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WE HAVE BEEN PART OF NIGERIA'S STORY FOR 80 YEARS-MD/ CEO, NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC, THIBAUT BOIDIN.



LIFESTYLE

Nigeria's luxury boom draws Franck Muller CEO for first-ever visit



GLOBAL

Three occupations that allow foreign workers to study in Canada without a permit

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CONTENT



5
LAUGHTER IN THE MIRROR



15
FASHION
The Business of Luxury: How House of Marvee Is Shaping African Fashion



23
FOOD
Recipe of the week: Gwote Acha

24
ENTERTAINMENT
Women Are the Frame of the Future for African Cinema, Says AFRIFF Founder Chioma Ude

28
TECH
ChatGPT leads the 15 most visited ai tools in 2026

33
BRANDS
Looking into Brand Guidelines

37
SPORTS
Mustapha Abdullahi: From energy technocrat to basketball chief

40
BOOK REVIEW
The League of Style

44
MOVIE REVIEW



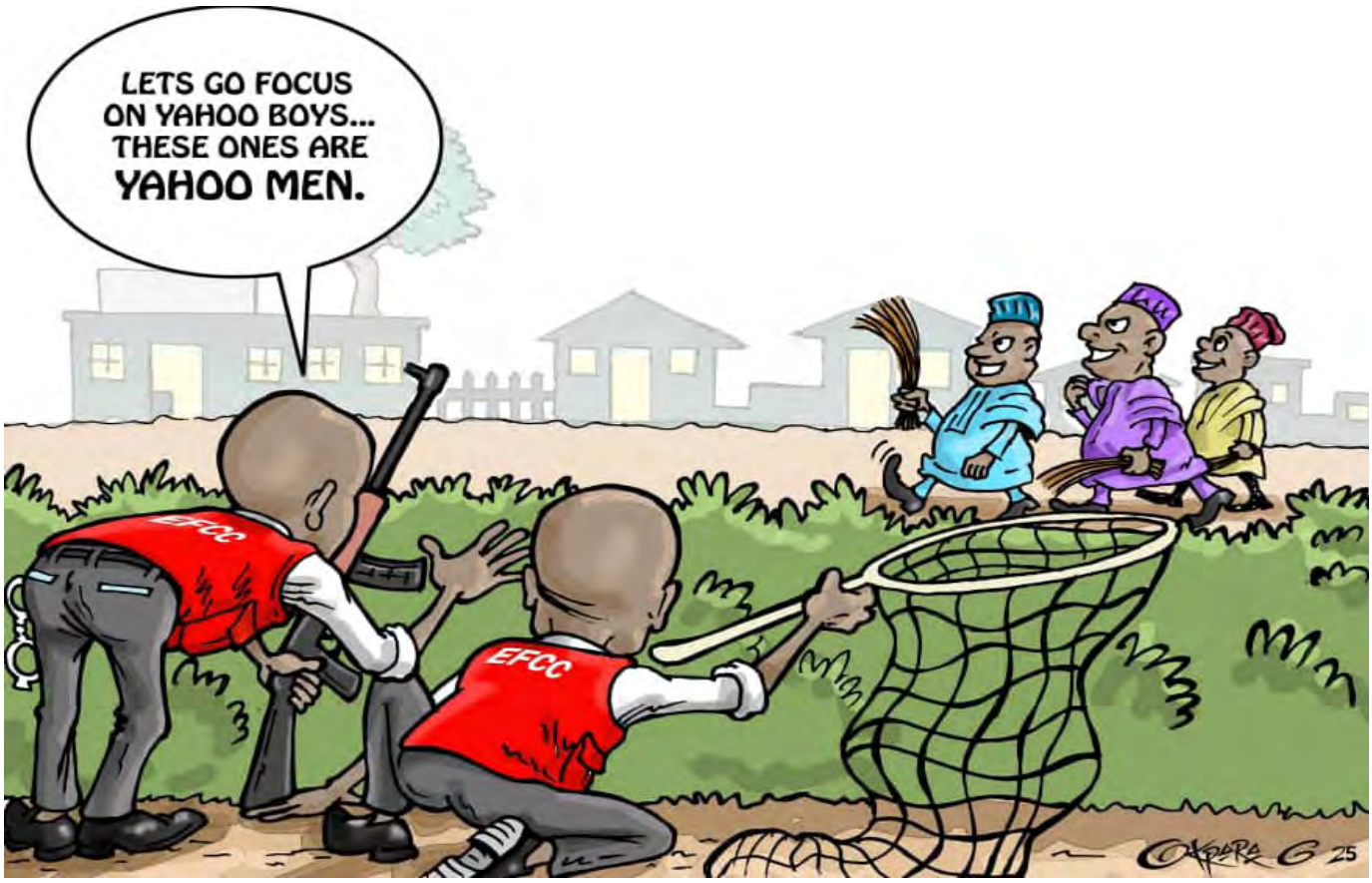
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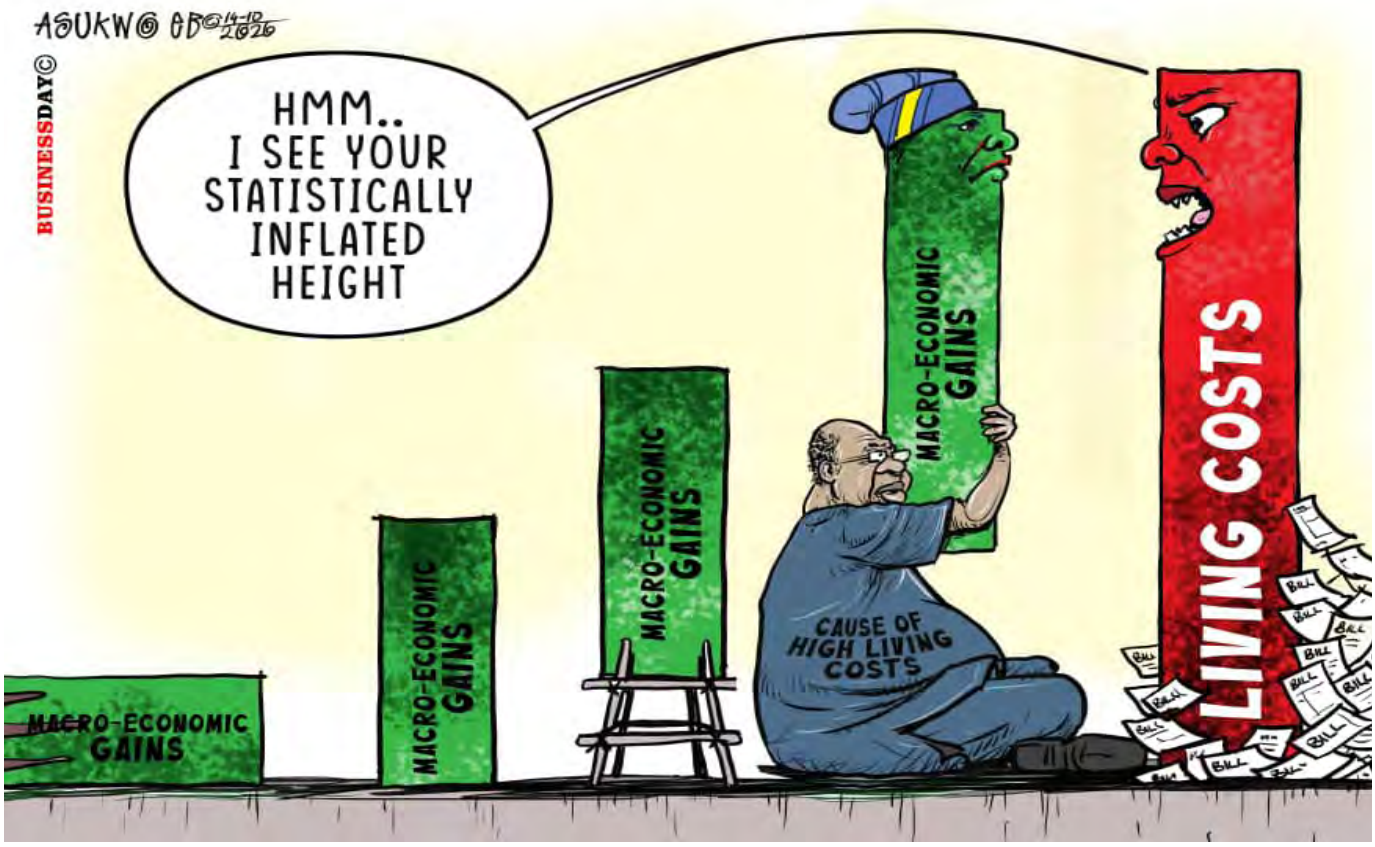


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INTERVIEW

WE HAVE BEEN PART OF NIGERIA'S STORY FOR 80 YEARS-MD/CEO, NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC, THIBAUT BOIDIN.





Eighty years, countless economic cycles, and an unshakeable faith in the Nigerian market. As Nigerian Breweries Plc celebrates its landmark 80th anniversary, the nation's pioneer brewer isn't just reflecting on a storied legacy, it is actively shaping the future. Following a remarkable financial turnaround in 2025 and record-setting growth in 2026, Thibaut Boidin, Managing Director and CEO of Nigerian Breweries Plc, sits down with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA to discuss navigating macroeconomic headwinds, driving local sourcing through barley farming, and why, with a market of 240 million people, Nigeria remains one of the world's most compelling growth stories.

Nigerian Breweries is celebrating 80 years. What does this milestone mean to you and the company?

We've been part of 80 years of Nigeria's history and have navigated the many economic cycles that have shaped the country over that period.

For a company to successfully navigate those changes, help build and lead an industry, and remain a market leader after 80 years means a great deal to us. It is a significant milestone, but it is also one that sets the tone for the future.

In recent years, some companies chose to scale back or exit investments because of the economic challenges, but we decided to stay because we believe in Nigeria's long-term potential.
So, while we are celebrating 80 years of legacy, we are equally excited about the next chapter.

Looking back over the last 80 years, how would you describe Nigeria's journey and evolution to date?

