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Audience Perception on the Representation of Money Ritual Practices in Nollywood Films: A Focus on the Nollywood Film; "Living in Bondage"

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Abstract

This research work investigated the Audience Perception on the representation of money ritual practices in films with a focus on the Nollywood movie; 'Living in Bondage'. The presentation of ritual practices in most Nigerian home movies have gained an increase in recent times, and its implications especially for young adults cannot be overlooked. Therefore, this study critically highlighted the implications of the depiction of excessive money ritual practices in Nigerian films. Undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, were the respondents for this study and they were chosen as the study population as several studies have proven that Nigerian youths are adequately exposed to Nollywood films and are equally familiar with the Nollywood movie 'Living in Bondage' which was the film under focus. This study was anchored on the Cultivation theory and Selective Perception theory. The qualitative research design was employed for this study and instrument of data collection was the focus group discussion in which 12 respondents constituted the focus group discussants. However, secondary data was also retrieved from Textbooks, Journals and e-books. Findings showed that Unizik undergraduate students are exposed to ritual practices as depicted in Nollywood films and also highlighted the connection between these ritual practices and societal issues such as inequality, materialism, and systemic injustice. This study also found out that money ritual practices displayed in the movie 'Living in Bondage' is reflective of real life societal ills and has actually communicated the fact that one could be wealthy and influential through rituals if one plays by the laid down rules and therefore recommended amongst others that a balance should be

created in these money ritual themes in films to also depict that there are other legitimate ways one can acquire wealth and be hugely successful besides the dubious means of money rituals.

Key Words: Audience, Money Ritual, Nollywood Film, Representation

Introduction

The media, especially television and films, have evolved over time while bringing along with them emerging features that are able to sustain the interest of their audience, create mood for them or lure them into taking certain actions. Among the media of communication, television and films are adjudged the most influential; this is because of their combination of both pictures and sound; and their ability to convey messages that may seem impossible for radio and print (Oyedemi and Odeleye, 2020).

Improvement in technology has further made it possible to watch and download films online through the use of cell phones, IPAD, laptops, PCs etc.

Film is a medium of communication which exerts a considerable influence in the society. Since it came into being years ago, film has demonstrated that it is persuasive, passionate, popular, perennial, practical and personal. Although not used by all or even most of its consumers daily, film has an advantage shared by no other medium (Ugande, 2012).

These characteristics, according to Ugande (2012) have made film a superb medium of instruction and persuasion over the years. Like any medium of communication, the film medium performs all the traditional functions of communication such as information provision, education, motivation, integration, cultural promotion, socialization as well as entertainment. While these functions are mutually inclusive, it is the entertainment function that is more closely identified with the film medium.

The Nigeria movie industry under the belt of Nollywood produces more films a year than any other country except India (Evuleocha, 2018). A report of the last comprehensive data as released in 2006, state that Bollywood releases 1,091 major feature films, Nollywood 872, and Hollywood with 485. This figure shows a growing popularity of Nollywood movies around the world (The Economist, 2006).

The appeal stretches far beyond Nigeria. Nollywood films are proving popular all over English-speaking Africa and have become a staple on M-NET, the South African based satellite television network. Nigerian stars have become household names from Ghana to Zambia and beyond. The last few years have seen the growing popularity of Nollywood films among African Diaspora in both Europe and America. The rising popularity of Nollywood, is increasing the level of scholarship with several researchers investigating the genres, production, distribution and challenges faced by the films within the country, region and diaspora. They also highlight the revenue generated annually, the number of films produced, as well as the themes and storylines of Nigerian films (Ebewo, 2014, Haynes & Okome, 2017, Obayiuwana, 2011).

Williams (2012) opined that Nollywood use themes from local realities to tell the Nigerian story and use the cultural diversity of the country to address local social issues. In recent

times, the dominant Nollywood theme that is common is ritualism or ritual practices. Ritual films are about the infliction of bodily harm, physical and spiritual attacks on persons for the purpose of demonic, diabolical and spiritual sacrifices often for money , material wealth or power (Fatoonji 2013).

Movies on ritualism can be described as the Nigerian horror films. Notable ritual movies include; Witches, One Chance, Okija, Living in Bondage, amongst others. Movies on ritual practices seek to capture the activities of ritualists, the experience of victims and to try demystify these very mysterious, diabolic and secretive activities. Ritualism is not restricted to one part nor is it the purview of any ethnic group or indeed peculiar to traditional religion adherents (Ayoola, 2014).

Ritual murder implies the practice or clandestine religious acts of killing the victim with intent to make money to appease their deities which is illegal and morally wrong. The killing of a living creature as a ritual to a god or spirit used to be termed a blood sacrifice or ritual murder is an old-fashioned term that focuses attention on the spilling of blood by ritualists with the belief that this act usually follows with a return of good fortune (Elegbe 2014).

Blood sacrifice might also be used to cleanse sufferers from sin, prevent misfortune or failure and avert evil (OAC Press, 2015). Nollywood films in depicting acts of ritual practices try to portray realities of the Nigerian society, where most beliefs are informed by unreason, dogmas, myth making and magical thinking, ghost, juju, charms and witchcraft as being prevalent and widespread (Igwe, 2016).

This act of ritual killing is performed mostly for money making purposes as shown most often in Nollywood movies. The aim of these movies on ritual practices is to showcase social realities with the aim of narrating the evil involved and outcome of such practices as a move towards eliciting possible attitude and behavior change among viewers. This study is thereforerelevant because it shall reveal how the practice of ritual is being represented through Nollywood movies and the effect it has on the audience using the undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University as the study population.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Film has been recognized as a popular culture which not only mirrors and tells stories which it subsists; but depict the lifestyles, attitudes, environment and activities within a given society (Alawode & Uduakobong, 2013). Nollywood movies in trying to captivate audiences' imagination and curiosity use themes and images that tell stories (Kumwenda, 2008). Films on ritual practices and ritual murder are among the widely used themes in Nollywood movies to showcase African content and cultural pattern.

Nollywood home videos in aiming to catch audiences' imagination and curiosity employ themes and scenes that communicate tales that are not healthy for the society (Kumwenda, 2008). Films about ritual practices are among the extensively utilized subjects in Nollywood home films to demonstrate African content and cultural pattern. However, the act of ritual practices is conducted largely for money earning motives as portrayed most commonly in Nigerian movies. The creation and watching of these sorts of home films presents a concern in the society as they considerably have a large impact on youngsters most notably (Okon, 2015). According to Tasie, (2013), The killing of a living creature (including humans) as a ritual to a god or spirit used to be termed a blood sacrifice or ritual killing is an old-fashioned term that focuses attention on the spilling of blood by cultists and ritualists with the belief

that this act usually follows with a return of good fortune, but these spiritual scenarios and sacrifices has dominated the content of most Nigerian home movies (Tasie, 2013).

