

## IMPACT OF NOLLYWOOD FILMS ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR IN EKPOMA, NIGERIA

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Using Ekpoma in Nigeria as a case study, this article investigates the impact of Nollywood films on the lives of children, and the possible behavioural implications of emergent visual (mis)representations on African society. It uses the perception/ representation model of 'NoSRA theory on Gaze Setting' developed by Kayode Animasaun as a theoretical anchor. The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide insights into the perceptions of Nigerian (African) children about the films they watch. While a very significant percentage of the sampled population finds Nollywood films such as *Issakaba*, *Beyond Sin*, *The Destroyer*, *Ukwa*, *Ultimate Warrior*, *Aki and Popo*, *Black Arrow*, *Cain and Abel 1&2*, *Crazy Twins 1*, *Yahoo Boys* etc., interesting and entertaining, a content analysis of many of these films reveals that they are replete with disturbing tropes which are at variance with cherished Nigerian (African) cultural values. Interviews conducted with parents/adults also provided some useful contexts. In spite of the sampled population's enjoyment of Nollywood films, a clear majority of it believes that the films do not properly portray or represent Nigerian (African) children. Thus, Nollywood films may have little to offer for the proper development of children. In fact, there is a strong connection between the unwholesome and violent behaviours which the children regularly see on Nollywood videos and their physical exhibition of anti-social behaviours and attitudes such as the frequent use

of swear and abusive words, indiscriminate use of lethal objects such as knives, guns, and membership of cult/gang groups, etc., which unfortunately are on the increase in the Ekpoma locality in Nigeria and in many other parts of Africa. To reverse this trend and maximise the gains of Nollywood, this article holds that, among other things, Nollywood content creators should begin to place emphasis on a range of culturally enlivening, entertaining, and character building narratives in scripting and shooting of movies.

**Key words:** Nollywood films, Impact, Children's behaviour, Africa, Nigeria, Ekpoma, Image, Nollywood content creators

## Introduction

Nollywood is an African film tradition and industry, which started in the late 1980s in Nigeria, but has now spread globally, with vast potentials for wealth-creation, employment, and the provision of social safety nets for teeming Nigerian (African) youths. Nollywood, as an industry, is derived from Hollywood in the manner as Bollywood. It has grown in leaps and bounds, with rapid and dramatic expansions that have virtually overshadowed stage performances and cine film productions in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Speaking on its legendary rise, Ayorinde and Okafor affirm that "the idea of video-film was introduced formally by Babatunde Adelusi (Adamson), a publisher of a defunct photo-play magazine. He believed that the movie would not only cut cost, but would imitate the Indians and Chinese, in terms of quality and quantity".<sup>1</sup>

Alongside Adamson were other Nigerian videographers like Ade Ajiboye, Muyiden Aromire, Jide Kosoko, and Kenneth Nnebue, who experimented with the video-film art form. Although the use of video had existed while cine filmmaking thrived, it was limited to such coverage such as funerals, weddings, naming ceremonies and other social functions. However, prohibitive cost of producing films on celluloid and other economic strictures compelled Nigerian filmmakers to take to the video format. Adesanya captures this change in the Nigerian (African) film architecture, thus:

Video-film production started in the 80s; out of a desperate desire by producers, to remain in the motion picture business and this was on a shoestring budget. Initially, the target audience was to be found in one room screening centres and mushroom halls, equipped with a television set and a VHS player.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AYORINDE, S., OKAFOR, C. Rave of the Video. In *The Guardian*, March 15, 1996, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> ADESANYA, A. From Film to Video. In HAYNES. J. (ed). *Nigerian Video Films*. Revised and Expanded Edition, p. 42.

At the forefront of this experimentation were some enterprising Yoruba film producers (as earlier noted) who started to record on home video cassettes. Ekwuazi observes that the way out for some of the Yoruba folkloric filmmakers (and this has led to their being called film contractors as opposed to filmmakers) has been the use of reversals, as against the use of negative films. This development translated into the making of many films with reversals. Some of these include *Igida*, *Jamijoke*, *Agbako*, *Arigi*, *Segi*, *Ogiji*, *Asiri*, *Baba Ibeji*, *Iyalode*, *Esan*, *Jugun Labi*, *Ekun*, *Itakun*, among many others.<sup>3</sup> However, Kolawole claims that “Muyiden Aromire, aka, Alade armed with a camcorder produced the first home video in 1988, and then others followed. But they all lacked depth and quality to be called proper movies until Nek Video Links – an independent production outfit, based in Lagos, produced an Igbo film entitled *Living in Bondage* in 1992, utilising good camera shots, exotic costumes, good acting and orderly temporal and spatial continuity”.<sup>4</sup> *Living in Bondage* (Andy Best, 1992) marked a watershed in the video-film enterprise in Nigeria, which has since grown into a booming industry with an unprecedented acceptance by both national and international audience,<sup>5</sup> thus becoming a transnational cultural product.<sup>6</sup> This, perhaps, explains why Okome argues that “from the standpoint of output, it (Nollywood) is the largest film industry in the world, accounting for over 1,000 feature video-films every year”.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the reception of Nollywood films has been phenomenal, cutting across all manner of audiences, including children, in many parts of Africa and diasporic African communities in the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Increasingly, more of the films are being licensed by the censor for public screening; video rental/sales shops are stocking more of them; and every quarter a burgeoning number of such films feature on DSTV Africa Magic, Netflix, NollyLand and other satellite channels and video-on-demand (VOD) platforms. From Kenya to Swaziland, from Zambia to Namibia, Nollywood films are the rave of the moment and scholars and critics have used different intellectual lenses to probe the film culture, with varied, but compelling views and outcomes.

Regardless of the existing diverse views, the term Nollywood has legitimised the movies made in Nigeria in world cinema practice and scholarship. “This

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<sup>3</sup> EKWUAZI, H. *Film in Nigeria*. 2nd Edition, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> KOLAWOLE, T. The Fate of Home Video in Nigeria. In *Sunday Concord*, April 14, 1996, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> ABAH, A. L. Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry. In *Media, Culture & Society*, 2009, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 731–748.

<sup>6</sup> ADEJUMOBI, M. English and the Audience of an African Popular Culture: The Case of Nigerian Video Film. In *Cultural Critique*, 2002, Vol. 50, pp. 74–103.

