

**NIGERIAN CAREER WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF THEIR  
REPRESENTATION IN SELECTED NOLLYWOOD FILMS**

**BY**

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MATRIC NO. 11037**

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
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**AUGUST, 2021.**

## CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Grace Dumebi GWAM-NZEKWU in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, under my supervision.

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**(Date)**

## DEDICATION

To God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

“It was not by their sword that they won the land,  
Nor did their arm bring them victory;  
It was Your Right Hand, Your Arm,  
and the light of Your Face, for You loved them.”  
(Psalm 44: 3, NIV)

to my noble princes –  
'Neme, 'Kachi and 'Muanya;  
Brilliant beacons of light that herald a beautiful future and a glorious destiny...

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## ABSTRACT

Career women constitute a group of upwardly mobile individuals contributing to societal development in Nigeria. Nollywood films have variously portrayed career women on different light. However, the perception of Nigerian career women to how they are represented in Nollywood films have not received adequate attention. This study was, therefore, designed to examine Nigerian career women's perception of their representation in selected Nollywood films.

Melvin Defleur's Cultural Norms and Emmanuella Lombardo's feminist analytical theories served as framework. The interpretive and descriptive survey designs were employed. Ten films were purposively selected based on their representation of career women. They were *Ije*, *Guilty Pleasures*, *Mr & Mrs*, *Lionheart*, *Isoken*, *Rough Diamond*, *Tango with Me*, *100% Secrete*, *Ghana Must Go* and *Iyore*. Copies of a questionnaire were administered to 580 purposively selected career women who watched Nollywood films. Data were subjected to content analysis and descriptive statistics.

The portrayals of career women in Nollywood films are perceived by career women as misrepresentations and inappropriate. *Mr & Mrs* emphasizes the need for a husband and his family to allow wives who so desire, to practise their chosen career and also projects problems associated with a wife being too engrossed in her career. *Ije* and *Guilty Pleasures* attribute marital breakup to wives being prevented from pursuing their career. In *Rough Diamond*, Mena almost loses her job due to her desperate desire to keep her home by pretending to be pregnant and adopting a child under false pretence. *Tango With Me*, *100% Secrete*, *Ghana Must Go* and *Iyore* depict different aspects of women's lives with no attention paid to their careers. In *Lionheart*, Adaeze wields her astute entrepreneurial skills to revitalize her aged father's ailing transport company. *Isoken* similarly portrays a successful career-minded young woman whose priority was not necessarily in marriage, much to the chagrin of her dear mother. A majority of the respondents (86.7%) and (56.7%) perceived that women are rarely represented in Nollywood films as influential leaders and role models, respectively. In addition, 83.7% viewed their portrayals in the films as negative and stereotypic, 28.1% saw them as passive victims, while 22.9% understood them as scheming and manipulative, and 21.3% adjudged them as available sex object. Career women challenges indicated that 49.0% of the respondents grappled with time management, 23.9% desired self-improvement, and 17.0% coped with sexual harassment in the workplace.

Nigerian career women perceived their representation in Nollywood films as overwhelmingly negative.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

A cursory examination of the feminine gender in Nigeria immediately accosts one with myriad issues; early and forced marriages-closely allied to the ugly practice of polygamy and harems in certain geographical locations; discriminatory practices in access to education and career choices; a double workload for the career woman who must needs keep her home; antiquated cultural practices that degrade and demean a potential bride or a widow; and the questionable cultural practice that ensures that a female is always either the father's property, or subsequently the husband's and as such, is permanently excluded from any form of inheritance rights.

According to Stacy Smith, Marc Chaouetti and Katherine Peiper (2014), in a United Nations sponsored research – (Gender Bias Without Borders), that spanned one hundred and thirty eight countries;

Women the world over face stark disparities in health, finance, education, politics and other areas. Persistent gender inequality may threaten economic growth and/or social progress. At the most micro level, discrimination impedes women and girls from achieving their individual hopes and dreams. (Smith, Chaouetti and Peiper: 2014)

It is not that society at large has been unaware of these issues and problems. Infact, these issues are not limited to Nigeria but rather, some of these problems tend to span all human existence. Although gender issues evolve separately in different parts of the world, the United Nations General Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1979, adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As if to further buttress its determination not to pay mere lip service any longer to feminine gender issues, the United Nations declared 1975 to 1985, “the

Decade for Women,” giving yet a bigger boost to 1975 that had been earlier declared “the International Year for Women.” This was really a great milestone as this momentous event was rounded off with a world conference. Tagged ‘Forum 85’, the Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya on July 15<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> 1985. The Convention resolution was that the advocated forward- looking strategies be adopted by all member states of the United Nations. This was a historical monumental leap as the document was signed into law and is therefore a legal instrument. Also, in 1995 during the Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, China, all governments met to discuss gender equality issues. The key potential of media to promote gender equality and diversity in all spheres of life was highlighted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. All stakeholders were called to join forces to combat “stereotyping of women and inequality in women’s access to and particularly in all communication systems, especially in the media.”

In December 2013, UNESCO and its partners gathered media organizations, media professionals, academicians, policymakers, civil society groups and development agencies in Bangkok, Thailand, for a global forum in media and gender. The forum took the 1995 Beijing Declaration as its reference point and resulted in the setting up of a pioneering Global Alliance on media and Gender (GAMAG). The aim of GAMAG has two focal thrusts. Firstly, it would ensure constructive dialogue between media partners and civil society. Secondly, it would enable all stakeholders to collectively give momentum to women’s access to expression and decision making by promoting a gender inclusive media and communication environment. Further, through its Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations has championed an increase in equality for women and girls across different sectors by the year 2015. While it cannot be argued that women in the millennium, now have far more visibility in the Nigerian media (both behind and in front of the scenes), it must be acknowledged that the structure of the Nigerian society is male supremacist. Even though men maybe disadvantaged in specific contexts, yet in relation to women, the societal structure frequently affords them real power.

Simply by virtue of the fact that males have had a head start over and above the female, it can be discerned that the Nigerian media is also male dominated. A casual observation and analysis of media content quickly reveals male supremacist roles in much of output- be they adverts, radio, television programs or films. In Nollywood

films, women are frequently passed on as a commodity, or at best, mere service providers. The “Glamour Girl” syndrome is highly proliferate. As Angela Ukata (2011) notes:

One of the first Nollywood videos I watched - *Glamour Girl* typified women in very outrageous ways that tried to feed on the stereotypes of women in Nigeria... It seemed as though women had nothing good to contribute to the society other than destroying moral values... I began to interrogate the rationale behind such representations of women. (Ukata, 2011)

On the other hand, the “good mother” syndrome is the desired unspoken contrast. At best, the woman is represented as the sedate long suffering, enduring pillar of the nucleus and/or extended family. But by far, the aspect that is burgeoning into alarming dimensions is the media representations of the Nigerian career woman. It becomes necessary at this point to articulate and define who the career woman precisely is, in Nigeria.

**Who is the Nigerian Career Woman?** The career woman succinctly put, is either a high profile entrepreneur in the market place who employs labor, or an employee, in both private and formal sectors of the economy. This spans across all professional capacities - educationists, medical practitioners, entertainment industry and the arts, service and goods provider sectors, to name a few.

*The Career Woman* (2014) starring Jackie Appiah and directed by Chidi Anyanwu is a succinct illustration. Anita, (Jackie Appiah) is featured as an impeccable and distinguished excellent lawyer who adheres strictly to the ethics of her profession, and has never lost a case. She’s tidily married to Richard (Frederick Leonard) with an only child. All is well until Queen (Calista Okoronkwo), her junior sister who is single, comes to visit them. Conflict is introduced as Queen sadly sets her sights on Richard as her would be man.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It is possible to argue that the dramatic representations of the Nigerian career woman derive from a desire to reflect reality in its entirety, in Nollywood films. Notably, Nigerian filmmakers have not been negligent in highlighting societal problems. Far from that! The problem however, has been that the continual presentation of these many actual ‘slices of life’ have perhaps honed and conditioned the psyche of many



an unsuspecting viewer to accept this as the unchangeable status quo. Rodman (2001) in giving a functional definition of gender analysis identifies its resultant effect, in Rodman's view gender studies examine how the media (society) perpetuate gender roles. A culture's assumption about how males and female think, act and speak are constantly presented in mediated images. The potential influence of these portrayals on a society's sense of who men and women are and who they should be is the gender critic's realm of consideration. These studies are concerned with the way gender stereotypes are confirmed. Anyanwu (2003) however, identifies and offers the desirable option which is summarized as the society is both a teacher and a pupil. As a teacher, it provides the artiste with raw materials for his work; as pupil, it has the artiste as a teacher to be taught, using the raw materials it provides. Thus, the artiste can be a prescriber of good taste if s/he is conscious of his/her role in society. Though Imam's (1983) advocacy comes across as a lofty and grand ideal "for people to be freed from exploitation and oppression, the whole structure of society needs to be changed" The big question though, is "how"? Nwagbara (1983) wisely advocates a first step towards a long term positive solution that in order to affect improvements, one must first be conscious of the problems, and not only acknowledge that dynamic change needs to be effected, but to also have a dedicated and determined group of people, who know what to do.

The question therefore arises - who are these dedicated group of persons who would feel the pulse of career women representations (actually better defined as misrepresentations) and set out consciously and doggedly over time to knowledgeably redress these issues? The study sets out to interrogate the actuality that while the above assertion was completely birthed by culture, it has been vigorously cultivated and nurtured by the mass media, especially television and its elaborate and long drawn out dramas.

### **1.3 Aim of the Research**

1. Key to the aim of this research is to locate and determine how Nigerian career women in particular, perceive and react to how Nollywood dramas represent them in the mediated world of film.
2. Further to this quest, is the imperative to identify what methods and processes could be applied and utilised, to realize sustainable ideological shifts in societal

perspectives; which would ultimately trigger and engender positive change in Nollywood career women depictions and representations.

3. The research also seeks to locate and identify that in the past few years, quite in contradistinction to the acute paucity of filmic career female representations, there has been what may be best described as “a moderate up-scaling” in the societal status of women. Currently, Nigeria now boasts a number of career female Chief Executives of entire establishments, companies, government corporations etc. As a consequence, ordinarily, one would expect that with the changing roles of especially the female gender in society as established by modern developmental thrusts and goals as is demonstrated for instance in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; that these salient factors would be adequately ensconced in the thematic content of Nigerian films. The future direction should be an adequate reflection of current realities - Nollywood films that portray Nigerian career women in leadership positions and as positive role models.
4. The study also takes a critical look at some dramatic portrayals and representations of Nigerian career women in Nollywood films, with the objective of locating the root causes and sustaining factors of such, with a view to proffering and recommending sustainable solutions.
5. The study further sets out to identify if filmic mediated reality as seen through television - (the major filmic viewership medium in Nigeria) is active in reinforcing societal gender constructs. Traditionally, most cultures have sex-role stereotyping. With men firmly in control of Nigerian films, it should be worthy of note that over the years, these portrayals have largely remained same. Baldwin and Capoor (2004) define sex and gender as having different implications:

Sex refers to the biological difference between men and women, while gender is a social construction of how men and women should act, what values they should hold dear, and what roles they should play in society. (Baldwin and Capoor, 2004: 156).

Interestingly, it could be adduced that Nollywood films are quite adept at wielding and applying these social constructs. Stanley Baran (2001), reflects George Gebner’s

three 'B's of television which articulates and outlines what he termed - "Cultivation Analysis Theory".

- Television BENDS mainstream reality to its own and its sponsor's institutional interests;
  - Television BLURS the traditional distinctions of people's views of their world;
  - Television BLENDS people's realities into the cultural mainstream. (Baran, 2001:338)
6. The study further aims to locate and pinpoint if socio-political and economic factors frame, contextualize and perpetuate current Nollywood career women depictions. While the "institutional interests" in the case of Nollywood films may easily consist of the entire coterie of executive/producers/directors who call the content, thematic, storyline and marketing distribution shots, the binding thread and undergirding key interest, is MONEY. In fact, lots of it! Another 'institutional interest' that is closely allied to the above is the syndrome of "why change an obviously successful money generating formula?" Better explained; once the filmmakers have had a 'break' with a film storyline and thematic content that has recorded an appreciable success, they invariably, adhere very doggedly to the selfsame formula.

#### **1.4 Objectives of Research**

1. The study sets out to interrogate the actuality that while Nollywood career female stereotypic portrayals are originally birthed by culture, the mass media especially television through the medium of Nollywood films, has vigorously nurtured its perpetuation.
2. To highlight and indicate that there are critical issues intrinsic to the wellbeing of career women such as the daily rigor of balancing career requirements alongside pressing family and personal needs; which hitherto have been hardly identified for research; and to locate solutions to some of these career women felt needs.
3. To locate the kind of filmic representations and depictions career women favor and would rather see, utilizing ten selected films.

4. To identify what methods and processes to apply and utilize in order to realize long lasting societal ideological shifts in perspectives that would ultimately trigger and engender positive change in Nollywood career women depictions.
5. To recommend proactive measures towards positive and sustainable change.

## **1.5 Research Questions and Hypothesis of Research**

### **Research Questions**

1. How is the Nigerian career woman frequently represented in Nollywood films?
2. What is the common reaction of career women to the portrayals of the career woman in Nollywood films?
3. What filmic representations or depictions do career women favor or would rather see?

### **Hypothesis of Research**

#### Hypothesis One

That in a male dominated Nigerian filmic world; there is a paucity of themes and storylines that actually present the career woman and issues pertinent to her life.

#### Hypothesis Two

That when the career woman is presented (if only by default), such representations are hardly positive and never as influential captains and leaders of industry, or as role models.

#### Hypothesis Three

That the positions in Hypothesis One and Two can be adequately remedied only when feminist oriented filmmakers: screenplay writers, producers, executive producers and directors, make films that espouse issues that are critical to career women.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for a number of reasons.

1. Nollywood is a nascent industry, and studies in audience reception and perception research are very few and far between to date.
2. Nollywood has immense potential as a fast growing industry, and has been claimed to be second only to crude oil, in its revenue earning capacity.
3. Nollywood films have promptly claimed a first place in the movie industries in the entire African continent. To underscore all of the above points, Nollywood films are very popular among viewing audiences in many other African countries as well as among Nigerians and Africans in the Diaspora, all over the globe. As Goke Alamu, (2010) reports:

A global cinema survey conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization, (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics in 2009, named Nigeria as the second largest producer of film in the world. This survey however, took sole cognizance of the number (quantity) of films produced. (Alamu, 2010:3)

4. Being that females constitute a very significant percentage of the Nigerian population, their stories necessarily, must not only be represented in the filmic space of the nation, but even more importantly, be adequately represented.

It is hoped that the findings of this study would be significant to women movements and other interest groups who are calling for a change in the traditional representations of the career woman, and are keen to sponsor or facilitate prescriptive films that would carry development oriented messages and touch the life space of its audiences. As part of contribution to knowledge, this thesis has opened up a positive critical approach for assessing the career women's reactions to female depictions and characterizations in Nollywood films.

More importantly, the thesis brings to the fore the notion that career women are resentful of current and replete feminine filmic portrayals and are calling for a positive shift and change to more realistic and relevant portrayals. As such, the study is expected to further stimulate discussion and action on the focal point of film producers/directors engendering films that are prescriptive and development oriented.

## **1.7 Scope of Study**

The study scope embraces how career women in Nigeria perceive career females in Nigeria, in the face of the inequities of life and the daily rigor of giving family care to a nucleus/extended family, while holding down a career. The study also sets out to determine what constitutes and nurtures the present filmic feeds, as well as to locate remedial and correctional measures, that are needful and could be harnessed by society. The study further explores plausibilities that could stem the present representations and recommends tested and proactive measures that have been tested and proven elsewhere on the African continent. A good example is Peacock's S.O.N.K.E, a prolific non- governmental organization based in South Africa. SONKE recruits men to persuade fellow men to be less repressive with their families, while teaching them what is daubed as gender justice. The teaching of "gender justice" also extends to women, boys and girls disparately, and has been so effective that the SONKE organization has spread into the entire West Africa sub region.

The study would cover an extensive review of previous research conducted in this field; a content analysis of ten Nollywood films, and a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the select group in study – the Nigerian career women, from whom relevant data has been generated as respondents.

It is believed therefore that a tripod research approach of generating and testing hypothesis, of content analysis of product samples (in this case ten Nollywood films), and generating quantitative and qualitative data through related specific respondents, within a geographical spread of six cities would be adequately sufficient to establish credible and authentic research findings. The opinions of various career women across six states would be sought to generate quantitative and qualitative data.

### **1.8 Limitations of Study**

Much as one would have loved to explore this topic even more extensively, one is however constrained by some factors. Chief among these is the paucity of local/ international publications on audience researches on Nollywood films. An appreciable volume of research has gone on and is ongoing about Nigerian video films, but even within these ambits, the feminine gender and its related issues are generally left out. It is not uncommon to have an entire journal of the arts with even a special edition dedicated exclusively to the Nigerian media and its film industry yet, not a single one of the research papers would feature a feminist or even gender related issue!

In spite of this limitation however, it is pertinent to indicate that this study locates areas where a knowledge gap exists, and seeks to fill it.

## 1.9 Definition of Key Terms

**Career:** Career is a particular work, vocation (or a series of jobs) over a number of years, that a person has received formal training in an educational institution to function in. This usually involves more responsibility as time passes especially as the individual inevitably, consistently moves up the organizational ladder; for instance- a career in Medicine.

**Gender** on the other hand as a terminology, has been somewhat stretched in recent years by certain societal developments and other people specific inclinations. Roberts (1997) therefore defines gender as socially constructed and not *necessarily only* biologically determined.

People are born 'female' or 'male' but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what the appropriate behavior and attitudes are for them and how they should relate to other people. This learned behavior is what makes up gender identity and determines gender roles. (Roberts, 1997)

**Representation:** Definitions of representation, amongst other definitions is (1.) a theatrical performance; and (2.) a figure, image or idea that substitutes reality.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 The Evolution of the Nigerian Film Industry: Nollywood

Long before the advent of Nollywood – as it is now known, there were a good number of Nigerian films; first by the British colonial masters and subsequently, by independent filmmakers such as Ola Balogun, Duro Ladipo, Hubert Ogunde, Eddie Ugboma and a number of others. Hyginus Ekwuazi (2001) categorises this into three stages:

- The Colonial Phase
- The Post Independent/ pre Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) Phase, and
- The Post S.A.P Phase

The characteristic of the industry, derived from the combination of all of the above. Colonialism privileged the documentary... With independence, the sources and types of films were diversified, with predominantly feature films coming from just about anywhere. The indigenous feature film made its debut in 1970 (*Kongi's Harvest*); and peaked in 1986. Between 1972 and 1990, some 80 indigenous feature films had been licensed by the censor for public screening.

(Ekwuazi, 2001:4).

Afolabi Adesanya (2001) furthers the narrative:

Involvement of the Yoruba theatre travelling practitioners in motion picture production was perhaps the most auspicious single factor in the evolution of an indigenous cinema in Nigeria. This happened in the mid 1970s when in spite of positive reviews English-language feature films by Nigerian filmmakers were not making the desired impact to stimulate constant market demand. From Ola Balogun's folkloric *Ajani Ogun*, the Yoruba film genre metamorphosed into the witchcraft-horror thriller introduced by Hubert Ogunde's *Aiye*. This led to a spate of



witchcraft films in the Yoruba genre. The economics of celluloid film production and marketing had been the bane of Nigerian filmmakers. (Adesanya, 2000: 38-39). Femi Shaka (2003) underscores the narrative:

It was the adverse effects of the devaluation of the national currency, that stifled the celluloid based budding Nigerian film industry. The creative experimentation with the VHS film camera as a medium for narrative film was therefore a consequence of the post-SAP financial difficulties encountered by the filmmakers. (Shaka, 2003:42).

As Frank Ukadike (2013) opines;

Although there was sporadic film production in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s, it was not until the 1994 release of the box office hit *Living in Bondage* that the inception of what is known today as Nollywood, garnered both national and international attention. (Ukadike, 2013:42)

While it could also be argued that the Nigerian video film was first incepted as purely a child of circumstance, what cannot be under doubt however is that within a period span of less than ten years, it blossomed into a flourishing film industry, and became widely known and generally referred to as Nollywood film industry.

Onyekwere Okpara and Ezechi Onyerionwu (2008) provide a brief assessment perspective:

Even though evidence abounds of some video films that had been made before the advent of the remarkable block buster movie, *Living in Bondage 1 & 2*, what one can remember as the effective inception of the now all powerful Nollywood industry, is the 1992 release of the film. This is probably why Jonathan Hayes, arguably the most expatriate scholar of the Nigerian film identifies *Living in Bondage* as laying the foundation (alongside other films such as *Glamour Girls*) for the video film industry.

It needs to be stated that Nollywood has risen from very humble beginnings to the place of domineering prominence which it enjoys now. In any history of the Nigerian video film industry, deserved credit has to be given to the influence of preceding films and other artistic forms; inclusive of the television dramas and soap operas of the 1980's and 1990's.

(Okpara and Onyerionwu 2008, 140, 141)

Barclays Ayakoroma (2008) throws light on the social background and influences on thematic structure and storyline contents of this fledgling industry; of course quite in addition, to the overriding desire to make money on the part of the practitioners and proprietors.

It could be said that Nigerian video films are deep rooted socially, in the sense that they not only reflect the way of life of Nigerians but also tell stories of Nigeria's past and present. Moreso, the films depict the culture of the target audience and are produced by people who also live in the cultural milieu of the audience themselves...For instance, the first Nigerian video film *Living in Bondage*, projected socio-cultural traits and propensity of the average Igbo trader who will stop at nothing to have a breakthrough in business.

Thus Nigerian video films are not rebuilding such cultural values but playing a very significant role in Nigeria's socio-political influence in Africa, and the black world in general. Hence Nollywood, the acclaimed second largest film industry, is a cultural product that tells the story of Nigeria and Nigeria's past and present. (Ayakoroma, 2008:82)

As to their form, content, structure and style, Jonathan Haynes (2000) is avidly munificent in his scholarly analysis:

The videos may not give us what we thought we wanted, but there are good reasons to pay attention to them. They offer the strongest most accessible expression of contemporary Nigerian popular culture, which is to say, the imagination of Africa's largest nation. They are a prime instance of the interpenetration of the global and the local through the international commerce in cultural forms – which one can claim without fear of exaggeration, is for better or worse, a crucial event in human history. And they are a prime instance of African modernity, a concept that has been growing in interest and importance, even as it has lost the clarity it once appeared to have in the days of a nearly universal belief in 'modernization'... Ethnicity is an example of a submerged issue that the Nigerian videos may help us to see since ethnicity is a basic (though not simple) structuring principle of Nigerian video film production and ethnic politics in Nigeria are very much out in the open.

