

**MORAL FORMATION AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES:
IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIAN YOUTHS**

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.23433.67684

Abstract

It is apparent that the entertainment industry has among its attributes, the undeniable ability to influence greatly among the people of the society. That is to say that many tend to be guided by things they read, listen to, or watch every day. However, because the entertainment industry is widely followed by the youths mostly, it is worthy to note that certain things associated with the entertainment industry should be morally guided. This is because of its huge ability to influence the general public. Therefore, it is the burden of this paper to highlight the imperatives of the moral formation which involve growth in knowing, being and doing, which together, lead to moral relationships and moral living. With that being said, the apparent moral formation among the influencers of the entertainment industries will be of great benefits not only to the youths, but it will also go a long way to enhance a morally sound society. This study employs philosophical method of analysis.

Keywords: Morality, Moral Formation, Entertainment Industry, Youths

Introduction

The burden of this work centers on the implications of entertainment industry on the moral formation of the life of Nigerian youths. Youths according to African youth charter count on people between the ages of 15-35 years. Nigeria new youth policy counts youth age as from 18-29 years. The main interest of this research is on how entertainment activities like movies and music shows, as well as the piece of information which we observe and gather from media devices affect the Nigerian Youths. Having gone through with this, we will look at the diverse interpretations of the key words in this discourse.

Conceptual analysis of the key words that constitute the theme of this research

Here, we will analytically interpret the core terms which constitute the topic of this research paper viz; morality, moral formation, entertainment industry, and Nigerian Youths.

Morality

Morality which has its etymological root from the Latin word, "moralis", according to Fagothy (2002), "literally refers to the differentiation of intentions, decisions and actions between those that are proper and improper." This can be perceived from its two senses; the descriptive sense which refers to the personal or cultural values and codes of conduct. This means that the descriptive sense of Morality does not connote objective claims of right or wrong, rather it only refers to that which is considered right or wrong. Secondly, the Normative sense which refers to whatever (if anything) is actually right or wrong, which may be independent of the values held by any particular people or cultures. Therefore, normatively says Obi (2019), "morality refers to a code of conduct that given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons." The Normative morality is the sense of morality which this research paper is referring to.

Moral Formation

Moral formation literally refers to the growth in knowledge, being and doing, this has in its end the spontaneous ability to lead to moral relationships and moral living, it can be said to be those necessary attributes that should be contained in the entertainment industries in Nigeria because of the powerful influence the entertainment industries possess in influencing and shaping the youths. Thus, for there to be a good moral formation, it is pertinent we say that the good approach to moral education will give a person the right knowledge and they will perform the right actions according to their understanding. However, Van der Ven (1995) is of the opinion that, "this practice of moral education has failed because its focus remains shallow and one-directional. Transmission-biased moral education is often accompanied by an attempt to tie specific consequences to certain actions. It is taught that obedience to the prescribed moral code will be followed by a reward, and disobedience by punishment. If a person can keep these realities in mind, they will be more than likely continue to make the right decision."

Entertainment Industry

Furthermore, the entertainment industry which is a group of sub-industries devoted to the goal of entertaining the general public, has among its attributes the undeniable ability to influence the public especially the youths. This literally means that when its content is good, then it will imbibe positivity, on the other hand, when its content is a bad one, then it will spread negativity, which will not only be a bad influence, but will also hamper the proper growth in the moral formation of the people especially the youths. According to Stephen Vaughn (1990):

Few new technologies have affected communication and society more profoundly than motion pictures. As far more classic medium than the stage, movies made ideas previously restricted to comparatively small groups of readers and urban theatregoers accessible to virtually everyone by projecting them on film screens everywhere. From the largest cities to the smallest village." By speaking to mass audiences directly, movies all too easily bypassed traditional agencies of socialization like, the church, the school, the family. For many they came to symbolize the important changes taking place in the structure of power and influence in the early twentieth century, thus, United States, and those who feared that their own influences were diminishing viewed them as threat.

Corroborating the above view with the topic at hand, it will highlight to the readers that in recent time, according to Lawson (2013), "entertainment industries have long surpassed the traditional ways of socialization, that is the church, family and the schools. Therefore, when the content which the Entertainment industry is giving out to the society is not morally guided, our society will stand the risk of degenerating to an amoral society, which in turn will hamper a good moral formation of Nigerian youths."

Therefore, using the phenomenological mechanism of research in philosophy, this paper aims to establish the supreme role of Morality in guiding the Nigerian entertainment activities. This can be achieved by the ways the entertainment industries will control positively, the three levels of moral self which are: (I) The moral knowledge, (ii) The moral emotions and (iii) The moral socialization.

