

Movie Stars in Politics: A Critical Analysis of Desmond Elliot's Stewardship

Ramson Oloche Acheme¹, Steven Anu' Adesemoye², E Timothy Ekeledirichukwu Onyejelem³

¹Department of Mass Communication, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos

²Department of Mass Communication, Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH)

³Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State

Abstract:

While contemporary movie stars are known as screen entertainers who enjoy massive popularity among young audiences, the audience often has high expectations of them. Viewers mostly see their screen heroes as ideal figures and assume the actors are the role they depict on the silver screen. This mental projection of thespians may be a mirage, as actors-turned-politicians seem not to meet the public expectations. Nollywood screen lover boy Desmond Elliot is among the few popular role interpreters who contested the 2015 elections and won the Surulere Constituency 1 seat in the Lagos State House of Assembly. Six years after his first electoral victory, Elliot remained a reference point for movie stars in Nigerian politics and many youths with popular and contending views of his public activities as a thespian-turned-politician. He became the poster boy for movie stars in politics. Subsequently, this study was initiated to ascertain the public perception of Desmond Elliot's stewardship and movie stars in politics. The empirical result from this case would be used as a springboard to adjudicate subsequent movie stars who showed interest in active politics. The study surveyed one hundred youths in Surulere Constituency 1, and the results were filed in simple frequency tables. Findings reveal that honourable Elliot scored a pass mark among his immediate constituents regarding political representation and the respondents aver that they would vote for movie stars contesting popular vote. However, there was worry that most of the respondents who took part in this survey were staunch APC supporters. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated in many areas to help ascertain the true perception of people regarding movie stars in politics. The credibility source theory was reviewed in this study.

Keywords:

Movie star, Nollywood, public perception, public figure, political representation

I. Introduction

While political participation is an old practice in human society, the modern democratic representative government is a popular form that allows credible people to contest and run for public office (Russo & Cotta, 2020). Though experienced and reliable people are expected to run for such public offices, there is an unspoken and unwritten understanding that only people with impeccable backgrounds and good public image are fit to run for public office. Men and women from all walks of life usually attempt representative politics. However, entertainers who act as career film actors are one group of people who are not usually considered ready for political offices, yet they play critical roles as critics of governments and politicians, campaigning against bad public affairs. It appears that acting and politics run in parallel. However, some events have revealed that there could be an exemption case, as many movie stars have ventured into politics for various reasons. Film actors, widely acclaimed for their portrayals on the silver screen, have always aired their opinions on political and socioeconomic situations in their environment. In contrast, others decided to become politicians to change their societies' socioeconomic situation

(Celebrity Lists, 2024; Siegel, 2023). As the number of actors in politics increased, people became critical of the actors who turned into politicians but failed to meet public expectations. However, few politicians in this category have earned public admiration. For example, in early 1966, then-movie star Ronald Reagan contested for the governorship of the State of California and won. He later becomes the first movie star to be made president. Movie superstar Arnold Schwarzenegger also contested in the 2003 recall election in California to become the state's governor (Kelly, 2021). British film star Tracy Brabin won the election to represent her constituents in 2016, and she later became the mayor of West Yorkshire in 2021. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky was a well-known actor cum comedian whose attempt into politics was easy as a result of his onscreen fame. He faces many challenges governing his country (Today Report, 2024).

While many other film stars worldwide had won democratic elections, only Reagan and Schwarzenegger seemed to enjoy public opinion before, during and after their political foray. Many other actors face backlash for their political activities. Like international film stars, Nollywood actors have also leveraged their fame to engage in political affairs. Though they intended to effect positive change in society, some publicly endorsed politicians; others got appointed by politicians, and some contested for public office. The likes of Kenneth Okonkwo assumed the role of spokesperson for the Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi; Richard Mofe Damijo (RMD) was appointed Delta State Commissioner for Culture and Tourism by Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan; Ini Edo was appointed as Akwa Ibom State Special Adviser on Tourism; Femi Adebayo was Special Assistant to Kwara State Governor; Nkiru Silvanus was appointed by Governor Rochas Okorocha as Special Assistant, etc. (Aboje, 2024; Nairaland Forum, 2024).

