



ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS
& PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA
BOOK SERIES



CANADA UNIVERSITY PRESS

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To cite this article:

Oguchi O. Ajaegbu, Omolayo O. Jegede, & Mofejesu G. Olarewaju (2020). Portrayal of Youth Cultural Values in Indigenous Home Videos in Nigeria in *Media Freedom, National Interest and Governance*, ACSPN Book Series 5, pp. 45 — 54

Retrieved from <http://www.acspn.com.ng>

(Institutional or Subscribed access may be required)

Please note that this is an electronic, pre-print version of this article published by the Canada University Press, Concord Ontario, Canada for Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN).

The ACSPN Book Series is exclusive to the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria.

ISBN: **978-1-989271-07-0**

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Layout/Design: Ashroph De Grafico

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CHAPTER FIVE

PORTRAYAL OF YOUTH CULTURAL VALUES IN INDIGENOUS HOME VIDEOS IN NIGERIA

Oguchi O. Ajaegbu, Omolayo O. Jegede, & Mofejesu G. Olarewaju

Introduction

Home videos perform the traditional functions of mass communication by informing, educating and entertaining the masses. To achieve this, it employs the use of cultural concepts, music and stories. Home videos are available in different Nigerian languages like Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Efik, Idoma and also English language which is the general language of communication in Nigeria. Therefore, it is safe to say home videos cut across most ethnic groups and cultures in Nigeria. The diverse nature of home videos is a shared quality with Nigerian culture. Justifying this, Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa (2011 p.2) state that “Nigeria is a society with abundant rich cultural heritage scattered with diverse ethnic nationalities”. Culture is the total way of life of a particular group of people, it instructs their beliefs, values and attitude. It is learned through communication which includes dressing, language, hair, mythical stories. This way, culture is transferred from one generation to another.

In a bid to communicate culture, the use of mass media, especially television and new media has been employed to showcase culture to a largely dispersed heterogeneous audience: nationally and internationally. The media is used to propagate ideologies of certain cultures, to foster understanding by other individuals who may or may not belong to the culture. In the process of learning about other cultures some parts of the world have dominated the media through globalization, with their cultural contents bringing about cultural imperialism.

In Nigeria, home videos have gained prominence over time, available for viewing on both terrestrial and satellite television, the popularity of home videos is such that, it is a top choice for many Nigerian homes. Ahmadu (2015) in his study explains how Nigerian people have been exposed to a lot of communication contents which have contaminated their thought pattern, belief

systems and even actions. This situation can be blamed on the technological advancement of developed countries, which makes it easier for them to dump all these cultural contents on developing nations, especially among youths who are more technologically inclined than the older generation. Based on this premise, Agbanu (2011 p.157) asserts, that “Technology has made communication systems more destructive to local cultures” In developing countries people are losing their cultural heritage as a result of technological advancement and their manipulation by the center (developed countries)”. This explains why Nigeria being a developing country is experiencing cultural domination by developed countries.

Nwaolikpe (2013 pp.1-2) states that “culture determines the developmental pace of a society because the traditional values of people are related to the pace with which they accept or reject the demands of socio-cultural development” but for sustainable development to be attained, culture must be communicated. However, in the case where factors like technology to aid effective communication is not stable, development is slowed down. Technological and economic advancement on the part of developed nations have given them the higher advantage in information flow. This imbalance of information allows developed nations through globalization, dump their media content and cultural values on developing nations like Nigeria. With the advent of the internet, youths spend long hours online learning and assimilating western content which is promoted through western media and in turn lead to the adoption of western beliefs, and culture. This can drive the Nigerian culture to extinction.

This comes to show the need to promote Nigerian culture as it is a pivotal element for development in Nigeria. The media is charged with the duty of promoting culture and its values in order to attain this development. But how is the Nigerian media through movies portraying the Nigerian culture? How is the Nigerian culture perceived by youths? This study therefore assessed how culture is being portrayed in indigenous home videos and its influence on youth' cultural values. The movies selected for the study are: *Figurine, Ije, October 1, Inale* and *Saworoide*.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this research was to assess the portrayal of culture in indigenous home videos and its influence on youth cultural values. The specific objectives are thus:

1. To identify the cultural elements portrayed in the selected movies (*Figurine, Ije, Inale, October 1 and Saworoide*)
2. To determine the prevalence of viewership of indigenous home videos among Nigerian youths.
3. To examine the extent to which the selected movies have influenced Nigerian youths.

