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FILM AS A MEDIUM FOR TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines film as an effective medium for transformation in Nigeria. Film, in the world generally and in Nigeria specifically is one of the strongest means of disseminating information to the populace. Over the years the film industry in Nigeria has witnessed a tremendous turnaround in form of patronage. Presently, the Nigerian film industry is the second largest in the world. It can unarguably cause a change in the affairs of the nation. This change was seen in both the positive and negative light. The study contends that its establishment has helped greatly in development of the nation, and has served as a medium of entertainment, education, perpetuation of culture, employment and communication as well as a source of information for research purposes. It also highlights various critics that praised the ability of Nollywood industry in the past, and expresses concern on the reverse focus on the negative themes and its negative impact on youth behavior and the image of Nigeria. The recommends that Nigerian films censors commission should scrutinize films before they are sent out for viewing by the larger audience, film makers should make movies that will portray Nigeria as a good place to be not as a den of criminals and that parents should pay attention to the kind of movies their children watch so as to prevent them from being involved in any social vices and ending up in jail as well.

1. Introduction

The influence of film on the culture and wellbeing of a society cannot be overemphasized. It has a way of effecting changes in the perception of its audience towards certain issues of life and these changes can be seen to be either positive or negative depending on its outcome on the individuals and the society at large. Sambe (2008) defines film as a series of motionless images projected into a screen so fast as to create in the mind of anyone watching the screen an impression of continuous motion. Film is a unique means of communication; its visual bias gives it a universal appeal and impact. Film is the link between all the aspects or forms of literature: prose, poetry, short story and drama (Adenugba, 2008). Film is an art form that appeals to the senses of beauty and aesthetics. It combines all the arts of editing, costume, make up, lighting, dance, drama (writing), directing and producing to make it statements. Film plays important roles in the development of any groups of people, ethnicity, and race as a nation or country. It is a veritable tool of national development. One of the key areas in which it performs this duty is in

the realm of culture. Films are not only pieces of creative expression, they are also tools of communication and awareness raising, and a way of calling for social change (Okenwa, 2000).

Film plays significant roles in the wellbeing of a country such as civilization, education, entertainment and so on. But on the other hand, film has detrimental effect on the individuals and on the society at large as some of them encourage social vices which can make life unbearable for people of the society. Research has it that, constant exposure to foreign movies makes an individual to exhibit certain lifestyle seen in the movies which may be in conflict with the his/her indigenous culture. This can reflect in the individual's dressing pattern and other activities which the culture of that society may not permit. This is evident in Nigeria where a higher percentage of Nigerians (especially youths) watch more foreign movies than Nigerian movies and this has reflected in their general lifestyle. At such, the growing influence of the Western media and the concept of globalization seem to be creating a transition of Nigerian culture to the Western culture, especially in the urban areas and cities (Billington et. al, 1991). A trend that is fast growing and eating deep into every facet of the Nigerian system.

This paper examines film as an effective medium for change in Nigeria. This change will be addressed from the positive and negative perspectives.

2. Literature review

Films are the art form of the Twentieth century. They take aspects from almost every other major art form and combine them into one. They are a "spectacular wedding of the old mechanical technology and the new electronic world"(McLuhan 1962). To make a film director needs to know how to frame a shot just like a still photographer needs to. The soundtrack of a movie encompasses pop, rock, classical, instrumental and every other genre of music. Set designing, staging, blocking, and of course acting all play a large part in the production of a Film. But films do not just correlate all these factors into one form, they take them to the next level and add a new spin to each individual art. Framing a shot with a still camera now has to lose its immobility and move with the action in a film. The musical background reflects the emotional state of the characters or action taking place on the screen. Set designing, staging blocking and acting or all done in a real world environment rather than on a stage. Because of all these different factors films are "a collective art form with different individuals directing color, lighting, sound, acting, speaking" (McLuhan 1962).

Films are the first art form to offer "as product the most magical of consumer commodities, namely dreams"(McLuhan 1962). Viewers step into a darkly lit theater almost as if they are stepping into their own subconscious. They stare in complete darkness at images projected onto a larger than life screen. The audience of a film are taken on a journey where they can lose themselves and their own problems in the characters on screen. The camera becomes the navigator and wherever it "turns to, the audience accepts, they are transported to another world"(McLuhan 1962).

The irony of Films is that the line between a dreamy fantasy and life-like reality is very muddled. For a viewer in a movie theater "the larger screen puts the edges at the periphery of vision and the lack of distinct edges makes it easier for the viewer to become part of the scene, thus facilitating identification"(Greenfield 1984). What are the effects of this identification? What if the viewer is an impressionable teenager that identifies with the gun-toting hero who makes killing look glamorous? To fully understand the effects of film one must understand the art, science and media of film. Like learning to read a book or a sheet of music one must also learn how to "read" a film or become film literate. However, unlike a book or a sheet of music, film literacy is achieved without conscious effort if the viewer is exposed to film at an early age. Most people today, especially in America, are exposed to television and film at a very early age and are not illiterate to the film code. However, it is a different story to an African audience of the 1960's who, when a character "[disappeared] off the side of the film, they would want to know what happened to him"(McLuhan 1962).

