

**Nollywood Movies and Academic Performance of the Youths of Nnewi:
A Socio-Religious Discourse**

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Abstract

Every human society has set of rules of behavior to which every member is expected to adhere. This code of conduct guides their behavior in both public and private situations for peaceful coexistence. Nollywood movies, one of the most popular instruments of entertainment for the society, are expected to uphold these principles and to inculcate morality in the lives of students but, unfortunately, it has not only failed to uphold the moral standards of the society but also led to the poor academic performance of students at all levels of education and has neglected the biblical instruction: "Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes ... And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee" (Deut.6:17-18; KJV). This is so bad that it has spurred this writer to draw attention of the government, church leaders and the population to this menace with a view to proffering solutions. Data for this article was drawn from primary and secondary sources. The primary source was based on survey carried out at the Living Word Comprehensive Secondary School, Umudim, Nnewi, Anambra State. The secondary sources included newspaper, magazine and journal articles, books and Internet resources. Based on social learning theory, the article concluded that some actions should be taken urgently to arrest this situation and preserve Nnewi's posterity.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Code of Conduct, Negative Effects, Nnewi, Nollywood Movies, Society and Youths.

Introduction

The human society, throughout history, has developed through education. Defined as the systematic process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through various methods such as teaching, training, research and self-study, education occurs in informal settings like the family, peer group etc. and formal settings like schools and universities.

Again, education is meant to promote personal development, social responsibility and economic growth. Elvis (cited by Lawrence and Ahmed 2025) observed that "education is the foundation of national development, and history as a subject plays a significant role in shaping a society's consciousness" (p.31). Furthermore, Garba (2024) has posited that:

Formal education remains the primary vehicle for socio-economic and political development and the social mobilization of any society. Secondary education, as the foundation for further education, serves two main purposes: producing a literate and numerate population capable of addressing challenges at home and work, and providing the groundwork for advanced education (p.64).

Education, in formal school setting in particular, is measured by the academic performance of the students. Academic performance refers to the level of achievement students demonstrate in their educational pursuits, typically measured through grades, test scores, completion of coursework and overall engagement in learning activities. It is a key indicator of a student's ability to understand and apply knowledge across various subjects.

In the recent times, it has been observed that the youths of Nnewi in particular and Nigeria in general have been scoring abysmally low in their academic performance. Delors (cited by Okolo and Ahmed, 2025) mentioned five factors that affect the quality of education. These include the level of training of teachers, instructional materials, language of instruction, class size and curriculum reforms (p.34). In addition to the five factors mentioned above, Nollywood home movies have been identified as one of the culprits wreaking havoc in the academic performance of the students.

Speaking of Nollywood home movies, Adama (2023) has noted that:

Video is the visual part of a movie or recorded program, or something recorded to watch in the future. It also means a sequence of images processed electronically into an analog or a digital format and displayed on a screen with sufficient rapidity as to create the illusion of motion and continuity. ... It is the movies that are sold on videotapes or DVDs and are meant to be watched on television at home. The term originates from the VHS and Betamax when the predominant medium was videotapes, but was carried over to optical disc formats such as DVD and blu-ray (p.102).

Gonina, Samuel and Pam have observed that:

Nigerian movies as a medium of communication is evidently seen as capable of influencing individual's attitude, character, lifestyle and culture either negatively or positively. Thus, it can be seen as one of the agents of socialization among audience members, as the mass media are very powerful socializing agents (p.115).

In most homes, according to Njoku (2016), many adolescents and youths glued their eyes on the television watching movies of all kinds; some movies that may adversely affect their emotion, psychic, moral behaviour and cognitive development. The prevalence of immoral behaviour among youths has been linked with the types of programmes, movies they view. Recent research has shown that high rate of crimes in Nigerian schools and society at large could be related to influences of bad movies or videos they watch. For instance, the display of pornographic films or shown during most the Nigerian movies has affected many youths and exposed them to all forms of sexual harassment like practice of homosexuality, incest to mention but a few. Practices like adultery, witchcraft and ritual practices are glamorously shown; and most of the young people do not border about the end of the practice which is usually shown at the end of the movies (p.182). Simply put, these Nollywood home movies are negatively influencing the attitudes, characters and lifestyle of the youths of Nnewi and it has also led to their poor academic performance.

This paper is, therefore, set to critically study the negative effects of Nollywood home movies on the academic performance of the youths of Nnewi with a view to making recommendations that might bring about a positive transformation to the said group. The paper hopes to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine what academic performance implies.
2. To elucidate the harm Nollywood home movies do to students.
3. To examine the roles the society including religion can play to stem the tide.
4. To draw government attention to the dangers of the home movies with a view to making stringent policies that might arrest the situation.

