press Limited, 2012) p. 201

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 211

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 70

<sup>38</sup> *Anton Pillar KG vs Manufacturing Processes Limited* (1976) Ch55 at p. 61

### **a. Civil Remedies**

Any person who has a copyright in any of the specified items under the Copyright Act reserves the right to initiate civil action at the Federal High Court for any infringement of his copyright.<sup>39</sup> In *Achebe vs. Drum Publications Nig. Ltd*<sup>40</sup>, an action for infringement of the Plaintiff's copyright was brought before the High Court of the defunct Eastern Region. The court held that it lacked jurisdiction to determine any action which was related to copyright.

The court with jurisdiction is the Federal High Court; and the remedies that the Federal High Court can award where the action is successful are: award of damages, order of injunction, or order for account. In addition to the above, the copyright owner will be entitled to all the copies of the pirated materials that the Court may so find. The above issues are covered under sections 16 and 18 of the Act.

It is also noteworthy that the owner of an infringed copyright has the right if the court orders ex-parte; to go into the premises where the infringement has taken place to take possession of the offending article with the assistance of a police officer not below the rank of an Assistant Superintendent of Police, under section 25(1) of the Act.

Section 24, of the Copyrights Act abolishes the common law rules prohibiting simultaneous prosecution of criminal and civil actions in the same cause. It provides inter alia as follows:

Notwithstanding the provisions of any law to the contrary, it shall be permissible for both criminal and civil action to be taken simultaneously in respect of the same infringement under this Act.

Section 29 replicated the provisions of section 16(1) & 18 in a condensed manner with respect to the entitlement of the right of copyright owner to orders of damages, account, injunction and conversion with respect to performer's right. It is still debatable or a moot point whether the various remedies under the Act are enough to

---

<sup>39</sup> Under Sections 251(1)(f) CFRN, the Federal High Court has jurisdiction as regards matters relating to copyright.

<sup>40</sup> CA (1974), NLR, 1, p.230

assuage the injury that is inflicted on a copyright owner whose right has been breached.

There are very few precedents to make illustrations. However, in *Continental Pharmaceutical Limited v. Glaxo Smith Kline Consumers Nigeria Plc*,<sup>41</sup> a Lagos Federal High Court awarded ₦1.2 billion as damages against a multinational pharmaceutical firm, Glaxo Smith Kline Consumers Nigeria Plc; and its parent company, Smith Kline Beecham plc based in the United Kingdom for infringing on the trademark and patent right of the local company in Nigeria, over a logo with blue and white package design for the manufacture and sale of panadol and panadol extra products.

In another case, of *Beddings Holdings Limited v INEC and 6 Others*,<sup>42</sup> a Federal High Court sitting at Lagos affirmed that the patent and industrial design rights (RP 12996 and RD 5946 respectively), held by Beddings Holdings (the plaintiff) for the invention of “Transparent Ballot Box” had been infringed by the INEC when it licensed the importation of transparent ballot boxes by two private Nigerian companies without seeking the requisite license from the Beddings Holdings limited for the 2011 general election.

#### **b. Criminal Liability**

Section 20 of the Copyright Act provides for three categories of criminal liability. To fully comprehend the section, it is necessary to quote the provisions of subsections (1), (2) and (3) of the said section which provide:

S. 20(1) Any person who (a) makes or causes to be made for sale, hire, or for the purposes of trade or business any infringing copy of a work in which copyright subsists; or (b) imports or causes to be imported into Nigeria more than two infringing copies of such work; or (c) makes, cause to be made, or has in his possession, any plate, master tape, machine, equipment or contrivance for the purposes of making any infringing copy of any such work; shall unless he proves to the satisfaction of the court that he did not know and had no reason to believe that any such copy was

---

<sup>41</sup> (2012) 3 CLRN, 157

<sup>42</sup> Unreported, FHC/LS/CS/82/2011



not infringing copy of any such work, or that such plate, master tape, machine, equipment or contrivance was not for the purpose of making an infringing copies of any such work, be guilty of an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of an amount not exceeding N1,000 for every copy dealt with in contravention of this section or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

(2) Any person who- (a) sells or lets for hire or for the purposes of trade or business, exposes or offers for sale, or hires any infringing copy of any work in which copyright subsists; or (b) distributes for the purposes of trade or business any infringing copy of any such work; or (c) has in his possession other than for his private or domestic use, any infringing copy of any such work; shall, unless he proves to the satisfaction of the court that he did not know and had no reason to believe that any such copy was an infringing copy of any such work, be guilty of an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of N100 for every copy dealt within in contravention of this section, or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years or in the case of an individual to both such fine and imprisonment.

(3) Any person who, without the consent of the owner, distributes, in public for commercial purposes, copies of a work in which copyright subsists by virtue of section 5(1)(a) (vi), 5(1)(c)(vi), 6(1)(b) or 7(1)(c) of this Act by way of rental lease, hire, loan or similar arrangement, shall be guilty of an offence under this Act, and shall be liable upon conviction to a fine of N100 for every copy dealt with or imprisonment for six months or to both such fine and imprisonment.

