

Attitude of Students of Tertiary Institutions in Abia State Towards Violent Action in Nollywood Movie

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Abstract: This research investigated the perspectives of tertiary institution students in Abia State regarding violent acts depicted in Nollywood films, focusing specifically on the Umuahia South Local Government Area. The study was structured around five research objectives that addressed students' exposure to violence, their attitudes toward it, the perceived impact of violent content on the acceptance of violence, the connection between viewing frequency and attitudes, as well as perceived gender differences in responses to media violence. A quantitative research methodology and descriptive survey design were employed, with a sample of 300 students selected from local tertiary institutions. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire featuring 15 items rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The results revealed a significant level of exposure to violent content, with 70% of participants strongly agreeing that they often watched Nollywood films that included violent actions. Additionally, many respondents believed that regular exposure to violent scenes could affect students' acceptance and understanding of violence. The study also highlighted perceived gender differences in attitudes toward violence among male and female students. It concluded that depictions of violence in Nollywood films can shape students' perceptions and attitudes, especially when such acts are portrayed as acceptable, heroic, or justifiable.

Keywords: *Nollywood movies, violent actions, students' attitude, media violence, tertiary institutions.*

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Introduction

Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, has emerged as a significant part of modern Nigerian popular culture, serving as a major source of entertainment, information, social interaction, and cultural representation. Through its storytelling, characters, and visuals, Nollywood explores various aspects of Nigerian society, including crime, conflict, domestic violence, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, and other violent behaviors. While these portrayals may have valid dramatic and educational intentions, their frequent depiction raises concerns about how audiences, especially young individuals in higher education, perceive and react to violent content. Anunne and Yan (2018) noted that violence and crime have become more prominent in Nollywood films, and their exposure could negatively influence young viewers' understandings of violence, crime, and the use of offensive language.

This concern is particularly crucial for university students since young adulthood is a crucial stage for shaping attitudes, values, and behaviors. According to Social Learning Theory, repeated exposure to aggressive behavior models can promote observational learning, especially when violent acts are depicted as effective or socially endorsed. Evidence from South-Eastern Nigeria reinforces this view. A study by Ndukaihe et al. (2023) in Ebonyi State revealed that media violence could mediate the link between peer relationship issues and aggressive behavior. Likewise, research concerning Nigerian students has found a

connection between violent film content and aggressive behavior manifestations (Danasabe et al., 2022).

However, the link between watching violent films and engaging in violent behavior should not be seen as automatic or deterministic. Viewers actively interpret media messages, and their responses can be influenced by various factors such as personality traits, peer pressure, family environment, media literacy, and the context of violence in films. For example, research by Ayoyo (2024) among University of Ibadan students indicated that although Nollywood crime stories influenced perceptions of crime and led some students to become desensitized to criminal behavior, the majority did not feel that these films compelled them to commit crimes.

Recent studies also suggest that Nollywood can critically address violence rather than merely glorifying it. Adedeji-Olona (2026) found that Nigerian films could utilize narratives surrounding violence against women and girls to question societal attitudes, advocate for justice, and foster social change. Consequently, analyzing students' attitudes requires not just examining their exposure but also understanding how they perceive, assess, justify, reject, or emulate the violent actions shown in films.

In this light, the current study investigates the attitudes of tertiary institution students in Abia State towards violent actions depicted in Nollywood movies. This inquiry is significant as

previous Nigerian research has looked at media violence and aggression broadly, with limited focus on the specific attitudes of tertiary students in Abia State regarding violent portrayals in Nollywood. Exploring this topic can offer empirical insights into media effects on young adults and contribute to initiatives aimed at enhancing media literacy, promoting responsible filmmaking, and preventing the normalization of violence among students.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing appeal of Nollywood films among Nigerian youth has raised concerns about their potential impact on viewers' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, particularly regarding violence. Many Nollywood productions depict scenarios involving fighting, assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, revenge, physical assault, and other aggressive behaviors. While such portrayals may serve to entertain, educate, or mirror social realities, frequent exposure to violent themes may shape how young people perceive and assess violence. For instance, Anunne and Yan (2018) found that watching Nollywood films featuring violence and crime adversely affected young viewers' perceptions of these issues and their use of strong language.

This concern is especially relevant for students in higher education institutions, who represent a significant portion of the youth demographic and are active viewers of Nigerian films. Research from South-Eastern Nigeria reveals a link between media violence and aggressive behavior. Ndukaihe et al. (2023) showed that exposure to media violence influenced the connection between peer relationship issues and aggressive behavior in adolescents from Ebonyi State. Their study, involving 144 secondary school students, indicated that media violence could lead to aggressive behavioral outcomes under specific social circumstances. Likewise, Danasabe et al. (2022) identified a strong correlation between violent movie content and aggressive behavior among secondary students in Bauchi State. These findings underscore the need to explore violent media consumption among young Nigerians.

Nonetheless, a significant issue persists. Much of the existing research has focused on aggressive behavior resulting from media violence, rather than specifically examining students' attitudes toward the violent actions showcased in Nollywood films. Understanding attitudes is crucial, as a student may not engage in violence physically but might still view such actions as acceptable, justified, normal, effective, or necessary in certain situations. Thus, relying solely on behavioral studies may not provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of violence.

Additionally, Ayoyo (2024) investigated perceptions of crime, attitudes, and behaviors related to Nollywood films among students at the University of Ibadan. The study found that these films shaped students' views on crime, even though most participants did not believe the films directly led them to commit crimes. However, Ayoyo's research was conducted in Oyo State and took a broader look at crime rather than directly assessing students' attitudes toward the violent actions depicted in Nollywood films.

As a result, two significant research gaps emerge. The first is a geographical/contextual gap: there is a lack of empirical research specifically targeting tertiary institution students in Abia State regarding their attitudes toward violence in Nollywood movies. Previous studies have largely focused on other Nigerian locations, such as Ebonyi, Bauchi, and Oyo States (Ayoyo, 2024;

Danasabe et al., 2022; Ndukaihe et al., 2023). Therefore, conclusions drawn from these studies may not accurately reflect the experiences of students in Abia State.

