

WESTERN TELEVISION PROGRAMMES AND THE CULTURAL VALUES OF NIGERIA YOUTHS: LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE FROM IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of western television programmes on the cultural values of Nigeria youths through literature and empirical review.

Methodology: The study applied a multi-stage strategy where the population was divided into a number of groups from which the sample was drawn from one thousand youth selected to form a representative population and at the secondary sampling stage the researcher employed proportionate stratification and the sample size of each stratum was proportionate to the size of the stratum.

Result: More exposure to Western television content(s) tends to identify Western television stars as models and the improvement of local television movies in quality and standard will increase Nigerian students' preference for local television product. A number of major conclusions may be drawn from the result and findings of this study.

Recommendation: The study recommends that the Nigerian journalists should be aware of their responsibilities towards the community which is the principle way of helping development. As

long as they realizes that the conduct of their duty and bearing in mind what is good for the society, then they will always guard against feeding their audience with imperialistic messages.

Keywords: *Western television programmes, Cultural values, Nigerian youth, Imo state.*

INTRODUCTION

Television is among the most powerful forces in adolescents' lives today. It is an important medium of communication in the 21st century and is used for several reasons including information acquisition, education, preservation of cultural heritage, surveillance of the society, and entertainment as it provides millions with a constant stream of free leisure strategies and opportunities; family matters; messages about peers, relationships, gender, sex, violence, religion, food, values and cloths just to mention a few (Salehan, Kim & Lee, 2018). According to Garba and Wanapia (2020), besides sleeping, a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF, 2018) revealed that youths spend more time with media than with any other activity. Despite the overwhelming qualities (light, colour, sound and motion) which empower television to command a major proportion of media consumption, the audience may reject its programmes if its content derails from their cultural traits (Liu & Fang, 2017). The multicultural nature of our society today exists as the effect of global media and the emergence of new technologies have paved way for access to diverse and remote cultures via our television, radio, internet, supermarkets and shopping centres. A society like Nigeria which is culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse may recognize the enriching value of diverse cultures and values, and use them in its own way. But then, discussion of this scenario normally emphasizes on the negative effects rather than positive (Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018).

Broadcasters acknowledge the fact that youths "split their enormous media time among many activities social networking, viewing video, exchanging Instant Messages, viewing graphics and photos, listening to music, watching TV, playing games, looking up things, even catching up on the news often simultaneously, (Vahlberg, 2020). Hence, they tailor their programmes for so many platforms TV, the internet, mobile devices, and desktop computers. Developments with mobile media and the global expansion of the internet have driven much of the growth in consumption of television programmes. Before anything else, the paper posits that slave trade, colonialism, and

the missionaries are the citadel of Western civilization and culture in Africa (Kiamu & Musa, 2021). This paper is unable to ignore the fact that colonialism is the root of cultural imperialism and all other derivatives, including media imperialism, in Africa. The unstoppable wave of globalisation in Africa is a result of Western interference on the pace and tempo of cultural growth and civilization in the continent. Though colonialism is now a thing of the past, Africa remains subjugated and dominated by the commodities and cultures of the colonial powers (Lando, 2020).

While several cultural and media imperialist theories have been propounded, this study is anchored on the basis of cultural imperialism thesis (Naeem, Khan & Khaliq, 2020). Cultural imperialism is most usefully viewed not as a tightly defined paradigm but as “a set of concepts, hypothesized linkages, and above all an optic that attempts to locate and clarify a wide range of problems” (Fejes, 1921). It refers to a global situation in which powerful culture industries and actors located almost exclusively in the West and, in particular, in the United States, dominate other local, national, and regional cultures and actors (Demont-Heinrich, 2019). The notion of cultural imperialism as an analytical and political lens through which to theorise global cultural production and consumption emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s to become one of the “staple catch-phrases of the field of international communication”, (Roach, 2017). Cultural imperialism is heavily rooted in imperialism theory which refers to the politics of states politics of states to expand their empire and thus their sphere of power and influence. It has been defined in a variety of ways in the past. In the early days, cultural imperialism, as a concept and focus of research was broad and ill-defined, “operating as evocative metaphor rather than precise construct, and has gradually lost much of its critical bite and historic validity (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 2017).

