

# Film/Video Industries As Channels Of Communication And Development

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Video distribution is causing a great deal of excitement in the television and movie industries. In 18th century, some popular toymakers used their understanding of vision to create an ocular illusion which became illustrious. At first, the toys were simple books, still pictures which could be thumbed through to create the illusion of movement, which became illustrious. Group of 10 companies under Edison, hold the patent to virtually all existing filmmaking and exhibition equipments, used in running the production and distribution of film in the United States of America. The Nigerian Film/Video movie industry (Home Video Industry) popularly known as The Nollywood, is the second largest producer of films after Bollywood in India. Nollywood just like it counterparts in the United States and India has helped to mobilized the citizenry for national development and projected African culture to the rest of the world.

**KEY WORDS**: Film, Video, Channel, Communication, and Development.

#### INTRODUCTION

Film/Video movie industry is assumed to be one of the biggest media industries around the world because of the revenue generated and the publicity received by these films. Movies have been considered as magic by fascinated audience from the beginning. Film/video is a communication channel for disseminating vital information, with the intent of bringing about positive changes in the society. Video is meant to be a package of information on developmental issues put in video cassettes and screened on a television monitor or projector on a white wall screen (Think Board) and later sold to the public to generate revenue, Isiaka (2002:135). Research shows that film exhibition began to flourish since the Colonial era, with Glover Memorial Hall playing host to an array of unforgettable films viewed by the Nigerians of those days. In August 1903, however, it was noted that the Lacuna, paved the way for the exhibition of additional foreign films at the same Hall and at the same time as other designated venues. Films during those days were not common or available to ordinary people, but only to a privileged few in the society. Films like Tales of Manhattan, Trailer horn, where Tarzan began to stir up a great revolution in the mind of the people were very popular among Africans and parts of the world. The influence of these films on African nationalists led to the demand for independence from the colonial masters. This led to the establishment of the censor's board by colonial government in Great Britain and France. http://www.nigeriamovienetwork.com/pages/History-of-Nollywood.html

The Colonial Movie Censors Board (CMCB) was created in 1933 to censor and classify the types of films to be released for visual consumption of the general public and the country at large. During this period, scholars revealed that films like "The Primitive Man, Dixie, Buffalo Bill, The Keys of the Kingdom, Sleepy Village Girl" were tagged 'suitable' to be watched, while that of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Clive of India, "The Isle of Forgotten Sins", "Home of Frankenstein" were considered as unsuitable for the public consumption. The Censorship Board was later transformed to form the Federal Board of Movie Censors (FBOMC), the board derived its powers from 1948 Cinematograph Laws of Nigeria, and the Cinematograph Laws of 1963, http://www.nigeriamovienetwork.com/pages/ History-of-Nollywood.html

Research shows in recent times, that film/video industries are involved in generating their contents in the country and around the world. However, they create and outline those ideas, opinions and find the (personnel, directors, actors and actresses and other crews in the production industry - the talents) to turn the ideas outlined into scripts, and also sourced the finance that could turn the scripts into motion pictures, and promote interest in the finished product for dissemination to end user(s) the ultimate consumers. Theatrical film or feature film were created to be visual first in traditional movie theaters; and once it had its test run at movie theaters by the producers, then they are redistributed as home videos and DVDs for rental or for sale, pay-per-



view films in hotels, homes or viewing centers build in community for consumers, as in flight movies on airlines, and as featured films on cable, satellite, and broadcast television channels, Turow (2003).

The Nigerian film/video industry are business oriented, they generate a lot of revenue for the country through its production which is produced on DVDs, VCDs, tapes and other devices which attract patronage from millions of Nigerians, both at home and abroad.

Understanding the operational definitions of some key terms will help us to have a clear view and appreciation of the role played by filmmakers in this paper.

### BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

#### **The Motion Picture Movies**

History shows that the motion pictures started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the experimentation of picture movements and continue through the silent eras of films, sound and digital film/movie making. In film production, it is believed that the heart of every magic show is cleverness. This is synonymous with the film/movies activities based on the persistence of vision of the actors/actresses.

In 1800 research shows that there were some popular toy makers who use their understanding of vision to create an optical illusion. The toys such as simple book still pictures could be skimmed through to create the illusion of movement. Sixty years after the invention of toys by the toys makers, which is around 1860s, the "peep show" came up with what was said to be the amusement popular boxes containing moving rods of still pictures. As you move the rods, different pictures are revealed for one to see, Rodman. (2006:151) In 1839, a photography motion was invented and was successfully used around the 1872. A few years after Muybride's demonstration took place, individuals in the United States, France and Great Britain were working at the same time to develop techniques for projection of motion pictures. During this period, it was an American and two others, Thomas Edison (American) and Louis and Augustine Lumiere (French) who made the first breakthrough in the field of filming and projector, which was called Kinetograph (Camera). Edison used what is called the Kinescope, a device that helped in viewing motion pictures.

The most essential period in motion pictures achievement was the years from 1939 to 1941. Going by the wind of change, which showcased the new Technicolor film process, was released in 1939. In the same year, two other films became classics. The Wizard of Oz and Stage coach (starring John Wayne) in his first major role was released. Two years later, Orson Welles directed and starred in Citizen Kane, which some critics considered it as the best American film ever.

The financial backing and various holdings of the studio system helped the film/movies industry survive the depression. Film attendance and profits making began to climb in 1934 and held steady throughout the World War II. Around the 1940s, movies was just as part of American life as watching television today. The all-time peak for film/movies going was in 1946 when average weekly attendance reached over 90 million.

In 1938, the Justice Department filed suit against Paramount and major film companies with a charge, that the industry's vertical control of production, distribution, and exhibition constituted censorship of trade and monopolistic practices. The case was set aside during the war, and in 1948, the court ordered that the major studios get rid of at least one of their holdings in the three areas. Some choose to divest themselves of their theater chains. The court also eliminated the block booking system and thus deprived the studios of guaranteed exhibition for all their films/movies. As a result the studios had to cut back on film/movies production and reduce costs, as noted above by Dominick, (2009:206).

Isiaka, (2002:135) notes that there are several organization both local and international that engaged in film/video production, these are the United Nations Information and Cultural Educational Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organizations (WHO), Federation of Agricultural Organizations (FAO) etc. They produced video cassettes on various issues that may be of interest to the rural populace. The messages must of necessity be in local dialect in order to ensure maximum impact on the viewers.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research is aimed at gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event, rather than surface description of a large sample of a population. It aims to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among a group of participants. It is also called ethno-methodology or field research. It generates data about human groups in social settings, http://www.csulb.edu~msaintg/ppa696/696.quali.htm#intro



The method adopted in this research work is the qualitative method which dependents on documentary of evidences on the subject matter. Information was also obtained from the library and internet sources to examine scholars' contributions in the related fields of discussions.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory has been defined by various scholars in different ways. According to Lewin (1958), theory is a way of explaining the ordering and occurrence of various events, while Schramm (1963) looked at theory as a "crap-detector" which enables us to separate scientific statement from unscientific ones. Philosopher Kaplan (1964) sees theory as a way of making sense out of a disturbing situation.

The theory adopted here is the "Technology Determinism Theory." The theory was formulated by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. The theory asserts that media bring in new perceptual habits while their technologies create new environments. It further stated that the media shapes the way the individuals think, feel and act, also how societies organize themselves and operate. The medium determines the content of communication; it has the power to manipulate our perception of the world. Mass Communication has become the dominant form of interaction. Some messages which were crafted to conform to the medium are films and television action/violence and that the invention in technology have change our cultural way of life, Asemah, (2011:186).

# **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS**

**Film -** A medium that record images on plastic through a photochemical process. It is also seen as a process of recording images and sound on VCD/DVD hardware.