However, critics and the regulatory body (National Film and Video Censors Board) have severely criticized Nigerian home videos for placing too much emphasis on what is described as 'negative themes', which include occultism, blood, fetishism, ritualism and other negative practices. Despite the critiques, new videos that depict this worrisome theme without necessarily stating largely the implication of engaging in this negative vice of ritualism are launched into the market which therefore necessitated this investigation.

Against this backdrop, the question is how do the audiences who expose themselves to Nollywood films, perceive the representations of ritual practices in these movies? Does it agree or in contradiction with their pre-existing beliefs on the issue? Are they real or imagined? These, the study intends to ascertain using an audience perception of the movie living in bondage.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is on Audience perception on the practice of rituals through films with a focus on the Nollywood film "Living in Bondage". Precisely, the study will be explored through the following specific objectives;

i. To find out the extent to which undergraduate students of UNIZIK are exposed to ritual practices in Nollywood films.

ii. To ascertain if the effect of the practice of ritual through films influences undergraduate students of UNIZIK perception towards wealth creation.

iii. To find out the extent to which the undergraduate students of UNIZIK perceive ritual practices as reflective of real-life societal ills.

iv. To find out how the undergraduate students of UNIZIK perceive ritual practices in terms of their possible moral impact in the society.

1.4 Research Questions

From the above objectives, these research questions were adopted:

1. To what extent are undergraduate students of UNIZIK exposed to Money ritual practices in the Nollywood film Living in Bondage?

2. Does representation of ritual practices in the Nollywood film 'Living in Bondage' have any effect on undergraduate students of UNIZIK perception of wealth creation?

3. To what extent do undergraduate students of UNIZIK perceive money ritual practices as reflective of real-life societal ills?

4. How do undergraduate students of UNIZIK perceive the practice of rituals through this film in terms of their possible moral impact in the society?

Literature Review

Media Representation: An Overview

Media representation refers to the construction in any medium or aspects of 'reality' such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. Such representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures. It is the way the media presents people to the audience. Specifically, it refers to how various social groups are represented. The easiest way to understand the concept of representation is to remember that watching a television programme is not the same as watching something happen in real life. All media products represent the real world to us; they show us one version of reality, not reality itself. So, the theory of representation in media studies means thinking about how a particular person or group of people are being presented to the audience (Haynes, 2017).

The concept of representation has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture. It is the way in which the media portray particular groups, communities, experiences, ideas or topics from a particular ideological or value perspective. Representation is a fundamental key factor by which a meaning is produced and shared between members of a culture which involves the use of languages, signs, images and most importantly intentions to represent things. Representation is a basic need for communication; without representation we would not be able to communicate with one another, as representation is mainly about meaning which then leads to understanding. According to Hall (2019), representation is produced by two systems that complete each other to form meaning, the mental representation which includes all objects, people, concepts and language, which allows us to describe these objects, people and concepts producing meaning that could be communicated through signs like words, sounds, images and objects.

Representation draws our attention to the media productions; therefore, film, as a means of communication, with the portrayal of its surrounding events, gives a new world to its audiences; a world that originates from the representation of events. Representation involves not only how identities are represented (or rather constructed) within the text but also how they are constructed in the process of production and reception. A key concern in the study of representation is with the way in which representations are made to seem 'natural' (Nicholas, 2018).

Film: A Global Historical Perspective

Dirks (2018), records that the history of film reaches as far back as ancient Greek theatre and dance, which had many of the same elements of today's film world. The commercial, public screening of ten of Lumere brothers, short film in Paris on December 25, 1895 can be regarded as the breakthrough of projected cinematographic motion pictures. The first decade of motion picture saw film moving from a novelty to an established large-scale entertainment industry. The film became several minutes long consisting of several shots. Special effects were introduced and film continuity, involving action moving from one sequence into another, began to be used. In the 1900s, continuity of action across successive shots was achieved and the first close-up shot was introduced, most films of this period were what came to be called "chase films".

Film in Nigeria and its growth over the past decades

Ekenyerengozi (2014) asserts that the earliest feature film made in Nigeria is the 1926's Palaver produced by Geoffery Barkas; the film was also the first ever to feature Nigerian actors in a speaking role. As at 1954, mobile cinema vans were used to play to at least 3.5 million people in Nigeria, and films being produced by the Nigeria Film Unit were screened for free at the 44 available cinemas, the first films entirely copyrighted to the Nigeria Film unit is Fincho (1957) by Sam Zebba; this is also the first Nigerian film to be shot in colour.

The first Nigeria films were made by film makers such as Ola Balogun and Hubert Ogunde in the 1960s, but they were frustrated by the high cost of film production. Nigeria film industry had been making films on celluloid and films were screened in cinema houses across the country; however, the release of the straight-to-video movie "Living in Bondage" in 1992 by NEK video Links owned by Kenneth Nnebue launched the home video market in Nigeria (The Economist, 2006). Nollywood industry exploded into a booming industry in the late 90s and pushed foreign media off the shelves. It is now an industry marketed all over Africa and the rest of the world (Onyishi, 2012).

Obiya (2015) narrated that the Nigeria film industry experienced a second major boom in the 1990s, marked by the release of the direct-to-video film Living in Bondage (1992); the industry peaked in the mid-2000s to become the second largest film industry in the world in terms of the number of annual film productions, placing it ahead of the United States and behind only in India.

In 1992, the release of the classic Living in Bondage kicked off a new era in the Nigerian film industry. This era produced movies that are still referred to as classics like "Violated", "Silent Night", "Blood Money", "Out of Bounds" and more... it produced actors that were and are still household names in Nigeria like Genevieve Nnaji, Pete Edochie, Kanayo O Kanayo, Kenneth Okonkwo among others…in the 90s, the Nigerian cinema culture faced a major decline as the home video market boomed. Alaba Market became a vital commercial domain- becoming the hub of video distribution, and finally, the centre of piracy in Nigeria (Ekenyerengozi 2014).

Presently, the advances in sound technology, storytelling, and technological special effects are proofs that the Nigeria film industry has grown (Izuzu, 2017).