An example of Film literacy is given in *Mind and Media* by Greenfield (1984): "If Image A and Image B alternate on the screen in progressively shorter and quicker fragments (a technique known as accelerated montage), an experienced movie goer, one familiar with the code will get the message that A and B exist at the same time but in separate spaces, and that they are converging on each other either spatially or dramatically". Montage is the technique of editing.

There are many other techniques that a viewer must learn to decode. These elements that a viewer must learn are "visual, generated by techniques such as cutting from one shot another, panning from one side of a scene to another, zooming from long shot to close up, splitting the screen. Others are auditory, such as faceless narrators or canned laughter"(Greenfield 1984). All of these techniques have a direct correlation with reality, they are "symbolic representations, that is, each technique stands for something in the real world"(Greenfield 1984). For example, a cut from one shot to another can represent a lapse in time or change in location. A more complicated

concept, that in addition can be used to increase the artistic value of a film, is a shot that is used to create an emotion or idea. For instance, a shot with an off-centered angle can create a feeling of uneasiness in the viewer. A child's ability to understand these techniques depends on the stage of development of the child. In a study of children, 80 percent could correctly retell the action of a sequence without montage, but over half could not do so after watching a different sequence with montage. (Greenfield 1984). If children could not understand the simplest of montage, then a movie like *Natural Born Killers* with never-before-used montage that defies space and time relationships is undecipherable to a young mind. But does this increase or lessen the effects of the movie on the young viewer? These techniques are obviously mastered by the time a child reaches adolescents. All forms of media and especially film have become ingrained in today's society. Movies are so much a part of American culture that actors become gods for a secular society. Teenagers can readily quote from movies like a priest from the bible. But what are the lasting effects of films on teenagers? An example of the effects of film on racial attitudes was tested fifty years ago. A group of white children from small Midwestern towns were shown *The Birth of a Nation*, a movie that shows blacks in a very bad light. The children's attitudes toward blacks dropped thirty-five percent after watching the film. But would there be the same effects on older teenagers who are not as easily influenced? According Greenfield (1984),

"As children get older they adopt new definitions of television [or film] reality: first they believe that anything on television that could happen in the real world is real on television; later they believe that what they see on television represents something that probably happens in the real world. But despite these changes in the meaning of reality, the belief that entertainment programming represents social reality does not seem to change much with greater life experience or exposure to television. The realistic style of much entertainment programming seems to contribute to this effect".

Yet, despite this, a difference in age does "reflect the general finding that younger viewers are more open to messages from the media (or film) than are older ones"(Greenfield 1984). One of the more popular aspects of film has been and still is violence. Violence since the dawn of civilization has appealed to man's tastes. Just as the Roman had circus shows that featured lions and leopards eating the Christians which were extremely popular. Do violent films perpetuate violence in society or cause a desensitization? Take the 1995 fire bombing of a New York City subway station. The attack which closely resembled a scene from *Money Train* was committed two weeks after the movie's release. Many politicians criticized the movie industry

telling them to take responsibility even though a couple of weeks later police said there was no relationship between the movie and the incident. This incident is just one of the many violent crimes "inspired" by artistic or dramatic movies. In 1971 following the release of *A Clockwork Orange*, a group of teenagers in England simulated the rape scene by singing the song "Singing in the Rain" while brutally raping a young girl. Other films with related incidents are *Taxi Driver* which is tied to the assassination attempt on President Reagan, *Natural Born Killers* which apparently inspired a teenager to kill his stepmom and half-sister, and *The Program* which depicted teenagers lying down drunk in traffic (Katz, 2000). Although violent movies continue to be made today "the fact is that during that past couple of years...Violent crime has decreased not grown in America"(Katz 2000). Within the white suburban middle class "violence remains relatively rare"(Katz 2000). However, among the underclass minorities violence has escalated (Katz 2000). It is unlikely that violent movies have a stronger effect on a certain racial and social class. In fact, white middle class kids are "targeted by marketers of CDs" and movies (Katz 2000). Underclass minorities cannot afford to see movies as much as the middle class and thus cannot be effected nearly as much as middle class suburbanites. Yet the underclass are the ones committing the violent crimes. Jon Katz, author of *Virtuous reality* believes that "blaming violence on media and [films] is easier and safer both for journalist and for opportunistic politicians. Blaming violence on violent movies could be seen as the same as arguments as "comics books threatened decency (in the forties), that rock and roll was dangerous (in the fifties), that video games turned kids violent (in the eighties)"(Katz 2000). Robert Coles a Harvard psychiatrist believes that young moviegoer who is exposed to the "excesses of a Hollywood genre; sentimentality, violence, the misrepresentation of history, racial stereotypes, pure simple-mindedness, and can emerge unscathed intellectually as well as morally"(Katz 2000). Cole further this by saying "sometimes these images help the child to sort matters out, stop and think about what is true and what is not"(Katz 2000). Like what the movie *Scream* says, "don't blame the movies, movies don't make killers, movies just make killers more creative."