(Haynes, 2000: 4, 10)

A number of political factors had led to the emergence of the video film. On the one hand, celluloid film production and its consequent cinema going culture for a long while had had it rough-going; not to mention a lot of mostly politically occasioned setbacks of military coups and counter coups; a disadvantage that readily increasingly boosted television, while steadily diminishing, if not practically eroding cinema audiences. The 1960's and 1970's had had a steady growth in the establishment of cinema houses and a cinema going culture was actively a dominant part of Nigerian social life. The 1980's and 1990's however, recorded a very sharp decline in cinema audience attendances.

This unwelcome development was brought about by a number of factors. Politically, with the protracted rule of the military, an increase in armed robbery ensued, in spite of the stiff penalty of death by firing squad, if found guilty. This dare devilry was largely triggered by dire economic circumstances. Armed robbery attacks were rife and sporadic, and as a result, citizens generally scampered to the 'safety' of their homes at dusk. Haynes (2000) further gives a brief purvey of this historical background. According to him, "the years of the Ibrahim Babangida military junta, officialised the impoverisation of the citizenry. Economic austerity measures such as the S.A.P program were extremely unpopular and hard biting." The subsequent years of the Sani Abacha military era, if anything, made matters worse. This singular factor was to completely blot out any form of the hitherto booming nightlife in the southern Nigeria metropolis. The other factor that really fueled the decline of outings to the cinema was the invention of the VHS video film camera and play back machine. This was simply connected to a television set and one could watch entire movies in the privacy of one's home. Quite a number of the affluent middle class could afford this, contrary to the old film strips that required the use of a projector, which only the super affluent rich could afford. However, other target audiences and video film viewers were also to be found in one room screening centers and mushroom halls equipped with a television set and a VHS player. Gradually, the video business made inroads into Idumota market Lagos, where it found patrons who desired entertainment.

From the above analysis, the polity desperately needed a form of entertainment that was affordable and in the relative comfort/safety of their homes and neighbourhoods. The advent of the VHS player machine and tapes fit snugly into these requirements to inevitably birth the Nigerian video film industry.

## 2.2 Television and the Nollywood Film

It is an interesting blend to accord great cognizance and attention to television in the indices of film analysis. What must be kept firmly in mind is that this study incorporates a hybrid of film, whose end user is the television set. Also, the majority of Nigerian video films are largely viewed through television, or by television audiences through cable networks. In recent years, the cable television networks such as Multichoice/DSTV, Startimes, CTL and others, have become firmly entrenched and quickly edged the hitherto mushroomed video rental shops (the former purveyors of this business) out of commission. Hubson (1990) states that: “television is a part of the everyday life of its audience. It adds to the hypothesis that locates television drama programs as part of popular culture.”

It is little wonder therefore, that many Nigerian television stations schedule either local or imported soap drama content into their daily peak viewing periods. One can therefore claim with some confidence that the video film channels on cable television and soap operas are highly popular, especially among women and female adolescents.

In fact television has become an indispensable culture and a daily “must have/see/view” item in the daily lives of Nigerians. This is very much applicable to Nollywood films and soap operas; as well as the foreign, imported soaps that are broadcast daily on Nigerian television stations.

To further buttress the ineluctability of this, Campbell (1998) asserts that in America for instance;

The average American spends forty percent of his free time watching television...The idea of a visual affordable mass medium giving all citizens entertainment and information held great appeal... Today, companies are marketing products that allow audiences to be introduced to, and see such products through our television sets. As a plus, television offers special moments-inaugurations, debates, space conquests, football, sensational dramas, films and even mega events such as the Olympics and Super bowl, that bring large heterogeneous groups together for shared triumphs and mourning and for common experiences.

(Campbell; 149, 150)

Additionally television by concept and make up has what analysts have described as inbuilt “thrills and frills!” These range from sports programs (that could come in mega sizes, such as local and international football championships, the World Cup, Olympics, etc), and the inevitable daily news with the occasional thrills of watching live - “breaking news”- that could range from awesome natural phenomena such as earthquakes to seismic volcanic eruptions!

### **2.2.1 Television and the Power of the Visual Culture**

Additionally, television dictates the dress sense and fashion of especially adolescents and young adults and inevitably influences our choices of household products, and even food and drink. In today’s media culture, a product must be given visibility through television adverts for the product to attract huge sales and consumerism.

As has been earlier stated, it can comfortably be estimated that over ninety percent of Nollywood/Hollywood/Bollywood film viewing is done through television in Nigeria. This is largely due to the dearth of an active cinema culture. The above developments engendered a ripple effect consequence which has accrued immensely to the inexorableness of the television medium to Nigerian homes. Drama that is transmitted through the broadcast media is patently popular, not only with television viewing audiences, but also with television station programmers. It usually makes for high quality content provision especially if they consist of one or half hour daily serials or series, popularly referred to as soap operas.

A relevant and nagging question however, needs to be stated. Within the ambits of this almost riotous profusion of Nigerian moviemakers “offering the strongest and most accessible expression of contemporary Nigerian popular culture,” and “telling the story of Nigeria - past and present,” through the easily assessable medium of television, how much of the career woman’s stories are told if any, within this plethora of stories that echo through the halls of time?

### **2.3 Female Gender Representations in Nollywood Films**

To a large extent it is factual that poverty and its indices are rife in Nigeria. A World Bank demographic statistical, economic survey reveals that women are always at the bottom of the economic ladder especially in developing countries in Africa. Differently put, women constitute the world’s poorest persons. Even the women who

act out the demeaning role assigned to them in Nollywood films in some cases, do so largely out of lack and a need to procure basic necessities of life for themselves and their loved ones. As such, a vicious cycle of exploitation is created. Women are cast in minor roles and when they are given more key roles, it is often that of a scheming evil manipulator. Emmanuel Alozie (2008) critiques the concept of male producers and directors exploiting women's dilemma for the Nollywood screen.

Studies on mass media have also established that an individual's value system and world view are related to their media exposure. As such, frequent exposure to stereotyped roles, attitudes and behaviors of women in television (*Nollywood films on television*), could lead young girls to emulate and assume those conducts the characters convey. This is because, at informative stage of life, children tend to perceive mass media characters as real, rather than a symbolic representation of reality. It may be argued that the mass media is a potent instrument for educating and influencing the perception of behavior of individuals. Since in most societies men control the political, social, economic and cultural institutions, feminists contend that women are denied access to media to represent themselves, enabling men to dictate their depiction in the mass media. With men controlling the depiction of women in the mass media, the depiction of women is often based on sex and gender stereotypes. (Alozie, 2008 5)

The aphorism that "he who feels it knows it," and one might add 'like none other,' holds true. Others can represent women but the women are best positioned to relate their felt needs, hopes, expectations and aspirations in life and not have extraneous persons and factors dictate to them. This is a trait that is inbuilt and wired into all humans. Any aberration from this would smirk of domination, if not manipulation.

Anyanwu has a similar observation:

The (Nigerian) video films positions women at the bottom of the power hierarchy in a way that reinforces their domination and suppression. Using discourse theory, the representations of women in Nigerian films also appear to be subtle images that negotiate and create "normal" gender identity for women by respectively representing women as inferior subjects and as 'immoral' people that are morally corrupt. Specifically, the representations in Nigerian films are similar to those constructed in soap opera. Through the various studies of the portrayal of women in Nigerian films, it has been argued that Nigerian films do not only limit representations of women to passive and subordinate housewives; they also portray them as

evil people, who are wicked, vindictive and unfaithful.  
(Anyanwu, 2003:84)

Anyanwu is not alone in this view. Other studies and research indicate that frequently women are portrayed as mere sex symbols or as blatant prostitutes available for sale to the highest bidder in films such as *Domitilla*, *The Prostitute* and the more recent *Supermodels* (2010) by Osita IHEME. To make matters worse, many of such productions have had runaway financial successes, and in view of the quaint ethics of Nigerian filmmakers and adherence to their uncanny code of practice manual of “make sure to replicate to death whatever has been found to be successful,” these films that degrade women have continued to be churned out without let or hindrance.

Ayakaroma (2008) graphically outlines the predicament and remote causes of women’s filmic representations:

Many Nigerian video films portray women as mere sex symbols. Thus we find that in many video films, they do not play any significant roles in the decision making process in the family, (*or even sometimes in their own lives!*) It could be argued that this has been occasioned by the thinking in traditional African societies that women are there just to procreate and look after the family, in consonance with the dictum that “the place of the woman is in the kitchen.” (Ayakaroma, 2008: 279)

These preferred female gender representations typically reflect how film producers perceive feminine needs and desires. This is not surprising. Since the majority of these filmmakers are male, they frequently miss the mark. But no matter, the films are churned out anyway! In reference to Yoruba video films, Wole Ogundele (2000) observes a similar trend.

In general, the portrayal of women in this new medium derives from the social fact of polygamy and from the three recurrent thematic motifs that spin off there from: the evil wife whose irrational jealousy makes her dangerous to her husband, herself, all the other wives and to all the children; the wicked witch, and the cruel foster mother. These thematic motifs are recurrent in folktales, and were used frequently. But side by side with and counter balancing them was also the image of “our mothers”- (the good mothers) with whom rest the ultimate and mystical powers of rescuing the community (or individual) when in dire straits, and of ensuring corporate happiness, peace and survival.

He further states that:

This more positive aspect of Yoruba metaphysics of womanhood has been gradually losing its potency in the contemporary urban settings, exacerbated by their seemingly disproportionate (to their lack of political influence and subordinate role as wives) success as traders in the market.... While those without rightly misogynist themes are few, those with ambivalent attitudes in which the woman ends up accepting male superiority and embracing the subordinate role that she is “perfectly” fitted for are legion. In the very few outrightly misogynist films, the hostility usually comes in the portrayal of an irresistibly beautiful young lady who rather than allow herself to be “mastered” by a man, uses her beauty and sexual power to play several rich men against each other in order to amass her own wealth and social power. (Ogundele, 2000:111,112)

Ogundele (2000) further poignantly observes that these stereotypic female representations persist, in spite of the fact that women have become active participants in the art of filmmaking.

There are women who now write, direct and produce these videos themselves, and also play leading roles, but strangely enough, so ingrained are the sexist ideology and stereotypic image of women that they do not think of doing something to counter this negative image. One can only guess at the reasons for this: fear of commercial failure? Implicit belief by the female actor/producer/ director in the reality of the negative image? Self-censorship due to fear of hostile response and stigmatization? The reasons will probably be a combination of these and more. (Ogundele, 2000:113)

Virginia Nightingale (1990) scathingly relates how a well-liked American television channel regularly represents female characters.

Women are obsessed by the family and caught in its web of emotions- emotions spun by a male psyche, dominated by the enigmas of a masculine imagination. The context ‘family’ defines woman, her interests and her concerns, as well as her continuing subordinate status within the family; a subordinate status which is believed to be chosen by women. Women are implicated in their own exploitation through love, through the desire to first please their husbands, fathers and children. Faced with a vacuum of ideas and knowledge about what women as audiences want, the ‘Chanel Father’ constructs woman as he would like her- in his own image! (Nightingale, 1990:29)



It becomes necessary however, to also reference feminist critical analysis of Nollywood gender representations. According to Carmela Guarittano (2000):

Women are rewritten constantly in the popular media, often appearing in negative and stereotypical forms. Nigerian video films actively participate in these cultural conversations about gender identity, and feminist theory enables this present sketch of the contours of what a small sampling of video films is saying about how men and women should behave. While the male hero of the film has an inner, secret self, concealed from the audience and other characters in the film, the women in the film are equated with corporeality. For instance, in *Hostages*, Fatima becomes a discursive prop used to tell Tony's story. She represents little more than an object of exchange whose value depends on its purity. She is equated with the body while Tony is associated with the intellect and will. Her existence in the film is contained within her physicality, that is, her virginity and rape. Tony however, is portrayed as having depth. It is within his mind that the narrative voice places the audience and through his character that the spectator experiences the actions of the film. (Guarittano, 2000:166-176)

Clearly, these two developments suggest the following areas of investigation for feminist scholarship.

- How are films by women different from or similar to films by men?
- What do female and male spectators make of the video films?
- Do films by women and men construct impact spectators differently or in similar ways?
- Feminism in this critical paradigm, aims not only to understand but to “transform what it is to be a woman in society.

The foregoing referenced literature review is indicative that female characterization that lacks depth is very prevalent in Nollywood films. She is either all bad, pure evil and always out for war to achieve her macabre goals or she's the sedate, servile, long suffering, ever supportive-through-thick-and-thin desirable prototype. The research indicates the dire need for better balanced and in-depth female/career women characterization

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

Conceptual frameworks are predominantly mental concepts/theories that exist through scholarship. These serve and are utilized as models and building blocks for the organization of ideas, especially in the social sciences and the arts. The subsequent concepts/theories of perception, framing and cultural norms will be applied as organizing principles that articulate the backdrop of career women representations in Nollywood films.

#### **2.4.1 Perception Concept**

Theories of perception are often studied in tandem with sexual orientation (gender stipulations). Media audience impact assessments research (Emanuella Lombardo and Johanna Kantola, (2017) reveal that societal hegemony perceives women as subordinate to men within the ambits of the family. This underscores an urgent and critical need for:

Discussions about the theories and concepts that academic disciplines provide for making sense of societal, cultural and political transformations. We focus on the capacities of feminist political theories to undertake the task. By assessing different feminist approaches to political analysis, that range from focusing on women and men to analyzing gender, to doing intersectionality and to adopting post-structural and new materialist approaches, we explore the contributions and the limitations of each framework. This allows us to consider where feminist theoretical debates on gender and politics currently are, and to assess old and new developments. (Lombardo and Kantola, 2017:1)

A hegemonic colored lens pervasively permeates the entire societal fabric - the media and film industry inclusive. At best the female is presented as a paradigm of goodness-the enduring mother who doggedly keeps her home, or could be depicted as the vile, wicked, scheming and manipulative opposite who is not content to be cloistered within the ambits of the “safety” and seclusion of her home (that has been provided by either her father or husband); but dares to venture out into the work arena where she is completely “unprotected,” and as such plies her evil, scheming and manipulative traits! Muhammad (2014) confirms this assertion in referencing Adekunle (2010) who states: “the women in the (Nollywood) films come as wicked, manipulative, loose in morals, diabolic and inferior to the men.”

However, it must be stated that Nollywood filmmakers are not a deliberately devious group of persons with a calculated diabolical desire to paint women in dark and ugly colors; though economic considerations and incentives that always constitute a critical dynamic of the discourse cannot be ruled out. Rather, these perceptions stem from age old handed down cultural beliefs. Researchers with an interest in the study of the psychology of gender perception recognize that perceptions inevitably issue from cultural practices. As such, a special emphasis is often placed on the precipitated outcome of such factors, and the resultant ripple effect it ultimately triggers and engenders in the societal filmic space.

#### **2.4.2 Framing Concepts**

While the concept Framing applies to various areas of research (for example - social norms and ideologies such as feminism), framing is a communication concept that offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text.

##### **The Power of Frames**

Baetson (1955) argues that meaning is not intrinsic to the frame but rather constructed and derived from frames. The social frameworks continually construct meaning for our everyday experiences.

Piscotta (2012) on the other hand, references Eastman (1993) to define frames as: “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.” She postulates that the social elite are considered more credible sources and in turn are allocated more influence in the framing process. Their power allows them to access and maintain control of the filmic space, often at the expense of opposing sources. Since the Nollywood filmmaking elite (cabal) are given more voice within the framing process, frames can be considered a reflection of the filmmakers ideals/perceptions.

Gramsci's (1991) Concept of Hegemony speaks to how power holders maintain their status through diffusing meaning and value to subordinate groups. This concept highlights how sources (filmmakers in this context), maintain power in the filmic space by imposing their personally perceived meaning and knowledge to the general public (career women inclusive of course) - namely those without power. The research sets out to emphasize, the necessity to locate a positive way forward to move out of the maze and haze that career women representations have hitherto, been enmeshed in. Lombardo (2006) goes beyond mere analysis and delves into utilizing the analytical approach to engender and elicit long term sustainable solutions:

The method we employ to explore what is the meaning of gender equality that lies underneath the label of a supposedly broader approach to gender. This methodology enables us to identify the ways in which gender equality policies (formal and informal) are framed and in particular, to grasp the names of a policy frame through an in-depth detailed analysis of different dimensions of a specific frame. (Lombardo, 2006:8)

Frames have a power that inevitably genders a hegemony of perceived 'norms.' But when these 'norms' through articulated research are examined and interrogated, new better balanced, more adequate and well informed norms will inevitably replace the old undesirable ones; and engender positive societal development.

### **2.4.3 Cultural Norms Concept**

Cultural norms are perhaps the most culpable cultural diegetic that fashions and shapes skewed representations of the career woman. Pitted against the backdrop of the original African female prototype who is generally secluded to her home and limited to rearing children and doing household chores; in sharp contradistinction to her husband, lord, and master, who not only makes all the decisions but all the provision as well. It is not surprising therefore that the women who foray into the public workplace would have been perceived by this culture as harmful, forward and most definitely over reaching themselves.

Research indicates mass media has little power to change norms over time but more likely, reflects and reinforces trends that already exist. Researchers believe that however, over time the mass media has a high capability to create and change social norms. De Fleur (1970) in his discussion of Cultural Norms, suggests that "the mass

media selectively presents and emphasizes certain contemporary ideas or values and influences norms by reinforcing or changing them.” He further suggests that the cultural norms theory provides the foundation for the more comprehensive social learning theory. Campbell (2003) opines that:

Some cultural “norms” gain wide popular appeal awhile others do not. Some appeal to certain age groups or social classes These span the gamut of dress and appearance, food and eating habits as well as govern relationships within the community. (Campbell, 2003:15)

As such, it is inevitable that cultural norms not only influence, but to a large extent, determine and shape the interpretation of filmic mediated realities, by defining those which are considered to be acceptable, as revealed in specific situations.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is based on several socio-cultural and media theories which include gender theories, the social learning theory, the gender stereotypes theory, and feminist theories. The concepts of gender equality and gender equity were also brought to the fore, as United Nations endorsed measures to ensure fairness for both sexes in all aspects of human endeavor. The analysis would be from a feminist perspective, to challenge the hegemonic ideology that presently undergirds much of the Nollywood representations of the Nigerian career woman.

Feminist criticism is used to challenge rhetorical constructions that identified gender as an explanation for domination. As Duru (2013) states, “many feminists take interest in analyzing the rhetoric used in films and other categories of popular culture, because of their tendency to reinforce dominant hegemonic beliefs and to silence marginalized groups such as women.” Meri Lisa Johnson (2007) advocates the application of a feminist framework, “that explores rhetorical construction in popular culture.”

According to Jonathan Haynes and Onookome Okome (2000),

The Nigerian video film (Nollywood), falls within the realm of popular culture and can be analyzed from a feminist perspective.” The rhetoric of Nollywood films

reveals the ideological positions of the society, and the dominations that affect gender representations. As a result, feminist criticism is an applicable method of analysis in discovering the underlying meaning of the rhetoric that undergirds the career female, and thereby making the marginalization and struggle of women visible; as well as giving them a voice. (Haynes and Okome, 2000:72-74).

Tambay Obenson (2016) cross references Agatha Ukata in her thesis titled *The Images of Women in Nigerian Nollywood Videos*, where she raises critical questions that are intrinsic to her feminist study. It would be pertinent though, to interrogate some of those critical issues she raises:

- How women are represented in Nigerian video (Nollywood) films,
- What the implications of such representations are,
- How representations affect the larger society of Nigeria and beyond,
- The extent to which visual aesthetics and cultural codes are used in films to either portray women in negative or positive angles.

To fully locate and psycho analyze the above issues, specific, socially held and approved mindsets which are usually passed off as the norm, or even culture, need to be examined. The world swarms with ideas about gender and these ideas are so commonplace that we take it for granted that they are true, and thereby accepting common adage as if they are scientifically tested and proven facts. Gender traditionally, is referred to as the state of being female or male. However, societal gender constructs are a set of moded behavioral patterns and communication traits and characteristics that have been invested on the sexes. Therefore, gender as a term, is typically used with reference to social and cultural differences, rather than biological ones. As such, gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between femininity and masculinity.

### **2.5.1 Gender Theories and Gender Communication**

A key focus of this research is to apply feminist theories of gender and of gender communication (gender equality and gender equity especially), in the interrogation of stereotypic patriarchal hegemonic representations of the object of the research - the Nigerian career woman. There are various definitions of the term ‘theory.’ Kelsinger (1973) defines theory as “a set of inter-related constructs, definitions and propositions

that give a systematic view about phenomena, by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting such phenomena.”

Gender is not something we are born with or something that we have, but merely a social construct of societal approved and acceptable behavioral patterns and traits associated with the sexes. These expected associated behavioral traits and patterns have been buttressed, psycho analyzed and duly categorized into theoretical patterns known as gender theories, which are deemed relevant to society and necessary for its proper functioning. It should also be noted that gender is geared towards development. The understanding of gender creates mutual relationships between the masculine and feminine genders

### **Feminist Gender Theory**

Much as feminist gender theory primarily sets out to establish the nature of equality between the sexes, Caroline Sweetman (1997:4) postulates that “stereotypes are commonly invoked to explain the different attitudes of various communities to ‘family values’ and the rights of individuals.”

Feminist media studies have become essential to the imperatives of feminism. A strong research area within the ambits of Cultural studies, it has over the years moved from an interest in critiquing gender stereotypes (gender depiction studies) to looking at how depictions of women in the media are understood by the audiences (gender reception studies). Most recently, feminist media studies have been interested in how audiences actually mold, or negotiate the meanings of media messages (meaning, negotiation studies). With these shifts, perspectives on gender have changed as well

### **The Social Learning Gender Theory**

This theory emphasizes that the individual’s gender development is a process of observational learning and imitation-modeling, and reward-punishment guide as a child, towards gender appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Social stereotypes, cultural norms and agents of socialization from parents, peer and institutions, play important roles in the development of gender identity and sex-typing. But this approach ignores the importance of individual cognitive abilities; inheritance and development stages, but treats individuals as a passive object that solely responds to the environment.

