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Portrayal of African Women in Nollywood Films over a Five-Year Period:
A Content Analysis of Traits Applying the Stereotype Content Model

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Media and Communication
East Tennessee State University
In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Professional Communication

by
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December 2016

Dr. Susan E. Waters, Committee Chair

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Stereotype Content Model

ABSTRACT

Portrayal of African Women in Nollywood Films over a Five-Year Period:

A Content Analysis of Traits Applying the Stereotype Content Model

by

Olushola Aromona

Previous research shows that perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs are cultivated via media exposure. A content analysis of stereotypical traits in five Nollywood movies in a five-year span examines the prevalent portrayals of women in the Nigerian movie industry – Nollywood, and the effect of these portrayals on reinforcement of stereotypical norms and perpetuation of gender disparity. Cultivation and Objectification theories were the theoretical frameworks for this study. Findings revealed no significant change in the stereotypical portrayals of women in the past five years. From the movies analyzed, Nollywood movies appear to remain persistent in typically depicting women as unambitious domestic servants. Applying Fiske’s stereotype content model, this study found that women are typically depicted as warm and incompetent, but cold and competent when they compete for same resources as the dominant group. With such portrayals in Nollywood movies, women are further subdued and beliefs that normalize these norms are cultivated.

DEDICATION

I would thank you from the bottom of my heart, but for you, my heart has no bottom.

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of two angels with mortal bodies whose lives inspired me through this journey, and whose deaths painfully remind to never give up trying to be better. To my father, Mr. Sunday Aromona, and to Dr. Dan Brown. For your love, support, and inspiration.

Rest on.

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I am grateful to God for the success of this study and the people He has blessed me with on this journey.

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From my heart, thank you all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The African woman is plagued by a number of gendered challenges such as inadequate education, early marriage and being objects of male gratification. These challenges are results of the sex roles ascribed to them. This thesis is an overview of the culturally defined roles of African women and how these stereotypical expectations are reproduced in the media through negative portrayals, under representation, non-reportage of women's success stories and how these media images reinforce stereotyped perceptions of the average African woman.

The issue of gender portrayal in media has been a growing concern for researchers (Ross-Smith & Walker, 1992) and the focus has primarily been on sex stereotyping in media and the media's role in perpetuating discrimination, encouraging the disparity and "preserving traditional sex role attitudes and behaviors" (para.1). Several studies have investigated how women are portrayed in the media (Jekayinfa, 1999; Maree, 2014; Okunna, 2002; Peters, 2001) with the media often castigated as presenting women as objects for commodification.

The purpose of this study is to review past research to examine how women are typically portrayed in the media, investigate changes in portrayals in the last five years, and report how this portrayal further reinforces gender disparity. A content analysis will be performed of five Nigerian movies using both objectification and cultivation as the theoretical framework as well as Fiske's stereotype content model. This study will present findings from the content analysis of these five award-winning Nigerian movies to examine if women are stereotypically treated as invisible and in traditional roles prescribed by the media. This image depiction of Nigerian women by the media affects how the public stereotypically perceive them. These depictions often mirror the stereotypical categories in which women are grouped and the socio-cultural

roles they are expected to perform in the society.

Stereotype

Lippmann first coined the word stereotyping in 1922. According to Lippmann, stereotyping was a necessary and efficient way of seeing things as “the attempt to see all things freshly and in detail, rather than as types and generalities; is exhausting, and among busy affairs practically out of the question” (as cited in Berg, 2002, p.14). The cognitive conception that stereotyping is a value-neutral psychological mechanism that creates categories implies that everyone is capable of stereotyping (Berg, 2002). In support of Lippman’s assertion, Zerubavel (1998) posits that categorization is a useful process in socio-symbolic interaction. Premised on the foregoing, stereotyping could be without any value or worth. However, as Berg (2002) stated, humans are potentially capable of moving a step further to ascribe “those categories with value-laden connotations” (p.14) either positive or negative.

For the purpose of this study, focus will be on stereotyping with negative connotations, which is often the thought when we discuss stereotypes. Such stereotyping is the negative generalization used by an in-group (US) about an out-group (THEM) (Berg, 2002). Negative stereotyping thrives on ethnocentrism and prejudice. As the review of literature in this study will show, the generalization that women are inherently not as good, intelligent, strong, capable or ambitious as their male counterparts are, are disastrous in themselves. This misconception could be normalized by repetitive portrayals of this negative stereotype in the media. Not only does media maintain the status quo, the media often establish the terms by which the Other can be known and situates the Other within dominant discourse (Berg, 2002).

Socio-Cultural Roles

According to stereotypic beliefs about the sexes, women are more communal and

domesticated, and these beliefs stem primarily from the distribution of women and men into social roles (Eagly & Steffen, 2000). In this section, the different social roles and their attending effect on both sexes, particularly Nigerian women, will be explored. From being categorized as homemakers, child bearers, cooks and care givers, Nigerian women are domesticated (Jekayinfa, 1999) and these social roles define how others perceive them.

Nigerian women do not just take up these roles nor ascribe the identity claims of being homemakers or child bearers; these roles are culturally vested on them, and the Nigerian society expects that they function accordingly. The meanings and classifications attached to the Nigerian woman, which is at best inferior and negative, is based on the roles ascribed to the women. As Jekayinfa (1999) further explained, Nigerian women are often classified as inferior, subservient and less important because the society does not require them to be breadwinners or decision makers and so it seems they have the less prominent and important roles to perform in society compared to their male counterparts.

Based on these roles and the attendant responsibilities, it is stereotypically perceived that Nigerian women are not to be educated. As Jatau (2010) stated, western education was not open to Nigerian women mainly because it does not serve their purpose as housewives and mothers. On the other hand, men have access to education simply because education affords them the opportunity to earn more and provide more as the head of the home. In collaboration with Jatau's submission, Mkpa (as cited in Jatau 2010) explained that prior to the introduction of western education, traditional education was geared towards teaching subjects that will equip both sexes with necessary skills for performing the ascribed sex roles. In a traditional educational setting, women grew up sitting with their mothers learning how to cook, be great homemakers and care givers while men grew up learning how to hunt, use proverbs, speak

eloquently and settle disputes, thereby stimulating their sense of rationality in preparation for their roles as important members of the society (Jatau, 2010).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study builds on existing media and the psychological body of research to examine the stereotypical portrayal of gender in Nigerian movies. It proposes to determine how media via movies present gender roles, thus, perpetuating socio-cultural inequalities as well as to investigate whether there is a change in these portrayals in a five-year period.

