

The Portrait of Family Size in the Hausa Home Videos: Culture or Economy?

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Abstract

Traditional Hausa family is typically large. Film is a medium through which ideas and beliefs can be transmitted. It therefore serves as a mirror through which one can view the contents of a certain culture. The Hausa home videos industry came to presumably present and preserve the Hausa culture. As an industry it is thus for economic benefits and Hausa cultural representation. However, there have been arguments especially by the Hausa cultural enthusiasts that the players in the industry have always produce for the economic gains, while misrepresenting the Hausa culture. The aim of this study was to see whether or not there is a balance between ensuring economic benefits and Hausa cultural representation, specifically large family size, in the Hausa home videos. Content analysis was used. Twenty home videos were randomly selected and reviewed. It was found that most of the home videos do not represent the culture, specifically Hausa family size, and economy equitably in their contents. Hence, the players in the industry should ensure balance of interests' representation in the home videos they produce. And, this could be achieved through the mechanisms of censorship boards and various associations within the industry.

Keywords: Family size; Hausa culture; Hausa home video; Media representation; Society

Introduction

Family is a group of individuals usually of different sexes, who are related by birth or kinship. Depending on the culture, family can be nuclear or extended. While the nuclear, often small in size, is commonly found in western societies, the extended, usually large in size, is common to African societies; the latter consists of parents, numerous children and other relatives living in one household. The Hausa families found in Africa are communal in nature and therefore large. Large size is indeed a pride among typical Hausa families because it shows numerous and different capabilities of a family. Films can be and are in fact used to project culture. The Hausa home videos or *Finafinan Hausa*, considered as films in this context, which "main aim" is representing and preserving the Hausa culture and traditions, in addition to educating and entertaining the viewers, it is argued, seem to portray the Hausa family quite different from what it is [1].

The players in the film industry always argue that they are in the production of Hausa home videos to perform dual role; that is, to act as an economic players on one hand and present Hausa Home Videos as embodiments of Hausa culture on the other. Other people hold a contrary view, arguing that the film makers have constantly produced for economic benefit only. Hausa cultural enthusiasts, specifically, pinpoint at some instances in the home videos where certain practices presented as part of Hausa culture are sharply in contrast with what is obtainable in the culture. *Indianised* forms of dancing, mode of dressing and defiance among children are some of the things commonly mentioned as alien to the culture. One important issue also, though not being discussed by scholars, is the size of Hausa family as it is represented in the home videos. While film serves as historical material, family size, which gives rise to population, in the contemporary society is used to achieve both economic and political development and relevance. What family size does the Hausa culture cherish? Is the family size represented in the home videos? If the answer is in affirmative, why is it? And, if there is a disjuncture, what is really happening?

"Ideal Size" of Traditional Hausa Family

Hausa society is communal in nature and is characterized by extended families. Extended family is a family consisting of father (s), mother (s), several children and in some cases with relatives. Indeed, it is the communal nature of the society that necessitates the need for large family size, since many individuals are required to occupy different positions and perform several roles. This, not only in Hausa society, is the general view of Nigerians irrespective of their culture [2]. Connected to large family size is the practice of polyandry, where husband marries more than one wife, with each wife having chance of bearing children. This is also a common practice in Hausa society. It is indeed a sign of affluence, even among formally educated, for a man to marry more wives and therefore bear so many children. While for a new married couple it is expected they have at least a child within a very short possible time as the Hausa tradition recognizes, middle age and old couples are expected to have numerous children as they grow within their fecundity period. Accordingly, barrenness or *Rashin Haihuwa* of a couple is seen as a serious problem in Hausa society and has in so many cases cost the existence of marriage union. This could have been the reason why non-fertile family is not common in a typical Hausa society. Moreover, with large percentage of Hausa being Muslims, the tradition of having large family size came to be strengthened further by Islamic religious teaching of having so many children [3].

Western education and modernization which many people could see as factors that can change this traditional belief, have not substantially affected the practice. The modern family planning programmes and

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methods, which may alter the traditional “production system” among Hausa couples, are still not wholeheartedly accepted [3]. And, where individuals accept modern family planning methods, they only mean Child Spacing not necessarily having fewer children [4]. This is what was also found in studies conducted in Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Zamfara (all largely Hausa states) and Yobe states. Specifically, desired number of children among family members, especially women, in many parts of the North is 8. Even in societies neighbouring Hausa society, such as Kanuri [5] and Yoruba [6] fewer children and by implication small family size is not appreciated. Thus it can be understood that the “ideal size” of a family among Hausas is anything beyond three i.e., father, mother and children; in other words, it is typically large (National Population Policy, 1998) - husband, wife/wives, children and relatives [7].

