

Evaluation of Nigerian Undergraduates on Media and Film Literacy

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Abstract:

Media, and film in particular, are not only popular medium among contemporary Nigerians, but they have become critical source of concerns for media scholars. Given to the fact that film permeate our world through the multiplex phenomenon and the internet, it has become a major concern to investigate the level of film literacy among young Nigerian viewers. Renowned media scholar Stuart Hall argued that filmmakers embed certain messages in their narratives and the viewers most times, decode the messages, while others form an opposite view of what the filmmaker originally intended. With the pervasiveness of film/movies on the internet and other modern technologies, it is pertinent to examine the level of film literacy of Nigerian youths. Consequently, undergraduates from Nigerian universities in Southwestern part of the country were served a 19-item questionnaire through Google Form. A link was sent to mass communication students in Caleb University, Christopher University, NOUN Ikorodu campus, Lagos State University of Science and Technology, and Wesley University- Lagos annex. 336 responses were recorded and tabulated. Findings reveal that Nigerian undergraduates have some level of media literacy as a reasonable number of the respondents attest that they are ware of filmmakers' motive in the narratives, and they admitted that film contents influence their life purview. They agreed that film is a good and one of the fastest ways to reach the people with any behaviour change message. This study anchored on the uses and gratification theory-UGT, recommends that further field studies be launched into this topic to clear some grey areas. For instance, a new study should probe how Nigerian undergraduates make sense of the foreign and local movies about their culture.

Keywords:

film, film consumption, film literacy, media literacy, media products, streaming platforms

I. Introduction

Media scholars Baran and Davis (2012) define media literacy as the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and communicate media messages. This is not about a singular mass medium but it is the ability of people to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication. Put simply, media literacy is the ability to critically access the accuracy and validity of information transmitted by the mass media and it provide information via any medium (Heick, 2019). Media literacy empowers people to be critical thinkers and makers, effective communicators and active citizens. In this era of digital technology where media messages/products are readily available to people in their palm and accessed with just a click or swipe of the finger, media literacy has become increasingly important. With the millions of media contents accessible to people at their convenience, it is more than ever before importa

nt for people to possess the ability to analyse media contents (Bittner, 1989). This is why Vivian (2013) stated that media literacy is the application of knowledge and critical thinking process, which requires continued questioning of conventional wisdom. People need to fully grasp the meaning of media messages, especially in films and television contents. This is because television and film products are the most viewed and common media children and youths consume. With the advent of digital technologies like smart phones, tabs and potable laptops, they view film and television contents most time of the day, when they are not sleeping, working or doing chores. To the youths, mass media is how they stay entertained and connect, and films, TV programmes satisfy these needs (Fran, 2021).

A research firm Statista (2023) recently published a report on the rate at which the American households subscribes to Vid

eo on Demand (VOD). In its 2022 survey, it was gathered that the share of every United States household's subscribing to Netflix amounted to 78 percent while Amazon Prime Videos is about 72 percent. This does not end in the United States alone, as the rate of movie consumption through VOD is increasing across the globe. Today, global streaming platforms like Amazon Prime Videos and Netflix are not only providing film contents to the Nigerian audience, they have created sub platforms where Nigerian films/movies are promoted among Nigerians and other interested audience around the world. These global brands are jostling for the Nigerian film market with many other local brands like Access TV, Red TV, Iroko TV, Ibaka TV and many others. Though, statistics have not shown the rate at which Nigerian youths patronise VOD on daily basis, nonetheless, it is clear from observation that a lot of Nigerian youth's view and download movies from poplar (local and international brands) streaming sites. They could be seen viewing movies on their phones, in offices, shops and in moving vehicles and even in classrooms.

