

RITUALISM IN NIGERIAN HOME VIDEOS

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Abstract:

The media is a mirror of the society. Like other movie industries in the world, Nollywood, (the Nigeria home video) is significantly involved in the framing, reflection and identity construction of Nigeria and African society through its cultural representations. This study investigates the portrayal of ritualism through indigenous language in Nigerian home video films. A content analysis of thirty Yoruba home video films reveals that ritualism is significantly depicted in Nigerian indigenous home video, with 46 cases recorded and it is found as an essential part of African Traditional Religion. This is reflected in the elaborate use of African traditional totems like shrines, statutes, palm oil, drawings, clothes of special colours (e.g. red, black and white), and extra-mundane communication like incantations and diabolism. It was concluded that the purpose of ritualism is neither good nor evil since ritualism itself is an application which can either be positively or negatively used to solve life's problems.

Key Words: Ritualism, Nigeria, Nigerian home videos

Introduction

The media is a mirror of the society. Like other movie industries in the world, Nollywood is significantly involved in the framing, reflection and identity construction of Nigeria and African society through its cultural representations (Akpabio, 2007; Anoliefo, 2008; Babawale, 2009). According to Uwah (2011), the use of films as a meta-narrative in exploring the religious identity of Africans is something of a revelatory process towards understanding not only the religious culture of the people but the efficacious use of indigenous languages and communalism as practiced in Africa. This paper is thus aimed at interpreting the industry's ritualistic representation as distinct from other mainstream film industries.

Background on Nigerian Movie Industry

Nigeria home video industry, popularly known as Nollywood is the third largest film industry in the world after America's Hollywood and India's Bollywood (Alozie, 2010). It produces more than 1,000 video films annually and it is estimated that 120 films are released weekly across Nigeria (Osei-Hwere and Osei-Hwere, 2008; allafrica.com, 2008). Most of the films produced are viewed at home, not in theatres and that qualifies them as home-videos (Ebewo, 2007). They are also regularly scheduled and shown on free to air television, cable and satellite channels at home and around the world.

According to Alozie (2010), Nollywood was given significant impetus in 1992 when businessman Kenneth Nnuebe wanted to sell a large shipment of videocassettes from Taiwan and decided they would sell faster if they had something on them. The production of the movie "Living in Bondage" thus gave birth to what became the second largest industry in Nigeria after agriculture with little or no help from the government (The Economist, 2006).

Prior to the emergence of Nollywood in 1992, film begun in Nigeria for over seven decades, as the first known film, "a newstreet", was exhibited at the Glover Hall in Lagos in 1903 (Babawale, 2009). However, "Palaver" became the first film shot in Nigeria at Jos in 1904 (Alozie, 2010). That was the era when Colonial Film Unit (CFU) came into existence during the British rule. The films produced were primarily aimed at propagating political, social and economic policies of the colonial administration and Western cultural values at the expense of domestic ones (indigent populations) (Anoliefo, 2008). But the trend began to change in the 70's when indigenous players began to surface.

That was when the first independent film, an adaptation of Wole Soyinka's "Kongi's Harvest", was made in 1970 (Ekwuazi, 2007).

Kunzler (2007:1) summarizes the emergence of Nollywood thus;

It is an industry that developed out of a context related to domestic and international cultural, economic and political environments. ...it is heterogeneous in nature and can roughly be divided into Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo video films which designate their production centres in the southwest, north and south-east of Nigeria respectively.

Thus, like other cinemas which sustain and challenge the myths of a country's nationhood, Nollywood is guided by the tenets of African nationalism and cultural identity (Williams, 2006:6).

The Problem

'Ritualism' is an important aspect of African traditional religion and it is one of the dominant themes portrayed in Nigerian movie industry (Okwori, 2003; Akpabio, 2007; Alozie, 2010; Uwah, 2011). It is often conveyed or expressed through the use of African indigenous languages. However, critics and the regulatory body (National Film and Video Censors Board) have severely criticized Nigerian home videos for placing too much emphasis on what is described as 'negative themes', which include occultism, blood, corruption, sex, violence, fetishism, ritualism and other negative practices.