It's actually a very impressive history because we pioneered this industry. The brewing industry didn't exist before us. We were the first to build this brewery here in Lagos in 1946. Since then, we have continued to shape and lead the industry through different economic cycles and periods of change.

We believe Nigerian Breweries has contributed not only to the Nigerian economy through its scale and investments, but also to communities and society. Our leadership has never been only about doing business. It has also been about creating value in the communities where we operate.

We have a footprint across Nigeria that is unique within our industry, and we have intentionally supported communities throughout the country for decades.

The third dimension is the role our brands have played in bringing people together. Through our portfolio, we have created moments where people celebrate friendship, family, achievement and joyful occasions together.

That is one of the reasons our 80th anniversary theme is "Together Every Moment." For generations, our brands have been part of moments that matter, helping create connections and shared experiences.

What does that theme have to do with your brands and what it means for you going into the future?

Many companies celebrate anniversaries by focusing on themselves.
For us, we decided to take a different approach. We want to celebrate with Nigerians. This is why the theme is 'Together Every Moment'.

For 80 years, our brands have been part of everyday life in Nigeria. Whether at weddings, anniversaries, sporting events, celebrations with friends, family gatherings or moments of relaxation after work, our products have often been present.

We've been part of Nigerians' lives. Our theme is really to go beyond celebrating a company to celebrating Nigerians and our contributions to Nigerians' lives.



Recession, inflation, and foreign exchange policy have been challenges under this new administration. What has been the major lesson the company has learned over the years? And how have you been able to stand these challenges?

The first lesson is about leadership.
If you operate in an environment with the level of volatility we have seen in Nigeria, you need leaders who can navigate uncertainty and turn challenges into opportunities.

One example is what happened decades ago when barley imports became difficult. Barley is an important ingredient in brewing beer and malt beverages. Rather than seeing that situation as a barrier, our predecessors saw an opportunity to innovate and develop alternatives. That led to the development of a local sorghum value chain, and today many of our products are brewed using locally sourced sorghum. One of the biggest lessons is that you need leadership that can adapt, learn and find opportunities even in difficult circumstances.

The second lesson is the importance of financial resilience. Nigeria can be a complex market to operate in because policies can change quickly and sometimes create unexpected challenges. We decided to stay because we believe in Nigeria's future and long-term potential.

Over the last two years, we have focused heavily on strengthening our financial position. Today, we have a much stronger balance sheet, improved cash generation and greater flexibility to invest in the future.

In a volatile environment, cash and financial discipline are critical. That stronger financial foundation gives us the confidence to continue investing in growth.The third lesson relates to economic reforms. While reforms can be difficult to navigate in the short term, we believe many of the measures being implemented are positive for Nigeria's long-term future.

The key question is how quickly consumers and businesses begin to feel the benefits. We are very conscious of the pressure on household disposable income because our consumers feel it every day.

Nevertheless, we remain optimistic that the foundations being laid today will support stronger growth in the future.

Given the current situation in Nigeria, you just mentioned some of them; do you still see this country, this market, as an attractive place for business?

The country is still highly attractive. Suppose you take a step back and look at which countries have the biggest potential. I mean a country with the primary enabler of growth. For us, population growth is a significant factor for Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs).

Nigeria is a country of 240 million people, growing at a very high pace, and it's going to be the third-biggest country in the world in 2050. Every single year, you have five million consumers coming of drinking age. For me, I think the growth ahead of us is huge for our industry.

For our industry, the long-term growth opportunity remains substantial. We also believe the brewing industry has significant untapped potential.

Consumption levels remain below those of many comparable markets, which suggests considerable room for growth as economic conditions improve.

There are very few markets in the world where you have this combination of population growth, youthful demographics and such a strong emotional connection between consumers and brands. That is why we remain very optimistic about Nigeria's future.

If you are still with this company 100 years from now, on its 100th anniversary, what do you want the company to be remembered for?

I think we're already known for what we are today. I would love us to continue to be known for the same. This is because, for 80 years, we've been shaping, creating, leading, innovating, and inspiring our consumers.

We've been doing this for 80 years and going beyond business. The number of communities that we supported, the value chain that we created from agriculture to retail- we've been building this and contributing big time to create millions of jobs.

There are millions and millions of families benefiting from what has been done over the past 80 years. I dream that we will continue to do this. My aspiration is that we continue doing this, but at an even greater scale.

I would like Nigerian Breweries to be remembered as the company that helped unlock the full potential of the brewing industry. And this is our role as the industry leader. Our mission is to continue to grow, shape, and lead.

The second aspect is our people. We are known for attracting and developing talented people across finance, supply chain, sales, marketing, corporate affairs, legal, digital and technology functions.

I hope we continue to build that winning culture, remain a company known for excellence and continue attracting some of the best talent in Nigeria.

We've also been a company known for excellence and top-tier competence in the market. So, I dream that we'll continue to build this winning culture and have the best people in the market, attracting the best talent in Nigeria.

The year 2025 was a turnaround year for Nigerian Breweries, with a 35 percent increase in revenue. What steps did the company take to transform two years of losses into profit generation in 2025 in Nigeria?

There are three dimensions to that turnaround.
The first was the rights issue. HEINEKEN and other shareholders demonstrated strong confidence in Nigerian Breweries by reinvesting in the business. That support played an important role in strengthening our balance sheet and accelerating our recovery.

The second factor was productivity and cost management. Our teams did an outstanding job optimizing our cost structure in what remained a very challenging operating environment.
The third factor was our focus on winning brands.
We have concentrated our investments behind brands with the greatest potential. The performance of Heineken, Maltina and Amstel Malta has been particularly encouraging. We continue to strengthen our brands and grow their relevance with consumers.

Today, the company has a significantly stronger financial position, improved cash generation and the ability to fund growth from within the business. That represents a major transformation compared with where we were a few years ago.

There is a significant increase in revenue in 2026. However, we are in a pre-election year, and people will drink more leading up to the 2007 election. What has been the major driver of revenue growth so far in 2026? And how has the company performed so far?

First, we do not necessarily see evidence that election cycles directly translate into increased consumption. The data does not show that. Now to your question: What is different about 2026 is the quality of our growth. Last year, a larger proportion of growth came from pricing actions, reflecting the inflationary environment. This year, we have been very conscious of affordability and have used pricing much more selectively.

As a result, growth is being driven by a healthier mix of factors, including improved brand performance, market-share gains and volume growth across key parts of the portfolio.
That creates a more sustainable growth trajectory for the business over the long term.



Beyond producing beverages, how do you contribute to the market in which you operate? How do you support people who sell for you?

We contribute in several ways. The first one is, as I said, that for over 80 years we've been shaping this industry, so there is the value chain we support. When consumers see a bottle of Maltina, Goldberg or any of our brands, what they do not always see is the large ecosystem behind it.

That ecosystem includes farmers, suppliers, transporters, engineers, distributors, retailers and many other businesses that contribute to getting products from raw materials to consumers.

Supporting and growing that ecosystem is one of our most important contributions. The second contribution is through community development. We have a unique footprint across Nigeria, with breweries, depots and operations spread across the country. Wherever we operate, we build strong relationships with local communities and support initiatives that improve livelihoods and create opportunities.

Over the years, we have invested in areas such as water access, agriculture and community development. The Maltina Barley Project is one example of our commitment to creating long-term value beyond our core business. The third contribution is helping shape the future of the industry.

As Chairman of the Beer Sectoral Group, I am working with government and industry stakeholders on a 10-year master plan for the sector. We believe the industry can play an even greater role in Nigeria's economic development.
The plan is intended to support investment, local sourcing, agriculture, job creation and long-term growth across the value chain.

I want to ask about your backward integration process: how far have you gone with it? Because I know there was a time when you were doing something along those lines. Secondly, I know that sourcing raw materials, especially amid FX issues, has always been a huge challenge. How are you looking at localizing most of what you use to reduce costs?

As a Nigerian company, many of our suppliers are already based in Nigeria and a significant proportion of our inputs are sourced locally. Glass, cans, PET packaging, labels and several other materials are already supplied through local value chains.

However, there is still more to do, particularly in reducing foreign-exchange exposure and increasing local sourcing of agricultural inputs. One of the flagship initiatives is the Maltina Barley Project. Our ambition is to establish sustainable local barley production in Nigeria.

We have been working on this for several years and currently support more than 1,100 farmers in cultivating barley locally. Agriculture requires patience because outcomes are influenced by climate, infrastructure and other factors beyond our direct control. This is a long-term project, but we are committed to it. We have seen similar successes in Ethiopia and believe the same can be achieved in Nigeria with the right support and collaboration. Our objective remains clear: continue increasing localization and reducing our dependence on foreign exchange over time.

So what's your view about equality, and I mean female representation, in NB?

It is something we take very seriously. If you look at my leadership team today, approximately half of the members are women. Our People Director, Finance Director, Marketing Director and Digital & Technology Director are all women. For me, diversity is important because different experiences, perspectives and ways of thinking lead to better decisions and stronger outcomes.

At HEINEKEN and Nigerian Breweries, we are very intentional about building an inclusive workplace. We want talented people to have equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of gender.

We have dedicated programmes and recruitment processes designed to ensure balanced candidate representation and equal access to opportunities.

We have made significant progress, although some areas naturally move faster than others depending on the nature of the roles. Because in some departments, it's more difficult. For instance, by law, we cannot employ ladies on night shifts in the supply chain. There are some departments where we can move faster; in others, we're a bit constrained.

Overall, our objective is simple: attract the best talent, create equal opportunities and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the society we serve.



NIGERIA'S LUXURY BOOM DRAWS FRANCK MULLER CEO FOR FIRST-EVER VISIT



Nigeria's luxury retail sector is witnessing a noticeable surge in appetite for high-end horology, driven by sophisticated collectors seeking high-complication timepieces and bolstered by ongoing macroeconomic reforms.

Nicolas Rudaz, Chief Executive Officer of premier Swiss watchmaker Franck Muller, disclosed this during his maiden official visit to Lagos, describing Nigeria as one of the fastest-growing emerging markets for luxury craftsmanship in Africa.