Women and Global Discrimination

The socio-cultural roles and expectations have consistently played a part in how the society sees Nigerian women and their aspirations as subordinate resulting in a “situation in which the marginalization, trivialization and stereotyping of women are glaring aspects of Nigerian life” (Okunna, 2002, p. 1). Although there is increasingly less trivialization in some cultures, research shows that the stereotyping of women is a global phenomenon (Swift, 2013) and there is a global outcry and strategy to nip the disparity and stereotyping in the bud (Sustainable Development Goals, 2016; The Millennium Development Goals, n.d.).

The global plan towards bridging the wide gap in disparity and battling stereotypes was hatched in September 2000 when world leaders gathered to make a declaration aimed at establishing peace and a healthy global economy (The Millennium Development Goals, n. d.). Building upon the success of the success of the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations set in motion a global partnership and adoption of 17 sustainable development goals also called the global goals which came into effect in January 2016, and is strategically targeted at improving the condition of humanity in infrastructure, human rights and human capital development, alleviating poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring “all people enjoy peace and prosperity” (Sustainable Development Goals, 2016, Para. 1). One of the critical targets out

of the 17 sustainable development goals set by the United Nations is promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women (Sustainable Development Goals, 2016). Realizing this target and empowering women through access to quality education, healthcare as well as positive representation in the workplace and portrayal in all media platforms, is an important way of reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable national and global development. However, women are still facing marginalization and underrepresentation in every sphere such as education, politics, workplaces as well as stereotypic representation in the media.

This marginalization and disparity can be linked to the socio-cultural roles ascribed to women. As Amobi (2013) explained, society's definition of feminine and masculine qualities is expressed through the roles that both men and women are expected to perform, and the opportunities that are available to them are hinged on those roles. Women are classified as weak, inferior and fit-to-stay-in-the-background, while men are classified as strong, dominant, the better gender group and conquerors. The inequality that arises based on the opportunities that become available to both divides is further strengthened in the media and the default assumptions and perceptions that women are lesser creatures than males are reinforced by the way media depict them.

Portrayal of Women in Media

Research shows media to be one of the many influences on how men and women are viewed (Allan & Coltrane, 1996; Wood, 1994). The media is the most pervasive way images and messages are communicated to people, and as an agent of socialization and information, the media play a key role in the transmissive and ritualistic processes of communication to ensure that society is not only informed, but that it is maintained. In addition to these, the media also set trends and influence topics of public discourse. With the saturation of several media

platforms, society certainly is influenced by the media in numerous ways (Nigeria, 2013) and with such great influence, people's perspectives are either changed, formed or upheld as necessary. Stereotypes often reflect viewers' observation of what people do in daily life (Eagly & Steffen, 2000). If viewers often observe a group of people engaging in a particular activity, they are likely to believe that the attributes necessary for such activity is typical of that particular group. In other words, gender stereotypes like other social stereotypes are a reflection of perceivers' constant observation (Eagly & Steffen, 2000) and by extension mediated by the media which have the capacity to play a primary role in the creation of realities, public opinion and maintenance of society (Nigeria, 2013).

The problem of negative depiction can especially be harmful for women. Swift (2013) has shown that women will be treated with contempt and abused if the media show women as dependent, unskilled and contributing little of value. In a special report on gender in the media, Swift (2013) stated that media shape how human relationships are perceived and distorted or stereotypical depictions of these relationships as well as the representation of women, particularly in news media, influences self-esteem issues and reinforces disparity. When a woman is constantly seen on media platforms as weak, real life exhibition of strength is often seen as pride, arrogance or not being womanly. This, more often leads to the woman being labeled either as cold or treated with disdain. For instance, media, specifically Nollywood movies' depiction of rape where the woman is a victim is often skewed to show the woman as being responsible whether through her dressing or associations. This skewed narrative often spills over to reality where a raped woman is then labeled as promiscuous, indecent or deserving of the rape; the same labels that the movies employ in the same situations. In a study on the representation of women in movies, Okunna (2002) found that women are often

criticized by their inability to bear a child in Nollywood movies. This, in support of Swift's (2013) stance indicates that when women are valued based on their fertility in movies, it cultivates the perception that in reality, women are essentially child bearing machines and a failure in this capacity ultimately calls for abusive and contemptuous treatments. There is little doubt that the media control the creation of meaning and realities in the society (Smith as cited in Swift 2013), and this ability of the media to set the agenda media could affect women negatively if they are depicted negatively.

As stated earlier, the media not only inform, but it also shapes perception. In shaping perception, it is necessary for the media to be objective and balanced in reportage and image creation. However, this is far from the reality as the media have over time depicted women in negative ways and create discourse and image portrayals that are both skewed and inaccurate (Swift, 2013). Although Swift's assertion did not specify the subculture of women, her position is particularly true for Nigerian women.

Nigerian Women Stereotyped in Social Media

An example of how Nigerian women are stereotyped can be perceived from social media. The effect of lopsided narratives was brought to life in July 2015 when a book club started a Twitter hashtag - #BeingFemaleInNigeria that trended for days to reveal the sexism prevalent in Nigeria as well as castigate society's expectations and default assumption of the roles of women. The #BeingFemaleInNigeria hashtag had mild comments such as "leaving Radisson Blu, on a Tuesday morning, I was held back; asked to call who I came to visit before they let me go"; "Your husband cooked? And you opened your mouth and ate the food

didn't give him a boy"; "I hate this phrase from men in meetings 'what she's trying to say is...'
just shut up and let me say it goddamn it!"; "someone asked me why do you want to get a PhD?
You won't get husband o"; "You are a lady you can't be seen to be too smart, sometimes pretend
not to know anything, men like submissive women" (Edoro

traditional roles ascribed to both groups. This study will consider each of these themes in the following sections.

Underrepresentation

According to Wood (1994), in various forms, women are often underrepresented whether as media practitioners, objects of news coverage or other subject matter that is termed important such as politics or finance. This underrepresentation creates a picture of non-importance as they do not hold positions that are termed important in media houses such as news editor or media director nor are their success stories given prominence. Women are often placed in non-visible positions and this enforces the cultural belief that men are more important and should get more attention and exalted positions in the workplace and be objects of news coverage. Also reflecting this under-representation is the news selection criteria which tend to push topics relevant to women to the margins of the news. Thus, this suggests that what is of interest to women is less important than that which interest men (Ross & Carter, 2011).

News items are often categorized as hard or soft to depict their importance. Such categorizing and emphasizing of “‘hard’ news over ‘soft’ news... and according prestige status on ‘hard’ news over the ‘lighter’ items of news” (Ross & Carter, 2011, p. 1149) produces a gender differentiated news agenda with discernible trends in who reports ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ news. With this development, women are naturally accorded the honor of overseeing the ‘soft’ items of news such as fashion and entertainment stories while men take charge of the ‘hard’ news category. This perspective, Allan (as cited in Ross & Carter, 2011) posits has the attendant presumption that women’s “everyday lives are intrinsically less newsworthy” (p. 1149). Gerbner described such behavior as “symbolic annihilation” (Okunna 2005, p. 127), which is a way of making women invisible and maintaining social inequality.