Then there is another category of actors who contested for political offices, ranging from Bankole Wellington (Banky W), who contested for the Federal House of Assembly to represent Ajah; Funke Akindele, who contested on the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as Lagos Deputy Governor in the 2023 election; Tonto Dikeh who contested as Rivers State deputy governor under the African Democratic Congress (ADC) party in the 2023 elections; Yul Edochie who made a move to run for Nigeria president in 2019/2023 under the Democratic Peoples Congress (DPC) his first bid was in 2017 when he ran for Anambra State governor but was later appointed by Governor Willy Obiano, SA Creative and Entertainment Matters; Desmond Elliot who successfully ran for Surulere Constituency 1 to the Lagos State House of Assembly in 2015; Olumide Oworu who ran for the Surulere Constituency 1 under the Labor Party banner and many others (Onye, 2022). Of all the Nollywood movie stars who contested elections in the last few decades, only Desmond Elliot was successful at the polls, and he has met unfavourable comments from the young population who watch Nollywood movies (Onyejelem, 2020; Aondover & Aondover, 2023). While honourable Desmond Elliot has endured unpopular commentaries from the general public on his political representation, objectively examining the public opinion of his political stewardship becomes pertinent. Therefore, the following research objectives are formulated.

Research Objectives:

1. To ascertain people's expectations for film actors in politics.
2. To examine the people's (constituents) expectations of Desmond Elliot when he assumed office as a political representative.
3. To measure constituents' view of Desmond Elliot's public performance as a political representative of Surulere.
4. To determine if people will vote film actors into political offices.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Public Perception of Movie Stars and Political Leadership Roles

With the rise of movie stars joining politics worldwide, there have been concerns and generally mixed feelings regarding their representation as political figures in society, which is pervasive. Political representation is considered a critical public affair (Wheeler, 2013). Actors are known for their glamorous lives and often attract public attention everywhere. The attraction may result from their public image for the controversial screen characters they have depicted or their private activities that became a major scandal. The frequent controversy movie stars face, usually due to stardom, makes the public view actors with jaundiced eyes whenever they show interest in public affairs (Sidrys, 2021). Actors may not enjoy popular appeal to the electorates regarding political affairs, as their public perception of what they do as professionals may be inadequate. In his 2013 book, Mark Wheeler believes that actors and celebrities may be suitable for public campaigns on public projects but may not appeal to the people as political candidates (Wheeler, 2013; Parker, 2017; Hall, 2024).

A recent post by a New York Times journalist on January 6, 2025, quoted research by Nielsen, stating that people turn off televisions whenever celebrities start to opine on politics. Brooks (2025) concluded the article by referring to the time when actors and celebrities avoided any political talk that affected the sales of their movies. In India, where many film actors have traversed film and politics, this unpopular opinion of movie stars and politics seems to pervade the society as Shekhar (2024) believes that while film celebrities may enjoy widespread popularity and recognition and enhance electoral campaigns, critics believe that fame is not enough and does not translate to political competence or deep understanding of governance mechanics. Shekhar wrote that when scrutinising celebrities and political actors, they will soon lose their glamour as their inadequate political skills will be exposed in the public domain. It is believed that the scripted world of cinema is not the same as the volatile political space. Writing on the public perception of actors in politics, Shekhar states, “While their fame can initially garner attention and votes, sustained political success requires credibility, consistency, and a genuine commitment to public welfare, voters scrutinise their motives and track records, expecting them to deliver on promises made during campaigns.” From records of the few actors who have won political offices, they have mostly struggled to balance stardom with statesmanship (Onyejelem & Ndolo, 2018). The view is that celebrities’ fame could help promote political causes, party ideology, candidates, and government development campaigns; however, their abilities to navigate the complexities of public governance may not be sufficient (Chang, 2024). In her 2024 article, Bose cited previous studies that revealed that younger audiences who consume films idolise movie stars and would easily vote for movie stars at the pool. In contrast, mature electorates take movie stars less seriously.