This now brings us to the question of media literacy as concerned groups are always worried about media contents/messages and their effects on viewers. Fran (2023), by making reference to Stuart Hall's thesis, argued that though media messages usually aim at entertaining the audience, they have multiple intentions. In his analysis, he contends that media messages are what the content creators want to convey to their audiences. However, the audience may receive it differently. The submission here is that media contents have the power to influence or impact viewer's thoughts, attitudes and behaviour. They are capable of shaping and reinforcing existing beliefs and views. Any content capable of influencing people's thought and worldviews are considered critically and matters surrounding it are handled with trepidation. The concept of media literacy, especially film literacy, therefore, has become increasingly important to all and sundry. Therefore, this study takes a critical look at the perception of Nigerian youths on the role of media and film in the society. The following objectives are drawn as the compass guiding this exploratory study.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the perception of undergraduates on the role of media and film in the society
2. To ascertain their level of film consumption against other entertainment media products like music, news, TV shows etc.
3. To find out how media products, especially films, shape their life views.

II. Review of Literature

One major human quality that distinguished modern human society from others throughout history, is the ability to read and write. In our today's world, literacy is a requirement for all and sundry while both personal and collective effort are being made to help people become literate. We are now in a world where formal schools are sprouting in every human society to help people become more productive, intelligent and do things smartly (ACARA, 2016). Before anyone can pursue a career in modern times, they need to first be literate. While literacy used to a privilege skill for a few in ancient societies, modern day societies encourage and promote mass literacy because it is the only way to even and accelerate human development across societies (Foley, 2025). Literacy is more precisely defined as a technical capability to decode or reproduce written or printed signs, symbols, or letters combined into words. Generally speaking, what comes to mind whenever literacy is mentioned, it the ability of people to read and write a set of alphabets. Many languages have certain alphabets developed to enable people encode and decode words and human expressions.

The ability to read these alphabets is referred to as literacy. Munarriz (2023) wrote that literacy represent the ability to read and write at a level sufficient for comprehension and communication. She added that this ability to comprehend and express ideas help people participate in society. As human development is enhanced through literacy, the process of literacy is becoming more sophisticated. Literacy is no longer just the ability to read and write a language, literacy rate has been found to correlate to socioeconomic prosperity (Peterson, 2020). With the rising sophistication in literacy, Edens Library (2024) concludes that literacy is now a technological tool that empowers users and cultures. It is believed that literacy is now a commodity which allows literate people leverage their competencies for money, goods, services, opportunities and jobs. Just like in ancient times where reading and writing was an exclusive skill for the privileged few, modern type of literacy are tools and sort of asset for those who possess the required literacy skills (Foley, 2025). Experts have long considered literacy an important contribution to the healthy development of individuals and societies.

However, researchers have found it difficult to confirm widespread expectations that literacy alone will lead to an individual's happiness and well-being, a society's economic growth, or a government's practice of democratic principles. However, it has become increasingly common to refer to different forms of literacy, such as computer, mathematical, or graphic literacy. Most experts believe that people need a combination of many different forms of literacy to meet the demands of modern life (Graff, 2009). While literacy is considered important for modern societies and most nations now have reasonably good level of mass literacy, there is still concern that basic literacy is no longer enough. Many countries with high levels of basic literacy have much lower levels of functional literacy where it is no longer about to write, and calculate figures well enough to carry out activities that many people consider necessary to function in society. Such basic literacy abilities activities like reading newspapers, reading training manuals in the workplace, understanding a highway map, and balancing a checkbook, are no longer adequate for the contemporary human. According to various surveys, from 10 to 50 percent of persons in the United States with basic literacy skills are still labeled functionally illiterate (Graff, 2009; Beecher, 2023).

According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, an estimated 13 percent of Americans over age 17 are functionally illiterate. The National Institute for Literacy estimates that more than 20 percent of adults in the United States read at or below a fifth-

grade level, far below the level required in most workplaces. The rapid rise of new forms of electronic media and advanced technology, such as computers and electronic banking, may put even greater demands on individuals to learn complex literacy skills. Peterson (2020) couldn't have put it any better when she avers that literacy is the global metric used to assess the health and competence of communities. It is now established that having access to standard literacy defines not only a human but also nations. This is why global organisations like the United Nations are working assiduously to promote literacy around the world. With varied definitions of literacy, UNESCO attempted to define the term in a simple yet in an all-encompassing detail. The group states that literacy is a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation and communication in an increasingly digital, mediated, information rich changing world. They added that literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and society (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, n.d.)