Speaking during an interactive session with journalists in Lagos, Rudaz, who has been with the Geneva-based manufacture for 19 years, noted that Nigerian consumers are increasingly sophisticated, moving beyond entry-level luxury items to demand intricate mechanical complications.

"Demand in Nigeria is very much increasing," Rudaz stated. "There is definitely more demand, and Nigerians are asking for more complications.

They are becoming far more educated in the fine world of high watchmaking. This growth is partly backed by rising national economic output and broader market opportunities."

Rudaz attributed the positive trajectory of the luxury market to the federal government's strategic economic policies, which he noted are beginning to yield constructive results for trade and international commerce.

Highlighting Franck Muller's legendary reputation as the "Master of Complications," Rudaz emphasized that true horological collectors recognize the brand's technical breakthroughs—most notably its pioneering work with the tourbillon.

"For example, at Franck Muller, we manufacture the world's fastest tourbillon, which completes a full 360-degree rotation every five seconds—twelve times faster than a standard tourbillon," Rudaz explained.

"For anyone who claims to be a serious watch collector, owning such a masterpiece is essential. Furthermore, Franck Muller made history as the first watchmaker to place the tourbillon on the front dial of a wristwatch, whereas it was traditionally hidden on the back or confined to pocket watches."

This breakthrough paved the way for subsequent world-first innovations from the brand, including double and triple tourbillons, as well as the world's largest tourbillon mechanism.

Addressing modern technological shifts and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across global industries, the Franck Muller chief asserted that ultra-luxury watchmaking remains anchored in human artfulness and centuries-old Swiss tradition.

"AI is not going to revolutionize the watchmaking world immediately," Rudaz affirmed. "You will always need extraordinarily talented, highly skilled artisans at every single level. At Franck Muller, we utilize AI strictly for administrative tasks, letter writing, and routine office functions—never for the creation of our timepieces."

Rudaz's historic visit to Nigeria was hosted in close collaboration with Polo Ltd, Nigeria's leading luxury retail conglomerate and the official partner of Franck Muller in the country.

Welcoming the Swiss executive, John Obayuwana, Chief Executive Officer of Polo Ltd, described the visit as a major milestone that reinforces global confidence in the Nigerian market while empowering local retail teams.

"The arrival of Nicolas today is a huge milestone for us; it energizes and empowers our entire team," Obayuwana said. "Developing the brand locally in Nigeria rests on our shoulders. The intensive product training and educational insights provided during this visit significantly strengthen our sales specialists to better serve our discerning clientele."

Obayuwana also commented on Nigeria's broader economic outlook, expressing optimism that long-term policy adjustments will reposition the nation as an attractive hub for global luxury brands.

"Nigeria's economy is positioned for steady growth following major policy reforms instituted since 2023, including foreign exchange unification and subsidy adjustments, which have re-established Nigeria on the global investment map," Obayuwana noted. "While challenges remain in ensuring these macroeconomic gains fully filter down, the underlying structural progress is undeniable."

Founded in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1991 by master watchmaker Franck Muller, the independent manufacture continues to set global standards for modern luxury watchmaking, remaining a preferred choice among elite African collectors.

THREE OCCUPATIONS THAT ALLOW FOREIGN WORKERS TO STUDY IN CANADA WITHOUT A PERMIT

CHISOM MICHAEL



Canada has introduced a temporary measure allowing eligible foreign workers in three occupational groups to study for up to six months without obtaining a separate study permit.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced the policy on September 9, 2026. It covers eligible work permit holders in trades, nursing and laboratory technology who require short-term education, licensing courses or professional training. The exemption will remain in effect until December 31, 2027, allowing qualifying workers to complete approved courses without applying for an additional study permit.

For Nigerian professionals and other African migrants working in Canada, the measure could simplify access to training needed to meet occupational and professional licensing requirements.

However, the exemption does not cover every foreign worker or all educational programmes. Those intending to pursue longer academic courses or studies outside the policy's scope must follow the standard study permit process.

The measure also does not create a new immigration pathway or provide an automatic route to permanent residence. Eligible workers must continue to comply with their existing work permit conditions and other immigration requirements.

The policy comes as Canada seeks to reduce temporary residents to less than five per cent of its population by the end of 2027.

Foreign workers are advised to consult IRCC's official website to confirm their eligibility and review the exemption's conditions before enrolling in a programme.

Three occupations covered by Canada's study permit exemption. The temporary measure identifies three occupational groups whose members may benefit from the exemption, subject to the policy's eligibility conditions.

1. Tradespeople

Foreign workers in the trades may need to complete training, certification courses or other educational programmes before they can meet the requirements for certain jobs in Canada.

The exemption allows eligible work permit holders in this group to undertake qualifying programmes lasting up to six months without obtaining a separate study permit.

This could help workers who need to update their skills or complete training linked to professional licensing. Rather than applying for an additional permit, eligible workers can focus on meeting the educational requirements for their occupations.

However, the exemption does not remove any licensing, certification or professional requirements that apply to their work.

2. Nurses

Nurses are another occupational group covered by the measure.

Foreign-trained nurses working in Canada may need further education, examinations or training to meet provincial or territorial registration requirements. Some may also need short courses to maintain their qualifications or meet professional standards.

Under the exemption, eligible nurses holding work permits can undertake qualifying studies of up to six months without applying for a separate study permit.

The change could help nurses complete certain training requirements while continuing to work under the conditions of their existing permits.

However, the exemption does not guarantee professional registration or authorisation to practise nursing. Nurses must still meet the requirements set by the relevant regulatory authorities.

3. Laboratory technicians

Laboratory technicians also fall within the occupational groups covered by the policy.

Workers in this field may need additional training, certification or continuing education to meet the requirements of their jobs. Depending on their roles, some may need short courses to develop their technical skills or satisfy professional standards.

The measure allows eligible work permit holders in this group to pursue qualifying programmes lasting up to six months without a separate study permit.

For workers seeking to meet these requirements, the exemption could reduce the administrative steps involved in accessing training.

As with tradespeople and nurses, eligibility depends on the conditions of the measure and the nature of the intended course.

THE BUSINESS OF LUXURY: HOW HOUSE OF MARVEE IS SHAPING AFRICAN FASHION

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA





From the story behind The Plait Dress to Marvy Olugu's vision for ready-to-wear, how House of Marvee is building a Nigerian luxury fashion house.

At House of Marvee, garments are conceived with meticulous attention to detail. The atelier develops many of its own textiles, allowing fabric, embellishment, and silhouette to come together as a cohesive design.

This approach reflects a deep commitment to craftsmanship, ensuring that each finished piece carries the designer's vision from concept to final construction.

Founded in Lagos and formally registered in 2018, House of Marvee has developed a distinctive identity inspired by nature, Nigerian heritage, and the organic beauty of the natural world.

Natural forms such as flowers and butterflies inform its designs, while traditional Nigerian textiles, including aso-oke, provide a cultural foundation for its work. Intricate embroidery, precision corsetry, and detailed handwork have become defining elements of the house's aesthetic.

At the centre of this vision is Marvelous Olugu, the founder and creative director of House of Marvee, known to many as Marvy.

Largely self-taught, she developed her craft through personal experimentation, online courses,and, most importantly, growing up in a family where fashion was part of everyday life.

Her grandmother was a seamstress, her sister is a renowned stylist, and her mother remains her greatest inspiration.

These family influences helped shape her understanding of fashion and the possibilities of garment-making. What began as a personal interest has since grown into a couture house with a distinct point of view.

In 2024, The Plait Dress, a sculptural couture gown crafted from handwoven fringe and thread, attracted widespread attention online and sparked considerable debate across platforms such as X.

Much of the conversation centred on its ₦11 million ($6,967) price tag. Behind the debate was a designer building a fashion house around intricate craftsmanship, creative conviction, and a distinctive design identity. The moment raised a question that extends beyond a single garment: what does it mean to build a Nigerian luxury brand in a market still negotiating the meaning and value of luxury itself?

The attention brought renewed visibility to House of Marvee and sharpened a broader question: how can a Nigerian luxury brand communicate the value behind its work to a market still negotiating what luxury means? In luxury fashion, price is rarely determined by materials alone. Skilled labour, production time, design originality, and brand positioning all contribute to the value a customer perceives.

Yet craftsmanship must also be communicated. When a Nigerian designer's price becomes a subject of public debate, the conversation can also create an opportunity to explain the labour, skill and thinking behind the finished piece.

Marvy's journey reflects the steady evolution of a designer determined to establish her place in Nigeria's fashion industry. Her debut career lookbook, titled Marvel, brought together historical influences from the Roaring Twenties and the Swinging Fifties, reinterpreted through bold African prints, colour-blocking, and sequin embellishments.

From this early exploration of fashion history and contemporary expression, she progressed into campaigns and bridal couture, continuing to develop the visual language of House of Marvee. Her creative journey has since included The Playground Collection (SS24), another expression of the brand's evolving aesthetic.

These milestones mark the development of House of Marvee from an early exploration of fashion into a business with ambitions beyond bespoke dressing. Marvy is building a house around her own creative perspective while contributing to the growing visibility of Nigerian fashion internationally.

House of Marvee's next chapter is its expansion into ready-to-wear, which will bring the brand's aesthetic to a broader audience. The move is strategic: growth need not come at the expense of the qualities that established a brand's identity. Instead, it requires finding new ways to communicate that identity while preserving the design discipline, attention to detail, and craftsmanship at its core.

Ready-to-wear also gives Marvy another way to express the house's creative vision. Her ambition extends beyond dressing individual clients to contributing to the wider recognition of Nigerian fashion across the continent and throughout the diaspora.

By building a house that brings together cultural heritage, technical skill, and a distinctive creative vision, she is working towards a larger goal: establishing House of Marvee as a Nigerian fashion house whose value is expressed not only in the price of its garments, but also in the craftsmanship, conviction, and creative enterprise behind them.



WHY EYELASHES ARE NIGERIA'S NEWEST BEAUTY ESSENTIAL

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Walk down the busy streets of Lagos, step into a corporate banking hall in Victoria Island, or scroll through Nigerian lifestyle feeds on social media, and you will notice a striking common denominator: dramatic, beautifully curled, and fluttering eyelashes.