<sup>7</sup> OKOME, O. Nollywood: Africa at the Movies. In *Film International*, 2007, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 4–9.

legitimacy is in the form of the branding of Nollywood, which it has earned for itself within and beyond the nation.”<sup>8</sup> A chance trip to video rental shops in rural and urban settings across Nigeria, and the volume of films in these shops, coupled with the number of terrestrial and cable networks dedicated to the broadcast of Nollywood films evidently point to the fact that video-films have gained tremendous popularity and acceptance among the mass of the people. But “as the Nollywood industry becomes more popular, a major issue, which calls for researchers’ attention, is the problem of perceptions of representation of identity and culture”.<sup>9</sup> And this cannot be addressed effectively without an empirical inquiry because as Ekwuazi notes “perception and sociological studies are hardly robust and sufficiently rigorous without the backing of empirical data”.<sup>10</sup> This study makes a contribution to the ongoing discussion on the impact of Nollywood films, particularly in relation to the representation of children and children’s perceptions of such visual (mis)representations.

In spite of growing global attention, only a few empirical studies have been carried out on audiences’ perception/reception of Nollywood films and fewer still on the perceptions of representation of children. More generally, however, Nwaeke observes that interest has been shown in learning about the effects of the content of the message through whatever medium on the audience in the Nigerian film culture.<sup>11</sup> Having examined the portrayal and representation of women in Nollywood films, Okonofua concludes that the protest of feminists over the portrayal of women is justified by the negative and denigrating images of women in the movies.<sup>12</sup> The study also reveals that the progress women have made in reality have not been translated to the cinematic or video world, hence, it calls for a more positive treatment of women by producers of texts/Nollywood content creators.<sup>13</sup>

Ekwuazi assesses the practice of development communication in Nollywood, using 103 students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria as a sample, and concludes that Nollywood has not been used for development programmes.<sup>14</sup> In

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<sup>8</sup> ASEKUN-OLARINMOYE, S. Preface. In KAYODE, A. *NoSRA Theory on Gaze Setting and Analysis of Nollywood*, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> ANIMASAUN, K. *NoSRA Theory on Gaze Setting and Analysis of Nollywood Movies*, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Hyginus Ekwuazi made this Statement in a Post-Graduate Seminar at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria on Friday 27 July, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> NWAEKE, M. *Film Messaging and Audience Perception: A Study of Pretty Woman*.

<sup>12</sup> OKONOFUA, M. *Audience Views on Portrayal of Women in Nigerian Home Videos*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> EKWUAZI, H. Development Communication: Towards an Assessment of Nollywood Practice. In *International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship (Special Edition – Motion Picture in Nigeria)*, 2008, Vols. 3–5, pp. 190–205.

a related but more recent study, Ekwuazi focuses on audience's attitudes to the programming of Nollywood films on television (TV), where he employs a 23-item questionnaire to investigate the perception/reception of M-Net's Africa Magic Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo/English channels by Nigerian undergraduates and finds that there is a very positive perception/reception of the three channels, with a preference for the Yoruba channel.<sup>15</sup> Agina probes the way a young audience (students of the Yaba College of Technology, Lagos State) receives or responds to Nigerian video-films, with particular reference to the storytelling techniques, and discovers that the respondents are aware of some narrative techniques such as planting and reincorporation, repetitive designation and flashback, etc., used by film directors in Nollywood, but do not approve of character stereotyping.<sup>16</sup> Omoera investigates the Benin-speaking audience's reception of Benin video-films and concludes that the Benin video-film has indeed emerged as a viable variant of Nollywood owing to a large Benin-speaking audience and a production of about 400 movies.<sup>17</sup> But these are all generic rather than specific, with regard to children audience perception and representation in films in Nigeria.

Okoye's study is probably the most germane scholarly article on children audience research in Nigeria today because it provides interesting reading of the social cultural implications of videos on Nigerian child (using Lagos children of 16 years and below), but it only concentrates on the effect of foreign movies in its analysis, and it has no empirical data to underpin its several claims.<sup>18</sup> Besides, in the twenty-three or so intervening years between when Okoye's work was published and now, indigenous films have virtually taken over the linguistically and geographically variegated Nigerian film ecology, with the production of hundreds of movies weekly. Thus, there is a noticeable gap in scholarship, with regard to the perception/representation of children in Nollywood films, which this study seeks to fill. Essentially, it is an empirical investigation into the impact of Nollywood films on the attitudes and behaviours of Nigerian children, which uses Ekpoma as its frame of reference. And, by means of movies such as *Issakaba*, *Aki and Popo*, *The Destroyer*, *Ultimate Warrior*, *Ukwa*, *Mr. Ibu*, *Black Angel*, *Shakira*, *Forbidden Fruit*, *The Billionaire's Club*, *Blood Money*, *White*

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<sup>15</sup> EKWUAZI, H. If Nollywood isn't Moving Television in Nigeria towards Social Centricity what is M-Net/ Multichoice Doing with the Nigerian Film? In *International Journal of Film, Literary and Media Studies*, 2011, Vols. 7–8, Nos. 1, 2, pp. 16–34.

<sup>16</sup> AGINA, A. *Audience Reception of Visual Storytelling Techniques of Nollywood Films*.

<sup>17</sup> OMOERA, O. S. Audience Reception of the Benin Language Video Film in Nollywood. In *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 2014, Vol. 26, No. 1. pp. 69–81.

<sup>18</sup> OKOYE, I. Video in the Lives of Nigerian Children: Some Social-Cultural Implications. In *African Media Review*, 1993, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 63–74.

*Child, One Chance, Black Arrow, Girls Cot, Two Rats, Derrico, Glamour Girls*, religious films, etc., which serve as concrete reference platforms for children's perception of Nollywood, this article hopes to proffer answers to the following questions: How much time do Nigerian children dedicate to watching Nollywood films? What makes Nollywood films attractive to Nigerian children and how are they represented in the movies? Do Nollywood films saliently affect Nigerian children's perception of life? And as such, do the children pick dubious attitudes and behaviours from these movies?