Video films with whatever names or forms are meant to project and protect certain interests. Individuals, organizations, and cultures use films to show and sell their beliefs and practices. Thus films especially where they are designated are mirror through which one can view the “true” picture of a person, organization and even a society. The Hausa Home Videos (HHV), therefore, are deemed to be representing the Hausa culture [1,8]. And, the representation is assumed to be all encompassing as the videos try to cover and portray the gamut of socio-economic and political arrangements and “realities” in the society. In other words, the videos depict family issues, nature of economic activities and power sharing, among many others, as they are found in the society. Accordingly, they are expected to depict Hausa family size as it is found in Hausa society. However, do they perform this role? It is based on the above that this study is undertaken to examine contents of some representatives HHV in order to see how they portray the family size of Hausa people in their representation.

Methodology

Content analysis is used in this research as it is believed to be the most appropriate method for studying qualitative materials such as pictures and films. Additionally, the focus of the study is tight to the exploration of the content of home videos; hence the researcher believes reviewing the content is the best method that can be used to achieve the aim of the study. Using non-probability sampling, twenty HHV were randomly selected—picked from different sources and time - by eight individuals who were not aware of the motive behind selecting the HHV. Non-probability sampling was used because there is no comprehensive list of the study population. Indeed, none can be easily made. The sampling was also adopted because the phenomenon under study is assumed to be common to the population.

Results and Discussion

The selected HHV were viewed and reviewed. Table 1 below shows the members (i.e., husband, wife (ves), children and relatives) of various families or households (h) as they are presented in the HHV reviewed.

The Table 1 above shows the account of various families or households in the HHV reviewed. The HHV were released to the market at different times between 2007 and 2014. In all, 50 households were identified, each with members largely consisting of parent(s) and child or children.

Table 2 above shows that 60% of the families presented in the HHV consist of three members, 26% consists of two members and 6% consist of one member. Only 8% has either four or five members. In other words, irrespective of whether the setting is rural or urban, 88% of the family size showed in the HHV consists of three members or

below. This shows that the HHV are not presenting the true picture of the Hausa family size, which cherishes family size of more than 3 members. Two things could be used to explain this; first, the producers of home videos must have given preference to economic benefits out of their production, thus they cast limited number of actors to play various roles in the films so as to have few individuals to pay at the end of the production. The more they engaged many actors the higher the cost of payments to be incurred and perhaps the less the profit margin. Secondly, there can be the influence of other cultures particularly of those whose films are commonly viewed by Hausa viewers, such as American, Indian and Chinese films. Family size shown in these films is generally nuclear, composing of usually three persons. Many Hausa viewers view these films regularly and that the Hausa film producers in their effort to attract the viewers to their films can adopt certain aspects of the former including family composition. Consequently, they adopt the family size and portray same as that of Hausa society.

Theoretical Explanation on the Contents of the Hausa Home Videos

The leading position developed nations are occupying in the world affairs, including control of what media contents should be disseminated, has made some scholars to speak of what they termed as media imperialism [9,10]. Scholars believe that a sort of cultural empire ruled by developed countries like the United States of America, United Kingdom and France through the globalised media has since been established and the powerless developing nations are the ones being ruled under this empire [10]. In other words, people in developing countries are being bombarded with western media contents that are incompatible with the former's cultural beliefs and practices, without possessing the technological prowess to counter the adulterated contents. Hence they have no alternative than consuming the stuff especially as they are cheaper compared with their own media product [11]. While some scholars limit the media imperialism thesis to western civilization particularly United States of America, others like Boyd-Barret cited in Adamu “extend the theory to media rich countries” [11]. Thus, countries like India, looking at richness of its film industry and the influence it has on large number of Arabian speaking and African population (e.g., Hausa viewers), can be seen as a leader in this empire. This view can be corroborated by Adamu's idea of *Bollywoodanci* [12].