Film was one of the most devices utilized by the Colonial masters in compelling Africans to the European ideology. Emelobe (1997) asserts that early colonialist filmmakers intertwined fun and spectacle, with serious Eurocentric ethics meant to condition the lives of the populace. Several film production outfits established by the imperialists acted in this capacity in both Anglo-and francophone African countries. As a result of this, the African became compelled to see himself and his development in terms of European values and ideology. The foregoing does not only

accentuate the social impact of the film medium, but also reinforces the fact that the Nigerian video film has proven very influential on its people towards propagating social change. Thus, film is a powerful man-made instrument used for shaping and re-shaping individuals and the society at large leading to what has become the “Nigerian popular culture” of today. It has grown very influential. Being a visual medium, the audience’s interest is primarily sustained by what they see in the film and not necessarily the story.

Film makes viewers desire things that they may not ordinarily like, but with the appropriate application of visual elements and components by the disparate artists for a film production, the audience are enticed and willfully involved in the film as they watch it unfold. In this light the audience identify themselves with the visual images as codes assembled by the filmmaker, he/she perceives it based on his/her understanding with the cultural codes. The understanding of the different codes assembled by the film-maker as a unified entity depends on the viewer’s level of interpretation of the image seen and his/her familiarity with the cultural codes. For film is a creative medium that exposes extracts of the human endeavor and his environs which uses visual elements to initiate social change.

2.1. Evolution of Film in Nigeria.

During the colonial days when the Christian Missionaries arrived in Nigeria during the second wave of Missionary Enterprise from Europe about 1860, the missionaries introduced Christian concerts and musicals to promote religion, education, faith and values. The Colonial Administration and the Church saw film not only as a medium of entertainment but as an effective medium of communication (Akpabio, 2003). The British colonialist with the Christian missionaries used film amongst other media to persuade Nigerians to accept Christianity, education and the western culture.

Bittner 1980 traced the evolution of film to the beginning of civilization when some drawings depicted a moving horse with 8 legs or a king with one foot stretched out to suggest a walking motion.

These were soon replaced in early 20th century with improved motion picture exhibition devices; the first set of films shown in Nigerian theatres were Western films, with the first film screened at Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos from 12 to 22 August 1903 (Olubomehin, 2012). This was done by Mr. Balboa of Barcelona, Spain, under the management of a Nigerian Herbert Macaulay, who later closed his exhibition in Lagos and left to continue showing films in other

West African countries (Nnabuko & Anatsui, 2012). After his departure, an enterprising European merchant, Stanley Jones, began to show films in the same Glover Memorial Hall, and he showed his first films in November 1903, (Mgbejume, 1989), gradually it grew and became popular in the 1960's. The Nigeria Home Movie industry thus, began from there.

Film as cited in Sambe (2008), came during the time of the colonial government as a unit under the information department of the ministry of information in 1954. The function of the film unit was to show documentary films and newsreels on local events of great importance, health issues and the importance of education among others, using school premises, village centers etc. as improvised theatres. This was heavily dominated by foreigners.

Colonial filmmakers started producing films for local audiences within Nigeria since the 1920s, mostly employing the mobile cinema as a means of exhibition; the earliest feature film made in Nigeria is the 1926's *Palaver* produced by Geoffrey Barkas (Olubomehin, 2012). The film was also the first film ever to feature Nigerian actors in a speaking role. As of 1921, there were four other halls showing films twice a week in Lagos Mainland and one hall each in Ebute Metta and Oshodi. By this time, cinema had become popular in Lagos with crowds of young and old people usually waiting at the doors of theatre halls. Religion also aided in the expansion of cinema culture as the Christian missionaries used cinemas for religious propaganda (Olubomehin, 2012).

The earliest feature film made in Nigeria is the 1926's *Palaver* produced by Geoffrey Barkas. It was also the first film to feature Nigerian actors in a speaking role; Nigerian film actors featured in *Palaver* include Dawiya and Yilkuba. The film was shot amongst the Sura and Angas people of the present day Bauchi and Plateau States in Northern Nigeria, and narrates the rivalry between a British District Officer and a tin miner which leads to a war (Nnabuko & Anatsui, 2012). Also in this era there were several films set in Nigeria, one of the most notable being the 1935's *Sanders of the River* by Zoltán Korda, featuring Nigerian actor Orlando Martins. Martins also featured in other notable films including *The Man from Morocco* (1945), *Men of Two Worlds* (1946) and so on, and this established Martins as one of the recognized Nigerian actors of his time (Soyingbe, 2009).

As cinemas became a common feature of the social life in the then emerging city of Lagos, the late 1930s through 1940s marked the beginning of the establishment of big commercial cinema houses with branches in strategic parts of the country. One of the earliest cinema operators in Lagos was the "West African Pictures Company" owned by Mr. S. Khalil, a member of the Syrian community in Lagos (Emeagwali, 2004). He established the Rex Cinema in Ebute Metta,

Regal Cinema and Royal Cinema. Other popular cinema chains include: Capitol Cinema, Casino Cinema, Kings Cinema, Central Cinema, Rialto Cinema, Corona Cinema, Odeon Cinema, Road House Cinema, Ikeja Arms Cinema and Glover Hall. In 1937, the colonial government set up a Board of Censorship to handle matters relating to the establishment and operations of cinema houses in the colony (Olubomehin, 2012). Nigerian content in films made and shown in Nigerian cinemas during this period were however virtually non-existent as the production and distribution were controlled by foreigners. Motion picture entertainment was as a result complemented by the Yoruba travel theatre groups, which emerged in the 1930s through 1940s; One of the most prominent were the Agbegijo and Alarinjo theatre groups, which featured theatre actors such as Duro Ladipo, Ishola Ogunmola, Lere Paimo, Oyin Adejobi, amongst others (Ozolua, 2007).