### **Theoretical Anchor**

As a medium of entertainment, education, and cultural transmission, the video-film is affective, effective, and infective in its content.<sup>19</sup> Thus, its impact can either be negative or positive in society because the viewers' gazes, attitudes, and behaviours can swing either side too. It is in this context that this article finds Animasaun's 'NoSRA theory on Gaze Setting,'<sup>20</sup> an acceptable theoretical anchor in examining the impact of Nollywood films on the lives of Nigerian children, using Ekpoma community as a case study. 'NoSRA' is an acronym for 'Normative Self-Regulatory Approach', which was essentially developed for the analysis of Nollywood movies. Apart from robustly addressing the issue of paucity of indigenous theories on Nigerian video-films as dramatic media of entertainment, the NoSRA theory has the empirical potential of setting the discourse for global analysis of Nollywood films from both the audiences' (consumers') and content creators' (producers') perspectives. Animasaun explains that:

Gaze setting or perception is an inquiry into what the audiences watch or what arrests viewers' attention in video movies and how spectators interpret these... And, representation is the manner of portrayal, an inquiry into what is perceived as reality in the movie and the meanings the audiences are able to derive from the gaze that may be set through the movie. Perceptions of representation in the Nigerian movie, therefore, deals with the processes involved in reality creation and how outcomes are sought and achieved in relation to gender, ethnicity, religion, settlement, and class in Nigerian movies. It is a study on how Nigerian images are marked and formed by Nigerian and how the Nigerians receive these.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> ANIMASAUN, K. *NoSRA Theory on Gaze Setting and Analysis of Nollywood Movies*, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

The foregoing posit underscores the fact that gaze setting does not only involve how popular identities are mirrored within a particular context, but also the construction, packaging, and representation processes and how they are received by the people whose identities are always differently marked in diverse contexts. In other words, the theory focuses on the way and manner images and gazes are set/are to be set in Nollywood films; how to package and analyse films produced in Nigeria. In grounding NoSRA, Animasaun draws on Meera Protz's participatory approach to data gathering.<sup>22</sup> According to Protz, in this approach, the researcher does not impose his or her ideas on the subjects. Rather, a joint decision is taken between the researcher and the respondents based on their response to questionnaire items as to what is to be the standard or who is to be interviewed, and what issue is to be researched.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, Animasaun adeptly and demonstrably utilised instruments of analysis such as questionnaires, interviews of movie consumers and producers and content analysis of movies to formulate the NoSRA paradigm as a critical theoretical infrastructure for studying the perceptions of representations/images/gazes in the emergent Nigerian videos.<sup>24</sup>

### **Gaze/Image Representation and Effect Questions in World Cinema**

The gaze question in films and its possible effects on individuals, especially children has been under interrogation in different cultural contexts and situations for long. Indeed, there is a great deal of study and debate ongoing about whether watching violence on the screen provokes or relieves aggressive behaviour in those who watch such films globally. Studies indicate that, film as an emotional experience, does have an impact on the audience – whether negatively or positively.<sup>25</sup> In the silent movies era, public discourse about children focused on

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>23</sup> PROTZ, M. Video, Gender and Participatory Development. In GUIJT, I., SHAH M. K. (eds.). *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues on Participatory Development*, pp. 13–21.

<sup>24</sup> ANIMASAUN, K. *NoSRA Theory on Gaze Setting and Analysis of Nollywood Movies*, p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> ROBERTS, D. F., SCHRAMM, W. Children's Learning from the Mass Media. In SCHRAMM, W., ROBERTS, D. F. (eds.). *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* (Revised Edition), p. 601; EKWUAZI, H. *Film in Nigeria*. 2nd edition, p. 133; AKPABIO, E. Attitude of Audience Members to Nollywood Films. In *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2007, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 90–100; FOLARIN, B. *Theories of Mass Communication: An Introductory Text*, p. 69.

their safety and proper socialisation.<sup>26</sup> And, as movies appear to pose a problem of socialisation for children and adults, Butsch contends that studies conducted on movies had shown that many parents believed their boys went to movies to learn about stealing while girls went to learn about sex.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Jane Adams cited in Butsch argues that movie's content was the root of children's misbehaviour. She referred to nickelodeon as "house of dreams" to indicate film inducement of fantasies in children's minds. She further alludes to the case of 9-13 years old boys who saw a movie of a stagecoach hold up and mimicked it themselves. They bought a gun and one morning, lay in ambush for the milkman and they nearly killed him.<sup>28</sup> As much as the film is an emotional experience then the intensity with which the events in the film take hold of the individual cannot remain without social effects.

A more recent survey on the use of popular media by American children between the ages of 4 to 15 is as revelatory as damning because it states that the impact of movies on children within this age group has taken a depressing toll on their health, social, and mental well-being.<sup>29</sup> This is probably not also far from what is happening to Nigerian children as Alemma-Ozioruva reports that "a suspected addiction to movies may have influenced the behaviour of 13-year-old Daniel (Ricky) Oikhena, who stowed away on an aircraft bound for Lagos from Benin City".<sup>30</sup> But Ahmed argues and convincingly too that cinema/film could be utilised in inculcating life skills and values in children, thereby promoting their holistic development.<sup>31</sup> This observation points to the immense potential of the film in teaching, and training of children in educational settings and other fields which are yet to be fully explored in many parts of the world, including Nigeria. For instance, in Nigeria, a film in whatever format is generally regarded as an entertainment medium. Although the severity (or

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<sup>26</sup> BUTSCH, R. Class and Audience Effects: A History of Research on Movies, Radio, and Television. In *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, pp. 112–120.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> PARENTING ARTICLES. *How Watching Movies Impact Children* [online] [cit. 19 August 2013]. Available from <<http://www.studyvillage.com/resources/2874-How-watching-movies-impact-children.aspx>>.

<sup>30</sup> ALEMMA-OZIORUVA, A. How Movies May've Influenced Stowaway's Behaviour. *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 2013 [online] [cit. 27 August 2013]. Available from <<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/national-news/131116-how-movies-mayve-influenced-stowaways-behaviour->>.

