

The Survey on the Impact of Typecasting and Stereotyping of Nollywood Actors on Young Nigerians

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Abstract

In most Nigerian video films, actors are made to play same or similar roles, or to play roles which physically suit them, whereas it is better to cast actors based on talent and ability. From the pictures of one or two major characters on the cover jackets or posters of most Nigerian video films, a prospective viewer can predict the genre or features of the video content. Criticisms from movies scholars, observers and critics hinge on this common attribute. They observed that typecasting and stereotyping of Nollywood actors affects their acting skills and techniques, and so could mar the growing Nigerian film industry through stifling creativity and obstructing the discovering of newer talents. This perception inspired this research to investigate other hitherto hidden consequences of typecasting and stereotyping of actors, as it affects young audience. This survey research highlights the impact, typecasting and stereotyping of Osita Iheme and Chinedu Ikedieze have on young people. They are two Nigerian actors that are very popular among young people and so were used as case studies. The implications were spelt out and recommendations equally

made on how to cast such actors in a way as to contribute to the development of youth, who form majority of video film audience.

Keywords: Typecasting; Stereotyping; Nollywood; Youth Development; Juvenile Delinquency

Introduction

Nigeria video film industry has come a long way. It emerged from a background of neglect nurtured by the private sector, to a globally recognized industry with great potentials comparable to none. Charles Igwe (2008) estimated the industry at over N500bn based on the 2005 research by Alder consulting. The industry is estimated to provide employment and means of livelihood to four million Nigerians and upto 500,000 in the Diaspora, among them producers, scriptwriters, directors, marketers etc. the key practitioners are not left out. Like their American and European counterparts, Nigerian actors and actresses command respect, are globally recognized, acclaimed and well remunerated for their arts. Amongst Africans in Diaspora, Okagbue (2008) observes that the popularity of the video films stems from:

The nostalgic tension and dialectic between home and Diaspora, familiarity and empathy with the content of the video films; a sense of injustice and unfairness of continuing, orientalist, representations of Africa in Western media, the ever-present threat of the cultural imperialism of western cultural media, especially cultural productions from United States, the desire to repress the economic imbalance of globalization through patronage of indigenous industries, and finally, a feeling of ownership of a cultural product which the African video film is.

Katsuva Ngoloma (2003) categorized the popularity of Nollywood to emanate from the subject matter of the films, the language and cultural aspect, the setting and the duration of the films. Although endowed with these attributes, yet Nigerian video films have had a fair share of public criticisms. First, based on the technical quality, second, the visual content and storylines, and most recently on the acting techniques and casting.

Cherechi Maduakor (2004) observes that majority of the popular Nigerian actors and actresses are either typecast or stereotyped. This reference includes actors like Alex Usifo, Emeka Ike, Pete Edochie, Patience Ozokwor to mention but a few. Duruaku (2003) defined typecasting as casting an actor in a role that seems to suit his character and personality, while Ernest-Samuel (2007) states that stereotyping means carving a particular image for a particular actor, which is often not true to the character, hence it results in the actor/actress playing similar roles in different productions. Ernest-Samuel further highlighted several problems of stereotyping or typecasting to include, pre-empting the possible conclusion of the films; portraying the director as an unseasoned artiste, relegating upcoming talents to the background; giving old and experienced artistes better opportunities and depriving them opportunities to be creative, and giving the audience very wrong impression of a particular artiste. In one way or the other, these problems adversely affect the film industry, or the actors directly, hence it could affect the overall development of the video film industry.

Statement of the Problem

Typecasting and stereotyping of actors is a development in the video film industry, which movie observers, scholars, and critics regarded as a problem affecting the industry, popularly known as Nollywood, as well as the key participants or players in the industry, aptly called the Nollywood stars. However, because typecasting and stereotyping result in making an actor play a certain role, or a similar role repeatedly, this researcher is of the opinion that it is likely to have adverse effects on the audience, particularly the young ones.