The argument of whether movie stars are suitable for politics began receiving some unfavourable sentiment after some few actors turned politicians began performing poorly against popular expectations. For example, former Philippines president Joseph Estrada was a big movie star in his country before joining politics; shortly after being sworn in as president, Estrada faced corruption charges and was forced to resign in 2001. Indian movie star Jayalalithaa became Chief Minister, succeeding another actor, Ramachandran. Sources had it that Jayalalithaa, with all her movie personality charm, became embroiled in corruption charges. Also, Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachan failed in his bid to run for public office. He faced criticism for corruption when he served as a political appointee and resigned after 3 years in office (Upadhyay, 2018). In Nigeria, as stated earlier, only a few actors have won electoral seats, and Desmond Elliot is one

of the few prominent actors to have won electoral seats in the country. Meanwhile, his stewardship has faced criticisms from Nigerian youths.

2.2 Abridged Profile of Honourable Desmond Elliot and His Political Foray

Desmond Olushola Elliot was born to a Yoruba father from Olowogbowo in Lagos Island and a mother from Illah in Oshimili, North of Delta State. Born on February 4, 1974, into a family of 11, his father had more than one wife (Kristy, 2022). Elliot attended Airforce Primary School and St. John's College in Jos, Plateau State. He proceeded to the Lagos State University, where he obtained a bachelor's in Economics in 2003. As reported by Redahlia (2019), Elliot followed a friend's advice to try acting, and he got roles in soap operas like *Everyday People*, *One Too Much*, *Super Story* and *Saints and Sinners*. Since 2002, Desmond Elliot has starred in over 200 movies, and his brilliant performance in films has earned him accolades, nominations and awards, including the African Movies Academy Award for Best Actor in Supporting Role (Mustapha, 2022). In 2014, Desmond Elliot declared his interest in representing Surulere Constituency 1 on the All Progressives Congress (APC) political platform, a post he won for two consecutive elections without any internal opposition. During his third term bid, he had his first major opposition in the 2023 election from a younger actor. Elliot's fame as a movie star turned politician began attracting criticism sometime in 2017 when pictures of a shabbily constructed wooden bridge and an old mosque toilet appeared on social media (Onyejelem et al., 2023).

The situation was aggravated during the infamous 2020 End SARS Protest when Honourable Desmond Elliot supported the government's antisocial media bill and criticised the Nigerian youths for the carnage/barbarism displayed during the protest. After several backlashes from netizens, he apologised to the general public afterwards. If Honourable Desmond Elliot had given his constituents fair representation, the media would not have reported much of his activities. Perhaps his media team is not doing enough. A recent article published in the Nations newspaper by Ayobami (2024) stated that Desmond focuses on youth empowerment and community development as a Lagos lawmaker. However, netizens have not concurred with this claim. In the recent general election across Nigeria in 2023, a 28-year-old actor, Olumide Oworu, from the same constituency as Elliot, contested the seat of Surulere Constituency 1 under the Labour Party. Rumours had it that Elliot's political goons harassed the younger actor, who eventually lost in the poll.

2.3 Theoretical Underpinnings: Source Credibility Theory

One theory that closely addresses this topic is the Sources Credibility Theory. It is one of the persuasion/perception theories formulated by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss in 1951, and the theory was reviewed by Hovland C., Janis and Kell H. in 1953. The crux of the theory is the perceived credibility of the source of a communication. As explained by Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2016, p. 139), the source of a message is of vital importance when determining the credibility of the message. By implication, when someone sends a vital message, their public perception affects how the public receives it. The audience is moved by the degree of confidence (trustworthiness) and valid assertion (expertise/professionalism) they have in the sender of a message. In public communication, people would not take information from a source they do not trust seriously. In summary, people are easily persuaded by a public information source if they see the sources as credible, professional and trustworthy. This brings us to the question of how credible movie stars are in the public domain regarding critical public activities like politics because this assumption is commonly discussed during political debates.