## **Gender Stereotypes Theory**

Gender stereotypes are beliefs about the typical characteristics and behaviors of men and women. Stereotyping is universal-it is a cultural phenomenon. A stereotype can be thought of as a schema about members of an identifiable group. Stereotypes are based upon depictions that strengthen already held prejudices. When people hold stereotypes about others, they do not see them as individuals, but as part of a schema, a group. This activation is automatic. Lippman (1996) was the first to use the term 'stereotype' in a social sciences context. He describes 'stereotype' as "pictures in our head." Ibroscheva (2009) states that according to Lippman, "stereotypes are negative in that it protects the relative social standing and interests of those who hold these views, which may not be morally or empirically justifiable." Stereotypes not only affect people's inter-personal and inter-group relations and networking; they also affect one's perception of one's own abilities as well as status, as members of a society.

### **2.5.2 Relevance of Gender Theories and Gender Communication**

- Gender theories attempt to organize and therefore engender a better understanding of our communication experiences. Theories are used to organize a broad range of experiences into smaller categories by paying attention to common features of communication. Men and women talk and behave in significantly different ways and for significantly different reasons.
- Gender theories tend to choose and indicate what communication behaviors the sexes should study. It also guides the approaches on persuasive attempts and what to look out for as determinants of success.
- Theories challenge current social and cultural realities by providing new ways of thinking and living. People tend to assume that communication modes are innate and not learned. This is not true.
- In order to challenge the communication norms we learn, people use critical theories to ask questions about the status quo of human communication, to bring advantage and privilege to a particular group of persons. For example, Tannen (2013) argues that when men listen to women express their troubles,



they listen with the purpose of wanting to fix it. Women are not looking for advice or a fix, but rather empathy, from their male conversational partners.

As a result of this, Gender Communication is the favored new model as opposed to Gender Theories. The study of Gender communication is very important in our present day dispensation. It positions and repositions the mindset of the general public on how they should view both their gender and their opposite gender. Gender communication, spans all societal existence especially the dominant areas that radically distinguishes man from the animal kingdom - the ability to communicate, through the spoken word. Technological advances have made it possible through the years of man's existence on this planet, for man to communicate through the written word, which was the first to be invented, as well as various other technological modes generally referred to as the mass media of communication that travels the globe at the speed of light! Gender and communication is a relatively new specialization of the communication field that focuses on the ways female and males of the human species communicate in different contexts. Media play important roles in society. They report on current events, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilize citizens with regards to various issues, and reproduce predominant culture and society. As such, the media is a very critical actor in the promotion of gender equality.

### **2.5.3 Gender Equality**

Gender Equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of the society, including especially economic participation and decision making, and when the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favored. According to the United Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2001), gender equality is not a women's issue but should fully concern and engage men as well. Equality between men and women is seen both as a human right issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of sustainable people centered development.

The gender equality concept has been imitated from the matriarchal social laws. It has also been accepted and written into the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the ultimate aim is to provide equality and protection under the law; equality in all human liberties, social standing and situations, equality in receiving education, equality in all democratic values, principles and activities, and securing equal pay for

equal work. Within the ambit of the above stated objectives it becomes clear that this is far from the paradigm of career female representations in Nollywood films, in percentage relativity to the male.

#### **2.5.4 Gender Equity**

Gender equity is different from gender equality, described above. Gender equity is a set of actions, attitudes assumptions that provide opportunities and create expectations about individuals. In our definition of gender equity, gender is never separate from race, ethnicity, language, disability, income or other diversities that define us as human beings. It offers a framework for educational reform in which all males and females are:

- Engaged reflective learners, regardless of the subject,
- Are prepared for future education jobs, careers and civil participation,
- Set and meet high expectations for themselves and others,
- Develop as respectful, inclusive and productive individuals, friends, family members, workers and citizens,
- Receive equitable treatment and achieve equitable outcomes in schools and beyond.

Gender equity is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly, to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone has access to a full range of opportunities to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits that come from participating.

#### **Gender Equity Requirements**

Gender equity requires that girls and women be provided with a full range of activity and program choices that meet their needs, interests and experiences. Therefore, some activities may be the same as those offered to boys and men. Some may be altered and some may be altogether different. Human rights legislation and freedoms has affirmed the principles of freedom and equity, while making provisions for affirmative action programs to eliminate disadvantages.

Gender equity also requires the examination of organization's practices and policies that may hinder the participation of girls and women. For example, this requires service providers to assess:

- Hiring and recruitment practices: To ensure women have leadership roles, and are involved in decision making, and are available as role models for other girls and women.
- Resource allocation: To determine how budgets are allocated across programs.
- Facility bookings and allocations: To ensure that both females and males have access to prime time slots in the media and prime facilities.
- Participation rates: To evaluate current programs and services, to identify potential barriers and to determine whether co-ed programs are truly co-ed.
- Activity programming: To assess the types of activities offered for males and females.
- Promotional materials: to ensure girls and women are not being excluded or stereotyped in pictures or language.

Positive initiatives that target specific groups are important, because they take into account years of socialization and historical traditions that have created imbalances, subsequently marginalizing sectors of the population because these conditions are accepted as the norm.

### **2.5.5 Equality Vs Equity**

There is sometimes confusion between the concepts of equality and equity. Usage often depends on the sector and country in question. In contrast to equity, gender equality is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision making, so that males and females have the same. Therefore, females and males would each receive 50% of the resources, facilities etc: and each have access to the same programs. (For example, if there was a male program, there would also be a female program). While the goals of treating everyone the same may seem noble, the principle of equal treatment tends to ignore the fact that people differ in their capabilities, interests, resources and experiences; while equity has the goal of providing everyone with the full range of opportunities and benefits for the same finish line. Gender equity is as such an even better alternative, though not all agree to this assertion.

### **2.5.6 Benefits of Gender Equity**

Organizations have much to gain by committing themselves to achieving gender equity.

Below listed are some accruable benefits:

- Attracting more girls and women to sport and physical activity enhances the revenue base and increases the market segment to which the sport appeals.
- Fully representing the population base and tapping the resources of every member, results in a larger, stronger, and more effective organization.
- Skilled women provide the organization with an important talent pool of administrators, and technocrats in all fields of endeavor.
- Working together, men and women can learn to build equal partnerships
- By fulfilling their legal responsibility of treating fairly everyone involved in the organization and making a commitment to gender equity, organizations avoid a negative public image as well as the time and expense of dealing with unnecessary lawsuits.

Given the above articulated specifications and standards of gender equity benefits, the need to initiate and entrench feminist gender equity intervention measures and requirements becomes obvious, in order to have a fast paced and accelerated societal development, which will ultimately accrue to the benefit of all in society. It is advocated therefore, that all hands need to be on deck, working profusely and relentlessly, to achieve desired and long expected goals. All societal flaws termed “norms” only in the long run, successfully constitute delay factors that inevitably have an undesired negative ripple effect on the larger society.

## **2.6 Genre of the Nollywood Film**

### **Hollywood Genres**

Genre is an artistic categorization in which conventions regarding similar characters, scenes structures and themes recur in combination. Genre study has also been described as a formal way of examining the system of conventions whereby genres establish patterns of repetition. Further, Genres are a selling platform in Nigeria, much like the star personality syndrome. This could however on occasion have some drawbacks. If the trending genre suddenly or gradually loses appeal to audiences and viewers alike, it would automatically result in a dismal financial turnover for the

unperceptive entrepreneur. The down side is that this syndrome discourages and hampers creativity as filmmakers would be tempted to ensure huge profits by staying within the financially “safe” ambits of the trending genre.

However, genre categorization has multifaceted utilities and applications. Campbell (1998) asserts:

Grouping films by category allows the industry to achieve two related goals-product standardization and product differentiation. By making films that fall into popular genres the movie industry provides familiar genres that can be imitated. Among the most familiar genres are comedy, drama, romance, action/adventure, mystery/suspense, fantasy/science fiction, musical, horror, gangster and film noir. (Campbell, 1998: 126)

Abrams, Bell and Udris (2001) authenticate this assertion as well as indicate some practical uses of genre classification.

Genre is a French word meaning type and film genres have existed since the early days of cinema. Films were frequently categorized as being crime, romance, comedy, fantasy or actuality. Classification of films into genres helped the industry to organize production and marketing, in terms of making use of available and suitable props, locations, actors and production staff as well as promoting films as being of a particular type. Audiences in turn, used the marketing descriptions of films as a guide to what to expect. (Abrams, Bell and Udris, 2001:174)

Ayakoroma (2010) further elucidates the criteria of film categorization into genres.

If we are analyzing a film as belonging to a particular genre, we must be able in the first place to describe the individual film, and in the second place, we must be able to explain the principles on which it can meaningfully be associated with other films of this genre. A critical study shows that genre categorizations are partly open systems...also, genres need to retain the possibility of change and innovation. The thrust (of video film categorization into genres) is an exploration of how the bid to satisfy the tastes of Nigerian audiences has helped to sustain particular kinds of stories and film production practices within the industry. The idea is to also chart a trend in the application of particular genres and the generic development in an industry that is privately driven. (Ayakoroma, 2010:81)

Ayakoroma’s (2010:101) genre categorization of Nigerian video films is quite insightful, as he comes up with at least twelve categorizations. Of course these may overlap in areas but it is important to delineate them.

### **1. Traditional Belief Films**

These examine peculiar marital and family relationships from the contemporary perspective. Some older films in this genre are *Gold Diggers* (Opeoluwa, 2000) and *Submission* (Onu, 2001).

### **2. Crime/ Gangster Films**

This genre portrays the failure of the policing system in Nigeria, which has necessitated law abiding citizens to adopt stringent security measures for self-defense or personal survival. Vigilante groups, security organizations, 'Beware of Dogs' signs and very high fences with barbed wires around compounds (that make the occupants more of prisoners), are all features that show the poor state of the regular policing system in Nigeria. Some older films in this genre are *Isakaba* (Imasuen, 2000) and *Broad Daylight* (Benson 2001)

### **3. Gender films**

Gender films are generally centered on gender issues and treat gender related issues such as circumcision, the girl child, gender equality, the place of women, women empowerment and widowhood, to mention a few. Some older films in this genre are *The Orphan* (Frank Arase, 2002) and *World Apart* (Tchidi Chikere, 2004).

### **4. Christian Genre Feature Films**

Christian video films aim at preaching the word of God to win souls, to bring backsliders to the Christian fold again, and also to increase or strengthen the faith of believers. Some older films in this genre are *The Price* (Teco Benson, 1999) and *Rapture* (Amata, 2002).

### **5. Comedy**

One generic convention that has taken Nollywood by storm is the comedy genre. The comedy genre is made up of plays which are lighthearted and are designed to amuse and provoke laughter. This is achieved through exaggerated situation, language, action, character and relationships. Some older films in this genre are *Ukwa* (Chika Omu, 2001) and *Omugwo: Child Visit I & II* (Tchidi Chikere, 2002).

### **6. Love and Romance**

This genre constitutes video films which are targeted at the female audience and youth. They center on love romance and feature young ravishing actors and actresses that quickly catch the fancy of the audience. Some older films in this genre are *Romantic Attraction* (Dickson Iroegbu, 2002) and *Still in Love* (Onu, 2004).

#### **7. Thrillers**

These are basically serious dramatic presentations that portray realistic characters, settings and real life situations; they involve intense character development and interaction. They play on suspense and do not display special effects and other such extraneous narrative effects. Some films in this genre are *Emotional Crack* (Imasuen, 2002) and *Price of Hatred* (One Week, 2004).

#### **8. Adventure Films**

These adventure video films exhibit high energy, physical stunts and chases, battles fights, escapes that take the audience's breath away. These are war/action films. Some films in this genre are *Executive Crime* (Teco Benson, 2000) and *The President Must Not Die* (Zeb Ejiro 2004).

#### **9. The Political Film**

The Political video film genre seems not to have offered much incentive to producers in Nigeria in the sense that any foray into the secret or public lives of the political class could be taken as portraying the political leadership in 'bad light'. It explains why until recently, films in this genre have been very few. They include *The Kingmaker* (Fred Amata, 2002) and *The Senator* (Benson, 2003).

#### **10. Animated and Science Fiction Films**

We could observe that there have been no remarkable attempts in the areas of animated and science fiction (sci-fi) films. It can be argued however, that the probable reasons for Nigerian video film practitioner's non-incursion into this genre includes among others, the serious technical demands, the high budget, the time needed to plan and produce such genres, the market and the prospective financial returns on such productions.

#### **11. Melodrama**

Haynes (2000), does a succinct analysis of the Nigerian melodrama genre, but since this genre is also quite popular in other cultures, a brief definition of such would suffice.

Within Western film criticism, feminism has created a new interest in melodrama as a woman's genre... This is an obvious content for analysis of the Nigerian video films... Nigeria is only one instance of the rise of this kind of melodrama to dominance in Third World film and video... It is nearly impossible to overstate its prevalence and importance... The genre of melodrama has been associated with modernity and modernization... The basic structural difference of Nigerian video melodramas from all their foreign models or parallels is their mode of production. The Nigerian video films are an example of popular, in contrast to mass culture; they are invariably produced on a shoestring by small producers. In many cases, they belong to the informal sector of the economy, and are much closer to, if not direct expressions of a popular African point of view. (Haynes, 2000: 27-29)

Caren. J. Deaming (1990) analyzes melodrama somewhat similarly:

Melodrama polarizes good and evil and shows them operating as real forces in the world. It assumes that the quotidian life properly viewed, will live up to the expectations of the moral imagination. It posits good and evil as moral feelings thus asserting that emotion is the realm of morality. Melodrama thus resists evaluation according to the empiricist's conception of reality. (Deaming 1990, 54)

The purpose of melodrama could therefore be surmised as being explicit to societal moral values in the ineluctable hope and expectation that good will ultimately, always triumph over evil. Good (virtue) will be inexorably located and rewarded, while evil will be inevitably isolated and punished.

## **2.7 The audience and Content of the Nollywood Film**

### **2.7.1 The Audience**

Women (and of course children) frequently constitute a much higher percentage of audiences of much dramatic form; be they family narrated folktales by moonlight, village square annual/biannual festival dramatic re-enactments or informal home viewing of drama on television. Jonathan Hayes and Onokoome Okoome (2000) from previous research, describe the Nigerian cinema going culture of the seventies; eighties and nineties...

Everywhere in Nigeria, cinema going is predominantly a male activity for younger, poorer and rowdier males; it is considered of more or less dubious respectability for girls and



women...videos that are shown in cinemas to avid audiences however, contain essentially no women (as part of the audience), besides prostitutes. As Larkin points out, in the context of northern Nigeria the advent of television and then video cassettes has opened up to women a media environment that was largely closed to them before. The Igbos were always much less enthusiastic cinema goers and the men now tend to leave the family at home with the VCR, while they go out to sports events or music concerts. In any case, it seems obvious that female viewership has greatly increased everywhere. Perhaps one of the consequences of this is that women have been making careers as directors and producers of videos...The audience for the video film then is broad indeed, comparable to the diversity of the live audience of the Yoruba travelling theatre. But for the most part, the audience is assembled in a privatized manner quite different from that of cinema or live theatre. (Haynes and Ookome, 2000:72-74)

The Nollywood audience is not one large homogenous block, but consists of a vast geographical spread; cultural diversities with multifaceted antecedents and historical proclivities. Ekwuazi (2008), furnishes invaluable information and statistical data from empirical surveys and research.

- 75% of the audience fall between age bracket 15-35.
- Women and children take up some 81% of this population.
- The more educated (degree equivalent-35%) tend to watch less, except where such films are controversial/topical (47%).
- Over 85% agree that film information is from the younger ones/children; but the decision as to which films to watch (or not watch), comes from the adult-usually the father figure.
- 25% watch on TV; 32% buy borrow from friends; 43% rent.
- 38% say that if the films are not realistic, it doesn't matter, for it is just a film.
- 63% know more of the Executive Producers/Marketers than of the directors.
- Over 65% are drawn to the films because of the stars.
- 69% would rather see the original American film than the Nollywood version.
- Over 70% see no reason for the Part 2 of any film because it hardly advances the story (35%); it can all be contained in Part 1 (65%)

...Some 60% of Nigeria's 120 million population figure is Nollywood's latent audience. This is a huge marketing advantage. The challenge for the content provider is to work out a creatively empirical way to package this audience for sale to a sponsor. This is because any motion picture industry that relies solely on selling entertainment to the audience seriously restricts the sources of its production recourses. (Ekwuazi, 2008: 196, 197)

However, Ekwuazi's purview was focused strictly on Nigeria, within the context of marketing Nollywood films to sponsors. On the other hand, there are sponsors and marketers who might as well live in and operate from foreign countries. This concept is not outlandish but quite feasible, considering that lately, foreign films such as the Latin American tele novellas, have totally swamped Nigerian airwaves. This is quite in addition to the already resident Hollywood and Bollywood (Indian) films. It is also pertinent to note that Nigerian films have wide viewing audiences all over Africa, and even in the Carib beans as well. It therefore becomes important to delineate another articulate group of Nollywood audiences - Africans and most especially Nigerians in Diaspora-in Europe and the United States.

Uchenunu (2008) does a succinct expose on the nostalgic emotions and roots identification pulls that make up this wide audience segment of what he terms "*when it no longer matters where you live.*"

For many Africans in the Diaspora, relocating back home is synonymous to relocating to another land, where new tricks must be learnt due to the horrifying stories that emanate from these societies but which they are not in a position to authenticate. Due to either long periods from the imagined home or worse still, born and brought up outside it, there is certainly no place to go, even with the nostalgic feelings. While some of them cannot relocate to their original homes, there is a nostalgia borne out of the anxiety to keep abreast of what is happening in the societies they have fled.

He continues:

It is this nostalgia that has been judiciously catered for by Nollywood films, giving rise to its popularity and reason. Fans interviewed, talk about how the Nollywood films evoke memories of "everyday life back home." It is a window through which many see the events back home. The contact with Nollywood film images generates two opposing reactions on its diasporic audiences. To some, it's a reminder of the realities back home which in turn, creates a romantic aura that evokes a desire and wish to be there; while to others, their true pictures

are horrifying, and this deters them from relocating, for fear of being caught in the incidents depicted in the films. By creating an imaginary community, the role played by the Nollywood films, doubles the print and electronic media, in telling the stories of Nigeria, to Africans and Nigerians in the Diaspora, creating a sense of identity by bringing distant memories of a culture that is not known, for the viewing pleasure of the diasporic culture. (Uchenunu, 2008: 176, 177)

The challenges of content creation vis-a-vis the Nollywood film is directly related to its diverse and widespread (if not global) audiences. It becomes imperative therefore that content should be carefully structured to succinctly relate to and address the challenges that would accommodate the needs of these diverse target audiences.

### **2.7.2 The Content**

The Nollywood melodrama narrative is theme driven. Frequently, after five minutes into the film-watching from the head start, and the viewer would definitely have grasped the main theme being espoused. This theme is doggedly also put across through various ways and means such as the theme embodied songs which are virtually splattered over every intersection of the dramatic action, quite at the expense of even tiresome repetitiveness! It is almost a folklorist transposition, as in most Nigerian folklore, the pattern of intervallic chant/song and refrain is usually strictly adhered to.

Other melodramatic appurtenances are also replete such as vice will ultimately be punished while virtue will be inevitably rewarded. Themes and the subject matter of a film could possibly even emanate from the latest rumors in town or from current outstanding, bizarre or unusual incidents! According to Ogunleye (2003), “the same folkloristic pattern is what the video film producers have adopted in the technical retelling of their stories.”

Ogunleye (2003) further states:

The stories of the films are also rooted in happenings within the society-popular rumors and widespread folk beliefs. It is not surprising therefore that stories which people share in hushed voices on subjects as diverse as witchcraft, deviance, greedy people mortgaging their own souls or the lives of their loved

ones for wealth, human sacrifices etc, become the center point of the film. The films make use of magic realism and this is manifested in activities of the occult, appearance of angels, demons and a general interaction between real life and the extraterrestrial world. (Ogunleye, 2003:6)

The previous heavy borrowing and thematic leaning towards folkloristic patterns, have over the years been rapidly replaced with contemporary themes of village versus city life, and a prevalence of rags to riches stories. The bottom line frequently being the desperate desire to “get rich at all costs,” the occult/ritual dimension is therefore still doggedly being towed amidst a splattering of romance and comedy.

### **2.7.3 The Significance of Content**

Content is simply the embodiment of the drama piece. A media drama piece consists of the actual story itself and the technical appurtenances used to present it to the viewership. It is necessary that every content piece is directed at a specific group of persons-usually referred to as the ‘target audience.’ The significance of the content of the dramatic piece vis-à-vis the target audience is that the content ineluctably affects the life space of this group of persons, obviously for purposes of influencing their perspectives, in order to positively reshape and redefine their life choices and behavioral patterns.

There are at least several ways in which researchers can assess the significance of media content.

- Content as Reflection of Producer’s Perspective
- Content as Reflection of Audience Preference
- Content as Reflection of Society in General
- Content as an Influence on Audiences

It goes without saying that if the content of any dramatic piece is in aberration of any of the foregoing listed factors, or leans heavily to a singular aspect to the exclusion of the others, then it may lose relevance to its target audience and as such, would fail miserably in its original purpose – to entertain and influence, while it informs. For instance, if the content is all about the first clause (a producer/director who merely desires to tell his/her story as s/he pleases), it may even irritate or anger the target audience. Further, it could even be difficult to actually determine the target audience of such a piece; likened to a person who though aiming at a specific target, ends up

shooting scattered shots all over the place! Inevitably then, it would require a cluster or combination of the above listed factors (1 – 4), to effectively communicate the content of a dramatic piece. This research espouses the position that dramatic content achieves significance only on the threshold of its capability to positively influence and affect the life space of its audiences. Only then can it consist as change agent. Having sketched out some of the ways in which researchers assess the significance of media content, a brief examination of the content itself is necessary.

#### **2.7.4 Applying Media Drama Content to the Real World**

Does media drama content reflect the realities of the social world? The responses might vary in a survey. Media drama content is obviously intended to perform the following functions in society: entertain, educate, inform and affect in order to reshape societal/ personal perspectives and perceptions.

