

THE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN MOVIES ON THE NIGERIAN TEENAGERS: A QUESTION OF CULTURAL PROMOTION. (A STUDY OF BAUCHI METROPOLIS)

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts at examining the effects of foreign movies on the Nigerian teenagers: A question of cultural promotion, with a case study of Bauchi metropolis. The paper adopted the Cultivation theory to situate appropriately the essence of the topic. Using the survey method, where 100 questioners were distributed randomly to teenagers of Bauchi, which were analysed and interpreted. At the end of the study, it was found out that foreign movies in most cases affect negatively the cultural values of the teenagers. Most of them try to adapt to western way of living which these foreign movies come along with. The study recommends that parents, Governments, community as well as religious leaders should help in sensitizing the youth on the need for cultural promotion.

Keywords – foreign, culture, movies, teenagers

Introduction

Film was introduced into Nigeria in the 1900's by the British colonialists who used it for propaganda purposes, while the church used it to spread the gospel. The Colonial Administration and the Church saw film not only as a medium of entertainment but as an effective medium of communication (Akpabio, 2003) Movies are considered to be cheap and simple ways of providing entertainment to the masses. Movies have been seen as a way of relaxation among youths, adults as many cannot afford resort areas, travel abroad for holidays, so movies have been viewed as a way of comfort for people especially the youths to relax and while away time. Movies mean a lot to many people, movies inspire, entertain people and give them pause to ponder issues, we laugh, cry, we get outraged and sometimes we reach a new understanding of the world around. Movies show the different views of issues to people and teach people important lessons or morals lessons.

Considerations about the effects of films can be traced back to the 1920s. At that time, the earliest coordinated social scientific research or investigation into the impact of these effects began in the foreign countries. It was intended at studying the harmful impacts of films on societies.

The development of this medium as a common mass entertainment and information source during the 1950s encountered similar concerns about potential harms, especially in connection with young audiences (Gunter, 1994). Nowadays, many concerns have been raised about the kinds of values and attitudes that may be inculcated by exposure to certain kinds of media contents, especially enculturation and violence in movies (Kubey& Larson, 2005).

Behaviors acquired during adolescence, tend to remain with the individual, even after transition into adulthood has occurred.

1.2 Problem of the study

Foreign films portray violence, immorality, etc. and its adverse effects on the behavior of Nigerian teenagers and the society at large are devastating. Hornby, (2000) contends that some violent materials in movies include: sex scene, nudity, obscenity, vulgar language, courses, indecent dressing, molestation, killings, murder, rape and harassment. All these, are scenes contained in foreign movies, and are very likely to affect the social, physical, psychological and moral lives of Nigerian teenagers.

Films are supposed to be used to communicate ideas, and to teach morals to its audience or the general public, but this is not always the case with foreign movies as these movies sometimes end with evil prevailing, the bad guy succeeding.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research include:

- a. To find out if Nigerian teenagers watch foreign films.
- b. To identify how frequently Nigerian teenagers watch foreign films
- c. To ascertain whether or not these movies affect their lives.
- d. To find out if teenagers in Nigeria learn something from foreign films.
- e. To establish if those movies influence their attitudes.
- f. To find out the effects of these movies on the Nigerian cultural values.

Research Questions

- a. Do Nigerian teenagers watch foreign films?
- b. What kind of foreign films do they watch?
- c. How often do teenagers watch these films?
- d. How have these movies affected their lives?
- e. How have foreign films affected Nigerian cultural values?

Teenagers and film exposure

The history of movies began in the late 1890s, with the invention of movie camera. Motion pictures were initially exhibited as a carnival novelty and developed to one of the most important tool of communication and entertainment. Even though, films and mass media in general are not bye-products of globalization but the fact is, it gives coloration and occasioned a paradigm shift

in the media world in terms of conceptualization process and the general practice. Globalization also impacts greatly on the socio-economy, political, educational and cultural life of many countries of the world (Akpabio 2003)

Unfortunately, the case of African countries and other third world nations of the world are quite nagging. The cultural fabrics of these countries have suffered a seemingly irreparable damage in the face of globalization. The mass media; radio, television, computer, newspaper, magazines, books, billboards, cinema, recordings, films, internets etc, have by content and production eroded the cultural values of Africans. The operations of Nigerian mass media are patterned on the foreign model which invariably erodes our cultures.

