The African filmmaker and content of African films: a study of the perspectives of the Nigerian film audience

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Abstract

This paper attempts to appraise African filmmaking and the content of African films from a Nigerian film audience perspective. The study specifically explores the disposition of the audience towards contemporary African filmmaking for home video and cinema entertainment as well as the content of African films. The study used a qualitative questionnaire to determine the perspectives of residents in Lagos as members of the Nigerian film audience. The study found the perception of the content of contemporary African films, particularly home videos, to vary among the film audience. Opinion largely favoured a new orientation towards a de-emphasis on obscene scenes, rituals, fetish practices, violent crimes and display of partial or total nudity in the content of African films. The study, therefore, recommends that regulatory bodies set up in most African countries, such as the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board, should own up to their responsibilities in terms of ensuring strict compliance of African film makers or producers with rules and regulations guiding film production, content of films and exposure guidelines.

Introduction

Filmmaking requires creative potentials. The art of filmmaking is a worldwide phenomenon used for different purposes and intents. The western world that dominates the art continues to use filmmaking as a channel for the propagation of western culture in all the continents constituting the globe including Africa.

This cultural incursion of the West is very much pronounced in the African continent. Colonialism, and the underdevelopment of Africa, with reference to its historical past, render the inherent potential of filmmaking and its utilities as under- exploited.

These utilities are a platform to use films and filmmaking as vehicles for the presentation and transmission, from generation to generation, of Africa's cultural heritage; and for developmental purposes, particularly in the areas of health, political development and social integration.

The pervasive influence of western culture in the African continent through the influx and exhibition of foreign films, as in the past, is still a recurring phenomenon. This is made possible by the peculiar handicaps of contemporary African filmmakers in terms of lack of production facilities, funding and technical expertise. Bakupa – Kanyinda (2002) aptly puts it:

> If one is concerned about the alienation of Africa, which is currently saturated with foreign and strange films produced elsewhere, then production issues are not limited only to financial support, technical expertise or artistic passion. Financial success at the box office or in the bank is not the only goal of production. Television and the movies are the best means of conveying memory and popular culture.

Because of the dominance of western films in African societies, many contemporary African filmmakers conceive, through their themes, film as a means of fighting western cultural imperialism. Bakupa (2002) affirms this observation in his description of filmmaking in Africa:

> To produce a film in Africa is an act of resistance. It is about looking at the world's stories and giving one's opinion about them, capturing and inquiring about collective memory, attracting, entertaining and informing. It is also about making Africans realize that cinema is a powerful tool for development.

Colonialism popularised filmmaking in Africa. It is on record that the western colonial powers spread western ideals through films, some of which were funded and produced in Africa for Africans. In some cases, filmmaking was also used by the colonialist as a means of governance.

According to Cham (2002), in the African context,

> Filmmaking is a way of defining, describing and interpreting African experiences with those forces that have shaped their past and that continue to shape and influence the present. It is a product of the historical experiences of Africans, and it has direct bearing and relevance to the challenges that face African societies and people of African descent in the world in the present moment and in the future.

Part of these challenges concerns the cinematic tradition, the development of which, even in contemporary African societies, is low. This is due partly to the low emphasis placed on film (as a sophisticated and complex form of story telling) by governments in most African countries. As noted by Mambety (2005), issues bordering on politics, economics and physical infrastructure have largely not been conductive to the development of a cinematic tradition in Africa, despite the continent being well suited to the medium of film. Demonstrating the potential of Africa in evolving a rich cinematic tradition, Botha (2005) observes:

> I know that Africa is immensely rich in cinematic potential. It is good for the future of cinema that Africa exists. Cinema was born in Africa because the image itself was born in Africa (sic). The instruments, yes, are European, but the creative necessity and rationale exist in our oral tradition. Oral tradition is a tradition of images. What is said is stronger than what is written; the word addresses itself to the imagination, not the ear. Imagination creates the image and the image creates cinema, so we are in direct lineage as cinema's parents.

If Africa has the potential to develop a rich cinematic tradition, as observed by Botha, the emergence and continued popularity of the video alternative to the celluloid production of films (a peculiar feature of the film industry in most African countries) seems to constitute a hindrance to the realisation of a fully developed African cinematic tradition. Despite the obvious advantages of celluloid films in terms of longevity and sharp quality reproduction of images, video films, perhaps, because of low cost and ease of production, seem to have taken the central stage in film production in most African countries. The adaptation of video films for home use which has received wide acceptance among the film audience in most African countries has further popularised the video alternative in film making against the celluloid option among contemporary African filmmakers.

This paper, therefore, is an attempt to examine the disposition of the Nigerian film audience towards contemporary African films in terms of their content, the genre of African films as well as films produced for home and cinema entertainment

Literature review
Conceptually, film denotes a work of art on celluloid (from the evolution of the motion picture) and (in modern times) on video. Film as a communicative medium has till date been used to entertain, instruct, subjugate, persuade and propagate, the overall social, political, economic and educational needs of the inhabitants of the contemporary world that are deeply dependent on communication in its various forms, including film as a mass medium.

Filmmaking in Africa evolved out of the recognition and exploitation of the diverse uses of film by the colonialists. The colonial administrations in most African countries in pre – independence Africa, as rightly noted by Dimlong (1993:32) exploited the film medium to the fullest by 'producing a lot of documentaries designed principally for the attainment of their imperialist objectives.' On colonial Africa, Dimlong notes:

> Film, then, with its high communication potential, remains the most important medium for the proper mobilization of the people towards specific national objectives (1993: 32).

Recognising the importance of filmmaking in the African context, Ousmane, the legendary Senegalese filmmaker, asserts:

> Films must be political, they must be militant, but they must not be elitist, because if we must make our films for a small intellectual minority, they will remain in an intellectual ghetto where people who want to masturbate intellectually will come to their lubrication (quoted by Dimlong, 1993:32).

Situating filmmaking in Africa in historical context, Cham (2002) believes that African filmmaking is a response to, and intervention, in the factors and forces that have shaped Africa overtime. He categorises these factors and forces as indigenous, Arab – Islamic and Euro – and Christian, maintaining that the interplay of these forces has an enduring influence on the current mindset of Africans in most contemporary African societies regarding various aspects of human endeavor, including filmmaking. Cham (2002) affirms:

> The patterns of interaction, cross fertilization, tension and conflicts between and among these forces over many centuries on African soil have produced a wide range of complex dynamics and transformations that have resulted monetarily in the shape of Africa at the present moment. They have also spawned diverse patterns of thought and practices in many domains of life in Africa, particularly the domains of Filmmaking.