Despite the criticisms, new videos are released into the market thus necessitating this study. Also considering ritualism as an aspect of African traditional religion, the present study seeks to investigate the prevalent significant depictions, subjects, contexts, perceived purposes and directions and totems portrayal of ritualism in Nigerian home videos, in relation to African indigenous language and culture.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are rituals conveyed through indigenous language in Nigerian home videos?
2. What cultural totems, subjects and contexts are dominantly depicted in Yoruba language home videos as an instance of Nigerian indigenous language media offering?
3. In what light is ritualism portrayed in Nigerian home videos?

Literature

African Traditional Religion

The term "African Traditional Religion" is used in two complementary senses (MacGaffey, 2008). First, it is loosely used to encompass all African beliefs and practices that are considered religious but neither Christian nor Islamic. Secondly, the expression is used almost as a technical term for a particular reading of such beliefs and practices, one that purports to show that they constitute a systematic whole- a religion comparable to Christianity or any other "world religion". In that sense, the concept was new and radical when it was introduced by Parrinder in 1954 and later developed by Bolaji Idowu and John Mbiti (MacGaffey, 2008). In defining the concept of African traditional religion, Awolalu and Dopemu cited in Omotoye (2011:24) said;

When we speak of African Traditional religion, we mean the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forebears of the present generation of Africans. It is not a fossil religion (a thing of the past) but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practicing it. This is a religion that has no written literature, yet it is 'written' everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the people's myths and folktales, in their songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines and in their proverbs and pithy sayings. It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped. It is religion that has no zeal for membership drive, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young or old.

The above definition summarizes what African traditional religion is all about. It is an age-long religion originated by Africans in Africa and for Africans as well as for anyone who cares to be involved. It encompasses beliefs in a supreme God, other gods, ancestors, communal rituals, personal rituals and recognizes the existence of witchcraft, magic and sorcery, sacred specialists and other spiritual forces (Parrinder, 1974).

It is important to note that the religion has been widely criticized and misinterpreted by the early European explorers, researchers and other non-African religious bodies. According to Omotoye (2011), many of the groups mentioned used obnoxious and unacceptable technologies to describe the religion. This includes the use of terms like “Fetishism”, “Withdrawn god”, “Polytheism”, “High god of the Primitive People”, “Idolatry”, “Heathenism”, “Paganism”, “Animism”, “Juju”, and “Ancestor Worship”. These terms have been rejected at different fora and in scholarly publications by notable African scholars some of which include; Samuel Johnson, Olumide Lucas, E.G Parinder, Bolaji Idowu, John Mbiti, H. Sawyer, E.G. Ilogu, Christian Gaba, Afolabi Ojo, P.C. Lloyd, E.W Smith and Wande Abimbola (Omotoye, 2011).

Ritualism

The term ‘ritualism’ in African context, refers to a wide range of traditional religious rites and spiritual religious activities carried out to invoke the gods for a particular course. It involves the use of incantations, a part of indigenous language used for spiritual matters. It also involves the use of charms, magic, blood, amongst others. Generally, ritualism is deeply embedded in African traditional culture and religion (Kuwenda, 2007; Okwori, 2003; Ebewo, 2007; Anoliefo, 2008).

Uwah (2011) described ritual as a place where people integrate short-term pragmatic goals and the longer-range mythic values of a culture, where they can replace personal alienation with an affirmation of personal identity. Making reference to Victor Turner who propounded theory of ritual process, Uwah (2011) noted that every society’s attempt to mobilize itself to solve its broader societal problems leads to an emphasis on authoritarian institutions, creation of status differentiation, justification of the concentration of power inequality, reward of individual ambition, technical knowledge and other forms of structure, which often lead to conflict, alienation and oppression. This holds that ritualism is a panacea to solving life’s problems.