From the interpretation of Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008), when a source of public information is considered a trustworthy professional (a competent expert), there is a high

tendency that the message will be widely received by the people and vice versa. The thrust of source credibility theory is centred around three models: factor model (the extent to which the receiver judges the source as credible), functional model (the degree to which a source satisfies a receiver's individual needs), and constructivist model (what the receiver does with the source's proposal) (Asemah, 2011). However, there is a twist to the theory, as Anaeto et al. (2008) noted: sometimes, the manner of presentation is more important than the actual knowledge that a person might possess. Therefore, the question is, how do the electorates view actors during a political pitch? Are these actors turned politicians believable (saleable) to the electorates? This question is pertinent to the role of the double-character actors in the movie. As an actor, Desmond Elliot was loved for his critical roles on the screen, however, his career as a politician has earned him unfavourable criticism. Being the only known movie star who has won popular votes in the country, his political activities became an index case in this study.

III. Research Methods

This study adopted mixed methods for two reasons: to help collate data/information from Honourable Desmond Elliot's constituents, who form the respondents. Second was to gather his views on the discourse. The data from the two sources provided answers to these research questions raised in the preceding literature. As George (2023) stated, mixed methods research blends quantitative and qualitative research elements to answer research questions in a single study. Hassan (2024) posits that the mixed method gathers data from different perspectives and strengthens the holistic analysis of a study. This will result in statistical evidence supported by contextual insights; this method focuses on practical solutions in real-life situations. The first part of the data gathered in this study used quantitative methods, which helped in collating data from Elliot's constituency. Since the study is descriptive (to seek a summary of the respondents' approval of their political representative at the Lagos State House of Assembly), a survey was done using a questionnaire to sample their opinion (Bhandari, 2024).

Surulere is the name of an area, and it is also a local government council in Lagos State. Though other councils and streets across Southwest Nigeria also bear Surulere, the Lagos state Surulere is popular due to its affiliation with Lagos. The council has a vibrant population, and youths make up six per cent of the population. The council's formal website (Surulere LG, 2024) gives its population of one million people. However, Google online AI reports that Surulere has about six hundred and ninety-two thousand five hundred people as of the last count. There are two federal and state constituencies, Surulere 1 and 2. Honourable Desmond Elliot is currently representing the Surulere Constituency 1 in the LAHA. A 13-item questionnaire was prepared and sent online to Surulere Constituency 1, where 98 respondents filled out the online form, and the result was summed up using Google Forms in pie charts. The researchers converted the pie charts to frequency tables for ease of analysis. In order to get human-centred insights on the topic, a qualitative means of data gathering was also employed, and the instrument used was an in-depth interview, which allowed one-on-one interaction with Honourable Desmond Elliot. This instrument helped recognise the interviewee's voice (Honourable Desmond Elliot) to give the study a balanced analysis (Lim, 2024). However, Honourable Desmond Elliot declined to have any interview regarding the topic, citing issues in the LAHA as a reason for not granting any interview.

IV. Result and Discussion

The following frequency tables contain details of the data gathered and sorted from the online questionnaire administered to the research population.

Table 1. Gender

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	53	54.1%
Females	42	42.9%
Total	98	100%

Source: online survey 2024

The above table shows how males participated in the survey more than women.

Table 2. Age Bracket

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-24	20	20.4%
25-31	8	8.2%
32-40	29	29.6%
Above 41	41	41.8%
Total	98	100%

Source: online survey 2024

The above table shows that most of the respondents are mature and understand the public dynamics of political representation.

Table 3. Educational level

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	0	0%
Primary education	11	11.1%
Secondary education	10	10.5%
Tertiary education	84	84.4%
Total	95	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Most of the respondents (84 per cent) have a high level of education, and all respondents are literate.

Table 4. Religious affiliation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	55	56.1%
Islam	39	39.8%
Traditional belief	2	2%
Others	2	2%
Total	98	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Most of the respondents are of the Christian faith, and some are of the Islamic faith.

Table 5. Marital status

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	43	43.9%
Married	53	54.1%
Divorced	2	2%
Total	98	100

Source: online survey 2024

The above table shows that most respondents are married, while some are single.