Cham is also of the opinion that a cinema – bound Africa film invariably performs a pivotal role in the African context .This role is that of defining, enacting and performing African notions and ideologies of individual as well as community and humanity .These roles, Cham notes, are also performed by indigenous African oral narrative traditions and written literature.

> African filmmaking co-exists and interacts with these (i.e. indigenous oral narrative tradition and written literature) other forms of creative practice on the level of subject matter, theme, form, style and conceptions of art and artist and their role in and relationship to society (2002).

Cham's observation is implied in the description of the assumed duty of contemporary African cinematographers by Prescod (2000:79), quoting Mudimbe (1994) in terms of creating, inventing and transforming, and at the same time, faithfully obeying their vocation and responsibility to transmit a heritage, record its obsessions and preserve its past.

In contrast to the industrial characteristics of Hollywood or other "national" cinemas, African cinema (film produced for cinema entertainment), is believed to be characterized by the work of a number of individual directors from various countries across the continent (Bakari 2000:106). Referring to Africa cinema as an "artisan" or "amateur" cinema Bakari (2000) describes African Cinema as a cinema defined by films which reflects the individual vision of filmmakers; whereby such films are made outside of any industrial context, without much or any "national" finance, and in many cases, with the filmmaker of necessity, fulfilling a multiple of roles.

Boughedir (2000) opines that African filmmaking reflects African historical past and present social and cultural changes which African nations are undergoing as a result of the political and

economic upheavals which are shaking the continent. Boughedir is of the view that the central forms of filmmaking in Africa are a delicate balance between Africa's past and present experiences, from the perspective of the filmmaker (2000:109).

In classifying the subject of African films, Boughedir suggests an approach which relates the film to the degree of political consciousness of the director, the stage of cultural formation he is passing through or, in some cases, choices made deliberately by the filmmaker. Boughedir exemplifies this approach by listing historical films, which also reflect the present, to include *Ceddo* (1976) by Ousmane Sembene (Senegal), *Sejnane* (1974) by Abdelatif Ben Ammar (Tunisia) or *Rancon d'une alliance* (1973) by Sebastien Kambu (Congo). He also lists comedy films that blend the old with the present, to include *Pousse – pousse* (1975) or *Notre Fille* (1981) by Daniel Kamwa (Cameroon).

This conflict between the old and new experiences or ways of life which is captured by the phrase "tradition and modernity", Boughedir (2000) contends, is the central focus of themes of most African films. He observes:

> Four conflicts between the old and the new are often found: the conflict between town and village; westernized woman against a woman respecting the traditions; modern versus traditional medicine; traditional art bearing a cultural identity and art which has become a commodity and an object for consumption (2000: 109).

Attempts have also been made to classify themes of African films by scholars. One of such classifications made by Guy Hannebelle, a French film critic, and adapted by Boughedir in classifying contemporary films include: **The Struggle against colonialism** – comprising films which glorify the struggle against colonialism in the past and the present day struggle of the freedom movements such as *Emitail* (1972), Camp Thiaroye (1988), *Chronique des années de braise* (1975) by Lakhdar Hamma (Algeria), *Moru Nega* (1988) by Flora Gomez (Guinea Bissau) and many Mozambique and Angolan documentaries; **The Childhood Sickness of independence** – comprising films about former fighters or African intellectuals traumatised by their encounter with the west such as Sarzan (1963) by Mamar Thian (Senegal), *Identité* by Pierre – Marie Dong (Gabon), and in the Magreb *Une si simple histoire* (1970) by Abdeletif Ben Amar (Tunisia) and *Heritage Africa* (1988) by Kwah Ansah,(Ghana). In this category, though omitted by Boughedir, will be *Cry Freedom* (1981) by Ola Balogun, considered to be one of Nigeria's most prolific filmmakers (Adezia 1994).

Further theme classifications include**: Disillusions** – comprising films which criticize the new middle classes which appeared after independence such as *Xala* by Ousmane Sembene (Senegal), *Accident* (1972) by Benolt Ramampy (Madagascar), *Den Muso* (1975), Baara (1978) and Finye by Souleymane Cisse (Mali), *Mortu Nega* by Flora Caomez (Guinea – Bissau) and *Milliah Tamtou* (1989) by David Achkar (Guinea); **The rural exodus** - comprising films, which highlighted the rural exodus, which became a tidal wave after independence such as *Le Bracelet*

de bronze (1974) by Tidiane Aw (Senegal), and *Laweogo* (1982) by Sanou Kollo (Burkina Faso). A variant of **Rural exodus**, according to Boughedir, are films that depict the new "slave trade" usually encountered by African workers immigrating to Europe. Such films include *Soleil* (1970) and *Bicots nègres*, *Vos voisins* (1973) by Med Hondo (Mauritania), *Nationalité Immigré* (1972) and *Safrana* (1978) by Sidney Sokhona (Mauritania), *Paris, c'est joli* (1974) by Inoussa Qusseini (Niger).

A further classification is in terms of **The condition of African women** which comprises films that describe the unjust conditions suffered by African women being forced into marriage, the dowry system, and calling for their freedom. Such films according to Boughedir (2000: 111) include *Muna Moto* (1974) and *Le Prix de la Liberté* (1978) by Dikongne Pipa (Cameroon), *Le Desin* (1976) by Sega Coulibaly (Mali), and *Finzan* (1990) by Cheick Oumar Sissoka (Mali).

It is obvious that Boughedir's classifications and film examples are both not exhaustive. Just as there are other films that could easily fit into his classifications, there are other equally tenable classifications that could accommodate other films not mentioned. Such films will include those produced by Nigerian filmmakers since independence such as *Culture in Transition* (1963), an abridged version of professor Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, his Kongi's Harvest (1970) which is Nigerians first independent feature film. Ola Balogun's *Amadi* (1974), Ajani Ogun (1976), *Musik Man* (1976), *Black Goddess* (1978), *Cry Freedom* (1981) and *Money Power* (1982); *Sanya Dosunmu's Dinner with the Devil* (1975); Adamu Halilu's *Shaihu Umar* (1976), Jab Adu's *Bisi Daughter of the River* (1977); Hubbert Ogunde's *Aiye* (1980), *Jaiyesinmi* (1981), *Aropin Ntenia* and *Ayanmo* (both in 1982); and among others, Eddie Ugbomah's *Rise and Fall of Dr. Oyenusi* (1976), *The Boy is Good* (1978), *The Mask* (1979), *Oil Boom* (1980), *Bolus 80* (1982), *Death of a Black President* (1983), *Apalara* (1986), *Dmiran* (1988), *The Great Attempt* (1990) and *Tori Ade* (1992).