Theoretical framework

Cultural imperialism theory explains that the western cultures have dominated the cultures of developing and third world nations and gradually destroyed their cultures. The theory came to being as a result of an advocacy led by Herbert Schiller in the 1960s and the late 70s in response to the agitations against the United States' economic dominance in the global system (Adum, Kelechukwu & Abuah, 2015).

Adum et al (2015 p.3) asserts that, “Cultural imperialism theory holds that all media product originated from the Center have devious and ulterior motives of deliberately wanting to dominate the media of periphery nations. Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008 pp. 152-153) while discussing the theory asserts that “the cultural imperialism theory argument seems to assume that

people in other cultures are weak and simply absorb and accept cultural messages". Cultural imperialism is a subtle manipulation of the mass media of developing countries by the developed western nations of Europe and North America through the use of their advanced and well developed mass media to control behaviour lifestyle, morals, arts and values of the developing nation through the production and massive exportation of media software to the developing nations (Ahmadu, 2015).

Anaeto et al (2008) explained the manner in which foreign cultures make their way thus:

The western cultures are technologically developed in television and motion programmes. The developing countries that are not technologically developed depend on programmes from developed countries. This means that the programmes from the developed countries which portray their culture will be imbibed by developing nations. The media messages from the developed nations come to us with their cultural values. This western culture now dominated our local culture because we are consuming their mass media messages.p.152

This theory affirms that Nigerian cultures have been invaded by the cultures of the developed nations like America. Through their media content, Nigeria is flooded with the western culture and values which is widely adopted by the Nigerian youths of today as they spend long hours on social media platforms which is a channel through which foreign cultures can be imposed on them.

Cultivation theory opines that the media (television) has a strong impact on audiences' especially heavy viewers of the television content. Cultivation theory suggests that mass communication, especially television, cultivates some beliefs about reality that are held in common by mass communication consumers (Anaeto et al., 2008).

Cultivation analysis theory simply examines whether television and other media encourage perceptions of reality that are more consistent with media portrayals than with actuality (Anaeto et al, 2008). Gerbner (1990) in Anaeto et al (2008) opines that most of the things people know or think they know have never been personally experienced by them, he concludes that they know those things because of the stories they have heard or seen in the media.

This theory shows the powerful effect media has on individuals. Home videos have the power to influence how people act. Viewers of these home videos have the tendency to cultivate all the cultural values portrayed in them. They act based on what they have seen in the videos they are exposed to. Hence, this theory shows that there could be a relationship between viewing Nigerian home videos and youth perception of the values presented in those videos as well as the power it has to influence their actions.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Ahmadu (2015) in his study titled 'role of indigenous films in preserving culture in Nigeria" examined the role of film as a medium of communication in preserving culture by using a detailed examination of the performance of Nigeria film industry and its contribution in preserving the Nigerian culture. He opines that Nigerian film makers can reposition Nigeria's dented image by making films that will propagate the Nigerian image. The research adopted the survey method and the study was conducted in Jos, Plateau state with a sample size of 100 of which 71 were females and 29 were males.

The findings from the research showed that the Nigerian film industry has not succeeded in utilizing the powerful medium of film in preserving the culture of people and preventing it from decay. Nigeria has a promising future but depends on the Nigerian film industry to help project the Nigerian cultures and values which would aid national development. Ahmadu concludes that there would be no cultural development in the society without a sound and reliable means of presenting, educating and promoting culture in the society. He further recommended that Nigerian film makers must be culturally faithful to our society. They should be able to evoke and relate as close as possible certain social and cultural feelings to the target audiences.

Nnabuko & Anatsui (2012) in their study titled “evaluation of Nollywood on Nigerian youths” examined the effect of Nollywood movies on Nigerian youths. It looked into the impact of Nollywood movies on their socio-cultural behaviour with emphasis on some Nollywood movies such as *I hate my father*, *Shattered home*, *Outcast 1&2*, *Isakaba 4* which were all banned because of their visual content such as prostitution, murder, violence, cultism and other social vices. Findings from this study accused Nollywood of being filled with portrayals of violence which has adverse effects on the Nigerian youth and has caused a growing number of youth's involvement in violent crimes. Movie producers were also accused of failing to make any strong comment against social ills and this is a shortcoming of these films instead, they use violence in their message. The study employed the use of qualitative and quantitative data analysis to conduct the search conducted on final year mass communication students of Babcock University.

From the findings, it was discovered that Nollywood has a great influence on the actions and behaviour of the youth, through constant exposure to violent films. They concluded that the Nigerian producers used the social ills in the society in their message without realizing that arts can be viewed as having therapeutic effect that can both mirror and heal the society of its perceived ills. The researchers recommended that producers of video films should know they owe the larger society a duty to promote the greater good of the society.