2.1 Media Literacy

The term media literacy may appear to be a mere attempt to make people read and write about the media, but scholarly works have shown that the term was conceived as a means of empowering the audience to be able to cope with media content and messages. Buckingham (1998), as cited by La'rao (2023) wrote that media literacy evolved out of the concern to protect the young ones from the presumed negative influence of media on their lives. He further explained that this concept encompasses a range of audience skills in technical usage, abilities to analyse and evaluate the media contents, awareness and knowledge about media industry, about media regulations and potential risk in the media as well as the use of new media to empower the youths for civic participation. Scholarly attempts to define the concept of media literacy have multiple effects, as there are some who took a holistic approach while others are more specific to evolving terms like new media technologies (Aondover et al., 2022). For example, while Livingstone and Hudson (2009) defined media literacy as the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across variety of contexts. Ding (2011) defined media literacy as the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and to create communication in a variety of context.

Baran (1999) as cited in Acheme (2023), described media literacy as the ability to effectively comprehend and utilise mass media content. Adding that, this means the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and communicate media messages. Another attempt by Vivian (2013) defined it as the competences that enable people to analyse and evaluate media messages and also to create effective messages for mediated delivery. Her definition underscores the term "competences", effective messages and mediated" delivery, making it a more all-encompassing and sophisticated skill. Vivian took a more critical approach in defining the term as she explains that media literacy acquires continued questioning of conventional wisdom. Following this reflective exposition by Vivian, Acheme (2023) clarified that media literacy is not restricted to one medium, instead, it is the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication. This means identifying different types of media and understand the messages they are sending. With the current era of information overload, it becomes necessary to develop the ability to critically assess the accuracy and validity of information transmitted by the mass media and to provide information via any medium.

According to Okeya-Oluyinka (2023) media literacy is a form of effort to counter fake news in the digital era as it applies to the traditional media and the internet. This is a form of

critical thinking in respect to behaviour change, cultural dispositions, tastes, process and evaluating partisan content. Scholars believe that media literacy is a communal experience and a necessary competency for engaged citizenship (Mihaailidis & Thevenin, 2013). This critical skill covers print media, broadcast media, and the new media technologies. The knowledge is meant for contemporary folks, regardless of their status, occupation, age, belief since everyone are exposed to mass media one way or the other. Even media practitioners need constant update of the evolving media world to stay abreast with the constant changes. It is a 21st century approach to education that gives people the appropriate skills to evaluate the myriad media contents from variety of forms like video, audio, text, and the internet. It builds an understanding of the role of media in a society as well as existential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democratic society.

2.2 Film as Cultural Agent and the Need for Film Literacy

In addition to being one of the most popular means of entertainment, film is one of the most distributed cultural products in modern time. Film goes beyond the immediate environment of the producers and distributed to foreign society more than news organisation could reach (Shah, 2023). For example, while Nigerian news organisations are not circulating the world, Nollywood films are viewed in almost all the continents inhabited by humans. As film proliferate societies, they also introduce and recreate culture around the world (Aondover & Aondover, 2023). While it stimulates pleasure with entertaining narratives, films express and reinforce cultural norms (Koller, 2015). Through foreign films people learn about other people's culture and even adopt some practices that are portrayed in the foreign films. For example, without being to India, many Nigerian youths have learnt about Indian marriage norms and other practices commonly seen in Indian movies. Similarly, some contemporary Nigerian youths, Gen Z especially, who enjoy Korean drama could speak conversational Korea and understand some common practices, food, clothing etc., from watching Korean movies (Inspire Culture, 2023).