The current era has seen the success of various genres including horror, comedy, action, thriller and romantic drama. From conventional movie plots, the Nigerian film industry has moved on to experimental and innovative films (Apakama 2018). The industry has become more profitable because over the years, web platforms like Iroko TV, Ibaka TV and CixTV that provide Paid-for Nigerian films on-demand have become affordable. Pay TV entertainment platforms like Africa Magic has also invested in the Nigerian film industry, creating shows and award platforms that further project the industry in a good light (Okorie 2015).

An Overview of the Nigerian Film Industry, Nollywood

The Nigeria cinema and film industry dates back to the late 1960s as the business of filmmaking evolved and expanded with increased investments in production and distribution networks, it was in 1990s that Nollywood began its rise to recognition across the world, (Haynes, & Okome, 2017). Although the Nigerian cinema culture cannot be compared to Hollywood, it is constantly improving with great potential of being more widely recognized.

Although, there is a great deal of inspiration from Hollywood that can be seen in Nollywood films, from the production, distribution, storylines, and characterizations, (Shaka, 2013).

The Nollywood industry is Africa's most prevalent movie activity in both the number of productions and value, roughly producing between 1,000 and 1,500 movies annually which shows that Nollywood is making its mark in the film business. According to the article, "Nigeria's Film industry; A Potential Gold Mine, Rebecca Moudi (2013) states, "The Nigerian film industry, produces 50 movies per week, second only to India's Bollywood-more than Hollywood in the United States.

The rising popularity of Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, is increasing the level of scholarship with several researchers investigating the genres, production, distribution and challenges faced by the films within the country, region and diaspora. They also highlight the revenue generated annually, the number of films produced, as well as the themes and storylines of Nigerian films (Ebewo, 2014; Haynes &Okome, 2017, Obayiuwana, 2011).

From a historical point of view, the Nigerian film industry can be partitioned into four eras: the Colonial period (1903–1960); the Independence period (1960–1972); the Indigenization Decree period (1972– 1992) and the Nollywood period (1992–date). Hence, it was in 1992 that "Nollywood" emerged as name given to the Nigerian movie industry. It is uncertain how the name originated but according to Haynes (2000), the term was coined by a foreigner and first appeared in a 2002 article by Matt Steinglass in *The New York Times*. The name imitates Hollywood just like Bollywood, which was derived from joining Bombay and Hollywood, to describe the film industry of India. Hence, Nollywood has been linked and likened to Bollywood. For instance, inherent in both film industries is the experience of nationality in the diaspora. Scholars such as Haynes (2000) and Owens-Ibie, (2005) indicated that the emergence of Nollywood was triggered by various factors, including economic factors and the need to address social conscience as well as contribute to world culture. Nollywood has provided a platform for understanding and expressing Nigerian and African cultures. Owens-Ibie, (2005) contended that the film industry of any country should promote the well-being of humanity, which is a critical issue given the way in which movies play an ever-greater and more important role in society. He further noted that films in Nigeria are produced on comparatively low budgets but are popular and have influence and impact on lifestyles, popular opinion and culture there.

The Nigerian film industry is adjudged the most prolific in the world and the second biggest employer in Nigeria after the government (Omenugha, 2018). PwC's *Global entertainment and media outlook 2017-2021*asserted that Nigeria produces around 2,500 films a year, a figure that makes it the second biggest production hub after India. Consequently, the rising popularity of Nollywood is increasing the level of scholarship and attracting research into its genres, production, distribution and challenges within the country, region and diaspora. Studies of African film have tended to be Pan-African, for marketing as well as ideological reasons. In addition, Dirks (2016) submits that Nigeria is one of only three countries, along with India and the United States, where domestically produced movies dominate local viewing. The industry has also been able to generate and increase revenue through extensive local and international distribution of films, including promoting overseas viewership and organizing film festivals which create awareness of new films and offer access to Nollywood films.

An Overview on Nollywood Movie Themes

Nollywood movies range from the historical aspects of the industry to the themes, plots, production and distribution of films for local and global audiences. The movies have been a source of expressing and understanding the Nigerian culture as well as an influence on the lifestyles of Nigerian people, (Oguine, 2019).

For many years, Nollywood movies have been based on storylines showing constant tragedy, romance, violence, drama and comedy that arouses the viewers mind, (Highet, 2017). Whether the main character is going through constant tragedy to end up triumphant or the characters are caught in a love triangle, there are always high drama plots to keep the audience interested. Within these themes many of the movies include multiple storylines combined into one film (Akpabio, 2013).

In recent times, the dominant Nollywood themes that are common are sex, ritualism, romance, cultism, love, promiscuity, relationship and violence (Emmanuel 2010). The producers are sometimes exaggerating these issues. Although the producers claimed to be using their movies to discourage social vices in the society, as stated by cultivation theory, audience cultivate some values or do learn, and they through the media adopt what they learnt from the movies into their social reality, to say that the negative values from Nollywood movies are not being imbibed by the audience is to deny the undeniable fact. However, these movies can send a wrong message to the public about the country. It can portray the country in a bad light, like ritualism or ritual practices, and more often than not a lot of stories are centred on a ritual that has to be performed, such often involving bloodshed and human sacrifice, (Nwuneli, 2018). People outside the country seeing these movies may think that is all the country is made of and in that sense would have a terrible image of the country and would fail to see the country for what it truly is.

However, Many Nollywood movies also have themes that deal with the moral dilemmas facing modern Africans. Some movies promote the Christian or Islamic faiths, and some movies are overtly evangelical, others however, address questions of religious diversity (Adenugba 2008). Many of Nollywood movies deal with AIDS, corruption, women's rights and other topics of concern to ordinary Africans.

Nollywood and Her Audience

Nollywood is a new player that has crept into the market unannounced. The Nigeria movie industry was initially restricted to Nigerian and African audiences, but is progressively making in-roads on the global scene. Nollywood is regularly featured via satellite or cable (Multichoice Nigeria, BEN TV-Sky channel 194). Since 2008, Nollywood has a dedicated channel offering 24 hour movies service on Sky digital platform to audiences in UK and Ireland; there are also ranges of websites which support the circulation of Nollywood (Esan, 2008).

In the production of films, audiences play a significant role as they determine the content of most Nollywood movies. Some 60 percent of Nigeria's 160 million populations is Nollywood latent audience (Ekwuazi, 2009). The audience factor remains a crucial part of the business in the film industry because audience action, custom and preference patterns, loyalty and good will, determine commercial success (Esan, 2008).

