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A Critique of Language Vulgarism and Streetism in Nigerian Home Videos: A Study of the Movie ' Selina Tested'

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Abstract: *There is a wide concern for the high rate of abnormal behavior evident in our youth as a result of home video films they are exposed to. This study was undertaken to examine the critique of language vulgarism and "streetism" in Nigerian Home Videos: A study of Manuchim Praise Movie " Selina Tested". This study is of immense importance because it examines the crucial problem of home video and its influence in the life of its audience. The researcher has demonstrated that home video is highly influential and since youths are easily influenced, whatever message home video carries is definitely copied by youths. On the basis of these findings, certain recommendations were made which would be beneficial to the government and all agencies concerned with home-video and upbringing of youths student teachers how to use differentiated education and hold seminars for tutors on how to use differentiated education.*

Keywords: Language, Movie, and Video.

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INTRODUCTION

The value of home videos as medium of mass communication is esteemed. In Nigeria there are millions audience s of home video films that have been affected in one way or another by the subjects treated in movies. These movies portray messages that have tremendous influence on the viewers, mostly vulgar language and violence.

Movies hold a special place in the culture of people. Movies, like books are special and important medium of cultural transmission, Baran (2009) studies have shown that movies contribute to socialization and the transmission of culture (Baran, 2009) and that there exists a relationship between the mass media, social ills and the other behavioural mannerisms and attitudinal changes in society. For instance, the media are attributed considerable power to shape opinion and belief, change habits and actively mould behavior and impose value systems even against resistance.

O'Rork (2006) and Wogu (2008) argue that audiences are more likely to emulate models of behaviour seen on the media if they expect to receive gratification from emulating another person. Behavior is influenced not only by personal or live model but by those presented in the mass media (O'Rork, 2006).

Analysis on media influence continue to show that the media have influence on the pattern of behavior of its audience (Uwakwe, 2010). As a medium of mass

communication, film has become an entrenching social order of influence on viewers. It influence is alarming, given the progressive models of thoughts that film has become the 21st century household means of survival. This is why most scholars see it as a means to an end (Adamu, 2010).

Film is also called a movie or motion picture. Uwanwene (2002) define 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 continues motion such images are projected by light shining through a corresponding series of images arranged on a continuous band of flexible material.

According to Mamer (2009:3), film is made up of series of still photographic images when projected in succession, these images provide illusion of movement. It is proposed in this study that the home movie genre, which is the Nigerian local or indigenous films have influenced the pattern of life of an average Nigerian child. This pattern of influence has come in the form of language use.

This supposition is hinged on the fact that home movies have gained wide followership among viewers, especially the youths; hence, the name "home videos".

The home movie industry in Nigeria has come a long way. Nollywood is a household name for Nigerian movie industry and which by definition, means Nigeria's movie industry by Nigerian production team for the

Nigerian audience. Several movies have been acted in Nigeria, under Nollywood subsidiaries. This is because most of these industries are not Nollywood, but come in the guise of the big industry. For instance, there are Yoruba film, Ibibio film, etc, all counted for Nollywood by non-indigenes. This is to explain that *Selina Tested* is really not a Nollywood production, out a movie acted by subsidiary industry in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The movie “*Selina Tested*” is an action film that depicts vulgarism, violence, power, authority, dominance, comedy, revenge, drama, betrayal, survival, romance and more. “Aboy” and “Chiboy” pose as the main characters of the movie with others revolving round them, conquering and ruling a little town called “Holy Ground” also known as ‘Ama’. They grew up to meet a life survival, hence you must be “*Selina Tested*” in order to survive the climate of the environment.

They didn’t go to school and all they learnt were how to survive the hard way by being *Selina Tested*, using gun also called “Kala” as their weapon of warfare. Their criminal life started when they met a keke driver in episode one (titled: *Young Rascals*) counting money and wished they could have money like him.

The next day “Aboy” saw a guy in the hood, hiding a gun in the bush, he hid himself, as soon as the guy left the bush, and he took the gun and went to inform Chiboy about it. They went to confront a keke man, shot him on the leg and made away with his money, this was how they grew and became social deviants. The path of their childhood was briefly re-enacted on the first episode of the movie. It was the beginning of a life of criminality, radicality and streetism.

Violent attitudes in humans are recognized to be associated to a number of physiological, emotional, domestic and cultural reason. The learning environments which the child is exposed to are also considered to contribute to the increase of antisocial attitudes and feelings.

Statement of the Problem

Home movies are veritable tools of mass communication which cut across national and cultural boundaries with wide and fast distributing networks internationally. Home movies are seen as source of entertainment and education, as well as conduit for promoting Nigerian culture. Thus, cultural transmission is a sole of the home movies.