As a medium of mass communication, film educate, inform, entertain and enlighten viewers about their own culture and other people's culture. Through depictions of other people's way of life, viewers get educated and learn new things about the society. Storyline maybe about people, event, government, organisations in distance or near past, yet the narrative informs viewers about what happened. While viewers get entertained watching a movie, they also get enlightenment as the director create the entire sequence to tell a story (Shah, 2023; Ahmed, 2024). Generally speaking, film is a social window through which people relearn their own culture and learn about other people's culture. It tells stories of the past, recent events, and imagined the future scenarios in human society, as political, social, economic, spiritual, scientific matters are creatively recreated to entertain the viewers. Film is a cultural product that is in turn influencing societal culture (Libretext, n.d.). With the increased knowledge of film as a cultural phenomenon, many nations and government are supporting the film industry in their country. They realised that the fastest way to spread an idea, culture, message etc., is through film.

Today, Indian, Chinese, American, Korean, Filipino and Nigerian cultures are known around the world through their films (Bellaniaja, 2025; Sil, 2023). Cultural exchange only become seamless with the aid of film. Since films are viewed across borders, people become more acquainted with foreign culture and have glimpse into strange and misunderstood foreign traditions and this reduced culture shock whenever they eventually come in contact with real cultural situation (Ronaldo, 2024). Tamara (2023) captures this by writing "movies are a great way to travel without going outside and can be extremely useful for getting to

know a town or a country we are interested in.” Film has shaped people’s perception of foreign culture and correct some misconceived notions about some foreign practices and way of life. The implication of having cultural exchange is that, people adopt and imitate what they see in movies (Sil, 2023).

This development becomes dangerous as some sinister filmmaker may produce a film promoting some unpopular cultural belief and practices. While there may be reactions towards this unpopular belief, some viewers would be influenced (Glide Magazine, n.d.). In addition to this problem of cultural misappropriation in films, that is the inappropriate adoption in portrayals of culture by members of another culture (Vitalis et al., 2024). This misrepresentation when done deliberately or out of ignorance, can cause harm to the receiving society as viewers would erroneously believe or even adopt the narrative in the movie (DW, n.d.; Jefferson, 2020). It is in light of these issues about cultural depictions in films that Patel and Michelson (2021) urged viewers to be critical of the kind of films they consume. They point to the need for viewers to understand the messages and cultural display depicted in films. Therefore, it is pertinent to be film literate in order to not only decode the messages of films but also make sense of the entire production.

2.3 Empirical Review

Though the impact of film on the psyche of viewers may remain debatable, no one can deny the fact that film makes a major constituent of mass media products in contemporary society (Kubrak, 2020). With most media operating a convergent broadcast anchored through the internet, the youths spend most of their active time immersing themselves in the films they can access through other means like cable television, blue ray disc, DVD etc. Kubrak (2020) demonstrates how young adults’ perception of societal topics are shaped through films they consume. In her 2020 study titled “Impact of films, changes in Young people’s Attitude after a movie” using psychosomatic technique of 25 scale design, she observed young people’s attitude towards elderly people before and after they watch a set of selected films. The findings reveal that the films have negative and positive influence on the youths. Variables like age and educational status were key indicators of the respondents’ psychological characteristic. It was observed that undergraduates behaved badly towards elderly people after the selected films while postgraduate students behaved nicely towards elderly people after watching the selected films.

In another study by Sifaki (2003) which examined the various national experience and how films shape culture around the world. In the study titled “Global Strategies and Local Practices in Film Consumption” Sifaki probed international film companies and how their global impact caused what she called ‘multiplex culture’. She made a comparative analysis of open-air theatre viewership of cinema called multiplex or multiscreen phenomenon. She concluded that multiplex has not only gained ground but it has become a major means of promoting modern lifestyle like consumption attitude, creating a sense of bandwagon among youths. Noting that the effect of this multiplex film phenomenon is the erosion of public social space as its replacement with a fad of private consumption of youth culture. In another paper titled “Projections of popular culture through the study of the cinema market in contemporary Greece,” Sifaki (2003) avers that cinema is one of the most popular practices in modern societies, as it affects social, economic and cultural practices around the world.