<sup>31</sup> AHMED, S. S. *School Cinema: Utilizing the Powerful Impact of Films to Inculcate Life Skills and Values thereby Promoting Holistic Development of Children*. A Paper Presented at the World's Largest Research Based Educational Conference 'The Learner' in Hong Kong, China, July 2010 [online] [cit. 19 August 2013]. Available from <<http://sultanspeaks.com/blog/?tag=impact-of-films-on-children>>.



otherwise) of the effect largely depends on the type of movies the child watches and how many hours he/she spends watching movies, such studies speak to the need for global society to pay closer attention to the popular visual media and their impact on children.

While watching a film, the mind of the individual is so completely given up to the moving pictures. The ideas in the film are effectively implanted in the viewer's brain without his/her knowing it and such a viewer, in the case of this study, a child, is likely to take to some of those ideas that he/she had seen, utilising them in his/her daily real-life activities or situations. Children are hardly able to draw the line between real life and make-believe acting on the video screen, especially in cases where the scenario painted in the film is very akin to what they are experiencing or wish to experience.<sup>32</sup> In such cases, very few of them will be detached enough to know that the "solution" proffered on screen, may not work in their own situations. In the context of Nigerian films, Omoera asserts that there has been a lot of hue and cry about how video-films have purportedly had a negative impact on the Nigerian audience, especially children who tend to imitate most violent acts that they see on the screen.<sup>33</sup> In the same vein, Emmanuel Eregare contends that:

The effect or influence of the home video could be seen every day amongst Nigerian children like these examples: A boy offended his mother, and when he was being disciplined with a cane, the boy shouts 'Odechi', 'e no dey enter'. 'Odechi's is a pidgin coinage of characters in some Nigerian home movies. These characters in the films use certain charms to prevent gunshots from doing them harm when they shout 'Odechi'. One should try to picture what would happen when the child comes across real guns. These children imbibe the spirit of doing anything with the hope that nothing can harm them like the characters in the films.<sup>34</sup>

Video-films such as *Aki and Popo* (2000), *Issakaba* (2001), *Ultimate Warrior* (2006), *Yahoo Boys* (2015), *Crazy Twins I* (2016), to mention a few, apparently belong to this category. In *Ultimate Warrior* for example, in an attempt to probably play up macabre portents in the epic movie, children are made to play the role of scary apparitions in the evil forest where the warriors (adult men) must pass through to get to their destination. Children who might be viewing such a film are likely to try exhibiting such actions in real life because of their

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<sup>32</sup> OMOERA, O. S. *Audience Reception of the Benin Video-Film*.

<sup>33</sup> OMOERA, O. S. The Question of Violence in Nigerian Video Films. In *International Journal of Film, Literary and Media Studies*, 2011, Vols. 7–8, Nos. 1, 2, pp. 1–15.

<sup>34</sup> EREGARE, E. A. From Reel to Real: Censorship Climate in Nigeria as it Affects the Child. In *Iroro: A Journal of Arts*, 2005, Vol. 10, Nos. 1, 2, pp. 267–275.

highly impressionistic nature. Such inappropriate setting of gazes or images of children are barely in the pink, let alone developmental. But, the question of whether crime or anti-social behaviours would have been committed / exhibited as the case may be if the criminal/deviant had not seen unwholesome films is still a subject of animated debates in different film climes. In Nigeria, the National Film, and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), according to Ekwuazi<sup>35</sup> has classified films and video works into categories for different audiences in a bid to address the kind of concerns raised above. In the classification, symbols are used to indicate which category of audience can watch a particular video. The symbols are:

“G” to indicate for general exhibition.

“C” to indicate particularly intended for children.

“NC” to indicate not recommended for children.

“18” to indicate mature audience.

“RE” to indicate for restricted exhibition and such other classification as may be exhibited exactly in the form and under the name in which it was registered without any alteration or addition.

In spite of such efforts, Okoye<sup>36</sup> observes that “many Nigerian children on their own buy or borrow and watch video films meant for adults only. This state of affairs naturally raises a number of social, cultural, political and economic problems”. Utoh-Ezeajugh notes that some persons worry that the prevalence of witchcraft, crime, “get-rich-quick” mania, violence, and other negative portrayals in the movies may reinforce negative stereotypes in and about Nigerians.<sup>37</sup> But she is quick to add that we must look “beyond the negativisation syndrome”.<sup>38</sup> Nollywood films in Mgbejume's<sup>39</sup> and Ndibe's<sup>40</sup> estimations, contains lots of bloodletting, lots of murder, lots of suggestive sex scenes, lots of pornography, lots of witchcraft, lots of voodoo and occultism, lots of armed robbery, and lots of ritual killing, among others, which are

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<sup>35</sup> EKWUAZI, H. Discourse on Film Censorship in Nigeria. In ENAHORO, A. (ed.). *Cinema Discourse*, pp. 34–45.

<sup>36</sup> OKOYE, I. Video in the Lives of Nigerian Children: Some Social-Cultural Implications. In *African Media Review*, 1993, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 63–74.

<sup>37</sup> UTOH-EZEAJUGH, T. Beyond the Negativisation Syndrome: Nigerian Video Films and National Image Laundering. In *International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship (Special Edition – Motion Picture in Nigeria)*, 2008, Vols. 3–5, pp. 249–258.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> MGBEJUME, O. Video Production Procedure. In EKWUAZI, H. SOKOMBA, M., MGBEJUME, O. (eds.). *Making the Transition from Video to Celluloid*, pp. 12–35.

<sup>40</sup> NDIBE, O. Again, on the Image Crisis. In *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 5 August 5, 2004, p. 41.

purveyed without regard to the sensitivities and sensibilities of the viewers of video films.

From Mgbejume's and Ndibe's remarks, it could be more morally damaging, culturally destructive, socially uninspiring and developmentally problematic to continually allow Nigerian children to be exposed to the kind of low-level, intellectually suspect and ethically suicidal images/gazes which are conspicuously evident in Nigerian videos such as *Beyond Sin*, *Aki and Popo*, *Issakaba*, *The Destroyer*, *School Dropout*, *The Return of the Professor*, *Boys Cot*, *Rush Hour*, *Ukwa*, *Mr. Ibu*, *New Jerusalem*, *Forbidden Fruit*, *The Billionaire's Club*, *Blood Money*, *Cain and Abel 1&2*, *Crazy Twins 1*, *Yahoo Boys*, etc. Some of these films have the tendency of over-maturing and overgrowing children into adulthood which they are ill prepared for. For instance, we see a set of impish children with slim moral texture in the Nollywood movie, *Aki and Popo* (2000). Osita IHEME and Chinedu Ikedieze (who in actual fact are full grown adults) respectively play the role of Aki and Popo, with questionable/conflictual image representations of Nigerian children, all in the name of providing entertainment. They engage in mischievous pranks of stealing, insulting their elders, beating up other children, attempting to rape girls, etc., and the image/gaze that is ostensibly represented is that kids can involve in such unwholesome activities and get away scot free. What kind of gaze is being set for the growing child who is likely to copy some of the pranks exhibited in the film?