Significance

This article attempts to explicate the negative effects of Nollywood home movies on the academic performance of the youths of Nnewi. It is hoped that the following will benefit there from:

1. It will help students at different levels of education to pay more attention to their studies than expending much time and other resources on watching home movies.
2. It will encourage the parents of the students to closely monitor the activities of their children at home with a view to curbing excessive time on television.
3. It will serve as a basis for further studies by students of sociology, religion and other humanities to determine the utility or otherwise of Nollywood home movies.

4. The article will encourage traditional rulers, presidents general, age groups and other community leaders of Nnewi to increase surveillance on movie-viewing centers in their domain to make sure that students are not allowed to come there.
5. Lastly, it will also encourage government agencies such as censors' board to increase its censorship activities with a view to curtailing the excesses of the movie producers and viewing centers.

An Overview of Nnewi History

Nnewi is an industrial city and the second-largest city in Anambra State in southeastern Nigeria. The city is known for producing a diversified range of transportation entrepreneurs from transporters, to spare parts dealers and manufacturers. It is located about 15 miles south of Onitsha and has a population of about 958,000. The city spans over 1,076.9 square miles (2,789 km²) in Anambra State. According to Nnewi community.com, As of 2005, Nnewi Metropolitan Area and its satellite towns were home to nearly 2.5 million residents. The Nnewi Kingdom is also known as Anaedo meaning the Land of Gold (The supreme deity and goddess of Nnewi). Geographically, Nnewi falls within the tropical rain forest region of the world. And as such, it suffers from soil leaching and soil erosion. In spite of these factors, that have reduced the soil to a porous sandy terrain, her citizens have survived this harshness through subsistence type of agriculture and trading. Nnewi community.com records that Nnewi is the only town in Nnewi North LGA. It has four villages (sub-towns) that make up the one-town local government, which includes: Otolo, Uruagu, Umudim and Nnewi-Ichi. The traditional ruler of Nnewi- Igwe of Nnewi presently is Igwe Kenneth Orizu the 3rd of which this royal family is from Otolo Nnewi, and for this reason, is regarded as first among equals of the four villages.

Due to its high commercial activities, the city has attracted millions of migrants from other states and countries. The great majority of industrialists in the cluster of spare parts factories in Nnewi are also traders, and most of these traders are producing one or more of the products they specialize in marketing as traders (usually motor vehicle parts), and most began by distributing their products through their preexisting distribution networks. Nnewi has produced notable men and women who have made meaningful contributions to Anambra State and Nigeria as a whole. Again, the town can boast of more than eight secondary schools where their children and wards are given life-changing training.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework, according to National Open University of Nigeria (2016), is:

A system of related ideas that enable one to generate accurate explanation of and sometimes predict social phenomena. ... It is a set of logically interrelated statements that attempt to describe, explain, and (occasionally) predict social events. Theory involves the construction of abstract interpretations that can be used to explain a wide variety of practical situations (p207).

Theoretical framework, for the purpose of this paper, refers to a set of interconnected concepts, theories, and principles that guide the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon being investigated or studied. This article is based on social learning theory (SLT).

Proposed by a Canadian-American psychologist, Albert Bandura in 1977, social learning theory is a psychological framework that posits that individuals learn behaviors, values and social norms through observing the actions of others and the consequences that result from those actions. The theory emphasizes the importance of modeling, imitation, and reinforcement in the learning process, suggesting that learning can occur in social contexts without direct reinforcement. The key components of the theory are attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. These highlight how observation and social influence shape behaviors. Oluoma (2015) believes that:

In society, children are surrounded by a number of models with whom they identify. These may be people in their immediate world, such as parents or older siblings, or could be fantasy characters or people in the media. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate. Children pay attention to some of these models and encode their behavior, values, beliefs and attitudes. At a later time, they may imitate the behavior they have observed (p.255).

Strengths of Social Learning Theory

Some of the strengths of SLT include but not limited to:

1. **Comprehensive Understanding of Behavior.** The theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation. This approach, according to Bandura (1977), acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in learning, integrating both behaviorist and cognitive perspectives (p.51).
2. **Incorporation of Cognitive Processes.** Unlike traditional behaviorism, SLT incorporates cognitive processes such as attention, retention, reproduction and motivation, which are crucial for understanding how learning occurs.

Zimmerman (2002) believes that "this cognitive element enhances the effectiveness of the learning model" (p.66).

3. Basis for Research Evidence. Scholars believe that social learning theory has supported a variety of studies whose results showed that individuals can learn new behaviors merely by observing others, without direct reinforcement. This, Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) observed that "the evidence solidifies the theory's credibility and relevance" (p.578).

