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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## DEGENERATING MORALS AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN CALABAR METROPOLIS: THE ROLE OF THE MOVIE INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

Nkang, Rosemary Ani, (M.Ed)<sup>\*1</sup> Akah, Levi Udochukwu (PhD)<sup>1</sup> & Nkang, Udeme Ani (B.Sc.)<sup>2</sup>

1. University of Calabar, Faculty of Education, Dept. of Human Kinetics and health Education

2. University of Calabar, Faculty of Arts, Dept. of Linguistics and Communication Studies

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#### \*Corresponding Author

Nkang, Rosemary (M.Ed.)

### Abstract

This study was undertaken to investigate the consequences of home video degenerating morals among adolescents in Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas of Cross River State. It specifically sought to find out whether there was any relationship between home video and degenerative behaviours among adolescents. To achieve the aim of this study, two research questions and two hypotheses were generated to guide the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 97 respondents. Two Local Government areas across the state were covered in the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency, percentages and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics. The findings of the study revealed that home videos significantly relate with violent behaviours and substance abuse (cigarette and cannabis) among adolescents. Based on the result of the study, it was recommended among others that: parents should monitor the type of programmes their children watch on television at home; the government should monitor and sanction movie producers who release violence oriented movies and on-screen smoking for public and home viewing.

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## INTRODUCTION

Home video is one of the strongest media outlets and because it is widespread, it could influence the culture of the any society, especially among the younger generation. The home video business distributes films, telemovies and television series in the form of videos in various formats to the public. These are bought or rented, then watched privately from the comfort of the home by consumers. Most theatrically released films are now released on digital media, both optical (DVD or Blu-ray) and download-based, replacing the largely obsolete VHS (Video Home System) medium. The VCD format remains popular in Asia, though DVDs are gradually gaining popularity.

Home video is very influential as, through combining pictures with sound, it can communicate messages which are impossible to convey effectively by radio and or print media. Also, it is fundamentally different from other mass media in that it requires no reading ability, mobility or cash. Home video is now considered as the central cultural arm of society, a culture's primary story teller (Baran 2009). It is the chief creator of entertainment and information for the emerging heterogeneous mass publics.

Home video is literature on screen and literature is often seen to be the mirror of life. Therefore it is believed that videos portray real life; movies are the avenue for portraying social reality. This is based on their audiovisual functions as well as their influential power to make an impact on the viewer. This was succinctly

captured by Griffin (1991) when he observed *inter alia* that TV's power comes from the symbolic content of the real life drama shown hour after hour, week after week. At its root, television is 'story'. A society's stories give a coherent picture of what exists, what is important, what is related to what and what is right.

Until the early 1990's, foreign films or movies dominated the local scene. This changed with the production of the home video *Living in Bondage* in 1992 by Kenneth Nnebue. Nollywood, the Nigerian home video industry, has its history in this development. Suddenly, Nigerians' appetite for local films became insatiable and producers cashed in on this. Today, an average of 100 home videos or films, according to National Film and Video Censors Board records, are churned out monthly. It is against this backdrop that the researchers delved to investigate the impact of the narrowcast media structure, specifically the home video on the morals of teenagers in Nigerian.

Certainly many teenagers' development specialists have argued that home video has taken a disastrous turn as far as the welfare of teenagers is concerned. According to Folarin (1998:70), in allusion to Gerbner's cultivation analysis, "...the more time people spend watching television, the more their world views will be like those spread by TV". For example, there could be a strong relationship between the rising incidents of ritual killing in the Nigerian society and Nollywood's dramatization of human sacrifice for money making. It is a well established fact that viewing violent-oriented movies on television increases aggression, as well as affect the behaviour of the viewer, especially the younger generation. In a study by Chibugwu (1999) on effect of video films on Nigerian students' behaviour, a strong relationship between violence oriented movies and incidence of violent lifestyle, behaviours, thinking pattern and violent attitude toward people and situations among young people was established. This is because film has a dramatic effect on the perception of viewers, whether they are conscious or unconscious about this fact.