Apart from classifying African films in terms of themes, Ferid Boughedir, in his doctoral thesis, *Cinema African et de-colonization*, identifies three types of African filmmakers. These include: those who make their films in order (before anything else) to be of service to their people; those who make their films (before anything else) for themselves; and those who make their films (before anything else) for money (glory, career *etc*.) (Ekwuazi 1991: 57 – 58). Ekwuazi sums up these classifications as pointing to six principle tendencies of the African Film: the **Political** tendency with the **Moralist** tendency; the **Commercial tendency** with the **Cultural** tendency; and the **Self-expression** tendency with the **narcissistic intellectual** tendency (1991: 58). Ekwuazi, a Nigerian film scholar in attempting to situate this classification in the Nigerian context, writes:

> We group the Federal Government of Nigeria with Boughedir's first group of African Filmmakers: those who make films in order (before anything else) to be of service to their peoples. All the other Nigerian filmmakers belong with the last group – those who

make their films (before anything else) for money (glory, career e.t.c). Filmmakers in Nigeria have not sufficiently matured to produce the second group; those filmmakers who make their films (before anything else) for themselves. On account of this, films of the self-expression / narcissistic intellectual tendencies are more or less absent in the Nigerian context (1991: 58).

Ekwuazi's contention, though, expressed for almost 15 years now, still constitutes a tenable assessment of the filmmaking situation in Nigeria, despite the low cost of film production brought about by the video – film alternative.

Challenges of indigenous filmmaking in contemporary Africa
Filmmaking by independent filmmakers in contemporary Africa is bedecked with problems identified by scholars and professionals in filmmaking. These problems, which bring to the fore the challenges of contemporary African filmmaking, is the focus of this section of the review.

Barlet (1996) in his book *African cinemas*: *decolonizing the gaze*, chronicled the problems faced by contemporary African filmmakers. In what he aptly titled: the difficulty of making films, which reflected the outcome of a series of interviews he held with professional African filmmakers and scholars, Barlet identified problems associated with filming in Africa. Discussing these problems, Barlet writes:

> Making films in Africa is a gamble, yet it is one that people take! The director turns into a one-man band, and low budgets and the unforeseen problems of production also have their effects. Inevitably, this produces fantasies of autonomy (1996:221).

According to Barlet, many African filmmakers, in order to be able to write and film, become many things in one- directors, producers, editors, properties men, trainers etc or make videos and films on commission (1996). Economic, political, institutional, technical and environmental problems hinder effective filming in contemporary Africa. Identifying the practical problems of filming in Africa, Barlet writes:

> The practical problems of filming in Africa are unimaginable for Europeans. Actors aren't on the telephone. How do you get in touch with a P.O. Box in emergency? And when custom demands that they should be present at a wedding, should you let them go? African cars are 'tired', the power goes down when there are storms or surges of current blow the lights: generators are unreliable or inordinately expensive, transport is chaotic and exhausting; there are constant breakdown in all things mechanical; the light is infernal; the technical resources are inadequate, the political and customs authorities are irksome; and illness is never very far away … But a solution can also be found! (1996:223).

It is, however, to be expected that the sovereignty of, and the extent to which each of these practical problems have been solved, will depend on each country in contemporary Africa.

Another practical problem confronting African filmmakers has been, and continues to be, dependence on western societies for postproduction facilities, as same, if at all available, are inadequate in most African countries. While affirming that the services of European film laboratories represent almost a third of the cost of contemporary African firms, Barlet (1996:225) counsels that the maintenance of the few postproduction facilities in some of the African states through government support, will reduce this problem. Also looking at the problem from the Nigerian perspective, Husseini (1999:43), in a *Guardian* feature titled 'Move through the times', observes:

> The high cost of production, with the chunk of producers' budget going into hiring of equipment and crew from abroad and high cost of postproduction overseas, kept producers contemplating on whether it is worth it to produce big screen movie or not. Film financing became a main issue.

Some of the post-production facilities in some African countries, which, if made fully functional, could reduce the over-dependence on foreign film laboratories include: Cinafric, a private undertaking in Ouagadougou with the capacity of providing post-production and dubbing services for west African films; the film laboratories in Harare, Tunis, Rabat and Algiers; and among others, the Colour Film Processing Laboratory and Sound Dubbing Studio in Jos, Nigeria.

This problem poses a challenge to contemporary African filmmaking - that of initiating and maintaining a technical autonomy in the post-production aspect of filmmaking. Barlet 1996 aptly captures this challenge:

> Filmmakers dream of technical autonomy, so that they do not have to pay high prices for post-production in Western countries, and can therefore establish their independence. Many consider this an indispensable pre condition, the first step in creating a cinema industry, the foundations of which have not yet been laid. There is lack of arguments for entirely African crews, for South-South co-productions, for regional or continental structures which would make films easier to make and promote independence.

Implied in the foregoing is the fundamental problem of funding. This is aptly captioned as "The trials and tribulations of funding" by Barlet (1996:226) who notes:

> The more difficult the conditions, the harder it is to present the cost of a firm. Unexpected problems tend to mount up, non-professional actors take longer than would normally be the case; there are insufficient resources for time to be managed efficiently. In some cases, filming is interrupted because the initial budget has been spent and the director has to go running around to find additional funds.

The problem of funding is so basic that many contemporary African filmmakers incur debt in the process of completing a film. This is further compounded by what Barlet (1996:228) refers to as 'hazards of distribution and general wariness on the part of television stations" to accept exposure, and these prevent African film makers from covering their costs. By implication, many African filmmakers spend more time searching for funding than making films.

Looking at the problem of funding from the Nigerian context, Okon (1993), observes that the difficulty in securing adequate funding for filmmaking has had a damaging effect on artistic quality of film productions in the country. Okon notes:

> Having been used to investment in other spheres of the economy except films, a host of financial institutions and wealthy individuals tend to be reluctant to channel their investment into film production. They probably see it as a gamble (1993:22).

In the same vein, Alhaji Adamu Halilu, one time chairman of Film Producer's Guild of Nigeria, while affirming the funding problem, recommends co-production as a way to solving same. By going into joint partnership pacts with dependable exhibitors, filmmakers can better concentrate on their art- creative film production. In Halilu's words:

> Co-production will help the producer to concentrate on his film than chasing for funds, distribution/exhibition of his films … (1996:10).

Halilu believes the joint exhibition idea of the Nigerian Film Corporation will, if adopted, benefit filmmakers who would not have to bear the extra-burden of film marketing. The problem of funding brings with it the added problem of doctored or donor-dictated film contents. This is also peculiar to the contemporary African filmmakers. This is evident from the experience of Zimbabwean filmmaker, Tsits Dangarembga who directed a film, *Every one's child* for which she had no control of its content. While questioning the gate-keeping role of donors who favoured some directors over others and some narratives over others, Dangaremgba, as reported by Hung We (2005) contends:

> *Every one's child* is not the film I wanted to make. I didn't want to make another AIDS film on Africa. I was not empowered to make the narrative that I wanted to make.