It can be asserted that films are general instruments of globalized society expanding and sustaining the scope of cultural dominance and imperialism of the foreign world.

Teenagers are most likely to become emotionally invested and interested in the situations that pertain to their changing views of the world and growing status in society. The level of emotional involvement by teenagers in general feel with the film's content can affect aspects of his or her psychosocial development. In Nigerian society, the situation is quite alarming in that, teenagers' attitudes, thoughts and general behaviors are considerably influenced by foreign films and which are mostly anchored on foreign models consolidate foreign films thereby promoting foreign values in the Nigerian society.

In a similar study, "Attitudes of Nigerian Secondary School Adolescents towards Sexual Practices: Implications for Counseling Practices" conducted by Egbochuku & Ekanem (2008), the authors identified various anti-cultural issues and behavioral problems the Nigerian Society has to grapple with. Such problems according to the study include truancy, disobedience, vandalism, assault, insult, stealing, violent demonstration, drug offences, examination malpractices and secret cult activities.

According to Barber (1992) researcher have empirically proved that most films appeal to emotions of its viewers and ultimately affect their worldview because of the developing emotions of adolescents as a result of the onset of puberty, films can have a huge effect. In a study of retention rate film details between different age groups, Rosen (1979) found that "both children and adults remember best material that has a high emotional appeal, that is easily understood, that is concerned with the movie's plot" the material that adolescents will emotionally relate to differs not only from adult and children but also from teenagers to teenagers, teenagers are most likely to become emotionally invested and interested in the situations that pertain to their changing views of the world and growing status in society.

The general lifestyle of these teenagers is considerably modeled on that of foreign cultures. Their dressing, behavior, music and entertainment choice and worldview in general are all pointers to this position. As defined by Smith (2010), hybridist which emphasizes the impossibilities of returning to any notions of essential national or cultural identity after the colonial encounter, particularly in the present context of social, economic and cultural globalization is yet to see the light of the day in Nigerian society, even the media industry is not left out.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the cultivation theory, developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross of the University of Pennsylvania.

Cultivation theory:

Also known as cultivation hypothesis, cultivation analysis, is very important to this research. The theory was originally composed by George Gerbner and later expanded upon by Gerbner and Gross (1976-living with television; the violence profile. *Journal of communication* 26, 76.) professor George Gerbner dean of the Annenberg school of communications at the university of Pennsylvania, began the cultural indicators research project in the mid-1960s, to study whether and how watching television may influence viewers ideas of what the everyday world is like. Cultivation research is in the effects tradition. Cultivation theorists argue that television has long term effects which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant. The theory was developed on the basis of examining the long-term effects of television. "The primary proposition of cultivation theory states that the more time people spend "living" in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television. Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values that are already present in a culture; the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together. He believes that television tends to cultivate middle of the road political perspectives. And Gross considered that television is a cultural arm of the established industrial order and as such serves primarily to maintain, stabilize and reinforce rather than to alter, threaten or weaken conventional beliefs and behavior (1977, in Boyd-Barrett and Braham 1987, p100). Such a function is conservative, but heavy viewers tend to regard themselves as moderates (Gerbner, 1976)

Cultivation theory in its most basic form, then suggests that exposure to television, over time subtly 'cultivates' viewers perceptions of reality. Gerbner and Gross say "television is a medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviors" Gerbner et al posits that: *Cultivation theory in its most basic form, then, suggests that exposure to television, over time, subtly "cultivates" viewers' perceptions of reality. This cultivation can have an impact even on light viewers of television, because the impact on heavy viewers has an impact on our entire culture. Television is a medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviors. Its function is in a word, enculturation*" Gerbner in his work draws attention to three entities: Institutions, messages and publics which he seeks to analyze. Additionally, Gerbner was less concerned about the effect of cultivation on aggressive behavior, and "more concerned that it affects viewers' beliefs about the world around them and the feelings connected to those beliefs (Peter, 2013).