Regardless of the entertainment imports of such films, they tend to turn the cherished (Nigerian) African cultural ethos on its head. Again, this might be in a bid to ape pseudo-western behaviours and tendencies such as the use of vulgar words like "fuck you", "bitch," etc., "low-waist dressing, aka, sagging", indiscriminate use of guns and other lethal weapons, etc., which are even now causes of grave concern in western countries like England, Canada, the United States of America, etc., where relevant agencies are seeking ways of preventing children from viewing films with such representations because of the potentially disturbing sounds and distorted images they contain.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps, it is in this respect that Patience Omokhodion (a parent and resident of Ekpoma in an interview in 2015) argued "that the violent images and scenes in most Nollywood movies have negatively affected Nigerian children and, as such, she has banned her children from watching them".<sup>42</sup> However, Akpabio employs a

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<sup>41</sup> BROWN, J. D., WITHERSPOON, E. M. The Mass Media and American Adolescents' Health. In *Journal of Adolescent Health* 2002, Vol. 31, No. 6, pp.153–170; DEGROAT, B. *Scary Movies Can Have Lasting Effects on Children and Teens* [online] [cit. 11 June 2015]. Available from <[http://ur.umich.edu/9899/Mar29\\_99/9.htm](http://ur.umich.edu/9899/Mar29_99/9.htm)>.

<sup>42</sup> OMOKHODION, P. (a female parent and a civil servant residing in Ekpoma in an interview on October 14, 2015).

multi-stage cluster sampling method to interrogate Nollywood films against the backdrop of the barrage of criticisms from critics and the NFVCB that the movies place too much emphasis on occultism, blood, gore, fetishism, and violence, using Lagos State as a study case and finds that the sampled audience members have a favourable attitude to Nollywood video-films in spite of the emphasis on negative themes.<sup>43</sup> Ayakoroma agrees with Akpabio and pointedly notes that “we can say that perhaps apart from soccer, the video-film industry has positively projected Nigeria on the international scene”.<sup>44</sup> Again, with specific regard to Nigerian children, Ayakoroma claims that:

The video-film industry has become highly engaging, contributing immensely to the positive image of Nigeria in the global arena, to the extent that our children now identify with the stars it has created instead of Hollywood and Bollywood stars, so much so that apart from footballers, these stars have become our cultural ambassadors.<sup>45</sup>

While the debate on the degree to which film and other audio-visual forms of media production affect attitudes and behaviours, especially of young people still rages, “there is a consensus that a certain pattern of behaviour in young people can be traced back to the kind of programmes which they see on television and films.”<sup>46</sup> It is precisely this kind of concern that informs this article's empirical examination of the impact of Nollywood films on the behaviour of Nigerian children with a specific focus on the Ekpoma community in Edo State of Nigeria.

### **The Study Site**

Ekpoma is a fast-growing community which is located in the central part of Edo State in Nigeria. It is the administrative headquarters of Esan West local government area (LGA), which according to the 2006 census figures in Nigeria

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<sup>43</sup> AKPABIO, E. Attitude of Audience Members to Nollywood Films. In *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2007, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 90–100.

<sup>44</sup> AYAKOROMA, B. F. Trends in the Development of Contemporary Nigerian Video Film Industry. In ONI, D., YERIMAH, A. (eds.). *Trends in the Theory and Practice of Theatre in Nigeria*, pp. 1–22.

<sup>45</sup> AYAKOROMA, B. F. Nigerian Video Films and the Image Question: A Critical Reading of Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen's Home in Exile. In *Ijota: Ibadan Journal of Theatre Arts*, 2008. Vols. 2–4, pp. 73–93.

<sup>46</sup> BADEJO, E. A. Preface. In BADEJO, E. A. (ed.). *Perspectives on the Challenges of Nigerian Films and Audiovisuals to Ethics and Spirituality*, pp. iii–iv.

has a population of 127,718.<sup>47</sup> As a university town, it has a number of primary and post-primary schools spread across its traditional quarters/clans of Iruekpen, Idumebo, Emaudo, Ujeme, Ihumudumu, Emuhe, Ille, Uhiele, Eguare, Ukpenu, etc. Although the indigenes of Ekpoma speak the Esan language and have a traditional ruler who they pay annual homage to, the advent of modernity and influx of people (including professionals, students, businessmen and businesswomen, etc.) from other places and backgrounds have contributed immensely to Ekpoma's rapid urbanisation and its virtual embrace of English as the main medium of mass communication. Thus, Ekpoma has become metropolitan, with the trappings of modernity, with considerable infrastructures such as hospitals and cognate health facilities, banks, eateries, video/game parlours and rental shops, electricity, roads, mass media organisations, modern markets, etc.

Residents of Ekpoma get steady transmission of programmes from Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), African Independent Television (AIT), Silver Bird Television (STV), Independent Television (ITV), in addition to many other terrestrial and cable satellite broadcast channels such African Magic, Nollywood Plus, CTL Africa, My TV, Muvi TV Africa, Iroko TV, etc., via TV/video sets, internet, and subscription or non-subscription based decoders. Residents of different age group, class, occupation, and gender enthusiastically watch and talk about Nollywood movies which are shown daily or weekly on these channels. Hence, these residents, including the children, are likely to be sufficiently exposed to Nollywood film programmes and could give informed opinions on them.