According to Turner in Uwah (2011), part of the purpose of religious rites and rituals is to impress young people with their duties to the community and recall to those assuming positions of chieftaincy that they should not use their power for their own interest but to serve the whole community. In his interpretation, there are three moments in the ritual process: leaving the realm of structure, entering into symbolic experience of community which is deeply emotional and pleasurable and the returning to the context of structure with a sense of social values. Ritual is thus celebratory, consumatory (an end in itself) and decorative, rather than utilitarian in aim and often requires some element of ‘performance’ for communication to be realized.

Relatively, Nigerians’ experience (in everyday life) communality in festivals, traditional dancing tunes and steps, religious worships and socio-cultural cooperation in works (Uwah, 2011). Hence, rituals, whether in real life situations or in Nollywood films, have two references to what they achieve: backward to convention, habit, agreement and established order, and forward to immediate soon-to-be realized social significance of an underlying order (Rothenbuhler, 1998)

Culture in Home Video

Culture is a complete whole, including knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other habits required by people as members of a society (Luzbetak, 2002). It is “the summation of both individual and collective life of a society which comprises its ideas, behaviours, social, religious and political peculiarities, sentiments and expressions” (Akangbe, 2008: 61). It is the totality of man’s life. Thus, the representation of rituals in Nollywood can be said to be a combination of features of culture which are overwhelmingly rich and varied in their manifestations to represent people’s way of life (Hannerz, 1997).

To undertake the study of cultures in this way, especially that of religion, through its narrative address, does not merely draw attention to its language and rhetoric; but also attempts to alter the conceptual object itself, where its positive value lies in displaying the wide dissemination through which we construct the field of meanings and symbols associated with its national life (Uwah, 2011).

In this light, particularly African religious life and culture are presented from the perspective of nuanced visual and textual analyses.

Religion as a way of life

Religion is an integral part of man as well as African traditional life (Dipio, 2007). The ritual of faith and religion in African traditional worship is thus deeply embedded in almost every religious-social rituals. It enhances their identity as a people and offer clues to understanding their cosmological framework and thought patterns. Since Africans believe that God is a higher spiritual force that is involved in their affairs as a community and individuals, they reach out to him through other gods and minor deities like Sango or Amadioha, the god of thunder; Ogun, the god of Iron; Ala or Ani, the earth goddess; Ajoku, the yam god; Osun, the river goddess and several others. On the personal level, there is always a personal or family god who is considered to wade off evil and bring good luck to individuals and families.

This understanding frequently gets represented in Nollywood films, especially in rituals and symbolically conveys the notion of faith in God and the gods, not only in the traditional setting, but also in modern day African society (Haynes, 2000; Ogunleye, 2008; Alozie, 2010).

Use of Indigenous Language in Home Videos

Although film production began in 1904 in Nigeria, no film was made in indigenous languages until the commencement of feature film production by indigenous producers in the late 1970s {Babawale,2009:4}. Among the earliest films produced in indigenous language were *Aiye* and *Jaiyesimi* by Herbert Ogunde, *Orun Mooru* and *Aare Agbaye* by Moses Olaiya There were also *Irele Onibudo*, *Efunsetan Aniwura*, *Fopomoyo*, *Ose Sango*, *Agbo Meji*, *Ogbori Elemoso*, *Okun Ife*, *Vigilante*, *Ija Orogun*, *Kadara*, *Ija Omimra*, *Ajani Ogun*, amongst others {Ogunleye,2008}. Among the earliest pioneers of indigenous producers were Herbert Ogunde, Ola Balogun, Adeyemi Afolayan, Moses Olaiya, Brenda Shehu, Eddie Ugboma and Ishola Ogunsola.