In 1949 through 1950, the state of affairs changed a bit, with more Nigerian contents being exhibited in cinemas; with a purported drive to "Africanize" film production, the Nigerian Film Unit was established in order to decentralize colonial film production (Nigeria Film Unit, 2015). The Colonial Film Unit, throughout the decade, exhibited health and educational films to local audiences through its mobile cinema vans. It also produced newsreels and short documentaries, depicting celebrations and colonial achievements to domestic and overseas audiences (Nigerian Film Unit, 2015).

However, the indigenization decree of 1971 gave Nigeria total control of the film industry but soon after the colonialists left, Nigeria was flooded by Chinese and Indian films. In 1972, concerned about the influx of foreign culture into Nigeria, the *Indigenization Decree* was issued by the then head of state Yakubu Gowon; which demands the transfer of ownership of about a total of 300 film theatres in the country from their foreign owners to Nigerians. Then in 1979, Nigerian government recognized the importance of the indigenization decree and organized a seminar on film and its relationship to cultural identity in Nigeria that was sponsored by the Nigerian National Council for Arts and Culture. Also, more Nigerians started playing active roles in cinema establishment as a result of this policy. This transfer also resulted in the emergence of Nigerian playwrights, screenwriters and film producers; popular literature and theatre works were adapted into motion picture (Ozolua, 2007). The oil boom of 1973 through 1978 contributed immensely to the spontaneous boost of the cinema culture in Nigeria. The presence of foreign investments led to the erection of several cinema complexes. In 1976, The 5000-capacity National Arts Theatre, Iganmu was constructed in Lagos. The theatre was

incorporated with two cinemas, each having a capacity of over 700 people (Olubomehin, 2012). At this time cinema business had become a notable employer of many people and also served as an important social function, as Nigerians visited cinemas for relaxation and entertainment purposes (Abdulkadir, 2014). The increased purchasing power in Nigeria also made a wide range of citizens to have disposable income to spend on cinema going and on home television sets (Nificon, 2013).

Television broadcasting in Nigeria began in the 1960s and received much government support in its early years. By the mid-1980s every state had its own broadcasting station. Law limited foreign content on television, so producers in Lagos began televising local popular theatre productions. Many of these were circulated on video as well, and a small-scale informal video movie trade developed (Nificon, 2013). As of late 1980s, the cinema culture was beginning to face a major decline, and most Nigerian film producers had transitioned to television productions. The gradual decline of the Golden era of Nigerian cinema has been attributed to several factors, including the reduction in the value of Naira, lack of finance and marketing support, lack of standard film studios and production equipment, frequent Government structural adjustment programmes due to military dictatorships, as well as inexperience on the part of practitioners. The drastic decline in cinema culture resulted in some of the existing cinema houses being acquired by religious bodies and turned to churches; others were simply just closed down. In the early 1990s, only a few of the once vibrant cinema houses were still in operation, and all had collapsed before 1999 (Abdulkadir, 2014; Adelokun, 2009).

The emergence of the video film market in Nigeria is traced back to the 1980s when television productions thrived. Jimi Odumosu's *Evil Encounter*, a 1980 horror film released directly on television, was the first production to be a pointer to how lucrative making film directly on video can be (Adelokun, 2009). The film was extensively promoted before being aired on the television, and as a result, had streets flooded in the following morning with video copies of the recorded broadcast. It was reported that the film became an instant hit at Alaba market, a commercial district which later became the hub of video distribution in this period and also eventually became the hub of piracy in Nigeria. Since *Evil Encounter*, it became common, especially in Southern Nigerian cities to see video copies of recorded television programmes traded on the streets (Nificon, 2013)

This method was adopted and built on by producers and distributors at Alaba Market to reinvent the film industry, since the Nigerian cinema culture was facing a major decline (Emeagwali,

2004). The first film produced on video in Nigeria was 1988's *Soso Meji*, produced by Ade Ajiboye. The film was also screened at the few available theatres at the time. Subsequently, Alade Aromire produced *Ekun* (1989) on video, which was screened at the National Theatre, Iganmu (Ayengho, 2012). However, the boom experienced in this era is generally believed to have been kick started by Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* (1992). Nnebue had an excess number of imported video cassettes which he then used to shoot his first film on a Video camera (The Economist, 2009). Although *Living in Bondage* is often touted in the media as the "first commercial video film", several historians have argued that the video film industry was already booming before *Living in Bondage* (Nnabuko & Anatsui, 2012).

As at 2004, at least four to five films were produced every day in Nigeria. Nigeria movies now already dominate television screens across the African continent and by extension, the diaspora. The film actors also became household names across the continent, and the movies have significantly influenced cultures in many African nations; from way of dressing to speech and usage of Nigerian slangs (The Economist, 2009). This was attributed to the fact that Nigerian films told "relatable" stories, which made foreign films to "gather dusts" on the shelves of video stores, even though they cost much less (Onishi, 2002).