Cultural imperialism thesis is not restricted to unequal cultural flows between developed and developing countries (Salih, 2020). It also focuses on inequalities in cultural flow among developed countries, for instance between the United States and France. Nonetheless, scholarly studies concerning the phenomenon cultural imperialism often focus on unequal flows among countries not typically conceived of as being in the so-called global periphery, for instance, on inequities in cultural flow from America into Nigeria (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 2017). Cultural imperialism does indeed have important repercussions on political as well social norms and values embedded in the Nigerian society. However, the concern here is not whether the phenomenon in world media culture is desirable or has advantages or disadvantages. Rather, emphasis is on the

historical development of the phenomenon, reasons for its prevalence as well as the obvious but regrettable fact that it will continue to be part of the Nigerian media arrangement for some time to come.

Western civilization produces majority of the media (film, news, comics, etc.) because they have the money and technology to do so (Kreeft, 2021). The rest of the world purchases those productions because it is cheaper for them to do so rather than develop and produce their own. Third world countries are therefore watching the media filled with Western world's ways of living, beliefs and thinking. The third world cultures then start to want to do the same things western in their own poor countries. Cultural imperialism is a key feature of Marx's critique of media theory, which he viewed as dominated by the ruling classes (Despain, 2020). Via this domination, he argued, the ruling classes would best be suited to perpetuate their stranglehold on power. The ideas of the ruling classes are that in every age, the dominant material force in society, is at the same time its dominant intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production. In so far as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of each epoch, they do this in its whole range, hence, among other things, they regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age; thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. Cultural imperialism is an intangible form of colonisation that was practiced by the Western empires that took over the world and exploited insidious and organic link between conquerors and the conquered (Snickars, 2020).

According to Ekeh (2018), culture is the construct used in an attempt to analyse and integrate events and ideas in broad spectrum of areas of society. Jekayinka (2021), states that from wider perspective, culture includes the total repertoire of human action which are socially transmitted from generation to generation. Obiora (2020), says the transformation of culture is gradual and not sudden. He (2020), contends that culture is a continuous process of change. It changes exactly the same way as the human being change. It is dynamic, learned, acquired and transmitted or diffused through contact or means of communication flow from generation to another. The Nigerian culture is observed to be fading out as a result of the acceptance and adaptation of the modernist's solution on to underdevelopment. One of such theories which relates to this subtle method of assault international communication is given by Lerner (2016).

The African cultural values are distinct and vary from one region to the other and Nigeria being the largest African country, with over 200 tribes has the largest concentration of African cultures and civilizations. In fact, every Nigerian tribe has distinct cultural values which are evident in their language, music, songs, dance, marriage rites, greetings, mode of dressing and many more. However, according to Nwagbara and Umor (2021), the Nigerian culture is a complex subject that involves more than music and dancing or arts in general. It encompasses the material and nonmaterial aspects of culture. The material includes the food, clothing building architecture, fine arts and any other physical items, while the non-material includes African philosophy, religion and beliefs, language, proverbs and idioms, morals, behaviour, character, ethics and many other creative aspects. An American Sociologist, Charles Ellenwood describes Culture as the collective name for all behavioural patterns socially acquired and socially transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or artefacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices, art objects.

Bangladesh said they preferred to receive sex education via media sources, with 76% mentioning radio and 73% mentioning television as preferred sources of information (Kubaison, 2021). In Uganda, a study done by the Busoga Diocese's Family Life Education program found that both young and adult men, found information on their sexuality from the mass media, (Kamara, 2009). A study on Influence of mass media on adolescents' expression of sexuality and sexual behaviour in Nairobi Province, Kenya by M'imaita, (2017) showed that magazines are the most popular media that provide sexual information (42.6%). It is further revealed that though magazines are popular, more girls (63.2%) than boys (36.8%) had received sexual information from the television.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

The influence of Western television programmes on the cultural values of Nigerian youths have been said to be a serious problem facing Nigerians. Some of the key issues resulting from western television programmes includes: Inadequate policy to guard the youths towards Western Tv programmes, There is an erosion of the cultural values, The imitation of Western cultures

especially the American cultures, The Nigerian youths are faced with brain wash, therefore, if the above problems are not been taking care of, it will lead to a total destruction of the Nigerians culture. Television has become an integral part of our daily activities so much such that every state in Nigeria has either a State owned Television station, or National Television called the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) or both; and each is popular in its state.