According to Babawale (2009) films in indigenous languages were made in quick succession from the late 1970s to the mid1980s and Yoruba language dominated the scene. This according to Babawale was due to the existing structure provided by the Yoruba Travelling Theatre especially in terms of personnel and marketing. The Igbo films became the most prominent after the Yoruba with the production of *Inuku* (1993), *Omenuko* (1994), *Echidimme* (1996) and *Nneka* (1996). Olagore (2002) noted that it was not until 1996 that the first Hausa home video, '*Adawo Lafiya*' by Yusuf Mohammed was produced. There were also few non-major indigenous language films like '*Ugbeyin*' by Joe Dundun in Itsekiri in 1998; '*Ewemade*' and '*Eubakoe*' made in Edo in 1998 (Olagoke, 2002; Babawale, 2009).

According to Babawale (2009), the impact of indigenous languages films include presentation of such languages, propagation of culture (part of which is religion), encouraging learning of the languages, roles interpretation and enhancement of film's aesthetic value.

As noted by Danko (2001), there is a strong link between language, culture and social interaction in every given society. This perhaps may inform the extensive use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos and in ritualistic experiences (Ebewo, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within cultural norms theory which holds that

“through selective presentation and tendentious emphasis on certain themes, the mass media created the impression among their audiences that such themes were part of the structure or clearly defined cultural norms of society” (Folarin 2005: 96).

In relation to this study, the portrayal of ritualism in Nigerian home videos becomes cultural representations which audiences may have either positive or negative impressions about. Although this study is not audience related, it reveals the presentation of media (home video) messages which audiences may pattern their beliefs, perceptions and behaviours on. Folarin (2005: 97) noted further that “in citing the theory, the critics of mass media tended to stress the potentially negative consequences of such media treatment of issues; while the exponents of the media stressed the potentially beneficial influences”. This, points to the seemingly divergent views on media representations.

Method

Thirty indigenous language video films were randomly selected from the current films available on the video club shelves. Each video film was completely watched and analysed for the study but only twenty-two films have rituals depicted in them. Content categories were developed for the study including year of film, type of film, ritual contexts or locations, location design, day part, shooting set, ritualist gender and group, ritualist role or rank, ritualist age and costume, ritualist clientele, ritualist introduction/lead/link, purpose of rituals, instrument of rituals, medium of rituals, spiritual dimensions, ritual totems/objects, use/application and activation of rituals and duration of ritual scenes. Standard coding guide was also designed to ensure uniform coding of the variables. Scenes of rituals constitute the unit of analysis of the study. Standard coding sheets were obtained and used for the coding. The data gathered were then subjected to frequency count as well as percentages.

Results

Thirty Yoruba home video films were watched for this analysis from which 46 cases of situations were recorded. Analysis shows that 52% of the films watched were produced between 2010 and 2012, while the production year of 47.8% of the films was not indicated. 58.6% of the films fall in tragedy category, 17.3% fall in epic and comedy categories apiece and 6.5% fall in tragic-comedy category. The rating of the films shows that 50% were rated NTTB, that is NOT TO BE BROADCAST, 28.2% rated 18+/adult category, 4.3% rated under 18 while 17.3% constitute the others category.

Most (180.4%) of the ritual cases took place during the day in video films while 19.5% of the rituals took place during the night in the video films. The shooting set was Interior in 80.4% cases and it was Exterior in 19.5% cases meaning that large majority of the rituals took place inside homes and took place outside the homes in about one out of every five cases. The analysis also considered the duration/time devoted to ritual depictions in the video films and threw up the data in the table below:

Table 1: Depicting Duration of Rituals in Videos

S/N	Time/Range	Frequency	%
1	Less than 60 seconds	6	13
2	Between 1 – 2 minutes	21	45.6
3	Between 2.1 – 4 minutes	11	23.9
4	Between 4.1 – 6 minutes	6	13
5	Between 6.1 – 10 minutes	2	4.3
6	10.1 – above	0	0
	Total	46	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2013