An examination of some of the movies portray violence, vulgarity, nudity crime, sexuality, streetism, cultism, voduism, witchcraft among others. In the face of these frivolities, it becomes necessary to examine the impact of the movie *Selina Tested*, staged as a satire to portray and consequently correct the prevalent ills in our Nigerian society. The problem is that instead of meeting the people as a reflection of the prevalent life perpetuated

among them, the movie rather tend to tense society up. Making people, young and adults to be vulnerable and susceptible to vulgar language, voduism, cultism, streetism, and so on. Does the movie meet the purpose for which it was designed?

Such discovery is imperative since it will guide policy makers where necessary especially if it is found that the influence of the movie is negative and detrimental to Nigerian’s cultural objectives and values.

METHODOLOGY

This paper falls within the domain of qualitative research. Of all the qualitative approaches, the researcher adopted thematic Analysis and critical discourse approach. These approaches were adopted because they allow the researcher to probe thematic issues in the movie including: language, plot arrangement, scene setting, custom and so on.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Home Videos

Home video is a pre-recorded media sold or rented for viewing. The term originates from the Vits and Betamax era, when the predominant medium was videotapes, but has carried over to optical disc format such as DVD and Blu-ray. In a different usage, home video refers to amateur video recordings, also known as home movies.

Home movies in Nigeria started during the period when a colonial film unit was set up in 1947, but until the 1960’s little more than documentaries were produced.

Then came Nigeria’s first film production companies, Latola Film (1962); and Calpeny Nigeria Ltd. In 1970, *Kongis Harvest*, based on Wole Soyinka’s play was produced by Calpeny and directed by American Ossic Davies. This was the first flowing of local film in the 1970s and 1980s. With foreign exchange problems and the popularity of home movies on video, most indigenous film producers have now turned to making videos, usually of poor acting, filming and production quality, but which sell well. Vits copies are handled and marketed by distributor, who make them widely available and affordable and with the current video boom has left the film industry neglected. What is being contented with here is the fact that the film industry in Nigeria is yet to charge as an authentic cultural, moral or economic force capable of drawing to itself the attention of policy makers and integral component of the national development effort.

Home movies have evolved into the most time-consuming leisure activity of the audience both old and young, in fact by the age of 15 most children would have spent much time watching home movies through television and video players than doing anything else.

Home movies film viewing has been the topic of much scientific inquiry.

Selina Tested: Background Information

Selina Tested movie is an action movie/story that written and produced by Manuchim praize also known as Odogwu. This action movie depicts violence power/ authority/dominance, comedy, revenge drama, betrayal, survival, love, romance and more.

Two little lads, Aboy and Chiboy poses as the main characters of the movie with others revolving around them, conquering and rulling a little town called Holly Ground also known as Ama. They grew up to meet a life survival, hence one must be fortified “Selina Tested” in order to survive every day.

The movie comes as a series, shot in episodes. Selina Tested is an action movie, there is so much violence scenes, it also has a lot of suspense too. Each episode makes the next episode more interesting. With every negative acts in the movie accompanied by negative consequences. There is high portrayal of violence and criminality in the movie Selina Tested.

The Making of the Movie

Selina Tested is a 2021 film written and produced by Manuchim Praize also known as Odogwu. Manuchim is the brainbox behind Selina Tested, produced under the umbrella of Lightweight Entertainment Movie Production. The movie Selina Tested is one of the trending movie of 2021. The movie has captured the attention of the general public especially the youths.

Manuchim Praize also known as Odogwu played a vital role in the movie, therefore bringing more life into the movie using his acting skills.

The characterization comprises more of the youth than the elders. Munachim Praize grew up in Port Harcourt, River State Nigeria. There he developed interest in acting, audio production. He studied computer science at Port Harcourt University.

Characterization and Setting

The main characters in the movie Selina Tested are Aboy and Chiboy, they pose as the main characters of the movie with others revolving around them, conquering and rulling a little town called Holly Ground. Below is the list of Selina Tested Actors and Actresses:

Aboy
Chiboy
Tallest
Odogwu
Sibi
Belema
R2
Priest
Asa

Dera
Chiboy Sis/Baby Sis
Chizoram
Macapeletus
Nwayi Gborogu
Mama Chiboy
Striker
Amoural
Boma
001
Spirit boy
Herbalist
Mimi
Fresh
Orbu
11/Dum boy
Kobo/mentor prince
Trigger
Wonder boy
Atunakpa
Sibi mum
Sibi uncle
Sibi sis

Setting

Just like every fiction or non fiction, the setting or backdrop is the time and geographic location. It initiates the main backdrop and mood for the story.