### **Methodological Issues**

A multi-dimensional method involving historical research, interviews, and descriptive analysis was used in this study. This multi-pronged approach was adopted in accordance with Graham Roberts' position that questions in the field of cinema/film studies should be social and predicated on the understanding that cinema/film is socially produced and consumed [...] and a serious study [...] will require quantitative and qualitative (content) analysis, survey techniques, comparative research designs and the use of secondary and archival materials.<sup>48</sup> This study finds this methodology appropriate, especially because of the context

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<sup>47</sup> FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, Official Gazette No. 2, Vol. 96 – 2006 Census Final Results, 2 February 2009.

<sup>48</sup> ROBERTS, G. Opening Pandora's (Black) Box: Towards a Methodology of Production Studies. In *Wide Screen*, 2011, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1–15.

of claims and counter claims of problematic representations of, and implicit negative impact of Nollywood films on Nigerian children and the dearth of empirical data to prove or disprove such claims.

Children of primary and secondary schools of between the age brackets of 7–11 and 12–17 in the Ekpoma locality who watch Nollywood movies via television/video sets, with or without parental supervision constitute the population of this study. As a result of time constraint and other logistics, it would be too unwieldy if not impracticable to source information from every member of the population. Hence, it was necessary to take a sample of the population under investigation. Out of the 284 copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, 240 were retrieved in usable form. These 240 were the subjects used in this study. The size of the sample was intended to ensure an adequate representation of the study population so as to represent its characteristics in terms of value, and perception. This chimes well with the public opinion survey (POS) which Nwabueze affirms “[...] is often used to determine the opinion of the general public on a number of issues”.<sup>49</sup>

Since the study is essentially exploratory, the researchers designed a questionnaire as an instrument to elicit responses from the participants in seven selected quarters (Eguare, Ihumudumu, Ujoelen, Idumebo, Iruokpen, Ujeme, and Emaudo) of Ekpoma. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A (which is made up of four questions) drew information on the respondents' demographic variables while section B (which is made up of 12 questions) comprises items that measured the respondents' perceptions of representation and impact of Nollywood movies such as *Ukwa*, *The Destroyer*, *Beyond Sin*, *Issakaba*, *Aki and Popo*, *Cain and Abel 1 & 2*, *Crazy Twins 1*, *Yahoo Boys*, etc., on children. The responses were simply counted for all respondents. That is, there were no total scores for respondents, but total item scores.

The questionnaire was pretested in Eguare-Ekpoma, which is the most populous quarter, with the highest concentration of public/private primary and secondary schools. A stratified random sampling technique was the sampling procedure employed in this study. The reason for this is that each of the selected quarter was regarded as a stratum. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to children in both public and private primary and post-primary schools in the selected quarters, with the help of research assistants. In order to complement the result obtained through the questionnaire, interviews were conducted with parents, who have children of either primary or secondary school age in Eguare-Ekpoma. The essence of this was to further probe how the people of the locality perceive Nollywood films which are under investigation, and of

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<sup>49</sup> NWABUEZE, B. *Research Methodology: An Integrated Approach*, p. 60.

course, to generate additional information. The data collated were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages.

## **Results**

### ***Demographic Characteristics of Respondents***

In terms of demographics, the number of female respondents (100; 41.7%) is lower than that of the male (140; 58.3%). Those in the age bracket of 12–17 (185; 77.1%) were more than those between the age bracket of 7–11 (55; 22.9%). Perhaps, this saliently explains the point that Nollywood films viewing is higher among adolescent children in the locality under survey. A clear majority of the sampled population is made up of Christians (205; 85.4) while Muslims and others constitute (35; 14.6%) and (0; 0.0%) respectively. Another significant majority of the respondents are under the care of both parents (203; 84.6%), with pockets of them under mummy (15; 6.2%), daddy (11; 4.65%) and relatives (11; 4.6%).

### ***Analyses of Research Questions***

Table 1 shows that 215 (89.58%) respondents have access to TV/video sets. This implies that a majority of the sampled population is likely to watch Nollywood films. The respondents who indicated that they do not own/have access to TV or video sets might have done so based on religious, financial, or other personal grounds. A significant number of them (131; 54.58%) watch Nollywood films such as *Ukwa*, *Ultimate Warrior*, *The Destroyer*, *White Child*, *Boys Cot*, *Beyond Sin*, *Issakaba*, *Aki and Popo*, *Derrico*, *Black Arrow*, *Glamour Girls*, *Desperadoes*, etc., very frequently, 51 (21.25%) watch frequently, while 58 (24.16%) watch not too frequently. A majority of the respondents (203; 84.6%) are under both parents, 15 (6.2%) of the respondents are under the care of their mummy, 11 (4.65%) live with daddy, while 11 (4.6%) stay with relatives. A significant proportion of the respondents (158; 65.83%) usually watch Nollywood films without parental guidance while 82 (34.16%) watch with parental guidance.

**Table 1.** Questions to Ascertain Respondents' Access to TV/Video Sets, Regularity of Viewership, and Degree of Parental Supervision in Watching Nollywood Films

Items No.	Statements	Response	Frequency	%
1	Do you own/have access to TV/video sets?	Yes No	215 25	89.58 10.41
2	How frequently do you watch Nollywood movies such as <i>Ukwa</i> , <i>Ultimate Warrior</i> , <i>The Destroyer</i> , <i>White Child</i> , <i>Boys Cot</i> , <i>Beyond Sin</i> , <i>Issakaba</i> , <i>Aki and Popo</i> , <i>Derrico</i> , <i>Black Arrow</i> , <i>Glamour Girls</i> , <i>Desperadoes</i> , <i>Cain and Abel 1&amp;2</i> , <i>Crazy Twins 1</i> , <i>Yahoo Boys</i> etc.?	Very frequently Frequently Not too frequently Not at all	131 51 58 =	54.58 21.25 24.16 =
3	Under whose care are you?	Mummy Daddy Both parents Relatives Others	15 11 203 11 =	6.2 4.6 84.6 4.6 =
4	Do your parents/guardians tell you what Nollywood films to watch and when to watch them?	Yes No	82 158	34.16 65.83

Table 2 indicates that 133 (55.41%) of the respondents prefer action-packed movies as against 107 (44.58%) of them who prefer comedy. Many of the respondents (70; 29.16%) say *Issakaba* is their favourite film, 40 (16.66%) indicate that *Aki and Popo* is their desired movie, 50 (20.83%) mention *Ultimate Warrior* as their choice, another 70 (29.16%) say *Ukwa* is their much-loved film, while a paltry 10 (4.16%) indicate religious films as their favourite. A very significant percentage of the sampled audience indicates that it enjoys watching Nollywood films (217; 90.41%), while a fraction (23; 9.58%) says it does not. 42 (17.5%) of the respondents like the background sound/music of the films, 45 (18.75%) like the picture/action, 60 (25%) like the storyline, 62 (25.83%) like the words used and 31 (12.91) like all. A statistically significant number of the respondents (179; 74.58) say that children are not properly portrayed or represented in the Nollywood movies under survey, while others (61; 25.41%) opine that children are well represented and portrayed.