What used to be reserved strictly for bridal looks, red carpets, or heavy professional glam has evolved into an everyday essential.

Today, eyelash extensions and luxury strip lashes have cemented their place as the ultimate beauty accessory in Nigeria, and the magic behind the trend is simple. As many beauty enthusiasts put it, with a good pair of eyelashes, you don't even need to do any extra makeup; the lashes alone instantly amplify and transform your face.

Time-Saver: The "No-Makeup" Makeup Hack

For the modern Nigerian woman navigating tight schedules, heavy traffic, and fast-paced city life, time is a luxury. Between balancing career demands, family, and social engagements, spending 30 to 45 minutes every morning blending foundation, carving out eyebrows, and applying eye shadow is often out of the question.

This is where the magic of the lash trend comes in. A well-installed set of extensions or neat cluster lashes acts as an instant facial highlighter. By framing the eyes, adding instant depth, and lifting the gaze, extensions create a polished, "made-up" appearance even when the rest of the face is completely bare.



A Booming Local Beauty Economy

The shift toward everyday eyelashes has also triggered a vibrant entrepreneurial boom across Nigeria. Lash technicians, specialized beauty studios, and DIY cluster lash supply businesses are thriving from Lagos to Abuja, Port Harcourt, and beyond.

Techniques have become remarkably advanced, moving from heavy, stiff synthetic fibers to ultra-lightweight silk, cashmere, and customized wispy mappings that mimic natural hairs while offering lasting durability.

Here to Stay

While beauty trends come and go, the eyelash phenomenon in Nigeria has proven to be much more than a passing phase. By combining ultimate convenience with high-impact glamour, eyelashes have transformed from a periodic accessory into a lifestyle choice—proving that sometimes, all a face truly needs to shine is a little flutter.

As beauty lovers frequently note, you can skip the foundation, concealer, and heavy eye pencils; once the lashes are on, your face is automatically elevated. It provides an effortless, “wake-up-like-this” glamour that cuts down morning prep time to mere minutes.

More Than Just Length: A Boost of Instant Confidence

In a society where personal presentation and style are deeply appreciated, eyelashes have become a powerful tool for self-expression and confidence.

The eyes are the focal point of human interaction, and enhancing them alters how a person feels and presents themselves. Whether opting for a soft, wispy, “undone” natural look or full, voluminous mega-lashes, a good set of lashes gives an immediate air of elegance.

For many, it acts as an instant mood booster, a quick fix that takes a tired face from a long week of work and leaves it looking bright, awake, and camera-ready.



HOW TO DRESS FOR YOUR BODY SHAPE WITHOUT LOSING YOUR PERSONAL STYLE

DESTINY CHIEDU



You see an outfit online, save the picture for inspiration and imagine how good it would look on you. But when you finally wear something similar, the result is different from what you expected. The trousers sit awkwardly on your waist, the dress does not fall the way you imagined, or the oversized blazer that looked effortless on someone else feels too bulky on you.

You have probably experienced this at some point while shopping for clothes or trying to recreate a look you admire. Sometimes, the problem is the fit, the cut of the garment or how different pieces work together. Other times, you simply expect an outfit to look the same on you as it does on someone else.

You may have heard that you should dress according to your body shape, whether that means choosing clothes that define your waist or selecting cuts that balance your shoulders and hips. Understanding your proportions can help you make better styling choices, but that does not mean your body shape should determine everything you wear. You can learn how clothes fit, experiment with different silhouettes and find combinations that feel comfortable and reflect your personal taste.

Dressing for your body shape does not mean avoiding certain trends or hiding particular features. Think of it as a way to understand how clothes fit you, explore different silhouettes and develop a personal style that feels comfortable and authentic.

Understanding your body shape

You may have come across terms such as hourglass, pear, apple, rectangle and inverted triangle when looking for fashion advice. These are commonly used to describe the relationship between your shoulders, bust, waist and hips, rather than your clothing size.



If you have an hourglass shape, your waist is generally more defined, with your shoulders and hips appearing relatively similar in width. A pear shape typically means your hips are wider than your shoulders, while an inverted triangle describes a figure with broader shoulders relative to the hips.

If you carry more fullness around your midsection, you may identify with an apple shape. A rectangle shape, on the other hand, generally describes shoulders, waist and hips that appear relatively similar in width.

But what if you do not fit neatly into any of these categories? That is perfectly fine. Your height, torso length, shoulder width and curves can all affect how clothes sit on you. Even if you have a similar body shape to someone else, your styling preferences and the way clothes fit you may be different.

Rather than trying to fit perfectly into one category, pay attention to the details that affect your outfits. For instance, if you often struggle to find trousers that fit both your waist and hips, understanding waistband construction and trouser cuts may help you more than relying on a body-shape label.

Choosing silhouettes that work for you

The silhouette of an outfit refers to its overall shape, which is influenced by the cut, fit and volume of the clothes. Once you understand how different silhouettes work, you can make better use of the pieces you already own.

Take high-waisted trousers, for example. They can create the appearance of longer legs, particularly when you pair them with a tucked-in top. Wide-leg trousers give your lower body more volume, while straight-leg cuts create a more streamlined outline.

Neither style is automatically better than the other. What matters is the look you want, how the trousers fit you and how comfortable you feel wearing them.

The same applies to dresses and skirts. If you want to define your waist, you could try a wrap dress. If you prefer a straighter silhouette, a shift dress may appeal to you. An A-line skirt widens towards the hem, while a pencil skirt follows your body's contours more closely.

And if relaxed clothing is more your style, you do not have to give it up. You can experiment with oversized shirts, loose trousers and flowing dresses. Pairing an oversized shirt with fitted trousers creates a different effect from wearing it with wide-leg trousers, but either combination can work depending on the look you want.

Instead of asking which clothes are suitable for your body type, ask yourself what you want your outfit to look like, how you want it to fit and whether you feel comfortable wearing it.

Making fashion trends work for your style

Keeping up with fashion trends can be exciting, especially when you see an outfit you cannot wait to try. But not every popular look will fit your wardrobe or appeal to your personal taste. Rather than avoiding a trend because someone says it is unsuitable for your body shape, look for a version that works with your proportions and the way you like to dress.

Take oversized blazers, for example. You can wear them with straight-leg jeans, tailored trousers or skirts. If you prefer a more defined silhouette, try a structured blazer with a closer fit. If you enjoy relaxed dressing, a looser cut may be more your style.

Baggy trousers offer similar options. You can pair them with a fitted top, a tucked-in shirt or a shorter jacket. If you prefer a more relaxed look, you can also wear them with a flowing top. The choice depends on the overall effect you want to create.

If you love bodycon dresses, experiment with different necklines, lengths and fabrics until you find options you feel comfortable wearing. If you prefer more coverage, you can layer a jacket or shirt over the dress or choose a less fitted cut.

The same applies to crop tops, trousers and maxi skirts. You can adapt these pieces through layering, proportions and accessories. You do not have to abandon a trend simply because a fashion rule says it is not meant for your body type.

Remember that personal style goes beyond the type of outfit you wear. Colour, prints, shoes, bags and jewellery all influence how your look comes together. If you love bold prints, for instance, you do not have to give them up because a conventional styling guide recommends plain colours.

Why fit and tailoring matter

Have you ever tried on an outfit that looked beautiful but just did not sit right on you? Sometimes, the problem is not the style itself but how the garment fits.

Two women who wear the same clothing size may have different shoulder widths, waist measurements, hip proportions or torso lengths. A pair of trousers may fit one woman comfortably but pull at the hips or gape at the waist on another.

When shopping, pay attention to how a garment fits across your shoulders, bust, waist and hips. Can you sit comfortably in it? Can you walk and move without feeling restricted? Does it sit the way you want it to? These details matter more than the number on the clothing label.

You can also make tailoring work for you. Adjusting trouser hems, shortening sleeves, taking in a waistband or altering a dress can improve the fit of a garment that otherwise works well. Before buying something that needs substantial alterations, however, consider whether the additional cost is worthwhile.

Do not overlook fabric, either. Structured materials tend to hold their shape, while softer fabrics often drape more closely around your body. Stretch fabrics may give you more flexibility, although the result depends on the garment's construction.

Paying attention to these details can help you make more considered purchases and avoid the frustration of buying clothes that look appealing but remain unworn because they do not fit as expected.

Building a wardrobe around your personal style

You do not necessarily need to buy more clothes to build a wardrobe that works for you. Sometimes, you simply need to understand what you enjoy wearing, how those pieces fit and how you can combine them.

Start by paying attention to the outfits you already feel comfortable in. Is it the way a particular pair of trousers fits your waist? Is it a jacket that works with several outfits? Or is it a dress you can style for different occasions?

Once you understand what works for you, you can use those observations when shopping. If you consistently prefer straight-leg trousers, for example, you can explore different colours, fabrics and rises without feeling pressured to switch to wide-leg styles simply because they are trending.

Think about your everyday needs, too. The clothes you wear to work may require a different level of structure and comfort from what you wear to social events. Your shoes, bags and accessories can also change the character of familiar pieces.

If you enjoy following trends, you can introduce one or two new items into your existing wardrobe to create fresh styling options. You do not have to overhaul your entire wardrobe every season to keep your style interesting.

Ultimately, dressing for your body shape should give you more options, not restrict you. You may prefer to emphasise your waist, or you may feel more comfortable in loose-fitting clothes. You may enjoy fitted silhouettes, or you may prefer relaxed cuts. There is room for all these preferences.

There is no single formula you must follow because of your body shape. Understanding your proportions can be useful, but fit, comfort and personal taste should remain central to the choices you make.

The goal is not to dress according to what someone else believes your body should wear. It is to understand how clothes work for you and use that knowledge to develop a style that feels like your own.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK: GWOTE ACHA

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Nigeria is home to more than 250 ethnic groups, each with its own cultural practices, including food. This diversity gives us a rich variety of traditional dishes, some of which remain relatively unfamiliar outside the communities where they originated. This week, we are exploring Gwote Acha, a traditional dish associated with the Berom people of Plateau State.