Table 6. Tribe

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Igbo	10	10.2%
Yoruba	74	75.5%
Hausa	3	3.1%
Others	11	11.2%
Total	98	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Many respondents are Yoruba, while a fairly large number are Igbo. There are also a fair number of other tribes from across Nigeria living in the Surulere area.

Table 7. Occupation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public servant	19	20%
Private organisation	20	21.1%
Entrepreneur	18	18.9%
Self-employed/artisan	38	40%
Total	95	100%

Source: online survey 2024

A large number of the respondents are self-employed, artisans and entrepreneurs. Government workers only make up a fraction of the population.

Table 8. Household size

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-4	51	54.3%
5-10	39	41.5%
Above 10	4	4.3%
Total	94	100%

Source: online survey 2024

The residents are family-oriented, which is a feature of active political constituents.

Table 9.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
APC	74	76.3%
PDP	2	2.1%
LP	3	3.1%
Others	4	4.1%
Total	97	100%

Source: online survey 2024

About 76 per cent of the respondents are active in political matters and are registered members of the All Progressives Congress, APC. At the same time, other parties form a tiny segment of Surulere.

Table 10. How long the respondents have been living in Surulere

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-3 years	13	13.5%
4-9 years	10	10.2%
Over 10 years	75	76.5%
Total	98	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Over 76 per cent of the respondents have lived in Surulere for at least 10 years, and others have lived for a considerable number of years.

Table 11. Familiarity with Desmond Elliot's activities as a Lagos State House of Assembly member

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not familiar	18	18.8%
Very familiar	78	81.3%
Total	98	100%

Source: online survey 2024

The above table shows that most respondents are familiar with Honourable Desmond Elliot's political activities in LAHA.

Table 12. How effectively has Desmond Elliot represented their constituency

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	67	71.3%
Neutral	19	20.2%
Very ineffective	8	8.5%
Total	94	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Over 71 per cent of the respondents agreed that Honourable Elliot is representing them well

Table 13. Honourable Desmond Elliot's commendable activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Infrastructure	25	26.9%
Education	16	17.2%
Human development	37	39.8%
Others	7	7.5%
None at all	8	8.6
Total	93	100%

Source: Online survey 2024

Most respondents agreed that Honourable Desmond Elliot's most commendable political activities are in human development and infrastructure.

Table 14. If Desmond Elliot communicates effectively with his constituents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
------------------	------------------	-----------------------

Yes	74	77.1%
No	11	11.5%
I do not know	11	11.5%
Total	96	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Seventy-seven per cent of the respondents agreed that Honourable Desmond Elliot communicates effectively with his constituents.

Table 15. If Honourable Desmond Elliot communicates the progress of his works in the House of Assembly to the public

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very poorly	10	10.6%
Neutral	20	21.3%
Very well	64	68.1%
Total	94	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Many respondents believe that Honourable Desmond Elliot communicates the progress of his works in the House of Assembly to the public.

Table 16. If Desmond Elliot positively impacted the community as a member of the State House of Assembly

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	77	80.2%
No	11	11.5%
I do not know	8	8.3%
Total	96	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Eighty per cent of the respondents agreed that Honourable Desmond Elliot has positively impacted his community as an LAHA member.

Table 17. Associated impacts with Desmond Elliot's works in the Lagos State House of Assembly

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sponsored interesting bills	28	30.1%
Sponsored bills in favour of Surulere	16	17.2%
Complete constituency projects	41	44.1%
Nothing of public interest was connected to him	8	8.6%
Total	93	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Most respondents attest that Honourable Desmond Elliot completed many community projects and sponsored interesting bills, but fewer bills favoured his constituency.

Table 18. Overall opinion of Desmond Elliot’s performance as a member of the House of Assembly

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
He is a good representative	79	82.3%
He is a poor representative	2	2.1%
He is a waste of time	1	1%
He did not meet expectations	14	14.6%
Total	96	100%

Source: online survey 2024

About 82 per cent of the respondents said Honourable Desmond Elliot is a good representative, and only very few believe he did not meet up to expectations.