**Video-** this refers to a visual images displayed by a device as opposed to audio signals transmitted by a device, Hoffman, (2007:309).

**Channel** - A unique frequency that is used for communication between subscriber unit and cell site base station, which must be assigned by the Federal Communication Council (FCC).

**Communication** - "Communication is a process of information exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior", Wilson, (2006:7).

**Development** – development as used in the contemporary sense has useful or consummation dimension which implies increases in the quantity of usable items or goods and services that are available to people in the society. Development here means growth or change from one stage to another or planned growth, which requires social and cultural change as well as economic well beings of man in the society, Uwakwe, (2003:13).

# **PROCESS OF FILM PRODUCTION**

For a film to be screened, there are three distinct ways through which moviemaking becomes a reality. These includes, preproduction, production, and postproduction process, this is to say that all films begins by conceiving the idea(s) which is sketchy, and then mapped out by the talent/producer(s), and drawing the outline of the idea conceived or through detailing etc. Secondly, the preproduction process is all about writing out the screenplay. The third stage of production process deals with the whole process, which means, once the Cast and crew assembled at the chosen location and each of the scene required is shot and reshot to the satisfaction of the director, then the film moves into the actual production phase. The postproduction is the processing of the final production after which everything has been completed, after the editor and the director of the film/movies have decided on where close-ups shots should be placed, where angle of the shots are to appear and how long each scene should last. Dominick (2009:215) observed that moviemaking in general have a lot of routine ways, these include the following;

**Treatment:** this means narrative statement of the plot and descriptions of the main characters in the play and locations of the events; should also contain a sample dialogue.

**First-draft script:** this is a version that contains all the dialogue and camera setups and a description of action sequences in the program.

**Revised script:** this encompasses changes and suggestion that was made by the producer, director, actors, and others talents involved.

**Script polish:** this is a process that involves adding or subtraction of scenes, revision of dialogue and making other minor changes if any.

Dominick further stated that after all this processes were done, the producer should try to find actors (i.e. those people who act in films, the "talent" whether they have any or not), who will appear in the film. These talents were said to be special people who are professionally skilled and are normally hired for a special fee which must be paid to attract them. A movie crew contains dozens of skilled peo ple; they set up design,



makeup specialists, set dressers, property masters, crane operators, electricians, audio engineers, painters, and plumbers, carpenters, first aid personnel and many other personalities.

#### THE NIGERIAN FILM/VIDEO MOVIES INDUSTRY

The inventions and advancement in technologies today have brought about the transformation of the Nigerian film/video industry which leads to change from reel celluloid to digital disc and other magnetic tapes. This advancement in film/video technology has radicalized the dissemination of information produced by the industry to a heterogeneous audience who are the ultimate consumers of such products. Film production in Nigeria has brought about a huge economic, social, political and culture advancement and transformation. Also film/video industry created great awareness about our cultural heritage, and speed up development in the country. Ewelukwa, (2004:280) noted that "through film/ video industry, Nigeria's National Identity has been projected which has also given rise to national cohesion, peaceful co-existence, ethnic integration and unity among all Nigerians," and the world at large.

The Nigerian Film/Video movies were established under "The National Film and Video Censor Board" (NFVCB) was established by Decree No. 85 of 1993 to replace the old cinematograph Act Chapter 49 of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Nigerian film/video industry was conferred with the power to issue license to person(s) who wished to exhibit film and video talents (work) and to regulate, prescribed and ensure safety standards which is said to be observed on licensed premises by licensed persons, (NHBOIC 1994:142).

