

**VIOLENCE PORTRAYAL IN HOLLYWOOD AND IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTHS'
MORAL DEVELOPMENT: A READING OF "THE HOSTEL" AND "THE LAST
HOUSE ON THE LEFT"**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, thisdissertation is my original work, has been written by me in its entirety and has never been submitted in any previous application for higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are suitably acknowledged by means of references.

Ahmed, AbdullazizSanni

Date

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled “Violence Portrayal in Hollywood and Implications for Youths’ Moral Development: A Reading of ‘*The Hostel*’ and ‘*The Last House on the Left*’ written by SANNI AHMED ABDULLAZIZ, (MA/ARTS/290/2011-2012) meets the requirements for the award of master of Arts Degree in Development Communication from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty and my parents.

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ABSTRACT

The media plays a very powerful and influential role in the lives of youths anywhere in the world and it is sometimes referred to as the 'third parent'. Over sixty years of study has provided evidence that exposure to violent media leads to an increase in violence and aggression. This is a study on exposure to film violence and its implication for moral development. Morality represent a key human apparatus which influences an individual's perception and acceptance of what is right or wrong. Morality underpins the exhibited violent behaviour consequent upon exposure to violent Tv/Film content. Morality is shaped by many factors and the media like Tv/Film is a key factor particularly in the twenty first century. Youths do not understand the influence of violent media content on their moral development because to them it is just a medium for entertainment. This study examines the potential effect of exposure to violent films. This study utilizes the qualitative approach to collect information from youths, media practitioner/producer, representative of Nigeria Film and Video censor Board (N.F.V.C.B.) and non-government organization. It was gathered from the study that excessive viewing of violent films by youths has the potential to influence youths to accept violence as an acceptable way of resolving conflict especially when violence is depicted to be justified in such films. Also the depiction of sexual violence in films may register in the subconscious of youths and may lead to attempt to replicate such acts in real life. The study also gathered that youths are still in active development stage as such excessive viewing of violent films may pervert their moral development. However, in seeking to contribute to ways of tackling this potential effects of violent films on youths, this study recommended that youth should be educated to avoid watching films with graphic violence and explicit sexual content. Parents should be aware of the potential effect of violent films on their children. Government agencies should curb the influx of pirated Hollywood films and sensitize youths and parents on the effect of violent films on people. This has become urgent because youths are the future of our nation and their moral development must be nurtured to produce leaders and parents for a morally upright society.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the Study

There are several factors that shape up an individual's character and disposition to life; these factors include family traits, culture, peer group, media and environment amongst others. Consequently, the convergence of these myriad of factors could impact positively or negatively on an individual. The media as a vehicle of entertainment, education and information plays a very vital role in the life of a youth due to its audio-visual nature. In fact it is sometimes referred to as the third parent. In the same vein, the media include TV, film, music, radio, video games as well as the internet and its accompanying gadgets. However, next to music, films are considered to be popular amongst youths.

Freeman, (1998) posits that, film is the transformation of visual and auditory possibilities into a reliable and intelligible totality resulting from the imaginary element of the imagination. In other words, films use our knowledge of how the world works as the basis for the structure of its representation and therefore we see film sequence as mimetic representation which is illusory and symbolic. Viewers tend to identify with the human traits, physical abilities, spoken words and emotion of characters in films. Youths are the major consumers of films; the perception of what is real and unreal is not as acute as an adult because they are still in their formative years. This implies that aggressive adults learn their behaviour as youths.

Youths represent able bodied yet inexperienced segment of society. As the saying goes, youths' have the brawn, but not the brain. Within the restless human species, youths are particularly agitated and excitable group on the path to maturity. They have to experience social life, develop the inherent individual faculties and discover the limits of ability. The word

youth has been defined variously by different scholars and organizations. According to Zillman(1991:27), youth refers to a period between adolescence and adulthood in a post-modern era. He emphasizes that it is a new stage of life which millions of young Nigerians enter today. The United Nations Children Fund, UNICEF (1972) sees those between the age of 15 and 25 years as youth, but Johnson in Fenigsten (1979) insists that youth cuts across age, pointing to culture as what really matters. According to him any one who feels youthful, and exhibit qualities such as spontaneity, impulsiveness, energy, etc is a youth.

This study however focuses on films as a potential risk factor in influencing and stimulating violence and aggression particularly amongst youths. Youths who fall within the age range of 15 to 25 usually constitute the demography in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are expected to play a major role in the countries human resource development to shape youths to become responsible members of the society and to serve as vibrant centers of productive research and academic excellence. However, violence has become a serious bane among tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and intensely so in the last two decades. The tertiary institutions are the major points where the bulk of adolescence are students. Authoritative source from a study conducted by (Iheoma, 2008) confirmed that an average total of 23,650 Nigerian undergraduates were indicted for violence related offences and were either suspended or rusticated from the system between 2001 and 2008.

Iheoma (2008) further asserts that Nigerian higher institutions of learning have become “killing fields” as hardened criminals going under the umbrella of cultist continue to wreak havoc in different parts of the country especially within the educational institutions. For example in the University of Benin, a rival cult member was beheaded, his head was then spiked on a pole and paraded around a street (The Nation Newspaper, 2005). In 2002, rival cult

boys exchanged gun fire in the University of Ilorin leading to the death of three innocent students. Also in off-campus apartment in the Abia State University, a female student was brutally gang raped and the dastardly act was filmed with a mobile phone and then uploaded on the internet ([www.nairaland/http/rth](http://www.nairaland.com/111111/rth)).

Reports of these kinds of deviant and violent acts are recorded yearly in Nigerian tertiary institutions across the country, the bulk of such criminal offenses are usually unreported because such deviant behaviour are usually exhibited in off-campus residents. Due to the inability of Nigerian higher institutions to meet the accommodation requirements for the ever growing number of students admitted yearly, private individuals have come in to fill this gap, by providing off-campus accommodation. Individuals now build off-campus residents designed for students, these residents are often located around the institutions. Students now have the luxury of living off-campus with virtually no restriction for what they can or cannot do. Students now live with all the comfort of modern life which include TV/video, laptops with internet connectivity, satellite connections and even air-conditioned apartments. In such environment where individuals from different backgrounds, and world view meet, influences take place with positive or negative consequences. Such environment provides the opportunity for youths to express and discover themselves as individuals. The off campus environment creates a perfect ground for the convergence of so many factors that can potentially influence or stimulate an individual.

This is not to imply that youth deviant behaviours are only seen amongst students in tertiary institutions. In 2011, young boys from wealthy homes began to engage in car racing on the street of Abuja. The fun is to see who can race faster and perform jaw dropping stunts. This is an extreme and very dangerous sport both to the drivers and the spectators. A lot of

Hollywood films have become famous for portraying such extreme sports. The researcher is not implying that such acts are a direct copycat from films such as “*The fast and the furious*”, however it could be argued that it may provide influence and stimulus for youths who expose themselves to such films.

It is pertinent to note that this study is not conclusively saying such acts of violence enumerated above are caused by watching violent films, because factors such as, early initiations to violence and delinquency, substance abuse, negative peer group influence, violent and unhealthy environment among other factors are potential factors that constitute agents of socialization. Although violent acts such as enumerated above represent a constellation of events or factors which converge to influence an individual and one of such factors is films.

It is widely accepted that what people see or listen to on the media has effect on their behaviour in the real world. For example the multibillion dollar advertising industry flourishes on the assumption that showing people media advertisement will make them likely to buy the advertised products. Airlines train prospective pilots on flight simulators to teach them virtual flying skills before allowing them to fly a real plane. Also it is believed that limiting sexually stimulating or explicit materials from being shown to youngsters reflect the notion that such media contents adversely affect the young people’s development. Watching violent movies does not normally lead people to assault person when they leave the cinema, nor is it true yet that avid players of highly violent video games often end up as criminal. Just as not everyone who smokes gets lung cancer and not everyone who gets lung cancer is a smoker. Similarly not everyone who watches violent media becomes aggressive and not everyone who is aggressive watches violent media contents. Indeed smoking is not the only factor that can cause lung cancer, but it is an important factor (Green 1971).

The foregoing examples show that media contents of different sorts are accepted to have an impact on how people feel, think and act in real life. However, there seems to be more reluctance to accept the conclusion that depictions of violence on television or film have a similar capacity to influence people's behaviour in the real world, in particular their readiness to engage in aggressive behaviour. Most of the things youths see or hear in the media early in their lives affect them in some way. Positive parenting role models indicate that in the best interest of our youths, we should limit their exposure to violent acts. It is assumed that youths are innocent and vulnerable at their age. They tend to learn by what example they see other people do. Media violence may be seen as falling into three main categories: the learning of aggression: the increased arousal effect: desensitization for moral issues. Furthermore, youth may copy acts of aggression, as seen through the media. It may also elicit aggressive behavior by increasing the level of arousal in a viewer and that excessive exposure to violence decreases emulation of such violence (Burtterworth, 1999).

Many 'senseless' violent acts have been committed all over the country, these acts of violence are committed everyday by youths in secondary schools but much more in tertiary institutions. Psychologists and Scientists have been trying to figure out what is causing these violent acts among our youths and how to stop it. They have been researching television and film violence and how it affects our youth's behaviour for many years and now know that the more violence a youth watches the more violent that youth may react.

Similarly, watching violent media is not the only factor that can influence and prime a youth to be aggressive but it is an important factor. People, particularly youths, expose themselves to violent films primarily for entertainment. There is no doubt that violence in films has entertainment value. According to Berkowitz (1993), he posits that it is a sensational and

powerful aspect of the contemporary entertainment spectacle. Violent scenes in films undoubtedly heighten the viewer's emotions. He continues to explain that film makers are very much aware of this fact and thus use it as a technique for holding the audience attention.

Violence and sex sells particularly for youths who are attracted to this seemingly taboo depictions of life(Simon, 1998).However the researcher is aware that what may constitute as violence and taboo depictions to a Nigerian audience may not be so for an American audience. This is because what is socially and morally acceptable in one culture or society may not be acceptable in another. What is not contestable is that, violence is not culture-bound and can be learnt more importantly, morality which underpins the exhibited violent acts in the first place is a universal concept.

It is not an exaggeration to say that violence in Hollywood films has become a norm and in most cases it is preferable for entertainment as opposed to non-violent films or comedy. Hollywood films are very popular amongst youths all around the world and sixty percent of Hollywood films contains some form of violence, (Ihioma 2008).Although Nigerian films are also popular among Nigerian youths, Hollywood films are still much more popular, especially among urban dwellers like youths in tertiary institutions perhaps as a result of the glamour and the quality of acting, stories, cinematic effects and “real” actions it portrays.

Most youths in Nigerian tertiary institutions can list names of Hollywood actors they admire i.e., Jason Statham, Bruce Willis, Denzel Washington, Jet Lee. Angelina Jolie, to mention a few, all of whom are good looking and charismatic and often depicted as action figures. Youths around the world idolize these actors and consider them as role models. This is in line with one of the assumptions of the social cognitive theory, a core media effect theory upon which this study is anchored, which states that youths are more likely to be influenced by

models they admire especially when the actions portrayed by the model is rewarded or goes with no consequences, which is always the case in Hollywood films.

According to Mgbejume (1989), the early films shown to African audience before locally made films were available were those of Europe and United States. These films were seen by the colonial government as a benevolent gesture of tutelage to colonial people. He further noted that those critical of western films in Africa pointed out that early films from Europe and America did not portray people earning a living through decent means rather these films depict people earning their living through the use of the gun either as war mercenaries, paid assassins or just robbers. Some felt such films were having an antisocial effect on African audience and screen crimes and violence began to be transferred into real life by youths who may not be able to distinguish between “reel world” and the “real world”. The level of violence in movies and its acceptability has been debated for decades. It is no closer to being resolved now than when it first began but one fact is certain violent depiction in films is on the increase, partly because violence speaks a universal language.

Indeed, films are very influential medium, its content add to the reservoir of characters of its viewers especially youths, who are highly susceptible to the high influence of films (Prinz, 2005).It is also an accepted fact that the media plays a powerful role in the formation of values, morals and social skills in youths. The portrayal of violence in films and its glorification and glamorization may constitute a risk factor for youths who expose themselves to such depictions. What is more worrisome is that the hero or protagonist in violent Hollywood films is often portrayed to have triumphed through the use of violence. This is the classic scenario in Hollywood films which often portray the so called “justified” violence: that is violence motivated by revenge, need for justice or a hero verses villain scenario. Such films

“justify” the use of violence as a means of settling conflict. What is the intent and the subliminal message being sent to people? This kind of violent portrayal in films may influence a youth to accept or believe that the use of violence in conflict situations is morally acceptable. Youths who expose themselves to such films may be stimulated to resort to violence as a means to an end. Youths identify with hero’s in films which is very important in film studies and youths are very impressionable, what they see and hear tend to form an important part of them and they may be stimulated to act in the ways that the film hero’s do when they are faced with similar situations.

Violence is a major concern over the world today. The twentieth century has been the most violent in human history so far, it has been called the age of violence (Hobsbawn, 1980). Violent acts in human societies are recognized to be associated with a number of factors which are broadly psychological (emotional) domestic and cultural. Modern society is exposed to a massive dose of media violence and there have been several studies on the effects of violence portrayed by media. Broadly speaking such media include TV/film, music/radio, video games, the new media, the internet and its accompanying gadgets. The question has always been what effect if any does violent film have on people?

Violence by definition or manifestation can be difficult to define. However the overriding assumption is that violence is typically assumed to be motivated by hostility and the willful intent to cause harm, it is legally, socially, morally deviant human behavior. Typically, the phenomenon of violence as a hostile act emphasizes that harm, degradation, humiliation or injury to the target is the primary goal of the aggressor. (Berkowitz 1979). Violence is highly ambivalent in the ways it is socially sanctioned, legitimized and institutionalized as well as how it is culturally transmitted and experienced. Therefore no one single definition can

encapsulate the full gamut and manifestation of violence as a phenomenon. However a theoretical framework will be provided to specially account for the conceptualization of violence. It is important to note that not all violent acts can be seen as there are other salient acts of violence which are equally harmful to the victim.

Violence and sex sell and the impact on viewers who expose themselves to such acts may either be psychological, physical or emotional. The action hero is often depicted as an easygoing, good-looking family man who has to resort to violence because of some wrong done to him. So viewers sympathize with him and will often cheer him on as he metes out violent “justice” to his enemies. Violence is very attractive in films, conflicts are often built around violence, and it is a very effective mechanism used to sell films but the subliminal and subterranean impact on youths is strong. Youths are drawn into these films when the violent acts seem surreal and the lack of consequences makes it attractive. This is the danger that this study exposes.

From the foregoing, the level of violence portrayed in films has raised a lot of concerns and questions among sociologists, politicians, parents, teachers and everyone concerned. Film is a very important medium of getting information, entertainment as well as understanding the world and this has a great importance to the overall socio-moral development of youths because it can shape their norms, values, behavior, cognitive development as well as moral inclinations. Although violence in films is believed to have its benefit, theorist who argue along this line opine that violence in films purge viewers and allows them an avenue to release pent up anger thereby making less likely to imitate the violent actions portrayed.

This study is a reading of selected violent Hollywood films, to identify acts of violence and to investigate the potential implications for youth’s moral development. The researcher did

a reading of selected Hollywood films and observed the violent acts imbedded in the films and its potential implications for youths' moral development were also sampled. However the study will not be complete if the views and opinion of youths are not sampled. As well, the views of other experts on the perception of violent in films and its implications for youths' moral development. As earlier stated the bulk of youths in Nigeria are often found in tertiary institutions around the country, therefore this study picked interest in one Nigerian higher institution.

The Federal Polytechnic, Bida

The Federal Polytechnic Bida was established in 1975 and it is located along Bida-Doko road. The institution is made up of four schools, which include; the School of Engineering, School of Business and Administrative Management, School of Environmental Sciences and the School of Environmental Studies. The School has a population of 8,357. The population comprises the morning and the evening students. The institution like most institution in Nigeria is unable to provide accommodation for the ever increasing number of students, this short fall of accommodation on campus has created opportunity for private individual to build off-campus residence that cater especially for students.

According to information provided by the Chief Security Officer (CSO), the off-campus residents are 73 in number. One off-campus resident can comprise between 20 self-contained rooms to as high as 100 rooms. This unique environment is able to cater for everything the student needs. Business that cater for anything students need are set up by individuals, ranging from pharmacists, chemists, a markets, saloons, boutiques, photo studios, restaurants, hotels, beer parlors as well as football show centers. Football show rooms air live matches which are a big attraction to students particularly the boys. It is pertinent to note that

when there are no live matches, the football houses show Nollywood or Hollywood films, and the Hollywood films are often action films. Students who watch these films may not understand the conversations and the story line but they are attracted to the films because of the violence and sexually explicit contents they depict. However it is important to note that students who live in this off-campus residents do so with modern facilities like TV/video and stereo recorders and may view anything they want right in the comfort of their rooms.

The 21st century has changed the way people gain information about the world, including information about how violent the world is. The media landscape is ever-changing with new technologies and gadgets resulting in greater interactions in smaller graphically superior and computationally more powerful devices. These new technologies are tremendous resources for learning and knowledge acquisition at a rate unparalleled in the past. These new technologies in combination with an internet connection give youths a new window into the world, a new way of viewing the world as well as more diverse forms of visually stimulating contents than ever before (Donnerstein 2011). Access to the media and its content has many benefits but it also carries risks. Youth can now download, view, play and listen to sexually stimulating and violent materials anytime of the day from the comfort and privacy of their rooms with little or no adult supervision. Technology and the media have allowed opportunities for viewing violent and antisocial contents which were once relegated to more public spaces (such as the neighbourhood, movie theatre etc) have become increasingly private.

Freedman (1984) posit that: the recent increase in crimes committed by younger children around the world has put a lot of pressure on scientists to find answers to the future of the world. It also has put pressure on government to pass new laws to protect our youths from violent materials. Many of the researches conducted, point at film violence as the primary

influence in our youth's aggressive behaviour. Unfortunately, violence is one of the most popular forms of entertainment and over sixty percent of Hollywood films contain some form of violence.

The fact is that the perception of what is real and unreal for youths is not as acute as an older adult, meaning that, aggressive adults learned their behaviour as youths and the more violence children watch the better the chances are for them to be violent when they are adults. Scientists have been looking at the kinds of films youths watch and have come up with some shocking results. Research conducted has shown that the behaviors of hostile youths were influenced by the films they watched, especially if the youngsters were heavy watchers of violent films, (Huesmann and Eron, 1998).

Hearold (1986) who studied the effects of media violence on 875 youngsters found that youth's behaviour was influenced by TV/films, especially if the youngsters were heavy viewers of violent materials. Television violence, according to the researchers, provided a script for the youths to act out aggressive behavior in relationships with others. These youths were also likely to perform poorly in school and often unpopular with their peers. Even though aggression was found in youths who watched violent films, realistically it is not the only factor related to youth violent behavior, but studies have shown that it is a major factor because it affects individuals from a very early age. (Lancet 2008)

In a related study conducted in London, 1,565 teenage boys were studied for behavioral effects of viewing violent TV/films programs, many of which were imported from the United States. The study revealed that those who were heavy viewers of violent contents before adolescence committed 49 percent higher rate of serious acts of violence than did youths who had viewed below average quantities of violence. The final report was "very strongly

supportive of the hypothesis that high exposure to television increases the degree to which boys engage in serious violence” (Housesman and Erron 1986).

Five types of films were most powerful in triggering violent behaviour in the boys in the London study:

1. Films in which violence is demonstrated in close personal relationships.
2. Films where violence was not necessary to the plot but was just added for its own sake.
3. Fictional violence of a very realistic kind.
4. Hollywood style of “justified” violence in retaliation.
5. Films that present violence as being for a good cause.

Hicks (1968) analyzed crime data in areas of the world with and without television and made comparisons in areas before and after the introduction of TV. His studies revealed that homicide rates doubled in ten to fifteen years after TV was introduced for the first time into specified areas of the United States and Canada. Since the mid-1970s researchers have broadened their attention from behavioural effects to cognitive effects of violence viewing.