Pervasive Smoking is another consequence of home video. The main effect is to recruit new smokers from among young folks. Movies encourage them to experiment, and once they start experimenting with cigarettes, other factors take hold. Movies create the impression and expectation that smoking will turn out okay. Teenagers are also being recruited to smoke through their exposure to movie smoking (Glantz, 2001 & Wanner, 2012). In another dimension, Akah and Emeribe (2011) in a related study observed that young people who begin by experimenting with cigarette in such circumstance, often graduate to cannabis, and then to cocaine and other stronger drugs. Once they experiment with cannabis, they are most likely to become addicted. Such addiction makes them naturally disposed and addicted to violence as a lifestyle, with time they graduate to different shades of crime. This situation portend and paints a very dangerous and gloomy times ahead, if nothing is done to stem the tide. It is against this backdrop that the researchers delved to further investigate the influence of home movie on degenerating morals among adolescents in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria.

This study therefore seeks to investigate the influence of home video on degenerating morals among adolescents in Cross River State. The study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

- i. Do violent-oriented movies on home video increase violent behaviour?
- ii. What is the relationship between exposure to On-screen smoking in movies and experimentation with smoking among teenagers?

In the same vein two hypotheses were postulated to ascertain the level of significance existing between the variable that were isolated and investigated in this study. It was hypothesized that:

- i. There is no significant relationship between watching violent oriented home movies and increased violent behaviours among adolescents in Calabar metropolis of Cross River State.
- ii. Exposure to On-screen smoking in movies will not significantly relate with experimentation with smoking among teenagers in Calabar metropolis of Cross River State.

## Methodology

The design adopted for this study was the survey research design. This design is selected because the study is directed towards determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of investigation (Kerlinger, 1986). Survey research is therefore very useful for opinion and attitude studies. This design was used in this study to determine the influence of Home Video on adolescents and the extent to which it affects their morals and social behaviour.

This study was conducted in Cross River State which is one among the 36 states in Nigeria. The state is bordered by Benue state in the North, Ebonyi and Abia states in the West, Akwa Ibom State in the South and by the Cameroon Republic in the East. The sample for this study consisted of 100 subjects selected by stratification and purposive sampling techniques from the University of Calabar (first year students) and De-Wis College, Calabar. This was to represent students aged 13 – 19 years from the two Local Government Areas in the Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State that was selected for the study. These included male and female students.

The main instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: 'Questionnaire of role of movie industry on degenerating morals among adolescents', designed by the researchers for the purpose of this study. The items on the questionnaire were simple and straightforward to help the respondents answer the questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, sections A and B. Section A included personal information on the respondent, while section B consisted of items on the variables studied. The four point scale (Likert) was used in designing the questionnaire. This scale required respondents to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement formulated.

Copies of the questionnaire was administered on the subjects in University of Calabar and De-Wis College located at Calabar Municipality and Calabar South respectively, which are the two (2) Local Government Areas of Cross River State utilized for the study. The administration of the questionnaire was done by the researchers personally. After retrieval and sorting of the copies, 97 copies were correctly completed while 3 copies not well completed were rejected. The items were scored and data collated and analyzed using simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment correlation statistic. The results of the analysis have been presented in the tables below.

## Results

The results of the analysis was done and presented on the tables below.

**TABLE 1**

### Demographic indices of respondents

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
13 - 14	45	46.39
15 -17	32	32.99
18 - 19	20	20.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	63	64.95
Female	34	35.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>

The results in Table 1 shows that 45 (46.39%) were age 13-14, while, 32 (32.99%) were between 15-17 years, and 20 (20.62%) were between 18-19. For sex, 63 (64.95%) of the total respondents were female while 34(35.05%) where male.