Table 1 shows that 45.6% of the ritual scenes lasted between 1 and 2 minutes, 23.9% of the ritual scenes occurred between 2.1 and 4 minutes, 13% ritual scenes also occurred in less than 60 seconds, 13% of the scenes also occurred between 4.1 and 6 minutes while 4.3% occurred between 6.1 and 10 minutes. Assuming the upper time limit for each of the time frame category, when added all together (for instance the less than 60 seconds appearance would be taken to have appeared in 60 seconds each or one minute each with frequency of six occurrences in all the films), totalling 6 minutes (in all) and 2 minutes duration would be taken to have occurred in 2 minutes each for about 210 occurrences totalling 42 minutes; 44 minutes total for 2.1 – 4 minutes; 36 minutes total for 4.1 – 6 minutes and 20 minutes total for 6.1 – 10 minutes. All of these add up to 148 minutes or 2 hours, 28 minutes. If each of the thirty films had the duration of one hour, this will amount to thirty hours or one thousand, and eight hundred minutes. Thus, 148 total minutes duration in the analysed video films will constitute 8.2% of the total air time. This may be rounded up, to say close to 10% of the air time of Yoruba home video offerings is devoted to ritual scenes or ritualism. From duration, the analysis turns to context or location of rituals. The table below features the findings:

Table 2: Ritual Context/Location

S/N	Location	Frequency	%
1	Coven	4	8.6
2	Home	3	6.5
3	Forest	5	10.8
4	Open field	6	13
5	T-junction	2	4.3
6	Shrine/sacred place in the home	25	54.3
7	Shrine/sacred place elsewhere	1	2.1
	Total	46	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2013

This table reveals that rituals occur 54.3% cases in shrines or sacred places in the home, had 13% occurrences in open fields, 10.8% occurrences in forests, 8.6% occurrences in covens, 6.5% occurrences in the homes, 4.3% occurrences at T-junctions and 2.1% occurrences at shrines or sacred places (elsewhere) outside the home. Contexts as market square, underground, tree-top, mountain, undersea and tomb/graveyard were removed because they did not record any occurrences. The table shows importantly that most African Traditional Religious rituals occur most frequently at shrines or sacred places in the home. Following this is the design of the location for rituals. In 50% of the cases analysed, ritual locations were designed with clothes and drawings, in 26.1% cases the location was left as natural (no design), in 8.6% cases apiece the locations were designed prominently with clothes and statues respectively while palm fond were used in designing the ritual set in 4.3% cases and decorated with pots and clothes in 2.1% cases. Often times creating eerie, fearful or awesome atmosphere appears to be the aim of the designs with skulls/bones, statues (idols) on display in ritual location designs. Related to these ritual locations is the costume of the supposed ritualist or main actor in the ritual setting. In 36.9% cases, ritualists appear in extra-mundane clothing or weird appearance, 34.7% appearance in normal clothing, 15.2% appearance in plain white clothing, 8.6% appearance in black clothes, 2.1% appearance in red clothes and another 2.1% appearance in black and red clothes. The costuming here buttresses the unspoken impression of weirdness, fear and awesome atmosphere. This shows or backs the notion that the place of worship in the African Traditional Religion (as in orthodox religions) is a place of fear where the physical merge with the spiritual. The study then consider the gender of the ritualists in the offerings and it shows that majority (71.7%) of the actor turn ritualist are males while only about a third (28.2%) are females. Likewise, the study considers the role or character or status assigned the ritualist in the home videos and the table below reveals the findings.