The NTA has joined the league of digital satellite broadcasting firms by launching a terrestrial broadcasting outfit named Startimes. The Multichoice's Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) is struggling to maintain and if possible increase its market share by making calculated efforts to edge out competition. With these activities you will realise that viewers are on a daily basis bombarded with programmes that erode local Nigerian values and impose alien cultural traits which gradually becoming part of our heritage, In other words, while the local cultural values diminish, Western traits thrive this is cultural imperialism at its best. Based on the foregoing the study sought to understand why Nigerian students who are mostly youths have higher preference for Western television programmes despite the heavy dose of Western content invading our television screens, the effectiveness of policies by government and regulatory bodies like Nigeria Broadcast Corporation (NBC) to guard Nigerian youths from the negative effects of internalization of the media.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To investigate the impact of western television programmes on the cultural values of Nigeria youths through literature and empirical review.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Furthermore Lim (2018) that the relationship of globalization and nationalism articulated by this format, together with the typical reality TV strategy of blurring the boundaries between entertainment and ordinary life, work together to concurrently construct a desirable „national identity“. Her research found that audience members find a sense of national pride in Malaysian Idol despite the disjuncture of contestants performing international, non-Kenyan styles such as Rhythm and Blues. A study conducted by Nabi et al. (2013) among 252 residents in Tucson, Arizona found that younger people and “people with less formal education” were regular viewers of reality TV but gender and race were not significant criteria. But the study also adds that each

type of reality TV attracts different types of audience age groups. Raphael (2009) notes that advertisers believe that reality TV, especially tabloid, crime-time and emergency programs appeal more to pre-teenagers, seniors, and low-income viewers and fail to draw the attention of wealthy 18 to 35 year-olds. The enjoyment of watching reality TV also has been connected with the opportunities of socialization that it affords between viewers as they discuss the performance of a particular contestant or develop mutual preference for a certain contestant to build social affiliation" (Lundy et al., 2008). In other words, this capacity of reality TV to enable social affiliation" impacts how viewers have conversations, watch and participate in reality TV. Hill (2002) in his research on Big Brother audiences also found that the social and performativity aspects make it popular among the audience who most enjoyed watching the live „eviction show followed by seeing contestants talk about their experiences, watching the nightly TV program, and talking about the program with friends/family" (Hill, 2020).

In the U.S.A, Several highly publicized murders in schools have alarmed the public and politicians. An average of 20-25 violent acts are shown in children's television programmes each hour (Rubin, 2017). Significant association was found between the amount of time spent watching television during adolescence, with its exposure to violence, and the likelihood of subsequent antisocial behavior, such as threatening, aggression, assault or physical fights resulting in injury, and robbery (Huesmann and Taylor, 2006). Young men often name the mass media as their major source of reproductive health information. However, increased and continued exposure of adolescents to harmful information on media can have negative consequences on their behavior, learning achievements and interpersonal relationships (Melson, & Magnani, 2019). This is because mass media does provide models for emulation that sometimes influence adolescents beliefs, values and expectations. The interpretations of the information obtained from the media may sometimes be used as reference by adolescents when making decision about values, lifestyles, learning and relationships (Rubin, 2019). The impact of violent media on children and adolescents has been the subject of debate since the advent of mass media, and involved complex interplay of policies, politics, research, commercial interest and public advocacy. The U.S. Congress and federal agencies, prodded by professional organizations and child advocacy group, have for example claimed that violence in the entertainment media negatively affects children and have called for more self-regulation and social responsibility by the media industries (Rubin, 2018).