Television and the Nollywood film have attained a symbiotic cultural blend and near synonymy in Nigeria. Simply, many television stations - private or government owned depend to a large extent on Nollywood industry films and soap operas; (extremely popular with a large segment viewing audiences) as providers of invaluable content, with which their stations are sustained. Moreover, this content is procured for next to nothing and transmitted freely at no cost whatsoever! More importantly, the nascent cinema culture seems to be limited to an average miniscule affluent percentage, who can afford the luxury of expensive cinema outings in the few privileged Nigerian cities where they are sparsely located.

It becomes important however, to give good attention to and scrutinize television dramatic content, what they really are composed of, and how they eventually affect their viewing audiences. This is critical, bearing in mind that well over ninety percent of media drama – films and soap operas (Nigerian or foreign), are watched through the medium of television. Asserting that a person (or group of persons) who makes out time to watch a film on television, is being communicated to, is to state the obvious. Conversely, what might not be quite as obvious is that much of communication (especially in the electronic media), could be subjective. That is, the receiver grasps what is being communicated alongside other perceptions that the initial communication triggers. The latter comes from the viewer's bundle of previous

experiences and scholarship. These merge into one to engender a belief system and elicit specific behavioral traits which may solidify into a pattern, over time.

Predictably, there are non-desirable fallouts of this scenario. The sensibilities of Nigerian audiences are frequently bombarded with grotesque dramatic representations of bizarre rituals, occultism, violence and an obtuse but inglorious display of the profane and ugly! And to what purpose, one may ask? Quite in addition, profuse portrayals of unscrupulous women who stop at nothing to claw their ugly way to their perceived goal, are regularly churned out. To make an already bad situation worse, the actresses are active perpetrators of negative feminine representation, through their willing participation. Contrarily, many women are often livid at these negative dramatic representations. As Ahadiogwu (2008) observes,

The portrayal of women as sex objects is particularly abhorrent to women. While the idea of being sensual is not wholly rejected, there should be a line that differentiates that women want to be attractive to the man in their lives and the suggestion of sex object exploitation. (Ahadiogwu, 2008:287)

The question that incessantly boggles the mind is, “do Nollywood film makers not understand that the proliferation of these excessively evil and negative “slices of life” could be injurious to society in the long run, much as producers/directors may have raked in huge profits?” The tendency is that if one sees a thing quite frequently on television, it inevitably becomes common, familiar and subsequently could be accepted as the status quo, or a part of life. Anyanwu states:

The truth of film is the truth of mediated reality; a reality that has been filtered and reshaped for a more fulfilling and richer viewing experience. The negative portrayal of women in Nigerian video films gives a poor reflection of our society in general, and our women in particular. (Anyanwu, 2003:88)

Further, a fallout factor that is closely allied to, and doggedly follows on the heels of the concept of Nollywood negative representations of the career woman is the more critical reflux factor of how the audiences (end users), perceive and react to these portrayals. Adesina Lukman Azzez (2010) examines this factor in his research.

This study investigates how Nigerians, particularly women, receive Nigerian films in terms of their interpretations of the representations of women and the meanings of the representations in the films. If we are concerned with the meanings and significance of popular culture in our contemporary society; with how culture or media work ideologically, we need to understand not only media texts, but also how they are received and understood by their audiences. Therefore, such understanding could help in predicting the influence of the images of women in the media on gender identity and behaviors of female audiences. The understanding will also provide a basis for analysis against theories of media and gender identity formations, particularly, as they are related to how Nigerian audiences interpret the images of women, in home video films. (Azzez, 2010:36)

Having identified the above factors, there must certainly be a structured redirection for the future. A subtle replacement process needs to be effected. This would be a process of 'quiet substitution' in themes, plots and characterization, where the old negative stereotypes would be discarded by moviemakers (especially script/screenplay writers), for positive ideals. Much as this study is cognizant of the fact that there will always be ugly negative people and events in society and as such a possible need to reflect these sometimes; adequate structuring, and emphasizing the positive rather than the negative, especially in feminine characterization and roles, can be used as a change agent instrument. This will embrace feminist film ideology and achieve far more, in terms of societal perception and ideological shift.

#### **2.7.5 The “New” Nollywood Film: Style and Content**

“New Nollywood” is an appellation or brand name given by the foreign media to a more recent generation of Nollywood films that tend to adopt and adhere to Hollywood filmic presentation modes and patterns. The action is fast tempoed and dynamic. An effluence of relevant visual detail is provided to boost context and of course visual aesthetics and imagery. The plot is carefully orchestrated to crescendo into a cataclysmic climax that filters into a denouement which resolves all dramatic conflicts. Kunle Afolayan amongst others has more or less singularly distinguished himself by spearheading this filmic mode and specialty that has been identified as “New Nollywood.”

Andrew Rice's introduction to his article in the prestigious and widely read international New York Times Magazine (Feb 23, 2012) on "New Nollywood" films reads:

Nollywood fever has finally hit the New York Times Magazine. At this point in its history, discourse about the industry needs to be more sophisticated than glorifying it as a low cost novelty in filmmaking. On a continent where economies usually depend on extracting natural resources or on charity, moviemaking is now one of Nigeria's largest sources of private sector employment. And yet, most of the movies themselves are awful, marred by slapdash production, melodramatic acting and ludicrous plots. (Rice 2012)

The phenomenon tagged New Nollywood emerged from the excesses of Nollywood films through what is known as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> part syndrome in which a subsequent 'part' could be a complete derivation from part 1 both in thematic content and characters left much to be desired. This amongst other Nollywood films excesses/shortcomings made viewers yearn for a long overdue improvement and change. Movie makers such as Kelani Tunde, Ogidan Tade, and Mahmood Balogun attempted the production of movies expected to differ apart the usual one. However, Kunle Afolayan's emergence with the figurine (2009) heralded the long awaited and much desired change.

Rice further states in his New York TIMES article:

Kunle Afolayan is one of a group of upstart directors trying to transcend those rote formulas and low expectations. Afolayan wants to scare you,, he wants to thrill you, he wants to make you laugh, but most of all, he would like you to suspend your disbelief- in his plots, yes, which tend to be over the top, but also, about what is possible in Africa. He wants to make huge, explosive, American style blockbusters, and he wants to make them where he lives - in Nigeria. "Their mindset Afolayan said, "is totally different than mine." Nollywood movies both old and new, often play on traditional African belief about magic and spirits. *The Figurine* is about two young undergraduates-rivals for the same woman's affections, who stumble on a shrine and uncover the statue of a god. The figurine is supposed to grant seven years of good luck, followed by seven of misfortune. Afolayan's character brings it home to Lagos, wins the girl and great wealth, at which point the plot takes a horror genre turn. (Rice, 2012)



Once a rarity in the Nigerian film industry, screening at international film festivals are no longer few and far between, but actually abound. Erin Robertson (2016) highlights the New Nollywood films that would be premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in September 2016. He states:

As part of its Lagos themed 'City-to-City' spotlight, TIFF will be spotlighting eight new films reflecting the new wave of cinema coming out of Nigeria's cultural capital. Audiences will have the opportunity to see the premieres of films – *The Wedding Party*, *93 Days*, *The Arbitration*, *Okafor's Law*, *796*, *green White Green*, *Just Not Married* and *Taxi Driver*." He quotes Cameron Bailey in an interview: "The city of Fela Kuti's music has also given birth to one of the world's most vibrant film industries." He continues in his blog: "Bigger budgets, greater artistic ambition – the new cinema of Lagos is bold, exciting and ready to take its place on the international stage. We are excited to share the creativity of this remarkable city's filmmakers with TIFF audiences in September (2016). TIFF's solid line up spotlighting gallant works by Nigeria's cutting edge filmmakers will expose a whole new audience to this industry, taking Africa and the world by storm. (Robertson, 2016:4)

An interesting emergent factor is that New Nollywood has made widespread incursions into the Nigerian filmic space which is rapidly ballooning, the "Old Nollywood," of audiences so to speak, still booms. So, it is simply a matter of a proliferate variant and a multiplicity of audiences.

## **2.8. Systems Design and the Communication Platform of the Nollywood Film**

All communication is purpose driven. That is to say that when people communicate with one another, they have a purpose for doing so. The assumption here is that, the person(s) who sets out to invest resources and time into making a film, would possibly have an underlying purpose of more than mere entertainment and profit. This is a fairly common premise to film critics and theorists. That was until Nigerian video films infiltrated the world filmic space with its peculiar ethnic style and production values, all its own. The films have a clearly defined pattern that conform to the tastes of their dogged if not fanatic viewership and target audiences. Sadly, critics have hitherto used the Hollywood communication platform and systems design to critically analyze the Nollywood film. Whereas the Hollywood film depends on filmic techniques and the application of technology to compress its narratives while leaving

a lot to the viewer's imagination; in its filmic haste to concisely cluster in as much necessary information as possible, the Nigerian film is not averse to taking its time in the elucidation of its narrative, (considered to be a virtue in the Nigerian mores, while haste is aggressively frowned upon).

Another filmic technique that is so critical to the Hollywood filmmaker is that of creation of suspense. In fact this is the fulcrum upon which the Hollywood narrative rotates. On the contrary, the Nollywood target audience may well speculate the precise denouement of the film, and proceed to announce it to fellow viewers with confidence; and would most likely boast away when the predictions are matched at the end of the film. Suspense is totally irrelevant except to those who have been exposed to Hollywood media literacy, and as a result crave its style.

Hollywood uses a filmic technique usually described as "show, not tell!" Nollywood narratives will not only tell it in elaborate detail, but are also not averse to repetition, no matter how boring the repetitions might be. This is partly a cultural digesis that is endemic to the "cool sequestered vale" of Nigerian rural life. For instance, the adjudicators of justice and family life in Nigerian rural communities are the village elders. A filmic representation of a hurried over village elders/family meeting would if anything, more likely than not, offend the viewership, and come across as "not authentic!"

Again, target audiences (viewers) are not necessarily bothered about how long a particular narrative piece drags on, or how frequently the chorus intones the long drawn out thematic music. Their key interest in viewing the melodrama resides solely in their desire to see the antagonist's wicked schemes begin to misfire, and for evil to be ultimately punished, while good/virtue is rewarded. It is not unusual to see such audiences become so involved with the dramatic piece that they could frequently talk back at the antagonists, promising them "doom and gloom," and that their evil machinations would inevitably crash upon their own heads! There have even been occasions where characters have been aggressively accosted or actually attacked in real life by viewers who had so completely identified with the dramatic piece as to become so enmeshed in it, and completely lose the ability to distance mediated reality, from real life. A few of such incidents would bear narration. Patience Ozokwor, an accomplished and ebullient Nollywood actress had become stereotyped

as the wicked, selfish and greedy mother, stepmother, mother-in-law, wife, landlady, etc. She always played this wicked character to the tee in various films; that when audiences saw her at Asaba in a film shoot sequence, the rascally teenagers in the environment ganged up and actually begun to hurl stones at her with loud accusations of “wicked woman” and “witch!” The film shoot was hastily truncated while she was rushed away to safety. In a similar incident, another popular Nollywood actor Femi Branch relates how an overzealous battle-ready viewer accosted him in Lagos (where he resides), challenging the ill treatment he frequently meted out to his wife in a very popular TV soap of the early 2000’s - *Dominoes*. Seeing that this gentleman was obviously mixed up in mediated reality, it took a lot of ingenuity on his part to calmly explain that it was all mere play acting and that he was simply acting out the part allotted to him by his “bosses” the moviemakers.

In terms of systems design, Hyginus Ekwuazi, a leading researcher in film, enunciates the style and structure of the Igbo Nollywood film, in a critical analysis of *Circle of Doom*:

The screen has seldom been the medium for the complex or the intricate. It has always made more economic sense to reduce the story to the lowest common denominator, to appeal to the widest spectrum of viewers. That precisely, is what we find in these video films-simplicity. They make a virtue of simplicity. The story is simple, without any adornment. So too is the plot: there is no impediment in the form of either a flashback or a major subplot, though a variety of incidents (primarily sexual or financial), have been added to the storyline. One scene is linked to another by means of simple cuts or dissolves. (Ekwuazi, 2000: 140-3)

This is not to say of course that there are absolutely no flashbacks or subplots in the Igbo film. What is being enunciated is the simplicity of plot. Frequently, it is a linear plot of cause to effect. The production values are strictly adhered to and nothing is done outside the pattern. This does not issue necessarily from a code of rules and regulations, but more from the fact that the Nollywood filmmaker is in the business primarily and strictly for profit. This strictly for profit motif makes for dogged adherence to target audience tastes and wishes.

Bashiru Akande (2008) does a digenic analysis of thematic suffusions of the Nollywood film.

The Igbo films at this period, treated the communal essence of the traditional Igbo society. Their themes were based on the treatment of social vices in the pre-colonial era as they affected the society and on the identification of the age long tradition of the Igbos. Many traditions and customs of the Igbos were projected into the films. The Igbo films enjoyed a high degree of acceptance from the audience in its introductory stages in the nineties. However, a lack of innovation and zeal for improvement led to the audience becoming disenchanted with Igbo films...To redress this situation, most of the Igbo film producers changed gear as they started producing glamour films.

The bandwagon effect of the glamour films affected the Yoruba film producers as they bounced back to engage in the production of glamour films like their Igbo counterparts. All the films produced during this period were produced with special consideration for glamour. The most expensive cars in town were usually used as props, while the most beautiful mansions were usually considered for locations and also served as settings. (Akanke, 2008: 16,17)

Elo Ibagere (2008) throws further light on the issue of setting for Nollywood films.

The setting is usually apt in terms of landscape, mud houses and the like. They become part of what enhances the film, thereby attracting patronage. It is therefore commercial considerations that dictate the making of the Nigerian film, more than any other factor. (Ibagere, 2008: 12)

In terms of characterization, this syndrome of commercial consideration for effective maximization of profit has also evolved other fallouts such as the “star personality cult” syndrome. This implies that, target audiences are likely to watch films that their star/idol features in. Film patrons have been known to pick films to view/watch based not on the content or storyline but strictly on which star actor/actress was featured in it. Equally, executive producers have been known to dictate to producers and directors, specific movie stars that must be featured in the film, as a precondition for financial sponsorship of a given film.

### **The Communication Platform of the Nollywood Film**

Samovar and Porter define communication as “one’s ability to share one’s beliefs, values, ideas and feelings.” This assertion is further defined as “the basis of all human contact,” by Rudolf Verdeber (1999) claims that a pictorial representation (film), best reflects how the elements of communication interrelate.

In the minds of the participants (screenplay writers, producers) are meanings-thoughts or feelings that they intend to share. Those thoughts or feelings are created, shaped and affected by

the participant's total field of experience including such specific factors as values, culture, experiences, occupation, sex, interests, knowledge and attitudes. To turn meaning into messages, participants encode a thought or feeling into words and (dramatic) actions and send it via sending channels-in this case, the film.

At the receiving end;

Meanings that have been encoded into symbols are turned back into meaning by participants (recipients and end users) through the decoding process. This decoding process is affected by the participants' total field of experience-that is, all the factors that shape the encoding process.

(Verdeber, 1999:10)

The communication platform of the Nollywood film is directly specific to its teeming target audiences. It articulates a cause, enunciates its consequent effect which exposes and lays it bare for the viewing audience to behold the consequences. This could be achieved utilizing a lot of repetitiveness but that's part of the systems design. Ultimately the target audiences are happy, and that's what counts in the end.

### **Music and Song**

It has become a widespread pattern to make a customized musical piece that articulates the main thematic content of the entire story. This inevitably is interspersed all over the dramatic action sometimes as rude interruptions to the smooth flow of the dramatic action. A kind of unintended Brechtian alienation effect, perhaps?

### **Language**

The language is frequently Nigerian contemporary English, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, or of the other ethnic minorities such as Edo, Efik etc. The Nigerian brand of adulterated English usually referred to as Pidgin English, has proved to be extremely versatile and compatible, as well as most popular with the comedy genre.

## **2.9 Gender Representations in Hollywood and Bollywood Films**

A cursory examination of gender representations is deemed necessary to this research for a number of reasons. Historically, the filmic world was birthed to Nigerian audiences through the incursion of the Hollywood film. They were the initial and only

films (especially westerns) available to cinema audiences, either in communities or in cinema houses. The Bollywood film made its incursion not much later, replete with hilarious comedies and long winding, romantic plots. It is needful to state that Bollywood films were extremely popular with Nigerian audiences (warts and all); a love affair that still persists till date, especially in the northern parts of the country.

As an industry, it has been stated in some circles that the Nollywood film industry is the third (some claim second) largest film industry, globally. It becomes pertinent therefore to undertake a cursory look at the developments of the dynamics of the gender representations of its forebears and antecedents. Research has identified that filmic gender representations frequently tally after the perceived cultural norms of the geographical entity. This diversifies with time though, in shape and perspective, as a gradual diffusion of especially Western and other cultural values seep in; considering the advance in information technology and the advent of social media, through the internet. This is not to state that the changes are radical and sweeping. Rather it is a gradual diversification from the old classic patterns and modes. However, in the face of feminist groups rising up to challenge “accepted norms” and hitherto conventional modes of representations, structured change for a shift into the desired dimension is with persistence and perseverance, achieved over time.

### **2.9.1 Gender Representations in Hollywood Films**

While Hollywood dramatic content cannot be regarded as an absolute recreation of the real world, it has unarguably, largely reflected the perspectives on the world of the entire gamut of players, who control the movie industry. In a brief summary, Croteau and Hoynes (1997) state that though, the age old stereotypical patterns of feminine representations in films, made-for-TV-films and television soap operas, still suffice, since the 1990’s there has been a shift from these traditional role casting.

Women’s roles have often reflected similar stereotypes about femininity. Over the years, the dominant roles for women have been as mother, homemaker or sexual object. The media industry though, responded to feminists organizing for change. As with racial stereotypes, the industry has muted the blatant simplicity of stereotypical gender images of women in more recent years. There is certainly a wider palette of roles and media images of women the 1990’s than there was twenty-five years ago.

Further, in Hollywood made for TV Films:

The media images of women and men reflect and reproduce a whole set of stereotypical but changing gender roles. On television, we are more likely to find men in action and drama roles and less likely to find them in situation comedies and soap operas. Men are also more likely to be portrayed as having high status jobs in traditionally “male occupations” and are less likely to be shown in the home. Producers are likely to portray men as more dominant than women and as more prone to engage in violence. (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997:149)

Part of the strategy of research should be to identify undesirable and outmoded societal patterns (in this case, of feminine/career women) Nollywood portrayals; to examine and recommend desirable and currently applicable modes and patterns. This is a conscious engineering, collection and collation of thought processes that requires the concerted efforts of various concerned groups. In some cases, agitations have been put through legislative processes, to achieve desired societal change and shifts in perspectives.

Elaine Rapping (1995:42), refers to this as “war,” and articulates in some detail the war strategies of these feminist gladiators:

Those 1980’s backlash years in which made-for TV movies about issues feminists had placed on the national agenda – rape, domestic violence, incest, economic discrimination and more – were reaching audiences of 75 to 100 million viewers. Television (especially daytime) on the other hand, targets women for the purposes of charting feminist influence on women audiences. More importantly, this medium can at times actually raise consciousness about various forms of sexism and encourage women to resist and refuse them. In the last 20 years (70’s and 80’s), feminists began their organized battle to change the construction of gender relations and identities. Feminism has become a major force in the representation wars  
(Elaine Rapping, 1995:42)

The main point to be noted here is that these are ‘battles’ that are not only politically strategized, but more importantly, are precisely and strategically structured to impact (and sometimes shock) society to change.

### **2.9.2 Gender Representations in Bollywood Films**

Previous research conducted in this field has focused on the effect of globalization on Bollywood. Though Bollywood films today are now made with an international

audience in mind, the ideological values invested in the characterization still remain conservative.

Specific practices regulate gender relations within the context of Indian society. Thus Bollywood functions as a medium to perpetuate these gender ideals. Laura Mulvey (1975:15) argues that women are set into different characters; one as a sexually active and aggressive female, the other as a powerless female stereotyped as the “housewife”. Traditional films portray men as active controlling subjects and treat women as passive objects of desire for men.

Anne Cieko (2015:24) asserts that Bollywood has consistently reinforced traditional gender constructions. Firstly, she exhorts on how Bollywood films employ masculine agency, which she refers to as “metacinematic gender politics.” She opines: “The reinforcement of the super-masculine leading male compels the heroine to act, look, and behave more ‘Indian.’” Her examination of Hindi-language feature films (*Om Shanti Om*, *Luck by Chance* and *Dhobi Ghat/Mumbai Diaries*), directed and written by women - Farah Khan, Zoya Akhtar and Kiran Rao, offers insider industry perspectives and a variety of outlooks on Bollywood and Indian society, more generally. The concept of “selective reflection” is utilized to critically examine self-conscious representations of the excessively star-driven world of Bollywood filmmaking in an age of globalization.

Though Mulvey (1975:4) retains her relevance in representation of gender in Bollywood films, her observation has however, become less consistent over the years. In some films women have broken stereotypes and made individual identities for superior roles in films.

Progress is evident in the way women have played alongside males. Thus, the contemporary trajectory of the dynamics of the Bollywood film industry could be anchored in the feminist theory of Gender Equality, but not yet Gender Equity.

## **2.10 Ethics: The Nigerian Society and the Nollywood Film**

The term ethics is engaged with the accepted societal universal mores of good and bad, virtuous and evil. A simple definition of ethics is “a system of moral principles



or rules of behavior or, moral principles that control or influence a person's behavior or the branch of philosophy that deals with oral principles." Every profession or discipline is expected to have rules governing the conduct of members as well as the regulation of content production. This cuts across the entire spectrum of goods and services produced in society for the end user, be it food, or in the manufacture of electronic gadgets or the arts!

Anyantayo (1999:123) identifies the positive values or ethics in African philosophy to include justice, gratitude, honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, tolerance, hard work, cooperation, generosity, kindness, and fidelity to one's duty."