Substantial evidence has been accumulated that exposure to violent programs may affect a youths feelings and thoughts. In the long term, affect their cognitive response which may not only result in increased aggressive behavior, but may also be exhibited in more subtle forms of behavior than aggression.” Researchers have also found that exposure to violence may decrease normal sensitivity to aggression. High viewers of televised violence were less responsive in subsequent exposure to violence (Hauesman and Erron, 1986).

Film and entertainment industry and its critics have argued that these media outlets merely reflect the level of violence in the society. A film expert from Virginia Tech Institution in the United States, Stephen Prince claims that violence was first introduced in movies to actually deter real life violence (Sallyharns undated). He further claimed that this motive “back-fired” and has essentially desensitized viewers to violence in the real world.

If the above claims were true, then why do few people witness murder in real life but everybody sees murder being committed in the movies? If the original motive “back – fired” why would the movie industry continue to put violence in today’s movies? It is because film makers understand that violence is a spectacular way of holding the audience attention closely followed by sexual portrayal. The most violent ghetto is not in Lagos or Warri, it is on the media. It is safe to say therefore that there is far more violence in the “reel” world than in the “real” world. The influence of violence in the “reel-world” is best viewed as one of the many risk agents that can influence violence especially in youths. However no researcher will suggest that media violence is the sole cause of violent behaviour in youths.

Films in particular have been the center of much conflicting criticism and evaluation. Nesbett, (1996:12) posit that critics have accused motion pictures, television, and even comic books for causing, stimulating and encouraging socially improper attitudes and behavior. Media violence, such writers contend, degrades tastes, seduces the innocent and incites crime and juvenile delinquency. On the opposite side of the argument, however, substantial groups of authority have claimed that such fantasy and aggression often has socially beneficial effects by providing safe vicarious outlets for the supposedly pent-up hostile energy within the audience.

Why do people enjoy watching violent movies? How is that people getting stabbed, shot, beheaded, ripped apart, set on fire or a girl being raped is exciting to watch and therefore

entertaining especially to youths?. Indeed man seems to have an impulse toward violence, an impulse that is restrained by learned pattern but since people forget learned patterns when their innate impulse towards violence is triggered either by personal confrontation or an encounter with violence in the media and the youths are most vulnerable and susceptible.

Conversely, attitudes towards violence are viewed as having a significant role in translation of aggressive actions or behavior (Paik 1994)). Attitudes are governed by internal value system, persons develop their attitudes through a complex and particularly evaluative reactions to life experiences (Eysenck 1975) it is commonly admitted that attitudes have a significant power on behaviour especially violent behavior (Dodge 1980). For instance beliefs that violence is compulsory to achieve desired result may lead a person to focus on aggressive aspects of social cues or anticipate positive outcomes for violence behavior (Dodge 1980). This is often depicted in violent movies; the lead character who is also the hero is often seen to have triumph through the use of violence. Violence related beliefs are related to self-reported violent behavior as a result of exposure to violence. The link between exposure to violence and aggressive behavior, delinquency and later criminality has been thoroughly documented. Given the fact that youths are still in very active development stage it is therefore reasonable to agree and argue that there might be a relationship between exposure to violent movies and subsequent development of antisocial behavior.

Unfortunately violence is one of the most popular forms of entertainment. Research has shown that significant proportions of aggressive youths are likely to grow up to be aggressive adults (Philips 1983). Violence and antisocial behavior in the society today maybe primarily attributed to many factors including exposure to violentmedia messages like films.

1.2 The Statement of the Research Problem

The claim that films can influence young viewers to become aggressive and resort to the use of violence in conflict situations is not unfamiliar. It is also an accepted fact that entertainment media play a powerful role in the formation of values, morals and social skills in youths. The portrayal of violence in films and its glamorization and glorification may constitute a risk factor for youth exposed to it. According to Baxter et al, (1985) some kinds of issues brought to some kinds of people under some kinds of condition have some kinds of effects. A direct connection between film violence and violent behavior among youths is receiving increasing attention.

A lot of studies have been conducted on the effects of violent films on youths both the long and short time effects, which are impact studies. However there is a paucity of research on the effect of violent films on youth's moral development. Morals represent a key element of our human moral apparatus, influencing the link between moral standard and behaviour. As a society we try to teach our youths between right and wrong. What we are teaching them is really basic morality. Morality is constantly under construction and deconstruction which is subject to many influences such as family background, environment, socio-cultural factors, religion etc. One key factor is the media, in fact it has been argued that 80 percent of our moral stances on issues are shaped by the media like films. Youths are still in active developmental stage and highly susceptible to the high influence of films (Darbman, 1976).

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to establish the moral implications of youths' exposure to violence portrayal in foreign films especially the Hollywood film industry.

1. To examine the content of selected Hollywood films and determine the acts of violence therein.
2. To explore the extent to which exposure to violence in films may lead to the cultivation of violent behaviour and its implications for moral development of youths.
3. To suggest actions that may be taken to mitigate negative influences of Hollywood films on Nigerian youths.

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the acts of violence portrayed in the selected Hollywood films?
2. To what extent can exposure to violent films lead to cultivation of violent behavior and its implication for moral development of youths?
3. What action should be taken to mitigate any negative influence Hollywood movies might have on youth's moral development?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Film is a very important factor in the life of youths around the world and Hollywood films are very popular among youths. Excessive exposure to such films that depict violence and sexually explicit content is bound to influence viewers in one way or the other. Youths are also the major consumers of films, it is safe to say they are ignorant of the subliminal influence that exposure to violent and sexually explicit films will eventually have on their lives. This study exposes the dangers of excessive exposure to violent and sexually unhealthy contents on the moral development of youths. Youths are the leaders of tomorrow; therefore, this study will be of great benefit to parents and government agencies in their commitment to the protection of the value system and morality of youths and the country at large.

This study will also add to the existing literatures on the effects of film as a medium on the audience. It will also provide materials for further study into the Hollywood film industry and its implications for moral development of youths. More importantly, this study investigates the moral lessons that underlie acts of violence exhibited by youths as a result of exposure to violent image.

1.5 The Scope of the Study

The researcher focused on violence in Hollywood films and its potential implications for the moral development of youths who expose themselves to such films. In specific term, the study did a reading of two selected Hollywood films to first uncover violent acts portrayed in the films. The films were carefully selected based on their box-office hit and the number of nominations and awards they won in the years they were released, in the annual “Teen choice awards”. The researcher also exposed students of the Federal Polytechnic, Bida who represent the youth segment to the films. The researcher also involved film experts to lend their opinion on the subject of enquiry.

1.6 Definition of Conceptual Terms

Violence: Aggressive attitude and behaviour that will cause injury to self and others.

Moral: The learning of values and attitudes that are in conformity with social norms, mores, and traditions

Youths: Mostly from the age of 15 up to the adolescence 22 years.

Film: The representation of near reality dramatically presented in movie

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers relevant literature that helps in foregrounding our understanding of the relevant components of the study. Studies on media effects have always been controversial, it is important therefore to present empirical studies on researches conducted and its significance to this study.

2.1 Conceptualizing Violence

Violence by definition or manifestation is a concept that can be “either under or over defined or both” (Eron et al, 1971). However, the overriding assumption seem to be that, violence is typically assumed to be motivated by hostility and the willful intent to cause harm, violence is a socially, legally, morally deviant human activity. Violence takes on many forms and possesses very different characteristics and the range of definitions available creates ample controversies concerning the question, what violence is and how it ought to be defined Funk (1993).

Since there are so many different kinds of violence, the concept of violence is notoriously difficult to define because as a phenomenon, it is multifaceted, socially constructed and highly ambivalent. Violence is multifaceted because there are many different forms of violence, it could range from “youth violence”, “gang violence”, “school violence”, “dating violence”, “intimate violence”, “domestic violence”, “workplace violence”, “inter personal violence”, “structural violence”, “verbal violence”, “sexual violence”, to mention but a few (Gunter1883). Violence can be physical, i.e. bullying, humiliation or intimidation; it can be

overt but also covert like in language and literacy, abstraction, interpretation and representation (Van der Voot 1986). Violence can be individual or collective, interpersonal or institutional, national or international, symbolic or structural. The context may be private or public and the victim may be known or unknown based on the offenders' motive. Violence may be impulsive, hostile, expressive, dispute-related, instrumental or predatory. Nonphysical attack can be made against the gender race or sexuality of the victim or as in some of these cases, there integrity. Williams, (1986). Violence is also socially constructed because who and what is considered as violent varies according to specific socio cultural and historical conditions.

While legal scholars may require narrow definitions for punishable acts of violence, the phenomenon of violence is invariably more complex in social reality. Not only do views about violence differ but feelings regarding physical violence also change under the influence of social and cultural development. Violence is also highly ambivalent in the ways it is socially sanctioned, legitimized and institutionalized as well as how it is culturally transmitted and experienced as graphic illustrations of violence abound in world press photos, on television screens, movies, music and video games as well as the internet.

Viemereo (1983).states that violence is most effectively defined using a multi-level approach so that a broader meaning of the term can be applied to the social convention under which its meaning is rooted. The first level of socialized violence would be to consider violence as an exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on, or cause damage to persons or property. Included in this level of the definition would be the inclusion of violence as a means of inflicting physical or emotional pain or injury. Typically, the definition of violence as a hostile act emphasizes the fact that harm or injury to the target is the primary goal of the aggressor. This suggests a contrast to the classification of violence as an instrumental

aggression which is a hostile act of violence that involve little conscious premeditation or calculation (Viermero 1982).

A second level of interpretation would be to consider violence as an action or conduct characterized by an instance or case of intrusions, or severe threat. Violence on this level is often characterized as instrumental aggression where by violence is used as a tactical means of attaining one's goals such as obtaining an increase in social status or finance. Such behavior has been described as "learned" behavior involving relatively conscious, calculated behavior (Griffiths 1997). A third level of consideration would be to define violence as a treatment or usage tending to cause bodily injury or forcibly interfering with somebody's personal freedom. The broadest definition of violence at this level would be to include social, political or economic conditions that do damage to the quality of life.

What complicates the establishment of a clear theoretical definition of violence are prohibited by the complex cultural processes by which some behaviors and actions are marked as "violent" and others are not. This difference relies on a social standard or what is considered "violence" or "coercive force" where individuals who employ violence are allowed to do so only in extraordinary circumstances (Self-defense or war) or they are judged criminals (Wyrwicka 1996) Although it is not always clear what different societies constitute as extraordinary circumstances, it is often difficult to maintain a sense of clairvoyance since opinions over what is considered right or wrong may change over a period of time. Therefore, this moral standard is applied not only to gain a common conception of the "wrong" or "justification" of the violent act but a relationship to the historical context for which it is applied.

The difference between what is established as murder in a society can be demonstrated by the variance or difference in the meaning of the term “murder” or “homicide”. The moral standard that constitutes a killing as either part of a legal process or as an unlawful act is rooted in a collective identification of “self”. Therefore during certain historical periods such as times of war or revolution, the context for which violent acts are judged would be associated with the dominant social ideology that represents “state power”. Weber argues that what establishes the context or “legitimate” or “illegitimate” use of force is that the exercise of force or power tends to exceed the norm, a norm that is generally determined in terms of the individual cognitive response.

The distinction between what is considered “legitimate” and “illegitimate” use of force also suggests the power of language to name certain actions as violent while marginalizing and neglecting others. A common example of this is domestic violence, a mitigating term which refers to violent actions that occur outside the public realm for which notions of legitimacy within the law or acceptable social standards are most easily applied. Stack (1989), argues that compared to brutish action of war, urban riots even injurious crimes, violent acts, perpetrated in domestic spaces are typically viewed as lesser offenses and discussed through euphemisms like “abuse”. The conception of legitimacy as a critical category is thus crucial not only for the actions it validates as violent within a given culture but for the behaviors that it excluded from popular discourses of violence. As Titus (1999) argues, language itself communicates violence by giving a name to certain behavior and constructing certain subjects and objects of violence. The power of language is aptly demonstrated by the aforementioned illustrations. The power of language is used to establish violence as a social or legal fact. Prevailing standards of

representation are deeply impeded in a given culture to produce and restrict the social meaning of violence.

Huesmann(1988), argues that the more thought provoking inquiries into the meaning of violence have raised larger questions about whether or how understanding of violence bridges experiences of representation and actual life, about the pleasures of viewing barbarous images or committing actual incidents and about the necessity to confront distinctive tendencies in order to resist or at least comprehend them better in a modern society mitigated by popular culture. This problematic is further complicated by the viewer of violent contents (youths) who often lose track of the distinctions between representation of life on the screen and the reality of everyday life.

Violence, it can safely be argued, is a ubiquitous phenomenon, it is present in the local, national and international levels and it has been part of both public and private spheres. Given the broad remit of these areas, it is unsurprising that the conceptualization of violence in this literature is rather broad sometimes to the point of inaccuracies. It may be “understandable” that we lack a deep and penetrating way to conceive the many forms of violence as much as we apparently lack the means to stop it from affecting the lives of millions of human beings every day. Violence is something that we owe ourselves to understand and to define better if we ever want to limit it or control it more successfully.

2.2 How Film Violence Affects Youths

Youths are inundated with films depicting physical and sexual violence, as well as the use of illegal substances and harsh language. Unfortunately, due to this proliferation of negative media content, it may only be a matter of time before life imitates fiction, and youths

begin to copy the acts they view. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “Extensive research evidence indicates that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, fear of being harmed as well as decadence in moral life.

2.2.1 Morals

Sigmund Freud believed that children need to develop a sense of morality at the age of five or they could experience difficulties later in life if a child doesn't learn to understand the difference between right and wrong, he or she will not develop a proper understanding of guilt or remorse, and will thus be more likely to engage carelessly in behaviors that are considered socially and morally wrong. The article “Children, Adolescents, and Television” states that research has shown television and film violence to have a negative effect on the academic performance, sexuality, body concepts, and self-images of young viewers, which can lead to violent or aggressive behavior, substance abuse and moral judgment.

2.2.2 Desensitization

One much more pervasive but less well-known harmful effect of exposure to violent media is emotional desensitization. Desensitization refers to the process whereby repeated exposure to a particular objects or stimulus leads to decreases in emotional response to that stimuli (Wood et. al 1991). In the same way repeated exposure to media violence can “desensitize” viewers or make them less sensitive to, less aroused by or less emotionally upset over violent acts they see portrayed on films/T.V. Such effects have significant social consequences. Cline and Croft (1980) found that teenage boys who are heavy viewers of film/T.V responded with significantly less physiology arousal to a short violent movie clip. Desensitization to media

violence has also been found to influence individual's reactions to real-life violence. In two experiments, Atkin (1983) had youths and adults either view an eleven minute excerpt from a violent program or nothing prior to watching videotaped scenes of "real-life" violence. The results revealed that youths and adults who viewed the aggressive film were less responsive (physiological) to scene of a "real-life" violence than the subjects in the control condition.

Other studies have demonstrated that viewing media violence can also impact individual's behavioral responses to real-life aggression. For example Atkin (1983) were interested in the impact that film/T.V violence had on youth's tolerance to "real-life" aggression. These researchers exposed youths to either 15 minutes clip of violent western movies or a non-exposure control room. Results reveal that youths who saw the violent film clip took significant longer to seek help of an adult when faced with a similar situation compared to youths in the non-exposure control group. What impact does exposure to media violence have on viewers' affective and behavior reactions to violence? Daniel Linz (1985) has examined extensively the effects of viewing repeatedly more graphic and sexual forms of media violence on viewers' perception attitudes and emotional reactions.

In one study, Peterson and Pfof (1980) exposed male youths to five films, depicting violence against women across five consecutive days. Comparison between first and last day measures revealed that subject's initial level of self-reported anxiety and depression decreased considerably with repeated exposure, and the films were perceived by subjects to be less violent and less degrading to women. After viewing the violent film, the youths were exposed to a documentary rape trial in a real life situation. The youths were then asked to rate the victim of the sexual assault on several measures such as victims responsibility, sympathy, injury and worthlessness. Results revealed that the youths who were exposed to a "diet" of violent film

against women rated the rape victim significantly less and were less sympathetic to the rape victim than subjects in the non-exposure control group.

Theoretically, Peterson and Pfof (1989) suggested that viewers were becoming comfortable with anxiety provoking situations. Once viewers are emotionally “comfortable” with the violent content of films, they also evaluate the film more favorably in other domains. Materials originally believed to be offensive or degrading to the victims of violence may be evaluated as less with continued exposure. A reduction in the level of anxiety may also blunt viewer’s awareness of the frequency and intensity of violence in the films. Consequently, by the end of an extension exposure period, viewers may perceive violent films as less violent than they had initially. This altered perception and reactions may then be carried over into moral judgments made about victims of violence in realistic settings (Smith & Donnersten, 1998).

2.2.3 Fear

Another harmful effect of media violence is fear or what could be known as the “mean- world syndrome!” Viewing of media violence can lead to unrealistic perceptions of how much violence occurs in the world and create a general fear of becoming a victim of crime. These flight or fright reactions can be quite stable over time because violence in the media may evoke immediate fear responses that are transitory and fleeting in nature, such as when one watches a horror/scary movie. Both of these effects have been documented across youth and adult viewers.

One theoretical explication of individual’s long-term fear reactions to media violence is “cultivation theory” developed by George Gerbner (Gerbner & Gross, 1994)

Gerbner's cultivation theory is based on the premise that heavy exposure to the mass media can shape or alter individual's perceptions of social reality. Gerbner and his research team first tested this theory in terms of entertainment messages and violence (Gerbner & Gross, 1994). They argue that because violence permeates most of entertainment programming, repeated exposure should "cultivate" in heavy viewers perceptions about violence and crime that are similar to those displayed in films.

2.2.4 Depression

According to Zillman (1971), 37 percent of parents reported their children being frightened or upset because of a television news story. While teenagers are watching television/films, they are being bombarded 60 percent of the time with various images of violent acts. Viewing hour after hour of violence increases the likelihood that a teenager will see the world as a dark and sinister place. The American Academy of Pediatrics calls this the "mean world" syndrome.

2.2.5 Aggression

Repeated exposure to violence on television increases the likelihood of responding to others with violence. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that, every year, more than 150,000 adolescents are arrested for violent crimes. Youths will accept a violent act as justifiable when such acts are committed by the hero. This sort of unconscious learning process is added to their cognitive skills so that when they are confronted by a similar situation they may respond aggressively, (Hillson 1995).

2.3 The Attraction of Violence in Films

It is clear that youths expose themselves voluntarily to on-screen violence, which is violence as entertainment; violence on films has definite entertainment value (Slater et. al2000). It is sensational and a powerful aspect of the contemporary entertainment spectacle. He argued further that violent depiction in movies undoubtedly heighten the emotions viewers experience and continue to explain that film makers are very much aware of this fact and thus use it as a techniques for holding the audience's attention. It is not an exaggeration to say that violence in film has become a norm and in many cases is preferable for entertainment as opposed to non-violent films or comedy. In "real" violence our perception of what is proper in terms of on-screen violence is affected greatly by our subjective position in relation to the context and content of the act. The way in which the violence is presented to us has great influence on our positions of perception and the way we make meaning of it.

One explanation for why people watch violent images is argued by Zillmann(1991).He proposed that people seek out violent imagery in order to monitor their environment, so that they feel safe. He argues "the atomic bomb, they seek exposures to displays of violence and death to work out their fears". This argument also makes sense when one takes into account that some youths and adults (primarily boys) watch violent films in order to demonstrate their lack of fear, and use this to establish their identities in relation to that fear (Goldstein 1998:216).This hypothesis sees the watching of violent films as important social interaction during which interpersonal dynamics and viewpoints are exposed.

In 1994,Oliver Stone's film "*Natural Born Killer*", was released.Those who watched it came out with a sense of social status. This relates to what Arthur Penn (1967) stated when he writes that "...people define themselves in relation to screen excess". The film itself in terms

of narratives as well as its enjoyment factor, apparently meant very little and was barely discussed, yet, how we narrate our experience of viewing violence on-screen has a close bearing on our emotional response to what we have witnessed. It does not however give satisfactory account for the emotional and expressive motivations for enjoying representation of violence. Hansen and Hansen (1990) refers to five modes of viewing violence in relation to some form of emotions: mood management, sensation seeking and excitement, emotional expression, fantasy and the justice motive.