The second gap is conceptual: prior research has typically connected media violence with aggressive behavior, crime perception, or broad responses to violent content. There has been limited exploration of the specific attitudinal aspects regarding violent actions in Nollywood films whether students accept, reject, justify, condemn, or view such actions as normal or desirable. This study aims to address these gaps by examining the attitudes of tertiary institution students in Abia State towards the violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the **0.05 level of significance**:

- **H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between students' exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies and their attitudes towards violent actions in tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State.
- **H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between the frequency of watching Nollywood movies and students' acceptance of violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies among students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State.
- **H₀₃:** There is no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the attitude of students of tertiary institutions in Abia State towards violent actions in Nollywood movies.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which students of tertiary institutions in Abia State are exposed to violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies.
2. Examine the attitude of students of tertiary institutions in Abia State towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies.
3. Determine whether students' exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies influences their acceptance or rejection of violent behaviour.
4. Examine the relationship between students' exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies and their attitude towards violent actions.

Significance of the Study

This research is important as it investigates the perspectives of tertiary institution students in Abia State regarding violent behavior depicted in Nollywood films. Nollywood serves as a significant source of entertainment and social insights for Nigerian youth, and its representation of violence might affect how young individuals comprehend, interpret, embrace, or reject aggressive behavior. Consequently, the results of this study are anticipated to

be beneficial to students, tertiary institutions, parents and guardians, Nollywood creators, policymakers, researchers, and society at large.

Students: The study may help students recognize how frequent exposure to violence in films can shape their views and attitudes towards aggression. It could prompt students to critically assess violent material instead of passively accepting violent actions as normal, heroic, entertaining, or justifiable.

Tertiary Institutions: The results may offer valuable insights to administrators, educators, counselors, and student affairs departments about students' views on violence and the potential influence of media. The findings could facilitate the creation of media literacy, counseling, and behavioral programs that promote non-violent conflict resolution among students.

Parents and Guardians: The study might enhance parents' awareness of the types of violent content young individuals encounter. This could lead to better parental guidance, discussions, and supervision regarding movie consumption among students and young adults.

Nollywood Practitioners: Producers, directors, scriptwriters, and actors could gain valuable insights from the findings, helping them understand how students perceive violent portrayals in Nigerian films. This awareness may encourage filmmakers to depict violence responsibly, especially when violent actions might seem appealing or acceptable.

Government and Policymakers: The study may provide empirical data that can aid relevant regulatory and educational bodies in formulating policies and guidelines for the depiction of violence in Nigerian cinema. Additionally, it may support broader efforts to promote responsible media consumption and peaceful conduct among youth.

Researchers and Scholars: The research will enrich existing literature on media influence, Nollywood, violent content, and student attitudes. It could also serve as a resource for future investigations into media violence, youth attitudes, aggression, and film studies, particularly within the Nigerian context and Abia State.

Society: Ultimately, this study may enhance understanding of whether students view violent actions depicted in Nollywood films positively, negatively, or neutrally. Such insights could aid initiatives aimed at diminishing the normalization of violence and fostering the promotion of peaceful values among young Nigerians.

Literature Review

Anunne and Yan (2018) on Violence, Crime, and Strong Language in Nollywood Films

Anunne and Yan (2018) explored the impact of violence, crime, and strong language in Nollywood films on young audiences in Nigeria. This research was prompted by the growing depiction of violent and criminal behavior in Nigerian cinema. Utilizing a sample of 31 young individuals, the researchers distributed a questionnaire before and after showing them six Nollywood films filled with violent content. The results indicated that viewing these movies significantly altered participants' attitudes towards violence, crime, and the use of strong language in a negative manner.

This study is pertinent to the current research as it illustrates that Nollywood films can shape young viewers' perceptions of socially unacceptable behaviors. It demonstrates that media exposure is not merely passive entertainment but can actively influence viewers' beliefs and attitudes. However, the study's sample size was relatively small and did not specifically include tertiary institution students, and it examined violence, crime, and strong language as a combined concept instead of focusing on students' attitudes towards violence alone. Thus, the present research builds on this by specifically targeting students in tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Ogah, Marcus, and Okoro (2021) on Televised Violent Films and Aggressive Behaviour

Ogah, Marcus, and Okoro (2021) assessed the impact of televised violent films on youth aggression among students at the Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa State. They applied Bandura's Social Learning Theory and employed a survey research method with 378 respondents. The findings revealed that students exhibited a moderate consumption of violent televised content, particularly action films featuring war, crime, and gang-related themes. The study further established a correlation between viewing violent films and aggressive behavior, such as physical assaults and other antisocial actions.

This research is significant for the current study because its respondents were also tertiary institution students, aligning the population with the present research focus. It highlights the relevance of Social Learning Theory in illustrating how students might adopt aggressive behaviors modeled by media characters. However, the broader focus on violent films, without concentrating on Nollywood specifically, and the regional context of Nasarawa State necessitate further investigation into similar attitudes among students in Abia State.

Danasabe, Madugu, and Bura (2022) on Violent Movie Content and Aggression

Danasabe, Madugu, and Bura (2022) explored the association between violent film content and aggressive behaviors among secondary school students in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Their sample included 80 students, analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-tests. They found a significant correlation at 0.259 ($p < 0.05$) between violent movie content and aggression, noting gender differences in aggression among those exposed to violent media.

The findings underscore that viewing violent media may correlate with aggressive behavior among youth, thus providing insights into the link between media violence and students' attitudes towards violence. However, the study's focus on secondary school participants instead of tertiary students and its geographical location in Bauchi State differ from the current research, which aims to examine students in higher education and their attitudes toward violence portrayed in Nollywood films.

Ndukaihe et al. (2023) on Media Violence and Aggressive Behaviour

Ndukaihe et al. (2023) investigated the interplay between peer relationships and aggression, focusing on the role of media violence. Their findings suggested that media violence interacts with social factors in fostering aggressive behavior, implying that it does not solely determine aggression. This research is vital for understanding that the effects of media violence may be

contingent upon adolescents' social environments and peer influences.

These insights are relevant for the present study, indicating that students' attitudes toward violent actions in Nollywood films may be influenced by wider social dynamics beyond the films themselves. Factors such as peer groups and personal experiences could shape how students accept or reject the violent behaviors depicted. However, as Ndukaihe et al. centered their research on adolescents and aggressive behaviors rather than specific attitudes of tertiary students, the current study aims to fill this gap within the context of higher education.