Buoh-Jepson (2005) supports Dangarambga's contention by asserting that the realities of African filmmaking are such that most author-films are funded by the European Union. This makes the African filmmakers to be marginalised both within and outside Africa. Another problem facing contemporary African filmmakers is that of production. Production constitutes a problem in situations where an African filmmaker with a good script or narrative copy has to use foreign producers for the production. The experience of Fadika kramo-Lancine as reported by Barlet

(1996:229) exemplifies this problem. The account reveals that, in preparing for his new firm *Wariko* (1994), Kramo-Lancine secured subsidies of 700,000 French Francs and 120,000 Francs from French co-operation ministry and the Swiss DDA respectively. A French producer, The World Film Company, contracted to work on the film declared itself bankrupt after taking the money, 'only to re-emerge later as Atlantis Films' (Barlet1996: 229). This problem is pervasive in contemporary Africa as it poses a challenge to African filmmakers who are already trying out a solution by 'developing solidarity between like- minded individuals' (1996). Another problem that poses a challenge to African filmmakers is that of film distribution or exhibition. Expounding the implication of this problem, Gaston Kabore (2000: 189) notes:

> It is easier to watch African films in Paris, New York, Berlin, London, Tokyo or San Francisco than to see it in Nairobi, Dar Es Salam, Harare, Niamey, Lagos. This situation is not only one of the commercial disadvantages, it also prevents a mutual development between filmmakers and the public, and at the same time, it prevents the development of indigenous criticism which could be a determinant element in the development of a genuine African expression.

Also Sama (1996:148) presents his own perspective of the distribution problem as follows:

> But of what value is the finished product, if it has no circuit for distribution? African films are foreigners in their own countries; they are making a bashful entry in exactly the same way as a stranger entering another land. The irresponsibility of government towards culture, and cinema in particular is an addition to the burden of the colonial past.

A panoramic account of the film distribution problem across the African continent given by Sama reveals that the Nigerian Film Distribution Company only exists in theory since the Indians and the Lebanese have control of the cinemas. In the English-speaking countries of eastern and southern Africa, the United States and South Africa dictate the law governing film distribution. The majority of film shown on Zimbabwean cinema screens is distributed by multinationals based in South Africa where most of the foreign films come from the United States. In Namibia, as in 1992, there were only seven cinemas. In Mali, a National Film Office (OCINAM) that was created did not last long, but is still being reorganised. The Benin Cinema Board (OBECI) created after the 1974 nationalisation, no longer exists. Also, the Ivorian Cinema Company (SIC) established in 1962 as a commercial company lasted till 1975. In Cameroon, the Fonds de Development de I'industrie Cinematographique (FODIC*)*, created in 1980 went moribund out of political and financial intrigues. In Tunisia and Algeria, SATPEC and ONCIC were transformed into private structures.

The foregoing reflected the state of affairs regarding film distribution in most African countries up till the 1990s. The situation is not radically different in the 21st century Africa (2009). Painting the scenario of the film distribution problem in Nigeria in the early 1990s before the advent of video films later adapted for home use, Ekwuazi, (1992:57) writes:

> In Nigeria, like any other third world country, the distribution network is controlled and monopolized by agents of large external foreign films conglomerates. They are interested in showing only foreign films. Moreover, there is integration between major film companies and distributors in the third world countries. In Nigeria, these exhibitors and distributors are licensed representatives of these giant conglomerates. The obvious implication is the total neglect of the indigenous filmmaker. African films are not screened as these monopoly importers in collision with cinema owners have effectively side tracked indigenous producers.

Bringing a more recent perspective (the era of home video) into the distribution problem, Shaibu Husseini affirms the shrinking or the dearth of exhibition centers or cinemas for the exposure of indigenous celluloid films. Husseini (1999:43) observes:

> Next was lack of exhibition centers; an avenue which most of the filmmakers hoped will generate quick return on investment. Nigeria's political and economic quagmire worsened issues for producers.

Husseini goes on to assert that the threat posed by video-film, converted for home use, making the cinema irrelevant to the film audience, as well as other identified problems bedecking the Nigerian celluloid filmmaker, made most of them to substitute video for celluloid production. By implication, Husseini's observation presents the video film phenomenon as a problem and thus a challenge to celluloid film producers in contemporary Africa. Views have been advanced by scholars and professionals alike that the video film upsurge spells doom for the celluloid film, and such would lead to the demise of cinema entertainment, and invariably, the closure of many cinema houses. One of such scholars who belong to this school of thought is Segun Odukomaiya (2001:17), who, reflecting on the emergence of the Nigerian video-film meant for home entertainment as against celluloid films meant for cinema writes:

> Of immense contribution of Nigerian video-films is the advance of video and satellite technologies. Prior to the 1980s, home video recorders had not penetrated into the Nigerian society, and cinema theater owners (mainly foreign capitalists) discriminated against the few Nigerian films that were produced. But as video recorders became affordable, many Lagos homes acquired the machines and film viewers were, therefore, content to stay home and watch their choice films rather than taking the trouble to wade through heavy Lagos traffic to go to cinema theaters. The high incidence of car-snatching and armed robbery contributed to the scare of viewers away from cinema theaters.

Odukomaiya believed the video-film insurgence had a damaging effect on celluloid film production and exhibition, and by implication, cinema theater business in Nigeria. Odukomaiya asserts:

Apart from these social factors, the economic factor of production also favoured Nigerian-video films. With video, producers are to originate and complete productions locally, unlike the case with the celluloid film materials, which had to be flown abroad at a huge cost, for the necessary post-production work. Thus, the incursion of portable video technology did incalculable damage to the operations of cinema theatres (2001:17).

Odukomaiya's position is strongly supported by Shamsudeen Adeiza (1998:7) who observes:

It is indeed unfortunate that while the movie world is expanding rapidly, astonishingly in other parts of the world, Nigeria is shutting its cinema halls and converting many of them into ware houses, churches and what have you. While the screens are expanding elsewhere, Nigeria has decided to confine itself to the home video …

Shuaibu Husseini's observation partly supports the positions of Odukomaiya and Adeiza from the point of view of the emerging threat of video films to celluloid, but differs in terms of the closure of cinema houses:

With the growing screening of home video products in standard cinema halls at the expense of celluloid; and the new penchant of the viewing public for the video consumption, an attitude which some blamed on Nigeria's political upheaval and the attendant insecurity on the street, the film industry shrank, in terms of output and investment. Today, (1999) what Nigeria has a film industry is a buoyant home video sector that is at the moment largely controlled by the non-practitioners, mostly marketers that are known as 'Israelites' or 'Idumota traders' (1999:43).