Stanger and Grindna (1999) posits that some violent representations in film can produce a complex psychological and emotional response in the spectator, who has little choice, but to analyze, reflect upon even appreciate what he or she would normally despise, disavow or deny. In viewing violent images we enjoy the fact that we immerse ourselves in taboo issues or something we would normally consider inappropriate, but this enjoyment or pleasure may be highly complex and fraught with dangers.

It may be self-evident but it is critical that there needs to be a degree of awareness that what is shown is not “real”. There is a trend in film to represent violence in increasingly realistic ways, but it is necessary to assume that viewers are aware that cinematic violence is a fictional representation. As such, viewers are expecting to be entertained and this renders them willing to enjoy the violence. They are aware of their status as a viewers which enables them to be taken in by dramatic violence. Attraction is further enhanced by the viewer’s willing suspension of disbelief. (Hansen and Hansen 1990). Which is a requirement for a viewer to enjoy the violence.

In summary, the pleasure of watching violent entertainment may depend on two factors: first the viewer is consciously aware of it as fictional, and secondly, the violence needs to be

adequately contextualized. The viewer willingly acts as witness and legitimizes the act according to the narrative and his or her relation to the characters.

2.4 Representation and Perception in films

Karen Boyle (2005) posits that a film that a certain individual defines as violent may be in opposition to what his or her peers or the “prevailing attitude of film violence” may find violent. We watch violent films now and again. These films are usually violent films where the violence becomes part of the norm of the diegesis for the character and which some viewers accept easily. The amount of violent acts on the screen, however does not necessarily result in being perceived as a violent film. These perceptions of making meaning from representation of violence may be related to what Meltzoff and Moore (1977) refers to as “denotative” meaning informed by semiotic theory. “It is what it is and we don’t have to strive to recognize it”. Through this way of making meaning we may recognize an act of violence very easily in a film in that an act of violence constitutes an action or force which harms. Monaco also states that films also have connotative abilities. By this he refers to the understanding of cinematic representation as context based.

When we watch a movie, we position ourselves in relation to the image we see which makes possible the construction of the fictional film. In other words a “presence or absence” has to take place in our perception of the film. Meltzoff and Moore (1997). Posits that in the theatre, an action is presented to the audience and likewise the audience for the actor. In a film the actor is not present during viewing but “delegates its image to replace it when the film is projected”.

Many theorists, such as Noel Burch and Richard Allen agree that viewing of a film is in some way an illusory experience. Burch posits that viewing of a fictional film can “induce” “a perfectly full sense of being there” within the film. Thus the viewer gets the illusion of being part of the cinematography. Cinema uses our knowledge of how the world works as the basis for the structures of its representation and therefore we see film sequence as mimetic representation which is illusory. This means that film functions within a set of structures, akin to the symbolic and we also identify with the humans traits, physical abilities, spoken language and emotion. Abelson (1985), states that “we are moved by what we do credit” which means that our emotional responses are typically founded in “belief”. This thought is central to the “cognitive theory of emotion, which takes belief and judgment to be central to emotions”. Emotional response is triggered by first entering the imaginary of the film and identify the mimetic representation. This implies that to have an emotional response to an act of violence, may depend on the viewer’s identification with the situation by a suspension of disbelief, through this willing suspension of disbelief one is willing to identify with the situation and to “feel”.

However there are theorist who argue against the illusory phenomenon of film, according to Irvin Singer(1998) he posits that “we are rarely deluded about reflection on screen’s even when we become so greatly absorbed in them that we have feelings that are similar to those we would undergo if we were deceived, the shock, anxiety, tenderness or revulsion that we may feel while watching a movie, carefully crafted to instigate these on comparable reaction in us, do not signify a cognitive distortion on our part. In other words as viewers we are not tricked into believing that what we see is actually real but rather willingly engage with the fiction because we understand it and we entertain its proposition and imagery.

It is very obvious that we do not respond to violent representation in film the same way as we would respond in real life in fact Carol asserts that “we must know we are viewing mimetic representation in order to respond properly to it” (1998) for Carol “suspension of disbelief” does not mean that viewer completely believe that the mimetic representation is real but that they accept the representation as probabilities within the fiction. Singer (1998) posits that “film is a transformation of visual and auditory possibilities into a coherent and intelligible totality resulting from the imaginary element of imagination (1998). This notion is also supported by Buss (2005) who is convinced that we respond to films “because of the way we personalize, internalize and in effect, recreate the work imaginatively within us”.

There are two levels of representation of violence in film studies, according to Devin Mekinney in his book: *“Violence: “The strong and the Weak”* (1993), he posited that a distinction between “strong” violence and “weak” violence should be made. He states that “weak” violence is too articulate... in the limited sense of nice cinematic effects, too well contrived to have any other content” (1993:19) “strong” violence communicates the sense that a person who in the moment is fully alive, has been reduced to Gods garbage” (1993). A simplification of this outlook on the representation of violence in film may be that one representation might be violent to one viewer, but not to another. It does not seem unrealistic to accept that some representation of violence in film will be greater than others.

Let us consider for instance, the violence in *“Pirates of the Caribbean; theCurse of the Black Pearl”* Verbinski (2003) and the violence in *“The DevilsBackbone”* Del’Toro (2001) both films have a strong fantasy to the narratives, the treatment of violence differs greatly and one cannot argue that the violence is worse in one film than another. *“Pirates of the Caribbean”* romantically portrays, the swashbuckling of pirates, soldiers and civilians in the

17th century Caribbean, elements of magic and a ghost story is used in such a way that viewers may easily distinguish the diegetic space and time of the film as fiction. Swords clash and slash bodies: muskets are fired and bullets hit their targets yet one hardly acknowledges it as violent, because its representation do not lend itself to an expression of the terms and dangers of violence. There is little blood and no explicit harm to the bodies on screen. Therefore violence actions that occur frequently in the film can be seen as part of this imaginary world, which means that it may be related to what McKinney calls “weak” violence (1993).

On the other hand “*The Devils Backbone*” is set in Spanish orphanage during the reign of General Franco and tells the story of a boy (Carlos) left behind at the orphanage by his uncle who fights in the revolution. The film opens with a boy (Santi) who has been bludgeoned to death. This is shown with explicit detail of the gash on his head and blood siphoning from it. Santi’s ghost begins to haunt the orphanage and starts focusing his attention on Carlos. The violence that followed which contains a devastating scene where a group of orphans take revenge on Santi’s murderer by killing him with sharpened sticks. The representation are not mere fantasy but intensely “real” acts. It is also extremely explicit in that the special effects focus on portraying the physical bodily harm as real as possible. One can clearly relate this type of violence to what McKinney refers to as “strong” violence.

What we can also recognize from this distinction between the two films is that the type of diegesis which includes the characters and their motives. The diegesis in “*Pirates of the Caribbean*” is related to a fairy tale. Although fairy tales might be some of the grimmest stories, there is always an element of the unreal in them and as Maria Tartar (1998) notes they “mostly represent a world in which villains are regularly decapitated or boiled in oil and giants are slain”.

The characters in “*The Devil’s Backbone*” on the other hand are set in a specific historical time and space where the threat of violence seems to have an effect on how the characters act and communicate with each other. Even though the film is set in the past, the diegetic world is represented through modes of embodied existence as well as structure of direct experience similar to our understanding of reality.

What makes the murder in the end of the film so shocking is the fact that it is committed by children who were driven by a need for revenge, although the audience is aware that they can only be watching a film, Certain Fictional Characters, like the ones in “*The Devils backbone*” elicit effective responses and emotion involvement similar to real persons” (1998) because the characters are portrayed naturally so that the viewer holds particular disposition towards them and not that they are only watching a film.

2.5 Media Violence Cited as ‘Critical Risk Factor’ for Youths Aggression

Singer (2008) opined that you are what you watch, when it comes to violence in the media and its influence on violent behavior in young people, in a paper presentation, lead-authored by Rutgers University, Newark, researcher Paul Boxer, provides new evidence that violent media does indeed impact adolescent behavior. Berkowitz, (1994:102) revealed that: The research shows that even when other factors are considered, such as academic skills, family background, encounters with community violence, or emotional problems, childhood and adolescent violent, media preferences contributed significantly to the prediction of violence and general aggression, in the study subjects. Boxer, an assistant professor of psychology at Rutgers University in Newark, has been involved since 2004 in research funded by the Centers for Disease Control (C.D.C) on media violence and its relation to serious youth violence and criminal behaviour.

Although a relationship between media violence and violent behaviour has been acknowledged for some 40 years, much of the research was usually done in a laboratory setting rather than in the field, with very little emphasis on documenting links between media violence and actual engagement in serious violent and antisocial behaviour, explains Boxer. Many studies did not sufficiently address other influences on the children's behaviours, such as exposure to violent or aggressive behaviour at school or in the community, academic difficulties, and psychopathic tendencies or other emotional problems, Bushman, (2001).

However because violence is a "multiply determined behaviour," Bushman, (2001) and the research team collected data on several risk factors for aggression, to examine whether violent media exposure has an impact on behaviour even when those other influences are present. "Even in conjunction with other factors, our research shows that media violence does enhance violent behaviour," On average, adolescents who were not exposed to violent media are not as prone to violent behavior.

Bushman, (2001) was the lead author on the paper, the first paper produced through the C.D.C project. It reports the results of the research team's extensive interviews of 820 adolescents from the state of Michigan, 430 high school students from rural, suburban and urban communities, and 390 juvenile delinquents held in county and state facilities/prisons. The adolescents were evenly split between male and female, minority and non-minority. Parents or guardians of 720 of the youths also were interviewed, as well as teachers/staff of 717 of them. Each subject was asked about favorites TV shows, movies and video/computer games, both as a child and as a teen, and questioned to determine if they had engaged in specific antisocial behaviors, such as throwing rocks or using a weapon.

Interviewers also investigated the youths' exposures to aggression or violence, as well as other risk factors for aggressive behaviour, such as emotional disorders or being victimized. The parents, guardians, teachers and staff also were interviewed about the behaviours they had observed in their children or students. After collecting the data, researchers analyzed findings by integrating "violent media exposure scores" into cumulative risk totals. Their findings: high violent risk scores "added significantly to the prediction of both violence and general aggression." What's more, "even for those lowest in other risk factors, a preference for violent media was predictive of violent behavior and general aggression", Bushman, (2001) believes that the study results can be used to assess, intervene and treat young people displaying aggressive behavior. He also notes that more detailed research is needed, such as analyzing the impact on behavior when violent interactive video games are banned.

Boxer is co-investigator on the CDC grant; Principal Investigator is Dr. Rowell Huesmann, University of Michigan; the other co-investigator is Dr. Brad Bushman, University of Michigan. Bushman, (2001) and his team also are in the process of analyzing data collected through interviews with secondary school youths and their parents to determine how violent media consumption impacts on very young children. "Young children react to what they see and they mimic behavior," but are unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, or right and wrong, says Bushman. By investigating the mechanisms that influence their development, researchers can try to learn how to intervene in potentially aggressive or anti-social behaviors, and effect change at a very young age, (Bushman 2001).

2.6 Violence in Film Studies

In the beginning of scientific research on media, television and film the terms violence and aggression were often not clearly defined. In 1982, in a literature analysis of the studies on

media violence, the German scholars Schorb and Theunert found out that, “in nearly half of the 78 studies they analyzed, violence was not defined”. Within the studies on television violence, no common understanding of the terms was used and therefore, conclusions from different studies could not be comparable. Today, for a classification of violence one can find different aspects. Firstly, there is subjectivity in determining violence. It depends on someone’s experience with violence and on the personal and social context that someone is growing up with (Donnerstien 2011).

Schweizer (2003: 14) has this to say about violence and human development: Violence is not a sustainable method for problem-solving. Even among animals, violent behavior is guided and limited by specific behavioral reflexes (that is to mean a reaction that is being stimulated by something). The human maturation process is all developing codes of conduct and techniques of problem-solving for subduing our penchant for violence. Youth represents an un-spoilt, able-bodied yet inexperienced segment of society. As the saying goes, “youngsters have the brawn, but not the brain.” Within the restless human species, young people are a particularly agitated and excitable group. On the road to maturity, they have to experience social life, develop the inherited individual faculties and discover the limits of ability. In the search for guidance, young people can easily fall under the spell of ‘false gurus’, especially when the latter attempt to step in for failed parental relationships. For helping youngsters to cope with life, they have to be made aware of ‘the human condition’ with its aspects of resilience and also its vulnerabilities.

From an early age, Schweizer (2003:18) said that children should gradually be made responsible for their behaviour towards society. This includes instruction in the ways of achieving success without violence – a basic task in the education of young people towards

social compatibility. There are excellent ways of channeling youthful ambitions, either by directing them towards activities of the mind rather than the body – such as in organized forms of cultural expression and scientific research, or by exercising physical strength under conditions of controlled aggressiveness – such as in sports. Grooming the young generation for eventually taking over full responsibility as adults is an indispensable, central task of any society and must be promoted as a top priority.

Youths acquire the values, norms, customs, attitudes and behaviors valid in the society to which they belong, and grow up to become full members of that particular society. This socialization process is said to be the second birth of a human being. The importance of socialization is made clear by the famous statement that every culture lasts only 20 years, i.e. one generation away from the condition of total barbarism, since the new-born knows nothing about culture. The transfer of culture happens in learning processes occurring not only in childhood but through lifelong learning from predominating models.

The passing on of information through learning from models guarantees the survival and continuity of social structures through the relatively frictionless transfer of culture. Whereas the main part of the socialization process has until now been credited to parents. Many authors suspect that television/films, and other new media such as computers and computer games, curtail the parent's importance in children's socialization. Youths spend more time watching TV/films than in the classroom or with their parents. That is why television is now termed as a new third parent exercising considerable influence because the direction in which a personality develops is largely set in childhood, Parks (2008:114).

Children learn social skills through imitation: they imitate the way they are treated and the way they see others treated; through their experience of “real life” and getting responses

from others: and through their play in which they use their creativity and imagination to make sense of life experiences. Block (2007) posited that children and teenagers view and understand violence individually. For some teenagers, violence classifies when two people fight each other. For others weapons are required for it to be violence, while for others the devaluating of certain social groups is seen as a violent act. Secondly, the visualization of violence must be considered. In media violence, there is a distinction between real and fictional violence. Violence portrayed in films like “*Pirate of the Caribbean*” or “*The Lord of the Rings*” may not influence someone, because these are movies that tell stories of legends, pirates, and fiery tale creatures. However in comparison to films that depict “real life” characters that are believable, the tendency is for people to believe their actions and motives. (Bushman and Anderson2001).

The more realistic elements a movie contains, the more difficult is for teenagers to distinguish between film and reality. Furthermore, in television violence the intention of the actor must be considered, the instrumental or destructive purpose, and the visualization that de-emphasizes violence. Thirdly, in literature nowadays, violence generally is defined as physical, psychical and structural violence. Objectively the definition involves behaviours that directly intend to cause damage to persons or things, and indirectly through structural injustice within a social system. The prerequisite for violence is a position of power unequal to the others, while the victims of violence suffer physically and psychologically.

2.7 Televisionand Filmic Violenceandthe Emotional Impact on Youths

Even though it does not primarily focus on film violence, the study from the German psychologists Mvrtek and Scharff published in 2005 should be considered. The two scholars examined the impact of school and television on the emotion of youths. They tried also to

compare the emotional response of the students in connection to the use of television. The most important result was that increased television viewing weakens the emotional reaction on the television content. Pupils who watch more television became more indifferent than pupils who watch little television. As mentioned before, the scholars speak about habituation. Even if habituation, suggestion or stimulation does not explain the phenomenon of violence in connection with the mass media they are variations of a learning theory we should consider seriously regarding the impact of film.

2.8 The Glamorization of Film and T.V Violence

Nearly 40% of violent incidents are initiated by characters that possess qualities that make them attractive role models. Another aspect of glamorization is that physical aggression on films is often condoned since, more often than not, characters who use violence are never punished anywhere in the plot, some are even rewarded. The film usually presents aggression as a normal way of solving conflicts and the “reward characteristics” are more systematically promoted than non-aggressive ways of coping with one’s problems.

Films often ignore or under-estimate what happens to the victims of violence. The consequences of violence are rarely portrayed realistically. In fact, roughly half of the violent incidents on TV/films show no physical harm or pain or consequences to the perpetrator. More often than not, violent films do not portray the long term damage suffered by the victim’s family, friends and community, not to mention the victims themselves. Violent behaviours on films are quite serious in nature. If this were to occur in real life, the results would be lethal or, at the very least, debilitating. Even in cases of very serious forms of aggression, much of this violence is undermined by humour. When violence is made to seem trivial because it occurs in very humorous situations, it can contribute to both desensitization and learning of aggression

among viewers. Hollywood films usually depict violence with no consequences especially the so called justified violence, this is violence in retaliation.

However, certain depictions of violence pose more potential harm to viewers because they contain several plot elements that contribute to making the use of violence very attractive. These are labeled high-risk portrayals of violence. These high-risk violence portrayals involve a perpetrator who is an attractive role model, violence that seems justified, violence that goes unpunished and violence that seems realistic to the viewers. According to Ferguson (2009), youths may be less able to distinguish fantasy from reality on films. Thus, for teenagers when violence is portrayed as the only alternative to resolving a conflict they may tend to believe that sort of ending is replicatable in real life. Furthermore youths identify strongly with action heroes such as Bruce Wills, Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham, and Denzel Washington all of whom are always portrayed as action heroes who use violent actions to triumph over the villains and youths often learn from and imitate such portrayals, Ferguson (2009).

2.9 Justification of Violence in Films

Violence may be used for a variety of reasons in motion pictures and some of those reasons may be justified or socially acceptable whereas others are not. For example any violent interaction that is motivated by retaliation, protection of life or protection of property would be considered “justified”. Any other reasons for employing the use of violence such as intentionally harming another person would be considered “unjustified”. Research has consistently documented that justified portrayals of violence increases aggressive and responsive viewers (Berkowitz 1979). This effect has been documented across both fictional and more realistic films and with adults and young viewers (Jo and Berkowitz). Scholars have theorized that viewing justified violence may reduce individuals inhibitions towards aggression

thereby heightening the likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviour (Jo & Berkowitz 1994). A recent data analysis of 217 experiments revealed that justified violence increases the risk of aggressive behaviour in viewers (Paik & Cumstock, 1994).

Does viewing “unjustified” acts of aggression have influence on audience? Unjustified acts of aggression have been found to affect both the learning of aggression and fear in viewers. In terms of learning of aggression, studies reveal that exposure to unjustified violence has been found to decrease aggressive behaviour in audience (Berkowitz 1979). Indirect experimental evidence suggests that exposure to unjustified acts of violence can have a significant effect on adults, fear of victimization as well. Bryant, Carveth & Brown (1991) had undergraduate students watch a heavy diet of violent film for 6 weeks that featured either “just” or “unjust” endings. The “just” films usually featured violence that was punished (i.e. personal vengeance, legal restitution) whereas “unjust” film typically features violence that was unpunished. A third group of students were assigned to a “light” viewing condition and asked to watch a film with no violent content. Results revealed that subjects exposed to the violent films with “unjust” ending were significantly more anxious than were subjects in the two other groups.

2.10 Risk Factors for Violence and Aggression among Youths

There exist extensive literatures on risk factors to violence and aggression among youths (Bushman and Anderson 2001). These risk factors are subdivided into three, historical, clinical, and contextual.

Historical factors

Violent history: in both adult and youths prior violent behavior is perhaps the best single predictor of future violence. (Dodge et al 1995). In other words, the best predictor of violence in adult is the occurrence of violent behavior or aggression in youth.

- (a) Early initiation: of violence and delinquency: risk level for future violence is further increased with earlier onset of juvenile offending. Early initiation to violence is associated with increased risk for violent recidivism and predicts more chronic violence.
- (b) Victim of maltreatment and abuse: having a history of abuse or maltreatment is associated with increased risk for violence in youths. A person who was abused physically, sexually or psychologically were more likely to commit violent acts.
- (c) Dysfunctional family system: a number of factors related to parental problem behaviour within the family unit have been linked to violent behaviour among youths. Youths whose parents are into one form of criminality or the other are a high risks for violent crimes.

Clinical Factors

- (a) Substance use problems: this attitude predisposes a youth to risk for violent acts. Alcohol may be as much a risk as drug use.
- (b) Mental disorder: major mental disorder is a risk for violent behavior. Risk may be partially associated with delusions involving perceived threat of harm by others and overriding of internal control.

