

Report: Pop culture named the biggest influencer on African youth

According to a new report by Africa No Filter, the biggest influence on African youth is pop culture.



Source: www.unsplash.com

The [Who is influencing who report](#) investigates Africa's influence on the world, its influences on African youth, and how dominant narratives about Africa shape the youth's perception of the continent. The research interviewed 4,500 people aged between 18 and 35 in Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said pop culture has the biggest influence, followed by the US and Europe (45%), and politicians (31%). Regionally, pop culture had the strongest sway in Kenya (87%) and Zimbabwe, while West African respondents (65%) perceived the US and Europe as more influential.

Interestingly, even though politicians are considered influential, only 11% of interviewees said they were influenced by politicians.



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Alwi Suleiman 13 Jan 2023



Given that stereotypical narratives about Africa are abundant, the report asked young Africans what they believe to be the dominant negative stories about the continent in movies. 54% said that common negative narratives were about crime and corruption, followed by narratives set in underdeveloped cities (41%) and depicting uneducated, unexposed Africans (33%).

Regarding the impact on the world's perceptions, 75% of respondents said the stories created a negative perception of the continent. However, it has not stopped them from loving their country and the continent (60%) or believing that African countries - especially South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt - have a global influence (73%).

Moky Makura, executive director at Africa No Filter, said: "This is a must-read for any organisation working with and in Africa because it unpacks what influences the largest demographic in the continent. Sadly, African youth haven't escaped the impact of negative stereotypes but the good news is that it hasn't defined their perceptions - and that has a lot to do with social media, and the agency it gives them."

Here are key findings from the report:

1. Social media is powerful: Seventy-one percent of respondents believed they could challenge negative stereotypes about the continent on social media. While the report does not dig into the origins of this belief, previous research has turned up several examples of how young Africans have – and continue to – shift negative stereotypes at a global level.

2. Love for country and continent: Even though 45% of respondents believed their perceptions had been shaped by negative narratives about the continent, 60% still loved their country and the African continent. Only 18% of respondents indicated that they would rather live in the US or Europe and only 20% believed that there are fewer opportunities on the African continent than elsewhere.

3. The power of pop culture: The main influences on respondents were pop culture (57%), social media (27%), family and friends (44%), religion (74%) and their communities' cultural practices (54%). While 45% of respondents believed that other African youths were strongly influenced by the US and Europe, they stated that, for them, family and friends had the biggest influence.

4. Politicians are influential, but they don't influence the youth: Although 58% of respondents said politicians were the most influential people in their country, only 11% said they were influenced by politicians. The only time respondents said they were influenced by politicians was when making voting decisions (51%).

5. Movies perpetuate stereotypes: For 54% of respondents, the most common narratives about Africa in movies were about crime and corruption. 41% said they were stories about underdeveloped cities. 75% of respondents believed these stories created a negative perception of the continent, with Kenyans (83%), Ghanaians and Zimbabweans (82% each) most convinced of the negative impact.

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