Nwosu and Obi (2024) on Nollywood and Perceptions of Domestic Violence in Owerri

Nwosu and Obi (2024) examined how Nollywood films influence public perceptions of domestic violence among the populace in Owerri Municipal. Utilizing a survey design with a total of 384 respondents drawn from a population of 180,540, they analyzed residents' exposure to depictions of domestic violence in Nollywood, their interpretations of these portrayals, and the perceived impacts on domestic violence.

This study is particularly relevant as Owerri is situated in Imo State, adjacent to Abia State, reflecting a similar socio-cultural context. It illustrates that Nollywood representations of violence can be studied through audience perceptions rather than just behavioral outcomes. Nevertheless, Nwosu and Obi's research targeted the general public rather than tertiary students specifically, and it concentrated solely on domestic violence. The current research thus narrows the focus on students in Abia State and examines a broader spectrum of violent actions.

Ayoyo (2024) on Nollywood Films, Crime Perception, Attitudes, and Behaviour among University Students

Ayoyo (2024) analyzed how Nollywood films affect crime perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors among University of Ibadan students. Utilizing a survey of 190 students and focus-group discussions for qualitative insights, the study found that many students viewed Nollywood films as reflective of real-life criminal scenarios, believing these films shaped societal crime perceptions. Some respondents indicated that exposure to crime-related themes influenced their views on acceptable behavior and piqued their interest in crime, although a majority did not feel that the films prompted them to commit crimes. The study highlighted the need for media literacy and parental guidance for critical interpretation of crime portrayals.

Ayoyo's research is highly relevant as it specifically looked at university students' attitudes towards crime-related content in Nollywood. It showcases the complex nature of media influence, suggesting that exposure can affect perceptions and attitudes without inciting direct criminal behavior. This important distinction aligns with the current study's focus on differentiating attitudes toward violence from actual violent behavior. However, the research was conducted in Oyo State and dealt broadly with crime, necessitating a narrower focus on violent actions among tertiary students in Abia State.

Synthesis of the Reviewed Literature

The analyzed studies generally suggest that violent and crime-related media content can significantly influence young people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Anunne and Yan

(2018) highlighted shifts in young audiences' views following exposure to Nollywood films, while Ogah et al. (2021) and Danasabe et al. (2022) established links between violent film exposure and aggressive behavior. Ndukaihe et al. (2023) further indicated that media violence is intertwined with social factors when predicting aggression. Nwosu and Obi (2024) emphasized the importance of audience interpretation in assessing Nollywood portrayals of domestic violence, while Ayoyo (2024) found that university students perceive crime-related content as impactful, although they may not engage in criminal acts directly.

Despite these findings, crucial gaps persist. Most existing research has focused either on aggressive behavior, crime, or general media influence rather than specifically on students' attitudes toward violent acts depicted in Nollywood movies. Additionally, there has been limited focus on tertiary institution students in Abia State. The geographical and conceptual gaps highlighted by previous studies justify the current research initiative, which aims to explore whether students in Abia State accept, reject, justify, condemn, or become desensitized to the violent actions represented in Nollywood films.

Empirical Review

Anunne and Yan (2018): Nollywood Violence, Crime, and Young Audiences

Anunne and Yan (2018) conducted an empirical study to explore how violence, crime, and strong language in Nollywood films affect young viewers in Nigeria. They utilized a pre-test/post-test methodology with participants who watched specific Nollywood films featuring violent and criminal content. The results showed that viewing these films shaped the participants' views on violence, crime, and the use of harsh language. The researchers concluded that repeated exposure to such films could affect young people's attitudes toward undesirable behaviors. This study is pertinent to the current research as it provides evidence that Nollywood films can shape perceptions of violence and crime among youth. However, it did not focus specifically on tertiary students in Abia State or their attitudes toward violent acts as a separate variable. The current study aims to fill this gap by concentrating on the attitudes of tertiary students in Abia State towards violence depicted in Nollywood movies.

Danasabe, Madugu, and Bura (2022): Violent Movie Content and Aggressive Behaviour

Danasabe et al. (2022) explored the connection between violent movie content and aggressive behavior among secondary school students in Bauchi, Nigeria. Using a correlational design, they gathered data from 80 students and applied Pearson Product Moment Correlation to analyze the relationship between violent media exposure and aggressive tendencies. The study indicated a significant positive correlation, suggesting that frequent viewing of violent movie content may lead to increased aggressive behavior in young audiences. The findings are relevant to the present research, highlighting potential behaviors linked to violent films. However, the study was limited to secondary school students and did not address tertiary students or their attitudes specifically. Given its geographical focus on Bauchi, further investigation in the sociocultural context of Abia State is warranted.

Ndukaihe et al. (2023): Media Violence and Aggressive Behaviour

Ndukaihe et al. (2023) investigated how peer relationships relate to aggressive behavior among adolescents, with a particular focus on media violence as a mediating factor. Their findings revealed that media violence significantly affects the link between social relationship issues and aggressive behavior, indicating that exposure to violent media can exacerbate aggressive outcomes, especially in negative social contexts. This study adds value to the current research by suggesting that violent media's influence can interact with other social dynamics. However, it focused on adolescents rather than tertiary students, hence, the present study aims to collect data specifically from tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Ayoyo (2024): Nollywood Films, Crime Perception, Attitudes, and Behaviour

Ayoyo (2024) studied how Nollywood films affect crime perception, attitudes, and behavior among students at the University of Ibadan, using a mixed-method approach with questionnaires and focus groups. The results showed that Nollywood films shaped students' views on crime, although many participants did not believe that watching these films directly led to criminal involvement. This finding suggests that media exposure can shape perceptions and attitudes without necessarily causing direct criminal acts. This distinction is crucial for the current research, as it indicates that students might adopt particular attitudes towards depicted violent actions without acting on them. Nonetheless, Ayoyo's research was limited to one university in Oyo State and took a broad view of crime rather than focusing specifically on violent actions. The present study will focus on students from tertiary institutions in Abia State and their attitudes towards violence in Nollywood films.

Summary of the Empirical Review

The four empirical studies underscore that violent and crime-related movie content can affect young people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Anunne and Yan (2018) found that exposure to violent Nollywood films alters young audiences' views on violence and crime. Danasabe et al. (2022) identified a significant link between violent film content and aggressive behavior, while Ndukaihe et al. (2023) demonstrated that media violence can interact with social factors to foster aggression. Ayoyo (2024) revealed that Nollywood films influence students' perceptions and attitudes towards crime without necessarily leading to criminal behavior.