The foregoing submissions on the effect of video films, either converted for home viewership or screened at cinema through video projectors, constitute a threat to celluloid film and, as such, a challenge to Nigerian celluloid film producers. Emerging realities make the return to celluloid a possibility. First is that contemporary Nigerian films, mostly on video, have maintained a consistent absence at critical, but significant programmes of the Pan African Cinema and Television festival (FESPACO) held every two years in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (1998). This is so because, as Adeiza (1998:7) puts it, 'You cannot take video films to festivals anywhere in the world. Nigeria's name has become forgotten in film festivals.' Second is what Adeiza has rightly observed:

…people are becoming dissatisfied by the limitation of small screen. They are also becoming disenchanted with being confined to their homes. They want to go out there and reach out to other people, interact and see new faces with whom they share the fun of watching and exciting movie. That is why it is becoming the in-thing to go the cinema to watch video being projected on large screen (1998:7).

The increasing dominance of the video film over celluloid film constitutes a continental challenge, with the phenomenon permeating all member countries in contemporary Africa. This is confirmed by Bakupa- Kanyinda (2002) who observes:

> In Ghana and Nigeria, cola nut merchants, whose recent acquisition of the camcorder allows them to saturate the market with popular cheap productions, overshadow the efforts of serious directors. Filmed in a hurry, their stories lack basic narrative structure. These producers of video photo stories inspired by 'journal photo roman' don't care about the mediocrity of their stories on witchcraft, fetishism, gangsters, sects etc.

And on the effects, human and commercial, he asserts:

> And why not? The stories provide laughter and pleasure to the viewers. In Lagos and Accra, thousands of these videos are produced each year. Sometimes VHS cassette sales reach 200,000. Perhaps, there will be 'Lagoswood', just like Indians 'Bollywood' (2002).

Chidi Anselm Odinkalu (2005) looks at the video film phenomenon from the perspective of its effects on foreign films in African countries:

> With the pauperization of African economics over the last decade and half, and the emergence of home video technology, indigenous films became influential sources of popular entertainment and education as imported movies were increasingly priced out of the reach of the annihilated middle classes. Makers and producers of indigenous films also became powerful opinion moulders and in some countries-even serious political figures.

The foregoing review of pertinent literature has taken a cursory look at the emergence and development of filmmaking, distribution and exposure in Africa; the challenges of the cinematic tradition especially in post independence Africa; and the emergence and scholarly views on the consequences of the home video means of film entertainment, especially as it affects the cinematic tradition. This, invariably, provides the basis for the examination of the perspectives of the audience on the output of filmmaking in Africa (films) regarding the source (filmmakers or producers) and content of African films as well as the two alternatives of film entertainment (i.e. films produced for home entertainment – home videos and films produced for cinema entertainment – celluloid films) in terms of their use and rating by Nigerian film audience members.

Theoretical framework
The import of the research questions of this study makes certain communication and/or social scientific theories pertinent as the theoretical basis for the study. These theories, reviewed in this section of the paper, include:

Symbolic interaction theory
This theory has its origins in the thinking of the early-twentieth century pragmatists like John Dewey and William James, who argued that reality is dynamic and that meaning is created through interaction among people.

1.　Themes and assumptions of the theory

The symbolic interaction theory has three basic themes and seven related assumptions. The three themes are: the importance of self-concept; and the relationship between the individual and the society. The seven assumptions of the theory are that:

i. Humans act towards others on the basis of meanings those individuals have for them. Because individuals are perceived as choice makers, human behaviour is viewed as a loop of conscious thought and behaviour between stimuli and response people exhibit to those stimuli.
ii. Meaning is created in interaction between people. Meaning can only exist when people share common interpretations of the symbols they exchange in interaction.
iii. Meanings are modified through an interpretive process. The first step is intrapersonal communication in which an individual points out to her or himself the things that have meanings in the context in which they find themselves.
iv. Individuals develop self-concept through interaction with others. Self-concept is defined as the relative stable set of perceptions that people hold of themselves.

v. Self-concept provides an important motive for behaviour.
vi. People and groups are influenced by culture and social processes. Social norms constrain individual behaviour and self-concept.
vii. Social structure is worked out through social interaction. Symbolic interaction acknowledges that individuals can change social situations. (Panici and Thomas-Maddox 2000:75-80).

The sixth assumption of the theory is of particular relevance to the subject matter of this study. It is expected that the Nigerian film audience, as part of the larger African film audience, would be influenced in their perceptions and interpretations of their environments, cultures, traditions, societal norms and morals by their interactions with the contents of African films either at home as home videos or at the cinema.

2.　Uses and gratification theory

Propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch (1994), uses and gratification theory argues that people actively seek out specific media and specific content to obtain specific gratifications or results. The theory views people as active because they are able to examine and evaluate various types of media to accomplish communication goals. The researchers of uses and gratification theory ask the question: what do people do with the media instead of asking: what do media do with people.

The assumptions of the theory:
The five assumptions upon which the theory rests are that:

i. The audience is active and its media use is goal- oriented. This implies that individual audience members can bring different levels of activity to their use of media and are driven to accomplish goals through the media.

ii. The initiative in linking his/her needs gratification to a specific media choice rests with the audience member. The implication is that audience members have a great deal of autonomy in the mass communication process.

iii. The media compete with other sources to provide needs gratification. This assumption suggests that the media and their audiences do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, both are part of a larger society, and the relationship between media and audience is influenced by that society.

iv. People are aware enough of their own media use, interests and motives to be able to provide researchers with accurate data. This assumption reaffirms the belief in an active audience and implies that people are cognizant of that activity.

v. Value judgements of media contents can only be made by the audience. Uses and gratifications theorists argue that, because it is individual audience members who make the decision to use certain content for certain ends, the "value" of media content could only be assessed by the audience (Panici & Thomas-Maddox, 2000:332-337).

The fifth assumption of the theory is particularly pertinent to this study. The whole essence of studying the perspectives of the Nigerian film audience regarding African filmmakers and contents of African films as well as their preference for home videos and/or cinematic films, is to periscope the value judgements of individual members of that audience. It is also about establishing the reasons or motives behind their preference for, or exposure to, home videos or cinematic films to satisfy particular needs desires.

Research questions
1. How does the Nigerian film audience perceive contemporary African filmmakers and content of African films?
2. What are the dispositions of Nigerian film audience members towards cinematic films produced on celluloid and home video films?

Rationale for the Study
The study is premised on the following underlying assumptions:

i. Video films have popularised filmmaking in Africa, and have made exposure to African films more pervasive.

ii. Despite the pervasiveness and popularity home video films have brought to drama entertainment, cinematic films still have a crucial role to play in the exposure of contemporary African films.