Methodology and Design

The method adopted for this study is the survey method, which comprises self-administrated questionnaire, interview and personal observation.

The population of this study is the total number of people living in Bauchi metropolis. As at 2006, the population census carried out showed that the total population of Bauchi metropolis was 493, 810 though the research is focused on the teenagers. The researcher has decided to use 150 people as a sample to measure the entire population.

The sampling technique to be used for this research is random sampling. Random sampling is the least biased of all sampling techniques, there is no subjectivity, each member of the total population has an equal chance of being selected.

Data presentation and Analysis

TABLE 1: showing the sex of respondents

Responses	No. responses	Percentage
Male	76	76%
Female	24	24%
Total	100	100%

The table above shows that 76% of the respondents are males and 24% females.

TABLE 2: showing age group of respondents

Responses	No. responses	Percentage
13- 15	16	16%
15-17	38	38%
17-19	46	46%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 indicates that most of the respondents i.e 46% of the respondents are between the age of 17-19, 38% are between 15-17 and 16% 13-15.

TABLE 3: showing educational qualification of respondents

Responses	No. responses	Percentage
FSLC	20	20%
SSCE	24	24%
ND	48	48%
HND	8	8%
DEGREE	0	0%
Total	100	100%

From the table above the researcher found out that 48% of the respondents are ND holders, 24% SSCE holder 20% FSLC holders and only 8% are HND students.

TABLE 4: showing occupation of respondents

Responses	No. responses	Percentage
Business	10	10%
Student	90	90%

Others	0%	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 4 shows that only 10% of the respondents are into business and 90% are students.

QUESTION 5: Do you watch foreign films?

Responses	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	81	81 %
No	19	19 %
Total	100	100%

Data presented in the table above, indicates the answer to this research question. An overwhelming number of the respondents 81 respondents which is 81% of the population, signified that they subscribe to foreign films, while only 19% do not watch foreign films.

Question 6: What type of foreign films do you watch?

Responses	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Romance	16	16%
Comedy	2	2%
Action	32	39%
Cartoon	12	17%
Thriller	19	19%
Science fiction	12	12%
All of the above	7	7%
Total	100	100%

As shown in the table above, in terms of preference, 16% of the respondents confessed their preference of romance to other types of foreign films, 2% said they like to watch comedy, 32% voted that they love action films, 12% agreed they like cartoon, 19% said thriller, 12% said they preferred science fiction and 7% agreed to watching all of the above.

Question 7 : How often do you watch these films?

Responses	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Not often	28	28%
Very often	59	59%
Once in a while	13	13%
Total	100	100%

Data presented in table 3 indicates that, 59% subscribe to foreign films very often, 28% not so often, while 13% of the respondents reported that they watch foreign films only once in a while.

Question 8: Do you identify with foreign films actors and actresses, or do you look up to them as models?

Responses	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	71	71%
No	29	29%
Total	100	100%

Respondents were asked if they identify with foreign films actors and actress or if they look up to them as models, and 71 respondents representing 71%, said that they look up to foreign films actors and actress as idols, but 29 percent said they don't.

Question9:How has watching these films affected your life?

Responses	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Negative	26	26%
Positive	22	22%
Both	52	52%
Total	100	100%

Respondents were asked how watching these films have affected their lives, 26% said negative, 22% said positive while 55% said watching these films have affected them both positively and negatively.

Question 10:If positive or negative, state your reasons.