Made with acha, also known as fonio, beef, vegetables, tomatoes, peppers and onions, Gwote Acha is a savoury porridge traditionally prepared without cooking oil. Instead, the ingredients cook together in one pot, allowing the acha to absorb the flavours of the meat and vegetables as it swells and thickens into a hearty meal.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups acha (fonio)
500 g beef brisket, cut into small pieces
1 medium onion, chopped
3 medium tomatoes, chopped
2 fresh peppers, chopped, or to taste
2 garden eggs, chopped
2 handfuls of yakuwa (sorrel leaves)
1 handful of garden egg leaves
Salt to taste
Water, as needed

METHOD

WASH THE ACHA
Acha grains can contain sand, so rinse them several times in a bowl of water. Carefully pour off the water and repeat until the grains are clean. Drain and set aside.

COOK THE BEEF
Place the beef in a pot with some of the chopped onion, salt and enough water to cook the meat. Cover and simmer until the beef is tender, adding water when necessary. Retain the cooking liquid in the pot.

ADD THE VEGETABLES
Add the tomatoes, fresh pepper and chopped garden eggs to the pot. Stir and allow them to cook in the beef stock until they begin to soften.

ADD THE ACHA
Pour the washed acha into the pot and stir continuously to distribute the grains evenly and prevent lumps from forming. Add enough water to cook the grains, keeping the mixture moist as it thickens.

ADD THE LEAFY VEGETABLES

Stir in the yakuwa and garden egg leaves. Continue cooking until the acha is soft and the vegetables are tender. Stir regularly and add small amounts of water if the mixture becomes too thick before the grains are fully cooked.

CHECK AND SERVE
Taste and adjust the salt if necessary. The finished dish should have a thick, porridge-like consistency, with the grains, meat and vegetables cooked together. Serve hot.

WOMEN ARE THE FRAME OF THE FUTURE FOR AFRICAN CINEMA, SAYS AFRIFF FOUNDER CHIOMA UDE



As the Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) prepares to celebrate its milestone 15th anniversary from November 1 to 7, 2026, founder and creative director Chioma Ude has revealed that women filmmakers will dominate the festival's narrative landscape.

Speaking at a press conference in Lagos, Ude shared that while early discussions surrounding this year's theme, "Frames of the Future," leaned toward artificial intelligence and technological evolution, a surprising programming outcome pointed in a far more human direction.

"Something very interesting happened this year," Ude revealed. "I wasn't even part of selecting the films, but about five or six days ago, our head programmer from Canada called me and said, 'Looking back at all the films chosen, 85 percent of them are about women, or produced by women, or directed by women.' So, for me, the frame of the future is women. It might be AI, but there are a lot of women."

Since its inception, AFRIFF has served as an important platform for championing African cinema, elevating local talent, and connecting continental storytelling with

international distribution pipelines. Reflecting on her initial motivation for founding the festival, Ude explained that her primary goal was to bridge the glaring disconnect between African filmmakers and global audiences.

“When I started, I wanted to solve the gap between real storytelling, acting, and most importantly, I wanted the world to see us,” Ude stated.

“I made sure we bridged that gap between Nigeria, Africa, and the rest of the world. You can see from every passing year how much participation has grown.”

Addressing how AFRIFF 2026 will convert recognition into concrete commercial opportunities, Ude emphasized that the festival’s role is to construct high-level access to global decision-makers, investors, and distributors.

Highlighting a recent success story, Ude recalled: “Last year, five selected films ended up at the Cannes Film Festival in a room filled with distributors, sales agents, and investors. Out of those five, two secured deals. My job is to bring the right people into the room so filmmakers can sell themselves and their projects.”

The 15th edition of AFRIFF will introduce a major structural addition: the expanded AFRIFF Film Market, designed to accelerate co-productions, content buying, and regional distribution deals.

Additionally, the festival’s official selection will feature three prominent titles that have been submitted as their respective countries’ official entries for the Academy Awards (Oscars).

Ude noted that the festival continues to evolve beyond red-carpet premieres to build an active, sustainable ecosystem where creatives and agencies can network, exchange ideas, and build long-term partnerships.

When asked what has sustained her dedication over 15 years of leading West Africa’s flagship film festival, Ude cited passion and a deep sense of purpose.

“It’s so cliché to say ‘the passion,’ but it truly is,” Ude reflected. “Every year, I sit myself down and ask, ‘Why am I doing this?’ But for the past four or five years, God has kept saying to me, ‘Don’t say that again. You know why you’re doing this.”



SHIELDFORCE BETS ON AI PROTECTION AS NIGERIA FACES $500M ANNUAL CYBER LOSSES

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



A business can lose more than money when its systems are compromised. Customer records may be exposed, employees may lose access to essential files, and operations can grind to a halt while the source of an attack is investigated. For Nigerian businesses increasingly reliant on digital systems, cybersecurity has become an important part of protecting both information and day-to-day operations.

Data from Mastercard's white paper, Africa's Digital Defence Race, illustrates the scale of the challenge. Its Cyber Insights platform recorded approximately 16,700 cyber events in Nigeria in 2025, accounting for 24.4 per cent of the 69,236 events recorded across Africa. Nigeria had the highest number of recorded events on the continent, followed by other major markets including South Africa, Morocco and Kenya.

The financial cost has also been significant. Deloitte estimates cited in the report put Nigeria's losses to cybercrime

at more than $3 billion between 2019 and 2025, averaging about $500 million annually. Interpol data cited in the report recorded 5,822 ransomware detections in Nigeria in 2025.

The threats behind these figures take different forms. Phishing links can lead users to fraudulent websites designed to steal sensitive information, while malware can compromise devices and files. Ransomware can restrict access to systems and disrupt business operations. For organisations that depend on digital records, the consequences can extend to customers, employees and business partners.

These concerns formed the backdrop to the unveiling of Shieldforce's cybersecurity protection packages and Standard Edition at Ikeja Club, Computer Village, Lagos, on October 8, 2026.

The event was organised by Ndi-Igbo Computer Village in conjunction with Epinec Nigeria and SoftwareShop Limited. Discussions focused on protecting computers and organisational systems, preventing data loss and supporting business continuity.

Shieldforce was presented as an endpoint protection solution for personal computers and servers, with capabilities intended to address phishing links and malware attacks. Akor Akazue, a software engineer and web application support executive at Shieldforce Corporation, discussed the software's use of artificial intelligence to identify behaviour associated with malicious software, including ransomware.

System monitoring was also presented as a means of examining the history of incidents affecting a device.

Austin C. Agbakor, chief executive officer of SoftwareShop Limited, described Shieldforce as a complete end-to-end protection solution. He said its monitoring system operates through a server, allowing users to trace the history and possible source of a problem even when a system breaks down. He added that the software uses artificial intelligence and is designed to work across personal computers and servers. SoftwareShop Limited distributes Shieldforce in Nigeria.

The capabilities described at the event address concerns that extend beyond preventing an attack. Understanding what happened to a system and tracing the source of a problem can also matter when businesses are trying to assess an incident and restore normal operations.

The wider challenge remains significant as organisations move more transactions, records and communications online. The cyber events recorded in Nigeria in 2025 highlight the exposure facing businesses, while the launch of Shieldforce adds another product to a market responding to growing concerns about the security of digital systems.

For Nigerian businesses, protecting data is increasingly tied to protecting operations, customer information and the trust on which commercial relationships depend.

CHATGPT LEADS THE 15 MOST VISITED AI TOOLS IN 2026

CHISOM MICHAEL



ChatGPT recorded 5.32 billion website visits in June 2026, exceeding the combined 4.7 billion visits recorded by the next 14 AI tools in a ranking of the world's most visited artificial intelligence platforms.

Google's Gemini ranked second with 1.14 billion visits, followed by Anthropic's Claude with 967.91 million. Canva, Google Translate and China's DeepSeek completed the top six, according to data from AITools.xyz, modelled on traffic data from SEMrush and Ahrefs.

The figures show how traffic is distributed across the AI industry, with ChatGPT accounting for approximately 53 per cent of the 9.97 billion visits recorded by the 15 platforms combined. Its lead highlights the challenge facing other providers seeking to attract users as new AI products continue to emerge.

The ranking covers website visits in June 2026 and excludes usage through mobile applications and application programming interfaces (APIs). The figures therefore do not represent total platform usage across all channels.

The country breakdown also highlights the presence of American companies, with 12 of the 15 platforms based in the United States. Canva, DeepSeek and Magnific represent Australia, China and Spain, respectively.

The platforms serve different purposes, ranging from general AI assistants and search services to design, productivity, translation and music generation. Their positions reflect website traffic rather than a direct comparison of their capabilities or business performance.

The figures provide a measure of where online attention was concentrated during June. While ChatGPT maintains a substantial lead, the presence of other platforms shows that users continue to visit services built around different tasks.

As AI becomes part of more online products, providers will seek not only to attract visits to standalone websites but also to become part of the tools people use to work, search for information, communicate and create.

Here are the 15 most visited AI tools in the ranking and what their positions reveal about the market.

1. ChatGPT: 5.32 billion visits

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI in the United States, ranked first with 5.32 billion website visits in June 2026.

Its traffic exceeded the combined visits of the other 14 platforms on the list, establishing a gap between the leading AI assistant and its competitors.

Since its launch in November 2022, ChatGPT has become a tool for tasks ranging from answering questions and drafting documents to writing code, analysing information and generating ideas.

Its position at the top of the ranking indicates the scale of its website audience. However, the figures measure visits rather than individual users, so they do not establish how many people use the platform or how often each person returns.

2. Google Gemini: 1.14 billion visits

Google's Gemini ranked second with 1.14 billion visits, making it the closest competitor to ChatGPT by website traffic.

Despite its position, Gemini recorded about one-fifth of ChatGPT's visits during the month. The difference between the two platforms also shows the distance other AI providers must cover to approach the leading service.

Gemini is Google's AI assistant, offering capabilities that include text generation, information analysis and support for tasks across Google's product ecosystem.

Its second-place ranking places Google among the main providers competing for users seeking AI assistance online.

3. Anthropic's Claude: 967.91 million visits

Claude, developed by American AI company Anthropic, ranked third with 967.91 million website visits.

The platform is used for tasks such as writing, coding, document analysis and research. Its position places it behind Gemini but ahead of every other tool in the ranking.