According to the *Filmmakers Cooperative of Nigeria*, every film in Nigeria had a potential audience of 15 million people in Nigeria and about 5 million outside Nigeria (Emeagwali, 2004). In no time, the industry became the third largest producer of films in the world (ThisisNollywood.com, 2015). However, this didn't translate to an overtly commercial film industry when compared to other major film hubs across the world; the worth of the industry was approximated at just about US\$250 million, since most of the films produced were cheaply made (Obiaye, 2015). The film industry regardless became a major employer in Nigeria. As at 2007, with a total number of 6,841 registered video parlours and an estimated of about 500,000 unregistered ones, the estimated revenue generated by sales and rentals of movies in Lagos State alone was estimated to be ₦804 million (US\$5 million) per week, which adds up to an estimated ₦33.5 billion (US\$209 million) revenue for Lagos State per annum (The Economist, 2010). Approximately 700,000 discs were sold in Alaba market per day, with the total sales revenue generated by the film industry in Nigeria estimated at ₦522 billion (US\$3 billion) per annum, with broadcast content valued at ₦250 billion (US\$1.6 billion) (Okonkwo, 2013).

At the peak of the video era at around 2008, the industry had become the second largest producer of films, releasing approximately 200 video films monthly (Vourlias, 2014). However, at this

point, the Nigerian film industry had practically degenerated into a "visionless" industry, with the invasion of several people who do not know a thing about filmmaking, and piracy was at its peak (Rice, 2012). Dealing with the menace of piracy, amongst other problems, became a hard nut to crack; as a result of this, most investors of the "*Alaba cartel*", who control almost 90 percent stakes in the video industry, began to channel their money into other business ventures instead. The decline of the Home video era has been attributed to several factors, such as the refusal of the Government to provide support and funding, the lack of a formal and effective indigenous film distribution infrastructure and the increase in the cost of production in Nigeria (Ekeanyanwu, 2015).

As time went, a new phase in Nigerian cinema emerged with a major shift in the method of film production, from video format back to cinema method, which constituted the films produced in the Golden era (Nificon, 2013). Few years into the 21st century, Nigeria began to experience the growth of cinemas, which was initially structured for the middle and upper class. The Silverbird Group is the first company to launch a series of modern Cinema houses across major cities in Nigeria, mostly situated in affluent areas and districts (Adelakun, 2009). It launched its cinema chains in 2004, starting with the Silverbird Galleria in Victoria Island, Lagos. The Silverbird Galleria is a large shopping mall, with an upscale cinema facility and various outlets where mercantile activities take place. This provides more reasons to visit the place beyond just watching films, but more of a social activity and a modified sort of entertainment beyond film watching. This trend has given another probable explanation as to the demise of the Nigerian cinema culture in the 1980s, which might have been as a result of the unfashionable appearance of most cinemas of the Golden era (Adelakun, 2009).

Silverbird cinemas upon establishment started screening Nigerian films with high production quality, as a result discouraging poor film production. The first New wave film to be shown at a cinema was the Yoruba-language film *Irapada* (2006) by Kunle Afolayan, which was screened at the Silverbird Galleria in Lagos. The Silverbird experiment became very successful, and as a result, the group launched few more cinema branches in Lagos and other cities in the country. Not long after the establishment of Silverbird cinemas, Genesis Deluxe Cinemas and Ozone Cinemas were also launched creating a competition in the cinema business. Much later, in the 2010s, FilmHouse cinemas also came into the picture, leading to the availability of more cinemas in the country, especially outside the affluent neighbourhoods (Leu, 2011).

Several grants have been launched by the Nigerian Government, in order to support quality content in Nigerian films. In 2006, "Project Nollywood" was launched by the Nigerian Government, in conjunction with Ecobank. The project provided ₦100 million (US\$781,000) to Nigerian filmmakers to produce high quality films and to fund a multimillion Naira distribution network across the country during this period (Okonkwo, 2013). In 2010, the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan launched a ₦30 billion (US\$200 million) "Creative and Entertainment Industry" Intervention Fund, financed by Bank of Industry (BOI), in conjunction with Nigerian Export and Import (NEXIM) Bank. This grant, although dubbed as a spin-off of "Project Nollywood", was for the entire Nigerian Creative Arts and Entertainment sector. The vision of the grant for the film industry however was to help more Nigerian filmmakers in training, funding, and also help in creating necessary infrastructure for the industry (This Day live, 2013; Huhu, 2013). In 2013, a smaller new grant of ₦3 billion (US\$20 million) was awarded once again solely for Nollywood, and specifically for the production of high quality films, and to sponsor filmmakers for formal training in film schools (Ekenyerengozi, 2015). Also in 2015, Bank of Industry launched another "NollyFund" program for the purpose of giving financial support in form of loans to film producers (Showemimo, 2015).

The popular 2009 thriller film *The Figurine* is generally considered the game changer, which heightened the media attention towards "New Nigerian Cinema" revolution. The film was a critical and commercial success in Nigeria, and it was also screened in international film festivals (Thorburn, 2015). The 2010 film *Ijé* by Chineze Anyaene, overtook *The Figurine* to become the highest grossing Nigerian film; a record it held for four years, until it was overtaken in 2014 by *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2013) (Akande, 2013). By 2016, this record was held by *The Wedding Party*, a film by Kemi Adetiba.