Despite these insights, a geographical gap exists as none of the studies specifically targeted tertiary students in Abia State. Additionally, there is a conceptual gap, with most prior research emphasizing aggression, crime perception, or general media impacts instead of students' specific attitudes toward violent representations in Nollywood films. Consequently, the present study is designed to address these identified gaps.

Theoretical Framework

This research on the attitudes of tertiary institution students in Abia State toward violent behavior in Nollywood films is grounded in two pertinent media-effects theories: Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory. These theories are suitable as they offer different perspectives on how media exposure can shape audiences' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.

Social Learning Theory

Developed by Albert Bandura, Social Learning Theory explains how individuals acquire attitudes and behaviors by observing and imitating others. In mass communication, it suggests that people learn not only through direct interaction but also by observing media models. When a behavior is frequently shown and appears rewarded, successful, justified, or admired, viewers are more likely to adopt and replicate it.

This theory is particularly applicable to the violent acts depicted in Nollywood movies. Characters may be involved in fighting, killing, revenge, weapon use, or conflict resolution through violence. If such behaviors are portrayed as effective or heroic without negative consequences, students might see them as acceptable conflict-handling methods. Conversely, if violent characters face punishment and peaceful characters are rewarded, viewers may develop unfavorable views of violence. Thus, the influence of Nollywood violence depends not only on exposure but also on how violence is depicted and sanctioned.

Recent studies in Nigeria support the relevance of Social Learning Theory to media violence. Ndukaihe et al. (2023), examining students in South-Eastern Nigeria, found that media violence exposure mediated the link between peer relationships and aggressive behavior, aligning with Social Learning Theory's premise that aggression can be learned by observing others. Similarly, Chukwu-Okoronkwo et al. (2020) applied Social Cognitive Theory alongside Cultivation Theory to explore the adverse effects of violent television and video-film content, including Nollywood, on youth.

Social Learning Theory is pertinent to this study as it provides a framework to assess whether observing violent characters in Nollywood films influences students' acceptance, rejection, justification, or normalization of such behavior.

Cultivation Theory

Associated with George Gerbner, Cultivation Theory addresses the long-term effects of repeated media exposure on individuals' perceptions of social reality. It posits that frequent exposure to consistent media messages can gradually shape beliefs and attitudes that align with the media's portrayal of reality. In other words, audiences repeatedly exposed to certain representations may come to view them as normal or realistic.

In this study, Cultivation Theory suggests that students who regularly watch Nollywood films featuring violence may develop specific perceptions about violence. Continuous portrayals of revenge, fighting, assassination, kidnapping, cultism, or violent conflict resolution might lead to the belief that violence is a common or acceptable aspect of daily life. However, the theory does not claim that all viewers will develop positive attitudes toward violence; rather, it highlights the cumulative impact of repeated exposure.

Chukwu-Okoronkwo et al. (2020) used Cultivation Analysis to study violent media's effects on youth, warning of potential negative societal consequences. Aniukwu (2023) applied Cultivation Theory to analyze delinquency and violence themes in Nollywood, concluding that persistent exposure to such content can adversely affect viewers over time. Aondover and Aondover (2023) also employed this theory in assessing Nollywood's depiction of Nigerian society, finding that these films mirror and project contemporary social realities.

Therefore, Cultivation Theory is crucial for examining whether ongoing exposure to violent actions in Nollywood films influences students' attitudes toward violence by shaping their perceptions of what is normal or acceptable behavior.

Integration of the Two Theories in this Study

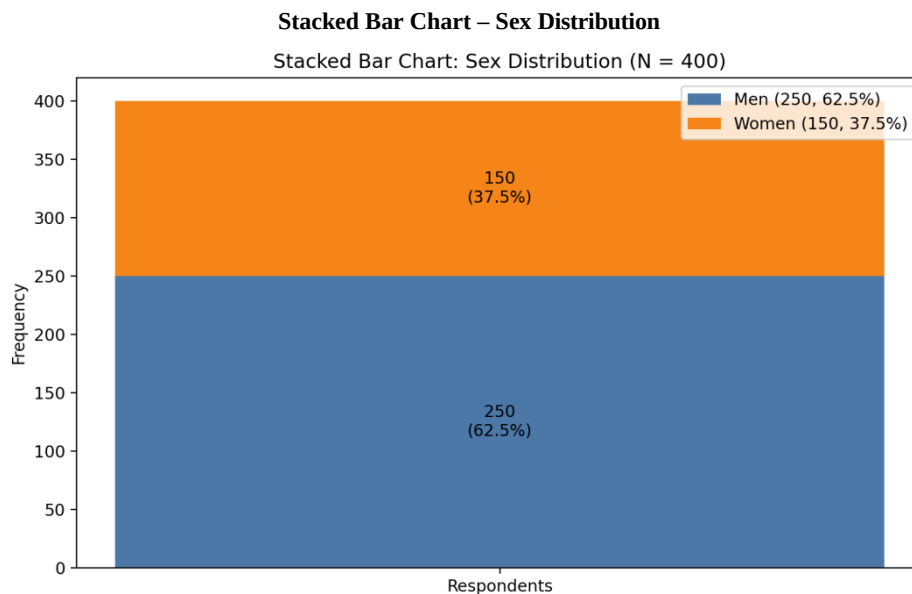
These theories complement each other. Social Learning Theory primarily explains how students might learn violent attitudes or behaviors by observing media characters, while Cultivation Theory focuses on the gradual and cumulative effects of repeated exposure on students' perceptions of social reality. Together, they offer a robust theoretical foundation for exploring students' attitudes toward violent behavior in Nollywood movies.

In this research, Social Learning Theory clarifies how students may adopt behaviors from violent portrayals, whereas Cultivation Theory elucidates how repeated viewing can gradually influence their attitudes and perceptions of violence. The combined use of both theories is thus deemed appropriate for investigating the relationship between Nollywood's depiction of violence and the attitudes of tertiary institution students in Abia State.

Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Use of Digital Technology in Teaching and Learning in Universities in South-East Nigeria

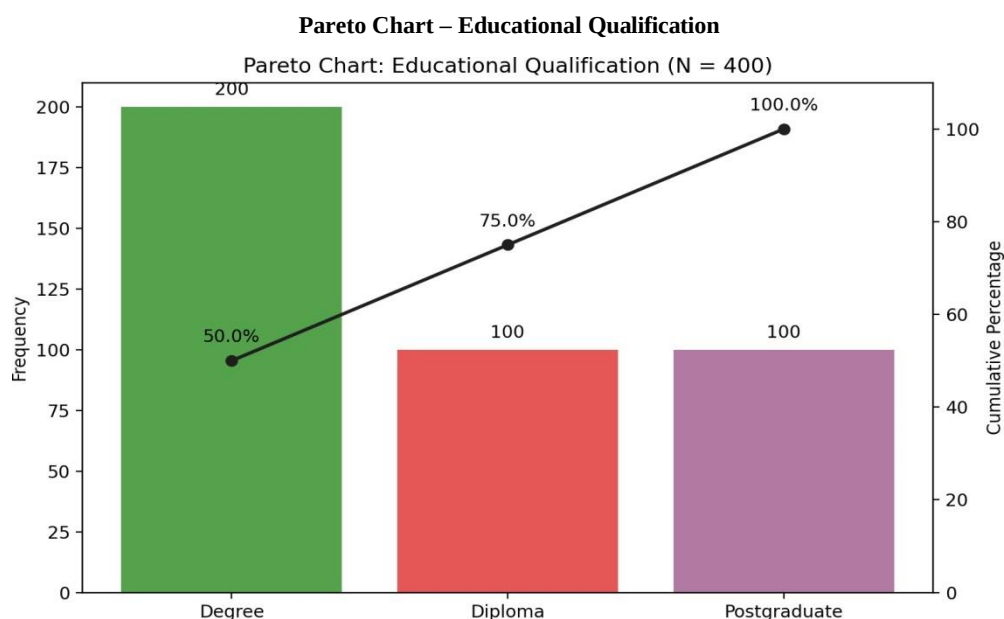
Total respondents: N = 400



The respondents comprised **250 men (62.5%)** and **150 women (37.5%)**.

Short Interpretation:

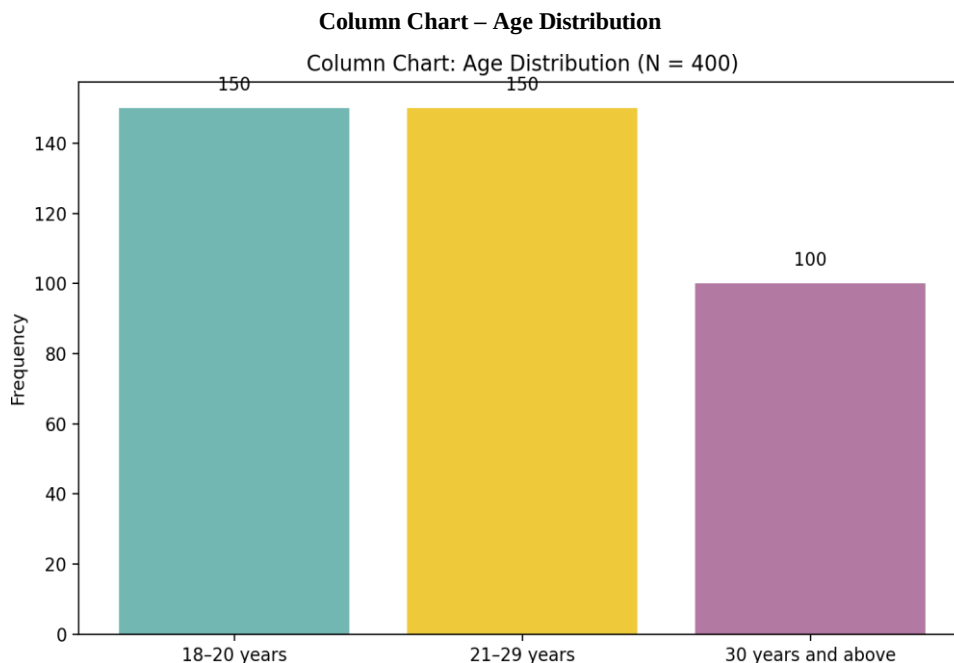
The chart showed that men constituted the larger proportion of the respondents, representing 62.5%, while women accounted for 37.5%. This indicated that the study had more male than female respondents.



The educational qualification of the respondents consisted of 200 degree holders (50%), 100 diploma holders (25%), and 100 postgraduate respondents (25%).

Short Interpretation:

The Pareto chart showed that respondents with degree qualifications constituted the largest group, accounting for 50% of the respondents. Diploma and postgraduate respondents each represented 25%. Thus, degree holders formed half of the total respondents.



The respondents were distributed across three age groups: 150 respondents (37.5%) were aged 18–20 years, 150 (37.5%) were aged 21–29 years, and 100 (25%) were aged 30 years and above.

Short Interpretation:

The column chart showed that the 18–20 and 21–29 age groups had equal representation, each accounting for 37.5% of the respondents. Respondents aged 30 years and above constituted 25%, making them the least represented age group.

General Interpretation

Overall, the demographic analysis showed that the study involved 400 respondents, with men constituting the majority by sex, respondents aged 18–29 years constituting the majority by age, and degree holders constituting the largest group by educational qualification. These distributions provided the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative research approach, specifically a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to collect numerical data from students of tertiary institutions and examine their attitudes towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. Umuahia South was selected as the study area because it contained tertiary educational institutions and a substantial population of young people who were exposed to Nollywood movies through television, mobile phones, social media, and other digital platforms. The area therefore provided an appropriate setting for examining students' attitudes towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State. The respondents consisted of students who had exposure to Nollywood movies and were considered capable of providing relevant information on their perceptions and attitudes towards violent actions portrayed in such movies.

Sample Size

The study used a sample size of 300 respondents. The 300 respondents were selected from tertiary institutions within Umuahia South Local Government Area. The sample size was considered adequate for obtaining quantitative data and making meaningful conclusions concerning students' attitudes towards violent actions in Nollywood movies.

Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the study. First, the relevant tertiary institutions within Umuahia South Local Government Area were identified. Secondly, appropriate academic units were selected through simple random sampling. Finally, eligible students were selected from the chosen units. This procedure ensured that respondents were selected systematically and that students who met the requirements of the study had an opportunity to participate.