Ogu Emenaku opines:

Ethics are generally not externally imposed but developed from within the society or group that subscribes to it. Sometimes it is bequeathed from previous generations. The ethics of the Nigerian home video industry can be expected to be a product of the industry and the society in which the industry operates. On one hand, it can be argued that the ethics of such an industry cannot be radically different from that of the larger society, since the arts (including video film production) are a reflection of the society. But on the other hand, it can be argued that arts should have a therapeutic effect. In other words, it can be argued that art should both mirror and heal the society of its perceived ills (Emenaku, 2003: 71)

As Bill Nichols, a foremost documentary filmmaker states:

The importance of ethics when making a film is paramount. They exist in filmmaking to govern the conduct, because no hard and fast rules suffice. There is a careful balance between choices of power and style that needs to be created between the filmmaker, the subject and the audience in order to produce an ethically sound film. (Nichols, 2011:4)

Given the above assertion, the question to ponder is, how mediated Nollywood film portrayals compare in juxtaposition to the real world? This in turn, also raises several issues. The filmmaker is inevitably selective in terms of choice of content and presentational modes and patterns. The submission that a work of art is merely "a slice of life" then becomes highly questionable and untenable, considering that as a work of art, it is subjective in nature; having been filtered through the producer/director's perceptions and perspectives. Closely aligned are limiting factors that militate against smooth production procedures, which are endemic in Nigeria;

such as erratic and infrequent power supply, unreliable weather forecasts, as well as limited financial resources and facilities.

Perhaps the gargantuan factor is the overriding need to maximize profit. This stems from associated factors of overt haste to earn income, which further overrides the necessity to research needful themes and more 'cutting edge' storylines. The end result? It engenders a hastily putting together and recycling of hackneyed themes and story lines. Within these ambits of extensive social limitations, proportionally societal miniscule issues that would normally be the exception (such as incest and prostitution) could be grossly exaggerated and made to appear as the norm, while virtue, integrity and uprightness are permanently thrown overboard. The mindset that informs this would be: "if the sensationally outrageous sells more than morality, then of course, produce and multiply it!"

As David Croteau and William Hoynes (1997:34-35) indicate, there is in reality only selective and filtered "slices of life" in filmmaking, and never an actual "slice of life."

First, the literature in the media and cultural studies reminds us that representations are not reality, even if the media audiences may sometimes be tempted to judge them as such. Representations—even those that attempt to reproduce reality such as the documentary film are the results of processes of selection that invariably mean that certain aspects of reality are highlighted and others neglected. (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997:34, 35)

The issue of ineluctably highlighting certain aspects of reality while neglecting others is the focal point of ethical responsibility. Why give so much obtuse emphasis to that which is ugly and profane and neglect that which is beautiful and desirable? It becomes fairly evident that many Nigerian filmmakers are clearly not cognizant of the issues of their ethical responsibilities. If not, how does one explain preponderant themes of disadvantaged females always resorting to prostitution? It becomes obvious that some filmmakers are more mindful of utilizing the nuances of melodrama to elicit overt emotional appeal from audiences that would ensure raking in a huge profit, rather than offer a positive ethical direction of future hope.

Emenaku (2003:78) significantly observes that:

Another way of approaching the question is to examine the motivation for the mass production of home video films in

Nigeria. Nigeria operates a capitalist economy characterized by the pressure to maximize profits (at all costs while minimizing losses); exploitation, unbridled competition, and other hallmarks of capitalist accumulation. Video film producers in the Nigerian economy tend to capitalize on all social factors, including moral frailties, to maximize profits. Accordingly, sexual innuendoes become attractive .... The things that should be considered morally reprehensible in a morally stable society are tolerated and put on display, as well as the oppressive and unjust social system that breeds poverty and discontent. All these are part of the current reality of Nigeria's moral and ethical foundations and since the foundations of the video film industry are inextricably interwoven with the moral and ethical foundations of the larger society, the rather ignoble and reprehensible lapses inherent in the larger society, have become part and parcel of the ethical foundations of the Nigerian video film industry.

Emenaku (2003:79) further proffers viable options, albeit solutions:

Ethical reengineering in the larger society may be a prelude to sanitizing the video industry. A system of ethical discipline to check recklessness should be put in place for the larger society and its subcomponents. An ethically errant philosophy that plagues the Nigerian society is the saying that 'the end justifies the means.' This reduces morality to an unwanted component, while the end- (usually wealth, affluence, fame and 'honor') is elevated. Reorganizing Nigeria's moral rubrics to accommodate morality, conscience and virtue, may be the first step towards reconstructing the ethical foundations of the home video industry.

But again in his opinion, does this obviate the need to urgently re-examine the ethical foundations of the video film industry? By no means! Rather, it makes the need for the reconstruction of the video film industry more compelling. The greater need of the society is not measured in terms of wealth, volume of sale, income and capacity to have influence and dominate others etc, alone. Other measures such as peace, progress, moral

development, and virtuous lifestyle, must be put into consideration. He further says:

The producers of video films owe the society a duty to promote the larger good of the society, and ennobling virtues which the society covets, should find expression in the video productions. The values which a society transmits to its future generations are very important since foundations are not just for the current moment alone. (Emenaku, 2003: 78, 79)

Predictably, it is in the face of these immense needs and necessities that the Federal Government set up a body - the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) in 1993, to regulate, albeit sanitize the Nollywood industry.

### **2.11 Censorship and Film**

Censorship is an age old governmental function, usually associated with repressive/totalitarian governments. Primarily, it was applied to the tabloid, but of course with time filtered on into other media dimensions and into the film. Being the oldest, it becomes necessary to give a brief overview of censorship in the Hollywood film industry. According to Baran (2010:153,406), in 1922, stressing the importance of movies to national life, and as an educational medium, the cry for government intervention on the need for government to regulate the movie industry morals, was raised. A committee founded on public relations that included many civic and religious leaders, was raised. In 1934, Hollywood created the Motion Picture Production Code (MPPC). The MPPC forbade the use of profanity, limited bedroom scenes to married couples, required that skimpy outfits be replaced by more complete costumes, delineated the length of screen kisses, ruled out scenes that ridiculed public officials or religious leaders and outlawed a series of words from “God” to “nuts,” all enforced by a twenty-five thousand dollar fine.

However, in 1953, Preminger and United Artistes battled the MPPC, for approval over a saucy sex comedy titled *The Moon is Blue* - a tale of a young woman who flaunted her virginity, and its humor resided in its double entendre and innuendo. Though approval was denied them, they released the movie anyway and grossed huge box office successes! Two years later, a similar set of events happened, this time with a movie titled *The Man with the Golden Arm*. In spite of this the movie industry still feared government intrusion. Its solution was to develop a different kind of self-

regulation, and in 1966, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) was born. Now, no longer were movie makers told what they could and could not do. Instead, audiences were being alerted to what filmmakers were doing. The idea was to give filmmakers as much artistic freedom as they wanted; and to also provide moviegoers with some indication of the nature of a film's content.

The rating system which has seen some alteration since its introduction is familiar today to everyone who goes to a movie or who rents a DVD.

G: General Audiences

PG: Parental Guidance: for mature audiences

PG-13: Parental guidance advised for children under 13 years old

R: Restricted. No one under 17 years of age will be admitted, unless accompanied by an adult

NC-17: No children under 17. This replaces the old X code.

(Baran, 2010:152, 153)

The National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) and its affiliates in Lagos and Kano, is the sole regulating body in Nigeria. The NFVCB was set up by Act No. 85 in 1993 to regulate films and video industry in Nigeria. Its vision as stated is: "To be recognized as a professional film and video classification authority that adopts best practices in the discharge of its functions." With a mission statement that is determined to:

Contribute to the positive transformation of the Nigerian society through censorship and classification of films and video works whilst balancing the need to preserve freedom of expression within the law and to limit social harm that could be caused by films. (NFVCB Act, 1993)

The board is empowered by law to:

- Classify all films and videos whether imported or produced locally,
- Register all films and video outlets across the country,
- Keep a register of such registered outlets
- To license a person/organization to exhibit films or video works

- To license a premise for the purposes of exhibiting films and video works
- To regulate and control cinematographic exhibitions
- To perform such other functions as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it by this decree.

The establishment of the board therefore, empowers it to assess, classify and register films and video works and the film outlets across the country, and to monitor the films and film outlets.

### **2.11.1 The National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) and the Nollywood Film**

It is important to note that interestingly, the National Film and Video Censors Board does not have a single specific clause in its total compendium of regulatory provisos that stipulates any criteria that is related to feminist issues or female representations. While a gamut of other issues that cover the spectrum of life, are articulated and duly legislated upon, the NFVCB Act is curiously silent about regulating female representational criteria in any aspect of life; except when it is at crossroads with the presumed more relevant stipulated criteria such religion. In other words, a filmic scene of rape where a woman is sexually and brutally violated draws no ire, but a consensual sexual scene of a clergy man and clergy woman in certain denominations, draws considerable ire and generates much heat within the polity. It is hoped that future reviews of the NFVCB Act will examine and include feminist issues with provisos for its application clauses. However, it was deemed equally pertinent to this research to critically examine and analyze the provisos and operative clauses of the NFVCB as a regulatory body. This is considered intrinsic and necessary to any articulate Nollywood filmic analytical study and discourse.

As a regulatory agency, the NFVCB is empowered by its enabling laws to control and monitor the distribution, exhibition and marketing of motion pictures in Nigeria. The censorship and classification of films and videos is a key function of the board. The mandate of the board specifies that it should deny approval not only to films considered indecent or likely to be injurious to morality, but also to films that are undesirable in the public interest, or that are likely to incite or encourage public disorder. According to Obiaya (2015), “the National film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) has come under a lot of attack for its interpretation and execution of this

mandate. It has been accused among other things of making confused judgments and of stifling creativity. There have even been calls for its role of censorship to be scrapped.”

It is important to note however, that prior to the establishment of the NFVCB, there had been several societal calls and clamor for some form of adequate regulation of especially video content that was being churned out and dumped with reckless abandon on the Nigerian populace. The fact is that there was in reality, a previous existing but failed censorship body – the Federal Board for Film Censorship which operated under the aegis of the Cinematographic Act of 1963-64; and had become completely moribund. The consequent huge public outcry for some form of official regulation could not be satisfied by the existing regulatory body. Thus the National Film and Video Censors Board was brought into being in 1993 through a government decree.

The NFVCB largely differs from the previous body in terms of the expanded scope of its functions and the inclusion of video films within the ambits of its responsibility. Ugor (2007) actually attributes the establishment of the board to the sudden rise in video filmmaking, which was facilitated by the available technology. According to him, “the informal nature of the new video culture made it an all-comers game. This led to a flood of films with all manner of content”

However, the role of the Board has been defended on the basis of the need to protect the common good. Many of the censorship decisions of the Board have been based on the desire to protect the moral ambient of the society and to forestall public disorder. The ethnic and religious tensions that exist in Nigeria, a country of over 250 different ethnic groups, make the latter concern a real one. As manifestations of popular culture, the video films tend to portray the realities of the society. Thus the possibility of incitement does exist and obviously, the state has a responsibility to maintain equilibrium in the society.

Johnson (1996: 134) opines that beyond the maintenance of law and order;

The state equally possesses a legitimate responsibility to protect society’s cultural memory and heritage, to defend its cultural values, to stimulate cultural production and to ensure that culture is not defined exclusively by market criteria. The fact that film is both a cultural and an economic good, means that

direct support of national film industries should be the rule, rather than the exception. (Johnson, 1996: 133)

Ikechukwu Obiaya (2013) takes this further:

Film as a cultural good tends to reflect the values of society and has the ability to shape thought, whereas as an economic good it is able to generate wealth and employment. It is for this reason that the state as a rule is reluctant to allow market forces to control the sector. (Obiaya, 2013: 262)

In direct consonance with the above stated, it becomes imperative that government establishes a regulatory and monitoring body that oversees this potent and versatile industry that is imbued with multiple, inherent capabilities for the good and positive furtherance of societal wellbeing and preservation; the film industry.

### **Censorship Activities of the Board**

The 1993 National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) act is introduced as an act to among other things, “establish the National Film and Video Censors Board to regulate the censorship and public exhibition of films and video works, and matters connected therewith.” It goes on to list the functions of the NFVCB in Part 1, Section 2 as follows:

- (a). to license
  - i. a person to exhibit films and video works
  - ii. a premises for the purposes of exhibiting films and video works
    - a) to censor films and video works
    - b) to regulate and prescribe safety precautions to be observed in licensed premises
    - c) to regulate and control cinematographic exhibition
    - d) to perform such other functions as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it by this act.

Part VII of the establishing National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) act is dedicated to the censorship of films and video which is a core function of the Board.



According to section 36, “no person shall exhibit, cause or allow to be exhibited a film without a censorship certificate issued by the board for such exhibition.”

It further stipulates that:

- (1). The film censors committee in reaching a decision on a film shall ensure that –
  - a) such a film has an educational or an entertainment value apart from promoting the Nigerian culture, unity and interest and
  - b) that such a film is not likely –
    - i. to undermine national security; or
    - ii. to induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality; or
    - iii. to encourage or glorify the use of violence; or
    - iv. to expose the people of African heritage to ridicule or contempt; or
    - v. to encourage illegal or criminal acts; or
    - vi. to encourage racial, religious or ethnic discrimination or conflict; or
    - vii. by its contents to be blasphemous or obscene
- (2). The film censors committee shall not approve a film which in its opinion depicts any matter, which is indecent, obscene or likely to be injurious to morality, or likely to incite and encourage public disorder or crime; or undesirable in the public interest.

(National Film and Video Censors Board Act, 1993)

In its first ten years of operation therefore, the NFVCB defined its role strictly in terms of the censorship and classification of films and most of its activity was centered on this. Within this period, the board had only two categories in its classification structure:

- G (general viewing)
- 18 NTBB (suitable only for those above 18 years and not to be broadcast on television)

This structure was modified in 2006 as follows:

- G (general viewing)
- PG (parental guidance required)
- 12 (for persons of 12 years)

- 12A (for persons of 12 years accompanied by an adult)
- 15 (for persons 15 years and above)
- 18 (mature audience)
- RE (restricted exhibition)
- NTBB (not to be broadcast)

The NFVCB approves films for broadcast on a monthly basis, all year round. In the year 2016 for instance, the Board approved a total of five hundred and fifty six (556) films. The films are approved monthly, totaling a set of twelve batches and are numbered accordingly in each batch. (January: 1<sup>st</sup>batch = 23; February: 2<sup>nd</sup> batch = 28; March: 3<sup>rd</sup>batch = 41; April: 4<sup>th</sup>batch =44; May: 5<sup>th</sup> batch = 58; June: 6<sup>th</sup>batch = 70; July: 7<sup>th</sup>batch = 42; August: 8<sup>th</sup> batch = 53; September: 9<sup>th</sup> batch = 51; October:10<sup>th</sup> batch = 48; November: 11th batch = 71 and December:12<sup>th</sup> batch = 27). Further, the approved films are equally rated, according to NFVCB rating guidelines and stipulations. For instance, the table below is a random sample. It outlines the film title, its rating criteria, consumer advice, preview location, the language of the film and the date of approval.

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Title of Film</b>	<b>Rating G</b>	<b>Consumer Advice</b>	<b>Preview Location</b>	<b>Langu age</b>	<b>Date of Approval</b>
27	Aso Agba Meta	15	Contains Ritual Practice	Jos	Yoruba	4.08.2016
32	I Believe	15	Contains moderate Language and Violence	Lagos	English	4.02.2016
8	Mota Alfa	15	Contains strong language and imitable tech	Kano	Hausa	20.10.2016
31	Hanging Coffin	18	Contains Strong Language, Ritual and Violence	Bauchi	English	03.08.2016
36	Jennifer's Diary (Season 4)	18	Contains drug use and imitable technique	Lagos	English	11.08.2016
17	Ayagba Oosa	18	Contains strong Language, fetish practices and imitable tech	Lagos	Yoruba	26.09.2016

It is important to note that within the ambit of its censorship activities, relatively speaking, the NFVCB has out rightly banned only a few films.

Obiaya (2015:97) notes:

Between 1994 and April 2005, the Board censored about four thousand six hundred films, only one of which was celluloid. Out of this number, some twenty-five or so films have been completely embargoed. They include *I Hate My Village*, which portrays the population of a certain part of the south east of Nigeria as cannibals. *A Woman in Love*, a Ghanaian film that supposedly glamorizes lesbianism, and *Iyawo Alhaji*, whose ban was later repealed. The others are *Valentine Sex Party* and *Sex is a Nigerian*. These films that were banned in 1999 contained indecent, obscure and overtly sexual scenes which the Board considered harmful to public morality.

Obiaya (2015) further judiciously observes:

Between 2002 and 2005 under Mrs. Rosaline Odeh, some of NFVCB's classification decisions were heavily criticized by the filmmakers and the public who considered some of those decisions as arbitrary. This notwithstanding, Peter Ugor (2007, 12) notes that "Mrs. Odeh's tenure as chairperson of the Censor's Board was indeed remarkable in Nigeria's film history. During those years, there seemed to be something like a firm censorship environment in the country." Both Mrs. Odeh and her predecessor Mr. Mbah have been commended for the firm stand they took in combating the spread of pornographic material (Obiaya, 2015: 98)

Other agencies that the Board needs to work closely with are the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC), the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). These agencies are all regulatory agencies that belong like the NFVCB, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Information and that share various overlaps in their fields of responsibility. With the aim of providing a platform to facilitate inter-agency cooperation, the NFVCB along with these other three agencies, formed what was called the Creative Industry Regulatory Quartet on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2005. The quartet is intended to enable the agencies work together to address issues of common concern by coordinating the policies and activities of the respective organizations.

## **Geo-Political Perspective of Censorship**

However, the NFVCB has had its share of difficulties in the effort to fulfill its mandate. A key difficulty of the board arises from the size of the geographical region over which its authority extends. Given the nature of its functions, the Board is expected to establish a monitoring presence in all the corners of the country which is 932,768 sq. km in size, and made of 36 including Abuja which is the federal capital. They are also divided into 774 Local Government Areas, made up of about 8, 692 wards. The board along with its headquarters in Abuja has six zonal offices with the eighteen centers that depend on them. This means that the board has an official physical presence only in 25 cities/towns.

The peculiarities and challenges of effective monitoring for censorship in multiple geographical locations is simply a gargantuan task. There are 36 states in Nigeria, with a total of 774 local government areas. As such, the NFVCB to be anywhere near effective, would need:

- Offices as well as well-equipped para military staff presence in every local government area to regularly monitor the shops and markets in its purview and ensure that unlicensed or censored films are not marketed.
- Many cities and towns in Nigeria such as Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Asaba, Calabar, Uyo, Ibadan, Port Harcourt – to name a few have ‘film villages,’ where films are regularly shot. Ideally NFVCB, should be aware of such shoots at the state or local government level, to keep tabs of which films eventually get submitted or not, for censorship.
- Presently, the order is that a filmmaker can choose to ignore the NFVCB and skip submitting his/her film for censorship. Aspiring beginners can easily skip censorship, make their films and quietly market them, without the knowledge of the censors board.
- On the other hand, there have been cases where filmmakers still marketed films without deleting the censored portions as instructed by NCVCB, who lacked the necessary instrument of jurisdiction to back up an effect its orders.

- Further, the NFVCB would need a strong judicial arm that is closely allied to the judiciary of all its state offices, in order to prosecute/ban or at least call offenders to book.

In spite of its Zonal offices, the presence of the NFVCB nationally, is largely inadequate. The Board is simply not in a position to monitor all the exhibition sites or all the videos available for sale in the country. Consequently, it lacks a complete control over the films released into the markets.

According to Obiaya (2015):

The number of films that the board classifies does not actually account for all the video films produced in the country and there may be many films in the market that have not been submitted for the NFVCB classification process. The Board faces the problems of filmmakers who either scorn the process altogether, or undermine it by taking to the market a version of their film different from that classified and approved by the board. These persons take advantage of the inability of the board to closely monitor all the geographical areas. (Obiaya, 2015: 98)

Nevertheless, the board still carries out periodic raids on the markets such as that which it carried out in Abuja in January 2014 which according to the News Agency of Nigeria, led to the confiscation of both pirated and uncensored pornographic films valued at N2.5 million, (about 15,365 USD).

### **2.11.2 Censorship and the Feminist Perspective: How Does Censorship React to the Treatment of Women in Nollywood Films?**

It comes as a surprise to note that censorship absolutely does not react in any way whatsoever, to the treatment of women in Nigerian films. Kenneth Harrow (2013:9) references Abena Busia (2010) in calling for “a proper representation of women in Nigerian movies.” The problem has become so prevalent that other nationals have not only noticed but are clamoring for improvement, while the non-gender inclusive syndrome seems to have completely eluded the ‘watchful’ eyes of the sole regulating body! In spite of all the United Nations declarations on gender equality/equity guideline

stipulations; not a single gender proviso is built into the entire National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) Act (document), considering that the NFVCB is the sole regulating body of film and its allied products in Nigeria.

In the foregoing, several considerations are inclusive and are clearly stipulated in the NFVCB purview - societal, economic, political, social, ethical, geographical, religion and others. Within the widespread ambits of these considerations, there is not a singular mention, consideration or stipulation to serve as a guide or checkmate for female representations. However, this research calls on the NFVCB to take cognizance of clause 3 of the 2013 UNESCO Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) which states that “media policy strategies must be gender inclusive”, and to be complicit to this directive that is binding on all member states and stakeholder nations, which includes Nigeria.

Ironically, it is also sad to note that there is an absolute lack of clamor and requests to NFVCB for such gender inclusiveness by female organizations agencies, or even stakeholders, while many seem merely content to helplessly wring their hands and complain about female sexual exploitation in films, music videos and advertorials.

### **2.11.3 The Capacity of Censorship to Regulate and Regularize the Filmmakers’ Originally Intended Content**

One can appreciate the importance of the oversight functions of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) when it comes to the medium of film. However, some of the decisions of the board have not always been welcome. One such decision that drew a lot of negative attention to the Board was the classification of Tunde Kelani’s film *Agogo Eewo* (2002) as out rightly banned - (NTBB). According to the board, the classification was given because the film overtly contained scenes with Ifa divination details which were considered fetish. Commentators failed to see the reason for the classification and thought the decision was erroneous.

A somewhat similar case scenario played out with Helen Ukpabio’s film *End of the Wicked* (1999). Helen Ukpabio’s the founder and leader of Liberty Foundation Gospel Ministries; an African evangelistic franchise which produces proselytizing films through its production company - Liberty films. Ukpabio was asked to amend some scenes which the Board found too visually explicit, in its display of the male sexual

organ. Though the case was lodged in court, it was later thrown out for want of evidence as the prosecuting police officer claimed the evidence he had which was collected in a raid had been gutted by fire. (Obiaya, 2015:102)

Helen Ukpabio's subsequent film *Rapture* (2002) was banned for its inflammatory anti-Catholic sentiments. The Board was acting in full awareness of its duties because section 36 of the NFVCB Act mandates the board to ensure that any film it approves is not likely to "encourage racial, religious or ethnic discrimination or conflict," and should not be "indecent, obscene, or likely be injurious to morality." "The Board's decision in the Ukpabio case mentioned above," Obiaya (2015:99) opines, "reflects the respect for religious sensibilities required to forestall potentially dangerous provocation." A similar concern this time in respect to tribal sensibilities has guided the board's decision to ban other films.