Weaknesses

1. Neglect of Biological Factors. Social learning theory (SLT), unfortunately, does not adequately account for biological influences on behavior, such as genetics and neurological factors. This led Anderson and Dill (2000) to argue that "such influences can significantly impact learning and behavior, which SLT overlooks" (p.775).
2. Limited Scope. While social learning theory focuses on observational learning, it may not encompass other forms of learning, such as associative learning and experiential learning. This limitation could restrict its applicability in varied educational settings.
3. Overemphasis on the Role of Models. Lastly, social learning theory has been seen by some scholars as having placed so much emphasis on the role of models without recourse to other factors. Pajares (2002) agreed that "the theory places too much emphasis on the role of models in behavior acquisition, potentially undervaluing individual agency and the active role of learners in their educational journey" (p.216).

Relevance

The social learning theory is one of the theories used in education to determine the concept of learning through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. It is relevant to this article because it corroborates the fact that Nollywood home movies create scenarios that affects the academic performance of students quite negatively. The students, for instance, pay so much attention to the movies that they no longer study as hard as they should. Again, they retain the contents of the movies so much that, over time, they begin to reproduce some of the character threats they have seen to the detriment of their studies, in particular and the society in general. If left unchecked, the students become less academically motivated that their performance starts to nose-dive. This led Njoku to conclude that:

Recent research has shown that high rate of crimes in Nigerian schools and society at large could be related to influences of bad movies or videos they watch. For instance, the display of pornographic films or shown during most the Nigerian movies has affected many youths and exposed them to all forms of sexual harassment like practice of homosexuality, incest to mention but a few (p.182).

Research Data

The Nigerian population, both religious and secular, has bitterly complained that Nollywood home movies are doing more harm than good to the younger population. Again, countless number of articles, conventional and scholarly, has observed that Nollywood home movies have negative effects on the academic performance of the youth population. This ugly trend has constrained this writer to embark on this research. For this, a questionnaire containing 10 questions were distributed to 60 students of Living Word Comprehensive Secondary School, Umudim, Nnewi, Anambra State. The 60 students, whose ages were between 14 and 18, were randomly selected from both SS2 and SS3 classes. Due to the huge number of expected respondents, the questions were closed-ended. Closed-ended questions are meant to elicit specific but limited responses. It is used to facilitate a quantitative analysis. The ten (10) questions were:

1. Do you know what Nollywood home movies are? yes---; no---;
2. Do you watch Nollywood home movies? yes---; no---;
3. How often: two hours or less? yes---; no---;
4. How often: two hours or more? yes---; no---;
5. Do you believe that Nollywood negatively affect your academic performance? yes---; no---
6. Do you allow Nollywood to distract you when studying? yes---; no---;
7. Do you attempt to reproduce the actions of the movie characters? yes---; no---;
8. Do you retain the actions of the movies after watching? yes---; no---;
9. Are you still motivated to study after watching movies? yes---; no---;
10. Do you consider Nollywood movies helpful? yes---; no---;

From the data, it was discovered that:

1. Familiarity and Viewership: Most students (95%) are aware of Nollywood, and 90% actively watch its movies. This suggests that Nollywood is widely recognized and consumed in the student community.
2. Viewing Duration: 70% watch for two hours or more, while 30% watch for two hours or less. This indicates that students have varied watching habits, with a significant portion dedicating longer hours.

3. Academic Impact: 65% believe Nollywood negatively affects their academic performance, while 35% disagree. This suggests that while most students may experience distractions, the minority do not feel their studies are significantly impacted.
4. Study Distractions: 80% admit to allowing Nollywood to distract them while studying, which suggests a disaster for their academic focus.
5. Influence on Behavior: Half of the students (50%) attempt to reproduce movie actions, indicating some level of behavioral influence. Meanwhile, 65% retain the actions they see, showing that movies have a lasting impression.
6. Study Motivation: After watching movies, only 25% remain motivated to study. This suggests that entertainment does hinder academic drive.
7. Perceived Helpfulness: 35% consider Nollywood movies beneficial while 65% believe it is a distraction.

Simply put, Nollywood home movies have negative effects on the students studied. This calls for urgent action by parents, teachers, Christian leaders as well as the government.

Academic Performance and Its Indicators

Academic performance tends to aggregate how well a student meets the benchmarks established by educational institutions. It includes evaluating a student's grades, standardized test scores and their engagement with the learning material. It is not solely defined by grades but also reflects a student's understanding of the subject matter and their ability to apply knowledge effectively. World Bank, (2002) further sees academic performance as:

The quality and quantity of knowledge, skills, techniques and positive attitudes, behaviors and philosophy that students achieve. This achievement is evaluated by the mark or grade that students attain in tests or examinations done at the end of the topic, term or year or education cycle (n.p.).