Table 19. Desmond Elliot’s performance as a Lagos public lawmaker/politician on a scale of 1-10

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	2	2.1%
1	3	3.1%
2	0	0%
3	7	7.2%
4	3	3.1 %
5	6	6.2%
6	8	8.2%
7	7	7.2%
8	13	13.4%
9	10	10.3%
10	38	39.0%
Total	97	100%

Source: online survey 2024

About 39 per cent of the respondents scored honourable Desmond Elliot’s overall performance as a perfect score.

Table 20. If they would support for Desmond Elliot’s future ambition for other political offices

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	77.3%
No	11	11.3%
I do not know	11	11.3%
Total	96	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Over 77 per cent of the respondents agreed they would support Honourable Desmond Elliot’s future political ambition.

Table 21. If they would they support for any Nollywood actor vying for political offices

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	67	69.1%

No	7	7.2%
I do not know	23	23.7%
Total	97	100%

Source: online survey 2024

About 69 per cent of the respondents agreed they would support any Nollywood actor vying for political office.

Table 22. Belief in movie actors as good politicians

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	68	70.8%
No	2	2%
I do not know	9	9.4%
Total	96	100%

Source: online survey 2024

Over 70 per cent of the respondents believe movie stars could make good politicians.

Discussion of Findings

From the literature reviewed in this study, it was gathered that, though movie stars are public critics who comment on government activities, they are not usually considered fit for political offices. Movie stars have mass appeal, and some have waded into politics; their interest in active politics is not usually met with enthusiasm, as many feel movie stars do not have what it takes to handle public affairs (Siegel, 2023). This view was acerbated by the performances of movie stars who occupied political offices worldwide. In the fourth republic of Nigerian democracy, only one movie star has won the popular vote for political office. That star is the honourable Desmond Elliot of the Lagos State House of Assembly. While he politely turned down comments for this study, a survey of his constituency was taken. Though data gathered appear to have been given by staunch movie star supporters, findings show an average review of his political stewardship. Desmond Elliot may have endured unpopular commentaries from the general public on his political representation; a segment of his constituency who participated in the survey thinks otherwise.

In Table 12, 71% of the respondents believe Honourable Desmond Elliot is representing his constituency very effectively. This response came mostly from people largely from Desmond Elliot's political party, APC, as seen in Table 9. Surulere is a place occupied by diehard APC supporters because of the affinity for the former governor of Lagos state- Mr Babatunde Fashola, and the immediate past speaker of the House of Representatives- Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila whose contributions to the growth of the constituency is reportedly huge. It is obvious that the movie star enjoys 'party immunity'. Respondents assert that Honourable Desmond Elliot's most commendable political activities in his constituency are human development (39%), which ranked above infrastructure (27%) and education (17%). This means that he scored a pass mark (Table 13). About 70% of the respondents also believe that the movie star communicates effectively with his constituents (table 14). In comparison, 68% agreed that he communicates the progress of his works in the House of Assembly to his constituents (table 15). Table 17 reveals that the movie star did poorly in legislative bills favouring his Surulere constituency (17%), and 44% attest that Elliot completed constituency projects. Over 82% believe Honourable Elliot is a good political representative.

The general overview of Desmond Elliot's public perception as a movie star in politics was rated below the pass mark, as only 39% rated him a perfect score of 10 (table 19). 77% of the respondents said they would support his future political ambition (table 20), while 69% said they would support any Nollywood actor vying for political office. Efforts to engage honourable Desmond Elliot in an in-depth interview on the topic proved abortive as he declined, citing the Obasa speaker tussle as a reason for not granting an interview on his matters. One crucial point to note in this study is that the respondents are largely staunch supporters of the ruling APC party. The few non-APC members who participated in the survey disagreed with what the party loyalists said about Honourable Elliot's public stewardship. About 9% of the respondents are non-APC members, and their negative views of the movie star are reflected throughout the rest of the data, as almost all the negative responses are between 8 and 12%. This brings more questions: Could honourable Elliot garner so much favourable review from his constituents if he is not from a community where staunch APC members are domiciled? Could data have differed if APC members had not populated the Surulere constituency? Therefore, the views of scholars like Chang (2024) cannot be dispelled here, as more surveys and discussions are required to ascertain the true perception of the electorates on their views about movie stars in politics.