**TABLE 2**

### Response of the respondents on whether violent-oriented movies on home video increase violent behavior (N=97)

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					
		A		D		Total	%
		f	%	f	%		
1	Home videos today bring out violence in youths.	70	72.16	27	27.84	97	100
2	Television violence could increase the likelihood of harmful behavior.	77	79.38	20	20.62	97	100
3	Violent films contains pornography, war films, horror films, crimes, detective, drugs and gangster films	72	74.23	25	25.77	97	100
4	Too much exposure to home videos can increase violent act.	65	67.01	32	32.99	97	100
5	Violence is literally everywhere in media	76	78.35	21	21.65	97	100

From Table 2, it can be observed that 70 representing 72.16% of the total respondents agreed that Home videos today bring out violence in youths. While 27 (27.84%) disagreed. Also, 77 (79.38%) agreed that Television violence could increase the likelihood of harmful behavior, while 20 (20.62%) disagreed. Again, 72 (74.23%) agreed that Violent films contains pornography, war films, horror films, crimes, detective, drugs and gangster films; while 25 (25.77%) disagreed. Also, 65 (67.01%) agreed that Too much exposure to home videos can increase violent act; while 32 (32.99%) disagreed. Finally, 76 (78.35%) agreed that Violence is literally everywhere in media, while 21 (21.65%) do not.

The results of the analysis indicate that the percentage of agreement for all the five items are higher than 50. This implies that violent – oriented movies on home video increase violent behaviour.

**TABLE 3**

**Response of the respondents on the relationship between exposure to On-screen smoking in movies with beginning to smoke or becoming established smokers among teenagers (N=97)**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					
		A		D		Total %	
		f	%	f	%		
16	Being bullied to start smoking is very common, especially among adolescents above 18	65	65.70	32	34.30	97	100
17	Watching movie stars smoking on the big screen makes teens more likely to experiment with smoking	70	72.16	27	27.84	97	100
18	Teens' exposure to smoking in movies comes from watching youth-rated, almost entirely PG-13 movies	60	61.86	37	38.14	97	100
19	People who start smoking in adolescence have a more difficult time quitting	61	62.89	36	37.11	97	100
20	The media tries to make smoking look acceptable	72	74.23	35	25.77	97	100

From Table 3, it can be observed that 65 (65.70%) agreed that Being bullied to start smoking is very possible, especially for those who are over 18, while 32 (34.30%) do not. 70 (72.16%) agreed that Watching movie stars smoking on the big screen makes teens more likely to start smoking themselves; while 27 (27.84%) do not. 60(61.86%) agreed that Teens' exposure to smoking in movies comes from watching youth-rated, almost entirely PG-13 movies, while 37 (38.14%) do not. 61 (62.89) agreed that People who start smoking in adolescence have a more difficult time quitting, while 36 (37.11%) do not. The result also shows that 72 (74.23%) of the total respondents agreed that The media tries to make smoking look acceptable, which helps tobacco companies make sales, while 35 (25.77%) do not.

The results of the analysis indicate that the percentage of agreement for all the five items are higher than 50. This implies that there is a relationship between exposure to On-screen smoking in movies with beginning to smoke or becoming established smokers among teenagers.

**TABLE 4**

**Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between home videos and teenagers' violent behaviour (N=97)**

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value
Home videos	3459	6148	89782	0.69*
Teenagers' violent behaviour	3527	6342		

\* Significant at .05, critical r = .195, N=95

The result of the statistical analysis as presented in Table 4, reveals that the calculated  $r$  – value of 0.69 is greater than the critical  $r$ -value of .195 at 0.05 level of significance with 95 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore means that there is a significant relationship between home videos and teenagers' violent behaviour.