- (c) Risk taking impulsivity: this is marked by behavior and affective instability and fluctuation in mood or general demeanor. Impulsive youths are at risk of committing violent acts.
- (d) Negative attitude/cognitive: certain attitudes in social cognitive deficiencies can increase a youth risk for violence an inability to generate non aggressive solutions to interpersonal conflicts and solutions. A tendency to perceive hostile or aggressive intent by others even when none is intended and sense of inflated self-esteem may also be linked to violent risk.
- (e) Anger control problems: Anger can be a “potent activation of aggression” (Novaco 1994).It also tends to be associated with anti-social behaviour. Difficulty in handling anger in an explosive temper is a red flag for potential violent acts.

Contextual Factors

- (a) Negative peer influence: the nature of peer relationship can be an important factor in a youth risk for aggressive cultivation. Two distinct but potentially related processes help to define negative affiliation. Peer rejection that is being liked by few or if any people. Also peer group affiliation, violent youths tend to associate with one another in anti-social networks. Such affiliation with peers who are violent is a risk factor for future violent conducts as well as overt and covert forms of delinquency (Elliot 1994)
- (b) Poor parental control; parent’s failure to set clear expectation for youth and inconsistent discipline, represents a constellation of family management practices that predicts later delinquency (Williams 1994).

- (c) Stress and loss: Hard or stressful life events have been associated with violence among youths. Death or separation of parents or loss of status can cause a youth to be stressed with a feeling of loss, such feelings can trigger aggressive behavior.
- (d) Lack of social support: hostile or conflictive relationship may increase risk for violence. Kinship and social support is positively related to anger suppression. Conversely, youths who feel hopeless may perceive that family and friends provide little support and may be more prone to express anger physically, overtly and aggressively (Allan and Reid 1997)
- (e) Community crime: the neighborhood in which a youth lives and spends time may affect the risk for violence; living in a high crime area exposes the youths to violence early in life putting them at risk for violent conduct (Thornberry et al 1995)

This research work investigates one but very potential risk factor that can influence violence in youths, violent Hollywood movies to be precise. TV/Films have come under investigation more than other media outlets for its violent contents perhaps due to its visual nature. However, it is pertinent to note briefly that there are other media outlets that carry as much violent content as the visual capacity of the screen. These other media outlets could have as much potential to communicate violent messages and have almost equal impact as the TV/film.

2.11 Media Outletsthat Portray Violence

Music videos/lyrics: music videos are also of concern because these videos sometimes are replete with violent portrayals. Even if it is not visual but audio, it could contain explicit and degrading lyrics with anti-social overtones (Richwoods, Goodman and Durant 1998). Music videos are widely watched by youths, in fact, every youths with a cell phone has audio and video recordings stored in it (Hilbrand and Foster 2000). Music is one of the oldest forms

of human expression and may be the oldest of the modern forms of human media. Music such as Jazz and blues are believed to have contributed to a decline in youth's moral structure. Music has changed from the melodic love songs of Luther Vandross to the sexually explicit lyrics of "2live crew" "59cent", and R. Kelly. The two genres of music at the centre of the debate over negative effects that music has on the youths are Rap and Heavy metal.

Heavy metal music is an offshoot of rock and roll music which was popularized by Led Zepphim in 1969. Modern rap music was popularized in the 1970s by Sugar Hill Gangs song in their first album "*Rappers delight*". Rap music has since grown to become the most powerful voices to speak for urban culture in the world. Rap and heavy metal songs have been blamed for many anti-social behavior including violence, theft, promiscuity and drug use (Berk 2000).

Cline et al (1993) reported that in an investigation, African American teens were randomly selected and assigned to a group that watched videos containing violent sexually stimulating images of women or a group that did not watch videos. When asked about their attitudes afterwards, the youths that watched the violent videos expressed greater acceptance of dating violence. Violent lyrics without video have the same capacity to influence youth. Youths who favoured Rap and Heavy metal songs are more hostile than youths who favored blues or country music (Anderson, et al. 2003).

Following the audio release of the music rap hit album "Get rich or die trying" by Curtis Jackson aka "50 cent", the Brooklyn area of New York exploded in gang related crimes. Some of the youths arrested confirmed that they listened to the songs from the album before going to confront their rivals (Anderson, et al. 2003).

Many proponents of the argument that music and music video promote violence are basing their argument on Bandura's Social Learning Theory, a core media theory which asserts that people's anti-social and aggressive responses are a result of early experience in life from parents and other significant adults in their lives (Bandura 1977). Another model that is similar to this is the "Excitation Transfer Theory" that suggest that youths are directly influenced to do what they hear in songs because they get excited by what they hear in songs and attempt to transfer what they hear into their own real life (DuRant, 1997). It is pertinent to note that this model only applies if the subject is already in a mood that supports the music lyrics.

Video games, violent video games have recently surpassed violent music videos and lyrics and even violent film. There are several reasons for this; first, youths are spending an increasingly large amount of time playing video games, secondly large portion of these games contains violence; and thirdly, youths playing these games are active participants rather than observers. They may be at risk of becoming favourable disposed to violence (Anderson and Bushman, 2001). Most video games are violent often involving car racing, martial arts, gun exchange, sword fighting or physical combat. The graphic display of blood splatter is also greatly exaggerated and enhanced to give the player some sense of horror and satisfaction

The internet: the use of computer and the internet has increased rapidly over the past decades. Today many youths in the world own at least one form of new media technology which they use to text, call, email, blog and access social networking websites (Lenhart and Madden 2007).The internet provides benefits to youths in research access, socialization, entertainment and communication.It also connotes negative aspects such as violence, pornography "hate" sites, isolation, predators, stalkers and commercialism. Internet pornography among youths is very wide spread, and the content of pornography is more

violent on the internet, (Baron and Kimmel, 2002). Violent pornography may be more prevalent among youths who are characterized by a greater acceptance of interpersonal violence and anti-social behavior (Malamuth 1981). A female serial killer arrested in the U.S.A Ted Bundy explained how pornography set him on the path of murder (Montaldo undated).

Books: interestingly books have also come under criticism for its violent contents. The 20th century has seen many examples, from “Harry Potter” books by J. K. Rowlings which teach witchcraft and sorcery and which have led to concern of its potential to lead to Satanism or mental illness. Even comic books like” Batman and Robin”, ”Spider man” both of which have been made into blockbuster movies have generated concern due to its hero vs. villain violent nature.

2.12 The Concept of Morality

The concept of morality (from the Latin *moralitas*, meaning manner, character, proper behaviour) has intrigued philosophers and writers for centuries. Moral behaviour, or behaviour that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong, has its early beginnings in empathy, compliance, and pro-social behavior (Kochanska, 2002). There are many definitions used for empathy, all slightly different. We consider empathy as the recognizing and sharing of the emotional state of another person (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Sadovsky, 2006).

Kohlberg quoted by Kochanska, (2002), revealed how the development of morality started from birth with empathy and develops in four stages. At the first stage, referred to as global empathy, the infant becomes aroused when it hears another person’s crying. Because of the lack of a differentiated sense of self and others, the infant starts to cry in reflex. This behaviour is visible in babies as young as one to three days old. During the second year of life,

the child starts to develop a self-other orientation, which leads to the second stage of empathic development, egoistic empathy. Although now children are aware that another person may be in distress, they cannot yet make a distinction between their own internal state and that of the other person. Children of this age tend to try to comfort victims in ways they would want to be comforted themselves. In the third stage of empathic development, empathy for another's feelings, children can distinguish between needs and feelings of the other person and of themselves.

These role-taking capabilities emerge during the third year of life. The fourth and last stage of is the empathic development. This implies the empathy for another's life condition, requires the cognitive ability to form social concepts and classify people into groups. This can be seen in children from late childhood onwards (Hastings, Zahn-Waxler, &McShane, 2006). Another aspect of moral behaviour is compliance, especially committed compliance

Morality is the human attempt to define what is right from wrong about our actions and thoughts, and what is good and bad about our being that we are. Moral development refers to the process by which humans learn how to act towards others and behave in the society. It involves the acquisition of concepts such as manners, empathy, guilt, shame and understanding the difference between right and wrong. Morality occurs in stages as earlier identified by Kohlberg, throughout childhood and adolescence and is affected by several factors. Although morality had been a topic of discussion since the beginning of human civilization, the scientific study of moral development in humans did not begin until the late 1950s. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987), American psychologist building upon Jean Piaget's work in cognition and reasoning, posited six stages of moral development. Since that time moral development has become acceptable subject of scientific research. Prior to Kohlberg's work, the prevailing

positivists view claimed that science should be “value-free”. (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Sadovsky, 2006).

Moral development in human nature convey a sense of human beings as dynamic and progressive beings, human nature is naturally good, at least it leans towards an awareness of the good and preference for it over evil and injustice. Morality grows in human being spontaneously alongside physical limbs, basic mental and social capacities. Through individually and social interactions the human evolves in conscience and character despite the many factors and social impediment that slow or de-rail the process of development.

There are several approaches to the study of moral development, which are characterized by several ways. The social learning theory perspective claims that humans develop morality by learning the values of acceptable behaviour from external factors such as family, friends, and models as seen on the media. The psychoanalytic theory proposes instead that morality develops through conflict between their instinctive drives and demands of society. Cognitive development perspective views morality as an outgrowth of cognition or reasoning. Whereas personality theory perspective takes a holistic approach taking into consideration all accounts that can contribute to human development.

Those who argue that man is born with no moral sense tend towards the Social Learning or Behavioral Theory perspective (as it were most morality are learned from the external factors). Others who argue that humans are innately aggressive and completely self-oriented are more likely to accept the psychoanalytic theory (where morality is the learned management of socially destructive internal drives). Those who believe it is our reasoning abilities that separate us from beast will find cognitive development theory attractive. Hoffman (2000), says, what constitutes morality is a subject of great controversy. Each society develops

its own set of norms and standards for acceptable behavior. Does this mean then that there is no universal truth, no cross-cultural standard for human behavior in a world that continues to shrink due to technology and the media?

Over the last 30 years the Social Learning Theory approach has become an important part of our attempt to understanding human criminality, aggression, violent tendencies and non-violent behavior. This theory is also arguable one of the most tested theories on violence. Which is what this study investigates.

2.13History of Hollywood

The choice of Hollywood movies is obviously due to its mass appeal and popularity and the fact that pirated copies are cheap and found everywhere. Hollywood has the capacity, technology and financial potential to produce breath- taking, action packed movies which are very popular among film lovers all around the world. Hollywood is a district in Los Angeles, California U.S.A. situated west north of downtown. Due to its fame as the historical center of movie studios and stars, the word “Hollywood” is often used as a metonym for American film and television industry. Accounts of the name Hollywood coming from the imported English word “holly” are in-correct. According to Petras (2004) the name in fact was coined by Hobart Johnstone Whitley. He and his wife Gigi came up with the name in 1886 while on their honeymoon.

In the early 1900s, motion picture production companies from New York and New Jersey started moving to California because of the reliable weather. Although electric lights existed at that time, none was powerful enough to adequately expose film: the best source of illumination for movie production was natural sunlight. The climate is dry with acres of open

species and natural Scenery which come in handy during film making. According to Petras (2004:19) another factor in Hollywood development was “its great distance from New Jersey, which made it more difficult for Thomas Edison to enforce his motion picture patents”. At that time, Edison owned almost all of the patents relevant to motion picture production. Petras (2004) explains further that movie producers acting independently of Edison’s motion picture patents company were often sued. Thus movie makers moved west to California where they could work unencumbered by Edison’s control. If Edison sent agents to California, word would usually reach Los-Angeles before the agent’s arrival and the movies makers could simply escape to nearby Mexico.

According to Rothman (2001), in early 1910, director D.W. Griffith was sent by the “Biography Company” to the west accompanied by troop of actors. They started filming on a vacant lot near Georgia Street in downtown Los Angeles. The company decided to explore “new territories” and traveled several miles north to a little village that was friendly and enjoyed the movies filming there. This place was called “Hollywood”. D.W. Griffith stayed there for months and made several films before returning to New York. Words quickly spread about this wonderful places, in 1913 many movie-makers headed west. With this film, the movies industry was “born” in Hollywood which soon became the movie capital of the world. The first motion picture studio in the region was built in 1909 by the Selig Polyscope Company. The Selig studio was located in Edendale, east of Hollywood. The first studio in Hollywood proper was Nestor studios founded in 1911 by Al Christie for David Hoisley in an old building on the southeast Corner of sunset Boulevard and Gower Street. The first motion picture to be filmed in Hollywood was filmed at the Whitley home located on the corner of prospect (Now Hollywood Blvd) and Wilcox.

In the same year another fifteen independent Company settled in Hollywood. “Creators of dreams began arriving by the thousands, cameras cracked away, capturing images of custard pies, bathing beauties comedy and tragedy, villains leavings heroines with long curls and heroes to save the day and they built a new world to replace the lemon groves”. Thus the fame of Hollywood came from its identity with the movies and movie stars .The word” Hollywood” when spoken in any country on earth. Evokes worlds even galaxies of memories, come to be colloquially used to refer to the motion picture industry.

Rothman (2001) states that prolific director D.W. Griffith was the first one to make a motion picture in Hollywood. His seventeen minute short film titled “*In old California*” which was released on 10 march 1910, was filmed entirely in the village of Hollywood. The first film by a Hollywood studio, Nestor, motion picture company was shot on October 26 1911” by the end of 1911: Los Angeles was second to New York in motion picture production and by 1915 the majority of American films were produced in the Los Angeles area. However today much of the movies industry has dispersed into surrounding areas such as Burbank and the Westside but significant auxiliary industries such as editing, effects, props, post-production and lighting companies remain in Hollywood.

Beyond the worldwide recognition of Hollywood as the home of movies, Hollywood has the capacity to produce violent movies on a scale none can imagine. Hollywood actors are household names around the world. Even though the Nigerian movie industry is making great progress, the quality of the acting, sound, stories, visual effects, lighting, and editing still leaves much to be desired. By far Hollywood has captured the imagination of movie viewers the world over and the list of block buster movies are long i.e. “kill bill”, “Apocalypto” “Godfather” “Raging bull” “training day” “Terminator” the list is endless. Most Nigeria youths

identify with Hollywood actors and would readily list names of Hollywood actors that they admire.

The choice of Hollywood is due to the availability of violent films and arguably no movie industry has surpassed Hollywood in that respect. Also Hollywood movies epitomize the American dream which has become a universal dream. In view of this the researcher has studied violent Hollywood movies and its implications for moral development of youths.

2.14 Theoretical framework

This study focuses on the influence of Hollywood movies, particularly violent Hollywood movies on Nigerian youths using the “Social Learning Theory” otherwise known as the “Social Cognitive Theory” and the “Psychoanalytic Theory” as frameworks.

Social Cognitive Theory has its roots in the studies of N.E Muler and J. Dollard (Miller and Dollard 1941). They posit that if an individual would like to learn something, they have a great chance of succeeding simply by observing and then imitating the action. During the imitation process the person is learning while he or she tries to complete the action on their own or for themselves, this reinforces the process of learning.

From the 1930s through the 50's, the behavioral theory began to gain prominence with emphasis on the application of consequence to influence behavioural change. With a reinforcement of a cognitive perspective in the 1950's (e.g. Miller 1956, Galanter and Pribram 1960) researchers began to look for ways to integrate the behavioural and cognitive perspective. Robert Sears (1951) and Albert Bandura (1977) contributed to connecting behavioral and cognitive approaches to learning and this theory (Social Cognitive Theory) is an important step towards modern version of learning theories. Bandura (1966), building on the

work of Miller and Dillard (1941) proposed that learning first occurs cognitively through imitation and then is modified through the application of consequences. In contrast to a purely behavioural approach, social cognitive theory proposes that individuals are participants in their own learning processes.

In Social Cognitive Theory, the learner is viewed as thoroughly integrated into the environment within which he or she is learning. The viewer's cognitive responses, behaviours, and environment all work together to create learning. Viewers/ learners observe models (actors) and build self-efficacy, their belief that they can accomplish the work modeled. Based on the learners understanding of why it is important to learn something and the beliefs that they can accomplish the learning, learners will then self-regulate their learning and become proactive in their efforts to gain mastery.

Parjares (1996), referenced Albert Bandura (1986) in "Social Foundation of Thought and Action", that individual possesses a self-system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings and actions. This self-system houses one's cognitive and affective structures and includes the abilities to learn from others, plan alternative strategies, regulate one's own behaviour, and engage in self-selection. It also plays a prominent role in providing reference, regulating and excluding behaviour, which results from the interplay between the self-system and external environmental sources of influence.

Through the observation of others, individuals learn numerous new behaviours, such as emotional reactions and how to use tools in their environment. Bandura demonstrated that individuals modify their own behaviour based on consequences (which could be reinforcement or punishment) that others receive. In other words, individuals tend to model their behaviour on persons who are similar to themselves, persons who are of higher status and persons who

are either reinforced for the behaviour or not punished for it. Social learning theory is a general theory of human behaviour which Bandura has used to specifically explain media effects. Bandura warned that “youngsters and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses and new styles of conduct through films and television (George Gerbner 1999).

One of the early and most notable theoretical accounts of learning aggression is Social Learning Theory, this theory advances that individuals acquire social behaviour through direct experience and indirectly through the observation of models. One theoretical basis of Social Learning Theory is that an observer would imitate the models behaviour if the model possesses certain characteristics traits such as talent, intelligence, power, good looks or popularity that the viewer find attractive or desirable. Indeed these qualities are often associated with Hollywood actors/actress. Most Nigerian youths are very familiar with Hollywood actors and figures, such as Brad pit, Denzel Washington, Bruce Wills and Robert Downing Jr to mention but a few and these action movie stars are popular among Nigerian youths and are considered role models. These actors are not only good looking but are often portrayed in movies to be intelligent, physically powerful and smart. By watching or observing models, youths and adults come to view that behaviours are socially sanctioned or rewarded in society on the one hand and those actions that are reprehensible or punishable on the other hand. The assumption of social learning theory is that much of human behavior is directed towards achieving some particular goal or reward (Smith Donneisten, 1998).

Several investigations have demonstrated that individual learns aggressive behaviour from being exposed to models (Bandura, 1965; Bandura, Ross, 1961), perhaps the most renowned of these experiments was the classic “Bobo doll” studies undertaken by Bandura and his colleagues in the 1960’s. In a series of experiments, Bandura and his research team found

repeatedly that preschoolers exposed to an aggressive television programming or live model who was rewarded were significantly more likely to engage in aggressive behavior than were those exposed to the same aggressive film or live model who were punished (Bandura 1965, Bandura, Rosen & Ross 1963). Much of the experimental research investigating the causal relationship between viewing media violence and aggression has been critiqued for being too artificial and contrived as in the case of the “Bobo Doll” experiment. However even more naturalistic field studies also provide support for the social learning theory of aggression.

For instance, Huesman and Eron (1986) have argued that aggressive habits are learned and become resistant to change over the course of a youth’s development. In an effort to assess the long-term impact of early exposure to violence on later aggression and criminal behaviour, Huesman et al studied a group of youths across a 22-year time frame. Data on the subjects, film viewing and aggressive behaviour was collected when they were 15, 18 and 30 years of age.

The result revealed a longitudinal effect that bridged 18 years. Early viewing of violent film/ television by boys was associated with likely aggressive behaviour at age 30 and contributed to the significant probability that a serious criminal arrest would occur at that age. Based on these findings, Huesman and Eron (1986) concluded that early viewing of violent films stimulates aggression and that early aggression is a statistical forerunner to later criminality. Their research on violent films helped bridge the evolutionary behavioural connection from habitual childhood exposure to film violence to adult crime.

A Social Learning approach has been widely accepted and used by media effect scholars attempting to examine the relationship between exposure to media violence and aggressive behaviour in both youths and adults. A little over a decade ago, however Bandura

(1986) reformulated the theory to account for more of the cognitive process involved in observational learning and thus re-entitled his explanatory framework as “Social Cognitive Theory”. Other media effect researches have established cognitive models and information processing perspectives to explain the relationship between viewing film/television violence and aggressive behaviour. Leonard and Berkowitz advanced one such theory, which we called a “priming effects” perspective. Berkowitz and his colleagues (Berkowitz & Roger 1994) offer an explanatory framework grounded in cognitive neo-association theory to gain perspective of the short term transient effects of exposure to media violence.