To prove that there appears to be a form of symbolic annihilation of women in media, a 2001 study by the International Federation of Journalists revealed that although a large number of journalists are women, “overall, they comprise less than 3% of media decision-makers” (Peters, 2001, para. 1). In fact, women rarely get top positions in Nigeria, as there were only three Nigerian female editors at the time of the study (Peters, 2001). Although this number has improved somewhat, it is still a far cry from what could be (Okeyo, 2013) and the agitation for more representation of Nigerian women in top positions in media outfits is still being amplified.

Peters (2001) further explained that one contributing factor to this underrepresentation of women as top media officers is the cultural definition of who should be the head. In a patriarchal society such as Nigeria, it is culturally expected that women be reverential, subservient and subordinates to men. Little wonder then that women’s stories are not given prominence in mainstream media due to the lack of enough women calling the shots, championing and writing those stories. It is important therefore to have enough women in positions of power in the media ecosystem: “women capable of acknowledging that every story is a potential gender story will be an instrumental factor in creating the conditions that will ensure equality of coverage” (Gross, 2010, p. 29). In support of this argument, Mill (as cited in Wood, 1994) stated that more women occupying executive and positions of authority would “offer more positive portrayals of women” (p. 32).

As a result of the underrepresentation of women in higher status of authority in media hierarchies, Tuchman (1979) explains women’s status will be distorted and their stories will remain untold. In support of this and in particular reference to the Nigerian society, Okunna (2005) points out that women are still grossly under-represented in the Nigerian media as news subjects and almost invisible. She further states that women often only make the news as wives

of prominent men without acknowledging their “accomplishments” (Tuchman, 1979, p. 531) on their own right.

Stereotypical Portrayals of Women

Not only are women underrepresented as media professionals, they are also portrayed in traditional roles that reinforce gender stereotypes (Okunna, 2002). Considerable research has shown that media portrayals often reflect the cultural stereotypes that depict women as weak, passive and dependent (Nigeria, 2013) and as Amobi (2013) explains, women’s stories are seldom given prominence in the media and when they are, they are often presented in stereotypical ways as domesticated, victims and helpless. In the subsequent paragraphs, this research will examine how women are portrayed in stereotypical ways, and these ways are a reflection of the culturally ascribed sex roles in media.

On television just like in patriarchal societies, men are typically portrayed as strong, aggressive, dominant, competent, confident and in high-status positions. Popular films often starred men who were aggressive, tough and unafraid (Wood, 1994). With such films, the media reinforce the ideals of masculinity, which is that men should be in control of their emotions, tough and dominant. Rarely do we see men portrayed in domestic settings or doing household chores. On the other hand, women are portrayed as passive, younger, deferential, calm and focused on their families (Okunna, 2002; Wood, 1994). These portrayals reiterate the image expected of women as decorative and dependent on men.

Research show that women are portrayed as subservient, dependent and fit for “domestic roles rather than professional and career roles” (Okunna, 2002, p. 9). In a study of three Nigerian films: *Confidence*, *Gone Forever* and *Tears and Sorrow*, Okunna (2002) found that the central female characters were portrayed as helpless, particularly without a man, vicious,

subordinate and lacking confidence.

Rationale for Studying Movies

Why should anyone care about the portrayals of women in the media, particularly in movies? Media is a powerful tool in influencing what people think and talk about (Agbese, 2010) and the pervasive nature of media stories are key components for “national development and social change” (p.78). As a component of media, film/movies have defining power in the transmission of a society’s values, expectations and beliefs across generations (Putnam as cited in Agbese, 2010). This current study suggests that constant observation of negative images in movies will not only dictate how others will perceive women, but also, how the women will perceive themselves. These images of subservience and inferiority will contribute to a low esteem, as the women will see themselves only in the light of the realities that they are presented in the movies. Also, this study suggests that movie portrayals and lack of depiction of women as strong, successful and capable will contribute to the dearth of role models for young women. Finally, this present study seeks to measure the changes and improvement in media portrayals of women. To this end, the first research question is proposed.

RQ1: Has the perceived representation of the female in Nollywood movies changed in a five-year span?

In addition to understanding how movies perpetuate stereotypic realities, studying how movie portrayal has changed or not over a period is a way of moving forward the achievability of item three of the millennium development goals. A positive change in media portrayals will positively influence how women are generally treated in the society, the goal of item three. In what follows, this study will examine the emergence of the movie industry in Nigeria and its role in the creation of reality and shaping perception in the Nigerian society and Africa at large.

Nollywood

Nollywood is a term used to describe the movie industry in Nigeria. The industry is valued at \$5 billion in 2014 (Tolchinsky, 2015) and is the world's third largest and most valuable film industry after Hollywood and Bollywood as at 2013 (Tolchinsky, 2015). Since its boom in the 1990s, the industry has steadily become popular, not only within Africa, but in homes around the world. This growth is despite the menace of piracy and the lack of well-structured regulatory and distribution channels. The industry was begun accidentally by a local trader, Kenneth Nnebue, who thought he could "sell his tapes faster if he recorded something on them" (Abah, 2008, p.336) thus birthing the film "Living in bondage." The Nigerian movie industry with minimal help from the government has succeeded in developing to become a key contributor to Nigeria's GDP as well as the African economy (Moudio, 2013). Since its emergence, the video film industry has served as a response to the high rate of unemployment and has provided many opportunities for a number of talented and creative individuals. The major difference between Nollywood and Hollywood is in terms of production and distribution (Agbese, 2010), as movies are often shot in 10-14 days on an average budget of \$15,000-\$25,000 (Osifo-Dawodu, 2007) and commonly produced in multiple parts in the African art of storytelling (Abah, 2008). This is contrasted to the enormous budgets and timelines of major Hollywood films. Sixty-five percent of movie production is done in English with the rest (35%) spread among the other indigenous languages and increasingly subtitled in English with themes varying from religion and witchcraft to romance and thrillers (Osifo-Dawodu, 2007).

Nollywood, a visible and strong force in Nigeria as well as Sub-Saharan African countries, produces melodramatic movies aimed at delivering moral messages of virtue over villainy. These movies are quite popular with African women (Abah, 2008) primarily as the audience

and also as stakeholders (as cast and crew). Abah (2008) found that although African women are celebrated in Nollywood movies as they depict the women in varying roles, the movies nevertheless “issue dire warnings for women who exceed the limits placed on their dreams by construed tradition as well as women who fail to meet the expectations placed on their domestic roles by cultural institutions” (p.339). These domestic roles include being housewives, mothers, caregivers, child nurturers, and cooks. To fail in these roles is to have failed in life as success is not only measured by how early a woman is married, how rich the man is to whom she is married, but also by how well she can fulfill those roles. To this end, Nigerian women are often more pressured than the men into marriage so that they can become wives and mothers. Their worth lies in their abilities to keep a man and a home, and success is measured by how happy their husbands are and how well the women maintain their marriages and homes. Thus, the second research question is proposed.