Sifaki noted with great concern, decline in European films/cinema caused by the pervasive dominance of Hollywood which is not only dominating global films but also undermining other nations cultural memory. The Hollywood filmmakers and marketers

penetrated global market with cultural products and making huge return at the same time. Their films have not only pervaded countries around the world, the American way of life filtered through the social space. This study, is an exploratory work to investigate the situation of Nigerian undergraduates and how well they know about media products and films they consume.

2.4 Theoretical Frame Work: Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and gratification theory is one of the media theories that considers media consumers as active agents who decide on what media product they to consume. This theory counters the magic bullet theory and aver that media audience are not docile people who just react to media messages, instead, they have personal reasons, needs, and desires for choosing a media content (Vinney, 2024). As explained by Greenawald (2021), the theory was popularly attributed to the famous media scholars Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in their 1974 work. However, the uses and gratification theory has been in the media encyclopaedism since the 1940s. The core assumptions of the theory centres around the principles that people are motivated to consume media products; users expect to satisfy specific needs from the selected media; factors like individual's personality determines their interpretation of media messages; individuals chose from assorted media media programmes what they want (as media houses fights for viewers' attention); and users are in control of the media they chose (Vinney, 2024).

In a succinct way, uses and gratification theory probes what people do with media and not what media does to people. For example, young people sought entertainment on their smartphone and may decide to view or download movies or music videos. Sometimes, they spend hours on social media viewing contents of their choice because they are deriving the gratification/satisfaction/pleasure they want. Motives for using a particular media like film (movie) may vary from one individual to another. Just like it was stated in the core assumptions, an individual can decide on types of movies to watch and this choice can be influenced by the age or personality of the individual (Fagoust, Winterland, Moon, Parker, Zinzow & Madathil, 2022). Greenawald (2021) further explained that people not just seek entertainment from media, they also use it to gain knowledge or information. Gratification from the media could either be for pleasure, knowledge, information or for other reasons that users intend to gain from their chosen media. Why the centre of this paper is around film literacy, we have many instances to point to in the study of uses and gratification model. Film is one of the most interesting media products that are viewed on television, in cinemas, on phones, computers and other gadgets that have visual screens. Film is a popular medium among people of all ages and most theories of mass media affect the medium. Filmmakers have motives for making a movie and they usually embed messages in the plot, which they want the viewers to learn.

However, movie viewers are not completely passive to decode the messages exactly the way the producers intended. This explains another offshoot of uses and gratification theory, known as reception studies, which aver that viewer make sense of specific forms of contents. (Baran & Davis, 2012: 304). Citing Stuart Hall thesis on reception studies, Baran and Davis (2012) conclude that it is possible for audience members to make alternate interpretations to what the content creator (filmmaker) wants viewers to believe. However, in reality, viewers might agree with or misinterpret some aspects of a message and give an alternative (negotiated meaning). Hall argues that in some cases, viewers of a film may even develop an opposite meaning to what the filmmaker had in mind (oppositional meaning). In conclusion, media audience may receive messages from the creators but not read the same to it. Therefore, viewers of movies may develop different meaning (in agreement with the

producer, have an alternative meaning or come up with oppositional meaning) from the producer's original intent (Ruggiero, 2000; Media Theory, 2023). In this study, attention is placed on how Nigerian undergraduates make sense of media contents and films.

III. Research Methods

Survey is the preferred method of data gathering chosen for this study. Survey is one of the most popular means among social science researchers to investigate public perception on any topic. As explained by Okwechime (2016:27), survey method is used to find out opinions, attitudes, preferences, knowledge levels set of a people. Wimmer and Dominick (2011), gave two types of surveys; descriptive and analytical. According to them, descriptive is used to document current conditions or attitudes. It is used to test audiences' tastes, changing values, lifestyle variations etc. Why analytical survey is used to describe and explain why situations exists by testing variables to investigate research questions or test hypotheses. For example, a study aiming on finding out how variables like lifestyle, educational level, or social status affect viewing habits of Nollywood movies. In this current study, descriptive survey is conducted to examine Nigerian youths' perception of films. There is no intention to study variables on how they make sense of the films they consume. Though, few students from other departments decided to participated in the study, mass communication students are purposively selected as the sample frame and universities in Lagos were selected, which include undergraduates of Caleb University, Christopher University, NOUN Ikorodu campus, Lagos State University of Science and Technology, and Wesley University (Lagos Annex).

