



THE RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF NIGERIAN HOME VIDEOS ON VALUES AND YOUTH MORALITY

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Abstract

Writers and critical thinkers have extrapolated that immoral behaviours among the youths are as a result of the kind of home video they watch. Home video that shows violence can influence youths to become aggressive and also urge them to use violence in conflict situation. Pornographic films/video is another factor that promotes sexual desire or sexual fantasy in the youths. The impact of corrupt video in the area of culture, religion and morality has generated a lot of uneasiness. The aim of this study therefore, is to reduce the level of moral decadence among the youths and also educate parents on the danger of watching immoral video by the youths. This step will help parents to monitor films/video that their children watch in the home. This paper adopted descriptive phenomenological method. The paper concluded that viewing home video has both positive and negative effects on moral development of youths. The paper recommended among others, that government should strengthen and monitor video censorship board to ensuring that videos produced are devoid of immoral and violent contents. The church should frequently teach the youths the implication or risk associated with immoral and violent film/video and youths should not be exposed to violent film/video early in life because it is a predictor to exhibition of aggression later in life because of its influences.

KEY WORDS: Home Video, Moral, Morality, Development and Youths

Introduction

The mass media become one of the major agencies of education and socialization. The media play a very powerful role in the formation of values, morals and social skills in children and youths. The media in both prints and electronic, have made the constant flow of information and exchange of ideas possible. To this effect Ahmed (2015) asserted that “the media as a vehicle of entertainment, education and information plays vital role in the life of the youths due to its audio-visual nature. In fact it is sometimes referred to as the third parent”(p.1). The media include radio, television, newspapers, films, video games as well as the internet and its accompanying gadgets.



According to Pring (2005) films are very influential media, its contents add to the reservoir of characters of viewers especially youths who are highly susceptible to the high influence of films. This is because it is accepted that what people see or listen to on the media has influence on the behaviour.

Home video is easily and readily produced as against traditional cinema in Nigeria. The industry also creates job opportunities for the teeming youths in Nigeria. This is why Ekwuazi (2007) stated that “the Nigerian home video has spanned an industry that turns out 1000 films every year, generates 300,000 jobs every year, has a turnover of well over ₦5 billion yearly with a growth rate of some 60%, the industry is bursting at the seams” (p. 64).

Youths are the major consumer of films/home video. The perception of what is real and unreal is not as acute as adults because they are still in their formative years (Ahmed, 2015).

Immoral behavior among the youths has been linked with the kind of home video the youths view. Violence home video can influence youths to become aggressive and resort to the use of violence in conflict situation. Pornographic films/video promotes sexual desire or sexual fantasy in the viewer. The impact of video in the area of culture, religion and morality has generated a lot of uneasiness. This paper, therefore, examines the development of video industry in Nigeria and its effects on the society. It is aimed at reducing the level of moral decadence among the youths and also to help the parents to monitor the video/films and program their children watch in the home. For proper articulation of the subject matter, the paper adopted descriptive phenomenological method.

Definition of Terms

In order to avoid ambiguity and for proper understanding of this paper, it is important to define some key words such as youth, morality, video and home video. Ahmed (2015) describes the youths as those particularly agitated and excitable group on the part of maturity. Habila (2001) describe the youths to be young and energetic person. Youth is therefore describes as the energetic group of persons who are within the period between childhood and adulthood, especially between the ages of 15-25 years.

Morality on the other hand is derived from the latin word ‘*mos*’ which means ‘conduct’ of individuals (Adama, 2016). It is the standard principle of good behavior (Ilori in Adama, 2018). It also means a person’s or society’s view of what is perceived to be the highest good. The highest good is described as a mindset and those actions and behaviours that contribute to what Aristotle refers to as *eudaimonia*, which means happiness, or a sense of well-being (Mariaye, 2006) in Louw, (2009 p.14). Moral is the learning of values and attitudes that are in conformity with social norms, mores and traditions. Okwueze (2004) describes it as specific forms of social consciousness of awareness of your relatedness to others without which social life would be impossible. Moral development according to Olds & Papalia (1986) in Louw (2009) is a process that coincides with cognitive development, because children cannot make moral judgments and choices until they have achieved a certain level of cognitive maturity and can shed egocentric thinking.