The audience's attitude towards Nollywood films has been a subject of interest for scholars and researchers. A study conducted by Onookome-Okome and Agbontawen-Eghafona (2014) found that Nollywood audiences have a positive attitude towards Nigerian films. The study found that Nollywood movies are highly popular in Nigeria and audience identify with the themes and characters portrayed in the films. The study also found that Nollywood films are perceived as reflecting the Nigerian culture, and that audiences appreciate the use of local languages and settings in the movies.

Another study conducted by Okoye and Ejiofor (2017) found that the attitude of Nollywood audiences towards Nigerian films is influenced by the quality of the films. The study found that audiences appreciate Nollywood films that are well-scripted, well-directed, and well-produced. However, the study also found that audiences are critical of Nollywood films that are poorly produced or have low production values. A more recent study conducted by Oyedemi and Odeleye (2020) found that Nollywood audiences are highly engaged with Nigerian films and that they use the movies as a form of entertainment and social commentary. The study found that audiences appreciate the themes explored in Nollywood films, such as romance, family life and social issues, and that they identify with the characters portrayed in the movies.

The attitude of Nollywood audiences towards Nigerian films is generally positive, with audiences appreciating the themes, characters and use of local languages and settings in the movies (Omera 2014). However, audiences are also critical of the quality of the films and expect film production values.

Review of Money Ritual Practices in Nollywood Movies

The presentation of money ritual practices in most Nigerian home movies have gained an increase in recent times, and its implications especially for youngsters cannot be overlooked. It was argued that Nollywood film industry helps to put Nigeria ahead of the game when it comes to building a worldwide perception of the nation. The films of this industry are distributed across African continent and provide a lot of entertainment for people but its specialization in witchcraft and ritual practices has proven enormously popular all over Africa, and the world at large. The movie "Living in Bondage" is rightfully revered as exemplar of the genre. Alawade (2013) describe ritualism as "a wide range of traditional rites and spiritual religious activities carried out to invoke the gods for a particular course". He further notes that it involves the use of charms, magic and blood amongst others.

Okon (2015) opines that money rituals belong to the realm of the sacred, involving sacrifices, essentially. Okon goes on to identify the sacred and the non-sacred as the typology of rituals. The sacred can be positive or negative. They involve sacrifices for life crises, death rites and customs and rituals of initiations. Non-sacred rituals on the other hand are the imitative types, signifying re-enactment.

Shujaa (2009) equally defined ritualism as "a set of patterns or prescribed processes and orders for performing religious deeds or rites." He went on to say that ritual killings are a particularly brutal and extreme form of criminal homicide in which the slayers remove the victim's vital organs for use in "holy" rites involving human sacrifice. Human sacrifice is a blood sacrifice that involves the killing of a living creature as a ritual offering to a deity or spirit, usually in the hope of receiving good fortune in the form of general good fortune or the fulfilment of a specific supplication (La Fontaine 2011). Whole or severed human body parts, such as the head, genitals, breasts, eyeballs, intestine, arms, and legs, as well as excavated

dead bodies or their severed parts, are some of the items of sacrifice for this rite. This is frequently used as a "faith tactic" to obtain money, fortune, fame, favour, glory, power, and safety from threats.

Nollywood's didactic and melodrama films on ritual practices criticize desires that drive men to put the attainment of wealth before human life and to consume selfishly and excessively on luxury of life. These movies set within the everyday life of the urban Africa, where people's life experiences of scarcity collide with fantasies of affluence (Mbembe, 2013). A onetime Nigerian Minister of information, Mr. Frank Nweke, has also lamented the emphasis on money ritual themes claiming that it gives the country a bad image by saying: You can have stories that talk on things like voodoo but when it is overdue and made the center of any offering, that is when it becomes a problem because the more people see it, the more they will think that our country is all about voodoo practices. However, the unceasing preoccupation with "juju", the relentless celebration of dark rituals and diabolic cults could make viewers cultivate the perception of reality portrayed by these films (Thaddeus Hanmakyugh 2013).

Movies on ritual practices address anxieties about wealth's mysterious sources in a global context where affluence seems disconnected from work and production Akpabio 2017).
In ways similar to many Hollywood movies, Nollywood movies on ritual murder/practices involve conflict surrounded by death and violence brought about by the protagonists' immoral accumulation, and plots revolve in strong assertion, of moral instruction. The protagonists often die painful and gruesome deaths or are redeemed by prayer, though sometimes the state intervenes to arrest the murdering ritualist (Meyer, 1986).

Portrayal of Ritual practices in the Nollywood Movie Living in Bondage

Living in Bondage (1992) is widely recognized not only as one of the earliest Nollywood blockbusters, but as one of the movies that shot the Nigerian movie industry to limelight, gaining multiple recognition for the way it depicted the issue that it was concerned with – Ritual practices in Nigeria and the way it is depicted in Nollywood movies. The level of popularity and success enjoyed by this movie encouraged other movies with the same theme during the same period.

One reoccurring theme in movies shot during the 1990s was that most of them were filled with scenes of ritual acts due to the prevalent get-rich syndrome motivating youths in the country to engage in anti-social acts. The 1990s – 2000s saw Nollywood movie producers engage with this issue through movies like *Rituals* (1997), *Issakaba* (2001) and *Living in Bondage*. It is worthy of note that the depictions of ritual practices are still dominant in the portrayal of related issues till this day.

Living in Bondage (1992) was directed by Chris Obi Rapu, written by Kenneth Nnebue and Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, produced by Ogunjiofor, and sponsored by Jafac Wine. The film was shot straight-to-video, starring Kenneth Okonkwo and NnennaNwabueze in their breakout roles.

Andy would constantly compare his financial state to that of his rich friends. This was even made worse with his former friend, Paul (Okechukwu Ogunjiofor), who was already better off financially. Despite Merit's support and patience, Andy is driven to near-depression, and determined to obtain wealth by any means possible. Paul reveals his secret – a satanic cult where members pledge their loyalty to Lucifer and kill their loved ones in ritualized sacrifices, gaining enormous wealth in return. After much hesitation, Andy reluctantly agrees

to sacrifice the person he loves the most – his wife (Merit). She dies in the hospital days after the ritual, but not before she curses her husband's betrayal.