Another research by Omije (2015) titled 'Nollywood and cultural reorientation of Nigerian youth' affirms that film has an extraordinary influence on youths and consequently they imbibe the culture of the society the film is showcasing which affects the orientation they have of their own culture before watching films of other cultures. The article was aimed at demonstrating the extent to which the Nigerian films from the stable Nollywood with storyline, culture, costumes, and locale have become invaluable in the position of the Nigerian cultural values. He employed the use of content analysis and also interviews to validate his point of view. Although a lot of people agreed that Nigerian movies promote culture some people however disagreed. The author concludes that apart from the socio-economic benefits of the Nigerian film industry, it is also a useful platform for promotion of cultural values among youths. He acknowledges that the Nigerian movies appeal to the Nigerian youths and are gradually replacing foreign films in Nigeria. Also, that films which are subtitled in English language are very helpful to the youths in understanding the cultures represented.

In another study by Giwa (2010) titled “Nollywood; a case study of the rising Nigerian film industry content and production” examined the changing trends in the Nollywood film industry. The general aim of the study was to examine the portrayal in rising Nigerian film industry. The study was aimed at finding out the western and local cultural themes in Nigerian films such as dressing, character portrayal, language and setting as well as to find out the level of viewership and impact of Nollywood films on Nigerians living in the United States.

The study adopted mixed methods, content analysis on some Nigerian movies namely; *Ije, LeyinIgbeyawo, IrinAjo Eda, Last flight to Abuja* and *Iwa* and online survey through the use of questionnaire comprising 23 questions. Findings from the content analysis showed that film makers are developing themes and plot using language to meet the needs of Nigerians both at home and overseas. Respondents from the survey affirmed the improvement in Nigerian films and how it served as a constant reminder of their culture as some of them learn more about their culture through films. Giwa concluded that Nollywood has made its impact in the film business as each of the movies produced holds a significance in the storyline for people to relate to. She further recommended that the film industry should continue to improve their content, production and distribution of movies.

Ekerikevwe and Iwokwagh (2015) in their article “the role of mass media in repositioning Nollywood for the promotion of Nigerian cultural diplomacy and national security” affirmed that the mass media remains a very useful tool in repositioning the image of Nigeria because of its ability to reflect the cultural heritage of Nigeria adequately and also its strong influence on the members of the society. They assert that Nollywood through movies and performance has been in the fore front of promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage, hence the study aimed at examining how the mass media can serve as a veritable tool to reposition Nollywood for Nigeria's cultural diplomacy and national security. They concluded that if mass media is properly motivated they can serve as an effective tool of cultural diplomacy in Nigeria and provide a good avenue for Nollywood to promote Nigeria cultural diplomacy.

Another study conducted by Kur and Edegou (2010) looked into “Nigerian home videos and young people's attitude towards African cultural values; a case study of Anambra State University undergraduates” which was necessitated based on the researchers' observation that genres, themes and other aspects of portrayal in Nigerian home videos demean many aspects of African cultural values. The objectives of the study were to determine the level of exposure of the Nigerian home videos by the undergraduates of Anambra State University and to evaluate the influence of the undergraduates' exposure to the movies as well as their attitude towards the African cultural values based on their exposure. The study was hinged on the social cognitive theory. Survey method was adopted with a sample of 364 drawn out from an entire population of 7244 undergraduates of Anambra State University. Findings from the study revealed that the young people who were heavily exposed to Nigerian home videos have a negative attitude towards African cultural values. The authors concluded that Nigerian home videos are evidently a contributing factor to the eroding African cultural values. They recommended that a regulatory body be put in place to regulate the themes and content of the movies produced in Nigeria.

Okorie (2015) in a study titled 'media criticism, culture and Nollywood' focused on how film makers promote the culture and image of Nigeria. The researcher asserted that one major factor that has affected the promotion of culture and image of Nigeria is local hegemony especially on the part of movie practitioners who are more concerned with making money rather than promoting the real Nigerian culture. The study was grounded in the theory of cultural hegemony through studies of different scholarly works the researcher discovered that although the Nigerian culture is being promoted there is a conflict in the portrayal of culture as it is represented in both positive and negative light. Therefore, the researcher recommended that filmmakers must have vast knowledge of the Nigerian culture before producing movies that centre on it. They should also promote good cultural values of Nigerians more often.