**TABLE 5**

**Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between Home videos and On - screen smoking (N=97)**

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value
Home videos	3459	6148	98427	0.74*
On - screen smoking	3758	6914		

\* Significant at .05, critical  $r$  = .195, N=95

The result of the statistical analysis as presented in Table 5, reveals that the calculated  $r$  – value of 0.74 is greater than the critical  $r$ -value of .195 at 0.05 level of significance with 95 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore means that there is a significant relationship between Home videos and on - screen smoking.

## Discussion

The result of the first hypothesis reveals that there is a significant relationship between Home videos and teenagers' violent behaviour. The finding of this study is in line with the position of Ineji (2003) who observed that television violence could increase the probability of anti-social behavior. He also noted that, there is a causal link between viewing television violence and anti-social behavior. Violent films comprise pornography, war films, horror films, crimes, detective, drugs and gangster films. All these movies or films project negative influence on those who watch or view them particularly teenagers.

Children of different ages watch and understand home videos in different ways, depending on the length of their attention span, the ways in which they process information, the amount of mental effort they invest, and their own life experiences. Children at high school years are capable of high abstract thought and reasoning, although they rarely use their abilities when watching home videos, they continue to invest little mental effort. Their interests, at that age tend to revolve around independence, sex and romance and they develop a preference for pornographic videos and violent movies. Though there are several behaviours exhibited by youths which do not conform to our cultural values, such as violence, crimes, swindling, rape, etc. as being influenced by watching movies.

Schramm, *et al* (1961) also stated that violence is “physical or psychological injury, hurt or death addressed to a living thing. TV guide also see violence as any deliberate act involving physical force or the use of weapon in an attempt to achieve a goal, further a cause, stop the action of another, act out of angry impulse, defend oneself from attack, secure a material reward, intimidate others. Schramm *et al* (1961) also see humorous violence, such as the Comedian fall, legal violence, verbal violence and violence resulting from act of nature of accident. Since large percentage of movies heavily depicts violence it can then be said that youth's excessive exposure to movies is also excessive to movie violence. Such influences are varied, some writers believe that for sure, movie violence has harmful effect on youths even though they cannot specify the consequences, they are sure that the consequences are undesirable.

Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1980:124) also stated that young girls who often watch movies show features aggression, and have grown up to be more aggressive adults involved in more confrontation showing matches, choking and knife fight, than girls who have watched few or none of these shows. There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on movies are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior”.

According to a study published in Psychological Science in the Public Interest conducted in December of 2003, exposure to violent media such as violent video games, television shows and movies, causes a rise in aggressive behavior in teenagers and young children. Even short-term exposure to violence in the media raises the likelihood of verbally and physically aggressive behavior in minors, and frequent exposure to violence in the media is linked to aggression later in life. Frequent exposure to violence can lead to desensitization toward violence in teenagers. The amount of aggression caused by violent media depends on identification with aggressive characters, parental influences and the attractiveness of the violence displayed in the media. Identification with aggressive



characters among adolescents and young adults is commonly seen in their adopting such characters as their idol. By this, they try to imitate such characters and strive to become like them.

Knorr, (2013) Violence is literally everywhere in the media. And it's becoming harder to avoid. Today, with the explosion of technology and the 24/7 media access that comes along with it, the question more than ever is what's the impact, especially on our kids? The short answer is: We don't know. Research on the amount of violence in media consumed by kids and teens is out of date and incomplete. Past research estimates that about 90% of movies, 68% of video games, 60% of TV shows, and 15% of music videos include some depictions of violence. What we do know, however, is that media violence is pervasive. And kids are exposed to a lot of it. In fact, a recent study found that kids as young as 8 are spending nearly 7.5 hours with media every day. That's more time than they spend with their families or in school. While experts agree that no one single factor can cause a nonviolent person to act aggressively, heavy exposure to violent media can be a risk factor for violent behavior. Children who are exposed to multiple risk factors such as aggression and conflict at home, are the most likely to behave aggressively.