Table 3: Ritualist Role/Status

S/N	Role	Frequency	%
1	Chief Priest	2	4.3
2	Diviner	12	26.1
3	Spiritualist/Spiriticist	18	39.1
4	Herbalist	3	6.5
5	Consultant	2	4.3
6	Wife of Warrior	1	2.1
7	Warrior	4	8.6
8	Mother of Warrior	1	2.1
9	Others	3	6.5
	Total	46	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2013

Table 3 shows that ritualists were depicted as spiritualists/spiriticists in 39.1% cases or two out of every five situations, that is, individuals gifted with analysis of matters beyond the physical; they are depicted as diviners in 26.1% cases, that is, about a third of ten situations; depicted as warrior in 8.6%

cases, depicted as herbalists in 6.5% cases, depicted as chief priests and or consultants in 4.3% cases respectively; and as wife of warrior and mother of warrior in 2.1% cases respectively with other unclassified roles constituting 6.5%. Further to this, the study considers the ritualist group or apprentices since it is a vocation which sometimes features groups. The study reveals that in 82.1% cases, videos do not have group appearance but the ritualist was all by himself/herself, whereas in 8.6% cases the ritualist was with male apprentices, with female apprentices in 6.5% cases and with mixed group in 2.1% cases.

Considering the type of people portrayed as ritualists in home videos, the study attempts their age range. It shows that about six out of ten or three out of five (58.6%) are adults (age range of 35 – 50 years) while 26.1% are old adults (age range of 51 – 70 years); 13% are young adults (20 – 34 years) and 2.1% are teenagers (below 19 years). The aged (above 70) did not feature at all in the videos in this category. Since it takes two to dialogue, the study turns attention to the clientele of the ritualists to consider their characteristics. The study shows that men as individuals visited ritualists in 28.2% cases while women, as individuals visited ritualists in 26.1% cases. Combined, it means men and women as individuals visited ritualists or are involved as ritualist clientele or are involved in ritualism in 54.3% cases. Similarly, groups of men got involved in 4.3% cases, groups of women got involved in ritualism in 4.3% cases and groups of children got involved in 4.3% cases. Also groups of men and women (mixed) in 2.1% cases while man and friend got involved in 2.1% cases. Furthermore, the community as an entity got involved in ritualism in 6.5% cases, while only the ritualist(s) was involved in ritualism in 21.7% cases in which case it means rituals do not only take place for and on behalf of others; it may actually be for oneself. The figure here implies one-fifths of all situations where ritualism could be for the self and for the deity (ies) in question. What then is the status of the clientele? In 34.8% cases the ritualist clientele in home video belong in the medium socio-economic class (MSES) (more than a third); in 19.6% cases, the clientele belong in the commoner, the poor or the low socio-economic status (LSES) and in 17.3% cases, belong in the rich, opulent or high socio-economic status (HSES). Yet in 2.1% cases, the clientele belong in some other status and in 26.1% cases belong in groups not decipherable in the depictions. Who are these clients of the ritualists? The earlier analysis has shown that ritualism cuts across all the classes in the society and is not restricted to any particular group or gender. The clientele are individual males in 30.4% cases and are male groups in 4.3% cases – making 34.7% together; they are individual females in 28.2% cases and 4.3% female groups while they are groups (mixed) of males and females in 4.3% cases; they fall in others category in 2.1% cases while the gender variable is not applicable in 26.1% cases. The age range of the clientele include 41.3% for youthful, middle age/young adult; 30.4% for adults, 2.1% for teenagers and 2.1% for others category. Yet in some 23.9% cases, the age range variable was not applicable to the clientele. The study also turns to consider the relationship between the ritualists and their clientele and finds out that the clientele are in more than half (58.7%) of all the situations or about six out of ten or three out of five, are customers and acquaintances of the ritualist(s), the clientele is the community in 6.5% cases and outright stranger in 2.1% cases, a son in 2.1% cases, a relative in 2.1% cases, a friend in 2.1% cases, a mother in 2.1% cases, a father in 2.1% cases and others in 2.1% cases. This relationship variable is not however applicable in 21.7% cases. Thus, this variable shows glaringly that ritualists are not outright strangers in the human society but close acquaintances and relatives in the society. It further affirms that a pretence of their non-existence or non-knowledge of their existence is outright sham if indeed video is a slice of life, a reflection of reality. Again the study attempts a documentation of the link, lead or one who introduces the clientele to the ritualist. It reveals that it is a friend in 26% cases, a father in 2.1% cases and others in 4.3% cases, while it is not applicable/decipherable in 67.3% cases. This shows that friends, ahead of relatives are the leads and links to ritualists. This shows that individuals would tend to trust and believe their friends or peers in matters of rituals than relatives.