In the first place, young people form more than 60% of home video audience, as they have enough free time for viewership unlike the adults. Also, as behavioral scientists often fear, young people are more likely to be influenced by what they see. They also form majority of the members of the fans' club of most actors and celebrities. Sequel to that, an actor/actress who is their role model, who is equally cast in a particular role too often, could influence them positively and negatively based on their roles. This researcher decided to use two very popular actors among young

people in the survey research, namely. Osita Iheme and Chinedu Ikedieze popularly known as Aki and Pawpaw. Igwe (2008) observes that the duo of Aki and Pawpaw have what would be in a normal society a handicap, however, through the movies, they relied upon their other talents to surmount the other limitations they may face. These two young men, who are physically underdeveloped, and therefore pint-sized, command huge local and international following. They are very popularly referred to as 'Nollywood twins' and so are very popular among young children.

That aside, the duo have starred in more than forty films together among them *Aki na Pawpaw* (2003), *I'm in love*, *Jadon the Godfather*, *2 Rats*, *Oke Belguim*, *De Don and the Baron*, *the Capone*, *Invaluable man*, *Magic Cap*, *Reggea Boyz*, *the Rainmaker*, *Tom and Jerry*, *Aka Gum*, *World of Our Own*, *One Good turn*, *Apian Way*, *Secret Adventure*, *Daddy Must Obey*, *Happy Xmas*, *Spirit of a Prophet* etc.

In most of the films, Chinedu Ikedieze and Osita Iheme were cast either as village urchins, delinquents, or very mischievous children. Because most of the films were comical, they are portrayed as funny characters even in their delinquency. Therefore, the films reflect issues like youthful truancy and pranks, characterized by indiscipline, lying, stealing and other ungovernable behaviours that are beyond parental control. In many of the films they toy with early pre-marital sexual relations, at other times they abscond from their homes and even indulge in diabolical acts as seen in *2 Rats*, *Tom and Jerry*, *I'm in love*, *Okey Belgium*, *Happy Xmas* etc. also, in some of their films they are cast as cultist, mafians or juvenile gangs as in *Jadon the Godfather*, *Magic Cap*, *the Rain Maker*, *the Capone* etc.

An investigation on the impact of stereotyping Iheme and Ikedieze is timely because recently, a Nollywood website came up on July 10, 2010 with the caption 'Parents want Aki and Pawpaw banned'. This attracted several spurious reactions from video film lovers. A research on stereotyping Iheme and Ikedieze is necessary in order to establish the extent of their influence on young people; and further bring to the fore, other hitherto hidden problems of typecasting and stereotyping of actors, particularly as it concerns the young viewing audience.

Research Questions

Casting is a selection process through which the best persons adjudged capable of playing an interpretative role in the clarification of meaning and signification of experience in an audio-visual production, is engaged for performance (Owuamalam, 2002). A good interpretation of role by an actor brings respect to the actor as well as the industry. However, stereotyping of an actor or typecasting could have impacts that may not only adversely affect the actor and the industry, but also the audience. It is against this background that the following relevant questions emanate in the course of investigation:

- i. How does typecasting and stereotyping of actors affect young audience (or juvenile)?
- ii. Is there any significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and typecasting and stereotyping of Nollywood actors?
- iii. If such relationship exists, what informed it?
- iv. How can such impact be controlled so that it does not affect the future and development of the youth?

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to ascertain the impact of typecasting and stereotyping of Nollywood actors on young viewers, and so proffer solutions to the problem, in order to ensure that our youths are not socially, psychologically or emotionally debased by what they watch through our home videos, that they become social misfits in our society.