On the other hand, the NFVCB has been accused of wielding power or sometimes wielding the big stick a little too freely. An instance that critics point to is the banning of a documentary film *Fueling Poverty* (2012), in 2013. The thirty-minute documentary chronicles the protests generated by the Nigerian government's removal of the fuel subsidy in January 2012. The documentary describes the effect of the removal and how it has served to increase poverty in the country. It goes on to depict the corruption and greed in the oil sector. The film was banned by the Board which "prohibited the distribution and exhibition of the documentary in Nigeria," saying "its contents were highly provocative and likely to incite or encourage public disorder and undermine national security." (Nigeria News Day, 2013: April 18).

The decision was heavily criticized and the Board was accused of merely misusing its power to prevent people from learning the truth. This factor to some extent, periodically crops up in critics' response to NFVCB's censorship decisions. One short year later in the year 2014, tempers and critical accusations of "stifling creativity" and "not wanting the people to know the truth," were flying once again! Other analysts are however, quick to point out that such decisions are taken only in the line of duty, as a course of action that would be ultimately beneficial to the common good.

*Half of a Yellow Sun*, another story set in the period of the civil war was required by NFVCB to expunge some scenes before approval would be given for it to be screened in Nigeria – (amidst a lot of hue and cry and pungent criticism of the board) - almost



three months after the planned cinema release date. The Board is said to have clamped down on this long expected movie out of concerns that this could re-open old wounds and give rise to renewed violence.

To a large extent, issues of censorship, rotate around issues of ethics and morality. There are those who strongly feel that Nollywood films should be censored even more stringently than the measures that are presently being applied. As Sarah Ironsi (2015) asserts:

The NFVCB is tasked with the responsibility of screening and classifying these movies for public viewing. NFVCB's mission is to contribute to the positive transformation of the Nigerian societies through censorship and classification of film and video works, while balancing the need to preserve freedom of expression within the law, and limit social harm caused by films. (Susan Ironsi, 2015: March 15)

On the other hand, there are those who accuse the NFVCB of meddling unnecessarily with content. They insist that this hampers creativity. The closely allied issues of censorship protocol which acutely robs the Board of prompt efficiency, does not help matters. A good case in point is the clamor that heralded the delayed release of *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

As Cable news poignantly observed:

The NFVCB has verified and approved 35 films for the month of May 2014, but the widely anticipated *Half of a Yellow Sun* is missing on the list. The NFVCB has received a fair share of bashing following the late approval for screening of this critically acclaimed movie. The body succumbed to the wishes of the public when it subsequently released a timeline of approved movies for the month of June 2014, with HOAYS being one of the selected movies for screening. (Cable news Nigeria, 2014)

In Nigeria, close monitoring of the arts and literary scenes by authorities dates back to military rule. When the film adaptation of Chinamanda Adichie's literary masterpiece *Half of a Yellow Sun* was announced, many Nigerians cheered. For those who had read the book, it meant seeing Olanna and Kainene come to life. For those who hadn't, it meant discovering what the fuss was all about. Dealing with the sordid past of a bloody Biafra civil war which had all but been obliterated from Nigeria's history, the movie adaptation of the book promised to be an avenue of education for the

teeming Nigerian public, particularly those born after the 1970's. Alas, that was not to be! Since premiering at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in 2013, the movie was banned in Nigeria until recently. The film starring BAFTA award winning Chiwetel Ejiofor of *12 Years a Slave*, was censored by the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) – the Nigerian government agency for rating and vetting visual material. The condition given by the agency for placing the movie on consideration involved the removal of offensive scenes. The reasons cited by censors for taking such a hard stance appear plausible enough. With the level of volatility, namely in the battle against Boko Haram, anything remotely fueling or adding to distrust among the country's varied groups could very well tip Nigeria over the precipice into a dark abyss. Further on the delayed release of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Barakat Akinsikun (2014) boldly objects:

When one takes into consideration the fact that censorship of literary arts is fast becoming the norm, the banning of the movie might just be 'business as usual.' Free societies are those where the individuals have the right to express themselves, be it in writing or in whichever form. It is also one where the individual should have access to whatever information they want or need. Censoring literary material is an infringement on freedom of expression as well as the right to information. (Akinsikun, 2014:360)

In spite of the lament of this seeming infringement of creativity and the individual's right to information, the topic in question is potentially latent and prone to volatility, even if the censors tended to paper it over with other applicable reasons. The fact is that the censors acted wisely and judiciously, in this case.

#### **2.11.4 Benefits of Censorship**

- Given the present age of information technology, if all holds on censorship are barred, many producers/directors would possibly make storylines riddled with scenes of explicit sex, or even straight porn, as they are almost guaranteed it would turn in huge profits. A society without restraints, checks and balances especially in the creative industries that has a supercharged potential to influence and affect lives should not be left unsupervised by government.
- Other limiting factors abound. Though censors tags specify what age limits are permitted to view specified films, many parents who desire to, frequently have

problems with enforcing this. The indices of poverty, meager resources or a simple lack of affluence, causes many families to be tightly clustered in miniscule living apartments, especially in Nigerian metropolitan settings. It is not uncommon to have a family of five-to-six or more members closeted in a tiny one or two-bedroom apartment, with only one television set! The parents want to watch an X rated movie. They ask the little ones to go to bed (which could very well be separated from the sitting room with the television set, by only a thin hollow block wall, or worse, a cardboard/plywood ‘wall,’ or even a cloth curtain!) The children can hear so much of what goes on in the movie that they can mentally “audio-watch” it and grasp the story exclusively!

- It is remarkable to note that in over 20 years of existence, the NFVCB has not recorded a single case of civil unrest or of communal/tribal clashes as a direct result from any film. This should be noted as highly commendable. As such, continuous care must be taken to prevent any such occurrence, especially in a country that is a loose conglomerate of diverse cultural and ethnic/religious groupings; that already possesses a long record of the eruption of frequent inter-community clashes! It becomes obvious that in the absence of a regulatory organ gram such as the NFVCB, an ethnic/community war could easily erupt over a single film that as much as denigrates or offends a people group. It is within the ambits of these multiple limitations that censorship is acutely necessary. A society without laws, rules, restraints and regulations that govern any of its sectors is in dire danger of inevitably falling into anarchy, sooner or later.

However, these incidents serve to highlight the challenges that arise when it comes to the consideration of what yardstick the Board uses for judging what constitutes a violation of public morality. Quite clearly, there needs to be a standard by which the Board operates, and for now, adherence to the already set standards would do well to find acceptance within the polity.

## **2.12 The Need for Urgent Change in Nigerian Societal Gender Perspectives**

The thrust of this study is that there is an overriding need to overhaul societal perspectives, to accommodate a gender paradigm shift. This is critical in order to:

- Increase the positive representation of career women in Nigerian films; and to consider and recognise career women as a distinct target audience group,
- Adequately represent career women with issues and themes that are critical to their lives, and
- Structure content/plot and storylines that offer solutions, carry development oriented messages and inevitably, positively affect the life space of target audience career women.

Stanley Baran (2010), in articulating Mc Quail's Social Responsibility Theory, insists on responsible ethical industry operation which does not free media practitioners from their responsibility. Some of the clauses of the social responsibility theory assert that:

- Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society
- Media should avoid disseminating material that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder, or that might offend minority groups
- The media as a whole should be pluralistic, reflect the diversity of the culture in which they operate and give access to various points of view and rights of reply
- The public has a right to expect high standards of performance and official intervention can be justified to ensure the public good
- Media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to their employers and the market (audiences). (Baran 2010:406-407)

The above outlined third clause of the social responsibility theory makes it clear that “the media has a responsibility to “give access to various points of view,” within the ambits of a cultural diversity.” Marilee Karl (1991;25) in a United Nations research titled *The Mass Media and Women*, demonstrates that: “women are virtually absent from the important news of the world...very little media coverage is given to women's work, achievements, situations or needs.”

William Haviland, (1999:24) an anthropologist, corroborates this view that “the ‘women's point of view’ was largely ignored in the study of gender roles.” He also points to the fact of rarity of female representations in the art world of the Mayans in Central America; “at the ancient Maya city of Central America, one reflection of

gender stratification is the rarity of the portrayals of women, compared to men, in the city's public art.”

Emesalu (2008:151) insists that the theme and storyline content of Nollywood films, “must be relevant to the society in such a way that issues of human rights, social equality and peaceful co-existence are addressed.”

On the other hand, various organizations such as the “Women Advancement Forum”- an African based women's organization affiliated to the African Women's Development Fund, is actively engaged in realizing the above stated agenda. Their policy base states:

Few women run their own businesses, aspire to political situations, aspire senior board and senior management positions and even run successful Non-Governmental Organizations/Non Political Organizations. They are faced with so many challenges! Therefore, the time is now to consider best approaches to give women a helping hand to enable them build their businesses, be in parliament, join the senior management and board of corporations, have easy access to finance; exposing them to markets, skills acquisition and capacity building. At the same time, it is important to create awareness in our girls and youths of the possibility of becoming entrepreneurs, parliamentarians, Chief Executive Officers and reputable persons in society. (Women Advancement Forum, 2017)

Further, (Women Advancement Forum, 2017) is actively engaged in realizing the above stated agenda through conferences, seminars and workshops on advancement and empowerment as an opportunity to:

- Review the role of society in providing access to socio-economic and political participation,
- Deal with issues related to gender equality, women emancipation and capacity building,
- Attract new and strengthen existing public/private partnerships in Africa and the rest of the world on gender empowerment advocacy for global transformation,
- Present initiative and sustainable ideas for strengthening all structures for the actualization of SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) by 2030,

- Discuss existing new policies and their impact on women advancement and gender equality.

Closely allied to the above stated objectives, is the overdue need to begin to provide much desired role models through fictional narratives in Nollywood films. Film being an intrinsically impactful medium, is a much recommended agent, a graphic carrier vehicle that would imaginatively, albeit permanently impact lives.

It is imperative that within the cluster of other factors therefore, fictional narratives that carry messages that should have the desired effect on the perceived target audiences, be produced. Usually, this is achieved as the producers, directors and production team make sure to carefully structure all the production stages with the target audience's interest in mind. This is in tandem with Nkeruenwem Udoakah's (1998:48) requirement that "development originates from agencies and individuals responsible for one form of development or the other; that development is likely to be achieved through a deliberately planned, organized and directed communication."

The first clause of McQuail's theory of social responsibility, according to Baran (2010), stipulates that in parenthesis, filmmakers owe it as a responsibility to "accept and fulfill certain obligations to society," while the third clause states the imperative, "to reflect the diversity of the culture in which they operate and give access to various points of view."

Admittedly, the advent of the Nigerian career woman is a fairly nascent but welcome culture in Nigeria, and their views and stories must not only be heard among the multiplicity of Nigerian stories being told; but must also, be adequately represented; and not be grossly misrepresented as seems to be the case from the research findings. As Udoakah (1998:15) emphasizes, "central to the bedrock of communication (*message*) is the desire for changes that will affect citizen's welfare positively."

Ekwuazi (2008, 197) fully further articulates this view, cross referencing Elo Ibagere's 'integration clause' that states: "the provision to all persons or groups, of access to the variety of messages which they need, makes it easier for the society to share same goals and aspirations, and to be predisposed towards social change."

Conclusively, the Nigerian society needs to undergo a radical gender change paradigm shift. While every family is practically avidly desirous of an upwardly

mobile daughter who excels and attains the pinnacle of her chosen career, very little effort if any, is being corporately garnered by the society at large to realize this noble objective. The film industry must not be allowed to continue to be used as a tool that objectifies and denigrates a significant percentage of the Nigerian population. What family in Nigeria would not really take pride in a successful daughter, who is a captain of industry, a renowned academician, politician, or any other field?

### **2.13 Proactive Measures Advocated for Gender Change Paradigm Shift**

The following itemized (2.13.1 to 2.13.8) are delineated strategies, discussed and analyzed in greater detail to achieve the above set objective. However, this research would briefly state paradigms and measures that should be utilized and supervised by existing bodies and institutions such as the Ministry for Women and of course, relevant non-governmental organizations.

- a) Creating enlightenment for the citizenry through the development of good narrative/feature films.
- b) Physically visit communities with DVD sets/projectors
- c) Create capable female captains/leaders of industry as role models in films and emphasize how everyone (especially the men – husbands, fathers, uncles, male relations and peers) stand to gain from these female role models; that would ultimately benefit all in society.
- d) Procure foreign partnerships
- e) Sponsor/enlighten especially female politicians.
- f) Enlighten traditional rulers.
- g) Involve men in strategies for behavioral change as participatory agents.
- h) Actively debunk the harmful traditional practices by proffering new and better sustainable practices.
- i) Initiate intervention programs such as skills acquisition etc (where possible and necessary; to be run by partners) for sustainable development.

### **2.13.1 Inclusion of Sex Incorporating Gender into Political and Groups that Make Decision**

Referring to issues of male and female ought to be seen within every area of rules. Policy ends and ways should be evident by a new thought and a reemphasizing of political agenda mainstreaming from a gender perspective. As the Beijing Platform for Action states, “women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women.” It further states, “without the active participation and inclusion of the female views in every state when deciding on the aim of equalizing, growth and ease will not be realized. So, Lambardo (2006:14) opines: “female as well as male deserve to have the same level of representation when institutional decisions are to be made.” Charlesworth (2013:25) of the same opinion, also accepts the thought that “all attempts to include the participation of the female sex at every decision making level should be widened.”

### **2.13.2 Political Advocacy for Sponsorship of More Females into the State and Federal Legislatures**

Judging from political antecedents, the aphorism “who feels it knows it” holds true in critical issues of life. It was only women who were denied the right to vote that fought for suffrage and voting rights in Great Britain and other parts of Europe. Today, they have the second female Prime Minister. Stacy Smith et al state that “despite a push to promote females worldwide, United state film industry seems to be the only one place where progress is yet to be seen.” However much it seems a controvertible statement, she and her team go ahead to establish from worldwide research statistics that female representation and participation in the film industry in front and behind the cameras have really spiked in other countries such as South Korea and Australia, much more than in the United States of America.

Statistics show that countries that have recorded breathtaking strides of advancement in the industry and elsewhere; these were agitated and fought for by women, not men! Legislation has proved to be a very critical and necessary weapon in a modern day battle. How is it that the Kenyan Parliament is considering a bill that does away with the bride price and institutionalizes the right of women to inherit property, and own



family land, as well as men. That is because the Kenyan parliament has a sizeable percentage of dedicated and active female legislators who champion women's rights.

As Nkechi (2014) states:

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees the right of women to participate in active politics and the last few decades have witnessed a relative increase in women's participation. This is only when we measure increase in proportion with certain standards such as the number of women who vote in elections, the number of public offices held by women and the number of women related policies implemented by government. In spite of the relative increase, there is inherently a pronounced level of underrepresentation of women in politics, when compared with their male counterparts Nigerian women have encountered a lot of problems while venturing into politics. Apart from the violence, thuggery, and 'fisticuff pugilisms' that are rampant in legislative houses, an absolute lack of transparency has become endemic in Nigerian politics, thereby garnering the conception that politics is "dirty!" Quite clearly, it is fairly obvious that the main factor that deters women from foraying into politics is an acute lack of the stupendous amounts required and demanded by government and political parties to qualify to apply for candidacy. (Nkechi, 2014)

The World Bank statistics for women's participation in politics in Nigeria, pegs the growth rate since 2013, at a paltry 0.3%. Liberia takes the lead in Head of State position. In ministerial positions:

Cape Verde - 50%

South Africa – 41.7%

Equatorial Guinea – 8.3%

Sudan – 22.7%

Sierra Leone – 6.9%

Rwanda ranks a high 63.8% in parliamentary positions, while Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Cameroon and Burundi boast more than 30% representation.

Swaziland, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zaire, Mali, Cote D'Ivoire, Gambia, Botswana – less than 10%. Infact, Rwanda has been acknowledged internationally, as "The Only Government in the World Dominated by Women." According to the World Bank,

The tiny central African nation of Rwanda elected the world's first majority of parliamentarians as women. Also, parliament set aside at least 30 per cent representation for women in parliament. The World bank further states that between 2001 and 2010, the country's economy has doubled in size.

Rwanda is not however the only African example where such a thrust is pivotal.

On 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016, Liberia's House of Representatives passed the equal gender representation in parliament law. It further stipulates that seats be created in parliament for women! (news.trust.org) So what is so different about Nigeria? The establishment of these much desired objectives should be actively sought and fought for, by the Nigerian womenfolk!

### **2.13.3 Legislation: Infusing Gender Change and Gender Mainstreaming Studies and Strategies into the Secondary and Tertiary Education Curriculum**

The public policy concept known as Gender Mainstreaming is governs and also assess various issues that implicates men and women is known as gender mainstreaming and this include every organized action or rule as well as policy at every aspect of life. It provides essential numerous ways to appreciate differences between genders. Idea of and the thought of having mainstreaming of male and female was introduced for the first time in Nairobi in a 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference in 1985., Kenya; was formally featured in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, and was cited in the document that resulted from the conference, the Beijing Platform for Action. Among the several clauses of this Platform for Action document, a critical intervention mode is the "prioritization of equality in gender."

One policy that tries among others to ensure that both sexes have equal perspective in all aspects of policy is the Gender Mainstreaming. Jacqui True, a political and international relations professor notes, "every piece of legislation and policy has to be assessed." It is an imperative that every policy or piece of legislation should be evaluated from the perspective of whether or not it reduces or increases gender inequalities. This concept of gender equality, should not necessarily be limited to only the formal spaces of life, but should be total in moving towards all rules that govern gender, in order to deal with multifaceted issues that directly make relationship unequal for both genders in all aspects of life.

#### 2.13.4 Films Made by Women, for Women and Girls

First and foremost, African women's films can be read as constructing a paradigm. This paradigm consists of speaking from within and attempting to compose a rich and varied portrait of the African woman via colonial modification and revisionism-something that male dominated narratives have not completely grasped. Female subjectivity in Africa as elsewhere has often been defined by men rather than by women. Black women have fallen victim to a tendency to "de-womanize black womanhood." Consequently, films made by African women (and feminist oriented men) are attempting to re-humanize portrayals of women and to reassert their identities. Furthermore, African women filmmakers are facing the challenge of regaining for women the power of self-definition and self-representation. (Ukadike, 2013: 69, 82.)

An excerpt of Victor Arigo's film *Oshenye* (Oppression) I & II situated in the Urhobo culture of Delta State, Nigeria, reflects on the personal struggle of one woman - Okotie, whose story has collective significance. The filmic mode draws attention to the national dimensions of the individual's problems posed here. Patriarchal hegemony has deliberately structured the vulnerability of women as a key factor into the societal fabric. Mabel Evwierhoma observes and keys into this.

Women are fundamental in any community and in their different categories, they jointly form and transmit critical mass of values and norms that help to sustain socio cultural significance. Once hemlined, development and the forward look towards advancement becomes a major challenge. Women are not only vulnerable in films, but also in the society. This minority status of women, cuts across different forms of creativity. Thus minority subtracts value from the status or esteem of women, making it difficult for equality between women and men.

She continues:

The connection between culture and the victimization of women, shows in polygamy. The culture of polygamy subsists in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Among the Urhobo, polygamous marriage is still dominant in communities and families that are traditional in outlook. The subplot of the film reveals Achoja's home which is polygamous. The intra-gender affairs in his household expose the rivalry between his wives: Onovuge, the quiet and soft one, and Okotie, the direct opposite. But for the defiant Okotie

(equally a victim in many respects), women in the film would not have exhibited any agency to talk back or confront male dominance in the film. (Evwierhoma, 2016: 252-254).

Several indices make women in *Osheye* vulnerable. In terms of the body, the inferiority of the female sexuality is objectified. Two instances address this: the capture of the maidens returning from the stream and the rape of the captive farmhand. Female sexuality is therefore exploited to the mortification of women. The film criticizes the village men who will eat without asking where the ingredients come from or how much they cost; and who culturally, do not help the women who work ceaselessly, both in the farm and at home. Providing the family with everyday nourishment in most cases has traditionally been the burden of women. As such, in the film, there is no happy marriage. Okotie's parents are not happily married. And neither is she. The question that hangs is "how long," will this unhappy, albeit evil trend be allowed to continue in society?

#### **2.13.5 Women's Biological Clock, versus Career Clock**

Statistically, every extended family (first/second, level) in Nigeria, has more than one career female, or at the very least aspiring ones. It is a tested and proven fact that a very high percentage of females who pass through tertiary educational institutions aim to become career women. Gone are the days when mothers were content to sit back at home minding children and doing household chores! Beyond this preferential value, are mitigating factors of life circumstances that propel change in the dynamics of today's living. The soaring high costs of living (that engenders the requirement of more than one income earner to ensure desired family comforts and desired lifestyle; as well as the incidence of infinitely more females being educated, generates a large workforce that should not be sidelined from the formal workforce sector.

However, in a career woman's life, there will always be a tension, a tearing-apart tending pull in opposite directions to balance career and family demands. Research has noted that a woman's biological clock and her career clock are at conflict. When she gets married and begins to have children (who make heavy demands on her time and health), is when she has to put the critical foundation and building blocks of her career in place. As she rises to middle management, her parents are ageing and require

more attention, while the kind of attention the now teenage children shifts from physical caring and feeding to nurturing, monitoring and mentoring. Middle management is also saddled with issues of extensive, critical decision making board meetings that could be laced with regular travels over long periods of time.

Further, it is a well-known and indisputable fact that beautiful and ecstatic as any bride may be on her wedding day, she inevitably agrees to take on the duties of being a child bearer/rarer, housekeeper, accommodating in-laws (and out-laws!) etc; - all the duties and functions that go with being a wife in the Nigerian context!

Strictly, the above stated is the most excruciating problem every career woman has to face. Some have been more successful at managing this miasma than others. Some career women have even lost their marriages in the process of juggling to balance all these functions.

The truth of the matter is however, that every single Nigerian family would be extremely proud and happy to have a super executive and influential mum, sister, aunt, cousin, and even grandma! But this comes at a cost! The key question that arises is, where should be the husband's place in this equation?