The Nigerian first filmmakers, <u>Ola Balogun</u> and <u>Hubert Ogunde</u> in the 60s, were faced with frustration due to the high cost of production, Akin (2006),noted that television broadcasting in Nigeria began in the 1960s and received much government support. By the mid-1980s almost every state had its own broadcasting stations. During this period, foreign television content were limited by law, so producers in Lagos began televising local popular theater productions, many of these films were circulated on video. This led to development of informal video movie trade. The release of the box-office movie <u>Living in Bondage</u> in 1992, by NEK Video Links owned by Kenneth Nnebue in the Eastern city of <u>Onitsha</u> set the stage for what is called Nollywood today. It was noted that Kenneth Nnebue had an excess number of imported video cassettes which he then used to shoot the first film. <a href="http://www.economist.com/">http://www.economist.com/</a>. The huge success of film/video production set the pace for others to produce home videos and other related films in the country for its consumer. Nollywood later flourished into industry that pushed out foreign media and imbibed the culture of watching home made video films in Nigeria. Today, the industry now marketed its products all over Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, Norimitsu (2002). The use of <a href="English">English</a> rather than <a href="Local languages">Local languages</a> served to expand the market and aggressive marketing with the usage of posters, trailers, and also radio and television. Advertising played a greater role in Nollywood's achievement and success.

Since this period in the history of film/video movies, thousands of movies have been released. The first Nigerian Film/movie to reach international audience was that of "Osuofia in London", in 2003, starring Nkem Owoh, the famous Nigerian comedic actor. Modern Nigerian cinema's most prolific auteur is Chico Ejiro ("Mr. Prolific"), who directed over 80 films within 8-year and brags that he can complete production on a movie in as little as three days. Stephan (2002), Ejiro's Brother Zeb is the best-known director of these videos outside of the country. The first Nollywood films to be produced with traditional analog video, was known as Betacam SP. Today almost all Nollywood movies are produced using digital video technology, http://www.AllAfrica.com

<u>The Guardian</u> cited Nigeria's film industry as the third largest in the world in terms of earnings and estimated that the industry brings in US\$200 million per year, Jeevan (2006).

The Nigerian Cinema was said to have grew quickly in the 1990s and 2000s. It is said to be the second largest film industry in the world in terms of number of annual films produced, placing it ahead of the <u>United States</u> and behind the <u>Indian</u> film industry. According to <u>Hala Gorani</u> and <u>Jeff Koinange</u> formerly of <u>CNN</u>, Nigeria has a <u>US\$250</u> million movie industry, creating some 200 videos for the home video market every month, (CNN, News, 2004). Presently the Nigerian cinema is the largest movies industry in Africa in terms of both value and the number of movies produced per year. Although Nigerian films have been produced since the 1960s, the rise of affordable <u>digital filming and editing</u> technologies has stimulated the country's video film industry. The Nigerian video feature film industry is sometime known as **Nollywood**, coined by the Financial Times of New York, just as Nollywood in America and <u>Bollywood</u> in India. (<u>The Economist</u>, <a href="http://www.nigeriamovienetwork.com/pages/History-of-Nollywood.html">http://www.nigeriamovienetwork.com/pages/History-of-Nollywood.html</a>)



### FILM AS SOURCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Technology has brought a lot changes in the way films are produced all over the world. For example, technological development can be seen in Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) programs which can be downloaded from the internet, write/burn to CDs using different types of devices and software such as the Internet Download Manager (IDM), with the aid of computer system which can store, retrieve, produce and receive information from any program service. The DVRs normally transfer such information on the screen for viewers to watch, when to watch and how to watch. The DVRs can change viewers' perception over the program they watch and most importantly the commercial networks which invested in the film/video movies industries that normally produce this technology, Biagi, (2005:170-71).

Movies are said to be magic from the factory by its innovation. Movies have created a lot of impact in the life of Americans and the world at large, portraying American ideologies, and cultures etc which Nigeria is not an exception. America has recorded a lot of success through their 10 top movies which communicate its content to the viewers, as pointed out by Rodman, (2006:158), these contents may be positive or negative.