V. Conclusion

While scholars have opined that movie stars do not generally have a good image whenever they attempt active political engagement, the argument is gaining momentum in Nigeria, as only one famous movie star, Honourable Desmond Elliot, has won the popular vote to represent his people. This exploratory study, designed to demonstrate people's views about movie stars in politics, has shown that, in their immediate communities, movie stars may enjoy massive support from their people. As seen in the case of Desmond Elliot, he enjoys support from his constituents, despite the fact that many non-constituents have a negative views of his political representation. However, this positive review may have been caused by factors like the concentration of party member support. In conclusion, while the data gathered has shown that Desmond Elliot received massive support from his constituency, there is still the question of how the electorate truly views movie stars in politics. Perhaps a survey with neutral respondents would give a fair representation of the people's perception of the topic.

Recommendations

Having reviewed literature comments, heard from honourable Desmond Elliot's constituents through survey and spoken with him on the topic of discourse, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Though most of the respondents who participated in the survey agreed that they would vote for actors who vie for public offices, this may not be the view of many Nigerians as this poll was conducted in a small geographical frame. Most of them could be seen in their political affiliation; they supported Desmond Elliot because he was close to them and belonged to the same political party. Hence, a wider statewide and nationwide survey be launched on this discourse to find out from a reasonable number of Nigerians whether they would vote/support movie stars in elections.
2. The scope of this study should be expanded from a particular actor turned politician to a general survey of Nigerian actors in politics. This would eliminate the local and personal biases most respondents would have in supporting or against any movie star mentioned.
3. Scholars should conduct studies on this topic in different country segments to get more diverse data.
4. Qualitative data-gathering methods, such as focus group discussion, in-depth interviews, and textual analysis, should be applied in further studies. This will not just help in gathering views

from people about movie stars in politics, it will help researchers identify honest opinions from fake responses.

References

- Aboje, S. (2024, April 19). *10 Nigerian celebrities who are into politics*. Available at: <https://naijassador.com/10-nigerian-celebrities-who-are-into-politics/>
- Anaeto, S.G., Onabajo, O.S. & Osifeso, J.B. (2008). *Models and theories of Communication*. Maryland: African Renaissance Books Incorporated.
- Aondover, P. O., & Aondover, E. M. (2023). Nollywood Offering and Nigeria People and Culture: Reflections and Projection. *Unisia*, 41(1), 117-142.
- Asemah, E.S. (2011). *Selected mass media bemes*. Jos: MAKOL Press
- Asemah, E.S., Nwammuo, A.N., & NkwamUwaoma, A.O.A. (2016). *Theories and models of communication*. Jos: MAKOL Press.
- Ayobami, A. (2022, October 11). *Five Nigerian actors who are politicians*. Available at: <https://thenationonlineng.net/five-nigerian-actors-who-are-politicians/>
- Barnes, B. (202, January 6). *Hollywood's stars were out. Their politics were not*. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/06/business/media/golden-globes-politics.html>
- Bhandari, P. (2023, June 22). *What is quantitative research? | Definition, uses & methods*. Scribbr. Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/quantitative-research/>
- Bose, M. (2024, June 6). *Film stars and politics: A match made in heaven?* Available at: <https://www.firstpost.com/politics/film-stars-and-politics-a-match-made-in-heaven-13779659.html>
- Celebrity Lists, (2024, January 23). *31 actors who went into politics*. Available at: <https://www.ranker.com/list/actors-who-went-into-politics/celebrity-lists>
- Change, E. (2024, August 14). *Celebrities do have an impact on elections, Harvard study finds*. Available at: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/celebrities-impact-elections-harvard-study-finds/story?id=112806120>
- Eduweb, (2025). *Surulere LGA Wards New and existing Polling Unit*. Available at: <https://www.eduweb.com.ng/surulere-lga-wards-new-and-exsiting-polling-unit/>
- George, T. (2023, June 24). *Mixed methods research | Definition, guide & examples*. Available at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mixed-methods-research/>
- Hall, H. (2024, June). *I'm not like a regular politician: Welcome to the age of celebrity. Government*. Available at: <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/work/careers/a45597450/celebrity-politicians/>
- Hassan, M. (2024, March 25). *Mixed methods research – Types & analysis*. Available at: <https://researchmethod.net/mixed-methods-research/>
- Kelly, E. (2021, June 23). *25 actors who became politicians*. Available at: <https://www.newsweek.com/actors-who-became-politicians-1601389>
- Kristy, (2022, February 16). *Desmond Elliot biography: Net worth, wife, daughter, Movies*. Available at: <https://abtc.ng/desmond-elliott-biography-net-worth-wife-daughter-movies/>
- Lagos Food Bank Initiative, (2024). *Surulere community outreach*. Available at: <https://lagosfoodbank.org/event/surulere-community-outreach/>
- Lim, W. M. (2024). What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>
- Mustapha, A. (2022, July 6). *Desmond Elliot biography*. Available at: <https://naijabiohistory.com/biography/desmond-elliott-biography/>