It is needful to state that the husband's disposition is very critical to the overall success of his wife's balance of her career and wifely responsibilities. This is a critical next step forward. A non-governmental organization in South Africa after conducting extensive research into the dynamics of family life in black, especially low income families, started an organization with the sole aim of educating the men folk about gender justice. Below is an excerpt on S.O.N.K.E.

#### **2.13.6 Educating Men for Gender Justice:**

##### **SONKE GENDER JUSTICE: Empowerment of Women and Girls, Men and Boys for Gender Equality**

Established in 2006, SONKE (Gender Justice,) is a South African NGO that strives to prevent domestic and sexual violence, reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS and promote gender equality and human rights...SONKE staff work in all of South Africa's nine provinces, in nearly twenty countries across Southern, East, Central and

West Africa, and globally, especially in partnership with United Nations Agencies and members of the Men Engage Alliance....

SONKE recognizes that effecting sustained change to gender roles and relations requires addressing the forces that shape individual attitudes and community norms and practices-traditions and culture, government policies, laws and institutions, the media and the family-as well as underlining economic, political and social pressures.

Given this understanding of social change, SONKE uses a broad range of change strategies to promote gender equality including:

- Partnering with government to promote policy development and effective implementation,
- Advocacy, activism and community mobilization,
- Networking and coalition work, nationally and internationally,
- Capacity building and training with partner organizations,
- Innovative communication strategies for social change,
- Community education,
- Individual skills building,
- Research and Monitoring and evaluation.

Peacock (2013) in his research of SONKE Gender Justice Network interventions remarks:

In its efforts to organize men to prevent gender violence, SONKE's work has grown rapidly and is recognized both nationally and internationally. Its largest project the "One man Can Campaign," an education outreach program with men that employs staff and volunteers to go to communities and challenge and engage as well as educate fellow males with positive developmental change alternatives and options. (Peacock, 2013)

Such interventions could fully be applied to Nigerian urban and especially rural communities, by NGO's working in affiliation with governmental and international agencies. If it works in South Africa and all over the African sub regions, then these strategies could be successfully applied.

### **2.13.7 Utilising Sponsored Target Audience Feature Films of Proven Experiment Modalities Such as Enter Educate Films and the British Council Intervention Action Programs, to Address Career Women Issues**

Several decades into the Hollywood film industry churning out gangster action films that were popularly called Westerns, it became evident that these films were negatively impacting especially American youth (and of course other consumer European nations). The youth tended to imbibe and live out the violent behaviors they had frequently watched in gangster films. No doubt the hero usually won the day and annihilated the gangsters, but nevertheless, he would more often than not utilize violent means to settle scores and achieve his noble objective. The bottom line message here to impressionable young persons was: “it is okay to resolve conflicts through violent means!”

Researchers traced the genesis of these violent tendencies in youth to media consumerism, and sought methods to achieve a reversal. This gave birth to the evolving and making of pro-social films. Pro-social films single out the beautiful, desirable, ethical as well as heroic and noble qualities in a character, and applaud these. Before long, cartoons domiciled here and readily carved a niche. This explains why adults thoroughly enjoy cartoons as well, especially the vintage ones.

Over time, these experiments were applied to specific target audiences. They were used as intervention programs aimed at communicating specific information and knowledge about one or several issues; that would in turn elicit desired behavioral change and a shift in societal perspective, in the targeted area. These programs was couched in the dramatic form, and just like the pro-social cartoons, sought to entertain, as well as inform and educate.

The Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs (JHUCCP) was the first to coin the term ‘Enter-Educate’ for communication programs. According to the center’s website, Enter-Educate is the term being used to describe “any communication program that delivers a pro-social educational message in an entertainment format.” (JHUCCP, 2003). Today Enter-Educate is now being used as an effective communication tool for almost all pro-social educational messages.

Global programs on gender, have used strategic communication to promote gender equality and address needs of women and men, and of boys and girls. Participation, engagement, discussion and culturally appropriate communication have constituted the hallmark to achieve equity between men and women. Women and girls learn to speak out, men become more engaged in family life and aware of health risks. Women and men learn how to engage with one another in discussions that look at gender norms, harmful traditional practices and ways to improve relationships, that leads to better health, wealth and general wellbeing.

With Enter-Educate, the film practitioner identifies a serious social or developmental problem, identifies the group of people that are directly affected by the problem. Having identified the problem and the target groups that are directly involved in a situation relevant to the problem, the practitioner then assembles these categories of people into a participatory assessment where the problem is diagnosed; its cause, effects and impact on the affected group in particular, and the society at large.

This stakeholder assessment will lead to a profiling of the problem so identified whereby, a typical scenario relating to the problem is developed. It is this scenario that will be used to develop a synopsis by a team of professional script writers. These writers will also share the synopsis for validation before the scripting could start. After such synopsis has been validated by the target group, the script writing process commences with adequate involvement of the target group to provide needed support for the writers in the areas of designing appropriate language, slangs and registers, relevant to the issue being addressed.

After the script has been completed and also validated by the target group, the team of professionals including the director, actors, and film crew in various technical arms of film production, start both the production and pre-production of such films. Essentially, the major element of any *entre-educate* film includes problem identification, stakeholders analysis and involvement, profiling of the problem, participatory script development as well as production, and monitoring and evaluation of such a project. This process considerably involves the target population in proffering workable solutions to the identified problems.

Similarly, the British Council has successfully utilized broadcast intervention programs in several third world countries to engender positive shift in societal



perspective, such as South Sudan, Burma and in the West Indies. Perhaps the most outstanding of such an intervention program in Nigeria, is the hit serial *Wetin Dey*, a highly successful television soap opera that was aired on multiple Nigerian television stations, in mid millennium decade – 2006- 2007. This drama series was targeted at providing illumination knowledge that would trigger positive behavioral change, a strategy to curb and checkmate the AIDS pandemic. The drama consistently showed that irresponsible decisions of casual sex and momentary pleasure can trigger a complex ripple effect with devastating lifelong consequences on the innocent; especially the persons cherished and loved ones that they would have given their very lives to protect! It must be stated that of course *Wetin Dey* was an instant hit, and a phenomenal box office success, to the point that some television stations still air the serial, even today.

One may want to know why this drama serial was such a phenomenal success and still remains relevant, even after a decade. Sufficient to say that in its production procedures, the principles (stated above for the crafting of enter-educate films) were utilized. These principles and techniques are applicable to the production techniques of virtually all pro-social films, and hence their sustained and unending appeal over time.

### **2.13.8 The Docudrama: A Purposeful and Effective Advocacy Tool**

The documentary is the branch of film production which goes to the actual and photographs, edits and shapes it. The documentary attempts to give form and pattern to the complexities of direct observation. Documentary is purposive, it is intended to achieve a specified purpose in addition to entertaining audiences and generating revenue.

In Nigeria where the documentary film has been overshadowed by a rapidly developing feature film industry, the genre has been relegated over the years to being a mere governmental falsified, albeit highly fact-modified propaganda mechanism. In recent years however, the potentials of the documentary film as an enlightenment, entertainment and informational medium, is beginning to filter into the nation's consciousness.

With the rapid growth of non-governmental organizations, (NGO), the documentary film according to Ekwuazi, (2008) is gradually finding acceptance among many in the Nollywood film industry as an “effective tool for advocacy.”

Adesina (2008,269) states that “some notable filmmakers such as Ladi Ladebo, Mamud Ali Balogun and Sandra Obiabo, have been exploring the documentary film option as a tool for community action initiatives.” Examples of such films are *Against the Odds*, *The Silent Sufferer* and *Nigeria: A Squandering of Riches*.

According to Ukadike (2013):

The African documentary seeks to interrogate the African experience. The documentary frame presents what might be seen as a transparent window on history, culture, and other issues of resistance. The social issues, cultural values and politics of the African world are portrayed with both sensitivity and realism. It is this connection between documentary and the real circumstances depicted, between the filmmaker and the subject/audiences that is the most distinctive characteristic of this genre.

Cross referencing Bill Nichols, Ukadike further states:

Bill Nichols points out that in documentary film practice, the “dominant organizational patterns around which most texts are structured,” four modes of production stand out namely- “expository,” “observational,” “interactive,” and “reflective.” He notes that in this paradigm, the expository text speaks to the “viewer directly with titles or voices” which are meant to convey progressive thoughts “about the historical world.” The voice-over narration, dubbed “voice of God” or “talking heads,” presents objectively, persuasive arguments. The observational mode is more directly connected with “direct cinema” or “cinema verite” and “stresses the non-intervention of the filmmaker,” who relinquishes control of the image to the unobtrusive camera. In the interactive mode, the coalition of “monologue and dialogue predominate” in the narrative, whereby “textual authority shifts towards the social actors recruited,” thus “putting the actors into direct encounter with the filmmaker,” involving participation, conversation or interrogation. Lastly, the reflexive mode of presentation positions the viewer to experience the method or process of representation and actively stimulates awareness of both the cinematic form and the issues inherent in the text. (Ukadike 2013, 132, 135)

The docudrama on the other hand is an essentially dramatic piece that is harnessed within the ambits of the documentary style approach, to tell a story, entertain but above all advocate certain issues, values and perspectives. It is with this singular aim that the docudrama is being recommended as a career women's change agent intervention tool. In the Nollywood film industry today, the docudrama is gradually gaining more grounds, but whether or not it is reflecting credibility as a creative treatment of actuality, is another question. It differs from the documentary in that the focus tends to be on the dramatic story, personal conflict and entertainment, as well as of course educating viewers. Producers are reaching out to discover real people in difficult circumstances, with worthy causes and conflicts. It is time for Nigerian filmmakers and non-governmental agencies to learn the importance of the docudrama, a prolific and most valuable intervention tool.

#### **2.14 An Overview of International Representational Statistical Analysis of the Female Filmic World**

The following is a transcription of an extensive United Nations sponsored research by Stacy Smith, Marc Chaoeti and Katherine Peiper. This research is critical to career female representations on a global scale and as such, it has been deemed necessary to be related here, in some detail.

Research has shown that there has not been a meaningful change the percentage of female speaking characters in higher top grossing movies in roughly a half century. Also, women are often stereotyped and sexualized when they are depicted in popular context. Occupationally, research before now has shown that few positions of power and importance are held by women on screen. Even though Hollywood is slow to progress in creating compelling and complex roles for women; it becomes necessary to find out locate if this likelihood to under-represent and mis-represent women is an American occurrence, or does gender imbalance in movies is a worldwide issue. The aim of this study is to research the visibility and type of female representation in films worldwide. To address this goal, we content analyzed gender roles in popular films across the ten most profitable territories internationally – (Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United Kingdom.)

Films analyzed were theatrically released in January 1, 2010 – May 1, 2013. In total, 120 films globally were examined.

Global Alert 1: Only 30.9% of All Speaking Actors Were Women.

Girls are nowhere to be seen! The gender ratio of appearing females as opposed to men was 2.24 males to every one female - (5,799 talking or named actors on screen). Becoming protagonists, only 23.3% of the films had females as lead or co-lead driving the story.

Since women make up 49.6% of the population all over the world, we should be looking forward to see more female on screen. This limited depiction is significantly different from country, story genre and content creator gender. Becoming leads/co-leads, fully 50% of the Korean films present one female in one of these high levels, also movies from China had 40%, likewise Japan and Australia.

According to findings, genre has to do with the presentation of women on screen. Action/adventure films depicted fewer females. Meaningful difference is not seen in the frequency of females in films made for young audiences.

Global Alert 2: Increase in Women Producers , Increase in Women Actors on Screen

Gender factor in content creation:

Portrayals of girls and women was related to gender on screen by directors and writers, Films directed by female attached 6.8% females more than those films not directed by a female on screen.

A similar increase of 7.5% was seen in movies with female as the screenwriter when compared to those movies without female screen writer credited to them. However, Producer gender could not be said to be related to gender prevalence, however.

Based on the findings presented previously, an outcome is visible. Male/female discrimination is common in world films. No of the country in the world is close to

true portrayal; females make up a whole of the 50% of human. It is not one of a 3<sup>rd</sup> or one of 4<sup>th</sup>. 50% .

### Global Alert 3: Female Characters are Frequently Sexualized

No matter the territory, an emphasis on female characters appearance cannot be avoided. Females were over twice as likely as males to be shown in sexually revealing attire, thin and partially or fully naked.

Two most clearly important components of female portrayals which is particularly problematic are Youth and beauty, while we look at the ways in which women are doing in the office, where capability is seen as connected to some part of looks presented

### Global Alert 4: Widespread Gender Disparity: Onscreen Inequality Does Not Mirror Real World Roles

Media content can present youth with a window to the world of work. Indeed, research reveals that exposure to media portrayals can contribute to or reinforce viewers' occupational knowledge, career socialization, and even gender stereotypical attitudes and beliefs about work. As such, we measured whether speaking characters were shown working in global films.

Job position was determined by being male/female all over the world as seen in the international movies presented. Of those holding a job, 77.5% were male and 22.5% were female. Women make up of the total world labour is 39.8% which is more than the (17.3 % plus) greater than the 22.5% is seen in world films. Females were under-represented in all the nations researched into, workers in film when compared to the real world percentage. Disparity scores were made to decide the level for the presentation of professions in film differently from the actual values of the world. India was the only country in which female film jobs revealed a small difference from the real world.

Moreover, women in films are represented in a lowly manner. Now, they make up below one of four of the labour force in films globally, this is quite lesser than what is attained in the actual world of career. Knowing the fact that films is able to set the movement where the coming set is concerned, the lack of females in the labor market

is a concern. Perhaps even more troubling are the types of occupation women are shown possessing.

#### Global Alert 5: Female Executives are an Endangered Species in International Films

Each occupation was classified as belonging to a particular industry (finance, law, medicine, academia etc). Then the degree of clout or influence a character has been evaluated. Characters working in a management or in professional positions were closer to the top of the clout hierarchy. Men actors unequally possess higher level of power more powerful positions above the women colleagues. All over the world example, professional capability is unfavourable to women's activities.

#### Politics

Only twelve women were shown at the highest levels of local, state/ provincial or national governmental authority – versus 115 males, a gender ratio of 9.6 to 1.

Only 12 women were the actual or fictional equivalent of legislators, ministers/secretaries/chiefs, ambassadors/ international council members or mayors. However, just three female characters governed at the very apex of political leadership.

Although in 2013, global senior management positions were 24% female, fictional executives are much harder to find. Similarly, female politicians comprised 21.8% of the seats in legislatures worldwide. Based on the significance of viewers that are not yet adult who are losing chance to perceive the strong female part form in the place of management in the nation where they are. Obviously, female directors exposed to extinction beings in global films.

#### Global Alert 6: Female Story in Law, Medical profession and Academic are not Justified

Conceptions suppress women in high career state in legal, academic and medical professions. Just a couple of women in legal profession, was shown across the sample, both of whom appeared in comedic roles. Similarly, just one female judge (versus 19 males) appeared across the 120 movies.

Powerful males in the cinematic legal world outnumber females by a factor of 13 to 1. Women in academics face a similar struggle – 1 female professor to 16 male

professors depicted. The ratio of medicine is 1 female medical doctor to 5 male medical doctors depicted. Sports and religion fared far worse with a ratio of 5 to 117!

### **Journalism**

The journalism sector presented a higher percentage of females in the workforce with 40 to 1% of reporting, anchor and photojournalism jobs given to women.

There is limitation and lopsidedness in Professional careers in film. Journalism gave a single example of a professional sector in which fictional females thrive.

### **Global Alert 7: Seeds are not being Planted for Women and Girls in STEM**

Only 3.5 females were shown working in an identifiable STEM career. Across countries, no females were revealed as mathematicians, though only one male was portrayed in this occupational area. However, in all the scientific fields of technology, engineering and of course mathematics, males outpaced females by a ratio of 7 to 1.

Conclusively, it becomes imperative to state that one major benefit of appropriate and adequate mediated representations of females working in prestigious professional or specialized roles across these industries would offer young audience a glance of employment possibilities. However, this analysis reveals that global films put these females in their occupational roles quite sparingly. Thus, even the next generation is being directly robbed and denied life possibilities and opportunities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents in detail, the steps taken to arrive at the results of the study. It gives a description of the methods used in collecting data and explains how the data collected were analyzed.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

The following questions served as the basis for the research:

1. How is the Nigerian career woman frequently represented in Nollywood films?
2. What is the common reaction of career women to the portrayals of the career woman in Nollywood films?
3. What filmic representations or depictions do career women favor or would rather see?



These research questions were posed to test the hypothesis earlier formulated and to constitute a basis of empirical research of Nigerian career female viewership of Nollywood films.

### **3.2 Research Design**

To effectively analyze the nature of the responses of Nigerian career females to Nollywood depictions of career women in film, necessitates a two-pronged but complementary research method. Content analysis and social survey are utilized, to arrive at empirical works based on perception theories (people's direct responses to scales) and mainstreaming/synchronization theories (hypothesis/theoretical framework).

This is directly in line with Adesina Azeez's scrutiny. (2010,38). He observes that "the films to women, can be a type of revolutionary weapon which can be used to reject the image and positions being sold to them and a means to change the culture and discourses that define their lives." Quantitative context is provided through a description and classification of content analysis of ten selected Nollywood films, to locate the gender constructs and career women representations in those films.

Content analysis is a research methodology in which specific message characteristics are systematically and objectively identified with the purpose of making inferences about the contexts, causes and effects of these messages passed on through the filmic medium. This method however, does not allow for generalizations, therefore it becomes necessary to examine feminist objections in a systematic content analysis. A number of issues have emerged, chief of which is the paucity of films with a thematic content focus on the Nigerian career woman.

For the survey, a quantitative research method was utilized to survey a large group of people using structured questionnaire that contains predominantly close ended questions. The study population was drawn from career women in both private and public sectors of the economy from six state capitals of the South South geo-political zone of Nigeria: Asaba (Delta State), Benin City (Edo State), Calabar (Cross River State), Port Harcourt (Rivers State), Uyo (Akwa Ibom State) and Yenogoa (Bayelsa State).

The South South geo-political zone is considered a suitable case study in that many of these state capitals – Asaba, Benin City, Port Harcourt, and Calabar are hotbeds of Nollywood film production both in English and in the indigenous languages. Further, it guarantees a core matrix of various professional/career women, who constitute the fulcrum of the study.

The survey method is used to find out the impact or effect of dramatic representations of specific categories of women in Nigerian films, based on perception theories (people's direct responses to scales) and mainstreaming/synchronization theories (hypothesis/theoretical framework). This research method is considered appropriate because it would guarantee empirical results, for the reason that it is specifically people oriented and as such would be valuable in examining the beliefs, opinions and interpretative receptions of career women, who are part and parcel of Nollywood viewership.

### **3.3 Study Population and Sampling Size**

The study population for this empirical survey comprised two hundred and twenty well educated women with a minimum of an Ordinary National Diploma-OND or NCE - Nigerian Certificate of Education; randomly chosen from Asaba, and Benin City. The factors taken into consideration for the choice of an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) as the minimum educational qualification for the survey, is the consideration that the basic educational requirements to get to middle or top management cadres in the civil service and in the formal sectors of the economy.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Since the study aimed at finding out the views of career women in Nigeria about their dramatic representations especially in English Nollywood films, it was considered that urban environments obviously would have a higher sample of highly educated and career women.

A sample of one hundred of each of the selected state capitals would be appropriate. The additional one hundred and twenty (twenty (20) per state capital), was to cushion errors that might arise in some copies of the questionnaire, thereby making them not useable.

### **3.5 Design Instruments**

The instruments used for data collection were content categories for coding questionnaire analysis, such as audience perception/reception and of course relevant demographics.

#### **3.5.1 The Questionnaire**

A questionnaire comprising twenty-one items designed by the researcher was used in carrying out the research. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section was designed to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the second part was designed to elicit information about the dramatic representations and depictions of the career female in Nollywood films, as well as ascertain the reception and impact of these portrayals among career females.

Questions were designed in both open-ended and close-ended formats. Closed ended questions were used in situations where respondents could give straight answers, so that there was no cause for ambiguity. On the other hand, open ended questions were used because they have possibilities of depth to be explored by the respondents, and ambiguity is mostly avoided as respondents could answer questions in their own way.

Also, responses can be better estimated so that true intentions beliefs and attitudes are brought out. Moreover, the open ended questions are flexible, and as such, enables respondents to answer them, the way they understand them.

The data collected from the questionnaire were used to answer the research questions as well as test the three hypotheses.

#### **3.5.2 Research Hypothesis**

##### **Hypothesis One**

That in a male dominated Nigerian filmic world, there is a paucity of themes and storylines that actually present the career woman and issues pertinent to her life.

##### **Hypothesis Two**

That when the career woman is presented (if only by default), such representations are hardly positive and never as influential captains and leaders of industry, or as role models.

### **Hypothesis Three**

That the positions in Hypothesis One and Two can be adequately remedied by feminist oriented filmmakers coming on board the Nigerian film industry as screenplay writers, producers, executive producers and directors, to make films that espouse issues that are critical to career women.

The three research hypothesis are tested against ten Nollywood films; five have been especially selected as they are deemed to profile the issues that are pertinent to career women - *Ije (The Journey of Life)* by Chineze Anyaele (2010), *Guilty Pleasures* by Emem Isong (2009), *Mr. & Mrs* by Chinwe Egwuagwu (2010) *Lionheart* by Genevive Nnaji (2018), and *Isoken* by Jadesola Osiberu (2017). *Rough Diamond* by Chuks Obiora (2012), *Tango with Me* by Mahmood Ali-Balogun (2012), *100% Secrete* by Uchenna Mbunabo (2012), *Ghana Must Go* by Yuvonne Okoro (2016).and *Iyore (The Return)* by Frank Rajah Arese (2016) were also critically analyzed with a view of their relevance or not, to career women issues.

The thrust of the hypothetical application will be to examine and locate if specific films could be observed to meet the needs of the target audience career women, as well as establish from the application of the randomly chosen films if these desirable ends (as stated in the three hypotheses), will ever be accomplished, except on a premise of deliberate structuring.

Films in English language were chosen because across the South South geo-political zone that comprises six states, several indigenous languages abound, such as Edo, Ibo, Efik and Kalabari, to name a few. Though, films in indigenous languages are regularly produced in these state capitals as well as English language films, it is considered that films in English language, would constitute a common denominator.