The study also focuses attention on the rituals and reveals the following starting with the purpose for which rituals are carried out. The table below reveals this:

Table 4: Purpose of Rituals

S/N	Purpose	Frequency	%
1	Evil	6	13
2	Health-related problem	2	4.4
3	Work-related problem	3	6.5
4	Relationship related problem	1	2.2
5	Marriage related	2	4.4
6	Issues of life generally	6	13
7	Communal good	2	4.4
8	Wealth/prosperity related	7	15.2
9	Protection/security related	11	23.9
10	Revenge	3	6.5
11	War/victory	3	6.5
	Total	46	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2013

Table 4 shows that rituals occur in Nigerian video films in 23.9% cases purposely for protection or security, in 15.2% cases for wealth or prosperity acquisition; in 13% cases for evil/evil machinations; in another 13% cases, it was purposely for issues of life generally; in 6.5% cases, it was for work related issues/problems, in another 6.5% cases, ritualism was for war victory. Similarly, ritualism in home video portrayal was in 4.4% cases purposely for health-related problems/issues, marriage (husband – wife) related issues, and communal good respectively. And lastly in 2.2% cases, it was purposely for relationship (singles/romance/unmarried) related issues. The study also consider instrument used in rituals and these include 41.3% use of spells, 13% use of staff or rod; 2.2% use of knife/matchet, and 2.2% use of rope, while some other non-decipherable instrument were used in 41.3% cases. The study also considers the medium of rituals as exhibited in the table below:

Table 5: Medium of Rituals

S/N	Medium	Frequency	%
1	Blood letting	5	10.9
2	Magic	4	8.7
3	Invocation	8	17.4
4	Incantation	15	32.6
5	Incision	3	6.5
6	Mirror	4	8.7
7	Others	7	15.2
	Total	46	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2013

Table 5 shows that incantations constitute a medium of rituals in over one-third (32.6%) cases; invocation followed with 17.4%, bloodletting constitute 10.9% while magic and mirror constitute 8.7% apiece and incision took 8.7%. Yet some unclassified others category constitute 15.2% as medium of rituals. The study then focus on the spiritual dimension explored in home videos and the findings are exhibited in the next table.

Table 6: Spiritual Dimension

S/N	Dimension	Frequency	%
1	Appearing	4	8.7
2	Disappearing	1	2.2
3	Natural	1	2.2
4	Supernatural	4	8.7
5	Diabolical means	17	36.9
6	Physical means	13	28.3
7	Speaking with the unseen	2	4.4
8	Appearing and disappearing	4	8.6
	Total	46	100

Source: *Content Analysis, 2013*

Table 6 shows that diabolical means (36.9%) and physical means (28.3%) are the major spiritual dimensions of rituals in Nigerian video films. Appearance/disappearance, supernatural and appearing constitute 8.7% apiece – while speaking with the unseen constitute 4.4% and disappearing as well as natural constitute 2.2% apiece. Follow up to this, the study consider the uses or activation (or application) of home video rituals and this include 52.1% activation of rituals on others and 36.9% activation on the self. Yet in 2.2% cases each, rituals are activated at work, at junctions/T-junctions and at forests while activation/application is not indicated in 4.4% cases. On a last note, the study concentrate attention on the totems and objects used in ritual scenes in Nigerian home videos and the findings are as indicated in the table below:

Table 7: Ritual Totems/Objects Involved

S/N	Totem	Frequency	%
1	Red cloth	12	26.1
2	Black cloth	3	6.5
3	White cloth	7	15.2
4	Sketches of skull and bones	3	6.5
5	Pots	3	6.5
6	Cowries	1	2.2
7	Statues	7	15.2
8	Palm oil	4	8.7
9	Calabash	4	8.7
10	Others	2	4.4
	Total	46	100

Source: *Content Analysis, 2013*

Table 7 shows that red cloth (26.1%) has the highest occurrence in home video ritual portrayals followed by white cloth and statues with 15.2% apiece. Calabash/pot/tambourine and palm oil have 8.7% appearance apiece, black cloth, sketches of skull and bones and pots has 6.5% showing apiece while cowries has 2.2% showing in home video ritual portrayals.

Discussion

The results indicate that ritualism is significantly depicted in Nigerian indigenous language videos. Out of the 30 Yoruba home video films watched, 46 ritual scenes were found. This supports the submission of Okwori (2003) and Akpabio (2007) that ritualism is an important aspect of African traditional religion and it is one of the dominant themes portrayed in Nigerian movie industry. The cultural totems used, the spiritual dimensions and medium of rituals are embedded in African traditional religion (Kuwenda, 2007; Ebewo, 2007). For instance, 50% of the locations used for rituals were designed with red, black and white clothes, drawings as well as statues.

Ritualism was portrayed in complex range, involving various uses, dimensions, motives and identification. For instance, male ritualists constitute 71.4% while female ritualists constitute 28.2%. On the other hand, male ritualist clienteles were 34.7% while female ritualist clienteles were 32.5%

(others were not applicable). These show that males were stereotyped as ritualists but no gender stereotype or disparity exists in the portrayal of ritualist clientele.

Importantly, ritualism was portrayed as a panacea to solving life's numerous problems in the African way. The problems include protection and security (23.9%) wealth and prosperity (25.2%), issues of life (13%), victory in war (6.5%), work related (6.5%), health related (4.4%), marriage related (4.4%), amongst others. In all, the use of rituals for solving problems constitutes 80.5%. This finding corroborates the idea that every society mobilizes itself in some ways (ritualism in this case) to solve its broader societal problems (Uwah, 2011).

Although 13% of the rituals were for evil inclinations (e.g. to kill, to cast spell of mental disorder, to break marriages, etc), it cannot be concluded that the purpose of rituals is for evil. Its usage for evil inclination is only an application, which on other hand, can also be used or applied for good purpose, as seen in its usage for solving life's problems. Thus, this finding fails to support the criticism that Nigerian home videos place too much emphasis on negatives, part of which is ritualism (Alozie, 2010).

Finally, the study partially supports the cultural norm theory, which according to Folarin (2005), postulates that the mass media, through selective presentation and tendentious emphasis on certain themes, create the impression among their audiences that such themes were part of the structure or clearly defined cultural norms of society. Ritualism was emphasized and portrayed as core part of indigenous language home video films and as an important aspect of African traditional religion.

Conclusion

This paper has established that ritualism is strongly portrayed in Nigerian indigenous language home video films, and it is depicted as a key part of African traditional religion. This is reflected in the elaborate use of African traditional totems like shrines, statutes, palm oil, drawings, clothes of special colours (e.g. red, black and white), and extra-mundane communication like incantations and diabolism.

The purpose of rituals is neither good nor evil. Ritualism itself is an application which can either be used positively or negatively. For example, 80.5% of all the rituals were used for solving problems while 13% was used for evil purposes, and 6.5% for revenge. All these are simply the uses of rituals. They do not mean that rituals are good or evil. It all depends on how it is used. Besides, what is 'good' in one clime may be 'evil' in another and vice-versa.

But whether good or evil, positive or negative, the use of rituals in Nigerian indigenous media serves the purpose of framing, reflection and identity construction of Nigerian society (Akpabio, 2007; Anoliefo, 2008 and Babawale, 2009). Hence, there is a need for home video producers to exercise caution in the presentation and emphasis of certain cultural themes.

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