Amadou Mahtar (1982) observes that many young people, particularly in fast growing urban centres, live in precarious conditions which may, in extreme case lead to nihilism and despair. He therefore hints on the need for a more penetrating study of problems relating to the lifestyles, situations, behaviour and aspiration of the young people because they not only represent in numerical terms, an increasingly important section in many societies all over the world, they are the first to be affected by certain phenomena. This survey research is therefore a response to that call.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the survey method. The respondents for the study were selected from a cross section of primary and secondary schools within Owerri metropolis in Imo State, Nigeria. To ensure that only young children capable of understanding the issue in question were used in the research, only pupils from primary five and six were administered with the questionnaire, while in the secondary schools, majority of the respondents came from the junior secondary section. Thirty-two respondents however, came from tertiary institutions and they were all in their first year in the university. On the whole, a total of two hundred copies of questionnaire were administered. The simple random sampling method was used because it gave all respondents equal opportunity of being selected. The research questionnaire had a total of twenty three questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A of the questionnaire contained three questions about the respondent's age; sex, and education. Part B contained twenty questions designed to investigate the popularity of the actors among the respondents, the impact and extent of the actors influence on the respondents', the respondents viewing mates, and perception of the actors etc. Some of the questions were re-cast and repeated to validate the true response of the young respondents.

Some of the data were collected by the researcher, while some were collected on her behalf by field assistants. However, regardless of who retrieved the questionnaire, the instruments were administered in the classroom, under seeming exam conditions while the questions were read out aloud for the respondents to tick the appropriate answers that apply to the questions. Only the 32 undergraduates had the privilege of meeting with the researcher to complete theirs after a short briefing. This method of instrument administration laudable because it made it possible for the researcher to collect back all the questionnaire in record time, and without any questionnaire missing. The major disadvantage was that it was a tedious and time-consuming exercise.

Presentation of Results and Discussions

The questionnaire was made up of 23 questions divided into six sections as indicated in the tables. Respondents chose responses that reflected their opinion. The result is presented as follows. (see table 1)

Of the 200 respondents 114 representing 57% of the population are males while 86 or 43% of the respondents are female. 46 of the respondents are between the age of 9-12 years, while 114 of the population are within 13-16years. 40 respondents are between 17-20 years. In terms of academic status, 68 are in primary school, 100 are in secondary school, while only 32 are from tertiary institutions. (See Table 2, p. 25)

Table 2 shows that more than 80% of the respondents agree to liking Nollywood films. Only 12 respondents or 6% of the population do not like Nollywood films, while 5% is undecided. In the same vein, 111 respondents declared that they watch the films often, 81 pupils or 40.5% stated that they do not watch the films often, while 4% or 8 respondents were undecided about watching the films . To ascertain the actual frequency of Nollywood films viewership,110 respondents or 55% of the population admit to watching the films very often, 38% or 76 respondents answered that they watch the films ‘seldom’, while 14 pupils or 7% of the population are undecided. One finds out that the percentage of respondents who like Nollywood films does not correspond with the number of young people who watch the films as much as expected. (See Table 3, p. 25)

Table 3 shows that 40 persons or 20% of the population watch these films alone. 24 pupils or 24 or 12% of the respondents watch the films with their friends. A greater number of the population almost half of the research population (98 respondents) watch the films with their siblings. The table equally revealed that only 16% of the population watch films with their parents. In other words, more than 70 percent of our research population watch Nollywood films without parental guidance. A very small number of the respondents watch the films with the combination of all, or some of the options. (See Table 26, p. 26)

From Table 4, it is copiously evident that all th

+e respondents can identify the pint-sized actors known as Osita Iheme and Chinedu Ikedieze, as all the respondents admitted that they can identify them. This is a clear indication of their prominence or fame in Nigeria.