According to Jo & Berkowitz (1994), stimuli seen or heard in the mass media can activate or “prime” for a short time, other related thoughts in viewers. These thoughts, in turn, can activate other semantically associated ideas, feelings and even action tendencies. The process of thought activation has been labeled a “priming effect”. To illustrate how the priming process is instantiated watching a violent film can “prime” hostile or aggressive thoughts or ideas in viewers. These hostile thoughts may automatically trigger the viewer’s other hostile thoughts, feelings, and possibly even behavioural action tendencies.

Several studies have documented that aggressive media content like film can prime aggressive thoughts in viewers (Bushman & Green, 1990). For example, Bushman assessed the impact of exposure to either 15 minutes violent video (*Karate kid II*) or a nonviolent video excerpt (*Gorillas in the mist*) on the priming of individuals aggressive thoughts. Bushman found out that under-graduates exposed to the violent film clip generated a greater number of aggressive associations to stimulus words than did those exposed to the non-violent film clip.

Research suggests that other forms of violent media can evoke aggressive thoughts in viewers. Parker & Berkowitz, (1991) found that children who had read a war comic book or

other violent books like “Batman and Robbin” or the “Amazing Spiderman” were significantly more likely to choose words with aggressive meaning. These exposures to violence, independent of the medium can evoke aggressive ideas and thought in viewers. Research evidence also points to the fact that priming aggressive thought may heighten the probability of acting aggressively. Carver et al (1999) results reveal that male, subjects primed to have aggressive thoughts delivered significantly more intense electric shocks in an experiment than those male subjects in the control (Neutral prime) conditions. From the foregoing, these studies provide support for explaining the short term instigation effects to exposure to media violence from a cognitive priming perspective.

One limitation of Berkowitz priming approval is that it only focuses on the immediate impact of viewing violent media on the audience. What about the long-term or cumulative effect to exposure to violence in media? Rowell Huesman’s (1986) social developmental theory, offers an excellent explanatory framework that delineates how exposure to film/Television violence as well as several other intervening variables, contribute to a youth’s socialization and aggressive behaviour that results in the use of violence.

According to Huesman (1986), social behavior is controlled to a great extent by cognitive “scripts” that are learned early in the course of a youths development. A script is simply a cognitive tube or map stored in memory that serves as a guide for behaviour. Scripts are developed either through direct experience or by observing models such as portrayed in films. By watching a great deal of interpersonal violence from the media, youths can develop aggressive scripts or cognitive rules dealing with problems that rise in social situations (Huesman, 1986).

Not every violent scene in a movie is encoded and stored in memory; however, Huesman (1986) indicates that certain factors heighten the probability of encoding. For example, violent scenes that are perceived as realistic by the viewer and that feature aggressive characters with whom the youth can identify with, are particularly sensational and this would increase the likelihood of encoding. Also not every aggressive script that is encoded and stored in memory will be retrieved when a youth faces a problem-solving situation. Huesman's (1986) model can clearly account for both the short and long term effects of viewing violent mass media. Repeated exposure to violence in the media contributes to a youth's development and maintain of aggressive scripts in memory for dealing with social problem-solving. Such cumulative learning eventually leads a youth to employ aggressive scripts and behaviours to solve interpersonal conflicts (Huesman, 1986).

Indeed, studies reveal that youths who view violent movies are both correlated with aggressive behaviour and are a precursor to later adult aggressiveness and criminality (Huesman et al, 1984). Violent scenes in films may also function to trigger and strengthen already acquired aggressive "script" stored in memory. Huesman and his colleagues have found out that several intervening variables strengthen the relationship between viewing film violence and aggressive behavior, thereby heightening the likelihood that a youth will adopt aggression as a characteristic way of solving conflicts (Huesman, 1988).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the organized inquiry which includes the planned and the systematic data collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation for solving identified problems. Ihomeje, (2006:15). According to McNabb (2004), a methodology is a strategy which researchers follow in order to gain knowledge of study phenomena, and it usually broadly consists of the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

This chapter covers the research methods, research instruments, justification for the adoption of the research instruments, sources of data and procedure for data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research methodology focuses on investigating behaviour, motivations, desires, attitudes, beliefs, choices and opinion of persons or group of persons. According Denzin and Lincoln (2003:135) qualitative research involves an interpretative and naturalistic approach, in which researchers study a phenomenon in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret the phenomenon in terms of meaning people bring to them.

Qualitative data refers to some collection of words, symbols, pictures or other non-numerical records, materials, or artifacts that are collected by a researcher and which has relevance to the social group under study. The use of these data goes beyond simple description of events and phenomenon rather they are used for creating understanding, for subjective interpretation and for critical analysis as well (McNabb, 2004). Qualitative research

is quite relevant in the behavioral science where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Through such method, we can analyze the factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner (Kothari, 2004). This is why the researcher has decided to use the qualitative research to strengthen this study. Based on the nature of the research, the qualitative method of research was used to gather different points of view from respondents.

3.3 Population of Study

The study chose two Hollywood films which are “*Last house on the Left*” and “*The Hostel*”. The films were carefully selected based on their recognition by youths in the annual “*Teen Choice Awards*” held every year in the United States of America. The “*Teen Choice Awards*” is an annual award show that is aired on Fox Network. The awards honors the year’s biggest achievement in music, films, sports, fashion, and more. It is voted by teen viewers between the ages of 13 to 22. Winners receive a full size surfboard designed with the graphic of that year’s show. The films selected for this study won a hand full of awards in the years they were released. It is pertinent to note that “*The Teen Choice Awards*” is strictly a youth’s affair where they honour films stars and other individuals who have excelled in their various fields of endeavours. Both films won a total number of seven awards in the years they were released. (www.hollywood reporter). It is also important to note that the two films featured graphic violence, sexual assaults and the use of explicit language among other forms of violent acts.

The choice of the film industry is because it is one of the most popular film industry in the world. Hollywood films have been exported across the world in different genre from romance, epic, historical, science fiction, documentaries, horror thrillers, action thrillers and many more. There is no doubt that Hollywood films have become ubiquitous of the twenty first

century and a primary means through which American life style and dreams are sold to the world and the youths are drawn to these depictions. Youths also identify with Hollywood actor and actresses who they may consider role models. According to Robertson (2001) Hollywood movie industry is a big attraction for youngsters around the world. Youths are more susceptible to be influenced. What they watch and hear registers in their subconscious and they are prone to reenact these influences in real life situations. On the average the Hollywood movie industry produced 706 films and 560 films were released between 2010 to 2012. Hollywood movie industry has been a reference point for other film industries which has led to the proliferation and growth of film industries around the world such as the Bollywood and Nollywood.

The participating students in this research were drawn from the Federal Polytechnic Bida. The school is made up of four Schools. They include the School of Arts and Applied Science, School of Environmental sciences, School of Business and administrative management and the School of Engineering Sciences. Also a film producer was interviewed to understand why violence in films is used and its implication for youths who expose themselves to such depictions.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

Based on the nature of the research, the qualitative method of research was used to gather different points of view from respondents. Over all, the research made use of Documentary Observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview.

The Documentary Observation Method

Documentary observation method involves the reading of written, printed or pictorial documents. Expanding this assertion, Bernard (2006) explains that the standard approach to the

analysis of document focuses primarily on what is contained within them. In this frame, documents are viewed as conduit of communication between a writer and a reader. It is a conduit that contains meaningful messages and such messages are usually in the form of writing but can also engage other formats such as maps, architectural plans, films and photographs. The documentary observation method enabled the researcher to collect a lot of information contained in the selected films.

The researcher carefully watched the two films under study, observed the acts of violence portrayed in them and analyzed them accordingly. Besides, the films were screened to selected students of Federal Polytechnic Bida. The students watched the films alongside the researcher. Issues on violence and potential moral development were raised and exhaustively discussed by the students under the guide of the researcher. The discussions were effectively facilitated by the researcher and the data enriched the study.

FocusGroup Discussion

A Focus Group could be defined as a group of interacting individuals brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interactions as a way to gain information about a specific issue. Unlike the one-way flow of information in a one-on-one interview, focus groups generate data through the “give and take” of group discussion. Listening as people share and compare their different points of view provides a wealth of information—not just about what they think, but why they think the way they do (Kothari, 2004).

The Focus Group is a discussion-based forum that produces verbal data via group interaction. The aim is to build conversation among participants rather than conversation between the interviewers and individual participants, which would be akin to doing a ‘round

robin' exercise. It is the 'interaction element' that is important to understanding how participatory groups can be used to generate a very different type of evidence than is possible from a one-to-one interview.

The FGD is like a group interview. FGD is used increasingly in higher institution as a form of institutional research to identify needs and test solutions. The researcher used this technique in this study. The participants were engaged by the researcher to learn more about their feelings in relation to violent portrayals in the two films screened before then. The essence is to uncover real feelings from the respondents and issues and provide richer and more profound information to strengthen the study.

FGD is a qualitative research tool, it helps us to understand and provides insight into how people think and provide a deeper wider understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The goals of FGD are to promote self-disclosure among participants, because a group, rather than an individual, is asked to respond to questions and issues. Participant's therefore take cues from the comments of others and add richness to the general discussion.

Participant students from the Federal Polytechnic Bidawatched the films to identify what constitutes violent acts to them and their implications for their moral development. Four sets of groups were constituted with each group comprisingtwelve individuals (six boys and six girls) (48repertoires).The group was drawn from each of the schools.

The researcher made use of a 32 inches plasma Television in the board room of the General Studies Department of the Federal Polytechnic Bida for the viewing of the selected films for the participatory group discussion (P.G.D). The choice of the location is that it was approved for the exercise by the school authorities. The researcher made use of midget

recorder and jottings to gather information and responses from participant repertoires during the participatory group discussions.

Interview Method

Hollway and Jefferson (2000), state that interviewing the respondents with a series of questions is one of the most common and popular qualitative methods used in social science research. An interview is a kind of conversation usually between two persons one of them being the seeker of responses from the other (Gillham, 2000). The findings of good interviews can highlight some real problems and show the ways to solve them, thereby benefitting a bigger section of people.

The researcher interviewed a film producer/director to get professional view on the study. A representative of the Nigeria Film and Video Censor Board was also interviewed to know the position of the government in relation to the issue under study and what the agency is doing to address the issue. Finally the researcher interviewed a representative of a Non-Governmental Organization that deals with youths to get firsthand information on the implications of exposure to violent films for youths.

3.8 Data Presentation and Method of Analysis

Being a qualitative research, the study employed the qualitative mode of analysis. The researcher did a critical reading of the films under study within the context of moral development. Therefore the data presentation of the study is in three parts.

The researcher facilitates discussion among the selected Polytechnic students and synthesized the data in line with the issue of moral development. The result of the interview

was also integrated into the general discussion. Summarily the analysis of the data was patterned along the following lines:

- (a) The study considers the synopsis of the films under study.
- (b) The study then looks at the discussion of the specific acts of violence in the selected films based on the researchers' personal reading.
- (c) Finally the study then explores the implications of the violence for youths' moral development based on the findings from the FGD and interview conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the synopsis of the films under study as well as other essential details bordering on the portrayal of violence in films and their attendant implications for youths' moral development.

4.1 Synopsis of the First Film

- i. Name of Movie: *"The Hostel"*.
- ii. Written and Directed by: Eli Roth.
- iii. Produced by: Mike Fleiss, Eli Roth and Chris Briggs.
- iv. Year of Production: January 6, 2006.

Synopsis

American College Students (Paxton and Josh) are traveling across Europe with their Icelandic friend, Oli. After being thrown out of a club and visiting a brothel, the three meet a man named Alexi who convinces them to visit a hostel in Slovakia. They board a train to Slovakia, encountering a strange Dutch businessman. When they arrive the Slovakian hostel, they are greeted by Natalia and Slevtlana who invite them to a Spa and thereafter to a disco. Josh is approached by a gang of street boys known as the "Bubble gum gangs" and they demand money, he is saved by the Dutch businessman that they first met on the train. Josh offers to buy him a drink. Later at the hostel, Paxton and Josh have sex with Natalia and

Slevtlana, while Oli goes home with the desk girl, Vala. Next morning, Oli has not returned yet and they are unable to reach him on phone.

Josh becomes anxious to leave immediately but Paxton convinces him to stay one more night. That night, Josh and Paxton are invited to a disco and tranquilizers are slipped into their drinks. Josh stumbles back to the hostel room while Paxton passes out in the disco room closet. Josh wakes up in a dungeon-like room where he is tortured to death by the Dutch Businessman. Paxton wakes up the next morning to find Josh missing. The authorities prove unhelpful to find Josh, Paxton tracks down Natalia and Slevtlana at a pub and demand to see Josh. He is led to an old factory house; Paxton is horrified to witness Josh's mutilated corpse being stitched together by the Dutch Business man who they first encountered on the train. He is ambushed by thugs, dragged to a cell and confined to a chair.

He is soon joined by a German named Joan, who severs two of Paxton's fingers, with a chainsaw. When Joan charges at Paxton, he slips and falls severing his own leg with the chainsaw, Paxton reaches for his gun and shoots him in the head. He shoots the guard and escapes from the cell. As Paxton makes it out of the factory he hears the cries for help. He discovers one of the girls from the hostel, Kana being tortured by an American. He kills the American and flees in a stolen car with Kana whose face has been disfigured. He runs into Alexi, Natalia and Slevtlana who do not take notice of him and he knocks them down and flees.

They both make it to the train station, Kana sees the reflection of her disfigured face and becomes depressed, and leaps in the path of an oncoming train. This creates a distraction allowing Paxton to board another train. Once on board, Paxton hears the voice of the Dutch Business man, he follows him to a rest room, he cuts off his two fingers, and he then drowns

him in the toilet bowl, allowing him to see his reflection before slitting his throat, killing him. Paxton then leaves to board another train.

4.2 Synopsis of the Second Film

- i. Name of Movie: *“The Last House on the Left”*.
- ii. Written and directed by: Carl Ellsworth and Dennis Illiadis.
- iii. Produced by: Wes Craven, Sean Cunningham and Marianne Maddalena.
- iv .Year of Production: March 13, 2009.

Synopsis

After a stormy relationship, Emma and John and their daughter Mari head out on vacation to their lake house. Shortly thereafter, Mari borrows the family’s car and drives into town to spend time with her friend Paige. They meet Justin who is in transit and he invites them to his hotel room to smoke marijuana. While there, Justin’s other friends return, they include Krug, (Justin’s father), Francis and Sadie who is Krugs’ girlfriend.

Krug shows Justin a local newspaper that has Krug and Sadie’s picture on the front page cover. The paper explains how Sadie and Francis broke krug out of police custody and killed two officers. Believing it too risky to let Paige and Mari go, the gang kidnaps them and uses their car to leave town. While Krug searches for the highway, Mari convinces him to take a road that leads to her parent’s lake house, Mari then attempts to jump out of the vehicle, and the ensuing fight causes Krug to crash into a tree. Sadie and Francis beat Mari, Krug attempts to teach Justin to “be a man” by forcing him to fondle Maris’ breasts. Paige insults him to get him to stop, Krug and Francis stab Paige repeatedly and Mari watches her bleed to death.

Kurgthen rapes Mari. As Mari attempts to flee, Krug shoots her in the back leaving her body floating in a lake.

A storm forces Krug and his gang to seek refuge with John and Emma, whose house is nearby. Justin soon realizes they are Mari's parents and intentionally leaves Mari's necklace on the counter to alert them about their daughter. Emma and John find Mari barely alive on the porch and the necklace on the counter, they realize that the people who did this to Mari are in the house. They decide to take revenge. Francis is attacked and killed by John and Emma. As they go after Krug and Sadie, they find Justin in possession of Krug's gun, Justin gives them the gun. Emma shoots Sadie in the head; John chases Krug who jumps out through the window. Krug is knocked unconscious, paralyzed from the neck down; John leaves him to die with his head in an active microwave oven. Then they take Mari to the hospital.

4.3 Acts of Violence Portrayed in the Film “*The Hostel*”

Going by the reading of this film, the following are some of the acts of violence discovered by the researcher.

Torture and Mutilation

Torture is the act of intentionally causing severe pain or suffering on someone whether physical, mental, emotional or psychological. In the film, “*The Hostel*” the depiction of violent scenes such as mutilation and torture is graphic; characters in the film take pleasure in inflicting harm on others. The first act of torture and mutilation is seen in the middle part of the film when Paxton wakes up in a dungeon tied up to a chair. His captor drills a hole in his thighs and back as he screams in excruciating pain and begs for his life. He is covered with blood as he cries for help, then his abductor reveals himself to be the same man they first met in the

train. He sits in front of Paxton welding an operation knife and threatening to use it on him. He raises his hands up to stab Paxton with the knife, Paxton screams and closes his eye and braces himself for the cut.

The Dutch man repeats this act four times and each time it seems to make him exited to see how his threat to stab Paxton had completely dehumanized Paxton. Paxton is covered with blood and crying, begging him to let him go, he promises not to report to the police or tell anyone if only he will free him. Suddenly he plunges the knife in his thighs. Paxton screams in pain and begs him to let him go, he pretends to accept and he unties him but surprises him again by cutting his tendons rendering him immobile. Paxton falls to the floor and drags himself to the door as the Dutch man watches in amusement.

Similarly, in the fifty sixth minutes of the film, Josh is seen also tied to a chair by another captor who picks up chainsaw and threatens to cut his throat, Josh screams and begs him not to do so. He continues to wield the chainsaw right in front of the terrified Josh whose scream for mercy seems to be drowned by the sound of the chainsaw. His abductor screams at Josh to keep quiet, but Josh continues to scream at the top of his voice. This seems to irritate him as he drops the chainsaw and punches Josh in the face repeatedly yelling at him to shut up. He punches Josh repeatedly in the face six times, this seems to exhaust him and josh refusal to stop screaming irritates him the more. He picks up the chainsaw, starts the engine and uses it to slice Josh on the thigh and punch him in the face again. Josh screams in pain and begs him to stop, his face is covered with blood and he could barely see as he continues to scream for help.

His captor, a German called Joan calls on a guard to gag Josh in the mouth to stop him from screaming. The guard walks in and punches Josh in the face, holds him by the throat and forces a cloth into his mouth and ties it around his face. Even though Josh continues to scream,

his cries and screams are muffled by the cloth in his mouth and this satisfies his abductor who smiles and takes a moment to drink alcohol from a bottle on the table. He then picks up a gun and points it at Josh's forehead. Josh screams with fear, he pulls the trigger and a click sound is heard, apparently the gun is not loaded but Josh is now completely terrified, unable to talk he continues to shake his head in a gesture of plea.

His tormentor is excited to see how terrified Josh is and he laughs and punches him in the face. He then loads the gun with two bullets and spins the revolver and points the gun at Josh on the temple. He pulls the trigger, it's a click sound again Josh is lucky the bullet is not in the chamber, this kind of dangerous act is called Russian Roulette. His abductor is very excited to see how close Josh has come to dying but just lucky to be alive. He points the gun at Josh and places his finger on the trigger, suddenly he drops the gun and picks up the chainsaw and cuts off two of Josh's fingers and in the process he mistakenly cuts off the rope used to tie his hands, Josh is seen bleeding profusely. Joan seeing that Josh's hands are now untied, lunges forward to deliver the final cut but slips on the floor which is completely covered with blood and falls and in the process severs his own leg with the chainsaw. Josh spots an opportunity and breaks free, he picks the gun, points it directly at Joan's forehead and pulls the trigger. Josh is lucky, the bullet is in the right chamber, Joan's head splits open and his brains mixed with blood gush out.

As he tries to escape out of the dungeon, he stumbles into a room filled with bodies of mutilated people. Suddenly, he hears a girl's scream for help, in a room: in the room, a man is seen punching a girl in the face. The girl is covered with blood is heard crying for help. Her abductor continues to punch her repeatedly. He then picks an instrument that looks like an operating knife and uses it to slash her in the face and on her breasts. He drops the knife and

picks up a soldering iron, which was already plugged and is smoldering hot. He wields it in her face as she screams and begs him not to use it on her. Then he uses it on her eye, her eye is seen almost falling out of its socket, the girl's face is badly mutilated with one eye falling off. Josh breaks into the room and immediately shoots the man dead on the head, he then unties the girl and they both flee in a stolen car hotly pursued by the gangs.