RQ2: How are females and males in Nollywood movies portrayed in their relationships (i.e., married, unmarried, divorced, living together)?

This study is concerned with how the ideal woman is depicted in these videos and how these portrayals reinforce the stereotypical perception of an African woman. In subsequent sections, several theories will be explored as a guide for the study.

Objectification Theory

Objectification refers to the act of viewing and treating a person as an object or thing. The word “object” in this sense can only be considered by another as such without any value of its own except that bestowed upon it by the viewer (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009). Succinctly, objectification is the act of viewing a person as though their body is “capable of representing them” (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 598). Further, Nussbaum (2000) stated that

objectification entails making into a thing, “something that is really not a thing” (p. 218).

In predominately heterosexual cultures, women, when objectified, are reduced to mere instruments existing solely for the “use and pleasure of others” (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175). Research has provided considerable discussion on the psychological consequences of objectification as well as the perception of women (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009). These consequences as Nussbaum (2000) speculated include valuing women solely on appearance; minimizing the capabilities and competence of women; “denying that their feelings and experiences matter and having less concern when they are physically or emotionally harmed” (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009, p. 598). In Nollywood movies, women are often objectified and presented as merely objects to be viewed through the male gaze.

Consequently, their values rest on their appearance, how well they can meet societal expectations as wives, mothers, sex objects, and the acceptance of the men in their lives. Thus, the third research question is proposed.

RQ3: Do the female’s capabilities in Nollywood movies as perceived by her physical features correlate to success at stereotypical role performance?

As Nussbaum (2000) further stated, this minimization of women’s worth downplays their capabilities and strengthens the narrative that women are lesser beings belonging to an insignificant gender group. Nollywood objectifies women limiting their abilities and capabilities to physical characteristics such as how beautiful or sexy a woman is; their childbearing or nurturing abilities; and by tagging them as someone’s (usually a man) property, thereby depicting them as incapable of being an individual without the tag of their ‘owner.’”

Stereotype Content Model

The Stereotype Content Model is a psychological definition of the social perception of warmth and competence (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008). The SCM model postulates that perception of warmth and competence as well as the interactions are dependent on competition and status. Although women are typically stereotyped as warm, the SCM posits that they will be perceived as warm only if they are not competitive or ambitious. Therefore, the fourth research question is proposed.

RQ4: In what forms of the stereotype content model are women portrayed in Nollywood?

Nollywood presents women as warm only when they are content being wives or mothers without the ambition of having a career outside the traditional role of housewife. Gender stereotypes fall into quadrants with male stereotypes in high competence/low warmth quadrant and female stereotypes in low competence/high warmth. However, this changes for the female who is career driven (and competing for the same resources – work – as the male). Such female then falls into the high competence/low warmth quadrant as she is perceived to be cold. Table 1 shows the complete Stereotype content model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

Table 1

Fiske et al. (2002)'s Stereotype Content Model

	LOW COMPETENCE	HIGH COMPETENCE
Low Warmth	Contemptuous Stereotype (Low status, competitive) Poor, welfare recipients, homeless	Envious Stereotype (High status, competitive) Career women, Asians, Feminists, Rich people
High warmth	Paternalistic stereotype (low status, not competitive) housewives, elderly people, mothers	Admiration/pride (high status, not competitive) Rich people, men, Christians, middleclass, close allies

Essentially, the warmth and competence concepts identified in the stereotype content model are predictions for when women are objectified. Heflick and Goldenberg (2009) in their study on how women are objectified, proposed that objectification of women leads “others to perceive them (women) as less competent and less fully human” (p.600).

Media presentation and portrayal affects women not only intrapersonally, but also interpersonally. Outside the media, women are treated as well as held to the standards and responsibilities placed on them in the media. For instance, a woman who is presented as beautiful on screen will be held to the same beauty standards off screen. Although this expectation is same for all gender groups, it is more adversely so for women. This idea hinges on the fact that there is a fine line between make-belief and reality, particularly in Nollywood. Research show that Nollywood portrays women in ways that define an ambitious or career woman as less human, thereby scoring low on the warmth end of the stereotype content model. This is even more poignant if such women are in socially constructed male-dominated professions.

Cultivation Theory

Another theory that has served as framework for various research on the effects of media and perception of social reality is Gerbner’s cultivation theory (Okunna, 1996). As earlier mentioned, television is one of the most pervasive media platforms. In fact, Cross (1983) called it “the quintessential form of media” (p.1). As a medium of socialization, television is an important factor in how perceptions are formed and society maintained. A 2014 Nielsen report states that an average American watch more than five hours of television daily (Hinckley, 2014). Although this statistic is a drop from earlier surveys which revealed that an average American watches six and a half hours of television a day, and in the face of unprecedented

growth in new/online media and video games, television remains a “seductive, pervasive and influential form of mass communication” (Cross, 1983, p. 8). With such exposure to television, it would be a surprise if viewers’ opinions are not shaped or affected by the images seen on TV.

Propounded by Gerbner, the theory rests on the concept that people’s perception of reality is determined by the amount of TV exposure they have (Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2002). Specifically, Gerbner hypothesized that heavy viewers of television are likely to view the world as a violent, awful place. The idea of cultivation is the effect of television on viewers’ perception of “social reality” (Morgan et al., 2002, p. 35). In other words, cultivation theory posits that heavy viewers will see the world in the light of what they see on TV. The mass media, particularly television, speaks to audiences and maintains the society through images and ideas (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). This language of television referred to as media-speak is not merely a way of communicating, it is a way of “perceiving reality” (Cross, 1983, p. 3). Cultivation relies more on heuristics than on controlled abilities (Morgan et al., 2002) and movie stereotypes promotes this mental shortcut in viewers regarding perception of reality.

Currently, the theory is being used as a theoretical framework for research in crime, gender stereotypes, body ideals, and politics (Morgan et al., 2002). Although it is basically about the overall effect of television exposure to perception of reality, especially violence, quite a number of studies have examined the correlation between traditional and new media platforms and other dependent variables such as sex roles idealism (Harrison, 2003; Morgan et al., 2002; Okunna, 1996).

Gender and sex roles stereotypes studies have relied on cultivation theory to research television perpetuation of the rhetoric of the female body ideals while depicting stereotypical sex roles (Harrison, 2003; Okunna, 1996). Okunna (1996) found that heavy viewers of

television have cultivated attitudes towards their perception of sex roles and gender stereotypes. The study demonstrated that heavy exposure to television is related to how members of gender groups are categorized and treated as dominant or subservient, as the case may be. In another dimension, Zurbriggen and Morgan (2006) found that exposure to reality dating shows has a correlation with sexual beliefs and sexual behaviors.