The movie Selina Tested was shot within Nigeria. From Episode 1 down to the last, having taken place in Obi Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. Out of the 36 states in Nigeria, Port Harcourt is the fifth largest city in Nigeria after Lagos, Kano, Ibadan and Kaduna. It lies along Bonny Rivers and is located in the Niger Delta.

Issues and Language

The portrayal of negative themes has been the base of Nigerian film industry, probably because of the gains gotten from constant patronage from its audience as well as the interest the audience members have in language vulgarity, violence, nudity and the likes. The industry was accused of over emphasizing negative themes. The National Film and Video Censors Board (the industry regulatory body), in its guidelines for motion picture producers, called for production to be above board in portrayer of violence, crimes, sex, pornography, vulgarity, obscenity and other sensitive subjects (NFVBC, 2000: 107 – 111).

Katamba (2011) cited in Ewurum and Chukwu (2021) asserts that language is at the heart of all things human. Nollywood (Nigerian film industry) is the most visible form of cultural machine on the African continent (Sylvanus, 2021).

Today, the nature of most Nigerian movies have grown or evolved from bad to worse especially on the part of those that portray “Language vulgarity”.

(Language vulgarity refers to language which is offensive or obscene, words most associated with the verbal form of vulgarity is “cursing”).

Selina Tested engages in language vulgarity which are commonly used slangs related to confraternities, below are a few examples and their meaning:

- Jazz out (Leave this place)
- Deck down (Sit down)
- Throne over board (To kill)
- Capping careless (you are talking out of point)
- Die it (forget the matter)
- Who goes you (who are you)

The constant production and distribution of these movies for either personal viewing on to rent to people in video shops, inspite of the nature of most of these movie poses continuous influence to the consumers as the youths these slangs to their speeches. Which could either get them in trouble or lead them to be seen in bad light.

The Movie as a Reflection of the Nigerian Society

In the current wave of globalization, Nigeria is part of the “Global village” the fact that Nigeria is the eight largest exporter of crude oil, endowed with human and natural resources and still has more than 59% of its population living below the poverty line depicts a paradox in the country. World Bank (2014) claimed that, out of about 170 million human population, 100 million Nigerians are living in destitution. Factors such as corruption and injustice are undoubtedly behind this suffering.

While fighting poverty by a government is an integral aspect of security measure, lack of security of life is another pressing issue that can necessitate prompt intervention. And going by what transpires at the moment national security threat has been a major issue for the Nigerian government in recent years.

Adebayo (2013) observes that, security and crime have been deeply rooted in the political history of Nigeria, particularly in recent time, hence struggle for good governance, sustainable democracy and development by a few patriotic citizens of the country.

Omede (2012) agreed that, the reason why unrest, violence and other forms of social vices in which the youth are the vanguard is as a result of bad governance, poverty and unemployment among the youth. The crimes are championed by the youth in the movie *Selina Tested* and it mirrors the society societal ills frequently occurring in the society.

A Porous Society: When Satire Fails

A satire is the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people’s stupidity or vices. It is a genre of the visual, literacy and

performing arts, usually in the form of fiction and less frequently non-fiction in which vices, follies abuses and short comings are held up to ridicule, often with the intent of sharing or exposing the perceived flaws of individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement.

Selina Tested is a satire, the essence of the movie is to expose the societal ills and correct the life of streetism so that next generation will not live that kind of ill-fated life. The lifestyle portrayed in the movie is a typical life of a regular Port Harcourt resident, should young people in the name of cultism continue to dwell in violence, streetism, use of voodoo (Juju) etc.

However, in communicating the societal ills, the movie *Selina Tested* uses vulgar languages, languages that is affiliated confraternities, so that when some one hears someone speak this slangs, one would be looked at a bad person. The movie came as a satire but it has negatively affected the audience especially kids who now imitate the characters and use these vulgar languages, leaving the society porous as everywhere you go people use these slangs to interact between one another.

This work of art has failed as a satire and has made the society vulnerably porous such that everybody now wants to act and speak what they have watched in the movie.

Nigerian Home Videos: Between Crime Streetism and Vulgar Language Use

Many factors have been advanced for the glide towards violence, crime and strong word related movies in Nollywood. Nbeta and Ikiroma – Owiya (2014) said there is “Hollywoodization of Nollywood” as Nollywood producers continue to copy violent and horrid scenes from Hollywood. They argue that the exposure to such scenes have the tendency of making of making young people develop violent characters. This position is supported by Fernando (2016) who posits that it will be foolhardy to ignore the impact of globalization in the movie industry.