Similarly, 95% of the young people like the duo, whereas only 3% do not like them, and 2 percent or 4 respondents are undecided as to whether they like the actors or not. Of the entire population of the study, about 19% have watched 1-5 films where the actors stared together, 23% have watched between 6-10 of their films, 16% or 32 of the respondents have seen between 11-15 films, while 42% have seen 16-20 films where Iheme and Ikedieze starred together. This shows that more than 100 respondents (precisely 58%) of the study population have seen more than ten films where the duo of Iheme and Ikedieze starred together. (See table 5)

Table 5 is a revelation of how the respondents feel about the actors and their acting roles. 164 respondents or 82% see the roles of the actors as ‘good’, 9% rate them as ‘bad’, while another 9% rate the roles as neither good nor bad. In a similar vein, 3 believe the actors play the roles of ‘good children’ in films, 4% believe they play ‘bad children’, whereas 93% or 186 members of the population believe they play funny mischievous children in films. Sixty three point five percent (63.5%) of the respondents like the type of role the actors play. Twenty four point five percent (24.5%) admit to not liking the roles of Iheme and Ikedieze, while 12% are undecided about their feeling concerning the roles of the duo. An observation here is that young Nigerians do not see the roles of ‘funny/mischiefous children’ as making the actors ‘bad’, instead they assess their roles as good as replied by 82% of the respondents. (See table 6 page 27)

From Table 6, very startling revelations are made concerning the impact of Iheme and Ikedieze – Aki and Pawpaw on young Nigerians. 47% of the sample respondents see the actors are living their real lives on screen. 21.5% do not think so, whereas 31.5% are undecided. That 31.5% of the population are undecided is an indication that the number cannot be ruled out. In other words, such group may respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ but it depends. 106 respondents representing 53% of the population want to play the actors’ type of roles, 38.5% will not, while 18.5% are undecided. A total of 187 respondents or 93.5% of the population admire the actors’ creativity, 3% do not admire them, while 3.5% are undecided. Again, this is interesting. About 53.5% of the population are influenced by some of the actors’ actions or roles, 39.5% are not, while only 7% are undecided. Perhaps, based on the admiration of the actors’ creativity and influence of

their actions/roles, 65.5% of the respondents aspire to be actors too. 27% do not aspire to that while 7.5% or 15 respondents are undecided. Furthermore, 154 respondents or 77% of the study population are inspired to act smart like Iheme and Ikedieze. Seventeen percent (17%) are not inspired, while only 6% remained undecided. Sixty two percent (62%) or 124 respondents are influenced to play some pranks, 46 (23%) are not inspired, while 30 respondents or 15% of the study population are undecided. These results all indicate that Iheme and Ikedieze have a great impact on young Nigerians. From admiring the actors, or wanting to play some of their roles, 51.5% of the population admit to copying most of the actors' actions. Forty two percent (42.5%) denied copying most of their actions, while 6% are undecided as to whether they copy or not. The last two statements buttress why young Nigerians were so overwhelmingly influenced by the duo. Eighty five point five percent (85.5%) representing 171 respondents claim to be Aki and Pawpaw's fans. 10% denied that, while 4.5% are undecided. Fifty three percent (53%) see the actors as their role models, 33% denied that, while 27 respondents representing 13.5% of the study population are undecided. From all the statements, it is obviously evident that the two stereotyped actors have overwhelming influence on young Nigerians, basically because of their creativity and consequent stardom or fame.

Summary of Findings

From this research study, it is unequivocally established that:

- a. Young Nigerians are great lovers of Nollywood films.
- b. The pint-sized actors in Nollywood named Osita Iheme and Chinedu Ikedieze are very popular among young Nigerians.
- c. A greater percentage of young Nigerians have seen them play several typecasted and stereotyped roles as funny and mischievous children.
- d. That young Nigerians are so enthralled with the duo of Iheme and Ikedieze that they do not see them as playing any bad roles, notwithstanding that most of their roles are bad.
- e. Young Nigerians actually see the roles of Iheme and Ikedieze as simply entertaining because they feel the actors are simply funny and mischievous.