Despite the criticisms on the validity of the cultivation theory, studies have consistently found support for the correlative effect of the media, particularly television, to perceptions of idealism and realism (Morgan et al., 2002; Okunna, 1996; Potter 1988). Socialization and social knowledge come from various sources, chiefly, personal experience and the mass media (Okigbo, 1995). In support, Nwuneli, Okoye, Okunna, and Ayo (1993) posited that the “perception of social reality will correspond closely to the mass media ‘realities’ because the images of the world portrayed in the media will be internalized and accepted as accurate representation of reality by media audiences” (p. 37).

Studies have shown that viewers cultivate negative attitudes from the stereotypical contents of television (Agbese, 2010; Gallagher 1995; Okunna, 1996). Gallagher (1995) further posited that messages with unchanging trivialization and objectification of women not only degrade and dehumanize women, they also aid in structuring public perception and perpetuating gender stereotypes.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Method and Procedure

Content Analysis

An important communication research technique, content analysis is the study of “recorded human communications” (Babbie, 2004, p. 314). It is a way of summarizing and analyzing messages (Neuendorf, 2002) being communicated in films, books, magazines, songs, speeches or advertisements. Research has looked at a number of topics using content analysis. For instance, the progression in the number of violent media content, aggressive behavior, contextual variables in violence, reasons, extent, method, realism, and consequences of violent media content have been examined via content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). Also, a considerable amount of research on gender roles, portrayals, and media content have used content analysis to summarize media messages (Neuendorf, 2002). More recently, content analysis research has focused on body image ideals, racial and ethnic minorities, and ageism (Waters, 2006). This present study used content analysis to investigate the stereotypic portrayals in five award winning Nigerian movies released between 2011 and 2015. The core concepts examined in the study are (a) depictions of gender stereotypes in terms of demographics, physical characteristics, role depictions, and stereotypic traits; and (b) perceived change in the depictions, perceptions and societal expectations in regards to women.

Selection of Movies

Films were selected based on their ratings and recognition from Best of Nollywood. The Best of Nollywood awards is a prestigious annual film event created with the sole purpose of recognizing and honoring outstanding performances and achievements in the Nigerian movie

industry. The selected movies were nominated as Movie of the Year between 2011 and 2015.

Sample

As earlier noted, five top ranking movies over a five-year period between 2011 and 2015 were used for this study. Each movie was divided into 30-minutes intervals for coding purposes excluding advertisements and credits. The manifest and latent content (Babbie, 2004) were recorded. Table 2 shows a list of the movies, their release dates, and rating by year.

Table 2

List of Movies

MOVIE ID	MOVIE TITLE	RATING YEAR
1	Dry	2015
2	Black Silhouette	2014
3	Unforgivable	2013
4	Married but living single	2012
5	Mr. & Mrs.	2011

Movies Synopsis

Married but living single. This movie revolves around Kate, a young ambitious woman building a career in the ad industry and her husband, Mike, an entrepreneur, who felt neglected as a result of his wife's ambition. The movie touches all aspects of family and work relationship, trust, neglect, abuse, and domestic violence.

Mr. & Mrs. This movie is a story of two couples and their struggles as well as the conflicts in their homes. Susan Abah, a lawyer turned housewife was shown to be verbally and sexually abused by her husband Ken Abah, despite her diligence at keeping her home and discharging her wifely duties. Linda and Charles seemed to have a perfect marriage until the wife, Linda, caught Charles in bed with their house help; an action Charles blamed on Linda's insensitivity

to his needs and career drive.

Unforgivable. This is a movie on the topics of cancer, male dominance, domestic violence, regrets and repentance. The movie tells the story of Sewa, a lady who fell in love and married Damola while someone else, Richard, was heads over heels in love with her. Sadly, Damola physically, sexually, and verbally abused Sewa until the couple's only daughter died, and he (Damola) realized that his wife is dying from cancer.

Black Silhouette. This movie revolves around Maro Oti, a woman about to make history as Nigeria's first female Governor. However, despite her husband's disapproval, she was determined to write her memoir which revealed a past filled with struggles to earn a livelihood, sexual abuse and eventual rescue by a friend, Doctor Charles Obi.

Dry. This movie is an exposition on child marriage and its attendant result – Vesicovaginal Fistula (VVF), male dominance, and female subservience in a patriarchal society. Set in Northern Nigeria and Wales, England, it tells the story of Halima, a 13-year-old girl married off to a man old enough to be her father. He subsequently rapes her and she becomes pregnant. The viewer witnesses the prevalence of this harm against women as Dr. Zara, a female doctor based in England, had a similar past consisting of sexual abuse, rape, and pregnancy – a past similar to Halima's and other young girls in the community.

Unit of Data Collection/Analysis

The female and male characters playing the lead and supporting roles were the units of analysis for this study. The lead (primary 1, referred to in this study as Lead Female Character (LFC) or Lead Male Character (LMC) and the supporting, primary 2, referred to in this study as the Supporting Female Character (SFC) or Supporting Male Character (SMC) are defined as characters who have more screen time than others (Dominick & Rauch, 1992, MacArthur &

Resko, 1975, as cited in Waters, 2006). Waters (2006) outlined a procedure for coding characters for television advertising and defined primary 1 and primary 2 characters as the following: one who appeared on the screen for at least three seconds, had at least one line of dialogue, or appeared to be the most central figure.

For the present study, primary 1 (LFC/LMC) and primary 2 (SFC/SMC) are defined as the ones who appeared to be the most central players in the movie. Specifically, the coder defined and recorded most central as most visible with the most presence in the movie. The characters were assessed on demographics, physical and role characteristics. Specifically, variables with established indicators such as age, sex, status, occupation and stereotypic traits like warmth, competence, attractiveness, dependence, assertiveness, subservience were assessed and coded.

Character Variables

Age. The characters coded fell into four groups: children (1-17), young adult (18-34), adult (35-59) and old (60-above) (Waters, 2006). Children were coded with identifiable age markers such as child-like behaviors, students in high school, concern about education, and living with parents or guardians. Young adults were characters perceived to be between 18 and 34 with age markers such as attending or completing college, characters having younger children, being independent of parents or guardians, and having a full time job (Waters, 2006). Adults were coded to be characters perceived to be between 35 and 59 with identifiable markers such as well-established careers, being responsible for parents and showing concern about health issues. Old characters were coded based on age markers such as grey hair, wrinkled skin, difficulty with motor skills, fully retired or settling into retirement. It is noteworthy at this point that media portrayal of age has been stereotypical with old people portrayed as less healthy (Waters, 2006), and frail. Nollywood portrayal of ageism is not so

different, however, with a twist as old men are portrayed as sage while old women are more likely portrayed as not only senile but also as cunning, wicked and sometimes as witches.