Brutal Killings/Ruthless Beatings

Another acts of violence found out in the film are brutal killings and ruthless beatings. To kill someone or a living creature is to deprive the individual or creature of life. Brutal killing therefore, is to cause death by means of maximum force with the use of harmful objects, while beating is a physical act involving the use of the fist, legs and other objects to cause pain to someone.

In the film under study ("*The Hostel*"), characters are depicted using sticks, pipes, guns and other dangerous weapons to inflict maximum pain and death on their victims. An example is seen in the middle of the film when Paxton is tied to a chair and traumatically tortured. His abductor uses a broken glass to slash his throat killing him instantly and this is graphically depicted. Also when Josh is brought into the dungeon, a man is seen tied by the hands and forced to kneel down then another man is seen behind him wielding an axe. He then decapitates him, blood gushes out as the headless man finally falls.

Similar brutal attacks are seen in the sixty-eighth minute of the film when Josh escapes from his abductors and he spots Valla, Alexi and Slevtlana standing by the road-side, he now knows that the three of them are responsible for their abduction and then sets out for revenge. The three are standing by the road-side and oblivious of his presence, he drives on top speed

and crushes them to death. Their mangled bodies are seen flying in the air. He stamps on the breaks and the car comes to a screeching halt, he looks behind and notices that Valla is still alive, he then throws the gear into a reverse and crushes her to death.

Josh flees the scene, still pursued by his abductors who continue to fire shots at him, bullets are seen shattering the glasses and windscreens. He stumbles upon the “Bubble Gum Boys” who blocked the narrow path forcing Josh to stop. The gang is about to beat him up then he made them an offer; he pays them to help him stop the men pursuing him and they agreed. They allow him to pass and block the road forcing the men pursuing Josh to stop. The men are ambushed but cannot see the boys, then the gangs begin to pelt them with stones and bottles. The men who are four in number begin to shoot blindly but continue to miss their targets. Suddenly they run out of bullets and then the gangs emerge from their hideouts. All of them are holding different dangerous weapons like sticks, baseball bats, crowbars and iron rods.

The leader of the gang picks up a stone and throws it at one of the men hitting him on the head. This seems to be the signal that the gangs are waiting for. They all surge forward screaming insults at the men and hitting them with the weapons they had on them. One of the men had his head ripped open with a crowbar, another s stabbed in the throat, the other two are beaten to death with baseball bats and iron rods. This attack is extremely graphic and shocking because of the fact that it was perpetrated by young boys and the viciousness of the attack is graphically portrayed.

Josh is then seen still on the run to get to the train station, he makes a turn but finds himself in a traffic hold up. The police have set up a road block, Josh is afraid they might be looking for him. A police officer is seen dragging out a motorist from his car and the man is beaten with a police baton by two police men. They hit him hard repeatedly on the head and

stomach, the man breaks free from them and begins to run, and then one of the police officers brings out a gun and shoots the man at the back killing him instantly. At the sight of this, Josh panics and makes a 'U-turn' and speeds away towards another direction and he manages to reach a train station.

At the train station, the girl he earlier rescued sees her reflection in a mirror and realize how badly mutilated her face is. Josh tries to shield her from seeing her reflection but she pushes him aside. Suddenly, she screams and jumps into the path of an oncoming train. Her body is cut into pieces and by -standers are covered in her blood. Josh takes advantage of the commotion and boards a train to escape from the city. He stumbles upon the Dutchman who is on the prowl for new victims, he follows him to the toilet where he beats him up and slashes his throat with a broken bottle. An apparent reenactment of what the Dutchman did to Paxton.

Sexual Violence and Rape

Another act of violence found out in the film understudy is sexual violence and rape. Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence/force, coercion, or making unwanted sexual comments or advances. Any sort of unwanted sexual behavior that is imposed on someone is sexual violence. Sexual violence takes many forms including sexual harassment, verbal abuse, leering, and groping. It may also include threats, unwanted touch, incest, mutilation, ritual abuse and rape. Rape is a type of sexual violence or other forms of sexual penetration perpetrated against a person without that person`s consent.

Sexual violence is graphically depicted in the film under study. This can be seen in the beginning of the film at the club house where josh, Oli and Paxton are invited to by Valla. They are ushered into a room where a naked woman is seen tied to a bed and a man beats her

with a belt several times. She screams as the man gags her and then violently defiles her. It is pertinent to note that the woman is a willing participant in the act. This kind of masochistic act of sexual violence is premised on the needs of both the man and the woman who get sexual gratification from inflicting pain on one another.

Similar act of sexual assault is seen in the middle part of the film at the dungeon, a female captive is tied to an iron pole, she is naked and a man is beaten her, she is in pain and screaming for help then the man approaches her from behind and proceeds to sexually defile her, she screams bitterly and in an attempt to shut her up the man holds her in a chokehold, she gasps for breath as the man continues to assault her. As this act is in progress, another man is seen getting sexually aroused from watching the act.

Also in the dungeon a woman is gang-raped. She is naked and very scared for her life, she attempts to run but each attempt is met with a crushing blow on her face and stomach. Finally she collapses and a man proceeds to rape her while the other gang members cheer him on, her very battered and bloodied face is depicted throughout the ordeal.

Use of Vulgar Languages

There is a way language is depicted and one can see a vestige of violence in the deployment. Cases of linguistic violence include insult, intimidation, and shout, instances of curses, vulgarity or profanity. Others include use of offensive, unsavory, coarse, lewd, cursing and strong words to the debasement of someone or something. These words are more commonly referred to as “fighting words” and are generally used to incite hatred or instigate violence from their target.

In the film *'The Hostel'* words like 'fuck you' 'fuck off', 'bitch', (a name for a female dog but used derogatory for a woman), 'kiss my ass', 'motherfucker' were used repeatedly throughout the film. At the beginning of the film Josh, Oli and Paxton are seen in a club house, their accent immediately gives them out as Americans and the girls are excited to be with them. This infuriate the local guys in the club and they confront the three of them. They begin to hurl abusive words at each other. One of the locals calls Josh a 'fucking cunt' and told him to get his 'fucking American ass out of here'. Paxton refers to him as a 'cock sucking son of a bitch' and told him to 'go fuck yourself'. Josh refers to the Dutch girls in the club as 'skinny lazy ass bitches', they begin to fight and the bouncers in the club ask Josh and his friends to 'get the fuck out of the bar'. The three of them are thrown out, while they are outside Josh told the bouncers to 'kiss my American ass'.

While Paxton was in captivity the Dutch man repeatedly hurled insults at him. Every time Paxton pleads with him to please stop, the Dutch man screams at him to 'shut your cunt' or 'shut the fuck up'. As he inflicts pain on Paxton, Paxton will also scream obscenities such as 'mother fucker', 'you fucking bastard' and 'fuck you men'. Also while Josh is in captivity and being tortured by Juan, he uses obscene words like 'you fucker' and 'son of a bitch' repeatedly. At some point in his torture, Josh tells him that he is a 'fucking American' and that America will get 'your fucking Dutch ass for doing this'. The film is replete with obscene languages that have become a normal feature of American films and such vulgar expression can be found in the film under study from the beginning to the end.

This may not be strange words to Americans but film like this viewed by African audience is a different issue. Expressions or words and coinages deployed in this manner in

Africa are considered uncultured. It may create moral bankruptcy and debasement among youths.

4.4 Acts of Violence Portrayed in the Film “*The Last House on the Left*”

The second film chosen for this study is ‘*The last house on the left*’. This film also featured a number of violent acts which are treated below.

Rape and Sexual Assault

The gang kidnapped the two girls and flee with Mari's car to get out of town. While in the car Mari and Paige put up a resistance kicking and screaming and in the process, Krug loses control of the car and crashes into a tree in the bushes. Mari and Paige are dragged out of the car and subjected to severe blows and kicks on the stomach, ribs and faces. Justin refused to take part and this infuriates Krug, who drags him by the hair to Mari who is now badly beaten and lying on the ground. Krug then forces Justin to touch Mari on the breast and he tells him to be a man and rape her. Justin refuses, Krug then shoves him violently to the ground and he sits on Mari's stomach, tears her cloths exposing her breast which he begins to fondle as Mari tries to put up a fight.

Frances and Sadie join in with Sadie holding and punching Mari on her thighs repeatedly with her elbow, this weakens her legs. Krug then pulls her pants down and begins to rape her. Mari slaps him in the face and he replies with a crushing smack on her face. He punches her three more times and she could no longer put up any resistance. Sensitive female body parts such as breasts, thighs and buttocks are on display. In order to achieve the desired effect of shock and horror the scene depicts very close up shot of the rape, we see a close shot of Mari's face as she is being raped. Long shots are also used depicting a very graphic scene of

a rape in progress. The intensity of this rape scene is further heightened with the moaning of Krug as he rapes her. Sadie is also seen urging Krug to “feel the bitch”.

After the act, Mari bleeds from her private part, the only deduction that can be made is to assume she was a virgin, this sad fact is confirmed by John and Emma when they discovered the bartered body of Mari lying outside in the middle of a very heavy storm. This act of sexual assault is seen in the twenty-ninth minute of the film. In the manner with which nudity is portrayed little is left for the imagination due to its graphic depiction. In a rather long and graphically depicted scene, this act lasted for two minutes and forty five seconds.

Beatings and Fighting

The film, features a lot of fighting with the use of fists and other harmful objects. In the fifteenth minute of the film under study, Justin befriends Paige and Mari and invites them to their hotel room. Unfortunately the other gangs led by Krug suddenly walks into the room. Justin is bullied, pushed around and punched in the stomach and face by Krug for bringing Mari and Paige into their hotel room. Paige is held around the neck and threatened with a knife while Mari is physically restrained by Sadie, the girls are then robbed of their phones, money and clothing.

Paige breaks free and runs into the toilet, and locks the door. She is frightened and screams for help. Francis breaks the door, grabs her by the hair and slams Paige to the floor. He then hits her head against the bathtub then he drags her by her hair out of the toilet. He continues to kick her in the stomach as she lies helplessly on the floor. The gang decides it is no longer safe to remain in town and they decide to leave town believing it will not be safe for them to let Mari and Paige go, they hold them captive. While in the car Mari suddenly surprise

Frances by burning him with the cars cigarette lighter, a commotion then begins with the captured girls putting up a desperate attempt to cause the car to skid off the road. Krug loses control and the car runs into a tree .All the passengers are momentarily stunned.

Mari is the first to recover and she drags herself out of the mangled car and makes a run for it. Frances and Paige soon recover and pursue her. Sadie catches up with Mari and hits her from behind with a log of wood. Mari falls but continues to crawl. Frances then kicks her at the stomach and ribs, Sadie jumps on her and punches her on the face repeatedly. They then drag her by the hair back to Krug and the others.

A storm forces the gang to seek shelter, coincidentally they knock on a door which turns out to be the home of Mari. Emma and John let them in and even offer them accommodation at their guest house. The gang go to sleep, moments later John discovers the almost lifeless body of Mari outside in the rains with a gunshot wound on the back. They now know that the gang they have sheltered are responsible for their daughter's rape and torture. They decide to seek revenge.

First, Emma lures Francis out of his room and flirts with him. She seductively makes him believe they are about to have sex. She leads him down to the kitchen where John is waiting. The moment he is relaxed, John surprises him with a blow on the head with an iron rod. Francis's face bleeds but he quickly recovers and throws himself on John. He grabs John in a choke hold attempting to suffocate him. Emma quickly picks up the iron rod and hits Francis on the head. John then kicks him in the stomach and punches him in the face repeatedly until he could no longer put up a fight.

Similarly, at the sixty-seventh minutes of the film under study, John is seen walking into the main house as Krug hides upstairs and taunts him by telling him how he raped his daughter. John stealthily walks upstairs and Krug surprises him in the dark with crushing blows in the face. They both fight, exchanging blows and kicks on the stomachs, heads and legs. Krug then delivers a deadly uppercut which sends John crashing to the floor, he then slams him against the wall. John crawls in pain as Krug continues to kick him in the stomach. Krug then throws John off the stairs and he falls on a table. The fight continues with exchange of punches and blows to the bodies until John is able to demobilize Krug with a violent hit on the neck using an iron rod.

Brutal Killings

The film under study begins with a successful attempt by Frances and Sadie, who break Krug out of police custody by ramming their car into the car of the unsuspecting officers who were taking Krug to the police station. The hit stunned the officers momentarily giving Krug the opportunity to free himself, he then asphyxiates one of the police officers to death and kills the other officer with a shot on the head. This act of violence is seen in the fifty minute of the film. Also in the middle of the film, while Paige and Mari are in captivity with the gang, Krug begins to sexually harass Mari, Paige screams and curses him to stop. This infuriates Krug and he stabs her in the stomach. Frances joins him to stab her on the back and stomach. She falls to the ground bleeding profusely and she dies.

In the sixty-second minute of the film under study, Maris' parents embark on a revenge mission. First they attack Frances by stabbing him on the neck, blood is seen gushing out as he screams and drops dead. John then stealthily goes to Krug and Sadie's room both of whom are fast asleep. Justin hands them Krug's gun and steps aside, John fires at them but misses the

target, this enables Krug to jump through a window and escapes into the living room, leaving Sadie behind. Sadie then throws herself on John and a fight ensues, John stabs her with an iron rod at the back and finishes her with a point blank shot on the head. Her brains can be seen spilling out of her skull. Also at the end of the film after John successfully demobilizing Krug he then places him on the table and inserts his head into a micro wave oven and turns it on. Krug writhes in pain as the oven heats up, he screams till his head explodes in death.

Use of Vulgar Language

The use of vulgar languages and profanities is conspicuous in the film under study. While in the hotel, Krug holds Justin by the neck and calls him “fucking clitface” (a vulgar word for an idiot) and a “fucking ass bandit” (vulgar and insulting word for a homosexual) for bringing Mari and Paige into their hotel room. The frightened girls pleads with the gang to let them go, Krug screams at them to “shut the fuck-up”. Suddenly Paige punches Frances in the stomach and runs into the toilet and shuts the door. Frances screams at Paige to “open the fucking door”. He brakes the door down and he grabs her by the hair and calling her a “fucking cocksucker ...fucking fag hag” (a word for guys or bisexuals) and a “bitch”.

The gang decides it is no longer safe to stay in the town and they decide to make a run for it, taking Paige and Mari as hostage. While in the car, Francis is seen molesting Mari, she yells at him to “get your fucking hands off me”. Francis smiles and holds her by the neck and tells her to “shut your fucking mouth bitch”. Mari reaches for the car cigarette litter and burns Frances with it on the face he screams in pain shutting “you fucking bitch”. The ensuing commotion leads the car off the road and the car runs into a tree. Mari is the first to regain consciousness and makes a run for it but she is pursued by Sadie and Frances. Sadie catches up with her and grabs her by the hair screaming “you bitch, get your lazy ass back here”. Frances

soon emerges, he kicks her at the back and yells “fucking whore, God damn you” and kicks her repeatedly. They drag her back to the others and throw Mari at the feet of Krug who is very angry. He lifts her up by the hair and whispers in her ear, “you little whore, am gonna teach you a fucking lesson”. He begins to tear her cloths exposing her breast and then he goes and drags Justin over and forces him to touch her breast, Justin refuses and he yells at him calling him “a fucking faggot...touch her fucking breast, you little mother fucker”.

Krug then starts ripping off Maris cloths in an attempt to rape her, Mari screams at him, “God damn you...get your fucking hands off me”. As he rapes her he could be heard telling her to “stop fighting, it’s no use, am gonna have your apple pie...bitch”. Sadie is also actively involved, she holds Mari by the legs and urges Krug to “Fuck the bitch”. Mari screams in pain and Sadie screams at her to “shut the fuck up”.

A heavy storm approaches and the gang is forced to look for shelter in the woods. They coincidentally stumble upon a house and beg the occupants for shelter from the rains. Their host are Emma and John who are Maris parents. Oblivious of who they are and what they had done to their daughter, they offer the gang shelter for the night. Emma and John soon realize who they are and they decide to embark on a revenge mission. Frances is their first victim, Emma seduces him out of the room and he is attacked by John. Francis is surprised by the unprovoked attack first by Emma who stabs him with a kitchen knife. Frances screams at her “What the fuck are you doing, you fucking lunatic bitch”. He is immediately attacked by John who snuck behind and stabs him at the back”. Frances yells at them saying, “What the fuck are you guys fucking doing”. He continues to scream obscene words at them until he is finally killed. Emma and John then go after Krug and Sadie who are fast asleep. John aims a pistol at Krug but misses, this enables krug to jump through the window. Sadie jumps on John and

screams at him..."give me the fucking gun...you fucking asshole". She is finally killed with a point blank gunshot on the head.

At the end of the film understudy, Krug is seen in the couples living room still shocked why the seemingly nice couple attacked them. Then he stumbles upon the family picture and immediately recognizes Mari. Krug now knows who the couple is, so he screams out to John telling him that..."your little princess was quite a little piece of "axwound" (a vulgar word for a female genitalia). A very lengthy fight ensues between them with both using vulgar words such as "assface", "skullfuck", "mother fucker", and "fucking cocksucker" on each other.

4.5 Implications of the Films for Youths Moral Development

Beyond the personal reading of the films understudy, the researcher deployed interview and interactive group discussions techniques to generate data from the respondents on the issues under investigation. The films are screened before the selected students of Bida Polytechnic as earlier mentioned. The respondents watched the films under the facilitation of the researcher and quite an avalanche of data was generated on the issue of violence in the films and implication for the moral development of the youths. The respondents from the interview and Focus Group discussion formed by the researcher are not only enriching but revealing. Below is the summary of what the researcher gathered from the field.

Responding to the question whether they believe violent film such as "*The Hostel*" "could shape or influence a person's moral development. The first group of students observed the manner with which physical and psychological violence is portrayed and believe it has the potential to influence naïve and younger youths who expose themselves to such violent depictions. The second group of respondents also agreed and they observed that frequent

exposure to such films by impressionable youths may desensitize them to real life violence and this may affect their moral judgment when confronted with violent acts such as depicted in the film. The third group noted that in a society such as ours where younger children watch films like this in which very violent graphic acts such as mutilation and torture are depicted, such children they noted may believe violent acts like these are an acceptable part of life's caprices. The fourth group of repertoires also agreed that the film portrayed "real" violent acts, human suffering and sexual violence against women. The view of the group is that such depictions can be deleterious to children and youths who expose themselves excessively to such violent films. In the views of the four sets of Focus Group Discussants, exposure to violent films like these at a very young age may harden a youth and in turn pervert their development creating a generation of narcissistic psychopaths.

Indeed the researcher also believes that exposure to such physical and psychological violent acts could constitute a tragic pleasure for youths who expose themselves to such violent contents. The potential and effect of films on people is greatly underestimated in a country like Nigeria. This explains the reluctance of people to accept that such violent depiction on youths can shape their moral life. A male repertoire from the first group observed that,

It is not uncommon these days to see by-standers using their camera phones to video tape an accident scene. Instead of people to try to save the lives of people involved in accidents, they bring out their phones and either take still photographs or motion picture recordings. People are no longer moved when they see videos of human beings suffering (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 3rd of March 2014).

The researcher believes that the society is becoming desensitized to human pain and suffering creating a culture of violence voyeurism. This belief is further confirmed by a male respondent from the fourth group who stated that:

Youths now download and watch video recordings of bomb victims in the country and beheadings of victims by Boko Haram and other extremist group around the world who carry out such executions and these macabre footages are then circulated among friends and relatives. Youths these days take pleasure in watching images of people surfeiting or being killed'. (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 7th of March 2014).

Films like these could make people accept violence as just part of human nature. Indeed, such acts of violence are glorified and portrayed as a means to an end in films such as the "The Hostel". Depictions of violence such as mutilation and torture are featured severally in this film under study. Characters in the film take pleasure in inflicting harm on others, a world portrayed in this manner where people take pleasure in torturing other people for the joy of seeing them hurt may constitute for a youth, a tragic pleasure, especially if the person is already very prone to violence. Excessive exposure to films with such gratuitous violence may impair a youth moral development, the discussants from the first group noted.