Video is the visual part of a movie or recorded program, or something recorded to watch in the future. It also means a sequence of images processed electronically into an analog or a digital format and displayed on a screen with sufficient rapidity as to create the illusion of motion and continuity (rdictionary.com). Home video is the recorded program or something recorded to be watched in the home. Home video is a recorded media sold or rented for home viewing. It is the movies that are sold on videotapes or DVDs and are meant to be watched on television at home.. The term originates from the VHS and Betamax when the predominant medium was videotapes, but was carried over to optical disc formats such as DVD and blu-ray. (<https://www.dictionary.com>)

Development of Video Industry in Nigeria

Most ethnic groups in Nigeria had drama groups that were shown in the hall or media ever before the coming of Europeans to Nigeria. Examples are the Yoruba who have the Olarinjo traveling theatre, *Mmanwu* masquerade and *Ekpe* in Igbo land (Clark et al (1980). *Agbaka* masquerades, *Iyogwu*, *Ichabada*, and *Alime* in Igala land. These different forms of traditional artistic bands resemble the modern movie industries. All these theatrical displays were used to educate and entertain the audience who gather to watch them. These traditional institutions were however destroyed by the coming of the Europeans and the invention of motion pictures in the United States in the 19th century. In 1926 the first film was viewed at Glover Memorial Hall Lagos (Agbasianya, 2012).

Balogun and Herbert Ogunde made the first films in Nigeria in 1960. This is why it was stated in Eziagwu (2009) that Herbert Ogunde revolutionized theatre in Nigeria. Ogunde changed the old system of publicity which was oral to the use of posters in inserted advertisement in newspapers to publicize his plays. He also introduced new theatre equipment such as lighting, scenery and sound amplification.

Television broadcasting began in Nigeria in 1948 in Ibadan; every state had its own broadcasting station. This enhanced the production of the first television drama by Wole Soyinka in 1960. This was followed by “the village headmaster” (Agbasianye, 2012). Emergence of actors’ playwrights parade the production of plays like Ola Rotimi’s – *The Gods are not to blame* and Soyinka’s – *The Lion and the Jewel*. The complete development of theatre as a whole was the introduction of video cassette recorder (V.C.R.) in 1972 (Sydney et al, 1987). The first home video produced in Nigeria was in 1991, a Yoruba film title “Aja neiIyami” by Ven Nnebue.

Today, in Nigeria, movies are produced in different Nigerian languages – Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Igala, Tiv, Edo, Efik and so on out of the desire to remain in the business of motion pictures. Film/video production in Nigeria started in the late eighties (Adesanya, 2003). According to Eziagwu, 2009 this was on shoestring budgets, initially the target audience was to be found in one room screening centre and mushroom halls equip with a television set and a VHS player.

The home video and moral development of Nigerian youths.

Video is a very important medium of getting information, entertainment as well as understanding the world and this has a great importance to the overall socio-moral development of youths



because it can shape their norms, values, behaviour, cognitive development as well as moral inclination (Ahmed, 2015).

There is a general consensus that what people hear and see could influence them, especially, youths, and for youths it may register in their sub-consciousness. It could be deduced that any immoral acts viewed from video may pervert a youth's moral development and could be manifested in the long run with varying implication on the development of the youths and the society in general. (Ahmed, 2015). They reflect what is happening in the society. According to Eziagwu, (2009) many persons get a completely new perspective of the society through the movies and, also through the same medium, are shown how to respond to the new trends in the society or what option to choose from their consequences. Violence in video purges viewers and provides them an avenue to release pent up anger thereby making less likely to imitate the violent actions portrayed.