While questionnaire was the preferred techniques for the survey, online survey was adopted for simplicity, ease of use and reach. Online surveys are not constrained by geographic boundaries, they can be conducted almost anywhere. The simplicity of using online survey helps social researchers in many ways; first, it cost almost nothing to conduct online survey as most platforms offer free and paid services to researchers. Secondly, the platforms are easy to operate as a novice is guided with animated labels while a user's is filling the forms. In addition, online survey forms are delivered through social media platforms like email, WhatsApp, Facebook, Linkdn etc., making it easier to reach more respondents. There are online survey tools with specific features that perform important functions like breaking down information in pie charts, percentages of variables and collect information of respondents such as their emails (supersurvey, n.d.; surveyplanet, n.d.). These online platforms offer novices and first time users step-by-step guide on how to fill the forms, and they offer templates for dry-run test and services like analysing and interpreting data collected (surveyplanet, .n.d.).

From all indications, it is safer and best for social sciences researchers to conduct online survey whenever they intend to reach wider respondents optimally. This is due to the fact that over 64% (5.17 billion people) of human population now use social media on a daily basis (Khandelwal, 2024). Longe (2025) states that social media replicate human society online, and this makes it easy to observe human activities and their behavioural pattern on this virtual space. Therefore, online survey becomes the most recommended way for conducting survey using questionnaire. Over two decades ago, Wimmer and Dominick (2011:211) believe that in the near future almost all data collection will be done online. Today, we have many online survey platforms like Wix, Surveoo, MtroOpinion, surveyplanet, QuestionPro, Google Forms supersurvey, SurveyMonkey, and many others patronised by academic and professional researchers. For this study, Google form was used to prepare and administer a 19-item

questionnaire through a link to WhatsApp platforms of the above-mentioned universities' mass communication undergraduates.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Data Presentation

The following frequency tables contain details of the data gathered and sorted from the online questionnaire administered to the research population.

Table 1. Gender

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	117	34.8%
Females	219	65.2%
Total	336	100%

Table 1 Shows a high number of the respondents are female undergraduates, as most mass communication departments across Nigeria have a higher number of females to male students.

Table 2. Age Bracket

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16-19	101	30.0%
20-23	104	31%
24-27	75	22.4%
28-31	39	11.6%
32 above	16	4.8%
Total	335	100%

Table 2 Shows that majority of the respondents are in their 20s, with 30% less than 20 and 5% above 33 years. This makes the respondents just the right sample frame of youths to understudy.

Table 3. Academic level

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100	63	19.1%
200	75	22.8%
300	69	21%
400	19	5.8%
500	3	0.9%
Others	100	30.4%
Total	329	100%

Table 3 Many of the respondents are in their early years in their course of study, while only few final year students participated in the study by taking the survey. It is observed that most final students rarely participate in survey.

Table 4. Religious affiliation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christianity	217	64.8%

Islam	118	35.2%
Traditional belief	0	0%
Others	0	0%
Total	335	100%

Table 4 Christianity and Islam are the two dominant religions in Nigeria. A large number of the undergraduates who took the survey claimed Christianity why the rest claimed Islam, none of them identified with traditional belief nor other religions.

Table 5. I watch movies a lot

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, I do	236	70.4%
No, I don't	99	29.6%
Does not matter	0	0%
Total	335	100

Table 5 A large number of the respondents watch movies a lot.

Table 6. I watch movies on different platforms at my convenience

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	129	38.4%
True	123	36.4%
Somewhat true	37	11%
Not true	47	14%
All of the aforementioned	36	36%
Total	336	100%

Table 6 Most of the respondents watch movies on different platforms.

Table 7. I watch more of foreign movies than Nollywood movies

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	128	38.1%
True	81	24.1%
Somewhat true	49	14.9%
Not true	78	23.2%
Total	336	100%

Table 7 A reasonable number of the respondents watch foreign movies than they watch Nollywood movies.