Andy's sudden affluence and subsequent remarriage three months after Merit's death raise suspicion from his former in-laws who accuse him of murdering their daughter. He also faces more problems – the paparazzi's constant interference in his daily life, his new wife Ego (Ngozi Nwosu) fleeing with his money after he collapses at their traditional wedding, and Merit's ghost haunting and terrorizing him when he least expects. Andy later enters a common-law union with Chinyere (Jennifer Okere), another woman introduced to him by Merit's former friend Caro (Ngozi Nwaneto), but she meets her untimely death after Caro poisons her friend and attempts to escape abroad with the cash Chinyere steals from her husband. Caro is also killed by a hit-and run driver on her way to the airport, and Paul is murdered by hit men after Andy holds him partially responsible for his involvement with the cult.

A now frustrated Andy asks the satanic cult for help, but when the Chief Priest (Daniel Oluigbo) insists he can only pacify his late wife's spirit by blinding and castrating himself, he refuses and becomes mentally deranged, living as a vagrant under a Lagos flyover until Tina (Rita Nzelu) – a former prostitute Andy had previously presented to the cult as a decoy before his deceit was exposed – takes him to her church. He finally confesses to Merit's murder, and Andy's mother (Grace Ayozie) weeps at her late daughter-in-law's grave, pleading for her forgiveness.

The movie's sequel *Living in Bondage: Breaking Free*, also known as Living in Bondage II, released in 2019, premiered on Netflix in May 2020. It was produced by Charles Okpaleke and directed by Ramsey Nouah. Like its prequel, the movie explores the theme of ritual practices. Twenty-five years after the events of the original movie, Andy Okeke (Kenneth Okonkwo) has become an ordained man-of-God, renouncing his allegiance to the secret cult now known as Brotherhood of The Six. The sect has expanded into an international organisation, with most Nigerian members who survived the 1996 Otokoto riots fleeing the country apart from Chief Omego (Kanayo O. Kanayo) – now an Imo state governorship aspirant – and Mike Ekejimbe (Bob-Manuel Udokwu).

The film opens with Omego's son Obinna (EnyinnaNwigwe) murdering his young daughter Kosi (Charlene ChisomIgnatus) in a forest as part of a money-making ritual, and in a nod to the original story, her spirit torments her father throughout the movie, leading to his sudden death towards the end.

Nnamdi Okeke (Swanky JKA) – Andy's secret son by his late second wife Ego yearns for a luxurious lifestyle by any means possible, becomes acquainted with Omego's wife Nneka (Ndidi Obi) and Obinna who both offer to help him establish connections within the advertising industry with an introduction to wealthy businessman, Richard Williams (Ramsey Nouah).

Nnamdi is later catapulted into high society status, acquiring vast wealth and recognition, but his new life comes at a price. Unbeknownst to Nnamdi, Richard is the new leader of The Six, and on a mission to lure him into their cult, and due to Andy's past the Okeke lineage is eternally bound to the dark side.

Richard eventually initiates Nnamdi but, fails to persuade Andy back into the fold after the latter refuses. Nnamdi later regrets joining The Six, especially after falling for Kelly (Munachi Abii) whom he meets at Obinna's wedding when the latter remarries seven months

after his wife's death. Richard and Omego have commanded him to present her as a sacrifice, and Nnamdi is torn between appeasing the cult and sparing Kelly's life.

Toby visits the depressed Nnamdi to get to the bottom of the latter's melancholy demeanor and passes the night at his place, but Richard possesses Nnamdi, commanding him to stab his sleeping cousin in lieu of Kelly. Unable to resist, Nnamdi resorts to stabbing himself instead and is rushed to hospital where he survives and reconciles with his biological father Andy whom he had previously rejected. Members of The Six are arrested after a recording Obinna sent to Uzoma before his suicide is used as evidence.

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that Nollywood filmmakers consciously use their movies to warn society of the adverse consequences of indulging in ritual crimes. Hence everyone involved in the despicable behaviour comes to a tragic and regrettable end.

Empirical Review

This section of chapter two examines various researches conducted by scholars over the media representation and audience analysis of the practice of rituals through films.

Salihu (2019) in his study, "The growing phenomenon of money rituals" investigated how beliefs in magical powers and related sacred activities, particularly those that accept human body parts for ritual sacrifices in return for fortunes, alongside poverty, unemployment, and quest for wealth as predictors responsible for the increase in money ritual-related killings in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, Nigeria. A total of 1736 respondents were selected using simple random sampling techniques. The instrument employed for data collection was a questionnaire. In addition, the information gathered was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The results indicated that the increase in money ritual related killings in Ilorin Emirate is a result of the general belief that ritual sacrifices enhance fortunes, the boundless desire for material wealth among Nigerians, unemployment, and poverty in Nigeria. Therefore, this study suggests that there should be public enlightenment in all languages spoken in Nigeria about the dangers in associating individual success with spiritual influences.

Asiegbu Bature-Uzor (2017) examines rituals in Nollywood films as statements on the life patterns of the Nigerian society. This research involves a textual analysis of the video film text, Issakaba 1. The choice of this film narrative is informed by the thematic content in relation to the ideologies of the Nigerian society. The findings reveal that rituals are part of the culture and belief systems of the Nigerian society. In that case, Nollywood films can only present their narratives against the backdrop of culture by relating content to existing situations within the society. The paper therefore recommends that for proper critical assessment of rituals in Nollywood films, an understanding of the culture and belief system of the Nigerian society is important.

This study, 'Perception of materialism portrayal in Nollywood Movies' Nnaemeka (2017) examined the perception of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) undergraduates on the portrayals of materialism in Nollywood movies. The main objective was to investigate whether Nollywood movies' portrayals of materialism influence Nigerian youth. The study was anchored on Cultivation theory, which contends that people tend to copy what they see others do. The survey research method was used in carrying out the study. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was the instrument used in collecting data for the study. Results revealed among others that the respondents were quite exposed to Nollywood movies that portray themes of materialism and that the respondents perceive portrayal of materialism

negatively for its make-believe effects. The study recommends among others that film producers should as a matter of necessity highlight positive life styles in the movies while denouncing the negative aspects. It also recommends the portrayal and preservation of positive cultural values in local movies.

Another study was done by Onwuzulike (2016) on Audience Reactions to the different Aspects of Nollywood Movies. The study examined the various reactions by audience of Nollywood movies based on different aspects of the movies. The study made use of the survey method in gathering response from respondents with the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Findings from the study had it that Nollywood audiences recognize the same inefficiency, including poor production and of course, repetition of the themes; yet Nollywood audiences still support the movie industry, the study also found out that the geographical location of Nigeria audiences impacted the tastes and choices of their movies. The study recommended among other things that Nollywood filmmakers should try to depict the true Nigerian and African cultures as much as they can and that additional research should be encouraged in fostering the relationship between Nollywood and audiences with respect to preserving African cultures.