The complexities of the moral person

A vital concept in this study is the “Moral self” and how it leads to moral formation of individuals. This idea of the moral self as Lapsley (1996:22b) defines is, "the aspects of each person’s moral faculty, which together shape each individual’s moral decision. It is reflected in the characteristics of responsibility and integrity; a person will experience the need to act in light of their moral responsibility and be motivated to do so by the maintenance of their personal integrity."

From the above reasons, a broader focus on the moral self has been required and this research study places focus on moral knowledge, moral emotion and moral socialisation. Firstly, moral knowledge says (Estep, 2019), “refers to the mental reasoning surrounding matters of justice, rights and fairness, which is reflected in a person’s moral Judgement”. Secondly, as Lazarus (1991:7) made it known that, "moral emotions are experienced more intuitively, unlike moral knowledge where the moral content can be more easily discerned. Emotions instantly reflects a person’s desires and needs. Informing them when an action will be harmful or advance their personal values”. Lastly says (Turiel, 2006:7), “Moral socialization refers to the immediate historical effect of a person’s social relationships and other social influences. In a moral situation, people will almost instantaneously, experience the force of all the three factors namely; knowledge, emotion and socialization and thus, determine their moral goals for any given moral dilemma”.

In quest to explore the implications of psychological research and the roles of those aspects in moral formation scholars like (Turiel, 2006; Van der Ven, 1998, O’Connell, 1998; Osmer, 2005) “all shares some uniformity in views, citing that the relationships that potentially exist between Cognition, Emotion and socialisation continually require exploration within theological education”.

Therefore, the complexities of moral person focus on how “emerging adults” in life stage of late adolescent age to mid-twenties, are impacted by several cultural factors as marked by several different attributes and drives. According to (Arnett, 2004:14), “this focuses on self-accompanies, the development of skills for daily living, identity and talent explorations, and thus, helps emerging adults to lay a foundation upon which to build their adults lives”. This unique emphasis during this stage of life has a massive effect on cognitive, emotional and social aspects of the emerging adults as they relate to moral formation. The youths desire autonomy; they want to have the senses when they are making their own decisions, without blindly following in the footsteps of their parents. This transition should include the evaluation of their personal beliefs and ideologies as they decide upon the best way to live.

The Positive Effects of Entertainment Industry on the Public

The entertainment industry, in all of its various forms has had a tremendous impact on how we should think, perform and desire to be. Apparently, it has over the few decades ago, superseded the dominant means of socialization. The family, the church and schools. Thus, it is a reality that the public are made to believe that the movies, T.V shows etc which they watch are all real happenings. Even though some entertainment industries can teach teen's moral values and lessons, yet, some can adversely influence them. Hollywood for example, "makes teens reckless to extent that they think that as it happens in movies, so it can happen in reality thus teens want to do what the big actors do. The Hollywood industry is one of the most powerful and influential enterprises in the world, its visual voice is heard around the globe (Lowson, 2013)".

The entertainment industries (Hollywood & Nollywood) have become increasingly influential so that society now looks towards them to develop their standards, teach values, and provide morals. People has begun to "copycat" what they see celebrities do on televisions. Society takes personally the actions of what their idols do. In as much as there are plenty of good morally right entertainments out there, people will follow what they hear almost precisely to the word. Certainly, we have mimicked people in Hollywood by copying dance moves like Michael Jackson's dress styles, Don Johnson in "Miami vice" or, action movies like "Spiderman". However negative images are now being portrayed as cool and that's why so much of our younger folks are not only imitating these entertainers and how influential they are, but the truth is that for many years, Nollywood and other entertainment platforms has forced negative images on the society at large. These entertainers mostly don't take in account that younger people will follow their actions.

Therefore, regardless of how the conscious people raise alarm about the bad contents of our entertainment industries; the truth still remains that these entertainers would not listen to these calls because the vices they show off to the world are what they make living from. The only way to go about this is to cling to the government agency in charge of Nigeria Broadcasting Corporations (NBC) to use the authority within their jurisdiction to control certain contents that go to general public. Again, it is pertinent that the society should depend less on what they watch and focus more on reality. If the world are influenced less by the entertainers whose contents enhance moral decadence, then we would not only be guided on our own personal values and beliefs, but also attain the value of self-worth and accomplishment.