**Table 2.** Questions that Elicit Respondents' Opinions on what Attract Children to Watch Nollywood Films and Nollywood's Representation of Children

Items No.	Statements	Response	Frequency	%
5	Do you prefer action packed Nollywood movies to comedy?	Yes	133	55.41
		No	107	44.58
6	Which of the following is your favourite Nollywood video-film?	<i>Issakaba</i>	70	29.16
		<i>Aki and Popo</i>	40	16.66
		<i>Ultimate Warrior</i>	50	20.83
		<i>Ukwa</i>	70	29.16
		<i>Religious films</i>	10	4.16
7	Do you actually enjoy watching Nollywood films?	Yes	217	90.41
		No	23	9.58
8	What do you really like in Nollywood films?	The background sound/music	42	17.5
		The picture/action	45	18.75
		Storyline	60	25
		The words used	62	25.83
		All	31	12.91
9	Do you think children are properly portrayed or represented in Nollywood films such as <i>Ultimate Warrior, Ukwa, The Destroyer, Beyond Sin, Issakaba, Aki and Popo, White Child, Girls Cot, Cain and Abel 1&amp;2, Crazy Twins 1, Yahoo Boys, etc.?</i>	Yes	61	25.41
		No	179	74.58

Table 3 reveals that 84 (35%) of the respondents agree that Nollywood films positively influence children while a very significant number of them (156; 65%) opines that Nollywood films do not. This same question was asked differently in order to check the consistency in the pattern of responses and another statistically significant number (163; 67.91%) of the sample population says the films negatively affect children as against a fraction (77; 32.08) which thinks otherwise. A considerable number of the respondents subscribe to the idea that they sometimes like to behave like one of the actors/actresses in their favourite films while a negligible number (58; 24.16%) of them do not.

**Table 3.** Questions that Draw Respondents' Views on the Impact of Nollywood Films on Children's Behaviour

Items No.	Statements	Response	Frequency	%
10	Looking at <i>Ultimate Warrior, Ukwa, The Destroyer, Beyond Sin, Issakaba, Aki and Popo</i> , etc., would you say that Nollywood positively influences children?	Yes No	84 156	35 65
11	Can you really say Nollywood negatively affects children in view of movies such as <i>Ultimate Warrior, Ukwa, The Destroyer, Beyond Sin, Issakaba, Aki and Popo, Cain and Abel 1&amp;2, Crazy Twins 1, Yahoo Boys</i> , etc.?	Yes No	163 77	67.91 32.08
12	Do you sometimes like to behave like one of the actors/actresses in your favourite Nollywood films?	Yes No	182 58	75.83 24.16

## Discussion

Having benchmarked the sampled population's perceptions against films such as *Ultimate Warrior, Ukwa, The Destroyer, Beyond Sin, Issakaba, Aki and Popo, Cain and Abel 1&2, Crazy Twins 1, Yahoo Boys*, etc., which served as concrete screen media platforms for analysing the perceptions of (mis)representation and the impact of Nollywood on children, the results obtained in this study are illuminating and instructive. First, the results show that a significant number of the respondents regularly watch Nollywood films, without parental supervision or guidance. In consonance with this, Melvin Omiunu (a parent and resident of Ekpoma in an interview in 2015) observed that home videos appear to have become today's children 'close companions' and 'caregivers' of some kind as they can go to any video shop to rent or buy any video of their choice, including pornographic ones, without restriction. Upon arrival at home from school, many children automatically go straight to the television set and sit for hours watching films.<sup>50</sup> Many of these entertainment products (films) are morally and ethically questionable just as they represent children improperly. This is clearly because a considerable number of their themes vividly portray gratuitous violence, obscenities, and exaggerated cultism which are very distasteful to Nigeria's

<sup>50</sup> OMIUNU, M. (a male parent and businessman residing in Ekpoma in an interview with the researcher on May 4, 2015).

cultural orientation and as a result might be counterproductive when children are exposed to these audio-visual materials indiscriminately.

Unfortunately, a considerable number of these children who (or who their parents) have the means can also download from the internet and watch cable satellite channels such as African Magic, Iroko TV, and Nollywood Plus while their parents are away in search of livelihoods. In fact, parents in the locality under survey scarcely take the time to contemplate what the consequences of films are to the life of their children. Anna Isibor (a parent and educationist in an interview in 2014) advised that “children should not be barred from watching television or movies”.<sup>51</sup> Again, Sarah Uhiamikhogbo (a parent and educationist in an interview in 2014) maintained that “children can learn a lot of lessons when allowed to freely watch television programmes and films of their choice. Such freedom is healthy as it will remove that element of suspicion that could drive children to try to find out what their parents do not want them to see”.<sup>52</sup> It is true that children can learn a lot from films; however, not controlling the type of films watched by them could have negative effects.

To avoid the possible negative consequences of heavy viewership and maximise the gains of Nollywood films in the area under study and indeed in Nigeria, parents/guardians must acknowledge the immense power and impact of video-films and other audio-visual media and watch closely their children’s engagements with them. Parents/guardians must constantly monitor their wards and at all times guide or check their activities, with screen technologies including sophisticated mobile phones. Children should not be allowed to spend excessive time on these gadgets as this may create a negative addiction even to adulthood with corresponding negative consequences for society. This is because of the valid fears of the vulnerability of Nigerian children, with regard to their seeming indiscreet exposure to movies as expressed by Okoye. He argues that “it is almost certain that the video culture will create Nigerians who will completely repudiate their cultural heritage, thereby complicating further the problem of national development”.<sup>53</sup> While not saying that parents should put a stop to or entirely bar their children from watching Nollywood films, there is the need for them to obligatorily keep an eye on the type of films their children watch, discuss the imports of such movies with them, spend time with the kids and direct them to watch wholesome educational, cultural films. And in the event that children watch movies where their ilk play mischievous roles as

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<sup>51</sup> ISIBOR, A. (a female parent and educationist residing in Ekpoma in an interview on Tuesday, 17 September 2014).