Akpabio (2007) carried out a study on Attitude of Audience towards Nollywood films. The purpose of the study was to know the attitudes Nollywood audience members portray towards their films. To achieve this, the study employed survey method and administration of questionnaire. The study concluded that respondents have a largely favourable attitude to Nigerian home video productions. However they expressed the view that there is too much emphasis on themes such as ritual practices, witchcraft, human sacrifices, evils of polygamy, devilish spiritualism and related themes. The study therefore recommends among other things that film producers in Nigeria should endeavour to explore other wholesome themes that depict the country as good and not lay too much emphasis on themes such as ritual practices, witchcraft, human sacrifices, sex, prostitution, etc since these will not speak good about the country. It also recommends that the film regulatory body in the country should endeavour to be stricter when it comes to censorship, not to allow negatives themes to take over the film industry.

Theoretical Framework

The Cultivation Theory

The Cultivation theory developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross in 1975 considers the media as moulders of the society. The cultivation theory (sometimes referred to as the cultivation analysis) was used to study whether and how watching television may affect viewers' ideas of what everyday world is like. Cultivation theorists argue that television (movies) have long term influences which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant (Baran, 2009).

According to this theory, persistent exposure to mass media leads audiences to adopt their content (the ideologies embedded within them as consensual view of society (McQuail and Windahls, 1993). In line with this assertion, Nwunekli, Nwankwo, Obiora & Adibe in Okunna (2012) concede that perception of social reality will correspond closely to the mass media 'realities' because the images of the world portrayed in the media will be internalized and accepted as accurate representations of reality by media audiences.

This theory further argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture; the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thus, binding it together.

Cultivation theory looks at the mass media as a socializing agent and investigates whether movie viewers come to believe the movie version of reality the more they watch it. The research contends that movie has small but significant influence on the attitude, beliefs and judgement of viewers concerning the social world. This theory focuses on "heavy viewers". People who watch a lot of movie are likely to be more affected by the ways in which the world is formed by the media than are individuals who watch less, especially regarding topics of which the viewer has little first-hand experience.

This theorist sees film as a cultural arm of the established industrial order and as such serves primarily to maintain, stabilize and reinforce rather than to alter, threaten or weaken conventional beliefs and behaviours. Film is not a force for change so much as it is a force for stability (Wogu 2008).

The basic assumption of the cultivation theory is that the more time people spend watching movies, the more their world view will be like those spread by the media. According to this theory, heavy television viewers would tend to take the social reality portrayed by television as the same as real life. If light viewers and heavy viewers were asked questions about any aspect of life constantly portrayed on television, heavy viewers would give television answers to those questions of life, implying that they have adopted the television portrayal of life as reality.

Cultivation theory tackles the long-term effects of television on viewers. The theory proposes that the danger of television lies in its ability to shape people's moral values and general beliefs about the world. The theory stands on a number of concepts; the symbolic environment, story-telling, the cultural model, the cultivation of value system, the multi-directional process, and the cultural indicators.

A good number of studies have given credence to the cultivation theory. The relevance of this theory to this study is that movies provide a prism through which Undergraduates students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University perceive money ritual practices in the Nigerian film industry.

Selective Perception Theory

The Selective perception theory, also known as selective exposure, is the theory that an audience's interpretation of media is dependent on their personal beliefs. The public willingly chooses to consume media that aligns with their principles. If they consume media that does not reflect their ideas, the audience will view and construe the medium's content in a frame that supports their original ideals, in this way, every piece of content portrayed in a medium will be placed in an agreeable stance with the viewer's belief or be ignored.

This theory was originally established by Paul Lazarsfeld under the Bureau of Applied Social Research in the Columbia School. Lazarsfeld was an American sociologist who wrote The People's Choice in 1948, a book on how voters determine their presidential candidate. Co-authored with Bernard Berelson, Lazarsfled claimed that the media has little influence over the public's opinion in voting (Danesi 2013). The theory is relevant to this study as it is concerned with the media representations of the practice of ritual through films prompting which form the crux of this research.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design to analyse Audience Perception on the practice of rituals through film. Given the nature of the study, the researcher chose focus group discussion as a research method for the collection of data. The area of study is the main campus of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. It is a federal tertiary institution of learning situated in Awka, Awka South local Government Area of Anambra state Nigeria. The rationale behind using this population is the fact that the students would be an appropriate representation of the Nollywood film audience as studies have shown that youths make up the vast majority of the film audience and are therefore in a better position to analyse this phenomenon. The sample size is 12 respondents who made up the focus group drawn through the snowball technique.

Discussion of Findings

Objective One: Exposure Frequency to Ritual Practices in Nollywood Films: Most participants watch Nollywood films occasionally, especially during cultural events or leisure time and have watched the film 'Living in Bondage" which exposed them to ritual practices as depicted in the film.Participants generally agree that Nollywood films often incorporate ritual practices as significant plot elements.Participant 9 notes that he is often exposed to ritual practices in nollywood films and which are frequently used as narrative devices to create suspense and drama. Participant 6 opines that she watches Nollywood films to relax after the day's lectures and have come across some films that are filled with ritual practices. Participant 4 states that he hardly exposes himself to Nollywood films because they films are usually not interesting. Participant 10 agrees that Nollywood films are so interesting and teaches life lessons reason he watches them most often. He agrees that he has been exposed to films with ritual contents in the course of viewing. Participant 11 rarely watches Nollywood films because of the repetitive storyline. Participant 18 watches occasionally whenever she's less busy and has equally been exposed to ritual contents in the movies. Participant 14 states that she has watched a lot of nollywood films filled with ritual practices. Participant 3 was of the opinion that whatever knowledge she has of ritual practices were definitely through her exposure to Nollywood films. Participant 1 mentions that ritual practices are prevalent in Nollywood films across various genres, attracting diverse audiences and admits he has watched a couple of them. From the responses above, it is evident that unizik undergraduates are to a reasonable extent exposed to ritual practices in Nollywood films which cuts across genres in a bid to attract diverse audience. This indicates that youths access these movies that are laced with ritual practices through various movie platforms and expose themselves to it thereby bringing to their consciousness that certain ritual practices can be performed to facilitate one's desire to aim higher in life. The findings of this research question is in line with Akpabio (2007), Attitude of Audience towards Nollywood films, where the study is of the view that there is too much emphasis on themes such as ritual practices, witchcraft, human sacrifices, evils of polygamy, devilish spiritualism and related themes which the audience are largely exposed to. The study eulogized film producers in Nigeria to endeavour to explore other wholesome themes that depict the country as good and not lay too much emphasis on negative themes that do not speak good about the country. It also recommends that the film regulatory body in the country should endeavour to be stricter when it comes to censorship, not to allow negatives themes to take over the film industry. This study validates research question one, it is evident in the responses from majority of Unizik undergraduate students that they were highly exposed to ritual practices when they watched Nollywood films with an emphasis on the movie 'Living in Bondage' and that these ritual practices displayed in this movie is more real than imagined.