The result of the second hypothesis reveals that there is a significant relationship between Home Video and On-screen smoking. This finding is in line with Warner (2012) who started that watching movie stars smoking on the big screen makes teens more likely to experiment with smoking themselves, regardless of whether the movie is rated R or PG-13. A new study suggests it is the cigarette smoking itself in movies that affects teenage smoking habits, rather than other adult behaviors that go with it. In other words, adolescents appear to be easily corrupted than positively influenced; as goes the saying 'evil communication corrupts good morals'. Warner (2012) also found that on-screen smoking in movies rated R and PG-13 had a comparable impact on making teens more likely to smoke. PG-13 movies typically depict cigarette smoking that is visually stimulating without the sexual or violent behavior associated with R-rated movie smoking. Think of blowing smoke into a glass or smoking while reading versus a post-sexual-intercourse cigarette. Akah and Emeribe (2011) had also revealed another worrisome dimension as relates with cigarette smoking. According to their findings, adolescents who starts by experimenting with cigarette often graduate to experimenting with cannabis and then with cocaine; at which point they become addicted, in most cases beyond recovery. This also depicts increase in crimes and other anti-social behaviours.

Smoking is known to be damaging to one's health and can cause various cancers in the body. Smoking at any age has negative effects, including for teenagers and young adults. Teens are often exposed to images of celebrities smoking, which can make it seem cool, even though there are many serious downsides to smoking. In some instances, the media tries to make smoking look acceptable, which helps tobacco companies make sales. Teens may be faced with peers who smoke or family members who smoke in their home. Being bullied to start smoking is very possible, especially for those who are over 18, since it is then legal to smoke cigarettes in the United States. If teens live with smokers, they are more likely to be exposed to second-hand smoke and all the health repercussions that come with it. These teens are also more likely to have access to packs of cigarettes than older siblings, parents or other family members in the household.

## Conclusions

Today, with the explosion of technology and the 24/7 media access that comes along with it, the question more than ever is what is the impact, especially on our kids?

Though there are several behaviours exhibited by youths which do not conform to our cultural values, such as violence, crimes, swindling, rape indecent dressing, etc., these has been found to be influenced by watching movies. The home video which Nigerian youths view may actually have some positive lessons which they portray, but the negative aspects appear to be dominating the movie industry, thereby having a more viral effects leading to fast degenerating morals among adolescents. These movies are viewed through the electronic media, such as the television, cable TV, video cassette player or the compact disks, the satellite devices such as handsets, and cinema.

Dominick (1999) in Dynamics of Mass communication opined that television portrays violence, indecent dressing and other anti-social behavior which the youths or young people copy most. In fact, a recent study found that kids as young as 8 are spending nearly 7.5 hours with media every day. He further added that young people tend to model what they often watch. There is a bitter truth here being passed across that watching home video may affects our children negatively. From the study it was noted that home video significantly influenced, violent behavior, indecent dressing, sexual activity and smoking. It is therefore concluded that the interest of this group of people should be adequately taken care of by the government at all levels, the parents, the schools, the religious organizations and all communities at large. There is a saying that these are the leaders of tomorrow and must be guided with care. For that to be achieved, the following recommendations are necessary.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and their implications for the future of educational process and the country as a whole, the following recommendations are made.

- i. Parents should monitor the type of friends their children keep by asking them to bring their friends home. This will enable parents assess the type of friends that move with their children and give possible advice.
- ii. The school authority should invite/provide guidance counselors to visit their schools periodically and address the students. Alternatively, seminars/ workshops could be organized for teachers periodically on ways to counsel and handle students. These counselors should be able to inspire adolescents away from excessive television viewing by using biographics of appropriate role models in society who were able to move to greatness because they de-emphasized excessive television viewing as adolescents.
- iii. Government should promulgate a legislation to regulate what is being released in the movie industry. Such laws should ban the release of anti-social and moral corrupting movies for general public view.
- iv. Enforcement of existing law that bars individuals below 18 years of age from watching certain movies should be strengthened.

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