The mass media have all by content and production eroded the cultural values of Africans. Nollywood films which are mostly anchored on western models consolidate Western films thereby promoting Western values in Nigerian society.

Ojukwu & Ezenandu (2012) hold that colonialism had already done so much damage to African culture and social cultural development such that it should be allowed to have a foothold in its movie industry.

Nnabuko & Anatbui, (2012) stated that there appear to be an increase in violent acts among the youths, Nollywood movies have been accused of portraying

violence of Nigerian youths and the society at large are devastating. And detrimental to Nigerian's norms and values.

Opinion Review

Nollywood is fast evolving from the era of predictable storylines to dynamic and thematic a narration which is an offshoot of the vast skills, knowledge and trends in film making. Great movie adaptations are usually tasking because they go beyond just screenplay. It require, extra efforts to coherently birth the story.

However, the movie *Selina Tested* depicts violence and streetism. According to an unknown source 2021, "since the creation of this intriguing series, I have been following up each episode and I must confess, the movie is quite interesting to watch. Although the movie is captivating and educative, I still feel it is not suitable for kids and parents should not allow their children that are not up to 18 years old watch the movie".

Another had this to say "in my opinion, there are some aspects of *Selina Tested* movie that can easily influence the character and behaviours of kids. This is true because of the language and slang they use in the movie, I feel these slang can easily be learnt by kids and it will in turn influence how they communicate in school, at home and other places. Slangs like disembark, cappings, unit among others".

Also I will like to note that the movie is centered on crimes and violence, which I fell makes the movie too harsh for children to watch. In a world where criminality and violence are dominant issues in the society, I don't think it is wise if parents allow their children watch that have so much crime scenes.

The rate of crime and violence in the movie may corrupt kids since their minds are feeble and they can learn anything fast. "Watching violence in movies or TV programs stimulates the spectators to imitate what they see much more than if seen live or on TV news. In movies, violence is filmed with perfect illumination, spectacular scenery and in slow motion, making it even romantic. However in the news, the public has a much better perception of how horrible violence can be and it is used with objectives that do not exist in the movies" Steven Spielberg (1993).

"The glorification of violence or the embracing of violence, violence is a metaphor for feeling; it's a film about the problems or requirements involved with being masculine in today's society" David Fincher (1999). The younger minds should be prevented from watching the movie in order not to be negatively influenced to engaging in crimes afterwards.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultivation Media Theory

Cultivation media theory is a sociological and communications framework to examine the lasting effects of media primarily television. It suggests that people who are regularly exposed to media for long periods of time are more likely to perceive the world's social realities as they are presented by the media they consume, which in turn affects their attitudes and behaviours.

Cultivation media theory was first advanced by Professor George Gerbner in the 1960's later expanded by Gerbner and Larry Gross. Cultivation theory began as a way to test the impact of television on viewers, especially how exposure to violence through television affects human beings. The theory's key proposition is that the more time people spend 'living' in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality aligns with reality portrayed on television.

The more media that people consume the more their perceptions change, such images and messages, especially when repeated help bring about the culture that they portray.

Summary

This study was designed to examine the use of vulgar language, and streetism in Nigerian home videos, A study of Manuchim Praize movie "*Selina Tested*". Method was adopted for this work. Conclusive statement and recommendations are made which will help ameliorate the present suffering as an effect of the home video on the audience. Youths, especially impressionable age range, 18 – 23, who constitute the population in a nation imitate what they see in these media especially the home movies medium.

The movie *Selina Tested* have a huge effect on the audience exposed to the heavy violent scenes, language vulgarity and streetism. This was ascertained when the opinions of the sources were reviewed. The theory is the "media cultivation theory" which shows that children can learn all types of behaviour, positive manners or negative actions.

CONCLUSION

Home videos play a major role in moulding the character of people, particularly that of young people. The result of this study shows that exposure to violence, crime and strong word/offensive words movies influence the behaviour and perception of their young audience. Many scholars argue that some of these elements are as a result of the influence of Western media and globalization.

As Aghadiegwu and Ekugha (2013) caution, scripts, should be crafted in a manner that does not send wrong impression to audience by making social vices attractive to viewers but to promote those values that make Nigeria stronger.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that:

- Media and film regulatory frameworks (Actors Guild of Nigeria) should continue to be vigilant in screening contents of Nollywood movies so as to ensure the preservation of norms and values of our society.
- The producers need ethical re-orientation through creating awareness, conference and seminars on the type of films they produce.
- National Film and Voice Censor Board (NFVCB) and other regulatory bodies should lay emphasis on promoting movies that are educative and moral inclined.
- National orientation agency should come up with projects to stimulate good attitude morals, and patriotism among the youths.

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