Objective 2: Influence of Ritual practices in Films on Undergraduates' Perception Towards Wealth Creation

To ascertain if the effect of the practice of ritual through films influences undergraduate students of UNIZIK perception towards wealth creation, participants responses are found below;

Participant 10: I think these films do influence us, especially when they depict rituals surrounding wealth or success. They create this aura of mysticism and power around wealth that can affect how we perceive it in real life.

Participant 12: I agree. These films often portray wealth as something almost magical, attainable through secret rituals or knowledge. It's easy to see how that could influence our perceptions, especially when we're young and impressionable.

Participant 8: On the other hand, I'm not sure how much these films really impact us. Sure, they might be entertaining, but at the end of the day, we know they're just fiction. I think most of us can separate fantasy from reality.

Participant 4: I remember watching the film 'Living in Bondage' where the protagonist had to perform a series of rituals to attain wealth and success. Even though it was just a movie, it made me wonder if there's some hidden knowledge or secret rituals that successful people know about.

Participant 7: Yeah, I think those kinds of films can create a sense of curiosity about the occult or esoteric practices like the film 'Living in Bondage'. It's like they suggest there's more to success than just hard work and determination.

Participant 5: Definitely. A lot of these films seem to suggest that wealth is only attainable through extraordinary means, like magic or supernatural powers. It creates this idea that ordinary people can't achieve success without some kind of special advantage.

Participant 6: I agree. It's like they're promoting this idea of a secret elite class that has access to hidden knowledge and rituals for success. It's not a healthy message to be sending, especially to young people like us. It can have a negative influence on our young minds.

Participant 3: I think sometimes we might subconsciously adopt certain behaviors or attitudes we see in these films, even if we're not consciously trying to emulate them. It's like they become a part of our cultural consciousness, influencing how we perceive the world around us.

Participant 1: I can see that. It's like how advertising works - even if we don't realize it, we're still being influenced by the messages and images we see in the media.

Participant 12: I think it's important to be aware of the media we consume and how it shapes our perceptions of the world. Even if we enjoy watching these films, we should always critically examine the messages they're sending us.

Participant 11: Absolutely. We shouldn't just passively accept everything we see on screen as truth. We need to think critically and question the underlying assumptions and stereotypes being presented to us because these ritual practices depicted in these films definitely has a negative influence on us.

From the responses above, it is obvious that most of the respondents are of the opinion that the practice of rituals in films influences undergraduate students of UNIZIK perception towards wealth creation mostly negatively with some of the respondents citing the movie 'Living in Bondage' where certain ritual practices were carried out to generate wealth. The respondents all agreed that it definitely influenced their perception towards wealth creation making them believe that quick wealth can be attained through secret rituals or knowledge.The findings to this research question is in agreement with Nnaemeka (2017), "Perception of materialism portrayal in Nollywood Movies". The researcher examined the perception of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) undergraduates on the portrayals of materialism in Nollywood movies. The main objective was to investigate whether Nollywood movies' portrayals of materialism influence Nigerian youth in wealth creation. The study was anchored on Cultivation theory, which contends that people tend to copy what they see others do. Results from this study revealed that the respondents were quite exposed to Nollywood movies that portray themes of materialism and wealth creation and that the respondents perceive portrayal of materialism negatively for its make-believe effects. This study corresponds with the responses to the second research question gotten from the respondents, where Unizik undergraduate students stated that these ritual practices being displayed in the movie has not effect on them in terms of wealth creation and equally doesn't instigate their drive to acquire wealth, the answers from the respondents show that in as much as the movie 'Living in Bondage' displays that fast wealth is being gotten through ritual killings and sacrifices, it still doesn't instigate their drive in acquiring money or move them in anyway in terms of wealth creation. This study by Nnaemeka (2017) recommended among others that film producers should as a matter of necessity highlight positive lifestyles in the movies while denouncing the negative aspects. It also recommends the portrayal and preservation of positive cultural values in local movies.

Objective 3:Perception of Unizik Undergraduates on Ritual Practices Reflecting Real life Societal Ills: On whether ritual practices represented in Nollywood films reflected real life societal ills, the respondents had these to say:

Participant 1: Rituals, to me, signify a way for communities to come together and reinforce shared values. But I also think they can sometimes perpetuate harmful beliefs or practices that reflect deeper societal issues.

Participant 2: I agree. Some rituals seem outdated or even harmful, like those reinforcing gender stereotypes or discrimination based on caste or race.

Participant 3:But isn't it also true that rituals evolve over time? What might have been meaningful or necessary in the past might not hold the same significance today.

Participant 4: Well, in my culture, there's this ritual where women are expected to serve food to men first during family gatherings. It might seem harmless, but it perpetuates the idea of women being subservient to men.

Participant 3: Well, I think there's definitely a connection. In many cultures, there are rituals or practices believed to bring wealth or success. But, often, these rituals perpetuate inequality and reinforce existing power structures.

Participant 5: I agree. Many of these rituals promote materialism and individualism, which can contribute to societal divisions and disparities.

Participant 6: In my community, there's a belief that burning certain herbs or performing specific ceremonies can attract financial prosperity. However, this often leads people to prioritize these rituals over addressing systemic issues like poverty and economic inequality.

Participant 7: Similarly, in my culture, there's a tradition of giving extravagant gifts or offerings to religious figures in exchange for wealth or blessings. This perpetuates the idea that wealth can be obtained through external forces rather than hard work and merit.

Participant 8: I think some rituals can provide a sense of community and cultural identity. However, when they become solely focused on wealth accumulation, they lose their intrinsic value and become harmful.

Participant 9: I agree. Rituals can be meaningful expressions of spirituality and tradition. But when they're commodified or used as a means to gain wealth, they lose their authenticity and contribute to societal problems.