The significant point of departure in subsection (1) and (2) is that, the onus of proof of innocence is on the accused person, which means, the offences are not strict liability. Therefore, infringement of intellectual property ownership can be criminal offence as well as being actionable in civil law. Also it shows that a range of criminal provisions exist under

Nigerian laws which prohibit such practices which may be associated with organised crime by a group that are dealing for profit in brand fake products or pirated goods.

Technically, intellectual property offences are also known as IP crimes or counterfeiting and piracy. Counterfeiting can be defined as the manufacture, importation, distribution and sale of products which falsely carry the trademark or a genuine brand without permission and for gain or loss to another. Piracy which includes copying, distribution, importation or such other practices of infringing works, does not always require direct profit from sales.<sup>43</sup>

### **1.8 Intellectual Property Protection and the Challenges of Enforcement in Nigeria's Entertainment Industry**

It is a well-known fact that, entertainment industry in Nigeria is inevitably faced with problems militating against its growth under the guidance and regulation of the law. Compared to the developed nations. No doubt the Nigeria's entertainment industry is worth over 4 billion dollars and contributes significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP). However, absurd it may sound, the progress of entertainment law has been stifled by various intricacies affecting the industry over the years. These intricacies, have prevented entertainment industry/law from reaching its heights which have been long achieved in other jurisdictions.

#### **1.8.1 Dearth of Judicial Decisions**

The doctrine of judicial precedent or (stare decisis) is hinged on the fact that the principle of law on which a court bases its facts, or issues before it must be followed by courts lower in hierarchy and may be followed by a court of coordinate jurisdiction or a court which is higher in hierarchy in future similar cases.<sup>44</sup> Application of the doctrine of judicial precedent makes for scientific development of the law based on analogy, reasoning and coherent principles.<sup>45</sup> However, the doctrine of judicial precedence and its resulting legal development are however

---

<sup>43</sup> JOSEPH JA KUR, *Intellectual Property Law and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria principles and practice*, (Aboki publishers, (Abuja ) 2015). P.119

<sup>44</sup> Ephraim A. et al, 'The Rationality of Judicial Precedent in Nigeria's Jurisprudence' *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, (2014) Vol. 4, No. 5 p. 149

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

unfelt in the realm of entertainment law, because there are few precedents to begin with., of all the thousands of copyright and trademark infringements that happen yearly in Nigeria, only few are subject to litigation.<sup>46</sup>

This no doubt is a consequence of the slow paced judicial system practiced in Nigeria. Hon Justice Dahiru Musdapher CJN, once enthused: "I have a vision of a justice system which is simple, fast, efficient, effective and responsive to the needs and yearnings of the citizenry."<sup>47</sup> One thing is certain; the former CJN's vision is not a reality. Nigeria's judicial system is so slow that it takes an average of 2 years for criminal proceedings to come to a successful close. This time can be further prolonged depending on the calibre of lawyers involved, the status of the accused and the nature of the offense charged.<sup>48</sup>

### 1.8.2 Legislative Slothfulness

The legislature plays a crucial role in gauging, collating and presenting the views and needs of the people articulating their expectations and aspirations in determining the national development agenda. As an oversight body, the legislature helps to identify problems and policy challenges that require attention, and assists in overcoming bureaucratic inertia. The Legislature possesses supremacy and independence in the sphere of establishing the legal principles of state and public life. Achieving of good governance thus requires existence of an active, selfless and efficient legislature.<sup>49</sup>

The Constitution clearly spells out the powers, duties and functions of Nigerian legislature, its provided thus:

The legislative powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is vested in a National Assembly for which consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives... The National

---

<sup>46</sup> Ojukwu, E.V. Onyiuke Y.S and Esimone C.C., (2015). "Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement in Nigeria: A Prop for Music Industry" *US-China Education Review B*, (June 2015) Vol. 5, No. 6, 373-381 doi: 10.17265/2161-6248/2015.06.003

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Isibor, K.M, (2016). *'The Sluggish Judicial System in Nigeria: A Legal Change'* <[www.isiborkelvin.wordpress.com/2019/09/23/the-sluggish-judicial-system-in-nigeria-a-legal-change/](http://www.isiborkelvin.wordpress.com/2019/09/23/the-sluggish-judicial-system-in-nigeria-a-legal-change/)>

Accessed on September 24th 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Economic Commission for Africa, 'The Role of Parliament in Promoting Good Governance, Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD), 1.

Assembly have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part thereof with respect to any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative list set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the Constitution.

An indication of legislative slothfulness is captured by the obsolete regulatory frameworks. The 1988 Copyright Act, 1967 Trademark Act and the 1970 Patent and design Act are all obsolete in a sense. Take section 2 of the Copyright Act for instance, which stipulates the requirement of copyright by reference to author and has stirred up numerous controversies amongst Copyright law scholars. The Act does not define the meaning of an individual and this term has been stretched by some intellectuals to include artificial intelligence.