Instrument for Data Collection

The major instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. The questionnaire consisted of sections covering respondents' demographic characteristics, exposure to Nollywood movies, exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies, and their attitudes towards such violent actions.

A four-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' attitudes. The response options were Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The four-point scale was adopted to avoid a neutral midpoint and encourage respondents to indicate either agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was submitted to the researcher's supervisor and experts in Mass Communication and research methodology for face and content validity. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. A pilot test was also conducted among a small number of students who were not included in the main study. The responses obtained from the pilot test were used to assess the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's alpha, and an acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered satisfactory.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered the questionnaires directly to the 300 selected respondents, with the assistance of research assistants where necessary. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. The completed questionnaires were collected and checked to ensure that they were properly completed before being subjected to analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were coded and analysed using appropriate quantitative statistical techniques. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to present and summarise the data. Inferential statistics, where applicable, were also used to examine relationships between relevant variables. The results were

presented in tables and interpreted in accordance with the research objectives and research questions.

For the four-point Likert scale, a criterion mean of 2.50 was used as the decision point. Therefore, any item with a mean score of 2.50 or above was regarded as agreement, indicating a positive or favourable response to the statement, while an item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagreement.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research. The respondents' identities and responses were treated as confidential, and the information collected was used strictly for academic purposes. Respondents were not required to provide information that could unnecessarily reveal their identities.

Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the findings of the study on the attitude of students of tertiary institutions in Abia State towards violent actions in Nollywood movies, with particular reference to Umuahia South Local Government Area. The study involved 300 respondents. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire containing 15 items based on five research questions.

The questionnaire adopted a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The findings are presented according to the research questions.

RQ 1

To what extent are students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State exposed to violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies?

Table 1: Respondents' Exposure to Violent Actions in Nollywood Movies

S/N	Statement	Response	Percentage	Frequency
1	I frequently watch Nollywood movies that contain violent scenes.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
2	I regularly watch Nollywood movies that portray fighting, physical assault, or murder.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
3	I frequently encounter scenes of kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, and revenge in Nollywood movies.	Strongly Agree	70%	210

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 shows that 70% of the respondents, representing 210 students, strongly agreed with each of Items 1, 2, and 3. This indicates that a substantial proportion of the students were frequently exposed to violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies. The findings suggest that violent scenes such as fighting, physical assault, murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, and revenge constituted a noticeable part of the Nollywood content consumed by the respondents. Therefore, the finding suggests a

high level of exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies among the students surveyed.

RQ 2

What is the attitude of students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies?

Table 2: Attitude Towards Violent Actions in Nollywood Movies

S/N	Statement	Response	Percentage	Frequency
4	I consider some violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies to be acceptable when used to achieve justice.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
5	I believe that violent actions portrayed in some Nollywood movies are sometimes justified.	Strongly Disagree	5%	15
6	I believe that violence is an acceptable way of resolving certain serious conflicts, as portrayed in some Nollywood movies.	Strongly Disagree	5%	15

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 2 indicate that 70% of the respondents, representing 210 students, strongly agreed that some violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies could be acceptable when used to achieve justice. This suggests that a considerable proportion of the respondents viewed violence as potentially justifiable under certain circumstances. On the other hand, 5% of the respondents, representing 15 students, strongly disagreed with the statements in Items 5 and 6. This indicates that a smaller proportion of the respondents rejected the justification or

acceptance of violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies. Overall, the findings suggest that students' attitudes towards violent actions were not entirely negative, particularly when violence was presented as a means of achieving justice.

RQ 3

To what extent does exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies influence students' acceptance or rejection of violent behaviour?

Table 3: Influence of Violent Nollywood Content on Students' Attitudes

S/N	Statement	Response	Percentage	Frequency
7	Watching violent actions in Nollywood movies can make students more accepting of violence.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
8	Repeated exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies can make students regard violence as a normal way of dealing with problems.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
9	Violent actions portrayed by successful or heroic characters in Nollywood movies can encourage students to approve of violence.	Strongly Agree	70%	210

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 3 shows that 70% of the respondents, representing 210 students, strongly agreed with Items 7, 8, and 9. The findings indicate that the respondents perceived violent portrayals in Nollywood movies as capable of influencing students' attitudes towards violence. The result particularly suggests that repeated exposure to violent scenes could contribute to the perception that violence is a normal means of dealing with problems. Furthermore, portraying successful or heroic characters engaging in violence

may encourage some students to develop more favourable attitudes towards violent actions.

RQ 4

What relationship exists between students' frequency of watching Nollywood movies and their attitudes towards violent actions portrayed in the movies?

Table 4: Frequency of Viewing and Attitude Towards Violent Actions

S/N	Statement	Response	Percentage	Frequency
10	Students who frequently watch Nollywood movies are more likely to accept violent actions portrayed in them.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
11	Frequent viewing of Nollywood movies containing violence influences students' perceptions of violent actions.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
12	The more frequently I watch Nollywood movies containing violent scenes, the more familiar I become with violent actions.	Agree	25%	75

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 4 indicate that 70% of the respondents, representing 210 students, strongly agreed that frequent viewing of Nollywood movies was associated with greater acceptance and changed perceptions of violent actions. In addition, 25% of the respondents, representing 75 students, agreed that frequent exposure to violent scenes increased their familiarity with violent actions. The findings therefore suggest that frequent exposure to Nollywood movies containing violent scenes may be

associated with students' perceptions and attitudes towards violence.

RQ 5

What difference exists between the attitudes of male and female students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies?

Table 5: Gender and Attitudes Towards Violent Actions

S/N	Statement	Response	Percentage	Frequency
13	Male and female students differ in their acceptance of violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies.	Agree	13%	39
14	Male students are more likely than female students to regard violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies as acceptable.	Strongly Agree	70%	210
15	Male and female students differ in their perception of violence as an appropriate way of resolving conflicts after watching Nollywood movies.	Agree	25%	75

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 5 indicates that 70% of the respondents, representing 210 students, strongly agreed that male students were more likely than female students to regard violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies as acceptable. Furthermore, 25% of respondents, representing 75 students, agreed that male and female students differed in their perception of violence as an appropriate method of resolving conflicts. However, 13% of respondents, representing 39 students, agreed that male and female students differed in their acceptance of violent actions. The findings therefore indicate that a considerable proportion of the respondents perceived gender as a factor that could influence attitudes towards violent actions. These responses alone, however, do not statistically establish a significant gender difference.