By the end of 2013, the film industry reportedly hit a record breaking revenue of ₦1.72 trillion (US\$11 billion). As of 2014, the industry was worth ₦853.9 billion (US\$5.1 billion) making it the third most valuable film industry in the world, behind the United States and India. It contributed about 1.4% to Nigeria's economy; this was attributed to the increase in the number of quality films produced and more formal distribution methods (Liston, 2014).

Unlike the home video era, films in the new wave are generally of much improved quality, with considerably bigger budgets, averaging between ₦40 million (US\$250,000) and ₦120 million (\$750,000) (Hazlewood, 2014). These films' production periods take months and even span into years, a far cry from the films in video format which are usually shot in a matter of days or

weeks. Other notable improvements in the New Nollywood include: subtler performances from actors; different from the overt melodrama which constituted the video era, more practical, more logical and generally better stories (Djansi, 2012; Levine, 2011). Themes explored in these films are often characterized by consciously cosmopolitan themes, as most of the filmmakers are relatively young (Connor, 2013). A proper copyright and distribution system still remains one of the major challenges in the New Nigerian Cinema (Rice, 2012; Hussein, 2014; Akande, 2014).

2.2.Film and Culture

Over the years, the medium of film has come to be closely associated with the culture industry. In Nigeria, such a role for the film industry is still evolving although certain factors are altering the profile of what could be regarded as the country's culture, while the film industry itself is undergoing a crucial transition from analogue to digitization. In the views of Mgbajume, (1989), the immense potential of film was recognized even during the colonial times. The Federal Information apparatus earlier acknowledged film as the most effective medium for internal and external publicity. Before a handful of indigenous film makers in the late 1970s took up the challenge to fill the void in local participation in the film business, the market was dominated by films from China, India, Hong Kong and England and America. This was evident in the number of Chinese and Indian films that dominated our television screens. The Anglo-American films offered a variety which included cowboy, horror, war and adventure films, among others. (Adeiza, 1995). This was evident especially at weekends when these foreign films were shown on Nigerian television. Bruce Lee was one of the most popular Chinese film then. There was a strong competition between these films and the success and growing popularity of Indian romance and Kung Fu films with segments of the Nigerian audience, gave rise to the gains of this period. However, the Anglo-American film marketers, apart from having the advantage of the English language, regularly screened their films free of charge, using mobile cinema units in different parts of the country. Marketers of Chinese and Indian films somehow restricted their activities to movie theatres in the towns. Since most of the films screened in the country were imported from various sources, the only areas that could have been controlled by Nigerians were the distribution and exhibition of films. These were however, firmly in the hands of Indians and Lebanese who managed to hold on to ownership of movie theatres and the distribution of films at that time.

Each television station broadcasting in Nigeria has a mandatory 40% local programming requirement, which is reduced to 20% for pay-TV (Cable/MMDS and satellite) retransmission stations. However, producers are not about to champion the cause of cultural purity since the elements of local cultures are daily refined by influences which dictate the mainstreaming of values to fit global prescriptions. Popular culture projection appears to be a fixation for these producers who continue to be propelled by the profit motive. Packaging of films for export is also influencing the force to satisfy criteria rooted in Western commercial standards in the scripting, characterization and production of films.

Local cultures in their original form have therefore become secondary considerations in film content. Local cultures are, of course, in transition all over the world. Globalization is setting the pace in the interaction of cultures with the consequence that local cultures are weighed down. The lasting contribution of video films to Nigerian society will depend on how the movie industry responds to the challenge to stay profitable without compromising the rich cultural heritage of our country Nigeria and the unity that binds us together.

2.3. Theoretical framework

There are some theories that address changes that could occur in the life of a viewer as result of being exposed certain film show. Some of these theories are Observational Learning and Imitation Behavior theory, Cultivation Analysis theory and social responsibility theory.

Observational learning and imitation behavior theory

Folarin, (2001) contends that both theories assume that people, especially children, tend to learn from the mass media and to model their behavior on that of the Dramatis personae. The process is similar to that by which children imitate the behavior of adults around them.

Wartella, Oliverez and Jennings [1998] gave an outline of three basic theoretical models for describing the process of learning and imitation of TV programmes, which include the social learning theory of Bandura (1965) which opines that children learn from media models what behavior will be rewarded and what will be punished. While, Berkowitz (1984) contends that when people view certain activities, it activates other related thoughts and evaluations, leading to a greater predisposition to exhibit those acts in interpersonal situations. Finally, HuesMann's, (1986) on his Script theory holds that scripts indicate how to respond to events control social

behavior. For instance, certain aggressive scripts can lead violence, and this can have a negative impact on youths.

Cultivation analysis theory

According to Folarin (2001), Cultivation Analysis theory assumes that the more time people spend watching television, the more their world views will be like those to exposed to television. This heavily depends on the kind of contents they watch which will determine whether their worldview will tend to positive or negative direction. Most Americans for instance live with television from childhood, so television message and images form the mainstream of a common symbolic environment, and a cultural core of the society. In a nutshell, the media constructs a reality for its audiences and so its audiences eventually adopt the symbolic action world of the media as a reflection of their reality. Cultivation Analysis concentrates on the enduring and common consequence of growing up and living with the media, ‘an individual who is heavy with media products behaves differently from light audience who rely on other factors and influences of reality.