- f. The study also established that a great number of Nigerian youths watch videos with their peers or young siblings, as such they do not have parental guidance that is necessary.
- g. This informed why most of the respondents admire the roles of the actors, do not mind acting them, and are influenced to copy their actions. Consequently, some of the respondents aspire to become actors, play pranks or be smart, as the case may be.
- h. A good percentage of the young people also believe the actors are living their real lives on screen, in other words, by acting mostly as small children, the actors mislead most of the respondents into believing that the actors are small children like themselves.
- i. Most young Nigerians are the actors' fans and more than half of the research population see the actors as their role models. This perhaps informs why they are all so influenced by the actors and their roles.

Implications of the Findings on Young Nigerians

In order to highlight the implications of this research findings on young Nigerians there is every need to revisit the research questions of this study:

- i. *How does typecasting and stereotyping of Nollywood actors affect young Nigerians?*

The Nollywood twins – Osita Iheme and Chinedu Ikedieze (Aki and Pawpaw) are naturally created as kids, this makes it easy for them to pass as small children (though they're practically speaking young men). Consequently, they are very often cast as very mischievous, undisciplined and quite ungovernable children. Their creative handling of such roles brought them fame. With the popularity they have garnered owing to such stereotyped roles, many young people mistake them for their mates and so copy some of their actions in films because:

- a. Most of them idolize them and see them as role models.
- b. Because they idolize the actors, they were equally blind to the bad roles they play.

- c. In the eyes of young people, typecasted or stereotyped actors seem to possess a single, instead of dual personality.

Watter and Banduras (1976) posits that simply watching someone known or called a role model, who does something interesting can result to invitation (acquisition and performance). This is most likely with young ones.

Moreover, the actors' roles can be classified as obscenity because as Wilson (1992) quoted, obscenity is used to define anything that had a tendency to deprave or corrupt one's mind".

ii. *Is there any significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and typecasting and stereotyping of the Nollywood actors?*

To answer this question will require providing a definition of juvenile delinquency. Mmoh (2008) defined juvenile delinquency as the criminal or anti-social acts or behaviour of young people (children and adolescent). According to Egbucha (2008) it is the lack of moral and social sense among youth without impairment of their intellectual abilities'. The typecasting and stereotyping of Iheme and Ikedieze could encourage juvenile delinquency among young Nigerians because in more than 70% of the films they starred in, they were made to play delinquents as seen in *I'm in love; 2 rats; Aki na Pawpaw; Happy Xmas; Tom and Jerry; Magic Cap; the Don and the Baron*; to mention but a few. As such, their young fans may be influenced by such roles, and thus the nation will be faced with a bountiful harvest of delinquents. This can constitute a social problem to the larger society (nation at large). Also, the impact of observational learning cannot be over-emphasized.

iii. *If a relationship exist between typecasting and stereotyping of Nollywood actors, and juvenile delinquency, what informed it?*
Most Nollywood videos acted by Iheme and Ikedieze contain a reasonable amount of obscenity, indiscipline, violence etc that could result to delinquency among young viewers. Also most young Nigerians often watch such home videos alone, or in company of other young people instead of, in company of their parents or guardians, who should provide parental guidance. This makes them susceptible to wrong interpretation and assimilation of the content.

For instance majority of the young respondents in the study saw Pranksterism (smartness) and mischievous roles of Iheme and Ikedieze in most Nigerian video films as virtue instead of as vices. To say the least, young people require guidance in the forming of opinion.

iv. *How can such impact be controlled so that it does not affect the future of our youth?*

An answer to this question should also serve as recommendation in this study. As Ernest-Samuel (2007) observes, the family, religious institutions, schools, mass media as agents of civilization have roles to play: Their actions and inactions contribute to the growth of obscenity either through their overindulgence in, or negligence of certain vital roles. Chief among all, parents should stand up to their parental duties to monitor the content of what their children are digesting. This will ensure they do not copy or imitate actions or behaviours that could adversely affect them psychologically, socially and otherwise, and so affect the larger society.