- Citizen Kane, Kane, 1941. Orson Welles's Classic about the rise and fall of a media titan was based loosely on the life of William Randolph Hearst. This was made when Welles was only 25 years of age. It was not a commercial success, at least in part because Hearst used his power as a newspaper magnate to demand negative reviews and to force theater owners to boycott the film.
- Casablanca, 1942. Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman star as two sides of a lovers' triangle in World War II Morocco. This film won Oscars for best picture, best director, and best screenplay. This also shows his creativity as a performer.
- The Godfather 1972. Francis Ford Coppola's epic tale of the violent life and times of a Mafia family. It won Oscars for best picture, best actor (Marlon Brando), and best screenplay (Coppola and Mario Puzo, from whose novel the film was adapted).
- Gone with the Wind, 1939. Produced by David O. Selznick, this magnificent soap opera set during the Civil War won eight Oscars, including best picture, best actress (Vivian Leigh, as Scarleft O'Hara), best director (Victor Fleming), and best screenplay (Sidney Howard).
- ♣ Lawrence of Arabia, 1962. David Lean's sweeping, literate blockbuster starring Peter O'Toole as the adventurer T. E. Lawrence won Oscars for best picture, best director, best Cinematographer, best score, best editing, and best art direction.
- The Wizard of Oz, 1939. Victor Fleming directed this fantasy based on L. Frank Baum's story Judy Garland's song "over the Rainbow" won an Oscar.
- The Graduate, 1967. Mike Nichols's anthem to the 1960s included actor Dustin Hoffman's breakthrough roles as a naïve college graduate who has affairs with both a childhood friend (Katharine Ross) and her mother (Anne Bancraft as Mrs. Robinson). Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel provided the musical score; Nichols won the Oscar for best director.
- ❖ On the Waterfront, 1954. Marlon Bando stars as a misfit in a New York City harbor union. The film garnered eight Oscars, including best picture, best director (Elia Kazan), best actor (Brando), and best screenplay (Budd Schulberg).
- Schinler's List, 1993. The story of real-life war profiteer Oscar Schindler, who saved more than 1,000 Jewish people during World War II earned seven Oscars, including best picture, best director (Steven Spielberg), and best screenplay.
- \*Singing' in the Rain, 1952. Gene Kelley directed and starred in this movie musical about Hollywood's transition to sound movies, featuring Jean Hagen as Kelly's silent screen costar, who was having a difficult time getting into new industry because her voice could shatter glass.

In film production, not all films are actually good for every consumer, there are many dangerous films that portrays violence, although violence is part of the reality in our world today which serves as part of some of the films that we watch, however some of these films are advised not to be watch by children, teenagers and even the adult themselves because it can easily influence their attitudes and perceptions about life. These types of films are outline by Sidrah Zaheer (2013) which includes some of the following;

#### **Sattle Royale**

This is one of a Japanese action-thriller film based on a novel of the same name by Koushun Takami and it is the last film direct by Kinji Fukasaku. It is about a boy coping with the passing away of his father where he gets forced by government to kill other students. The film is faced with a large hue and cry because of its contents that is full of violence.

# **\*** The Wild Bunch



The Wild Bunch was directed by Sam Peckinpah, William Holden and Ernest Borgnine who lead the film. The films was said to depict a lot of gun violence.

### **❖** A Clockwork Orange

A clockwork Orange is one among the top violence film by Stanley Kubrick and despite the violence in this film it is still ranked as one of the best flicks ever made movie. This film shows a sociopath and his gang doing all the dirty work with torture and violence as the film's main themes implied.

#### \* Reservoir Dogs

Quentin Tarantino is one of the most violent films because it covers the story of a diamond heist, with Harvey Keitel, Steve Buscemi, Tim Roth, Chris Penn and others of its time, but despite its being violent it has been received really well by critics

#### \* Saw

This is one of the controversial films that come with a uniquely twisted mindset of a killer that plays odd and deadly games with his victims. It is full of gore and blood all around and even for a fan with a taste of horror and thriller flicks and despite the fact that the movie is full of violence, people love it so much that many, still download it today.