Participant 10: I think universities should promote critical thinking and encourage students to question societal norms and practices, including rituals associated with wealth creation. Participant 4: I found the portrayal of ritual practices in the movie to be quite disturbing. It depicted them as a means to acquire wealth and power at the expense of others' lives and well-being

Participant 11: Universities can also provide education on economic and social systems, helping students understand the root causes of inequality and how these rituals perpetuate existing disparities.

Participant 12: I just want to emphasize the importance of recognizing the underlying societal issues that contribute to the perpetuation of these rituals. Addressing poverty, inequality, and systemic injustices is essential for creating a more equitable society.

Participant 13: Absolutely. It's not enough to critique these rituals; we need to actively work towards dismantling the systems that sustain them.

The responses above provided valuable insights into the perceptions of undergraduate students regarding ritual practices associated with wealth creation and their reflection on real-life societal ills. Participants highlighted the connection between these rituals and societal issues such as inequality, materialism, and systemic injustice. They emphasized the need for critical thinking, education, and systemic change to address these issues effectively. The discussion underscored the importance of understanding the underlying dynamics of ritual practices in Nollywood films and their impact on broader social structures.

The finding to this research question is in line with Salihu (2019). In his study, “The growing phenomenon of money rituals”, where the researcher investigated how beliefs in magical powers and related sacred activities, particularly those that accept human body parts for ritual sacrifices in return for fortunes, alongside poverty, unemployment, and quest for wealth as predictors responsible for the increase in money ritual-related killings in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, Nigeria. The results from this findings indicated that the increase in money ritual related killings in Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State, Nigeria is as a result of the general belief that ritual sacrifices enhances fortunes, the boundless desire for material wealth among Nigerians, unemployment, and poverty in Nigeria. This study validates research question three which shows that these ritual practices being displayed in the movie ‘Living in Bondage’ is reflective of real life societal ills as having caused more harm than good to the

society due to what is being displayed in the movie, this has triggered to a large extent money-ritual related killings in the society and quest for wealth, because few of the audience whose opinions are being influenced by what they see and watch would want to involve themselves in ritual practices because of the juicy benefits being displayed in the movie forgetting that there are consequences to every actions. Therefore, Salihu (2019), in his study suggests that there should be public enlightenment in all languages spoken in Nigeria about the dangers of associating individual successes with spiritual influences in form of rituals, human sacrifices and secret cults.

Objective Four: Undergraduate Perceptions of Ritual Practices Depicted in the Nollywood Movie "Living in Bondage" and Their Moral Impact on Society

To ascertain Unizik undergraduates' perceptions regarding ritual practices as depicted in the Nollywood movie "Living in Bondage" and their potential moral impact on society, the participants responded thus;

Participant 5: I have watched the film 'Living in Bondage" and the movie showcased how individuals were willing to sacrifice their morals and even commit murder in pursuit of material gain through rituals. It sends a dangerous message that success can be achieved through unethical means.

Participant 6: Having seen the film, I must say that while the film might exaggerate certain aspects for dramatic effect, it does draw from real-life beliefs and practices surrounding ritualism in Nigeria. There have been cases where people have engaged in ritualistic activities to attain wealth or power.

Participant 7: I agree. The film might be fictional, but it sheds light on underlying societal issues and beliefs that contribute to the prevalence of ritual practices. It also shows that there are negative effects that emanates from practicing these rituals. The film exposed these ritual practices and then condemned it.

Participant 8: I think the film has the potential to reinforce negative stereotypes and misconceptions about ritual practices. It might lead some individuals to believe that engaging in rituals is a legitimate path to success.

Participant 9: Additionally, the glamorization of wealth obtained through rituals can desensitize viewers to the ethical implications of such actions. It blurs the line between right and wrong.

Participant 10: Absolutely. While the film might be controversial, it prompts discussions about the moral implications of pursuing wealth and success at any cost. It forces viewers to confront uncomfortable truths about societal attitudes towards materialism and greed.

Participant 11: I agree. It's a cautionary tale that highlights the dangers of prioritizing material wealth over ethical principles and human decency.

Participant 12: I just want to emphasize the importance of critical media literacy. It's essential for viewers to critically analyze and question the messages conveyed in films like "Living in Bondage" rather than passively accepting them.

The responses above indicate that majority of the respondents have watched the film 'Living in Bondage'and have expressed concerns about the glamorization of wealth obtained through unethical means in the film and emphasized the importance of critical media literacy in

interpreting such portrayals. Respondents agree that such representations have a huge moral impact in the society which could be positive or negative depending on how a viewer perceives the ritual practices depicted in the film. They therefore emphasized the need for filmmakers to be mindful of the messages they convey and their potential societal impact.

Finding from this research question shows that the respondents perceive the portrayal of materialism in Nollywood movies as real life situations and therefore encourages laziness, and the urge for inordinate acts such as fraud (419), involving in Ponzi schemes, secret cults, ritual killings among others. The findings validates an earlier finding by Okorie (2003) who explores how rituals of human sacrifices are presented as being an effective means of getting wealth in Nollywood movies. He stated that though the goal of the films is to denounce the human sacrifice as a means of getting rich in the society but the films tend to have contradicting meanings. According to him, the stated moral intent of the films is to present a form of bad behavior in order to discourage people from engaging in it, yet more than anything else, the films validate the efficacy of rituals in the way and manner that the characters in the filmed rituals are portrayed as extremely rich and highly successful.

Conclusion

This study has thoroughly examined a phenomenon of great expediency in our today's Nigeria. That phenomenon, though essentially art-related, is also of economic, social and cultural impact. That phenomenon being how money ritual practices were being represented in the movie "Living in Bondage" is very pertinent and imperative to note that they are of great essence to our society and reflect societal ills. In this study, two significant factors have been bequeathed to our academic environment. The first is that these money ritual practices in the movie "Living in Bondage" are reflective of real life societal ills and also that they contribute to societal impact morally because the lessons learnt from this film can help curb and eradicate real life societal ills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Nollywood producers and scriptwriters are encouraged to do an in-depth research into story lines in order to avoid churning out unreal or absurd stories to the public.
2. A balance should be created in these money ritual themes to also depict that there are other legitimate ways one can acquire wealth besides the dubious means of money rituals.
3. Nigerian youths should be made to understand that there are other means to acquire wealth legally which can be facilitated through empowering them in the area of skill acquisitions and programs pioneered by the government and other relevant agencies.
4. Filmmakers are encouraged to collaborate with relevant youth agencies in creating adequate awareness through films on the dangers of engaging in ritual practices for wealth creation.

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