Key Components

Academic performance has some key components which include:

1. Grades and Scores. Academic performance is often assessed through exams, quizzes and assignments. High grades reflect strong comprehension and application of concepts. This can be exemplified by a student scoring 90% in a mathematics test which shows a high level of understanding of the subject.
2. Class Participation. Engaging in class discussions, asking questions and collaborating with peers are crucial indicators of academic performance.

3. Project Work and Research. The ability of the students to complete academic projects and research assignments effectively demonstrates learning and critical thinking abilities.
4. Application of Knowledge. The ability to apply learned concepts to real-world situations is a strong indicator of academic success. A student, for instance, who uses mathematical concepts to solve budgeting problems in daily life is said to have applied the knowledge taught in the maths class.

Importance of Good Academic Performance

A population of the youths of Nnewi as well as other youths in Nigeria may not know the importance of good academic performance in their schools. Adaramajal, Temisanren, Raji, and Sulyman (2024) have, therefore, noted that "academic performance is essential because it is the channel via which parents, students, teachers, government and members of the public are informed about the level of success students have made in learning within a specified period" (p.58).

A cursory look at some of the importance might suffice:

1. Further Education. High academic performance usually leads students to higher education Opportunities such as the ability to gain admission to prestigious universities.
2. Scholarships. Many scholarships and financial aid programs, both local and international, are based on students' academic achievements. Those who score higher enjoy such privileges.
3. Career Success. There is a strong link between academic performance and occupational outcomes, as students with better performance tend to have better job prospects and career advancement opportunities.

Factors that Impede Academic Performance

Although the focal point of this article is on Nollywood home movies as the major factor that impedes academic performance, it should be noted that there are myriads of other factors to blame. These, according to Ojetunde and Ayodabo (2024), include:

1. Language barrier or subject technicalities
2. Laxity on the part of students
3. Shortage of qualified teachers
4. Lack of concentration and motivation
5. Poverty, financial constraints etc.
6. Inadequate study time
7. Lack of study materials
8. Low self-esteem, etc. (p.72); (list slightly modified by this writer).

Ojetunde and Ayodabo further observed that:

There is also parental influence, which is so much that parents have been found to impose themselves on the choice of subjects and courses on their children, irrespective of the fact that whether the children have the capacity and competence or not. This can consequently lead to drop in performance by students in senior secondary school classes and examinations (p.71).

Adaramajal, Temisanren, Raji, and Sulyman have further observed that "other factors contributing to poor academic performance include incomplete syllabi coverage, teachers' lack of interest in students' understanding, absenteeism, poor teacher-student relationships, lateness, and inadequate student reinforcement" (p.58).

The Negative Effects of Home Movies on the Youths

Nollywood home movies, one of the most popular instruments of entertainment, have, over the years, entertained men and women, both young, and old, the religious and the secular, in Nnewi and other parts of Nigeria. In recent times, however, these Nollywood Movies have exposed the youths to various forms of violence such as armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping, ritual killing, nudity, infidelity, disobedience to parents/elders and so forth.

Most unfortunately, the Nollywood home movies have not only vitiated African moral values and attitudes and reverence for the supernatural but have also neglected the biblical admonition "so shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22; RSV).

Again, these home movies have so consumed the youths that their academic performance is greatly affected. This led Duru (2020) to lament that:

A lot of the youths demonstrate negative attitude as a result of their exposure to violent films. The proliferation of local films appears to be adding to the problems of our society; hence, the need to ensure thorough scrutiny before production and marketing of home movies in order to achieve positive impacts on the generality of Nigerian society (p.107).

The Roles of the Society

Having realized the negative effects of Nollywood home movies on the youths of Nnewi, this article calls for a consorted effort by the society to extenuate the situation if not completely eradicated. Society, according to Ndukwe (2015), is "the members of a community or group with a common culture, mutual interest and shared institutions" (p.13). Here, society encompasses the people of Nnewi both religious and secular and

traditional institutions that can help the youths to not only retrace their steps but also expedite action on their academic performance. They can help in the following ways:

1. **Provide Educational Materials.** The Nnewi society should try to make sure that the schools in their domain are equipped with suitable textbooks, qualified teachers, libraries and other educational materials. Coombs (1970) has posited that "scarcity of these Inputs, will constrain educational system from responding more fully to new demands. In order to raise the students' academic performance, its efficiency and productivity, the needed materials should be provided" (n.p.).
2. **Ban of the Use of Phones in Schools.** It has been observed that many students come to school with mobile phones on which they load a lot of materials including Nollywood home movies. A ban of such devices in schools will help to curtail excessive movie watch and enhance academic performance.
3. **Proper Supervision.** The school authorities both state and local, should, from time to time, supervise the activities of the teachers to ensure efficient service delivery. Ndyali (2013) recommends that:

The preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans, filling of the subject log book and mark book must be inspected regularly. ... More instructional time must be efficiently and effectively spent to enable students have enough actual learning, which leads to more understanding and better performance. The school head must develop a good system that would minimize absentees and dropout of students from studies. On top of that, observation of classroom teaching, lesson plan, teachers' notes and students' exercise book survey are the other ways of supervising the teaching process (p.22).
4. **Parental Involvement.** Beyond paying the students' school and other fees, parents can regularly visit their wards' schools to examine the environment and level of teaching and learning. Hussein, Muturi and Samantar (2018) believe that:

Parents can also help to provide students' personal requirements that will enable them to acquire education easily. These may include clothing, sanitary pads for girls, notebooks and proper medication when they fall sick both at home and at school. Even if teachers are very good, such requirements have to be in place in order to help the student study well, yet they all require money (p.96).
5. **Stricter Censorship of the Nollywood Movies.** Nigeria has some government agencies saddled with the responsibility of censoring the movie production, distribution and broadcast. Such agencies include National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), the Consumer Protection Council (CPC), National

Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture. These agencies should, as a matter of necessity, not only work together to create a framework for the production, distribution, and exhibition of the Nollywood home movies in Nigeria but also ensure that the contents adhere to cultural and societal standards. Furthermore, Gonina, Samuel and Pam (2021) recommend that:

Greater efforts should be geared by the NFVCB to ensure that video films sold in the country meet the stipulated standards in both quality and content in order to suppress the display of immoral acts in Nollywood movies. Cable television channels such as Africa Magic, Cine Africa as well as other networks should ensure that before any Nollywood movies is shown on their channel; it should meet the stipulated standards that can impact its audience positively (p.120).

Conclusion

Every society depends on its youths to provide the workforce for its development and to preserve its posterity. Knowing this, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon demanded that youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chaldeans be sought out and prepared (Daniel 1:4; RSV).

To prepare these youths, they need to be educated. To be able to measure up to standard, the youths' academic performance should be encouraged. And, to encourage them, every form of distraction should be disallowed. Having identified Nollywood home movies as an instrument of distraction to the youths of Nnewi in particular and Nigeria in general, this paper notes that:

1. Education occurs in informal settings like the family, peer group etc. and formal settings like schools and universities.
2. Education is meant to promote personal development, social responsibility and economic growth.
3. Academic performance refers to the level of achievement students demonstrate in their educational pursuits, typically measured through grades, test scores, completion of coursework and overall engagement in learning activities.
4. Many adolescents and youths glued their eyes on the television watching movies of all kinds. Some movies that may adversely affect their emotion, psychic, moral behaviour and cognitive development. The prevalence of immoral behaviour among youths has been linked with the types of programmes, movies they view.

5. Nollywood home movies are negatively influencing the attitudes, characters and lifestyle of the youths of Nnewi and it has also led to their poor academic performance.

This article, therefore, prays that something should be done by all and sundry as urgently as possible to ameliorate this ugly situation. To extinguish this dangerous fire amongst the students, this article makes these recommendations:

1. The Government, whether federal, state or local, should motivate the teachers by regular and proper remuneration and other benefits. Again, the governments need to address the shortage of teachers by employing the thousands of graduates produced by the myriads of universities and colleges of education in Nigeria. This will help the teachers to be motivated to pass on knowledge to the youths on whom the development of the society is hinged.
2. Parents should regulate and monitor the exposure of their children to violent films. They should, as a matter of necessity, visit their wards' schools to examine the environment and level of teaching and learning.
3. The promoters and managers of the Nollywood movie industry should project positive virtues such as love, honesty, unity, respect for elders and hardwork instead of cultism, greediness, robbery, sex, pornography and so forth.
4. Increased Censorship. The government, both federal and state, should establish agencies in addition to the existing ones to help sanitize the deterioration that emanates from the influences the Nollywood home movies exert on the youth in particular and the populace in general.
5. Nnewi and other communities where schools exist should help to fill the gaps where government intervention is lacking. This can include building and/or repairing school buildings, provision of library materials, electrification and security.

It is hoped that if these recommendations are implemented, the academic performance of the students would be greatly enhanced and the society thrived on intelligent and productive youth population--the leaders of tomorrow.

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