Methodology

This study was principally descriptive in design, adopting the quantitative survey method to generate data. The researcher employed the service of student research assistants to administer an 18-item questionnaire, which served as the principal instrument of the survey. The questionnaire was administered to Lagos residents as the population of study representing the Nigerian film audience. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to a representative sample of 200 Lagos residents. Respondent were selected through the multi-stage sampling technique. Lagos residents were first divided into 20 clusters; with a cluster representing each of the twenty constitutionally recognised local governments in Lagos State. Through the current map of Lagos state, five streets were selected through simple random sampling using numbers assigned to them. Four houses on each street, where four copies of the questionnaire (one copy per house) were administered were then randomly selected through simple balloting.

Administration of the questionnaire recorded a response rate of 96 percent (N=192), with copies duly completed.

Out of the 18 questions contained in the self-administered questionnaire, 11 were instructed or open ended, while seven were closed ended. This was designed purposely to elicit un-influenced responses to questions that address the research questions, especially those bordering on the audience of African films.

Findings

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data obtained from a representative sample of the Nigerian film audience regarding their disposition towards contemporary African filmmaking for home video and cinema entertainment and content of African films.

With respect to the demographics of the respondents, the following table reveals the study's findings.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographics of respondents	Percentage
Gender	
Male	**55% (106)**
Female	**45% (86)**
Total	**100% N=192**
Age	

Below 18years	**1.5% (3)**
18 – 30years	**52% (99)**
31 – 40years	**33% (64)**
41 – 50years	**13% (25)**
51 – 60years	**0.5% (1)**
61years and above	**-**
Total	**100% N=192**
Marital status	
Single	**57% (110)**
Married	**43% (82)**
Widowed	**-**
Total	**100% N=192**

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the respondents, 55 percent (106), are male while 45 percent (86) are female. In terms of age, the majority of the respondents, 52 percent (99), are between 18 to 30 years followed by those between 31 to 40 years 33 percent (64). Also, the majority of the respondents, 57 percent (110), are yet to marry (male or female) while married respondents are 43 percent (82).

Respondents were also asked to provide their opinions on the African films they have recently watched. This was designed to gauge their impressions about or dispositions towards African films in terms of production and content. Findings in this regard are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Respondents impression of African films watched recently

Responses	Percentage
Positive	
Films produced in diverse languages	**2% (4)**
Educative and informative	**20% (38)**
entertaining	**37% (72)**
Popularising African culture and tradition	**23% (44)**
Negative	

Reflecting foreign culture and ideas	**4% (8)**
Portraying too much materialism	**2% (4)**
Displaying unrealistic effects	**3% (5)**
Storylines lack originality	**6% (12)**
No comment	**3% (5)**
Total	**100% N=192**

As shown in Table 2 above, the largest percentage of the respondents, 37 percent (72), think of the films they have watched recently as entertaining while a lower percentage, 23 percent (44), think such films will help popularise African culture and tradition. Such respondents, 20 percent (38), believe the positive attributes of films watched recently are being educative and informative while some, percent (4), believe producing such films in diverse languages enhances the utility and popularity of African films.

Conversely some of the respondents criticize African films watched recently on various grounds ranging from such films reflecting foreign culture and ideas, 4 percent (8), portraying too much materialism, 2 percent (4), displaying unrealistic effects, 3 percent (5), and based on storylines that lack originality, (6 percent). This shows that, based on individual differences in terms of acquired experiences and other factors that are largely sociological and psychological, members of the Nigerian film audience have varied dispositions towards contemporary African films they are exposed to.

This study also sought to find out what the Nigerian film audience likes about contemporary African films. Responses in this regard are as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

What respondents like about African films

Responses	Percentage
- Aesthetics, costuming, the setting, language, good acting and quality of production.	**47% (90)**
- Comedy	**1.04% (2)**

- **Use of effects and graphics which enhance production quality**	**6.3% (12)**
- **Projecting African culture and tradition**	**15.6% (30)**
- **Entertaining, educative and teaching morals**	**11% (21)**
- **Modernising African culture**	**5.2% (10)**
- **Provide a good means of relaxation,**	
relieving boredom and easing tension	**0.52% (1)**
- **Originality in storyline**	**4.7% (9)**
- **Nothing**	**9% (17)**
Total	**100% N=192**

As shown in Table 3, a slight majority of the respondents, 47 percent (90) prefer to watch contemporary African films because of aesthetics, costuming, setting, language used, good acting and production quality. A good number of them, 15.6 percent (30), like watching African films because the films help to project African culture and tradition, while some, 15 percent (21), are disposed to watching African films because they believe such films are entertaining, educative and morally instructive. This goes to show that people's disposition towards (or use of) certain media types is influenced partly by consideration of certain salient attributes of such media. Also, this, perhaps, goes in line with one off the assumptions of the Symbolic Interaction theory which states that people and groups are influenced by culture and social processes, and that social norms constrain individual behaviour and self concept.

In contrast, the study also sought to find out what aspects of the content of African films do Nigerian film audience dislike. Table 4 presents the finding.

Table 4

Content of African films disliked by respondents

Responses	Percentage
- **Unnecessary prolongation of scenes, replication of themes, titles, unrealistic and overuse of effects and**	

- **Overuse of same actors/actresses**	**9% (17)**
- **Rituals, horror and violent crimes**	**24% (46)**
- **Glamorisation of nudity**	**6% (11)**
- **Voodoo, witchcraft and fetishism**	**18% (35)**
- **Immoral scenes (obscenity) and meaningless comedy (humour)**	**14% (26)**
- **Excessive display of opulence**	**1% (2)**
- **The condescension of Africans and African culture and promotion of western culture**	**14% (26)**
- **Bad diction, wayward language and prolonged commercial breaks**	**4% (9)**
- **None**	**10% (20)**
Total	**100% N=192**

As indicated in Table 4, the highest number of the respondents, 24 percent (46), find rituals, horror and violent crime repugnant in African film content, while an appreciable number, 18 percent (35), would want such things as voodoo, witchcraft and fetish practices withdrawn from the content of contemporary African films. Other aspects of the content of African films disliked by respondents are indicated in the Table.