The Negative Effects of the Entertainment Industry on the Public

Just like other major innovation such as the automobile, electricity, chemicals and the airplane, the entertainment industries emerged in most countries of the world and has rapidly taken over every other source of pleasure because of its engaging and entertaining nature. From the early stages of the last century onwards, each year billions of cinema tickets and musical concerts were sold and consumers especially the youths who did not regularly show interest in any form of the entertainments, became a minority. For example, in the United States, film was the tenth most profitable industry, and in 1930s France, was the fastest growing industry attended and widely followed by everyone. Meanwhile, in Britain the number of cinema tickets sold rose to almost one billion pounds a year. Mores o, with the present innovations taking place in Nigeria's entertainment Industries, it has seen over the past few years, numerous interests shown to it by Nigerians. Little will you wonder the reason why the ex-President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan identified entertainment industry as a unifying factor for the nation and also an industry that will not only employ great numbers of Nigerians, but also can yield up to billions of naira to Nigeria.

However, despite the economic significance, despite its rapid emergence and growth, despite its importance as an early case of industrialisation of services, little emphasis has been made about its pronounced effect on the everyday life of consumers. Therefore, because of its undeniable influencing ability, those negativities which the entertainment Industries have among their contents will also grossly affect the general public. Thus, questions like; is entertainment industry destroying or benefiting modern society? becomes an interrogation that everyone has to answer. There is no doubt that entertainment is the main source of amusement for many today. It is used in almost every common man's daily life, from watching television to listening to the news. However, entertainment has unfortunately become deeply saturated in people's lives, to the point where it is no longer healthy and beneficial.

The utilization of entertainment has become an addiction, thus giving it the capability to annihilate society. From the adult industry to television shows, one conclusion is inescapable, entertainment is indeed a dangerous tool. With the emergence of the adult-entertainment in the late twentieth century it has expanded recently due to improved technology, and people can now access the contents of the adult movies from their various locations, without having to gather at a cinema. Therefore, due to its accessible nature, even the younger ones can watch the contents of adult movies without caring about the discretions attached to them.

With this, it becomes an easy tool leading to moral decadence in the society. Therefore, with the rise of internet and its accessible nature, pornographic postures have over the years overtaken the follower-ship among the masses.

More so, the negative effects associated with the adult entertainment Industries, are not just about how internet and technology has enhanced its accessibility, but it has also hugely affected the adult's marital life relationship. Men and women alike watch these films and arrive to the conception that what is portrayed on the screen is how a relationship should be. Recent report in the New York times had it that 80% of men and 50% of women feel that their sex life is lacking due to pornography and 40% of the people within the same poll have broken up their spouse or partner due to "lack of love life. Clearly, adult entertainment gives both genders a false conception of how a relationship and sex life should be. Certain unrealistic expectations towards sexual life emerged as a result of the rapid growth and massive fellowships of adults' movies. This gives rise to infidelity, divorce and use of certain illicit drugs to enhance sexual performance.

In tandem with the foregoing, the negative effects of the entertainment industry can also be traced to our poor state of movie industry (Nollywood). The emergence of the Nollywood industry in the late eighties and early nineties, saw a promising movie industry which as of that time, has the potentials to be among the leading movie industries in the world. Those early stages of the Nigerian movie industry, Nollywood has great numbers of master piece movies which reflects to the happenings around us. Movies back then was educating and inspiring, expository and suggests solution. Contemporary happenings back then were brilliantly scripted and acted with deep messages to the general public. However, fast forward to twenty years later, the once promising industry has turned out to be an industry where mediocrities and vices are being exalted. Nowadays, it is a norm that Nollywood promotes drugs, nudity, robbery, fraud and so many other social vices. A good movie industry is the one that influences positively on the society, but the reverse is the case here, our movie industries now allow movies that contains no message to be produced, movies with no moral contents are now aired on our channels, thus, the exaltation of hard drugs, smoking of marijuana, abuse of alcohol etc.

The negative effect of the entertainment industry can also be traced down to the music industries. It is evident that music industries are also widely followed as the movie industry. Therefore, it is pertinent to note that music industry also influences as much as the movies. Apparently, just like the deteriorated state of our movie industries, the contents of the music we listen to have also faded so

much that people have over the years embraced songs with bad and morally destructive lyrics as favourites. Plato () defined music as, " a food for the soul" because he believes that music relates directly to the soul. Good music he stretches will feed the soul positively, while the bad ones become destructive." Days of Fela Kuti, who despite the mental challenges, used his songs for activism, and to inspire, has gone. Days of Edris Abdulkareem singing against the poor state of nation and raising awareness about the irregularities among lecturers and students' relationships in tertiary institutions are gone. The large number of the Nigerian youths just wants to dance and vibe to any catchy sounds without thinking about the contents of the songs. Though there are some good artists out there making good music, but the undeniable fact is that the bad ones promoting vices like, nudity, sexual harassments, drug abuse, thuggery and violence are the ones that are widely followed. Nigeria has brilliant contemporary artists like, Asa, Tu face Idibia, Jude. M.I. Abaga, Brymo Olawale etc., much attention and accolades are being given to artists with bad influence to the society like, Olamide, Naira Marley, Tekno etc. This will go a long way to tell you how bad the continuous neglects of the contents of our entertainment industry have affected our youths.