Sex. Wood (2009) described sex as a classification based on “genetic and biological factors” (p. 23). Characters were coded into male or female groups based on physical sex markers.

Stereotypical gender traits. While sex is biological, gender is a “social, symbolic construct that varies across cultures” (Wood, 2009, p. 24) and behavioral expectations regarding a sex group. Thus, stereotypical gender traits refer to those characteristics that a culture constructs to belong to a member of a sex group. For instance, femininity is a gender trait belonging to a woman, and an example of a stereotypical trait for femininity would be emotional expressiveness. Woods (2009) stated that to be feminine or masculine is determined by a society’s cultural values and expectations. A patriarchal society expects a man to be masculine and exhibit stereotypical traits such as ambition, rationality, strength, dominance, and emotional control. On the other hand, women are expected to be subservient, attractive, submissive, and kind.

Warmth and competence. These are traits from Fiske et al.’s (2002) stereotype content model. Characters with identifiable markers such as gentleness, kindness, and empathy are scaled in the high warmth description and coded as warm; unemotional, indifferent, selfish are scaled in the low warmth description and coded as cold. Intelligence, efficiency, and knowledge were markers for competence while inexperience, lack of intelligence, and inefficiency are markers for incompetence.

Education. Educational status of characters was defined by a university education. A character coded as high on the education status of characters had completed a university

education with first or second degree. Characters are coded low on education if they have no formal education, particularly a university degree. The characteristics for defining these traits are presented in Table 3.

Ambition. Characters are coded ambitious if they are career driven. Markers for career drive included the desire for an employment outside the home or desire to get promoted at work.

Setting. Characters are coded as being shown in traditional or occupational settings. Traditional settings included the home, kitchen, and stores while occupational settings included the offices or business place.

Periods in movie. Each movie was divided into 40-minute intervals excluding advertisements and credits and coded in three different periods: Beginning, Middle, and End.

Status. Jatau (2010) stated that women seldom have access to skills for oratory or conflict resolution because these skills are not necessary to fulfill the culturally assigned female roles such as home-keeping or cooking. This drives home the point and expectation that women should be home or family oriented. To this end, women are often trained on how to keep their men and even pressured into getting into and staying in a relationship or marriage. Status is therefore coded on four levels: Married, Divorced, Dating (in a relationship), and Single (not in a relationship).

Codebook

Waters' (2006) study on age stereotyping and advertising provided the template for coding the traits. A 5-point Likert-type scale of 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree to measure the stereotypical variables. Traits were categorized into high and low level descriptions. For traits such as warmth and competence, the descriptions are semantically different as they are terms on the opposite end of the spectrum (Heise, 1970; Semantic Differential, n.d.).

Table 3

Traits Codebook

VARIABLE/TRAIT	HIGH LEVEL DESCRIPTION	LOW LEVEL DESCRIPTION
Attractiveness (Physical features)	Good looking, skin tone, handsome, well dressed, sexy, trim body size, fit	Shabbily dressed, not fit, not trim body size, not sexy
Care Giver	Patience, attentiveness, compassion, dependability, consideration, benevolence, empath. This character is compassionate and very dependable for caring for others.	Impatience, inattentiveness, undependability, lack of compassion. This character is not dependable for caring for others.
Education	Formal education, especially, a university degree. This character has a high level of education – first or second degree	Little or no formal education. Illiterate or semi-illiterate. This character has little or no formal education – high school dropout
Ambition	Professional Career drive. This character is driven to build a career professionally and outside the home	No professional drive. This character is uninterested in creating a career outside the home
Warmth	Gentle, peaceful, kind, sincere, empathetic. This character is helpful, caring and emotional.	Cold, unemotional, indifferent, selfish. This character is uncaring, shows no empathy and emotion
Competence	Intelligent, efficient, knowledgeable. This character is well versed in a subject (product/business) and shares the information for effectiveness	Inexperienced, unintelligent. This character is not knowledgeable at all and feeds off other people's knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examines the portrayal of women in Nigerian movies. This section will include the results from the data gathered from content analysis of five Nigerian movies. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the relationship or interactions between the different demographics and the questions about stereotypic traits and gender roles as seen in the movies. IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to conduct the MANOVA. The independent variables are sex with two levels: male and female; age with four levels: 13-17, 18-34, 35-59, and 60-up; marital status with four levels: married, divorced, dating, and not dating. The dependent variables are the 11 questions on the stereotypic traits and roles from the stereotype content model and coded in the movies such as ambition, education, submission, dominance, competence, and warmth.

First, research question one was addressed.

RQ1: Has the representation of the female in Nollywood movies changed in a five-year span?

To answer this question, of the 11 variables on the portrayed traits in Nollywood movies and coding for change that might have happened over a five-year period, Wilks' $\lambda = .17$, $F(44,174) = 2.28$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .35$, two variables were found to be significant: (1) The female will more likely than the male be portrayed as low on competence if she does not have a job outside the home, $F(4, 55) = 3.12$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .185$; and (2) The female will more likely than the male be shown in traditional setting, for instance, in the kitchen, shopping in the store or staying at home, $F(4, 55) = 4.119$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .231$. The means and standard deviations for the perceived change in portrayal and representation of females in Nollywood movie are

presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Perceived Change in Representation and Portrayal of Females in Nollywood Movies

VARIABLE/TRAIT	MOVIES	MEAN	SD
Intellectual and economic capabilities	Dry	4.3333	.98473
	Black Silhouette	3.8333	.38925
	Unforgivable	3.5833	.79296
	Married but living single	3.9167	.99620
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.7500	1.48477
Stereotypical sex and cultural roles	Dry	2.8333	1.33712
	Black Silhouette	3.1667	.57735
	Unforgivable	3.8333	.93744
	Married but living single	2.6667	1.15470
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.0833	1.24011
Resource Provider/Care giver	Dry	4.0000	1.04447
	Black Silhouette	3.0833	1.08362
	Unforgivable	4.0833	.90034
	Married but living single	3.0833	1.50504
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.8333	1.26730
Education	Dry	2.8333	1.99241
	Black Silhouette	3.3333	1.61433
	Unforgivable	3.0000	2.08893
	Married but living single	2.7500	1.86474
	Mr. & Mrs.	2.5833	1.78164
Ambition	Dry	2.8333	1.99241
	Black Silhouette	3.1667	1.58592
	Unforgivable	4.1667	.93744
	Married but living single	2.8333	1.99241
	Mr. & Mrs.	2.8333	1.64225