Respondents from the second group also stated that, when violence is portrayed so graphically, youths who expose themselves to such films may accept violence as necessary and a way to resolve conflict, especially when such acts are portrayed with no consequence. Characters who are killed in the film have "relations" and the impact of their loss on their family and friends is downplayed in the film, in fact they noted that characters are just dispensed with in the films under study. The repertoires from the first group further observed

that, the use of objects like baseball bats, iron rods, sticks and other harmful instruments may be an attraction for youths exposed to such a film. Furthermore, respondents from the second group noted that the “Bubble Gum Boys” are a gang of kids/youths, reminiscent of street urchins or “Area Boys” who are very common in most Nigeria cities particularly, Lagos, Warri, Benin, Sapele and even Bida e.tc. Exposure to such films may provide models for Nigerian youths, pointing out that the violent acts of the “Bubble Boy Gums” are glamorized in the film and not only could that be attractive to a youth but the fact that there are no consequences for their actions may lead a youth to believe that it is also possible in real life. .

Conversely, there is a general consensus among the four sets of repertoires that, what people hear and see could influence them, especially youths, and for youths it may register in their sub-consciousness. Thus, it could be deduced that these violent acts as seen in the films under study may pervert a youth’s moral development and could be manifested in the long run with varying implication on the development of the youths and the society in general.

The researcher shares the view, this is because youths are still developing. Moral development is an ongoing process throughout a person’s life. However, as youths, they are in the age when they are highly susceptible to influences which shape their lives. This danger is further heightened in a society where parents are too busy to carry out their parenting responsibility fully. Youths are now conditioned to learn from other sources such as films

Repertoires from the first group observed the portrayal of violent sexual assaults in the films under study and they believe such depictions may influence a youth. A female respondent from the first group stated that:

A film like this that shows scenes of sexual attacks with no penalty (consequence), for the perpetrator is extremely dangerous for youths who expose themselves to it. If the person continuously view films with such depiction over time they may begin to think and believe it is possible for them to do the same and get away with it in real life (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 3rd of March 2014).

The researcher observed Sadomasochistic violence and lesbian acts which are alien to African culture but are becoming manifest in Nigerian youths. Exposure to films like “*The Hostel*” can pervert the mind of a youth who could be stimulated to take advantage of a younger or weaker victim. Respondents from the second group equally noted that sexual violence against women is on the increase as reported in the media. They noted that exposure to such films could prime a youth’s urge and the tendency of acting out becomes greater.

Respondents from the second group also observed that youths may not be able to control their sexual urges and repeated exposure to films with such contents will register in their subconscious and this may create a generation of sexual perverts and pedophiles. Also respondents from the third group were of the opinion that there seems to be very little value placed on women in our societies today and films like this simply magnify such portrayal of woman as sex objects. The fourth group also expressed similar views, stating that when young people expose themselves to films like these, their minds become preoccupied with sex and they become sexually active early in life. Female discussants in the groups were particularly vocal, pointing at the depiction of sensitive female body parts. They noted that as visual creatures, such graphic depiction registers in the subconscious and may stimulate a youth to want to experiment. A female respondent from the fourth group noted that young boys who expose themselves to films like these may be stimulated by them. She points to the recent high

rate of rape of women and even minors and concluded that films of this nature may pervert the moral development of youths when confronted with issues pertaining to the female gender.

The researcher agrees with her submission because normal parenting skills dictate that films with sexual contents be kept away from youths. This is because youths are in a stage where they are still coming to terms with their sexuality and are witnessing rapid changes in themselves. Excessive exposure to films with such sexual messages as seen in the film under study may pervert the youths' mind and prime sexual queues which may then escalate to rape and even sexual murder.

Responding to the use of Profanities and abusive languages in the film, "*The Hostel*", repertoires from the first group noted that such languages are portrayed as civilized and in vogue. Aside from using such languages as insults, it is also depicted as a normal way of talking. Youths today are already picking that up. Discussant from the third group noted that we see that a lot, especially among boys who use words like "fuck you," "bitch" to refer to girls. They feel it is cool but the implication is that they are viewed as outcast. Repertoires from the second group stated that profanities and abusive language are now common among students on campus, particularly among boys and such profane words are directed towards women. The researcher also believes American profanities are one of the most manifest influences on Nigerian youths who view films with such content. It has become an American pop-culture that is manifested among youths anywhere in the world and films of this nature may be a great influence.

Respondents from the third discussants group of discussion on the film "*The Hostel*" observed the use of drug and alcohol. They particularly observed the use of marijuana

otherwise known as “weed”. It is portrayed as a normal way of having fun. A male respondent observed thus:

I know students that are into drugs, particularly “indian hemp” and whenever they are high on the stuff even the slightest comment from anyone can provoke them. The film glorifies drug use and portrays it like something every young person should experiment with” (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 5th of March 2014).

Repertoires from the second group also observed the use of drugs and narcotics, they noted that alcohol and drugs is portrayed as a normal harmless pass time youths indulge in and they contend that this portrayal is misleading because according to them, narcotics such as “weed” trigger aggressive cues in people. Conversely, the researcher also observed that drug/alcohol is depicted as having no consequence, and this is a misconception. Aside the health implications, these substances may also inhibit the normal thinking processes of a person because it contains mind altering substances. Repertoires from the first group noted that youths who expose themselves repeatedly to films of this nature may be influenced.

Respondents from the first group of discussion on the film “*Last House on the Left*” stated that; the violent rape of Mari is intense, long and feels “real”. A female repertoire has this to say:

“I still cannot believe this is a film certified okay to be viewed by youths under the age of 18 years, even by American standard. It is too graphic and real. This film is completely unsuitable for youths. You can imagine a young person viewing this kind of rape scene. How

can the person not be stimulated?" (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 3rd of March 2014).

The researcher observed that the rape scene lasted for over two minutes, viewers can also hear Krug as he moans and groans with pleasure and the pain Mari endures. A youth may be stimulated by such violent sexual depiction and if given the opportunity it has the tendency to stimulate a person into sexual immorality and indecency such as masturbation, rape, homosexuality or lesbianism and sexual moral decay.

Concurring further, discussants in the second group were of the opinion that there is something conquering about violently forcing a girl against her will or wish. We see the satisfaction in the eyes of Krug (rapist) as shown in the film. This could register in the mind of a naïve youth and may stimulate a young person. If given the opportunity, there is the tendency that they may act on that feeling especially with a younger girl whom they can physically subdue. Repertoires from the third group also commented on the rape scene stating that, watching the rape scene felt too graphic and uncomfortable due to the depiction of sensitive female body parts that can sexually stimulate a person, for instance Mari's breasts, thighs and buttocks were depicted, they noted that anyone not just an adolescent will be stimulated. Discussants from the fourth group observed that rape cases are now on the increase mainly at the off-campus residents. A female repertoire observed that;

Rapists around the off-campus residents are usually cultists who may have an axe to grind with their victims. However there have been cases where the perpetrator is not a cultist and is well known to the victim, they may even be friends. Films like these may cause an individual to lose his senses and become a rapist when he can no longer control their sexual urge" (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 7th of March 2014).

Consequently, discussants from the second group also noted that the rape of little kids and minors, and more worrisome incest, is very common and on the increase as reported in the media. This could be a possible manifestation of such depicted reality as reflected in the film.

Although it is pertinent to point out that film is not the only factor that shapes a person's moral life because there are other agents within the human environment that converge to shape the moral life a person. However from the responses from both groups of repertoires it is obvious that film is a very important agent because they noted that youths can view sexually stimulating contents as depicted in the film from the private of their rooms. Again female discussants from all the groups were more vocal in condemning such portrayal. They noted that the effect of rape is extremely devastating on the victim and which may last for life. A female repertoire from the third group believes that boys who view films with this kind of content may be stimulated sexually and any available girl they can subdue may be a victim.

The researcher viewed a series programmed on the Dstv cable network known as "*Crime Investigation*" in which the life and crimes of notorious criminals are profiled. One of such notorious female serial killers in American history known as Ted Bundy was aired. He terrorized the streets of New York for more than two decades in the seventies raping and killing women and somehow managed to evade the police for twenty years. Under psychological evaluation he confessed to have been influenced by films that depicted violent and sadistic rape of women he watched while growing up. Ted Bundy raped and murdered over eighty seven women and that is a conservative estimate given by the police. Ted himself said he murdered and raped over one hundred women. Discussants from both groups noted that films with such sexual contents may have dire consequences for the socio-moral development of youths who expose themselves to such images.

Repertoires from the first group also observed the graphic nature of the beatings depicted in the film under study. They believed that it may stimulate violent aggressive cues in a young person's mind. According to them when someone watches films like these which make it look as though one can get away with such act, this may send the wrong message to the youth. For instance, physical combats are portrayed as a means of resolving disputes and even an act of heroism, which is what the film suggests. Discussants from the second group observed that the implication of watching films of this nature is that it could make youths believe that they may use violence as a means of achieving their goal. Repertoires from the third group also observed that the beatings felt real, as they viewed the beatings they could not help but cringe and coil with fear for the victims under attacks. People particularly youths resort to violence, because films like this legitimize and even moralize violence. In fact, this has become a real issues in our society. A male repertoire stated that:

In the film there is no attempt to provide an alternative to resolving conflicts as violence is portrayed as the only viable means. This sort of message could make youths believe that violence as a means of conflict resolution is acceptable and justified, I think violence is never a justified way of resolving conflict situations”(Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 8th of March 2014).

The researcher observes that youths now believe it is morally okay under some certain circumstances to use violent force in conflict situations. A typical example is students' protests in Nigerian higher institutions, even though their demands are legitimate they often resort to violence to press home their demands.

Discussants from the first group also noted the graphic nature of the brutal killings; they believed that it may stimulate violent aggressive cues in a young person's mind. When

someone watches films that make it look as though one can get away with such acts, it may send the wrong message to the youth. For instance the murder or physical attack of person or persons who may have bitterly wronged another person could be seen to be morally okay. Which is what the film suggests as portrayed by the actions of Mari's parents, who embark on a reckless revenge mission against Krug and his gang which is tantamount to putting laws into their hands. Discussants from the second group observed that, Mari's parents went on a revenge mission and as viewers, we agree and even support their actions, because we can understand their pain and anger but we also know that their action is wrong. A female respondent in the same group has this to say,

I am happy the gang got what they deserved but like already observed, it still does not make the use of violent actions the right answer. The violent acts by Mari's parents are portrayed as a justified act and even heroic and as viewers we accept that to be true and even cheer them on. However, the dangers inherent in going after career criminals are underplayed. This is completely misleading..... (Focus Group Discussion held with Bida Polytechnic students on the 3rd of March 2014).

Repertoires from the third group observed that such wrong notion of conflict resolution may register in the mind of youths who may then accept violence as a justified means of resolving conflict. Discussants from the fourth group also noted that characters that are killed in the film have friends and family and the impact of their death will be devastating to them. However the film does not show us that, instead they are just killed and the killer moves on without suffering any consequences. This sort of portrayal is deceptive and could influence a youth to believe a replication of such acts in real life is possible.

The researcher is an avid follower of American films and has consistently noticed the trend of portraying the so called “justified” violence. This is violence in retaliation and it is often carried out by the protagonist or hero in the film as depicted in the “*Last House on The Left*”. The message that films such as this send is that such acts of violence motivated by revenge is morally okay, this is a dangerous message.

Repertoires from the first group who viewed the film “*Last House on the Left*” observed the use of obscene language which they say are gradually manifesting in Nigeria youths and that exposure to violent films among other factors may be a stimulant for youths. A female respondent observed that such use of profane languages is portrayed as the vogue and youths are quick to accept and use what’s in vogue. Furthermore repertoires from the third group noted that boys are more prone to use such uncouth words more than girls as can be noticed around them.

The researcher observed a human instinct called voyeurism. We are naturally curious and enjoy watching others act out violence or sexual acts. Also violence in films has entertainment value, violence and immoral contents sell and film producers are aware of this and they will continue to portray violence in films. The researcher is of the opinion that violence and immoral portrayals in films is here to stay, it has become part of the entertainment spectacle. In Hollywood films there seem to be an attempt at aestheticizing violence. Violence, a common term referring to cruelty and danger, is admired by people as an anesthetization of violence (also known as beauty of violence). The use of violence as art is not new, back in the Stone Age, many wall paintings that depict violent activities such as hunting have been preserved which review the people’s lives at that time. The anesthetization of violence in high culture art or mass media is the depiction of or reference to violence in what Indiana University

Film studies professor calls a “stylistic excessive” “significant and sustained way”. When violence is depicted in this fashion in films, television shows, and other media, Burder argues that audience members are able to connect reference from the “play of images and signs” to artworks, genre conventions, cultural symbols, or concepts. In 1991, university of Georgia professor of literature Joel Black stated that “If any human act evokes the aesthetic experience of the sublime, certainly it is the act of torture and murder”. In other words if murder and pain can be experienced aesthetically, the murderer can in turn be regarded as a kind of artist, a performance artist or anti-artist whose specialty is not creation but destruction.

Basically the anesthetization of violence improves stylistic violent actions and sceneries and evolves them into artistic form such as dances and paintings. In John Woo’s film “*Hard Target*”, Jean Claude Van Damme’s character takes on seven men who are in the process of attacking a woman. In less than a minute’s worth of the film, he kicks two men in the face, he trips a fellow and then uses that man’s foot to kick someone else, he breaks a beer bottle over a guy’s head and then shoves him forehead first into an iron hitching post, he ducks a kick landing his attacker flat on his back on the pavement, he punches a fellow in the stomach and then sends him flying through a plate glass window, and to finish things off, he breaks a man’s arm over his shoulder before shoving him to the ground.

In fact the whole of “*Hard Target*” and other films like it, illustrate the point at the aestheticization of violence. Violence in the media is beautified. In that violent images encourage us to take pleasure in spectacular representations of other peoples pain, our fascination with them may be difficult to justify. According to Hammerman (2004), one of the industry’s attraction to violence is that violence “travels well...”. Despite the commercial appeal of film violence, very few critics tend to fall into two categories on the subject. Those

critics who see film violence as style, as superficial and exploitative, argue that it leads us to a “desensitization to brutality” and thereby increases aggressiveness. Those who view it as content, as theme, claim it serves a “cathartic or dissipating effect...., providing acceptable outlets for antisocial impulses” (Atkins, 2005).

The researcher observed that violence is celebrated in Hollywood films and there seems to be an attraction to violence by people, particularly youths. Youths who view films like “*The Hostel*” and “*Last House on the Left*”, expose themselves to a world of unconscious moral learning, which is subtle and unnoticed. More worrisome are films that portray “justified” acts of violence. This sort of violent portrayals moralize violence and youths who expose themselves to films like that will “learn” that such acts of violence are accepted, especially when such acts of violence are carried out by characters they admire. The idea that violence can be used to achieve a goal or settle a score and the victor simply walks away is completely dangerous and misleading. The researcher is of the view that violence in films should be avoided or minimized. When violence becomes part of a film's narrative it should be portrayed with consequences. Consequences that point to the implications of violence not just for the individual but the society in general.

The theme of violence in this study is further reinforced in the researcher's in-depth interview held with a media practitioner/film producer in Abuja. . In response to a question, how concrete is the evidence that films can stimulate a person to violent acts? He replied that;

Yes of course, many studies and reports have provided empirical evidence pointing to the fact that when people are exposing themselves to a violent portrayal over and over again they carry the image in their sub consciousness so that the probability of acting out what they

have watched becomes high especially for youngsters”. (Interview with Umar Katun held at the Abuja Broadcasting Corporation on 10th of May 2014)

Also responding to the same question, in an interview conducted in Kano with a Director of Communication of the Nigeria Film and Video Censor Board (N.F.V.C.B) it was revealed that,

“There is a possibility for films to stimulate and influence a person. Youths are impressionable and are attracted by what they see. If we agree that youths copy the mannerism of footballers they watch, like the way footballers behave when they score goals. In the same way too, it is possible for films to influence someone” (Interview with MallamYunusaTanko conducted in Kano on the 27th of April 2014)

Furthermore, the media practitioner/film producer opined that, violence is a human behavior that can be learnt and Hollywood films are the primary means through which American culture is sold to the world and the American way of life becomes a big attraction to youngsters. The implication is that issues portrayed including violence in films, are expected to impact on people who watch them.

Reacting to the question whether films (Hollywood) could shape an individual’s moral development, the Director General insisted on treading with caution, he stated that, when we talk of the influence of violent films on the moral development and conduct of the Nigerian youths we have not had incidences where students walk into schools and start shooting like we have in America, some of which have actually been linked to violent portrayal in films, but we cannot deny the possibility that such influences may exist be they from Hollywood or any other film industry. We still have to tread with caution because such argument may be culture

specific and subjective. The researcher then pointed out the incidence of cult activities in Nigerian higher institutions and asked if exposure to violent Hollywood films may be a contributing factor to such violent acts: The Director noted that, indeed cultists have existed in our institutions for long and we know the kind of terror they unleash on students and even lecturers in and outside the school environment. However it will be impossible to say that these cult activities and violence are caused as a result of exposure to violent films. Though, since many factors converge to shape a person's development, we cannot completely deny its influence.

Reacting to this assertion that cultural differences between African and American society are a factor that cannot be ignored in media effects especially as it relates to violence, the Media practitioner maintained that;

“Violence is not culture bound”, and Hollywood films have tremendous impact on youths not just in Nigeria but anywhere in the world and seventy percent of our moral stance on issues is influenced by the media such as films” (Interview with Umar Katun held at the Abuja Broadcasting Corporation on 10th of May 2014).

He said further that morality does not just jump into people; it is shaped and reshaped as we grow up, by many factors, therefore a factor like film is a powerful medium that may influence a person's moral judgment and development. Parents teach children about what is right and wrong but that is just basic moral knowledge, when youths are now faced with ethical dilemmas as regard issues such as violence they may likely accept the portrayal of violence as seen in the media like films particularly when such violent acts portrayed in films are carried out by a character they admire who may be for them a role model.

The Director maintained that, there is no direct proof to link a crime or violent act by youths to exposure to violent films alone in Nigeria. Advancing his argument further, he stated that, Nigeria Film and Video Censor Board (N.F.V.C.B) does not have any record nor does the Nigerian police, or any empirical studies commissioned by the body or any other body proving that exposure to violent films have led to any crime or aggressive behavior. However, he noted that the NFVCB is working on different levels to collate real data of issues that exposure to these foreign or local films could cause or has caused on impressionable youths.

The media practitioner/producer expressed concern that the effect of Films on youths' moral development is still not taken very serious in Nigeria, he noted that,

It is sad that we are waiting for the “Smoking gun” and that will be too late. Parents must begin to pay attention to what their kids watch so that as youths when they leave home for school, they are able to make good moral choices, and that the N.F.V.C.B needs to do more”.(Interview with Umar Katun held at the Abuja Broadcasting Corporation on 10th of May 2014).

Reacting to this assertion, the Director stated clearly that; the N.F.V.C.B is constrained by so many factors to control the influx of foreign films into the Nigerian market, some of which include personnel, finance, protection and many more .He pointed out that; Ninety percent of Hollywood films are pirated, run by very powerful syndicates. NFVCB does not have the capacity to go after them. If we try to stop them, it turns political, in other words there is no political will to stop or control the influx of Hollywood films.

He however noted that, the board is doing its best by conducting raids to seize pirated copies of films that have by-passed the board. He stressed that, the normal procedure is for the

board to first screen a film. An American film for instance, may have a 12 or 15 rating but if we view the film and discover some adult themes or too much violent content, we might give it a PG, (Parental Guidance) or RE, (Restricted). Also we conduct sensitization workshop in schools and public places. We also give public lecture on the potential influence of films on people and other related issues. He rounded up on a cautionary note; many factors converge to shape the moral life and behavior of a person and accepted that the film and media in general are just one of them. While the media practitioner concluded by saying that the future of any country depends on the youths and their overall development is important. Youths should therefore guide themselves against harmful contents in films, “you are what you watch”. He concluded

Additionally an interview was also conducted with a non-governmental organization known as “Barack Youths Solidarity”. This is in order to get data from those who work with troubled youths and to find out if violent films have been identified as one of the factors that may trigger violent behavior in a youth.