The study was informed by Social Learning Theory as formulated by Albert Bandura at Stanford University, specifies that mass media messages give audience members an opportunity to identify with attractive characters that demonstrate behaviour, engage emotions, and allow mental rehearsal and modelling of new behaviour. Albert Bandura's social learning theory suggests that observation and modelling play a primary role in how and why people learn. Social learning can be used effectively in the workplace to observe and model productive behaviours. However, social learning does not occur passively. The behaviour of models in the mass media also offers vicarious reinforcement to motivate audience members' adoption of the behaviour. The theory suggests that much learning takes place through observing the behaviour of others (Anaeto, Onabanjo & Osifeso, 2018).

Social learning theory argues for imitative behaviour and learning from television, such behaviours seen as rewarding and realistic. It uses both imitation and identification to explain how people learn through observation of others in their environment. What this means is that we learn through television how people from other parts of the world live their lives and even how some individuals attain greatness in their chosen careers. Television often gives such people or individuals prominence and put them in the spotlight. The tendency to act like these individuals is very high because naturally people crave to associate or identify with successful individuals. Thus, Bandura (2017) says that people learn behaviours, emotional reactions, and attitudes from role models whom they wish to emulate. The so-called role models are called celebrities by the media, even when such people do not necessarily possess the kind of moral righteousness expected of them. But the media promote them beyond reason and the youths want to copy them and behave like such “celebrities”, who they perceive to be their heroes or heroines. This is true of majority of Nigerian youths who absorb hook, line and sinker, the Western cultural values of their heroes and imitate every aspect of their celebrities“ Western ways of life: food, fashion, music and the arts, language (especially, English language slangs), rather than using the standard English language grammar or worse still their Nigerian mother tongues.

According to Hämäläinen, Hoppitt, Rowland, Mappes, Fulford Sosa and Thorogood (2021), Social transmission of information is a key phenomenon in the evolution of behaviour and in the establishment of traditions and culture. The diversity of social learning phenomena has engendered a diverse terminology and numerous ideas about underlying learning mechanisms, at the same time

that some researchers have called for a unitary analysis of social learning in terms of associative processes. Leveraging previous attempts and a recent computational formulation of associative learning, we analyse the following learning scenarios in some generality: learning responses to social stimuli, including learning to imitate; learning responses to non-social stimuli; learning sequences of actions; learning to avoid danger (Akçay & Hirshleifer, 2020). We conceptualize social learning as situations in which stimuli that arise from other individuals have an important role in learning. This role is supported by genetic predispositions that either cause responses to social stimuli or enable social stimuli to reinforce specific responses. Simulations were performed using a new learning simulator program. The simulator is publicly available and can be used for further theoretical investigations and to guide empirical research of learning and behaviour.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study applied a multi-stage strategy where the population was divided into a number of groups from which the sample was drawn from one thousand youth selected to form a representative population and at the secondary sampling stage the researcher employed proportionate stratification and the sample size of each stratum was proportionate to the size of the stratum. In conducting the study both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather information through a questionnaire and interview as primary source of data. One thousand questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents, out of which nine hundred and seventy three questionnaires were filled and returned. Descriptive statistics data analysis method was applied to analyse quantitative data using SPSS version 26.0 and quantitative method.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The study discovered that more exposure to Western television content(s) tends to identify Western television stars as models and the improvement of local television movies in quality and standard will increase Nigerian students' preference for local television product. A number of major conclusions may be drawn from the result and findings of this study. There is statistical significant relationship between how often one watches television and one's tendency to identify with western television star as models. The results showed a positive relationship which means that as television exposure tends to go up, identification with Western television stars especially American television stars also tends to go up, suggesting that the average daily television broadcast content and home video cassettes contents in Nigeria are more of foreign origin than local ones. Nigerian students

also tend to identify with Western television star as models for various reasons ranging from their perception of the programmes in which the stars appear as being of high product quality to the believe that the stars themselves exhibit qualities which are in tune with time. The colonial expansion of European states in Africa was usually accompanied by missionary efforts to proliferate Christianity and European civilization. A kind of benevolent tutelage of the 'inferior native' populations occurred that was particularly well-illustrated in Rudyard Kipling's *The White Man's Burden*. The direct consequences of the colonial expansion ranged from genocide that wiped out of large segments of a population, to the subtle destruction of African cultures.