On the types or genres of African films Nigerian film audience prefer watching the most, the study's finding is particularly revealing: the findings is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Genres of African films respondents prefer watching the most

Genres of Film	Percentage
<u>**Particular**</u>	
- **Entertainment**	**31% (60)**
- **Comedy**	**23% (44)**
- **Horror**	**1% (2)**
- **Traditional rituals**	**12% (22)**

<u>**Combined**</u>	
- Entertainment and comedy	**12% (22)**
- Entertainment, comedy and traditional rituals	**1% (2)**
- Entertainment, comedy, horror and traditional rituals	**1% (2)**
- Horror and traditional rituals	**1% (2)**
- Comedy and horror	**1% (2)**
- Others	**15% (30)**
Total	**100% N=192**

As shown in Table 5, the largest number of the respondents, 31% (60), is disposed to watching, most times, African films that are entertaining, followed by those who watch comedy films the most - 23% (944). Some of the respondents claim to be favorably disposed to watching more that one genre of African film and their combined preference are as indicated in Table 5.

One striking revelation is that those who claim to be disposed to watching other types of African films not indicated seem to be in appreciable large number - 15 percent (30). The genre of African films preferred by these respondents include those focusing on heroic accomplishments of African legends, love and romance, African history about legends, events and developments, religion in Africa: traditional, Christianity and Islam, African culture, political issues, African traditional warfare, tragic-comedy, docu-drama, and adventures and exploits.

This finding further confirms that the mass media audience is active and goal- directed in its use of particular media, the film media inclusive. In other words, this finding aligns with the proposition of the Uses and Gratification theory earlier stated.

The finding on specific benefits respondents derive from watching African films is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Specific benefits derived by respondents from watching African films

Responses	Percentage
- **Escapist utility (a means of relaxation, easing tension or relieving boredom)**	**15% (28)**
- **Reflecting true life experiences in the African setting**	**11% (22)**
- **Educating and informing about the diverse African cultures, tradition and history**	**42% (80)**
- **Education, Information and Entertainment**	**15% (29)**
- **Teaching of good morals**	**11% (21)**
- **Provoking laughter/humour from the African perspective**	**2% (4)**
- **Linguistic enrichment**	**1% (3)**
- **Nothing**	**3% (5)**
Total	**100% N= 192**

As Table 6 shows, the majority 42 percent (80), of the respondents claim to be informed and educated about the diverse African cultures, traditions and history through watching African films. Other respondents, 15 percent (28), claim to watch African films for relaxation, or as a means of easing tension or relieving boredom. Some claim to be disposed to watching African films because they (films) are morally instructive - 11 percent (21). Other specific benefits derived from watching African films by respondents are shown in Table 6. This goes to confirm one of the assertions of the proponents of the Uses and Gratifications theory to the effect that it is individual audience members who make the decision to use certain content for certain ends, and that the value of media content could only be assessed by the audience (Panici & Thomas-Maddox, 2002).

The study also sought to establish the disposition of the Nigerian film audience towards African film producers. Finding in this regard is presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Respondents' impression about African film producers

Responses	Percentage
- Frequent production of inferior quality films with similar themes	4% (7)
- Need to improve creativity and acquire more	
theoretical and technical knowledge	42% (81)
- Molest and exploit actors and actresses	3% (5)
- Are concerned more with money – making than	
with producing quality films	8% (15)
- Few are creative and experienced while	
majority lack expertise and imitate western movies	12% (23)
- They are doing their best in the circumstance	25% (29)
- Produce films from western perspective	1% (2)
- No comment	5% (10)
Total	**100% N= 192**

As shown in Table 7, the majority of the respondents, 42 percent (81), believe African film producers need to improve themselves in terms of creativity by possibly acquiring more theoretical and technical knowledge in filmmaking. In contrast, a significant number of the respondents, 25 percent (49), are of the opinion that African producers are doing their best within the confines and dictates of their environment or situation. Other comments about African film producers are as stated in the Table. This shows that people's perception of others are subjective

and individualistic and are influenced by many factors that could, among others, be psychological or sociological. This finding has relevance in one of the assumptions of the symbolic interaction theory, reviewed for this study. The particular assumption is that meanings are modified through an interpretive process comprising two steps: the first step involving intrapersonal communication in which an individual points out to her or himself the things that have meaning; and the second step involving individuals selecting, checking and transforming the meanings in the context in which they find themselves. Judgment of the performance and image of the film producers by respondents is a function of the meanings the respondents derived from their interaction with the output of African producers (home videos or cinema films), and perhaps on physical interaction with the producers.

The study also sought to find out the medium preferred by Nigerian film audiences in watching their favorite African films, whether at home as home video or at the cinema as outdoor recreation. Table 8 presents the study's finding.

Table 8

Medium from which respondents prefers to watch favourite African films

Responses	Percentage
(a) At the cinema house or theatre	**21% (40)**
(b) At home as home video	**77% (148)**
© Others (at home and at the cinema house)	**2% (4)**
Total	**100% N=192**

As Table 8 shows, an overwhelming majority of the respondents, 77 percent (148), prefer to watch their favourite African Films at home, while 21 percent (40), prefer the theatre or cinema to home. Four of the respondents, 2 percent, said they would prefer to watch films both at home and at the theatre. Preference for home video films by the respondents on the strength of reasons adduced, is premised on the disposition to watching films in a more conductive and relaxing environment, and the convenience and pleasure in repeat exposures with no time restriction

provided by the home setting. Preference for cinema films by the respondents, based on reason given, is premised on the disposition to watch films as an outdoor recreation, especially in a more interactive environment. This finding further confirms the assumption of the Uses and Gratification Theory about the mass media audience being active, their media use being goal - directed and the autonomy the media audience member has in choosing a particular medium for his or her needs gratifications.

The study also sought to find out the disposition of the Nigerian film audience towards films shown at the theatre or cinema house in view of the availability of a more convenient alternative in home video films. Finding of the study in this regard is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Advanced video technology and respondent's perception of cinema films

Responses	Percentage
Positive	
- An exciting and captivating option for outdoor leisure engagement	16.1%(31)
- A merit of enlarged picture and colour display enhanced lighting and technical depth	9.4%(18)
- Provide a means of recovering cost, reducing piracy and promoting home video versions.	7%(13)
- Show originality and represent reality better than home video	6.3%(12)
- Cinema films are adapting video technology they are being shown as video films	24%(46)
- Provide a more interactive viewing experience than home videos.	1.6%(3)
Negative	
- Not impressive because of bad projection, low production quality and sub-standard environment.	10.4%

- Provide a more rowdy and noisy viewing experience, hence stressful and risky 11.8%(23)	
- Cinema entertainment is obsolete and tied to occasions; cinema films are expensive to watch and are mostly foreign.	10.4%(20)
- No comment	24% (46)
Total	**100% N=192**

As Table 9 shows, while the largest number of the respondents, 24 percent (46), declined to respond to the question, there were varied responses from others, some positive and some negative. For example, while 10.4 percent (20) believe cinema films lack quality projection, thereby reducing their re-production quality, an equal number 10.4 percent (20) also believe they are expensive to watch and mostly foreign. On the positive side, some of the respondents, 16.1 percent (31), perceive cinema films to be exciting and captivating outdoor engagements, while some also see them as a means of reducing piracy and previewing home video versions of the films.