Claude's monthly traffic was close to one billion visits, although it remained below the figures recorded by the two platforms above it.

The result places three American AI assistants in the first three positions, underlining the role of US companies in the website traffic captured by the ranking.

4. Canva: 759.76 million visits

Canva ranked fourth with 759.76 million visits. Unlike the AI assistants in the first three positions, Canva is a design platform that also offers AI-powered tools.

Users can create presentations, social media graphics, documents and other visual materials through its website.

The Australian company was the highest-ranked non-US platform in the list. Its position also demonstrates that AI-related traffic extends beyond chatbots to services that incorporate artificial intelligence into existing products.

5. Google Translate: 343.02 million visits

Google Translate recorded 343.02 million visits to rank fifth.

The translation service allows users to convert text between languages and supports communication across language barriers. Its inclusion reflects the range of activities covered by the ranking, which includes established online services alongside AI assistants and generative tools.

Google Translate's traffic was less than half of Canva's and about one-sixteenth of ChatGPT's.

Its position also means Google had two products among the top five, with Gemini and Google Translate serving different user needs.

6. DeepSeek: 318.81 million visits

DeepSeek, developed in China, ranked sixth with 318.81 million website visits.

The platform gained attention as an alternative in the AI assistant market, where companies compete on model performance, accessibility and the tasks their products can handle.

DeepSeek was one of three non-US platforms in the top 15, alongside Australia's Canva and Spain's Magnific.

Its ranking places a Chinese AI provider among the services attracting substantial website traffic, although its recorded visits remained below those of the five platforms ahead of it.

7. Grok: 189.89 million visits

Grok, developed by xAI in the United States, ranked seventh with 189.89 million visits.

The AI assistant offers conversational responses and other generative AI functions. Its position places it among the platforms competing for users seeking answers, explanations and assistance with everyday tasks.

Grok recorded fewer than one-fifth of Claude's visits, showing the difference in traffic between the third-ranked service and those in the second half of the ranking.

8. JanitorAI: 173.17 million visits

JanitorAI ranked eighth with 173.17 million visits. The platform focuses on AI-powered character interactions and conversations, distinguishing it from services centred on workplace productivity, research or general-purpose assistance.

Its position shows that specialised platforms can attract substantial website traffic even when they serve a narrower set of purposes than general AI assistants.

9. Character AI: 165.46 million visits

Character AI recorded 165.46 million visits to rank ninth.

The platform allows users to interact with AI-generated characters and participate in conversations based on different personalities and scenarios.

Its ranking alongside JanitorAI indicates the presence of conversational entertainment platforms within the wider AI market.

Although both services ranked below Grok, their visits placed them ahead of several tools designed for research, productivity and business use.

10. Perplexity: 140.7 million visits

Perplexity ranked tenth with 140.7 million visits

The US-based platform focuses on AI-assisted search and research, providing responses that draw on information retrieved from online sources.

Its approach places it among the services seeking to change how people find and process information on the internet.

Perplexity's position in the top 10 shows that AI-powered search remains part of the market, even as general-purpose assistants attract more visits.

11. Magnific: 116.84 million visits

Magnific, associated with Spain-based Freepik, recorded 116.84 million visits.

The platform focuses on image enhancement and AI-powered visual creation. Its inclusion in the ranking reflects demand for tools that support creative work rather than text-based conversations alone.

Magnific was the third non-US platform in the top 15 and ranked ahead of Notion, Zoom and Microsoft Copilot.

1**2. Notion: 110.64 million visits**

Notion ranked 12th with 110.64 million visits
The US-based productivity platform supports note-taking, documentation, project management and collaboration. Its AI features allow users to work with information within the platform.

Notion's position highlights the role of AI in productivity software, where users can apply the technology to existing workflows rather than visit a separate chatbot.

13. Zoom: 96.24 million visits

Zoom recorded 96.24 million visits to rank 13th. Known for its video conferencing service, the company has also incorporated AI features into its products to support meeting summaries, information retrieval and workplace collaboration.

Its appearance in the ranking reflects the expansion of AI capabilities into communication tools.

14. Microsoft Copilot: 92.72 million visits

Microsoft Copilot ranked 14th with 92.72 million visits. The platform offers AI assistance for tasks such as answering questions, generating content and supporting productivity.

Its position places it below Zoom and Notion in this website traffic ranking, despite Microsoft's presence across workplace software and digital services.

The figures, however, do not capture all Copilot activity within Microsoft's applications, so website visits alone cannot establish the platform's total reach.

15. Suno: 81.84 million visits

Suno completed the ranking with 81.84 million visits.

The US-based platform allows users to generate music with AI, including songs created from text prompts.

Its inclusion demonstrates that the market extends into music production and other creative activities, beyond search, writing and workplace productivity.

Although Suno recorded the fewest visits among the 15 platforms, its monthly traffic exceeded 80 million, according to the ranking.

MEET WINNERS OF STUDYIN NIGERIA MAIDEN ESSAY COMPETITION

CHARLES OGWO



The maiden edition of the StudyIn Nigeria Essay Competition for secondary school students has produced its first set of winners, celebrating intellectual curiosity and the power of young Nigerians to articulate ideas that can shape the nation's future.

The competition provided a platform for emerging voices to showcase their writing skills, critical thinking, and perspectives on issues that matter, underscoring the importance of nurturing young talent and promoting educational excellence in Nigeria.

Sienu Okoye, a Senior Secondary School three (SS3) student of Lagoon Secondary School, emerged as the overall best in the Future Ready Essay Competition.

Sienu was announced the winner of the essay competition at the StudyIn Global Study Conference held at the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Her essay was adjust the best out of 100 other students who wrote on the essay topic: "How would studying at an international university help you prepare for a career in a world increasingly shaped by AI?"

Okoye got a MacBook, iPad, and other gifts for her remarkable feat. for her win.

Tamilore Macaulay of Dowen College, Lekki, Lagos, emerged as the first runner-up and was rewarded with an iPad, while James Soorefunmi, from Lagoon Secondary School, was announced as the second runner-up and got a Tablet.

For the schools categories, Lagoon Secondary School, that produced two students in the top three, emerged as the overall best school, while Dowen College, and Riverbank Secondary School emerged as the first and second runners-up, respectively.



Other schools whose students featured among the top 15 finalists were Honeyland, Atlantic Hall, Silversands Hall, and Meadow Hall, all in Lagos.

The annual conference featured sessions and presentations on how Nigeria's education sector can embrace Artificial Intelligence and help students become future-ready.

Mary Agbu, the country director of StudyIn Nigeria, in her speech emphasised the need for schools to be intentional and balanced in their adoption of AI with ethical considerations and the values of education.

Agbu urged education stakeholders to strive to align with evolving global education and career landscapes and help students make informed decisions about their studies and future careers.

She said discussions on AI should involve parents, schools, and other stakeholders to ensure that students understand the opportunities and challenges associated with the technology.

"Education should continue to promote values and ethics as AI becomes more widely adopted. One of the things that we really push out in the college is values.

"The integration of AI into education should be balanced with an understanding of the value system and the ethics of education," she said.

Adiba Ofungwu, the chief of staff and director at StudyIn Nigeria, said that there was a significant gap between the realities of education in Nigeria and the demands of the changing global learning environment.

Ofungwu said students needed adequate preparation to compete with their counterparts abroad, many of whom were already familiar with AI-driven learning environments.

"StudyIn was seeking to bridge the gap by providing students with the information and guidance needed to navigate global higher education opportunities and prepare for changing educational demands.

"Students needed to understand their academic options, available scholarships, and the relationship between their chosen courses and future career goals," she said.

Lola Olukuewu, a chief artificial intelligence officer, in her keynote address, said Africans, especially Nigerian students, should be equipped to be future- ready, especially because of the AI evolution.

"AI has come to stay, from the realities we are seeing, especially since we've seen it happen before, through the advent of the Internet. We're having a sort of repeat of the Y2K advent, with AI.

"The educational system is being revamped as well, and so we need to let our learners know how to be future-ready, so that the changes in the world and career space don't meet them unprepared," she said.

Olukuewu emphasised that Nigeria must begin early to introduce artificial intelligence in its curriculum to avoid being reactive.

"As it is now, we're being reactive because most of the educational systems globally are changing very fast. In fact, China recently revamped thousands of its courses and expunged them from its curricula because they have now become obsolete.

"We have to begin to catch them young by letting them know on time that the world out there has changed, and help them to reposition themselves in such a way that they are future-ready for the realities they are going to meet," she said.



LOOKING INTO BRAND GUIDELINE

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Brand guidelines are like a manual guidebook of a brand. It consists of very specific principles regarding what colour palette and tone of voice must govern a brand's marketing visuals and communication. It lists out the dos and don'ts to help everybody surrounding the brand – from copywriters, graphic designers, animators, and web developers, to customer executives, and even external agencies; to maintain a consistent brand image.

Why does anyone need brand guidelines?

a.Makes a brand look recognisable
I know this brand! Do you see friendly colours? Tagline? Your favourite brands never need to introduce themselves with their name. Brand guidelines bring consistency in the use of colours, typography, copy tone, symbols, and more which makes the brand easily identifiable in public.

Infamous brands or even regular ones have a certain look and feel to them if they stick firmly with their respective brand guidelines.

b.Maintains a brand's consistency
I trust this brand! Brand consistency means the way a firm presents its brand and what it stands for is the same across all marketing channels. With the help of common brand guidelines for all, maintaining this consistency becomes easier. It supports standing out of the competency, builds brand authority, and most importantly enhances customer trust and loyalty.

c.Helps in avoiding any confusion
This is how it should be done! There are certain fonts and colours to portray their respective qualities. For example, MTN uses yellow and black- two solid and bold colours.