Social responsibility theory

The social responsibility theory is an outgrowth of libertarian theory of the press which advocate right to express view and to publish without let or hindrance. The social responsibility theory, however, says freedom without responsibility could lead to abuse. This theory therefore is applicable to this paper in the sense that moviemakers and artistes would be made to do their performance with sense of responsibility. The media, or the film-producers are thus, expected to regulate themselves, though public intervention and to ensure that media responsibility is not discouraged. Such interventions can take the forms of regulatory councils; commission of enquiry, etc.

3. The Positive and Negative Effect of Film in Nigeria.

3.1 The Positive Effects.

i. Purveying and Perpetuating of Culture.

It helps to preserve the culture of a people from eroding away and this is a focus of implementation of the Nigerian National policy on film article 4(3) c, which states that “film will be produced to protect and promote our rich cultural heritage and our national aspirations in the

process of development” (Adenugba, 2008). Culture is the totality of the ways of life of a group of people, nation or tribe including their food, costumes, dressing, music, marriage and burial practices etc. and it is the bedrock of the essence of being of a people (Adegbola, 2011). Tunde Oladunjoye in an article in the Guardian Newspaper of Sunday April 18, 2004 titled: “Cannes Film Festival Knocks, where is Nigeria?” retraced and emphasizes the role film plays in cultural promotion when he says “I am not aware of any nation that has been able to achieve development without proactive promotion of its essential cultural components” and this is true because culture is an integral aspect of the life of a people. Much of the Americanization of the world (so to say) is due to the fact that Hollywood movies emphasizes, promotes and projects the American people and nation in a form that most appeal to the viewer, thus from watching Hollywood movies the tendency to be American is developed and this is apparent in the way people dress, the way they speak amongst other nuances.

ii. Employment.

The film industry is a big employer of labour in any economy. Film like any other aspect of the Theatre arts is a melting pot of all the arts-painting, costumes, writing; prose, drama, poetry, short story, acting, directing, producing, photography, tourism and so on (Onuzulike, 2007). According to Korkus (2013), it takes a small village of people to make a movie. Film is a big art form that requires the involvement and participation of many people who are often employed as actors, costumiers, cameramen, producers, singers and aesthetic workers. In an article in the Sunday punch of 28th August, 2004, Yinka Ogundaisi, a major Yoruba film producer says that about N100 million goes into film production in Nollywood and about N1.2 Billion annually; the industry was valued at over N4 Billion in 2003 (Adenugba, 2008). Film provides worthwhile employment for a lot of people; other people are employed in the downstream sector of the industry as marketers, video club owners, copyright and censorship officers etc.

iii. Education and Human Resource Development.

Film plays an important role in education and human resources development (Clayton, 2010). Audio visual aids are now a significant element in teaching and knowledge impartation. Films are produced on different aspects of medicine, law, humanities etc. It is a very important in pre-school education; there are volumes of educational film materials for toddlers and small children, this is based on the premise that the human mind retain information more vividly what is heard and seen better than what is heard or read only (Onuzulike, 2007). Educational film is a genre of film on its own. Furthermore, documentary film helps to enlighten the public about events and

phenomenon in the environment. Film plays a vital role in social mobilization and information. Film is used to popularize government policies and ideologies amongst the masses. Owing to its ability to hold a captive audience films are used more than any other means of mass communication to promote ideas of positive social transformation as well as to consolidate and build new relationship between culture and national development for example, the National Orientation Agency and the Ministry of Information and Culture uses films to promulgate awareness on issues such as the HIV/AIDS endemic, anti-corruption, poverty alleviation, etc. (Ozolua, 2007).

iv. Development of the Nation's Population.

Film also help to inspire and develop a nation's population through the adoption of themes which emphasize the desirable rather than the negative aspect of present social existence and the projection of heroes and heroine that refuse to get involved in the ills and evil around them.

v. Entertainment.

Film serves entertainment and therapeutic purposes. The feature and animated films are chiefly made to entertain the viewer and also help him or her relax. *Madagascar, the Matrix Parts I-III, Titanic, Gods Must Be Crazy* are produced to help the audience relax and give off tension.

vi. National Mobilization and Unity.

It is a tool of national mobilization, unity, a sign of national autonomy and a means of the preservation of heritage and sovereignty.

vii. Source of Information for Research.

Film is a gizmo of research as in the case of archival and library materials. Reel tapes of national events like the Independence Day, First Visit of Queen Elizabeth to Nigeria, the Declaration of Independence, June 12 Presidential election, the official handover from Military rule to Democratic Governance in 1999.

viii. Film as a Propaganda Device.

Established and successful film theorist and filmmaker, Sergei Milkahovich Eisenstein (1898-1948) used films to lobby for the public to accept the regime of Josef Stalin who was the

President of the Soviet Union in the deformed USSR. Lisa Reinfanhel also used film that projected the Nazist regime of Adolf Hitler as being the best form of government in the world.