Also, time has come for film directors and producers to pick on the duo of Iheme and Ikedieze, and other typecasted or stereotyped actors and cast them in moral roles instead of as they are being used presently. As Enemaka (2003) observes, although morality may not sell as much as pornography, violence and other artifacts of western culture, it pays greater dividends when examined from a philosophical perspective, as the greater good of the society is not measured in terms of wealth, volume of sale, income, capacity to dominate others, etc, alone.

Finally, the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) should be more stringent in their censorship. Although, Ademola (1996) observes that the board is vested with the statutory responsibility of controlling and monitoring the content of video films in Nigeria, and claim that Nigerian video films are classified based on content, most Nigerian video films including those acted by Aki and Pawpaw, are not classified at all. Yet the board is believed to still be in existence in Nigeria. The board need to wakeup to their responsibilities.

Conclusion

Typecasting and stereotyping of actors among other things can adversely affect the social development of young people in a society. Rodney W. (1972) observes that development in human society is a many sided process. It occurs at different levels involving individual, group and the larger society and so embodies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being of all within the political entity". As leaders of tomorrow, the young ones require tutelage to ensure that nothing affects their mental or emotional stability and well-being, or they may pose danger to the larger society.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS' DETAILS

Sex	Male		Female	Total
	114		86	200
	57%		43%	100%
Age	9-12 years	13-16 years	17-20 years	
	46	114	40	200
Education	23%	57%	20%	100%
	Primary	Secondary	University	200
	68	100	32	100%
	34%	50%	16%	

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' VIEWERSHIP STATUS

	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
Likes Nollywood films	178	12	10	200
	89%	6%	5%	100%
Watch the films often	111	81	8	200
	55.5%	40.5%	4%	100%
Frequency of viewership	Very often	Seldom	Undecided	
	110	76	14	200
	55%	38%	7%	100%

TABLE 3: RESPONDENTS' VIEWING COMPANIONS

Alone	Friends	Siblings	Parents	All/some	Total
40	24	98	32	6	200
20%	12%	49%	16%	3%	100%

**TABLE 4: IDENTIFICATION OF IHEME AND IKEDIEZE
(THE ACTORS)**

Can identify the two actors	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
actors	200	-	-	200
Like the duo	100%	10	42%	100%
Number of their films watched	190	3%	11-15films	200
	95%	6-10	32	100%
	1-5 films	films	16%	16-70films Total
	38	46		84 200
	19%	23%		42% 100%

TABLE 5: RESPONDENTS' RATING OF THE ACTORS

	Good	Bad	Not Good/Bad	Total
Respondents' Assessment of the Actors' Role	164 82%	189% Bad	18 9%	200 100%
Role type often played by the actors	Good children 6% 3%	children 8 4%	Funny/mischievous children 186 93%	200 100% 200 100%
Respondents' liking for such role	Yes 127 63.5%	No 49 24.5%	Undecided 24 12%	

TABLE 6: ACTORS IMPACT ON THE RESPONDENTS

STATEMENTS	YES	NO	UNDECIDED	TOTAL
See the actors as living their real lives	94 47%	43 21.5%	63 31.5%	200 100%
Want to play such roles as played by the actors	106 53%	67 38.5%	27 18.5%	200 100%
Admire the actors' creativity	187 93.5%	6 3%	7 3.5%	200 100%
Influenced by some of the actors' roles and actions	107 53.5%	79 39.5%	14 7%	200 100%
Aspire to become actors	131 65.5%	54 27%	15 7.5%	200 100%
Inspired to act smart like the actors	154 77%	34 17%	12 6%	200 100%
Influenced to play some pranks	124 62%	46 23%	30 15%	200 100%
Copy most of the actors' actions	103 51.5%	85 45.5%	12 6%	200 100%
Refer themselves as the actors' fans	171 85.5%	20 10%	9 4.5%	200 100%
See the actors as their role models	107 53.7%	66 33%	27 13.5%	200 100%

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