

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF THE NIGERIAN HOME VIDEO - FILM

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian home video has emerged as major purveyor of Nigerian culture, and to a large extent the African culture, due to its extensive viewership. Its viewership spreads across nations in Africa, Asia, Europe and America. It is therefore important to examine the actual impacts of its content on its audiences. The audience is the ultimate consumer of video content. This paper therefore examines audience perception of the home video. It aims to further examine the levels of influence, meanings and understanding which the home video can bring to bear on its audiences. The paper also examines whether Nigerian home-video content is meeting the needs and expectations of its viewership.

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION

The audience is cardinal in any communication endeavour. It is a fact that the value and import of any medium of communication is only to the extent of its impact and influence on the perception of the audience or viewer. Also, examining the potential of film on perception, Hyginus Ekwuazi (1987:95) notes that films are 'canned dreams', and that films are built out of the dreams of a people, by offering them a vicarious experience built out of their dreams. Film provide the people the symbols around which to weave their dreams, the film not only mirrors but cause society to model itself on its mirror image as reflected on the screen, it does not only reflect but influences society.

Emmanuel Oga (2006) notes that the essence of any production is the consumer, that the consumer or the audience is central to production, he notes that from the Greek through the medieval and Brechtian period the audience has been at the core of production, he warns that it will be catastrophic to undermine or underestimate the audience, adding that the end essence of production is consumption by the audience.

This paper therefore takes a look at the crucial aspect of audience perception of Nigerian home video and kinds of influence it has on its mass audience. Assessing the influence of Nigerian films on its audience. Yomi Olugbodi (2007:27-29) observes that a study of the Nigerian video film will show that a lot still has to be done in the area of effectively communicating messages to the audience. He notes that making film is really about communicating with an audience to do this one must understand the semiotics of film language. Film language is very crucial in communication. Film language is defined as a set of collectively generated conventions that enable us to tell stories to each other through the medium. Filmmaking as an art is a conscious manipulation of the audience. By weaving magic and reality, the film idealizes the real and realizes the ideal in the perception of the audience. The structure of the film with its basic mechanism combines to achieve this through photography, editing, mixage, projection, illusion, three dimensionality, and of movement and audiovisual image. To Ekwuazi such synthesis impacts the more forcefully on the audience and by virtue of the communicative interaction intrinsic to the viewing experience. He states that,