If they decide to switch to sophisticated greys and blacks, it will send another message entirely. Brand guidelines also communicate common rules and regulations to both internal and external stakeholders so that there is consistency and no confusion regarding usage in design and verbal communication.

d.Creates a good impression and brings value
You can trust this one! Brand guidelines define principles about interaction with customers, brand positioning, values, leadership, innovation, ethics, and more. These develop the brand's quality positioning and integrity. A unique brand story is conveyed which delivers respective unique values attached to the brand. It builds the brand's image and customer loyalty stronger.

e.Develops a clear understanding of a brand
This goes along well! All the employees must have a clear understanding and answer to what are the brand guidelines. It makes sure that everyone's goals and work are aligned with a common perspective. If everyone related to the brand knows its emotion, context, and essence, through knowing brand guidelines, then communication to both offline and online worlds is quite impactful.

What does a brand guideline include?

Following are the basic things that must be included when you decide on how to create brand guidelines and what to include;

-Mission and vision statements
These statements define the organisation's business, goals, aspirations, and key characteristics.

-Core values and ethics
Values directing an organisation shape the importance of its work and its soft characteristics. Brand guidelines must lay out everything that portrays the institution as unique.

-Brand tone of voice
It refers to how a brand communicates with its audience – their choice of words aligning with respective pictures and values showcase the brand's current principles and futuristic aspirations.

-Colour palette

According to research and data analytics, colour improves brand recognition by up to 80 per cent and hence, plays a larger role in building a brand's personality and how it is perceived. Colours also have a physiological effect on the minds of humans which is why certain colours are appropriate for the brand depending on its product/service and message to the audience.

For example, blue brings up emotions such as trust and professionalism whereas green points out health and growth. Drawing out a unique colour palette for instant recognition and bringing up the right emotions among consumers is a necessary part of laying the brand foundation.

-Logo and its usage

A logo is the most essential part of a brand. Its formulation can be a whole different topic. But, only not the visual and verbal elements of the logo matter, its usage too. The logo usage guidelines elaborate on logo proportions, versions, space around the logo, colour palette, typography and font, rationale behind the logo, bad logo usage, background colours, and further such details.

This is an integral part of brand guidelines as it portrays how the most important part of a brand – its logo should be used on different online platforms and offline materials. It maintains the highlight and integrity as per the brand's requirements.

-Typography

Typography is a type of logo, which has an essential role in bringing certain moods among the audience as per the brand's requirements. For example, there is a difference between feminine and manly fonts which represent the brand's product/service. Different typefaces induce different emotions, which is why we have so many classifications and guidelines to use them accordingly for clear representation.

How to create brand guidelines

i.Identify your internal and external users
ii.Develop your brand's story or quality essence
iii.Define logo usage dos and don'ts
iv.Frame your brand's colour palette and typography
v.Establish respective principles for different media channels
vi.Specify visual and verbal style
vii.Educate internal and external stakeholders
viii.Plan for the evolution of your brand and its guidelines

LAST LINE

Brand guidelines are the navigators towards building a brand's visual and communication identity. It talks about the idea and positioning of the organisation, as well as develops its verbal ecosystem. It guides about the proper usage of the logo, fonts, typography, corporate graphics, illustrations, etc. It also clearly defines what not to do, with respect to the brand's communication and design.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Feyisitan Ijimakinwa is a Reputation and Perception Management expert. He is a prolific writer and researcher who, at different times, served as Head of Corporate Communications of top brands quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. A versatile communications specialist, he practiced extensively as a print journalist and was variously engaged in the broadcast media, working on radio and television. Feyisitan continues to write on corporate communications, brand reputation and perception management, and brand intelligence, among others. He organises the 'Brand Intelligence and the Marketplace' masterclass. Feyisitan advocates a pollution free and sustainable environment

RECLAIMED

Part 1

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

Lucas had married the love of his life.
At least, that was what he called Tare when they first got married. They had only been married for only two years when everything changed.

Tare and Lucas met through Matt, a mutual friend. Matt and Tare had been best friends since childhood, while Lucas and Matt had worked together in the same company before Matt relocated abroad.
When Tare lost her mother, Matt returned to the country for the funeral and dragged Lucas to attend the event with him.
Tare was an only child. Her mother had been the only family she had and losing her left her completely alone.

When Matt travelled back abroad, Lucas remained. He stayed in touch after the funeral. At first, it was simply because he knew she was grieving. He checked on her, listened to her and became the person she could lean on when the loneliness became too much. Somewhere along the way, friendship became love.

There was no formal asking out. No dramatic beginning. They simply moved from being friends to becoming lovers and before long, they were married.
Matt was happy for them. He gave them his full approval and support. He even flew into the country for the wedding and stood beside Lucas as his best man.

They were only married for two years, then Tare became sick. Her condition became serious enough for her to stop working. That was when Lucas discovered that loving someone in sickness was very different from loving someone in health. He loved Tare but he had never imagined that sickness would enter his marriage so early. He tried to care for her but his patience began to wear thin. His frustration became harder to hide.

And then he started calling Matt.
He complained about how tired he was. He complained about the demands of caring for a sick wife. Eventually, he began saying something that shocked Matt: he regretted marrying Tare.
Matt could hardly reconcile the man on the phone with the Lucas he thought he knew.

Lucas had always appeared to be a perfect gentleman. But this was different. This was a side of him Matt had never seen. And Lucas was not finished. He began telling Matt that he was seeing other women. There was one particular woman he liked more than the others. Lucas was already considering making her his wife.

Tare was still his wife. She was still sick.
And most times, she was lying in a hospital bed. Yet Lucas was taking other women to their home. He told Matt about it as though he had nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of.

Then Tare died.
Her doctor called Lucas to give him the news. EsLucas was busy with work.
He told the doctor to take care of the corpse and that he would come later.
The doctor refused. He waited for Lucas to arrive, made him complete the necessary paperwork and only then was Tare's body taken to the morgue.

The woman Lucas had once called the love of his life was now lying in a morgue.
Matt flew into the country.
He handled most of the burial arrangements because Lucas was either too busy to function or simply too uninterested to take responsibility.
Tare was buried a few days later.

And then Lucas moved on. Quickly.
He married one of the women he had been seeing while Tare was alive. But marriage did not turn out the way he expected. The woman he had chosen began showing him exactly why she had chosen him.
Lucas started calling Matt again.
Only this time, he was not complaining about Tare. He was complaining about his new wife. He compared her to Tare. He remembered the things Tare had done for him. He remembered her love, her loyalty and the woman she had been before sickness changed everything.

Slowly, painfully, Lucas began to understand what he had thrown away.
He regretted the way he had treated Tare.
He also realised that his new wife was not with him because she loved him. She was with him because of what he had.
Matt had heard enough.
His response was simple: Lucas had made his choice and now he had to live with it.

But something else had changed.
Matt had begun withdrawing from Lucas.
Their friendship was no longer what it had been. The calls became fewer. The closeness disappeared. Lucas noticed it but he did not understand why.

Then Lucas heard that Matt had gotten married. That surprised him.
What shocked him even more was that Matt had not told him. He had not invited him. He had not even mentioned it.
Lucas called. He sent messages.
There was no response. So he decided to try Instagram. He intended to send Matt another message but instead, he found the wedding pictures.

He stared at them.
Matt was dressed as a groom.
And standing beside him was his bride.

Lucas looked again.
Then again.
The woman in the wedding dress was not a stranger. She was not some woman Matt had met after relocating abroad. She was the woman Lucas had once married.
The woman he had watched grow sick.
The woman he had betrayed.
The woman he had abandoned emotionally while she was still alive.
The woman whose body he had once told her doctor to take care of because he was too busy with work. The woman he had buried.
Tare.
His dead wife.
Standing beside Matt.
As his bride.

Lucas dropped the phone.
For several seconds, he could not breathe.
Then he picked it up again and zoomed in on the picture as though the image might change if he looked closely enough.
It did not. The woman beside Matt was Tare.
Not a look-alike. Not a ghost.
Tare.
Alive. Smiling.

Lucas's hands began to shake. He opened the comments beneath the picture. There were hundreds of congratulatory messages. People spoke about Matt's beautiful bride, their love story and the small private ceremony they had held weeks earlier.
Weeks earlier?????

So while Lucas had been sitting in his house, complaining about his new wife and remembering the woman he had destroyed, Matt had been marrying Tare.

Lucas called Matt again. This time, the call went through. Matt answered but he said nothing.

"Matt," Lucas whispered.
There was a long silence.
"Where is Tare?"

Matt's voice was calm.
"She is with me."

Lucas closed his eyes.
"How is that possible?"

"You buried her," Matt replied. "You watched them lower her into the ground."

Lucas's throat tightened.
"I know what I saw."

"No," Matt said. "You saw what you wanted to see."

Lucas stood up so quickly that the room spun around him.
"What are you talking about?"

Matt exhaled slowly.
"Tare did not die."

Lucas gripped the edge of the table.

The words made no sense.
"But the doctor called me."

"The doctor called you because Tare was in critical condition. Her condition worsened and she stopped responding. They believed she had died."

Lucas stared at the wall.
He remembered the doctor's call.
He remembered being irritated.
He remembered telling him to handle everything because he was busy. He later went to the hospital. He had never looked at Tare. He had never asked to see her body. He had simply accepted the news and continued with his life.

"What happened after that?" he asked.

"She woke up in the morgue."

Lucas's knees weakened.

Matt continued.
"She was weak, confused and terrified. The hospital contacted me because I was listed as her emergency contact. I flew back immediately."

Lucas could barely hear him.
"And you never told me?"

"There was no point."

Lucas said nothing.
He was shocked.



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MUSTAPHA ABDULLAHI: FROM ENERGY TECHNOCRAT TO BASKETBALL CHIEF

ANTHONY NLEBEM



Dr Mustapha Abdullahi's election as president of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) marks a new chapter in a career built around engineering, energy policy, and public administration, taking the Kogi-born technocrat from the corridors of government to the leadership of Nigerian basketball.

Abdullahi, Director-General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria, defeated former D'Tigers captain Olumide Oyedeji and former international Ejike Ugboaja at Thursday's elective congress in Abuja. He succeeds Musa Ahmadu Kida, who completed eight years in office. His emergence places a public-sector administrator at the head of a federation facing demands for stronger grassroots development, improved player welfare, more competitive domestic leagues and greater commercial investment.

While Abdullahi's professional background differs from that of traditional sports administrators, he says his connection to basketball dates back to childhood. His personal experience as a young player, including the financial difficulties he faced pursuing the game, now informs his ambition to widen opportunities for aspiring Nigerian players.