Cold	Dry	3.0833	.99620
	Black Silhouette	3.3333	.49237
	Unforgivable	3.0000	1.47710
	Married but living single	3.7500	1.48477
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.4167	1.16450
Competence	Dry	3.8333	1.02986
	Black Silhouette	3.4167	.51493
	Unforgivable	3.7500	.86603
	Married but living single	4.0833	.79296
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.8333	.57735
Incompetence	Dry	3.2500	.45227
	Black Silhouette	2.6667	1.15470
	Unforgivable	3.6667	.77850
	Married but living single	3.2500	.45227
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.5833	.79296
Warm	Dry	3.2500	.45227
	Black Silhouette	3.2500	.62158
	Unforgivable	3.5833	.66856
	Married but living single	3.0833	.28868
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.2500	.62158
Occupational, home, traditional setting	Dry	2.8333	1.02986
	Black Silhouette	3.0833	.28868
	Unforgivable	3.6667	.88763
	Married but living single	2.2500	1.13818
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.0000	.738551
Dominance/submissive	Dry	4.0833	.99620
	Black silhouette	3.9167	.79296
	Unforgivable	3.7500	.96531
	Married but living single	4.0000	.85280
	Mr. & Mrs.	3.5833	.37895

Next, research question two was addressed:

RQ2: How are females and males in Nollywood movies portrayed in their relationships (i.e., married, unmarried, divorced, living together)?

A MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable of sex and the variables about the portrayal of relationship status in the Nollywood movies coded. Females were found to be significantly portrayed as married, in a relationship and expected to be married in comparison with the male, Wilks's $\lambda = .848$, $F(2, 57) = 5.08$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .15$. The means and standard deviations for the relationship portrayals of females and males are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Relationship Portrayals in Nollywood Movies

VARIABLE/TRAIT	SEX	MEAN	SD
Status	Male	1.667	1.154
	Female	2.467	1.431
Intellectual and economic capabilities	Male	4.200	.805
	Female	3.567	1.07

Next, the third research question was visited:

RQ3: Do the female's capabilities in Nollywood movies as perceived by her physical features correlate to success at stereotypical role performance?

To evaluate if the female's capabilities are hinged on her physical features, and success at performing the cultural roles, four variables on physical characteristics and stereotypical sex roles were analyzed and two variables were found to be significant. These two significant variables are: (1) The female will more likely be defined based on the physical features rather than intellectual/economic capabilities, Wilks's $\lambda = .89$, $F(2,57) = 6.68$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .103$. (2)

Both female and male will be portrayed in sex roles that are stereotypical (man works in the office, woman watches and raises the kids at home, woman cooks and does house chores), Wilks's $\lambda = .89$, $F(2,57) = 3.51$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .110$. The means and standard deviations for the relationship between females' capabilities, her physical features and performance of sex roles are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Relationship between Females' Capabilities and Physical Features in Nollywood Movies

VARIABLE/TRAIT	SEX	MEAN	SD
Intellectual and economic capabilities	Male	4.200	.8052
	Female	3.567	1.073
Stereotypical sex and cultural roles	Male	3.33	.606
	Female	2.90	1.45
Resource Provider/Care giver	Male	3.90	1.125
	Female	3.33	1.268
Dominance/submissive/weak	Male	4.10	1.028
	Female	3.63	.927

Finally, research question four is presented:

RQ4: In what forms of the stereotype content model are women portrayed in Nollywood?

A MANOVA analysis of the four variables related to the stereotype content model shows significance for two variables. (1) The female will more likely than the male be portrayed as highly warm if she does not have a job outside the home, Wilks's $\lambda = .908$, $F(1,58) = 4.65$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .074$. (2) The female will more likely than the male be portrayed as low on competence if she does not have a job outside the home, Wilks's $\lambda = .908$, $F(1,58) = 4.37$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .070$. The means and standard deviations for the forms of stereotype content model

in which women are portrayed in Nollywood movies are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for forms of Stereotype Content Model in Nollywood Movies

VARIABLE/TRAIT	SEX	MEAN	SD
Cold	Male	3.233	1.356
	Female	3.400	.968
Competence	Male	3.833	.698
	Female	3.733	.868
incompetence	Male	3.066	.827
	Female	3.500	.776
Warmth	Male	3.133	.345
	Female	3.433	.555

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Findings

The results addressing the research questions reveal the current trend in Nollywood movies and these findings are discussed in this section. Analysis of the results show that the portrayal of women still fits into the old pattern present in Nollywood movies. Previous studies have shown the various patterns that are present in Nollywood movies (Abah, 2008; Adewoye, Odesanya, Abubakar, & Jimoh, 2014). Adewoye et al. (2014), in an analysis of the forms and patterns in selected Nollywood movies, stated that women are generally portrayed as sex objects, domestic servants, weaker sex, wicked mothers-in-law, promiscuous, incapable of making wise decisions, cunning, and using what they have (e.g., their bodies) to get whatever they want (e.g., material gains, boyfriends/husbands). From its inception, Nollywood has churned out movies that “thematically explore the issues of greed, social and political corruption, infidelity, infertility, and human nature generally” (Abah, 2008, p. 343). With these themes, the portrayal of women has always been negative. If a man is greedy, Nollywood movies often interprets his greed to his desire to please his girlfriend/wife or to brag to a female lover who left because of his poverty. Other times, a greedy man who suddenly comes into wealth goes on to spend lavishly on girls with comments such as ‘let me spoil you silly with money’ and ‘I have enough money to buy you and whatever you want’ as though the women are merely materialistic objects. Further, the old pattern in Nollywood shows that women are responsible for male infidelity and infertility. A woman in these movies will more often be blamed for her husband’s infidelity especially if she is ambitious or hot tempered.

Traditional setting. In a five-year span, the portrayals remained the same except with the

variable on (1) The female will more likely than the male be shown in a traditional setting, for instance, in the kitchen, shopping in the store or staying at home. The current study finds that the women are significantly portrayed in less traditional settings. For instance, in the movie *Married but Living Single*, both females coded (lead and supporting female characters) were seen more in occupational settings than traditional. Also, Dr. Zara in the movie *Dry* was shown more in the hospital, working to save lives than at home or in the kitchen. However, Linda's house help in *Mr. & Mrs.*, Kate as well as Susan, the female lead character, were shown more in the kitchen, and at home than anywhere else.

Woman's education. There appeared to be a slight shift in education aspirations for the women as six out of the 10 women (three lead female characters and 3 supporting female characters) were portrayed as educated (defined in this study as having a university degree) without being promiscuous while in the university. However, there was still the subtle hint of female promiscuity. This was evidenced in the movie *Unforgivable* where Priscilla and the other girls (Sewa's friends), while in the university were shown to enjoy partying and meeting rich men who would give them money in exchange for sexual pleasure. Also, in *Black Silhouette*, Maro and Osas were portrayed as using what they have to get what they want (Adewoye et al., 2014).