Role of Indigenous Home Videos in Promoting Culture

The media is charged with the duty of entertaining as well as educating its audience. In a bid to fulfil these roles, it deploys the use of films which has a locking power on its viewers because of its ability to tell stories through motion pictures. This gives films an edge over all forms of mass communication tools. Corroborating this, Ahmadu (2015) opines that films when properly harnessed, have the power to rise above the language barrier through its ability to use motion pictures, visuals and audio effects to tell stories of past events present events and future events.

Kunzler (2007) in Fayomi (2015) describes Nollywood films as an industry that has developed out of a context related to domestic and international cultural, economic, and political environments with its heterogeneous nature it can roughly be divided into Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo video films. Okeoma (2012), explains home videos are seen as a source of entertainment and education and also a channel for the promotion of the Nigerian culture and heritage. Indigenous home videos just like culture dwells on diverse topics in its content.

Adenugba (2007) cited in Alawode and Uduakobong (2013) explains that Films are to be cultural ambassadors of the society in which they are produced. This means that just like films from other countries like China, India, and United States highlight and promote the culture of their respective people, Nigerian movies are also to project the Nigerian society and cultures. Adenugba (2007) in Alawode et al (2013) opines that, culture is an essential aspect of aesthetics particularly because films subsists cultures and because it is made for an audience that has a culture whether inclined or not. Films are to promote culture and its heritage among Nigerian youths. Through the use of indigenous language, traditional story lines based on myths or histories of culture, use of traditional attire, local setting, projecting the cultural values, and showcasing indigenous arts in home videos, the Nigerian culture can be learned and adapted.

Method and materials

The study was conducted using mixed method approach comprising content analysis and survey research design. Five Nigerian movies- *Ije*, *October 1*, *Saworoide*, *Figurine* and *Inale* were content analysed and some undergraduates from University of Lagos and Bells University were sampled on the topic of discourse. The respondents of the survey were purposively selected based on the criterion that they must have seen at least one of the selected movies. A coding sheet was adopted to analyse the contents of the movies while a questionnaire was used to gather responses from the respondents. The major content categories used in this study were: language, dressing, work of arts, religion, setting, cultural values and cultural norms.

Results and Discussion

Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 374 were retrieved. There were 219 females and 155 males in this study.

Research question 1: **To Identify the Cultural Themes Portrayed in the Selected Movies (*October 1*, *Inale*, *Ije*, *Saworoide*, *Figurine*).**

As stated in literature, some cultural themes are: dressing, character, portrayal, language, setting, dance, art and festival. The cultural themes identified in this study are language, setting, dressing, art, names, religion, cultural values and cultural norms. It was discovered that most of these themes were portrayed in the movies.

Language: Majority of the selected movies except for *Saworoide* which portrayed pure native dialect were done in English language and had a mixture of the language of the culture being portrayed in the movie. For instance, *Ijehad* lots of scenes in English language and that is partly because a part of the setting of the film was outside Nigeria and had foreign characters. *October 1* was a film on Nigerian independence and the events showing the colonial era. *Figurine* also used a mixed blend of English and Yoruba languages as it showed village scenes and also scenes showing the city and people who were shown as educated. *Inale* was also done in English but all the songs and names were in native dialects. This implies that the selected movies in one way or the other have portrayed the native dialects of the culture being represented in the movie. Hence viewers are able to easily identify through the languages being portrayed the culture which the movie represents.

Dressing: The dressing of characters in the selected movies was also a combination of local attires and foreign wears. The attires showed largely the cultures portrayed in the movies. For instance in movies like *Saworoide*, *Figurine* and *October 1* where most of the characters were dressed in traditional attires to portray the Yoruba culture. In addition, the kings in the movies (*Saworoide*, *Figurine* and *October 1*) were dressed in *Agbada* with a crown and horsetail to represent the authority of the king in the Yoruba land. *Inale* which was a representation of the *Idoma* culture portrayed their traditional attire in every scene which is the red and black striped wrapper. Also, *Ije* which represented the Igbo culture although some of the scenes were shot outside Nigeria, the Nigerian characters endeavoured to dress in traditional prints (*Ankara*) in the movie and scenes shot in Nigeria represented their cultural attire on the characters both male and female. This implies that the movies have been able to incorporate the African traditional attires in its portrayal of culture which makes the culture being represented easily identifiable by its viewers.