3.2 Negative Effects

Some movies encourage social vices among citizens of Nigeria and this has constituted a nuisance to the society. One of the major adverse effects of film is that it encourages violence. Violence in movies has become sought of a regular on the Nigerian movies and has continued to gain more acceptances by producers and directors. Most times when they are asked about the adverse effects of these on their audiences and society they simply say that “they are portraying their messages in the easiest and most convincing manner since these stories are most times associated with real life situations” (Nnabuko & Anatsui, 2012).

And one of the questions that critics have failed to answer, whose job is it when youths watch movies and often times get influenced by what they have seen? is it the parents, the regulators, producers, or the youths themselves? The National Film and Video Censor’s Board severely criticize Nigerian home video films for placing too much emphasis on occultism, violence, sex, pornography and blood, claiming that they could have adverse effect on the Nigerian society (Nnabuko & Anatsui, 2012).

Odukomaiya, (1980), has identified the negative aspect as: the ease with which anyone with minimal funds could purchase video cameras and portable video recorders and start producing fiction dramatic stories, which were at times of questionable content made the field a free for all. People without training in mass communication or theatre arts and even secondary school drop outs joined the bandwagon. Having acquired equipment, they opened for business in dingy shops with signboards such as ‘Video Production Center’ ‘Video Recording Studio. This development is true and has exposed the Nigerian society to media messages that are unprofessionally packaged which could result in the development of negative mannerism.

Nigeria operates a capitalist economy characterized by the pressure to maximize profits [at all cost] and minimize losses, exploitation, unbridled completion and other hallmarks of capitalist accumulation featured prominently in western capitalist development. The video producers in this economy tend to capitalize on all social factors, including moral frailties to maximize profits.

Likewise, sexual innuendoes become attractive because pornography is not vocally resisted by the larger society. The things that should be considered morally reprehensible in a morally stable society are tolerated because of the oppressive and unjust social system that breeds poverty and

discontent, and many other negative developments in the polity. All these are part of the current reality of Nigerian's moral and ethical foundation, which have become part and parcel of the ethical foundations of the Nigerian video film industry.

Films such as 'Dead of the Night' (2002), Anikukapo, (2002) Iyawo Alhaji (2001), etc. are set against a background of social and physical reality. Looking into the contents of some of the films, wealth is a major propelling factor. Most of the characters in the movie desire to have immense wealth and live opulently. Films such as Abuja Connection and Dead of the Night, the actors and actresses put on expensive costumes, while, the society ladies in Abuja Connection for example, ride in limousines and talk of money in millions. They display their wealth everywhere they go through expensive clothes, rings, necklaces, bangles etc. Even their sitting rooms are opulently furnished and occupied by overdressed characters lounging around lazily. While, in Please Come Back Movie, the characters dress and act typically like robbers. They go about often with their pistols, where smoking and drinking heavily, probably explains why they don't have mercy on their victims.

This calls the attention of parents to see how they can help in reducing the damaging influence of violent films on the children before it escalates to the larger society. It is understood that the current socio-economic terrain in Nigeria has made parents to become preoccupied with searching for money and other material things. This deprives the children of their parents' company. Absence of parents from home thus paves the way for the children to acquire certain values from video films when they watch without parental guidance. This notwithstanding, it is believed that parents can still device means to control the kind of video their children watch even when they are not at home.

3.3 Solution and The Way Forward

A number of regulations and strategic plans were adopted by the National Film and Video Censors Board [NFVCB] to control and refresh the system of the Nigerian Movie Industry (Nnabuko & Anatsui, 2012). Some of such are:

- Reduce the number of movies produced in Nigeria that depict the country as a 'Voodoo and violent country'
- Increase professional education and training in the movie production industry
- Counter video piracy
- Encourage growth of new exhibition windows

- Invite all state governments to the movie business as an important socio-economic growth factor
- Create a thriving environment for producers and makers of movies to exhibit their talents.

The NFVCB posed a strategic shift of mind set to new movie themes and professional best practices to curtail release and distribution of ‘offensive; movies through improved coordination and monitoring mechanisms and effective mobilization of all stakeholders brought about two movies that sell the image of Nigeria *Tourism* and *The Nigerian Pride* in 2006. The NFVCB also came up with warnings about films and their restrictions to their audience; if it is a family or 18 +film, let it be stated.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Film has been seen as an instrument with impacts that have brought changes in the Nigerian society both positively and negatively. Films have served as instruments for purveying and perpetuation of culture, a source of information, education, entertainment, employment and development to the people and to the nation, Nigeria. It can also serve as reference point for research works. On the other hand, films have also served as instruments that encourage social vices like violence, sexual immorality, arm robbery, occultism and many more.

It is important to note that, while appraising the good effects of film as an effective medium for change in Nigeria, the adverse effects should not be overlooked as they have the capacity to outweigh the good effects, making the society a place no one would ever desire to be. On this note, some recommendations have been projected so that the best can be made out of films. The producers of video films should know that they owe the larger society a duty to promote the greater good of the society, and should realize that the ennobling virtues which the society covets should find expression in their video productions. Parents should however pay attention to the kinds of movies their wards are exposed to in order to prevent them from ending up in jail at the long run. The Media need to be really careful when packaging a message, since it affects those that are exposed to it. The Nigerian films censors’ commission should scrutinize films before they are sent out for viewing by the larger audience.

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