The spokesman of the organization Mr. Shock Godwin noted that, the organization was set up in the year 1994 and that the aim of the organization is “to meet the overall needs of youths who have made wrong choices in life and have become outcasts. We have young boys and girls who are drug addicts, alcohol addicts, sex addicts, and youths with extreme anger issues who resort to violent behavior: Youths who have been incarcerated and need to be reformed or rehabilitated so as to allow them lead a meaningful life”, he stated.

Responding to the question on the factors that have been identified that can lead a youth to develop violent and criminal tendencies, he stated that, there are a lot of factors that shape a person’s life, the family, peer group, environment and even role models and the media. In the

twenty-first century, the media especially film plays a very major role in shaping youths. Remember that the media has shifted from the conventional way we know it to be, (radio, television, and newspapers) we are now in a new age, the age of the social media with high speed internet connectivity.

He went on to say that, the implication of the above is that nine out of ten youths on the street have a mobile phone which may have an internet connectivity. This means that youths can now sit in their rooms and download anything that they want to watch. When youths are brought to us either by their parents or guardians we usually confiscate their phones and one will be shocked at the content of the phones.

“We have seen real life gang rapes, street fights, and cult initiation activities, excerpts of clips from films that depict such acts as rape, explicit and sexually stimulating music videos and even pornography. The recent trend is video clips of actual terrorist violent activities such as beheadings as well as videos of the victims of bomb blasts. This trend of acceptance of violent acts is what is known as desensitization” (Interview with Shock Godwin conducted in Kaduna on the 6th of June 2014).

The spokesman noted that Studies have proven that since the advent of smart phones with internet connectivity, there has been an increase in the perversion of the sense of dignity, decency and respect for people. Young people have now become insensitive to victims of war or natural disasters, this is what you may call desensitization as a result of excessive exposure to violent films. For example when the *Sosoliso* Airline crashed in Lagos some years ago and passengers were engulfed by fire young men and women spent time taking pictures of the incident instead of offering assistance.

Furthermore he stated that Youths now place nude and unclad pictures of themselves on the internet with the intension of gaining popularity and increase their social profile. Attitudes like these are often a direct fall out of viewing films that glorify and portray such acts as normal and a civilized conduct which youths imitate not just in Nigeria but all around the world, I think there is an erosion of African values, morals and norms by western imperialism and the West sells their cultures and ways of life primarily through films. It is so covert but very effective.

Responding to the question on whether violent films have been identified as a factor that may influence a youth to exhibit deviant behaviors, he asserted that:

When a question like this is asked, people expect a yes or no answer but it's not that simple because a lot of factors converge to shape an individual. In this twenty first century one cannot rule the influence of films out completely. (Interview with Shock Godwin conducted in Kaduna on the 6th of June 2014).

He further stated that, we have worked with youths who were influenced by music and films. Like I earlier stated we often see excerpts of violent films from Hollywood and even the Nigerian film industry that depict one form of violence or the other in the phones of youths we have worked with. When we talk about manifestation of deviant or criminal behavior in youths, it is very difficult to pin its influence to one single factor, however there is no doubt that violent films can lead a youth to develop aggressive behavior and this has been established by researchers in the United States and Europe.

He also noted that, Nigeria is not like Europe and America where issues like these have been identified as a potential factor that can influence a person and legislative laws have been

passed to halt or slow its effect on youths. Responding to the question if violent films may shape a youths moral development; he stated that, there is a growing number of researches pointing to this fact, but because we live in a society that is still developing we are yet to fully understand the impact that violent films with immoral and sexual messages are having on youths. From an early age, youths are now exposed to films that depict violent materials and because they are still in the formative years of their lives they may fall victim to these false representation of life as portrayed in films.

Society has always been concerned about the effect of media on people, especially the negative effects. Since A.D. 300, there have been book burnings, banning of books and even the prosecution of authors and playwrights. Then they were afraid of how people will react to the dangerous sexual/amoral content in some books. Plato for instance, banished all story tellers from his imagined republic because listeners or viewers could, he thought admire and imitate characters bad behaviors.

According to an article from the Ecologist, “films and other media are likely.... often root cause... of the problems we face in the world today. (Edwards 2009). Film is also assumed to lead to a decline of moral, virtues and values (Wilson 2008). Researchers have written widely on how films affect youth’s behavior both pro-social and antisocial.

According to Berns (2004,) films are a very important agents that influence a person’s moral development because it reveals many aspects of the society and elicits cognitive responses in persons that affect their understanding of the world. Films depict relationship between people in different settings, thus providing youths with models of how to behave or interact in similar situation which influences their moral behavior. According to Hart and Carol

(2005), films provide additional unique and significant socializing experience that cannot be underestimated.

However, despite the negative value embedded in Hollywood films, films can have pro-social effects on youths such as improving literacy levels, educational and religious values. Films can provide youths with access to novel moral information and they are also capable of creating and promoting their moral beliefs and actions towards others. Violent Hollywood films like the *'The Last House on the Left'* depict human courage, resilience, perseverance and love. Mari survives her ordeal against all odds, these are qualities that viewers can learn and imbibe. Also In the film *'The Hostel'* Josh's courage and bravery lead him out of the dungeon alive. Hollywood stories and story writers are very creative; the quality of acting is also not in doubt as they parade some of the most gifted actors.

The cinematography and special effects are often ground breaking bringing about the best in Hollywood film industry. There is no doubt that Hollywood films can tell very powerful stories, with themes that cut across culture, ethnicity, religion and region. Youths can learn a lot from these stories and films. Bandura (2005; 2) mentions that youths acquire attitudes, emotional responses and new styles of conduct through filmed modeling. In addition, Fulcher and Scot (2003) state that films mold character of youths more than we think; in fact it is grossly underestimated.

Films depict slices of life that may otherwise be hidden to youths which could be considered as antisocial, such as crimes, promiscuous sexual behavior, substance abuse, use of physical force to achieve a goal, as depicted in both films. Watkins (2007) advises that people should discuss openly with youths to share concerns or correct misconceptions. Films can depict values that are in conflict with the values that parents communicate to their youths.

Films also moralize and justify violence and brutal acts. Films portray a hedonistic entertainment where youths are exposed to an unreal world to which one can escape and be entertained.

According to Bushman and Anderson, (1995) violence is popular in many Hollywood films, the attitudes of physical violence, sex and drug portrayal are obvious examples of unconscious moral learning that may present serious problems for the moral development of youths, and moral development is a universal phenomenon. According to Coicaud and Warner (2003), morality comprises an evaluation of what is good and bad in absolute terms. It comprises praise of what is good and condemnation of what is bad. Morality is thus related to values.

DuRant (1993) emphasizes that without morality neither the society nor the individual can feel secure to ultimately develop and survive. He further states that the principles that define morality include fairness, justice, freedom, and the principle of knowing what is right from wrong. Berkowitz (2003) mentioned that moral development is important ingredient in self-development and the acquisition of values.

Krener and Curtis (2002) conducted a study on youth's moral conception of right and wrong. Youths were divided into groups. One group watched a film where an argument resulted in violence while the other group watched a film in which the conflicting parties simply walked away, and the other group watched no film at all. The experiment revealed that those who watched the violent film judged the violence as morally acceptable because it was perceived as a "justified" act of violence in retaliation. In other words, excessive viewing of such acts of violence as depicted in the film the "last house on the left" can alter an

individual's views about the acceptability of violence and anti-social acts and hinder the development of their moral reasoning.

Bushman and Anderson (2001: 223-254) in their study, gave several reasons why youth are especially susceptible to the effect of violent films. According to them, youths are more susceptible to be influenced by film violence, and the evidence about the effects of film violence has accumulated over decades. Meta-analyses which statistically combine all the findings in a particular area, demonstrate that there is a consensus on the negative effects of film violence.

In another study by Bushman and Anderson (2001) it shows that exposure to heavy film violence between the ages of 11 and 17 predicts antisocial behavior as a youth or adult. In this study, both males and females who were heavy film violence viewers as youths were significantly more likely to engage in serious physical aggression and criminal behavior later in life.

Berkowitz (1993) posits that some violent representations in film can produce “a complex psychological and emotional response in the spectator, who has little choice, but to analyze, reflect upon even appreciate what he or she would normally despise, disavow or deny”. In viewing violent images we enjoy the fact that we immerse ourselves in taboo issues or something we would normally consider inappropriate, but this enjoyment or pleasure may be highly complex and fraught with dangers. It may be self-evident but it's critical that there needs to be a degree of awareness that what is shown is not “real”. There is a trend in film to represent violence in increasingly realistic ways, but it is necessary to assume that viewers are aware that cinematic violence is a fictional representation. As such viewers are expecting to be entertained and this renders them willing to enjoy the violence, we are aware of our status as a

viewer which enables us to be taken in by dramatic violence... “Attraction is enhanced by the viewer’s willing suspension of disbelief” (Blasi 1980) which is a requirement for a viewer to enjoy the violence.

Conversely, Anderson et. al (2003), arrived at three main conclusion that: Hollywood film content is heavily saturated with violence; youths are spending more and more time exposed to violent content and overall; the evidence supports the hypothesis that the viewing of violent entertainment increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior.

Groebel (1998: 155-180), reporting on a global survey of violence on films, UNESCO involving 5, 000 youths in 23 countries, commented on the universality of film violence and on the widespread fascination with aggressive film hero figures, especially amongst boys. For instance, he found out that 88% of the world’s youths knew Arnold Schwarzenegger’s “Terminator”, Bruce Willis ‘*DieHard*’ and Sylvester Stallone ‘*Rambo*’ all of these Hollywood movies are extremely violent (1998: 182).

Huesmman et al (1999), reported in his study that youths who watched violent films from the ages of 14 to 20 years old, were 60 percent more likely to be involved in assaults and fights as adults than those who watched less violent films. In addition, Anderson and Bushman (2001) found a link between exposure to anti-social elements like, drug and violent acts and aggression and possible manifestation of aggression in youths. Frequent exposure to violent films like ‘*The Hostel*’ and ‘*The Last House on the Left*’ may give rise to juvenile delinquency and antisocial offensive behavior e.g. property damage, violence, drug abuse, truancy and sexual offences.

Violent films are often easy to market anywhere in the world. In the Nigerian case, youths may not understand the content; rather they just see the violence, aggression, anti-social acts and even criminal behavior which are glamorized. There is the need to be proactively and consciously awake to the challenges that violent films pose to the upbringing and overall development of youths in the family setup of the society. The responsibility of making sure that youths are protected from unwholesome viewing of filmic contents lies majorly with the parents and other relevant agencies of governments that need to be awakened to the challenge that the family is faced with in properly nurturing their youths in a more moral way that would have a positive effect on the society's development as a whole.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

There is no gainsaying the fact that the issue of youths moral upbringing is now taking the center stage of most family discussion in view of the proliferation of globalized mass media broadcast from the western countries into our society. More so, with the ease and affordability of the movie players and discs as well as the free-to-air broadcast service enabled by the Direct Broadcast Satellite-DBS in most homes and with the increasing internet patronage by children and teenagers as well as availability of mobile phones with internet connectivity, there is the need to undertake a study of this nature to empirically find out the extent to which exposure to violent films can influence youth and teenagers moral perception and development.

5.1 Summary

This study has been able to investigate the Hollywood films within the context of moral development of youths in Nigeria. It has been able to review extensively literatures with regards to the effect of violent media on youths and based its theoretical framework on the Albert Bandura's Social or Observational Learning paradigm propounded in 1983. The study also looked into two selected violent Hollywood films '*The Hostel*' and '*The Last House on the Left*' to actually spotlight evidence of the increasing portrayal of violence in Hollywood films. Youths were also exposed to the films, which was then followed by discussions to know what influence such films could have on them. Key stakeholders were also interviewed to get their opinions on the influence of violent films on youths.

5.2 The Study Major Findings

The following are the major findings of the study

- (a) Based on the personal reading of the films the researcher is able to establish that Hollywood films portray graphic violence as well as sexual violence.
- (b) Excessive exposure to such violent films by a youth has the potential to influence a youth to accept violence as an acceptable way of resolving conflict especially when the violence is portrayed to be justified and with no consequences.
- (c) Youths are still in active development and exposure to films like this may pervert their moral development which may lead to, physical violence, use of object to cause pain on others, sexual violence, masturbation, use of hard drugs and other moral perversions.
- (d) Youths are of the opinion that exposure to such films may constitute unconscious moral learning which may pervert their moral development with dire consequences.
- (e) Expert opinion from the filed also gives weight to the opinion express by the researcher and the youths. In their various views, exposure to violent films early in the life of a youth is a predicator to exhibition of aggression later in life.

5.3 Suggestions

In view of the above findings, the study suggests the following:

Suggestions for Parents

1. Parents should become more aware of the risks associated with viewing violence in films and learning of aggression and its implications for people's moral development.
2. Talk with youths about the risk factors associated with violent films and teach them about alternatives to the use of violence.

3. Explain the true consequences of violence and point out how unrealistic it is for people to get away with violent behavior.
4. Teach youths how to use words responsibly to stand up for themselves without being abusive or throwing punches.
5. Demonstrate to youths through words and action that violence is never an acceptable form of behavior
6. Parents should as a matter of responsibility inculcate high moral values in their wards, so that even when they leave home, they are able to make informed and healthy choices about what they watch.

Suggestions for Films Producers

1. Producers should make more movies that avoid violence or establish anti-violent themes and if they choose to employ a violent narrative, they should keep the incidents of violence limited.
2. Producers should be more considerate in their portrayal of violent acts by explicitly depicting negative consequences of using violence and punishing characters for their use of or involvement in violence.
3. Producers should seek alternatives to the use of techniques that enhance the duration of violent scenes or the graphic nature of the violence.
4. Producers should consider the overall message they are sending to viewers in violent narratives and employ less justification for violent characters that are rewarded for their behaviours.

Suggestions for Youths

1. Youths should understand that movies are entertainment and that characters are role playing under professional supervision.
2. Everything that youths watch impact on them somehow, and therefore should avoid watching movies with too much violence and sexually explicit content.
3. Youths should always think about the consequences of their action. For example, hitting someone too hard may result to injury or death.
4. Youths should be assertive, not aggressive.
5. Youths should use more acceptable way of responding to conflict situations rather than the use of the fist, threat or weapons.

Suggestions for Governmental Agencies

1. The Nigerian Films and Video Censors' Board-NFVCB should be strengthened to intensify its effort in grading and rating of films fit for teenage viewing such that they are devoid of violent and immoral contents.
2. The Nigerian Broadcast Commission-NBC should make all satellite bouquet operating in the country to regulate and control their content especially those meant for teenage viewing before it is broadcast.
3. The Nigerian Film and Video Censor Board (N.F.V.C.B) needs to conduct a research to identify more clearly where Nigeria audience draw the line in terms of perceived harm and acceptability of depiction of physical violence in any film industry.
4. Most Hollywood films are available as pirated copies. N.F.V.C.B should do more to check the activities of pirates.
5. More sensitization workshops should be carried out for youths on the implications of viewing violent materials for their moral development.

5.4 Conclusion

From the findings of this study on the implication of exposure to violent films for the moral development of youths, it was discovered that, the films screened portrayed physical, mental as well as psychological violence. It also featured sexual violence like rape. Research has also shown that 80% of Hollywood films contain one form of violent act. The study also discovered that youths who expose themselves to violent films are not oblivious of the unconscious moral learning they inculcate. Particular when violence is portrayed as 'justified' as portrayed in both films screened. The subliminal message been seen is that people can use violence as a means of solving problems or conflict resolutions. This type of message is completely wrong and dangerous for the moral development of a youth.

The study also discovered that exposure to violent films could pervert the mind of a youth leading to immoral acts such as lesbianism, rape, masochism, bestiality, masturbation and other immoral pervasions. Findings from the participatory group discussions with the students

Violence exhibitions in our society today by children and teenagers have become a source of worry not only to parents who are saddled with their moral upbringing but the society as a whole which is on the receiving end of the violence. It could be agreed that children do not know the nature and extend of the influence of violence on their mental and psychological development as such most of them think it is fun watching such violent and unwholesome acts and actions.

The submission of this study is that parents are really losing their traditional roles in teaching and inculcating positive family and societal values on our youths as well as their ability to correct and control them. Furthermore, the study discovered that the lack of effective control of the mass media space by relevant agencies as a contributory factor to the influx of violent media content into the country. It could be surmise here that the study found out that the exposure by youths to violent and unwholesome films and mass media content invariably harms their moral upbringing.

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Mohammed, J. A. (2001). *Impact Study of Hollywood on Students of Main Campus Ahmadu Bello University Zaria* Thesis submitted to A.B.U Zaria in partial fulfillment of the award of masters of Development Communication.

ORAL INTERVIEW

Tanko, Y. (2014) Oral Interview. Minna: Nigeria Film and Video Censor Board.

Umar, K. (2014) Oral interview. Abuja: Abuja Broadcasting Corporation

Shok, G. (2014) Oral interview. Spokes person 'Baracks for Youths'

APPENDIX 1
SELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION:

Good day my name is ----- I am a post graduate student of Development Communication in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. I am selecting group members for group discussion on a topical issue. I would be happy if you kindly allow me interview you for a few minutes.

BIODATA

Name -----

Sex -----

Religion-----

Tribe -----

Language -----

Department -----

Q1) Have you ever attended a group discussion on the effect of exposure to violent films for a youth?

Yes () No () Please tick

Enumerator Note: If Yes, ask Q2 if No, go to Q3

Q2) Do you think watching violent film as an effect on how people behave in the real world?

Fill -----

Q3) Are you aware of the dangers of watching violent and sexually explicit films?

Yes () No () Please tick

Q4) Do you think youths and parents are aware of the negative effects of watching violent films

Yes () No () Please tick

Q5) would you like to contribute your views on the effects and implications of watching violent and explicit films on youths

Yes () No () Please tick

RESPONSE SUMMARY

QUESTIONS	Q3	Q4	Q5	
FAVOURABLE	Y	N	Y	Enlist respondents as part of the discussants and give slip
UNFAVOURABLE	N	Y	N	

NOTE: Y. N. Y stands for Yes, No, Yes

N. Y. N stands for No, Yes, No

V) PARTICIPANT TICKET

Mr. /Mal/Miss/Mrs. ----- is

The discussant No----- for the Participatory Group Discussion.

Meeting Date: -----

Venue: -----

Time: -----

APPENDIX 2

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

CATEGORY A: ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

To understand the effect of watching violent films on the moral Development of youths.

To expose the participants to two selected violent Hollywood Films.

To provoke discussions through questions and probe that would lead to the exposure of the impact and manifestation of violent acts by youths expose to such violent films.

To facilitate discussions that would expose suggestions on ways to tackle the negative effects of violent films on youths.

CATEGORY B: DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK

a) Introduction:

The facilitator introduces himself/ herself and ask each member to say their name and department .The facilitator continues by explaining the purpose of the discussion (moral implication of watching violent films).Facilitator then explains the concept of morality and its importance for the youth and society at large.

Ground rules

Everybody's opinion is to be heard and respected.

There is no excellent or poor response.

Everybody can speak for a stipulated period of time.

Responses should be made one at a time.

B) In-depth Questions and Investigation:

Can Identify violent portrayals in the films and explain its implications for the moral development of youths expose to such films.

If yes, what are those acts and explain its implications.

Facilitator pauses and allows respondents to talk extensively then probes further

Do you believe that films such as "*The Hostel*" and "*Last House on the Left*" that portray violent contents can stimulate and lead to violent acts for youths exposed to them?

If yes, explain how this could be manifested.

What efforts if any have been made to tackle this negative effects?

What efforts should be made to curtail this negative influence on vulnerable youths?

(c) Appreciations:

The facilitator thanks all the discussants for their contributions and close the session

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

My name is -----, I am a post graduate student of Development Communication in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. I am currently undertaking a research on Implications of violent Hollywood films for the moral development of youths. I will be glad if you permit an interview for few minutes.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1) In Your Professional capacity as ----- how powerful is the media in shaping a person's moral life.

Q2) Do you believe film contents have the capacity to influence younger viewers

Q3) Do you believe that exposure to violent and anti-moral contents can shape a youth's moral development.

Q4) what is your view on the depictions of violence and anti-moral images in Hollywood films.

5) What should be done to mitigate its influence on youths?

NOTE: Questions are flexible to allow for in-depth discussions

APPRECIATION

Thank you sir for your contributions. I am honored by your reception and humility.