Summary of Findings

- 70% (210 respondents) strongly agreed that they frequently watched Nollywood movies containing violent scenes and encountered portrayals such as fighting, assault, murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, and revenge.
- 70% (210 respondents) strongly agreed that some violent actions could be acceptable when used to achieve justice, while 5% (15 respondents) strongly disagreed with the statements concerning justification and acceptability of violence.
- 70% (210 respondents) strongly agreed that watching violent actions could make students more accepting of violence, regard violence as normal, and approve of violence portrayed by successful or heroic characters.
- 70% (210 respondents) strongly agreed that frequent viewing could influence acceptance and perceptions of violent actions, while 25% (75 respondents) agreed that frequent viewing increased familiarity with violent actions.
- 70% (210 respondents) strongly agreed that male students were more likely than female students to regard violent actions as acceptable; 13% (39 respondents) agreed that male and female students differed in acceptance, while 25% (75 respondents) agreed that they differed in their perception of violence as a means of resolving conflicts.

Overall Finding

Generally, the responses supplied suggest that students had substantial exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies and perceived such exposure as capable of influencing their attitudes towards violence. The findings also suggest that the acceptability of violence may depend on the context in which it was portrayed, particularly when violence was presented as a means of achieving justice. The respondents also perceived frequent viewing and gender as factors associated with students' attitudes towards violent actions.

Note: The supplied percentages represent only the stated response category for each item and do not provide the complete SA/A/D/SD distribution. Consequently, full Likert mean scores, standard deviations, and statistically valid hypothesis tests cannot be calculated without the remaining response frequencies.

Discussion of Findings

This section discussed the findings of the study on the attitude of students of tertiary institutions in Abia State towards violent actions in Nollywood movies, with particular reference to Umuahia South Local Government Area. The discussion was organised according to the objectives and research questions of the study. The findings were also related to the existing literature on media violence, students' exposure to Nollywood movies, and the possible influence of violent media content on attitudes and perceptions.

Extent of Students' Exposure to Violent Actions in Nollywood Movies

The first objective of the study was to determine the extent to which students of tertiary institutions in Umuahia South Local Government Area were exposed to violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies. The findings showed a high level of exposure. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents, representing 210 students, strongly agreed that they frequently watched Nollywood movies containing violent scenes. Similarly, 70% strongly agreed that they regularly watched movies portraying fighting, physical assault, or murder, while another 70% strongly agreed that they

frequently encountered scenes involving kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, and revenge.

This finding suggests that violent content constituted a significant part of the Nollywood movies watched by the respondents. The finding was consistent with the literature reviewed on the increasing presence of violent themes in Nigerian home videos and popular films. The availability of Nollywood movies through television, smartphones, social media, and online streaming platforms has also made exposure to such content increasingly accessible to young people.

The finding could also be explained by the entertainment value often attached to action-oriented movies. Violence may be incorporated into storylines involving crime, revenge, justice, conflict, or heroism. Consequently, students may encounter violent actions repeatedly even when violence is not the primary reason for watching a particular movie.

The high level of exposure found in the study was important because repeated exposure constituted a major condition examined in media-effects theories. Where violent actions were repeatedly presented, students could become increasingly familiar with such behaviour and its consequences. However, exposure alone did not necessarily mean that students would imitate the behaviour, since individual attitudes, family background, peer influence, personality, and the context in which violence was portrayed could also influence media effects.

Students' Attitudes Towards Violent Actions Portrayed in Nollywood Movies

The second objective was to examine students' attitudes towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies. The findings revealed a somewhat conditional attitude towards violence. Seventy percent (70%) of respondents strongly agreed that some violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies were acceptable when used to achieve justice. However, 5% strongly disagreed with the statements that violent actions were sometimes justified and that violence was an acceptable way of resolving serious conflicts.

The finding suggested that students did not necessarily perceive all forms of violence in the same way. Instead, their attitudes appeared to depend partly on the purpose or context attached to the violent action. Violence portrayed as a means of achieving justice or punishing wrongdoing could be perceived differently from violence used for personal gain or indiscriminate aggression.

This finding was relevant to the literature on media representation because audiences do not always passively accept everything presented on screen. Viewers interpret media content according to the circumstances surrounding the action. When a violent character was presented as a hero who defended victims, defeated criminals, or obtained justice, the violence could receive greater moral justification in the eyes of viewers.

The finding therefore supported the argument that the consequences of media violence could depend not only on the presence of violence but also on how the violence was framed. Where violent behaviour was rewarded, justified, or associated with heroic characters, viewers could develop more favourable perceptions of such actions. Conversely, when violence was portrayed as harmful and associated with negative consequences, viewers might be less inclined to approve of it.

Influence of Exposure to Violent Actions on Students' Acceptance of Violence

The third objective was to determine the extent to which exposure to violent actions in Nollywood movies influenced students' acceptance or rejection of violent behaviour. The findings indicated a strong perceived influence. Seventy percent (70%) of respondents strongly agreed that watching violent actions in Nollywood movies could make students more accepting of violence. The same proportion strongly agreed that repeated exposure could make students regard violence as a normal way of dealing with problems. Also, 70% strongly agreed that violent actions portrayed by successful or heroic characters could encourage students to approve of violence.

The finding was consistent with the basic assumptions of Social Learning Theory, which holds that individuals can learn behaviours through observation, particularly when the behaviour is performed by attractive, powerful, successful, or rewarded models. When Nollywood movies portray violent characters as heroes or successful individuals who achieve their goals through violence, students may perceive such behaviour as effective or acceptable.

The finding was also consistent with the Cultivation Theory perspective. Repeated exposure to particular patterns of media representation may influence the way audiences perceive social reality. Thus, students who repeatedly encountered violence as a common means of resolving conflicts could gradually perceive violent responses as more normal or acceptable.

The findings, however, should not be interpreted to mean that watching violent Nollywood movies automatically caused students to become violent. Rather, the result indicated that respondents perceived violent media exposure as capable of influencing attitudes towards violence. Other social factors could either strengthen or weaken this influence.