Every culture has a dual tendency, a tendency towards stability and a tendency toward change. What is the contribution of culture to the development process? Surprisingly, on numerous occasions even normally intelligent and knowledgeable Africans erroneously and inadvertently conceptualize culture as 'drumming and dancing' and therefore fail to see any contribution culture makes or made to the struggle for socio-economic development. It must be noted however, that culture or 'the way of life of a people, their ideas, acts, and artifacts' is one of the main determinants of whether a society develops rapidly or slowly. Numerous studies by anthropologists show that the traditional values of a people are closely related to the pace with which they accept or reject the demands of modern industrial or commercial operations. Since no society in the modern world exists in a vacuum, it is the pre-established patterns of culture which, to a large extent, determine whether that society accepts or resists innovation and change and the speed with which this is done.

African culture is functionally linked to the popular media forms radio, TV, and the press since they played a very significant role in their struggles against colonialism and exploitation. Since time immemorial, the media have helped to rescue, incorporate, preserve, and mediate elements which serve the interests of these popular classes. These interests include not only the people's aspirations, but also those factors which define their beliefs, expressions, and historical cultural development in general. Today, in spite of modern-day inclinations, the drum continues to assemble school children in Ghana because of its importance as a medium with communal significance. Popular theater, for instance, are cultural performances by and for communities which give expression to that community's reality, aspirations, and diverse struggles for survival and development. Throughout history, popular theater forms such as dances, dramas, musical

compositions, narratives, and others have played a role in the cultural struggles of the African peoples and their development.

Elements of African culture survived in its various languages, performing and other arts, religions, oration, and literature and depicts the strength of African culture. These elements also underscored African resistance to annihilation and cultural destruction. During the fight for independence, African theatre and cultural forms became elements of resistance and the struggle for independence. Songs, dances, and ritual dramas mobilized people to understand and reject their colonial situation. When personalities like the late Nnamdi Azikiwe, the First President of Nigeria, came to Ghana to establish newspapers, they did so with the conviction that they needed to intensify the struggle against colonialism through other art forms and get the African intelligentsia-who then seemed to be alienated from their people-to see the reality on the ground.

There is no doubt that there exist on our screens movies than needed local television programmes. This has led to the growth of skepticism among the Nigerian youths in whom the destiny of this country lies. If the prevailing rate of weird dressing, sexual pervasion, gangsterism and general moral bankruptcy among Nigerian students is nothing to go by, then one can safely conclude this country is more or less destined to wanton self-destruction. All of these go to confirm that exposure to foreign television alters the original cultural identity of the Nigerian youths. They all show that exposure to Western television lead to low Nigerian self-image and a corresponding high projected self-image among Nigerian University students as a result of their perception of reality of life in the Western world especially American as shown on television.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The perception of Westerners is based on the viewer's construction of social reality and the extent to which acceptance exists for television constructed image of Western reality and further the degree to which the viewers is prepared to substitute that reality and therefore identify for his or her own norms and values. The study recommends that no further time should be wasted in apportioning blames to individuals or bodies for their roles in the cultural imperialism issue. The cultural media domination that does exist in the Nigeria content can only take place within the complicity and social consent of the dominated cultures and Nigerian students as well as other audience members seen to offer willing compliance. However, the following recommendations are put forward as means of putting an end to our cultural values genocide and communication neo-

colonialism. The study also recommends that the Nigerian journalists should be aware of their responsibilities towards the community which is the principle way of helping development. As long as they realize that the conduct of their duty and bearing in mind what is good for the society, then they will always guard against feeding their audience with imperialistic messages. Finally, the broadcast houses should also create and project an in-house policy requiring that staff must air their indigenous name at least while on air. This will make people especially the students to identify themselves as Africans and not imitators of Europeans and Americans. This recommendation may sound trivial but it will likely go a long way to restoring the pride of being Africans or Nigerian students.

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