Also, there is no general penalty for all infringement offences; rather the Act seems to portray some infringing acts as more grievous than the others, consequently the penalties for various infringing acts differ.<sup>50</sup> Where an offender makes or causes an infringing work, master tape/plate or equipment to be made, he is liable to a fine not exceeding One Thousand Naira for every copy he dealt with or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or both.<sup>51</sup>

An offender who sells, hires, distributes infringing copies or has them in his possession for these purposes is liable to a fine of One Hundred Naira per copy or a term of imprisonment of 2 years or both.<sup>52</sup> An offender who infringes the copyright of owner's right of distribution through rental, hire, lease, loaning or similar arrangement is liable to a fine of One Hundred Naira per copy or imprisonment for 6 months or both.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, any law that does not impose a maximum fine as penalty would imply that the offender would be paying a substantial amount of money where he deals in large quantities of the infringing work. However, where he deals in few quantities such as a rental club that has just two copies of an infringing work or a production plant that has just

---

<sup>50</sup> Section 20 and 22 Copyright Act

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* Section.20(1).

<sup>52</sup> *ibid* Section 20(2). This ludicrous fine is a direct testament to the obsolete nature of our laws.

<sup>53</sup> Section.20(3) Copyright Act

one machine or plate, then the amount of fine would be too small to be deterrent.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, in such instances, imposing terms of imprisonment is a better penalty to deter such infringers and other intending infringers.

For instance, in *NCC v. Ali A. Bala*,<sup>55</sup> the accused was sentenced to pay One Hundred Naira (₦100.00) fine or 3 months imprisonment. Similarly, in *NCC v. Nwali Sunday*,<sup>56</sup> the accused was sentenced to pay Three Hundred Naira fine. There are however still cases where the fine imposed are higher. The highest in recent times has been One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira in *NCC v. Ibrahim Dan Almajiri*.<sup>57</sup> And N 1.2 billion Naira against Glaxo Smith Plc.

### 1.8.3 Lack of Specialised Law on Entertainment Industry

Nigeria lacks specialised law regulating entertainment industry, like what is obtainable in oil sector or telecommunication.<sup>58</sup> The fact that there are no specialized entertainment laws means that the Nigerian legislature are either oblivious of the importance of the industry, or they, while aware, are simply not careful.

All works of entertainment result in intellectual property, this is the irrefutable link between entertainment and intellectual property law. However, entertainment law and intellectual property law are not conterminous. While Intellectual property law deals with the rules for securing and enforcing legal rights to inventions, designs, and artistic works, entertainment law is the entirety of legal services devoted to the

---

<sup>54</sup> Olubiye, I. 'A Comparative Analysis of Copyright Enforcement Provisions in Nigeria: Maximising the Current Legal Regime', *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence*, (2014) P. 96.

<sup>55</sup> Unreported Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CR/127/2013 at the Federal High Court Abuja, FCT Division). Conviction for book piracy

<sup>56</sup> (Unreported Suit No: FHC/L/153C/13 at the Federal High Court, Lagos Division). Conviction for book piracy

<sup>57</sup> 2 (Unreported Suit No: FHC/KD/45C/2009 at the Federal High Court, Kaduna Division). Conviction for sale, distribution, possession of pirated optical discs. Although in *NCC v Sunday Ayodele* (unreported) FHC/KD/8C/12, a fine of ₦250,000 was imposed

<sup>58</sup> Such as the Petroleum Act (2004) Cap. (P10), LFN, Associated Gas Re-Injection Act (2004) Cap. (20), LFN, Oil Pipelines Act (2004) Cap. (07), LFN, Hydrocarbon Oil Refineries Act (2004) Cap. (H5), LFN

entertainment industry. Although, entertainment law involves a great deal of intellectual property law, there is more particularly on the emergence and application of digital technology in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the various challenges faced amongst which are: low level of funding by the government, inadequate personnel, low level or lack of training in an online enforcement of copyright, inadequate infrastructure.

Over the years lawyers have skilfully resorted to intellectual property law frameworks to cater for the legal obligations of their clients in the industry. This dependence on intellectual property law frameworks has created a gap that can only be filled by an enactment of a specialized statute for entertainment law. The absence of literature in this field makes matters worse. There are hundreds of articles and books on intellectual property law and few on entertainment law.<sup>59</sup>

### **1.9 Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing analysis there has been established an inexplicably link between intellectual property law and entertainment law, though they are not conterminous. The paper observed that there is interplay between the two laws, but the scope of the later is wider, whereas the former is still being used by the lawyers to litigate issues of breach of intellectual rights in entertainment industry.

Therefore, the need for legislators' proactive to develop a robust /specialised entertainment law that can take care of new global challenges of information technology and digital economy. This shall only be done by our legislators in consideration of the impact of international entertainment industry on religion, local cultures, values and national security.

---

<sup>59</sup> Uloko Greg, *Modern Approach to Intellectual Property Laws in Nigeria* (Lagos, Princeton Publishing Co. 2019) p. 68