26% Of the respondents said subscribing to foreign films have affected their lives negatively because through these films, they have been exposed to a lot of things which ordinarily a person of their age shouldn't know; thereby, arming them with the wrong information. 22% however commented that watching foreign films have affected them positively because it has widened their knowledge about the world as a whole as some of these films are very informative, educating and even teach morals. While 52% of the respondents who said the films have affected them both positively and negatively commented that their lives have been affected both ways as they have learnt both good and bad. i.e speaking, dressing, science, attitude, unidentified flying objects.

Question 11:Does your life style reflect the kind of films you watch?

Respondents were asked if their lifestyle reflect the kind of films they watch, and 63% agreed that their lifestyle reflect the films they watch as they tend to shape their lives to conform to what they watch and suit the characters in the movies. While 37% said their lifestyle does not reflect the kind of films they watch as they only want to be informed, enlightened and entertained.

Question 12: Has foreign film affected our cultural values?

Responses	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	87	81 %
No	13	19 %

Total	100	100%
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Table 7 shows that, 87% agreed that foreign films have affected our cultural values, reason been that most Nigerians have literarily changed their lives just to suit that of the foreign culture. Meanwhile 13% said that foreign films have not affected our cultural values because we still uphold and promote our tradition and cultural values.

Obviously, a number of conclusions can be drawn from this research. As Nigerian teenagers tend to identify more with foreign film stars as models most of whom are soft porn actors/actresses, gang star musicians and even stripers for various reasons. This is evident in table 9 of question 9 as 71% of the respondents look up to foreign film starts as their role models. This answers one of the research objectives because for one to identify with foreign film stars, they have to first subscribe to foreign films.

There is no doubt that there exists on our screen today more foreign films than needed and this has led to the adoption of the Whiteman's culture, thereby neglecting ours. It is discouraging to think that the future of this great nation lies on teenagers who have embraced gangsterism, weird dressing (swag) sexual pervasion and general bankruptcy. All these, as indicated in question 11 where 63% of the respondents agreed that their lifestyle reflects the kind of films they watchdogs without saying that exposure to foreign films alter the original cultural identity of the Nigerian teenager. They all show that exposure to these films lead to low Nigerian self-image and a corresponding high projected self- image among Nigerian youths as a result of their perception of reality of life in the foreign world.

Various scholars have established that no society can develop without proper integration of the culture of the land. Culture itself cannot develop the society except it is promoted by all segments and institutions of the society. The role of the teenagers in this regard cannot be over emphasized because teenagers are such a vibrant segment of the society and should live by the norms of the society in order to promote and sustain the culture of the land. It is however disheartening that exposure to foreign films has affected their attachment and affiliation to the Nigerian cultures and values. This point answers one of the research questions and is evident in table 12 of question 12 where 87% of the respondents said that foreign films have affected our cultural values. The local community with its communal lifestyle and influence on an individual's identity is gradually losing its grip on our teenagers.

Recommendation

- Non-Governmental Organizations, churches and mosques also have immense duties to discharge in this regards. These institutions should put up frequent but massive campaign against foreign films that are anti-cultural to the Nigerian society. If this campaign and other public enlightenment continue, there may be drastic reduction in its importation and exposure to teenagers. The role of the religious institution in this case cannot be over emphasized, as researches over the years especially in the 21st century have shown that religious institutions have impacted great influence on humanity.

- Parents and guidance too have an important role to play. As they must be mindful of the kind of films their wards watch, and also encourage them to watch films that will help them to appreciate their culture and the universe in which they exist.
- The Nigerian movie industry can help in the fight against immorality, indecency, violence etc by making films that condemn conflict and violence, and such films are likely to yield more fruits if shot in the indigenous language of the people.
- Nollywood has to realize that our culture is our pride so they can base their productions on localized contents where the cultural norms and values of Nigeria can be emphasized and promoted as against the present trend in the Nigerian movie industry.
- Nigerians should work more on the home base movies, if the Nollywood films produce high quality video and intriguing story lines like that of the western movies, most of Nigerian youths would opt for it. By so doing, the films would promote our indigenous values through that medium.

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