Table 8. I watch movies more than other mass media programmes

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	77	23.1%
True	126	37.7%
Somewhat true	41	12.3%
Not true	90	26.9%
Total	334	100%

Table 8 Majority of the respondents watch movies than other mass media programmes.

Table 9. I learn so many lessons from watching movies

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	138	41.1%
True	161	47.9%
Somewhat true	27	8%
Not true	10	3%
Total	336	100%

Table 9 Over 80% of the undergraduates attest that they learn many lessons from watching movies.

Table 10. I pick up some philosophies expressed in movies and they are working for me

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	89	26.5%
True	166	49.4%
Somewhat true	57	17%
Not true	24	7.1%
Total	336	100%

Table 10 About 50% of the undergraduates adopt some philosophies expressed in movies.

Table 11. I need movie for?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Entertainment	38	11.4%
Education	43	12.9%
Enlightenment	45	13.9%
All of the aforementioned	207	62.2%
Total	334	100%

Table 11 The undergraduates attest that they need movies for entertainment, education and enlightenment.

Table 12. I usually watch movies...?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	82	24.6%
Once or twice weekly	111	33.2%
Weekly	33	9.9%
At least once or twice in 2 weeks	85	25.4%
Monthly	23	6.9%
Total	334	100%

Table 12 A lot of the undergraduates watch movies at least once and twice weekly, making them regular movie viewers.

Table 13. Watching movies spurs me to pursue the good things of life

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	88	26.3%
True	134	40.1%
Somewhat true	61	18.3%
Not true	20	6%
Total	334	100%

Table 13 Most of the undergraduates get motivated by movies to pursue the good things of life.

Table 14. I get motivated by watching movies to pursue...

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Love	22	6.6%
Wealth	37	11.1%
Fame	6	1.8%
Knowledge /education	269	80.5%
Total	334	100%

Table 14 The undergraduates get motivated to pursue knowledge by watching movies.

Table 15. I learnt some simple hacks from movies that I apply in real life

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	79	23.7%
True	161	48.6%
Somewhat true	68	20.4%
Not true	24	7.2%
Total	333	100%

Table 15 The undergraduates learn simple hacks from movies

Table 16. Movies are good learning platforms about the world around us

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	111	33.2%
True	177	53%
Somewhat true	39	11.7%
Not true	7	2.1%
Total	334	100%

Table 16 A large number of the undergraduates believe movies are good learning platforms about the world.

Table 17. I take everything I see in the movies literally

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	29	8.7%
True	110	33.1%
Somewhat true	91	27.4%
Not true	102	30.7%

Total	332	100%
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Table 17 A reasonable number of the undergraduates admitted they take virtually everything they see in the movies literally.

Table 18. I have come to realise that most things said in movies are applicable in real life

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	96	28.7%
True	166	49.7%
Somewhat true	54	16.2%
Not true	18	5.4%
Total	334	100%

Table 18 A lot of the respondents believe most of the things said in movies are applicable in real life.

Table 19. The easiest way to communicate a public message effectively is to make it in movies/films

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very true	94	28.1%
True	135	40.3%
Somewhat true	74	22.1%
True	32	9.6%
Total	335	100%

Table 19 The undergraduate agreed that movies serve as a good medium to broadcast public message, effectively.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This study began with a review of related literature in the area of media and film as a popular culture medium and source of influence on youth's behaviour and lifestyle. Survey was employed as a tool to gather young Nigerian views on the discourse and the results presented in the frequency tables above, are analysed using the three drawn research questions.

a. To Examine the Perception of Undergraduates on the Role of Films in the Society

The findings in the study have a lot in common with other previous studies reviewed. For instance, Kubrak (2020) was able to obtain evidence that film influences young peoples' habit in the society. In her 2020 study of young Greece, she found out that film influences the respondents' attitude towards elderly people. In her conclusion, film can have positive and negative influence on young viewers. In this recent study, the undergraduates surveyed in this study, watch movies at least on weekly basis (Table. 5). From their response, they have idea about the roles of films in the society. As seen in Fig. 16, a large number of the undergraduates believe movies are good learning platforms about the world. Interestingly, the undergraduates learn simple hacks from movies (Table. 15). The undergraduates watch movies a lot and they consciously gain certain knowledge from the movies. Confirming the assumption of uses and gratification theory, which states that people select what they want to view and derive satisfaction from their choices.

b. To ascertain their level of film consumption against other entertainment media products like music, news, TV shows etc.