Works of Art: Works of art were also portrayed in the selected movies. Art in this study comprises drums, paintings, sculptures, music and dance. The works of art had various meanings in the movies. For instance *Figurine*, which constantly portrayed a sculpture called *Araromire* which was believed to bring 7 years of wealth to anyone who comes in contact with it. Also, movies like *Ije* and *Inale* portrayed music and dance as a form of communicating among themselves in the society.

Native Names: In the African setting, names are held in very high esteem. It is believed that names communicate and this is the reason some families give only native names to their children because it is believed that names could chart the course of a person's life. The selected movies used native names to identify majority of the characters in the movies and also to portray the culture represented in the movie.

Cultural Values and Norms: Cultural values like honesty, dignity of labour, sense of community, hospitality, respect, good human relations and discipline are held in high esteem in the African setting. These values were portrayed in these movies. Also, cultural norms like festivals, marriage, myths and taboos were portrayed in the selected movies.

Setting: the movies were able to portray the traditional African setting in its contents. Through the use of market squares, mud houses, huts, streams and farms. The movies were able to exhibit the local traditional setting and environment and also how people relate with the environment.

Research Question 2: Level of viewership of Nigerian home videos among Nigerian youths.

There are 374 respondents. Of this figure, nearly 90 percent admitted that they were exposed to indigenous home videos in Nigeria compared to 10 percent who claimed non-exposure. The result shows further that the most frequently viewed and popular home video among youths is *October 1* (86.1%). Others were less popular. For example, only 29.1 percent had watched *Figurine*; 22.7 percent were exposed to *Ije*; 24.9 percent were exposed to *Saworoide*; while only 13.1 percent had watched *Inale*. Thus, the majority of the respondents have seen *October* while only a few have seen the other selected movies. Giwa (2014) in the study of rising Nigerian film industry- content and production revealed that there is a high rate of viewership of indigenous home videos among Nigerians with a total of 73% of the total respondents attesting to this.

Research Question 3: Extent of influence of the selected movies on Nigerian youths.

Table 1: Respondents Encountering culture through home videos

Variables	VLE	LE	Low E	N	Total
	%	%	%	%	n=374
Extent of youth learning about culture through home videos	31.3	47.3	13.9	7.5	100%
Ability of youths to speak native dialect exposed to through Nigerian movies	24.6	35.0	25.7	14.7	100%
Acquisition of morals by youths through Nigerian movies	33.2	41.2	18.2	7.5	100%

VLE= Very Large Extent; LE= Large Extent; Low E= Low Extent; N= Never

This implies that through the portrayal of culture in indigenous home videos majority are educated on some things about different culture based on the culture being represented in the indigenous home videos. The study went further to find out the extent to which respondents have learnt native dialects through the home videos and the response was high in the affirmative with 59.6% as shown in the Table

Respondents also affirmed as shown in Table 1.5 that they have acquired and learnt some morals through portrayal in indigenous home videos. Respondents were also asked the extent to which these movies have promoted the Nigerian cultures represented, 58.5% agreed that through the portrayal of culture in indigenous home videos, the youths have an increased awareness of Nigerian cultures. In the same light, Okeoma (2011) in the study titled “influence of indigenous home videos on the dressing pattern of students in the tertiary institutions in Abia state” found that people manifest cultures that are seen on the media especially youth with the ages 18-25 years, which is within the age selection of this research. Omije (2015) explains that films produced in local languages which are subtitled in English language are very helpful to the youths in understanding the cultures represented.

These findings could draw a cue from the Cultivation analysis theory which states that heavy television viewers will cultivate the perception of reality portrayed by the television. This means that the more youths are exposed to home videos with rich Nigerian cultural content, the more they will perceive Nigerian cultural values favourably.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, it was discovered that the selected home videos have been able to incorporate some cultural elements into its content and these cultural elements are portrayed to a large extent in the content of the movies. The findings gathered from this research gave a clear view of the good cultural representation of the indigenous home videos and the findings showed that the good representation of culture have greatly influenced Nigerian youths in terms of language, morals among others. Based on this, it is therefore concluded that there is a good portrayal of culture in indigenous home videos and young people have been greatly influenced by the portrayal of culture in indigenous home videos.

It is recommended therefore that Nigerian movie makers should ensure continuous production of movies that portray the vast Nigerian cultures and not movies that belittle the nation's culture. In the same vein, movie makers must endeavour to go thorough research on a particular culture before production of any movie, so that the movie would portray the undiluted facts about that culture. The Nigerian film industry should also disengage from producing substandard movies with poor video quality, they should ensure the movies produced have high video quality and have very good story lines as it is evident in this research that movies with high video quality are more appealing to viewers.

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