During this period in history, the money generated in movie distributions and sales of home videocassettes and DVDs was said to have exceeds the revenue generated from theatrical shows. Revenue from home video normally come from two sources thus, rental outlets and sell-through outlets. Rental outlets are companies like Blockbuster Video and West Coast Video that purchase and releases from movie distributors and then rent out to individual customer on a pay-per-day basis and sometimes pay-per- days. Sales through outlets are stores which include video stores where consumers buy rather than rent video films for casual use. Today, more videocassettes are rented than bought, whereas more DVDs are bought than rented, Turow, (2003:460).

Dominick (2009:210) noted that the digital film/movie making is a reality. Many big budget motion pictures, such as Superman Returns and Miami Vice, were shot using digital cameras. It is only in 300 films that actors were said to be real, the backgrounds, sets, and locations was all digital creations, and in fact almost all the special effects the Hollywood uses are generated digitally. Under this system hundreds of copies of a celluloid film/movie were printed and put into big metal cans, and shipped to theaters across the country, and each copy can cost as much as \$2,000. Movies today can be seen on VCDs, DVDs, or electronically by satellite or optical fiber or even the internet where one can download and reduplicate for onward selling, thus preventing them from scratches, dust, and "gate jitter" which normally occur with the traditional celluloid film/movies.

Film/movies are probably the least portable of all media. They were designed to be seen in a large hall on a large screen. Nonetheless, the digital age has opened new possibilities. Portable DVDs players that weigh less than two pounds and are not much bigger than a book are becoming popular. Many vehicles have video screens installed in them, so that passengers at the back can watch VCDs/DVDs when undertaking a trip. There are many services that give subscribers the ability to download film/movies onto their laptops, while some entrepreneurs today have device ways of showing movies on palmtops, cell phones, and other Personal Digital Assistance (PDA). In Sweden a theatrical movie was prerelease on cell phones before they are shown in a movie theatre. There is even a company that offers pornographic films which is delivered to cell phones.

In an effort to improve the quality of Nigerian film industries, President Goodluck Jonathan, pledged in 2010, to create a \$200 million loan fund to facilitate the film/movies projects. Nigerian film directors have adopt new technologies in the production of film, editing, and other post-production work that are done with computer-based systems, <a href="https://www.http://afripopmag.com">www.http://afripopmag.com</a> (2010),these include Pinnacle Studio, Corel Video Studio Pro, Adobe Pro etc.

With an eye to attract an international mainstream audience, Nigerian film-makers are increasingly turning to the West for actors like <u>Isaiah Washington</u>, and <u>Thandie Newton</u>. The same developments are taking place in co-productions with film-makers from other African countries and the world at large. The 'Princess of Africa,' <u>Yvonne Chaka Chaka</u>, starred in Foreign Demons, a film set in Nigeria as well as her native South Africa. Feathered Dreams, is the first Nollywood-Ukrainian co-production. Set in <u>Ukraine</u>, the film stars Nigerian actress <u>OmoniOboli</u> Ukrainian actor Andrey Rozhen who also directed it. Ogbodo,(2012).

#### SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Film is a medium that record images on plastic through a photochemical process. It is also seen as a process through which images are recorded on VCD/DVD as hardware. While it may be true to some certain extent; that film is all about ideas, once the ideas is conceived then the process of film begins. Film/movies can convey a positive or negative messages to the viewers, it depend on the type of film you watch, that is why an Act was enacted to control the type of film to be viewed by people. However, film industry in Nigeria has helped



to portray Nigerian culture to the rest of the world, and is said to generate more than 300,000 jobs. According to Ayakoroma, (2011:21) "as far back as 2005, the industry is said to have generated well over N55 billion, providing jobs for more than 300,000 Nigerians," In conclusion, Film/movies are source of development, especially in a developing country like Nigeria.

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