More so, certain programs that is meant for entertainment sake like cartoon and some movies can as well possess bad contents which will also turn out to subliminally affect the lives of the viewers especially, children. It is evident that most cartoon shows, irrespective of its comic surface, still possess in them some violence which will make some kids to believe in using violence to solve certain problem surrounding them. The large numbers of movies without viewers discretion tags, are allowed to be accessible to everyone including teens. Teenagers suspend every activity they have to carry out just to watch movies that contain numerous scenes of violence and sex. Therefore, among the negativities that comes with entertainment industries, is the constant violence that comes with certain movies and cartoon.

Benefits of a Morally Sound Entertainment Industry on Nigeria Youths

We live in a culture where the things perpetuated through entertainment can make it seem as though moral standards are outdated. And, as degeneration and progressions become harder to distinguish, we are constantly bombarded with images and messages that even the most "just do it" person would find troubling. Therefore, it is high time that these entertainers are conceived as the biggest carriers of influence, whether or not we are aware of it and whether or not we

intend to be. The sound and messages they release through art forms, directly create good impact on listeners in powerful ways. This is especially true of the youths and adolescents of our society, who are still extremely malleable to the world around them. Having said this, it becomes pertinent to portray the benefits of a sound moral entertainment on our Nigerian youths.

First of all, a morally sound entertainment will be of positive moral impact. Merriam-Webster () defines morality as “beliefs about what is right behaviour and what is wrong behaviour”. A guide google search on the impact of music on morals will yield many results on the negative impact it has on society especially in the realm of rap and hip-hop music. Though it is true that morals and behaviour, especially in teens are not completely steered by the lyrics they listen to and the movies they watch, because there are so many factors to building a moral compass. However, music & movies can definitely play significant roles in determining what seems to be right or wrong. Because of this, artists need to become careful about the messages that they are putting out with their songs and our movies. But to take a step further, what if the contents of entertainment, carries positive messages? What if they become anthems or references that declare hope and joy, triumphs over weakness, courage and love? The positive impact of entertainments on Nigerian youths will be that which has the influence to empower the hearts and minds of the next generation and that is something to truly take hold of.

Secondly, the impact of a morally sound entertainment will further be seen in the way it positively influences our emotions. Many music and movies have been of bad emotional influence to the society. The use of drugs to fight depression, the constant scenes where suicide is used as a means of running away from hardships, so many scenes where by the powerful and wealthy people are respected irrespective of how they amassed their riches and fame. This scene has its subliminal effects on the minds of the youths, and thereby affecting their emotions. A morally sound entertainment platform is where goddesses are preached, and punishments are meted out for every vice is hugely emphasised on, for example, where some messages about how suicide is not the way to go and where the use of drugs during hard times is highly condemned; Such entertainment industry with morality as its foundation will impact in the minds of the youths positively and shape the way they understand the world around them.

Thirdly, the benefits of conscious and morally sound entertainment industry can be seen on the way it is culturally impacting. The popular trends in our music and other entertainment platforms simply reflect the culture of our day and it is evident that the degeneration has massively caught up on our rich cultures and

values. In a traditional African society, every art has a deep significance and reflects on something meaningful. More so the importance of art and how it represents the cultural heritage of the people can also be seen in the Europe of the middle ages, as an example-where music might remain largely the same for hundreds of years. It is so because it reflects on the real identity of the people. However, with the way our society is prone to continual arbitrary change, certain contents have the massive moral decadence affecting our entertainments, thus, the cultural impacts which arts have over the four decades ago, degenerated to adopt of mediocrity as trend. Therefore, the morally sound influence will be able to put out entertaining contents that will reflect on something meaningful and culturally impacting on the lives of the followers. With that said, we need to be very aware of our modern day culture and also not do away with the rich culture that reflects our identity, but more importantly, we need to be intentional, about the cultures we want to create and cultivate with our entertainments as it will be a big determinant towards the moral formation of the general public, especially the youths.

Conclusion

The entertainment industry has the power to morally, emotionally and culturally influence our society. Thus, the more intentional we become with the sounds, messages and moods we create and release through our arts, the more powerful we will become in making deep positive impacts. The entertainment industry and its influencers, has the mandate and authority to change the world around us, therefore when the contents are positive, it will be something worth dedicating a life to and adopting as a paradigm of social change.

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IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities. Vol. 7. No. 2. (2021)

ISSN: 2488- 9210 (Print) 2504-9038 (Online)

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University

publication of the Department of Religion and Society, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

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