- Nairaland Forum, (2024). *Top 5 Nigerian celebrities currently active in politics as at 2024*. Available at: <https://www.nairaland.com/8188027/top-5-nigerian-celebrities-currently>
- Onye, H. (2022, July 24). *5 Nigerian celebrities who have pursued a career in politics – 2022*. Available at: <https://www.kemifilani.ng/entertainment/5-nigerian-celebrities-who-have-pursued-a-career-in-politics-2022>
- Onyejelem, T. E., Ezeonyejiaku, N. P., Nwafor, O. A., & Nwodu, G. E. (2023). Portrayal of Drug-Related Crimes among Teenagers in Nollywood Movies: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nimbe. *IMSU Journal of Communication Studies*, 7(2), 156-168. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-91294-5>
- Onyejelem, T. E., & Ndolo, I. S. (2018). Cultural communication as a public diplomacy tool in Nigeria (The Nollywood Option). *International Journal of Arts, Languages and Business Studies*, 1(1), 108 – 115
- Onyejelem, T.E (2020). Reporting Child Right through film ‘language’ in Okunna, C.S (ed) *Communication and Media Studies: Multiple Perspectives* (423 – 439). New Generation Educare Ltd.
- Parker, H. (2017, July 2). *Examining the impact of celebrity political activism*. Available at: <http://reelhoney.com/examining-the-impact-of-celebrity-political-activism/>
- ReDhalia, (2019, September 11). *Desmond Elliot: Biography, movies, and political Career of a Lagos lawmaker*. Available at: <https://entrepreneurs.ng/desmond-elliott-biography/>
- Russo, F. & Cotta, M. (2020). *Political representation: Concepts, theories and practices in historical perspective*. Edward Elgar Publishing. Available at: <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781788977081/9781788977081.00007>
- Shekar, P.R. (2024, June 2). *Should film stars enter politics?* Available at: <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/entertainment/should-film-stars-enter-politics-900963>
- Siegel, E. (2023, August 8). *20 celebrities who became politicians*. Available at: <https://stacker.com/celebrities/20-celebrities-who-became-politicians>
- Sidrys, L. (2021). WUPR. Available at: <https://www.wupr.org/2021/10/15/actors-turned-politicians/>
- Surulere Local Government, (2025). *Surulere Local Government Lagos, Nigeria*. Available at: <https://surulere-lg.com.ng/website>
- Today Report, (2024, November 2). *From stage to state: actors turned politicians*. Available at: <https://todayreport.com/from-stage-to-state-actors-turned-politicians/>
- Upadhyay, A. (2018). *Actors and politics: Do film stars make good politicians?* Available at: <https://medium.com/@OhhSurreal/actors-and-politics-do-filmstars-make-good-politicians-66ed97142b7b>
- Wheeler, M. (2013). *Celebrity politics: Image and identity in contemporary political communications*. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lserewiewofbooks/2013/10/05/book-review-celebrity-politics-image-and-identity-in-contemporary-political-communications/>