Despite the media imperialism, forces within all societies and cultures make efforts to decelerate the onslaught on their cultures [10]. In countries that are “conservatives” in their religious and cultural beliefs and have more or less formidable leadership, banning western satellites serves as a means to checking the media intrusion [10]. However, other cultures and countries resort to producing local media products to substitute the foreign ones. This class of countries produces TV programs and films to counteract the dominating western products and present the correct picture of their own cultures. HHV is assumed to be one of these tools that came to presumably represent Hausa culture and preserve same from western influence. This however is not what the HHV are found to be doing. The HHV, for example, portray Hausa family size as small, a nuclear sort of, which is sharply contrary to an established cultural identity of the Hausa people. This is not surprising though, since as Douglas cited in Dandago states, film making, (especially) for entertainment, is deliberate escapist strategy by producers whose main motif is income generation; they produce with economic mind without, however, minding any negative implication the product can have on people's social identity [13]. No doubt, HHV have positively impacted on many individuals economically. But since HHV have other main roles (motifs) of projecting, representing, and

S/N	Title of HHV	Setting	Husband (s)		Wife (ves)	Daughter (s)	Son(s)	Family Size
1	Daga Ni Sai Ke	Urban	h1	1	1	0	1	3
			h2	1a	1	2	0	4
2	Attajiri	Urban	h3	1	1	1	0	3
			h4	1	1	1	0	3
3	Birnin Masoya	Rural	h5	1	1	1	0	3
			h6	0	1	0	1	2
			h7	1	1	0	1	3
4	Tsakani Na Da Ke	Urban	h8	1	1	1	0	3
5	Namaliya	Rural	h9	0	1	0	2	3
6	Barzahu	Urban	h10	1	1	0	2	4
			h11	1	1	1	0	3
			h12	0	1	0	1	2
7	Atiku	Rural	h13	1	1	1	0	3
8	Wahami	Urban	h14	1	1	1	0	3
			h15	1	0	1	0	2
			h16	1	1	0	1	3
9	Sandar Kiwo	Urban	h17	1	1	0	1	3
			h18	1	1	0	0	2
			H19	1	1	0	0	2
10	Naira	Urban	h20	1	4	0	0	5
			h21	1	0	0	1	2
			h22	0	1	2	0	3
11	Tawakkaltu	Rural	h23	1	1	1	1	4
			h24	0	1	1	0	2
12	Kanin Miji	Urban	h25	0	1	2	0	3
			h26	1	1	0	0	2
			h27	1	1	0	1	3
13	Dakin Uwargida	Urban	h28	1	2	0	0	3
			h29	1	1	0	1	3
14	A Duniya	Urban	h30	1	1	1	0	3
			h31	1	1	0	1	3
15	Gudun Wuce Sa'a	Urban	h32	1	1	1	0	3
			h33	0	0	1	0	1
16	Sarah	Urban	h34	0	1	2	0	3
			h35	1	1	0	0	2
			h36	1	1	0	0	2
17	Makashin Maza	Urban	h37	1	1	0	1	3
			h38	1	1	1	0	3
			h39	0	1	0	1	2
18	Munafikin Mata	Urban	h40	1	2	0	0	3
			h41	1	0	0	0	1
			h42	0	1	0	0	1
19	Matsalar Kauna	Urban	h43	1	1	1	0	3
			h44	1	1	0	1	3
			h45	1	1	0	1	3
20	Gidan Aure	Urban	h46	1	1	0	1	3
			h47	1	1	0	0	2
			h48	1	1	0	1	3
			h49	1	2	0	0	3
			h50	0	1	1	0	2
Total								50

Table 1: Account of Family Members in the HHV Reviewed.

Family Size	Frequency	Percentage
One member	3	6%
Two members	13	26%
Three members	30	60%
Four members	3	6%
Five members	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Table 2: Summary of Family Sizes Portrayed in the HHV Reviewed.

preserving the Hausa culture, it is expected that they will go a long way to performing such roles, shunning “*Bollywoodanci*” and “*Westanci*”. These the HHV have failed to do [12].

Conclusion and Recommendations

Film, including HHV, is a medium through which both political, social and economic interests can be projected and protected. It is therefore a medium to present and preserve Hausa cultural beliefs and practice. The HHV meant to perform those roles are however found to be short in doing that. It is thus concluded that HHV are not adequately representing the Hausa family size in their content, and that economic interest of the producers as well as foreign media influence are the major drivers of the content. This study therefore recommends that the filmmakers together with relevant authorities, such as film censors board, should ensure balanced representation of interests in the videos;

and this can be achieved through cooperation and working together between the censors boards and the various professional associations within the Hausa film industry. It is however recommended that considering the large number of HHV that are released to the market every two weeks, there is the need for further research to replicate the study.

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