Relationship Between Frequency of Watching Nollywood Movies and Attitudes Towards Violence

The fourth objective was to examine the relationship between students' frequency of watching Nollywood movies and their attitudes towards violent actions. The findings showed that 70% of respondents strongly agreed that students who frequently watched Nollywood movies were more likely to accept violent actions portrayed in them. Similarly, 70% strongly agreed that frequent viewing of Nollywood movies containing violence influenced students' perceptions of violent actions, while 25% agreed that the more frequently they watched violent scenes, the more familiar they became with violent actions.

The finding indicated that frequency of exposure was perceived as an important factor in shaping students' attitudes towards violent content. This finding agreed with the central argument of cultivation-oriented explanations of media influence, which emphasised the importance of repeated exposure. Repeated viewing could increase familiarity with violent behaviour and reduce the sense of unusualness associated with such behaviour.

The finding also supported the argument that media effects could accumulate over time. A single violent scene might not substantially alter a student's attitude, but continuous exposure to similar representations could contribute to the gradual development of particular perceptions about violence.

Nevertheless, frequency of viewing should not be treated as the only factor responsible for students' attitudes. The nature of the movies watched, the context in which violence was presented, the age and maturity of viewers, and social and cultural influences could also affect how students interpreted violent content.

Gender Differences in Students' Attitudes Towards Violent Actions

The fifth objective was to examine perceived differences between male and female students' attitudes towards violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies. The findings showed that 70% of the respondents strongly agreed that male students were more likely than female students to regard violent actions portrayed in Nollywood movies as acceptable. In addition, 25% agreed that male and female students differed in their perception of violence as an appropriate means of resolving conflicts, while 13% agreed that male and female students differed in their acceptance of violent actions.

The finding suggested that gender could be an important factor in students' interpretation of violent media content. The stronger association of males with acceptance of violent actions could be related to broader social and cultural expectations that sometimes associate masculinity with toughness, aggression, physical strength, and confrontation.

The finding also corresponded with media-effects literature suggesting that audience characteristics could moderate responses to violent media. Male and female viewers may interpret the same violent content differently because of differences in socialisation, expectations, experiences, and identification with characters.

However, the finding should be interpreted with caution. The questionnaire responses alone did not statistically establish that a significant difference existed between male and female students. A statistical comparison of the actual male and female respondents' attitude scores would be required to establish whether the observed difference was statistically significant.

Overall Discussion

Taken together, the findings indicated that students in tertiary institutions in Umuahia South were substantially exposed to violent actions in Nollywood movies and perceived such exposure as capable of influencing their attitudes towards violence. The findings further showed that the context in which violence was portrayed appeared important. Violence associated with justice, heroism, revenge, or success could receive greater acceptance than violence presented without justification.

The findings were generally compatible with Social Learning Theory because students could observe violent characters and potentially learn attitudes about the usefulness or acceptability of violence. They were also compatible with Cultivation Theory, particularly the finding that repeated exposure could make violent actions appear familiar or normal.

The findings therefore supported the broader position in the literature that media representations could contribute to the formation and reinforcement of attitudes, although media exposure should not be regarded as the sole determinant of violent attitudes or behaviour. Students were also influenced by family, peers, educational experiences, cultural values, personal beliefs, and their wider social environment.

Overall, the study demonstrated the importance of examining not merely whether students watched Nollywood movies, but what type of content they watched, how frequently they watched it, how violence was represented, and how they interpreted the violent actions portrayed.

Implication of the Findings

The findings have implications for Nollywood filmmakers, parents, educational institutions, media regulators, and students. Filmmakers should be encouraged to portray violent actions responsibly and to show the negative consequences of violence rather than consistently presenting violence as an effective or heroic means of solving problems.

Tertiary institutions could also strengthen media-literacy education among students so that they are better able to critically analyse violent content rather than accepting media representations uncritically. Students should equally be encouraged to distinguish fictional representations from appropriate behaviour in real-life situations.

Conclusion

The study concluded that students in tertiary institutions within Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State had significant exposure to the violent behaviors depicted in Nollywood films. It revealed that common violent scenes experienced by the respondents included fighting, physical assaults, murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, cult activities, and acts of revenge.

Additionally, the study found that students' perceptions of violent actions were partially shaped by how violence was represented in Nollywood movies. Specifically, scenes where violence was shown as a means to achieve justice, defend oneself, seek revenge, or overcome an adversary could lead some students to view such actions as acceptable or justifiable.

The findings also indicated that repeated exposure to violent content could lead to the normalization and acceptance of violence. Regular viewing seemed to increase students' familiarity with aggressive behavior, potentially influencing their views on using violence as a way to resolve conflicts. Furthermore, the results suggested a noticeable difference in attitudes toward violent behavior between male and female students.

In summary, while the exposure to violent Nollywood movies did not imply that students would necessarily engage in violence, the repeated and favorable depiction of violent actions could shape their perceptions and attitudes. As a result, promoting responsible media production, enhancing media literacy, and providing suitable guidance were deemed essential to mitigate the adverse impacts of violent media on students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Nollywood filmmakers should depict violence responsibly. Producers ought to refrain from showcasing excessive violence as attractive, heroic, or a desirable solution to conflicts. When violence is integral to the plot, its negative repercussions should be clearly illustrated.

2. Media literacy programs should be enhanced in tertiary institutions. Educational institutions should provide students with media literacy training that equips them to critically evaluate violent scenes and differentiate fictional entertainment from appropriate real-world behavior.
3. Parents and guardians should supervise students' media consumption. It is crucial for parents and guardians to actively engage with the types of Nollywood films students view and offer guidance regarding violent content.
4. Students should be encouraged to cultivate critical viewing habits. Education should aim to help students recognize that the violent actions depicted by actors, especially those in heroic roles, are fictional and should not be mistaken for acceptable approaches to resolving actual conflicts.
5. Relevant regulatory bodies should promote responsible content creation. Nigerian media and film regulatory organizations should continue to advocate for filmmakers' adherence to appropriate content guidelines, especially concerning excessive or glorified portrayals of violence.
6. Further research should investigate the impact of media violence on student behavior. Future studies should explore the relationship between viewing violent Nollywood films and actual violent behavior in students using larger sample sizes, various geographical contexts, and suitable statistical methods. Such research would provide more comprehensive insights into the long-term effects of violent media content.

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