As could be seen in table 8, the undergraduates attest that they watch movies more than other media programmes. By implication, nothing gets their attention on the screens like movies. It is therefore an established fact that it takes only movies to get full attention of youths. A message target at the youth, especially the undergraduates, would get to them when embedded in movies. As seen in Table. 12, a lot of the undergraduates watch movies at least once and twice weekly, making them regular movie viewers. These findings reinforce previous study by Sifaki in 2003, who proofed that multiple mode of film viewership, as popularised by Americans is causing a major revolution in contemporary society. She made a comparative analysis of open-air theatre viewership of cinema called multiplex or multiscreen phenomenon. She concluded that multiplex has not only gained ground but it is has become a major means of promoting modern lifestyle like consumption attitude, creating a sense of bandwagon among youths. Meaning that multiple form of film viewership is not only popular among youths but it is also influencing their lifestyle.

c. To find out how media products, especially films, shape their life views

This is rooted in many arguments that filmmakers have premeditated message they want the viewer to receive. For instance, Stuart Hall argued that though media messages usually aim at entertaining the audience, they have multiple intentions. In his analysis, he contends that media messages are what the content creators want to convey to their audiences. This message embedded in films appears to influence viewers, especially younger viewers, just as the filmmakers had planned. The undergraduates as could be seen in Fig. 18, believe most of the things said in movies are applicable in real life. Similarly, the undergraduates agreed that movies serve as good medium to broadcast public message, effectively (Table. 19). This collected opinion once again reinforces the popular belief that the fastest way to spread an idea, culture, message etc., is through film (Sil, 2023; Ronaldo, 2024). While this may be a good development, the danger lies in the fact that some filmmakers with sinister motives could present twisted and corrupt idea through their movies and the damage in a society may be disastrous as many young viewers would blindly believe what they see in the movie (DW, n.d.; Jefferson, 2020). As seen in fig. 10, about 50% of the undergraduates adopt some philosophies expressed in movies. As a reasonable number of the undergraduates admitted they take virtually everything they see in the movies literally (Table. 17).

V. Conclusion

While the influence of film grows around the world, it has become increasingly important to possess requisite skills to make sense of the messages, for films are capable of shaping and reinforcing existing beliefs in views. As established in this study, film is a popular medium among people of all age group and most theories of mass media have demonstrated how it affect the audience. Filmmakers have motives for making a movie and they usually embed messages in the plots, which they want the viewers to learn. Though, Stuart Hall argues that in some cases, viewers of a film may even develop an opposite meaning to what the filmmaker had in mind (oppositional meaning), many viewers still adopt the message as intended by the producers. Nigerian undergraduates were examined in regard to this discourse and the results show that the youths are aware of messages in film and they have positive perception of film as a cultural agent and vital means of information in the society.

Recommendations

1. In lieu of these findings, further studies should be launched to clarify some grey areas in this study. For example, while this study demonstrated how Nigerian undergraduates are aware that film influence their perception of the world they live in, the study needs to show how foreign films from Hollywood, Bollywood, Korean, Filipino, etc. Affect their purview of these foreign culture.
2. Further study to reveal how films have made Nigerian undergraduates view the Nigerian culture and society, is needed. Have film narratives influenced their perception of their own indigenous culture?
3. There is need to inquire how Nigerian undergraduates make sense of the messages in films. Do they usually decode the hidden and overt messages in the films they watch or do they seek for clarification from other sources like books, the internet, social media or public discussion/fora?

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