To achieve a balance, the study also sought to find out the disposition of the Nigerian film audience towards video films watched as home videos. Table 10 presents the study's findings.

Table 10

Respondent's Perception of Home Video Films

Responses	Percentage
Positive	
- Encourage family togetherness and are more convenient to watch	5.2% (10)
- Are good for home relaxation relieving boredom and easing tension	10% (19)
- Are entertaining, cost effective and improving in quality.	23.4% (45)
- Teach morals, educate and inform about life experiences and are easily accessible.	8.3% (16)
Negative	
- Similar themes, same faces and frequently released	11% (21)

with similar titles and storylines.	
- Endless commercial interludes, exaggerated portrayal of life experiences, and needless serialization of storylines.	3% (5)
- Mere commercial items, hastily produced films that lack moral instructions.	8.6% (17)
- Should be screened because of negative contents (e.g. nudity, immoral scenes, excessive violence, rituals fetishism, western values *e.t.c*).	7.3%(14)
- Mostly of low quality production due to low budget requirement	16.1%(31)
- No comment	7.3%(14)
Total	**100% N=192**

As shown above in table 10, respondents have varied impressions about home video films, both positive and negative. On the positive side, 23.4 percent (45), of the respondents consider home videos to be a means of entertainment, to be comparatively cost effective, and to be improving in quality. Some respondents 83 percent (16) also believe home video films are morally instructive, educate people about experiences of life, and are easily accessible. In contrast, of those who showed negative disposition towards home video films, 16.1 percent (31) believe they (video films) are mostly of low quality production, which is borne out of the comparatively low budget required in video film production. Other respondents, 11 percent (21), believe home video films are too frequently produced with similar themes, similar storylines, and with the same actors and actresses. Other respondents, 7.3 percent (14), believe video films should be screened and controlled because of negative contents such as exposing naked bodies, immoral scenes, excessive violence, ritual and fetish scenes and placing much emphasis on foreign values.

In view of the pervasive influence of home videos, the study also sought to find out from the Nigerian film audience whether or not cinema films should still be produced. Finding of the study is contained in Table 11.

Table 11

Should films be produced for cinema entertainment?

Responses	Percentage
Yes	76% (145)
No	24% (47)
Total	100% N= 192

As shown in Table 11, an overwhelming majority of the respondents, 76 percent (145), showing preference for home video films, as implied from previous findings, still believe films should be produced for cinema entertainment. A significant number, 24 percent (47), however, believe films should not be produced for cinema entertainment. Reasons adduced for continued productions of cinema films include the reasoning that cinema films: help to reduce piracy; are good for outdoor enjoyment; are good for socialisation; are good for the development of the film industry; are a means of family outdoor relaxation; constitute a good starting point for film making and exhibition; command a more exciting interactive audience; are usually screened before exposure; and constitute the standard for film production and appraisal since theatre films, mostly on celluloid are the acceptable standard for awards at film festivals.

Reasons offered by respondents for believing in the irrelevance of cinema films in contemporary times include the reasoning that: home video films are a good substitute for cinema films in terms of entertainment and relaxation; the home video films is less expensive and more convenient to watch than cinema films; watching films at the cinema or theatre is sheer waste of time; watching film at the cinema is risky and stressful and encourages immorality; and lack of time to watch films at the cinema.

Discussion of findings
With reference to the first research question of the study addressing the perception of African film makers or producers and content of African films, the study's findings have established that the Nigerian film audience considers few of them creative, original and experienced, and the majority as lacking expertise, and hence, imitators of western movies, producing films from

western perspectives. While some African film producers are seen as adapting to the emerging trends in filmmaking, particularly in the area of video technology in their productions, there are, nevertheless, some of these producers, the findings have revealed, who still need to undergo proficiency training in the art of filmmaking, particularly with regard to theoretical basis and technical requirements.

The study has also been able to establish that the perception of the content of contemporary African films, particularly home videos, varies among Nigerian film audience members. The weight of opinion is in favour of a new orientation towards the content of African films in terms of a de-emphasis on obscene scenes, rituals, fetish practices, violent crimes, and the promotion of total or partial nudity through film contents. In this respect the onus lies on the regulatory bodies set up in various countries to leave up to their billing in terms of enforcing strict compliance with rules and regulations guiding film production, content of films and exposure guidelines. The Nigerian Film and Video Censor Board has a role to play in this respect.

With regard to the second research question focusing on dispositions of Nigerian film audience members towards cinematic films produced on celluloid and home video films, findings of the study have been able to establish the pervasive influence of video films in filmmaking in contemporary Africa and film use among the African film audience. The video film phenomenon has made filmmaking much easier and cheaper to produce and expose. However there is still the strong belief that celluloid film shown mostly at the cinema still has its relevance in view of its obvious and comparative advantages over video films.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The study has been able to establish that the content of African films, whether on celluloid or as home videos, needs to be overhauled to reflect purely African values, realities and virtues. The study has also established that despite the pervasiveness and popularity of home video films as a veritable platform for home entertainment, they, nevertheless, should not be conceived as a replacement for cinematic firms meant for theatre entertainment. Rather, the two platforms are meant to exist, as implied from the study, as complementary alternatives; the choice of either cinematic films or home videos should be a function of the preference of individual film audience members. Hence, in reference to the foregoing, based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are pertinent:

1.   Rather than use the film medium to project total or partial nudity, immoral scenes, excessive violence, rituals or fetishism, or western values that are at variance with African values, African films producers should concentrate more on producing films

that project positive African values, teach morals as well as educate and inform about life experiences.

2. African film producers should strive to produce: films of high production quality; films with different and distinct, rather than similar themes; films featuring different artists or talents rather than repeated similar faces; and films with different rather than similar titles and storylines released at close intervals.

3. African film producers should produce films that de-emphasise needless commercial interludes, exaggerated portrayal of life experiences and needless serialisation of storylines.

3. There is the need for African film producers to improve on their creativity and acquire more theoretical and technical knowledge in order to enhance their expertise and

4. produce quality films that measure up to internationally acceptable standards in film production.

5. Regulatory bodies set up by African governments (like the Nigerian Video and Films Censors Board) to regulate African film content, should rise up to their responsibility by

6. enforcing strict compliance with the rules and regulations governing film production, film content, distribution and exposure.

Doing all the above would not only improve the quality of film production in Africa, but also enhance the chances of the entertainment industry in Nigeria and other African countries in reaching the pinnacle of development from which most African societies would benefit significantly.

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