Relaxations through watching video reduce stress and its related complications. It helps in reducing tension and psychological problems. Human values such as honesty, obedience, patience, love, forbearance, modesty and dedication are copied from home movies.

Most of the home video affects social values of the Nigerian people. In line with this Kolade (1996) said that the effect of what the home video display is one of the major factors that destroys Nigerian traditional heritage. He further stated that Nigerians tend to buy ideas from the western world and drop their rich cultural heritage. This is why most of our youths lack family attachment, respect for elders and constituted authorities. When foreign cultures and values are in constant display, it is conjectured that heavy home video viewers will further be alienated from the local surroundings, thereby making them strangers in their own community.

Through watching of certain home video/films many youths are converted to Christianity and Islam. This is because according to Agbasiana (2012) "in some movies, one can notice that when the name of Christ is mentioned, the lesser gods are captured" (p.7). In support of this Eziagwu (2009) stated that:

Many persons have undergone religious re-awakenings after watching the movies. The themes of redistribution, charity and fear of God are often concretely presented in the movies and reports abound of miraculous experiences and the melting of many hardened hearts (p. 95).

On the other hand, watching films/video has a negative effect on the academic performance of young viewers. This is because youths who are heavy video/films viewers will no longer devote time to their home work and reading.

Most movies on the television and home video affect religious belief. This is in line with Agbasiana (2012) who observe:

The displays of ritualism, witchcraft and fetishism in the Nigerian movies have led to syncretism in the Christendom. Most of the so-called Christian movies today have moral messages in them. For example "the popes most hear this", "Angel of darkness", "beyond belief", "August meeting", "House of God" etc. the weakness of some religious leaders or the laity are blown out of proportion in



these movies and therefore they end up demoralizing religious zeal of the populace (p. 13).

Movies/films destroy Nigeria traditional heritage. According to Kolade (1996) in and Ekwuazi (2000) home video brought about cultural changes to Nigeria and made Nigerians to drop their rich cultural heritage. Before then, Foreign orientations were pumped into the minds of the youths. The youths absorb foreign cultures without questioning. This constitutes the bases for moral degradation among some Nigerian youths.

Exposure to physical and psychological violent acts could constitute a tragic pleasure for youths who expose themselves to such violent contents. According to Ahmed (2015), the potential and effect of films is greatly underestimated in a country like Nigeria. This explains the reluctance of people to accept that such violence depiction on youths can shape their moral life.

Violence in home video affects the psyche of viewers. Some youths through watching of home video see violence as a means to settle disputes and that violence is morally acceptable.

Ahmed (2015) identified the following as the effects of violence video on the youths. Violence may desensitize youths to real life violence and this may affect their moral judgment when confronted with violent acts. Exposure to violent act film at a very young age may harden a youth and in turn pervert their moral development creating a generation of narcissistic psychopaths. Exposure of youths to sexual violence video/films may make youths not to control their sexual urges, it also make their minds to be preoccupied with sex.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is obvious that watching video has both positive and negative effects on the viewers especially youths. The negative effects outweigh that of the positive. Video production in Nigeria started in the late eighties and it has grown to bustling industry in Nigeria. The industry has, however contributed to the growth of the economy of the country. It could be surmise here that the exposure by youths to violent and unwholesome film content invariably harms their moral upbringing.

Recommendations

In view of the above discussions, the following recommendations are put forward.

- Parents should monitor the type of video the children watch in the home.
- Censorship board should screen thoroughly and ensure that videos meet the stipulated standard before publication.
- Government should strengthen and monitor the video censorship board to intensify effort in rating video films to ensure that they are devoid of immoral and violent content.
- Children/youths should not be exposed to violent films early in life because it is a predicator to exhibition of aggression later in life.
- Religious institutions should frequently teach the youths and the parents on the implication of risk associated with immoral and violent video and teach them the need to live a moral life.



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