Woman's ambition. Women are still portrayed as being responsible for house chores and taking care of the home. A woman's worth, as seen in the coded Nollywood movies, is based on her ability to be a perfect homemaker with roles including but not limited to meeting the husband's sexual desires, cooking for the man, and tending the children. Examples of this minimization of a woman's worth was exemplified in the cases of Kate in *Married but Living Single*, Susan in *Mr. & Mrs.*, and Sewa in *Unforgivable* whose values as individuals were

portrayed to lie in their abilities to keep the home front running. To drive home this expectation and standard for a woman, Linda in *Mr. & Mrs.* was portrayed as a deviant and a failure because she was not personally involved in taking care of the home. Though she was quite successful in her career and was a financial support to her husband, none of those mattered as she was not tending the home front personally. This is in support of prior research which indicated that women should not exceed the limits nor fail to meet the domestic roles expectations placed on them by cultural institutions (Abah, 2008).

Neuendorf, Gore, Dalessandro, Janstova, and Snyder-Suhy (2010) in a study on portrayal of women in James Bond films found that despite societal progression of the feminist ideology, women (in bond films) are still depicted in a “rather limited and sex-stereotyped manner” (p. 758). The current study supports Neuendorf et al.’s (2010) finding as despite the quest for gender parity, women are still portrayed as weak and incompetent in Nollywood movies regardless of the time period.

Woman’s status. Also, this current study found that women are more pressured into marriage as the ideal woman is depicted as the one who is married, who has children specifically in the marriage, and living up to the societal expectations placed on them as wives and mothers. The significant result shows that compared to the men, women are more shown to be married or pressured to be married. This is seen in several instances in the coded movies. For instance, Halima, the 13-year old girl in the movie *Dry*, was pressured into marriage by her mother who insisted that Halima was old enough and must be married despite Halima’s desire for education and not marriage.

This is consistent with prior research that women are not to be educated. According to Jatau (2010)’s submission, western education does not serve the traditional roles of being home

makers and care givers. Although one might argue that Halima's story was an exposition on a trend peculiar to Northern Nigeria, the exchange on marriage and women between Damola and Sewa in *Unforgivable* gives credence to the finding that women are expected and portrayed as married women more than the men regardless of the region.

Appearance and objectification. The consequences of objectification include valuing women solely on appearance, minimizing their capabilities and competence of women (Nussbaum, 2000). This was found to be significantly true and shows that women are more likely to be defined based on physical appearance and capability is based on the ability to fulfil stereotypical roles rather than intellectual or economic capabilities. As stated in the literature review, women's worth is downplayed and the narrative that women's abilities are in their physical characteristics as well as nurturing abilities.

Stereotype Content Model and woman's traits. With the stereotype content model framework, this study postulated that women will be portrayed as either warm, cold, competent or incompetent. As Fiske et al. (2002) and Cuddy et al. (2008) noted, the stereotype content model is a perception of warmth, competence and how the interactions are dependent on competition and status.

With this framework and in answer to the fourth research question, an analysis of the four stereotype content model variables indicates that women are portrayed as warm only when they are not competing for the same resources as the men, in this case, career or professional jobs outside the home. For instance, Susan in *Mr. & Mrs.* was portrayed as warm and caring but incompetent until she became bored as a housewife. As soon as she desired that she wanted to get a job since she trained as a lawyer, she was reminded of how cold and uncaring and ungrateful she was becoming. Also, in *Married but Living Single*, Mrs. Ibru, Kate's boss at the

advertising agency was portrayed to be overbearing, strict and insensitive to the family needs of Kate. She was presented as a very cold woman who is ambitious and concerned only about the work. Similarly, Kate was portrayed as very cold because she had a job outside her home and wanted to succeed at her job. On the other hand, Sewa was portrayed as warm, but incompetent since she had no job outside the home and throughout the movie did not aspire to work outside the home.

These findings show that movie portrayals over the past years have not changed although there are instances of improvement such as showing more women in offices and having careers outside the home, the idea that women's place is in the home remains unchanged.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations. The relatively small amount of data was a limitation to the study and MANOVA analyses. An additional challenge was getting the Nollywood movies in the United States. To beat this challenge, movies were selected based on their nomination in the award category as Movie of the Year in the years under review and their availability on irokotv.com and youtube.com. In addition, this study was an analysis of the contents of Nollywood movies. Perhaps, a survey or focus group interview with questions on how people perceive women after a Nollywood movie primer could have yielded significantly different results.

Future Directions. From the foregoing analysis and discussion of findings, it is evident that Nollywood movies reinforces widely held negative gender stereotypes. Further research could explore the portrayal of age stereotypes in Nollywood movies and study the relationship and interactions between both gender and age. Also, this study is primarily about African women, specifically Nigerian women, further research could examine other cultures such as Asian, European or American; how the movie industries in these cultures portray women and

thereafter, a comparative analysis of the portrayals in these cultures and in African cultures.

Conclusion

One of the major media avenues where women are increasingly visible is in Nollywood movies (Amobi, 2013). Whether as the audience or as stakeholders, the Nollywood movies are quite popular with African women (Abah, 2008). This visibility and growth of Nollywood notwithstanding, the movie contents still reflect pictures that reinforce patriarchal notions and perpetuate gender disparity.

It is clear from this present study that is that Nollywood movies produce images that further relegate women to positions of subservience and domestication. Because of exposure to these movies, viewers cultivate beliefs that women should be domesticated, inferior, and less ambitious than their male counterparts should be, while being judged on their abilities to manage their homes and marriages. Thus, these movies reaffirm the socio-cultural norms and expectations. This prevailing trend is worrisome for women, particularly those in rural areas and with little or no education. For instance, statement such as “our home is the most important thing in our lives. Any woman who cannot keep her home has failed” by Susan to Linda after Linda’s husband was caught in bed with Kate, the house help in the movie *Mr. & Mrs.*, is not uncommon among Nigerian women who cultivate the belief that their worth is hinged on the success of their home/marriages.

Another worrisome dimension to this trend is the role women themselves play in these movies. As Adewoye et al (2014) indicated, women, whether as actresses, producers or directors, are active contributors to the stereotypic portrayals shown in movies. In view of this, this researcher recommends that actresses should not take up roles that demean them sexually and culturally. In addition, producers and directors, should be more creative in producing

movies that are compelling and do not fit the stereotypic patterns present in the society.

Prior research shows that media images are often internalized and viewers then cultivate attitudes that fit the narrative and realities in the media. Nollywood movies, as a form of media, typically depicts images that are not only harmful to women, but also capable of negatively affecting their sense of worth and stunting women's development as well as empowerment.

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