<sup>52</sup> UHIAMIKOGBO, S. (a female parent and educationist residing in Ekpoma in an interview on Wednesday, 11 September 2014).

<sup>53</sup> OKOYE, I. Video in the Lives of Nigerian Children: Some Social-Cultural Implications. In *African Media Review*, 1993, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 63–74.

we have repeatedly seen in most films featuring Osita IHEME and Chinedu Ikedieze, which children in Ekpoma are enamoured of, they must be told not to take after bad behaviours which are portrayed or represented by pointing out the inherent dire consequences if they choose to.

The life of an average African child today revolves around what he or she sees in the media, particularly the screen media of television and film. For instance, what a child wears is based on what is being seen worn in a particular film, how people (specifically children) in that film behave is how the child will likely behave or what he or she says depend on what the child hears in the film. The persuasive ability of Nollywood actors and actresses in movies are conquering the minds and hearts of children; children virtually grow up watching families being destroyed and child actors and actresses disrespecting their parents, and irresponsible parents ruining the lives of their children in the films. In fairness to some of the Nollywood content creators and even the NFVCB, some of these films are marked with "18", but who heeds this warning? Is it the pirated video CD hawker in the street? Or the video rental shop owner who is interested in the pecuniary ends? It is likely these kinds of frustrating questions that made Okoye to lament that, "they are not heeding ... the warning that in order to develop, a society must remain true to itself, draw its strength from its own culture and ways of thought and action and set itself objectives consonant with its values and felt needs".<sup>54</sup> Such statement speaks to the need for Nollywood content creators to package their movies with children in mind. A tighter regulatory regime by the NFVCB will also be a welcome development.

Relatively the same percentages of the sampled children are enamoured of action-packed films (*The Destroyer, Beyond Sin, Ultimate Warrior, Issakaba*, etc.) and comedies (*Ukwa, Aki and Popo, Cain and Abel 1&2, Crazy Twins 1, Yahoo Boys*, etc.), as against only a few that love religious films. Equally, significant percentages of them are attracted by the background sound/music, the picture/action, storyline and the words of their favourite movie actors/actresses. In spite of this attraction, it is interesting to note, however, that a statistically significant number of the sampled audience still do not think children are properly portrayed or represented in Nollywood films. This is probably because of the obscenities and morally depraved roles the sampled population see their counterparts play in Nollywood movies with reckless abandon. Many young boys and girls engage in substance abuse, illicit sex, ostentatious living, etc., as a result of the movies they are exposed to. The heavy viewing of movies has direct implications for the get-rich-quick syndrome, upsurge in the spate of youth violence, kidnapping, the common use of vulgar words such as 'fuck you' among Nigerian (African) children, especially the adolescents in the Ekpoma

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

locality. Moses Odion (a parent and resident of Ekpoma in an interview in 2015) claimed that “apart from the ineptitude of political leaders in Nigeria, there is a moral breakdown which principally stems from the kind of audio-visual materials the youths are perennially exposed to”.<sup>55</sup> This further underlines why the Animasaun’s NoSRA theory was deployed in this study to highlight the need for Nollywood content producers to consciously set gazes/images which illumines the minds of youngsters with positive thoughts of creativity; visions of themselves, their communities and their country Nigeria attaining great socio-cultural, economic and political heights in global annals.

In this context, Nwamuo and Esekong caution that “having understood the tendency among youths to exhibit what they imbibe, it becomes imperative for society to consciously determine the quality of ideas or influences to which the youths are exposed to”.<sup>56</sup> Aside from the fact that it can impel youth violence, in the long run, it is capable of imbuing children with a false impression of the reality around them. The case of Ricky who stowed away in an aircraft points to the capacity of films in influencing the behaviour of children. Children in Ekpoma, Nigeria and indeed in much of Africa need to be reoriented toward spending healthy time in watching Nollywood videos as the image or gaze they perceive of themselves and even of others as portrayed or represented in Nollywood films goes a long way in determining their biophysical and psycho-social character make-up.

## Conclusion

This article has examined the representation, and impact of Nollywood films on Nigerian children, using Ekpoma locality as a frame of reference. Although it finds that children have not been well represented in Nollywood films, it recognises that video-films could be used in developing or shaping the behaviour and attitude of children. It also finds that Nollywood videos tend to influence children negatively as a majority of the sampled population agrees that it learned much un-African behaviour such as the use of abusive slang, violent acts, and sexually provocative words from them. Consequently, the study recommends that, among other things, Nollywood content creators should begin to place emphasis on a range of culturally enlivening, entertaining, and character building narratives in scripting and shooting of movies. Video-films should be

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<sup>55</sup> ODION, M. (a male parent and artisan residing in Ekpoma in an interview on Sunday, 13 October 2015.

<sup>56</sup> NWAMUO, C., ESEKONG, A. Complexities in the Development of the Nigerian Youth. In *Theatre Studies Review: A Journal of Theory, Criticism, Aesthetics, Administration, History and Practice of Theatre Arts*, 2004, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 79–92.

packaged with a children segment of society in mind even though it has been noted that change in children's behaviour is not solely caused by their exposure to video-films in the locality under investigation. Many children are idle and lonely because their parents do not spend quality time with them. But parents must realise that their obligation to their offspring is not only in terms of material things but also in terms of emotional, spiritual and the provision of wholesome relaxation time. Many children are now literally left to be baby seated, kept company by video-films from which they learn both good and bad behaviours. The conclusion reached is that content creators, adult consumers (that is, parents) of Nollywood films, the National Film and Video Censors' Board (NFVCB), and other stakeholders should be alive to their responsibilities if Nigeria is to avoid the pitfall of breeding morally, culturally and behaviourally deranged children who might put the great collective destiny of the country in jeopardy.

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