The challenge before him is to turn that passion and his administrative experience into measurable progress for the sport.

From engineering to public service

Born in Kano and originally from Okene Local Government Area of Kogi State, Abdullahi built his professional career in engineering, research and energy administration.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology, formerly Kano University of Science and Technology. He later earned a master's degree from the University of Salford and a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Manchester, both in the United Kingdom. His doctoral research focused on structural health monitoring in the oil and gas industry, while his academic career included research associate and postdoctoral positions at Manchester.

These roles gave him experience in technical research and problem-solving before he moved further into Nigeria's public institutions.



Experience across regulation and government

Abdullahi's career has also taken him through energy regulation, scientific research and policy advisory roles. He has worked with institutions including the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, formerly the Department of Petroleum Resources, and the National Space Research and Development Agency.

He subsequently served as Senior Technical Adviser to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Chief Uche Geoffrey Nnaji, before President Bola Ahmed Tinubu appointed him Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the Energy Commission of Nigeria on October 24, 2023.

His move into basketball administration brings experience in institutional coordination, policy formulation and public-sector management. Whether these skills can translate into effective sports governance will depend on how he applies them to the federation's funding, competitions and development programmes.

A personal connection to basketball

Despite his career outside sports, Abdullahi says basketball has remained an important part of his life since childhood.

After his election, he recalled borrowing money to buy shoes and enduring injuries while pursuing his passion for the game. Those experiences, he said, strengthened his resolve to improve the conditions facing young players.

His story provides a personal dimension to his stated ambition to make basketball more accessible, particularly for talented youngsters whose development is constrained by financial circumstances or limited opportunities.

For Nigerian basketball, the task is to create a clearer pathway from grassroots participation to organised competitions, professional opportunities and national-team representation.

A promise to change the system

Abdullahi has pledged to introduce institutional reforms and move Nigerian basketball away from what he described as business as usual.

"My presidency will mark a decisive departure from business as usual. We cannot keep doing things the same way and expect a different result," he said. "Nigerian basketball needs more than enthusiasm; it needs strategic leadership, sound administration, institutional reforms and measurable results."



He also stressed the need for accountability, saying the election marked the beginning of the work rather than the end of the process.

His priorities include grassroots development, stronger domestic leagues, improved facilities and greater investment in coaches and referees. Implementing these plans will require sustained funding, clear performance targets and coordination among the federation, clubs, schools and other stakeholders.

Player welfare and national teams

Abdullahi has identified player welfare and women's basketball as priorities, alongside improving the performances of Nigeria's senior national teams, D'Tigers and D'Tigress, and the country's youth sides.
His vision is to build a system in which young players can progress through grassroots and domestic competitions into the national teams.

He also sees basketball as a platform for education, employment, enterprise and national unity. Achieving these objectives will require consistent investment in coaching, facilities, competitions and player development.

Building a commercially sustainable sport

Beyond performance on the court, Abdullahi wants to strengthen basketball's commercial foundations. He has pledged to pursue partnerships with private-sector investors, corporate organisations, international basketball institutions and Nigerians in the diaspora.
The ambition is to attract investment, create jobs and build a more sustainable ecosystem around the sport. Stronger sponsorship agreements, commercially attractive domestic competitions and partnerships supporting player development could form part of that effort.

However, commercial growth will depend on the federation's ability to demonstrate sound governance, deliver value to partners and convert investment commitments into reliable funding for basketball development.

The test of leadership

Abdullahi's transition from energy technocrat to basketball chief brings a different professional background to the NBBF presidency. His experience in engineering, research and public administration may offer useful tools for institutional reform, but it does not remove the practical challenges facing the sport.

After eight years under Kida, the new administration will be judged by tangible improvements in grassroots participation, domestic competitions, player welfare, national-team performance and financial sustainability. For Abdullahi, the defining test will be whether he can turn his lifelong interest in basketball and his promise of strategic leadership into a more organised, competitive and commercially viable system.





Sade, What Exactly Are You Up To?-A Review of Ope Adebanjo's The League of Style

Title: The League of Style
Author: Ope Adebanjo
Year of Publication: 2024
Number of Pages: 212
Category: Fiction

THE LEAGUE OF STYLE

TITILADE OYEMADE

The cover of The League of Style by Ope Adebanjo looks more like that of a fashion magazine than a novel. And that beautiful, dark chocolate-skinned lady on the cover? Stunning! But look closely at her expression and you might suspect that beauty is not the only thing she has going for her. Something seems to be bothering her, and naturally, one wants to know what it is. The title offers no clues, so we have to open the book and find out what Ope Adebanjo is up to.

Set in Paris and Lagos, the novel opens with a conversation between an African couple in Paris. The writing is simple and natural, and the dialogue flows easily. There is a romantic comedy feel to the opening, giving the impression that we are in for an enjoyable read. So far, so good!
Things take a different turn when Sade returns to Lagos after seven years in Paris. She has a mission, but Adebanjo is not telling us much about it just yet. Clearly, this is not an ordinary homecoming. Sade has unfinished business, and her brother and his friends seem to have something to do with it. One might expect someone returning home after seven years to head straight to Mummy and Daddy for a proper reunion. Not Sade! She has more pressing matters to attend to, and settling a score appears to be higher on her list than family catch-ups. Mummy and Daddy will have to wait.

What is supposed to be a one-week stay stretches into weeks, with one dramatic encounter after another. Adebanjo keeps things moving, although at times, the story feels like an action movie that refuses to end.

Adebanjo brings Lagos to life with descriptions of its busy streets and everyday hustle. Anyone familiar with the city will recognise its familiar chaos, while the stylish locations and luxurious lifestyles reveal the author's taste for the finer things in life. There is a distinctly bougie feel to the novel, and fashion enthusiasts will find something to enjoy. As the story progresses, the title The League of Style begins to make more sense. Clearly, looking good is part of the assignment.

The author also includes photographs of some characters, buildings and locations, which is a lovely touch. Why should readers do all the imagining when Ope Adebanjo can lend a helping hand? The pictures add interest to the reading experience and allow us to put faces to names and see some of the places featured in the story. It is almost like having a little visual tour alongside the novel. Who says reading cannot come with sightseeing?

The chapter headings indicating time and location are another thoughtful touch, especially as the story moves between Paris and Lagos. At least, readers do not have to pause and ask, "Wait, are we still in Paris, or have we landed in Lagos?" Unfortunately, some of the supporting characters do not enjoy the same attention.
Saskia, Sade's boyfriend, and Banke, her brother's ex-girlfriend, seem promising, but they fade from the story just when things could get interesting. Where did they go? Did they quietly leave the party without telling anyone?

Then comes the ending, and this is where Adebanjo leaves readers wanting more, perhaps a little too much. After all the drama, several questions remain unanswered, some characters' stories are left hanging, and certain events need further explanation.

We have followed Sade around Lagos and turned the pages, expecting everything to come together, only to reach the end still searching for answers. Surely, we deserve a little more!

Ope Adebanjo, please, we need to talk! And if there is a sequel coming, kindly let us know. Some of us still have questions, and for once, they have nothing to do with fashion.



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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

ANIMAL (2026)

I just couldn't help but smile from chin to chin at the end of this movie, in my head I thought to myself; "What on earth happened in this movie?". They left me more confused in a funny way than I could imagine, how did they come up with that twisted story? I must commend the scriptwriter. In this movie, Mark was a brilliant, fantastic candidate campaigning for mayor of his state, but he needed to win the votes of the Latino people to win the elections, he had put all his savings into this campaign and was at a cross road. Things went south for him when his son's friend was kidnapped, thinking it was the mayor's son. The question will be if they will be willing to do anything to save him discovering that their son was safe. You will need to go check out this movie to find out how they managed the crisis, if they paid the ransom, who was behind all these and if he won the election. The 106m crime, drama, thriller, social issues were directed by Ben Affleek, they featured actors like Gillian Anderson, Kenny Washington, Steven Yeun, Luis Gerado Mendez, Adriana Paz, Ray Fisher, Matt Gerald e.t.c.



DADDY'S IN TROUBLE (2026)

If you're looking for something witty and funny to watch this weekend, then you might want to jump on this one. Roberta was a mother of four amazing kids; to ease her of her stress, she decided to go on a long-deserved holiday in another country with the kids and her husband. He will need to learn how to manage and take care of the kids. This was a total disaster as Fred had no clue on how to manage the kids, cook or take care of the home. You will need to go check out this hilarious movie to find out how the kids survived these few days with their father who had no clue of parenting. The 103m family films, kids & family, Brazilian comedy movie was directed by Carlo Durao, they featured actors like Rafael Infante, Dani Calabresa, Xande Valois, Bella Alelaf, Lara Infante, Manu Barbosa, Caio Costa, Pedro Costa etc.





MR. CHURCH (2016)

It has taken me months to finally finish this movie. The drama movie was okay and it was so nice to see Eddie Murphy do his thing again. In this movie, Mr. Church was assigned to assist Ms. Marie and her daughter Charlie. Ms. Marie was sick and dying of Breast Cancer and she was given only 6 months to live but against all odds, she lived an extra 5 years and was able to witness Charlie's Prom. She passed on after that, but rather than Mr. Church disserting Charlie, he decided to help her go to university. Just early in the first year, she gets pregnant and drops out of school to have her baby. You will need to go check out this movie to find out how she managed to live with her new baby and if she went back to school. The 105m drama movie was directed by Bruce BeresFord and they featured actors like Eddie Murphy, Britt Robertson, Natascha McElhone, Xavie Samuel, Lucy Fry, Christian Madsen, Natalie Coughlin, Madison Wolfe, Thom Barry, Mckenna Grace, etc.



WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Anxiety breeds wrong decisions
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Too much self orientation is not just discouraged in leadership but as a Christian. Code Phil 2.4
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

Leaders fail forward and move on after a set back even as a believer, you are called to do same. Stop the struggle! Code Phil 3:13.14
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Thinking of love, peace, virtue, good deeds, and truth eliminates anxiety. Code Phil 4.8
.....WhispersbyTEN