### **3.6 Validity of Instruments**

To ensure validity in this research, multiple research methods – content analysis and survey, were used. After compiling the items in the questionnaire, the researcher

ensured that it was validated by people who are experienced in that area of study. Pilot copies were made and duly presented to the research supervisor who critically went through each of the items, and made modifications before giving his approval. The sample population was specified along with the key concepts used for the survey. This ensured the reliability of the work done as similar results would be arrived at, if these same specifications were used in a similar study.

### **3.7 Administration of Instruments**

Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents in each of the six state capitals by the researcher with the aid of voluntary research assistants. Since the respondents consisted generally of highly educated women (minimum of first degree) currently working in establishments and companies in Nigeria, much effort was not expended in explaining the items to them. However, some copies of the questionnaire could not be collected immediately, but had to be retrieved after a couple of days, and in a few cases weeks, afterwards. Of the seven hundred (720) distributed copies, five hundred and eighty copies were useable, out of the total of six hundred and forty eight (648) that were retrieved. Most of the not - useable copies (68) sixty eight, had been filled out by males, thereby disqualifying them.

Because of contingency issues such as disruptions caused by strikes in targeted establishments where it was perceived there would be an easier to access cluster of career women, not all initially targeted establishments such as teaching hospitals could be used.

A detailed analysis of eight Nollywood films were critically examined and analyzed, against the backdrop, criteria and set objectives of this research.

Also, the two hypothesis of the research, were tested against the selected films.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Method**

Two types of data analysis were used for this research. A combination of frequency tables and statistical analysis against a backdrop of simple percentages, were used to analyze data collected through the questionnaire. The analysis of variance statistical analysis, was employed to show the actual percentages of career women who actually like to watch Nigerian films but desist from doing so because of a lack of relevant

thematic content, annoying, skewed female representations and other variables. As David Croteau and William Hoynes (1997) succinctly observe:

Based on the accumulated volume of media research, media content does not exactly reflect the realities of the social world. Content analyses of media products have repeatedly shown them to be quite different from key measurable characteristics of the social world. The nature of media and cultural studies reminds us that representations are not reality, even if media audiences are tempted to judge them as such. Even though we often use the “realness” of the images as a basis for evaluating whether we like or dislike particular representations; all representations “re-present” the social world in ways that are both incomplete and narrow. (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997:134)

To avert the above delineated syndrome of mere, and possibly myopic “representations,” statistical analysis was used, because the researcher believes that for this research to be of significant value to the target group and to future Nollywood audience researches, statistical facts from the core group under examination would have to be provided, rather than notional conclusions.

Ten Nollywood films are critically analysed and further tested against the study hypothesis. This analytical research method is further utilised because the researcher feels that the results would be invaluable to gender studies and pose a high relevance to strategies of gender mainstreaming, to be reflected in the media, and in Nigerian films.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA**

#### **4.1 Analysis of research Questions**

Empirical works based on audience research are very few. Ekwuazi (2014) states: “the situation today is that studies in Nollywood are increasing by the day. However, only a few of such studies are on the audience – and fewer still on audience perception/reception.” This research is an audience perception/ reception study. As such, the research questions are designed to empirically find out the true feelings, perceptions and interpretations that career women in the society have towards the existent genre of films that depict career women.

In weaving this analytical thread while keeping the issues in focus, the research questions seek to locate the ways the related different issues are perceived and rationalized by feminine audiences and thereby verify tenuous points and issues (that

may have also, already been observed by previous research); and to recommend solutions.

1. How is the Nigerian career woman frequently represented in Nollywood films?
2. What is the common reaction of career women to the portrayals of the career woman in Nollywood films?
3. What filmic representations or depictions do career women favor or would rather see?

### **Research Question One**

#### **How is the Nigerian career woman frequently represented in Nollywood films?**

This research question seeks to verify what kind of dramatic depictions and portrayals frequently accorded career women in Nigerian films. It is perhaps important to clarify who a career woman is. As stated in the earlier definition in chapter one, for the purpose of this study, a career woman is one who has “stuck” to her profession and has inched up the ladder of progress over the years – five, ten, twenty and even upwards of thirty. For this category of persons, the minimum educational considerations would be a Diploma/NCE; spanning all professions – education, all aspects of sciences, the arts, the medical field, engineering, entrepreneurship etc, and even the clergy.

The point of the demographic outlay is that this group of persons consist a significant percentage of the Nigerian population and as such, their stories should not be left out of the gamut of stories being told through Nollywood films as is presently the case. On the other hand, the stories of the career women in Nigeria, should not merely be included in the proliferation of Nigerian stories being told through Nollywood films, but should infact, be appropriately represented.



## **Research Question Two**

### **What is the common reaction of career women to the portrayals of the career woman in Nollywood films?**

This question probes into the very heart and core of the issue central to this research. It is necessary to identify what career women think and feel about these Nollywood portrayals that are obviously divergent from the actual and real world of the Nigerian career woman. Stanley Baran describes how the media can possibly mediate reality, to the point of twisting or completely bending/ blending it to the perceived and desired whole.

Numerous content analyses conducted over the past forty years have demonstrated that when women are portrayed more often than not, they are represented in traditional inferior roles; that women are more likely to be presented as victims of aggression than is the case in the real world.

(Baran, 2011:10)

A large proportion of filmic world female characterizations and representations for instance, tend to be myopic and linear. The human nature and mind is necessarily complex, added to which life situations, occurrences and happenstance frequently do not follow a progressive pattern as is often depicted in films. A bold assertion would state that women generally are wired with more complex mindsets than their male counterparts, such that being unable to understand and maneuver them, filmic characterizations tend to stick to traditional modes of representation that are actually at variance with real world statistics. As such, the next research question sets out to locate the representations that are desirable to women and why?

## **Research Question Three**

### **What filmic representations and depictions do career women favor and would rather see?**

There is more than one angle from which to consider this issue. The first, being that women who lack educational or other requisite exposure tend to simply capitulate to the perceived status quo handed them by society, and are too timid or feeble minded

to contemplate charting new paths or to ever rise up to take proactive action; a factor which is contrariwise, in the case of educated women.

The second factor is that women up till recently have not had a voice, quite in addition to gross and inadequate under-representation in the media. Haviland (1999) observed that women and their work and peculiar issues have not always been blended into the societal fabric that is a patriarchal hegemony.

In the past however, both men and women ethnographers generally analyzed the societies they studied from a male perspective. The 'women's point of view' was largely ignored in the study of gender roles since anthropologists generally perceived women as living in the shadows of men – occupying the private rather than the public sectors of society; rearing children, rather than engaging in economic or political pursuits.

(Haviland, 1999:50)

The third factor is that curiously, in an ironical twist, the skewed representations of the Nigerian female (especially the career woman), not only has a tendency to irritate and annoy them but to galvanize them to action, to rectify these perceived anomalies.

Adesina Azeez (2010) illustrates this with his research findings:

The films to women, can be a type of revolutionary weapon which can be used to reject the image and positions being sold to them – a means to change the culture and discourses that define their lives.

(Azeez, 2010: 38)

Annette Khun (1990) opines:

A concern shared by feminist representations of many kinds and across all media is an intent to challenge dominant modes of representation. This concern is premised on the notion that in a sexist society, women have no language of their own and are therefore alienated from culturally dominant forms of expression. (Khun, 1990)

A keen and diagnostic observation of media treatment of its subject matter would reveal a tendency for practitioners to be selective in their treatment of subject matter (even in documentaries that are considered to be fact and not necessarily fiction); to the point that what should be treated as a minor issue could be blown out of all

proportion, while the key and salient issues could be glossed over or completely ignored. What career women would rather see are not constructs and fabrications that for example depict career women as sexually promiscuous and profligate in the workplace, but representations and themes that address and offer solutions to the bipolar issues that gnaw away at their daily lives.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Findings

**Table 1: Number of Respondents**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Asaba	112	19.3%
Benin	108	18.6%
Calabar	81	13.9%
Port Harcourt	96	16.5%
Uyo	96	16.5%
Yenogoa	87	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>100%</b>

A total of five hundred and eighty (580) respondents were used in this survey. This survey is exclusive to a defined set of respondents - career women. In spite of strict instructions to research assistants to keep to only career women, some copies of the questionnaire were filled out by males. Luckily, there was a proviso in the questionnaire demographics indication of sex of respondents. This alone rendered over sixty copies of the questionnaire unusable.

The projected plan was to have an overall total of six hundred (600) respondents with the intention to survey a minimum of a hundred respondents in each city. An additional one hundred and twenty (120) copies were built in, (twenty for each city), in order to cushion losses that would inevitably arise from some questionnaire being poorly or badly filled out as to be unusable, and of course, others that would prove difficult to be retrieved.

Six state capitals of the South South geo-political Zone of Nigeria, were mapped out to be used in the projected plan – Asaba (Delta State), Benin City (Edo State), Calabar (Cross River State), Port Harcourt (Rivers State), Uyo (Akwa Ibom State) and

Yenogoa (Bayelsa State). It is important to note that apart from being state capitals, most of these cities currently serve as, prolific production and shooting locations of Nollywood films; both in English and in the indigenous languages.

These locations were chosen primarily because they are current hotbeds of Nollywood film production. As such the respondents would be completely familiar with Nollywood films; as it is fairly commonplace to run into street film-shoot locations in Asaba for instance, almost on a daily basis. Also, these are longstanding cities with establishments where it would be easier to access a cluster of the appropriate respondents- career women.

Further, a research such as this is not necessarily enhanced by the volume and sheer number of the respondents, but rather by the quality of the respondents. It is not likely that the statistical pattern of this survey would be radically altered, if the number of respondents were doubled, tripled or even quadrupled.

**Table 2: Age**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>20-30%</b>	<b>30-40%</b>	<b>40-50%</b>	<b>Over 50%</b>	<b>Total%</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	39 34.8%	27 24%	33 29.4%	13 11.6%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	13 12%	71 65.7%	13 12%	11 10%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	38 46.9%	27 33.3%	8 9.8%	8 9.8%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	32 33.3%	37 38.5%	16 16.6%	11 10.4%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	24 25%	43 44.7%	24 25%	5 5.2%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	47 54%	19 21.8%	16 18.3%	5 5.7%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b> <b>33.2%</b>	<b>224</b> <b>38.8%</b>	<b>110</b> <b>18.9%</b>	<b>53</b> <b>9%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>



The research findings have a fairly expected consistent pattern. Though demographically, the younger age bracket of twenty to thirty years (20-30) are far more in number in the society, these survey findings indicate that the older age bracket of thirty to forty years (30-40) have the highest number of respondents – 38.8%. This is in consonance with the simple fact that it does take a number of years to build up any career.

Another interesting factor to note is that the age of over fifty (50) has a strong 19% participatory input that is considered as crucial and important to the survey, for key reasons. Leaders and technocrats in society- science, technology, industry, academics and entrepreneurial disciplines etc, are invariably drawn from this age bracket. The image that could frequently come to mind when the word “career woman” is mentioned, is that of a distinguished looking female, within the forty to fifty years age bracket, or slightly above; hence the perceived relevance of this age grouping to the study.

**Table 3: Marital Status:**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	66 59%	39 35%	3 2.5%	4 3.5%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	78 72%	30 25%	0 0%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	28 34.5%	39 48%	0 0%	14 17%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	47 48.9 %	15 15.6%	0 0%	34 35,4%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	80 83%	15 15.6%	0 0%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	47 54 %	15 17%	0 0%	25 28.7%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b> <b>59.6%</b>	<b>153</b> <b>26.3%</b>	<b>3</b> <b>0.5%</b>	<b>78</b> <b>13.4%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>



The marital status of a career female is considered crucially vital to the study and is fairly consistent with expected demographics. Since the average career woman respondent is expected to be within at least the late twenties and early thirties of her life, an age where the average Nigerian woman would want to and is expected to be married and be discharging the duties of effectively managing her home (husband, children, young or older extended family members as well as hired helps), the research findings as such, have the highest number (59.6%) of respondents as married. Part of the thrust of this research is to highlight this dilemma that embroils career women and to identify the need and dynamics of blooming proactive action.

Another factor that underscores the above is that in spite of hectic domestic duties and career requirements, an approximate 60% of respondents in this survey still make out time to watch Nollywood films. That in turn positions Nollywood films as a viable advocacy tool for Nigerian career women.

**Table 4: Religion:**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	106 95%	4 4%	2 1%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	101 94%	2 1.5%	3 2.5%	2 1.5%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	67 82.7%	8 9.8%	4 4.9%	2 2.4%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	91 94.7%	4 4%	1 1%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	82 85.4%	11 11.4%	2 2%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	84 96.5%	1 1%	1 1%	1 1%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b> <b>91.5%</b>	<b>30</b> <b>5%</b>	<b>12</b> <b>2%</b>	<b>6</b> <b>1%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

A significant number of respondents are Christian (91.5%), being that these are southern Nigeria towns which are predominantly Christian.

**Table 5: Academic Background:**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Ph.D/Masters</b>	<b>First Degree</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	5 5%	59 54%	45 40.2%	3 2.7%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	6 6%	72 76%	9 8.3%	18 21.29%	3 2.9%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	13 16%	50 61.7%	10 12.3%	6 7.4%	2 2.4%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	32 33 %	48 50%	11 11.4%	0 0%	5 5.2%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	6 6%	78 81%	10 10.4%	0 0%	2 2%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	12 13.7%	62 71%	9 10%	4 4.5%	0 0 %	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b> <b>12.7%</b>	<b>369</b> <b>63.6%</b>	<b>94</b> <b>16%</b>	<b>31</b> <b>5.3%</b>	<b>12</b> <b>2%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

The survey figures indicate that the highest number of respondents have a first degree (64%) while the participatory figure of 13% for holders of Masters and PhD degrees obviously varies with the precise locations of the survey. This is directly reflected in the need for career women to be validated to aspire to the peak of their career ladders (just like their male counterparts) and become captains of industry and successful role models.

Frank Ukadike further lends credence to the above assertion:

Female subjectivity in Africa as elsewhere has often been defined by men rather than by women. Consequently, films made by African women (and feminist oriented men) are attempting to re-humanize portrayals of women and to reassert their identities. Furthermore, African women filmmakers are facing the challenge of regaining for women the power of self-definition and self-representation. (Ukadike, 2013: 69,82.)

As real life statistics indicate, women (if only a few), hold headships of entire corporations and governmental organizations, even in Nigeria. It becomes necessary for this key factor to be actuated in career women filmic representations. As Ukadike states above, women filmmakers are taking on this challenge.

**Table 6: Occupation:**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Civil Servant</b>	<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Para (military)</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	58 47.3%	18 16.1%	33 34%	0 0%	3 2.9%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	49 45.37%	14 12.9%	20 18.5%	0 0%	23 21.29%	2 0.9%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	52 64%	8 9.8%	12 14.8%	4 4.9%	5 6%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	51 53%	12 2.5%	14 14.5%	10 10.4%	7 7.2%	2 2%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	66 68.7 %	12 12.5%	8 8.3%	9 9.3%	1 1%	0 0 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	77 88.5%	6 6.8%	1 1 %	3 3.4%	0 0%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b> <b>60.8%</b>	<b>70</b> <b>12%</b>	<b>88</b> <b>15%</b>	<b>26</b> <b>4.4%</b>	<b>39</b> <b>6.7%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>0.6%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 6 above indicates that a general high percentage of respondents are either, civil servants- 61%, or engaged in the private and business sectors of the economy – 12% and 15% respectively, with an approximate 5% of para military personnel. Given the above statistic, part of the thrust of this study is to locate the paucity or otherwise of career women representations in Nollywood films.

World Bank statistics reveal that women constitute well over 50% of the world population. In the southern parts of Nigeria, women have virtually completely taken over the nursing and teaching professions especially at the primary and secondary levels. In the judicial system, journalism, and even in the military/paramilitary to mention a few, women constitute palpable numbers of the work force. It therefore becomes pertinent to find out if this phenomenon is represented at all in filmic modes or if the contrary is the case.

According to Smith, Piper and Chaouetti (2014):

Across all the countries examined, females were under-represented in the filmic workforce compared to their actual percentages globally. Discrepancy scores were calculated to determine the degree to which on-screen depictions of occupations differ from real world values. India was the only country in which female film jobs revealed a small difference from the real world. Once again, women are underrepresented on screen. This time, they comprise less than a quarter of the workforce in international films, which is well below their share in the real world of work. (Smith, Chaouetti and Piper, 2014)

Certain anomalous situations in life tend to lie dormant in society and may even be perceived as the norm until activists and concerned groups begin to agitate for desired positive change which would result in a shift in societal perspective. The filmic world allied with research (as in this case), are considered to be inexorable tools targeted at achieving the objectives of this research.

**Table 4. 7: Present employment level/previous (if retired):**

(a) Senior Management cadre

(b) Middle Management

(c) Non-managerial cadre

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Senior</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Non</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	79 70%	16 14.3%	15 12%	2 1.9%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	65 57%	30 28%	13 12%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	22 27%	43 53%	16 19.7%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	42 43.7%	32 33.3%	20 20.8%	2 2%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	43 44.7%	42 43.7%	10 10.4 %	1 1 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	19 21.8%	53 60.9%	12 13.7%	3 3.4%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b> <b>46.5%</b>	<b>216</b> <b>37%</b>	<b>86</b> <b>14.8%</b>	<b>8</b> <b>1.3%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>



In the Table 7 category, the percentage of respondents is higher at the senior management level (46.5%) and in the middle management (37%) levels. This is in consonance with the fact of the pre requisite that it inevitably takes a number of years to build up a career. A graduate for instance who has worked for only two or three years would still belong to the non-managerial cadre in any standard organization, and can hardly claim to have built up a career in just two or three years.

An important factor to note is the statistic of 46.5% of respondents who ideally should consist of top management civil servants. The big question that arises is – are women executives anywhere represented to this level of real life in Nollywood films? According to Smith, Piper and Chaouetti (2014) in their global survey of female filmic representations, this is of critical importance because, “movies can set an agenda for the next generation coming into the workforce.” From their research findings this team observed the following:

Global Alert 6: Female Executives are Species Threatened with Extinction in International Findings

The degree of clout or influence a character possessed was evaluated. Characters working in a management or in professional positions were closer to the top of the clout hierarchy. Male characters disproportionately hold more powerful positions than their female counterparts. Across the global sample, occupational power is at odds with female participation. (Smith, Chaouetti and Piper, 2014)

It is an inverse irony (as research statistics indicate), that in spite of less favorable portrayals, women are acute and more avid viewers of drama and tele-novella far more than men. This also stands true with the vast female audiences of Nollywood films in Nigeria.

**Table 8: Do you like Nollywood films?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	92 82%	20 17.8%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	99 91%	6 5.5%	3 2.7%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	73 90%	8 9.8%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	73 76%	23 23.9%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	63 65.6%	31 32%	2 2 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	64 73.5%	23 26.4%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>464</b> <b>80%</b>	<b>111</b> <b>19%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>0.8%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Given the majority (80%) percentage of respondents who like Nollywood films as reflected in Table 8 (above), one could be tempted to think that the actual word should be 'love' and not a mere 'like'. The interest ratio of females in the dramatic medium is frequently high and justifies the 96% research data positive response. Ayakoroma (2008:77) asserts - "video films act as a very potent socialization medium that shapes ideas, styles, attitudes and cultures of nations."

It is important though to note the seeming insignificant 19% that are not a part of the 'love affair' with Nollywood films. Some of the findings of this research will inevitably indicate some of the plausible reasons why this is so.

**Table 9: Would you say Nollywood films are popular with Nigerian women?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	109 97.3%	3 3%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	99 91.6%	8 7.4%	1 1%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	71 87.6%	10 12.3%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	72 78%	12 12.5%	12 12.5%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	84 87.5%	10 10.4%	2 2%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	73 83.9%	4 4.5%	10 11.4%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>508</b> <b>87.5%</b>	<b>47</b> <b>8%</b>	<b>25</b> <b>4.3%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 9 (above) is quite insightful, attesting to the popularity (87.5% likes) of the home made brew – warts and all! So many inferences can be deduced from this. One: Nollywood is an industry that has a great potential and a future that would greatly blossom like its older counterpart, the Indian film - Bollywood. In other words, once there is a liking and demand for a product, then of course the sky would be the limit for the particular product manufacturer(s). Two: Since Nollywood films are so well liked/loved by Nigerian career women, it is an awesome potential tool and an invaluable change agent that would affect the lives of women and engender a positive shift of societal perspectives in the future.

**Table 10: In your experience, are there many films that you have watched that portray the career woman, especially as role models (people one can look up to) and decision makers?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Only a few</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	21 19%	18 16%	63 56.2%	10 9%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	78 72%	0 0%	30 28%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	60 74%	4 4.9%	17 20.9%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	61 63.5%	22 22.9%	12 12.5%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	58 60.4 %	15 15.6%	20 20.8%	3 3%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	51 58.6%	23 26.4%	13 14.9%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b> <b>56.7%</b>	<b>82</b> <b>14%</b>	<b>155</b> <b>26.7%</b>	<b>14</b> <b>2.4%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

It is important to bear in mind that a cross section of respondents in Asaba and Benin City for instance, issue from the senior management cadre with a 10 -12% age range of over fifty years as well as being highly educationally qualified: 5 – 6% having a Doctoral (PhD) and/or Master’s degree. As such, these are not trivial but fully knowledgeable and capable respondents who should have full cognition of what it entails to be a captain/leader of industry or a corporate establishment apex leader and decision maker. As is indicated by Table 10 above, 27% of respondents indicate “none” as the sum of Nollywood films that represent women as top industry/corporate establishment leaders, entrepreneurs and role models; while 57% concede that there are “only a few” such representations.

Research (as indicated by the study literature review) indicates that only a miniscule percentage of women attain the peak of their chosen careers, as a direct consequence of a sheer lack of aspiration or by design of the societal and workplace status quo. Alongside this, the margin of female entrepreneurs and captains of industry is even narrower than the numbers of career women in the public sector who occupy apex positions. Such dismal circumstances inform and actually undergird part of the mission statement of some women’s societies such as African “Women Advancement Forum” (encapsulated in the study literature review), whose stated agenda policy base among other factors assert that:

Few women run their own businesses, aspire to political situations, aspire senior board and senior management positions and even run successful Non-Governmental Organizations/Non Political Organizations. They are faced with so many challenges. Therefore, the time is now to consider best approaches to give women a helping hand to enable them build their businesses, be in parliament, join the senior management and board of corporations, have easy access to finance; exposing them to markets, skills acquisition and capacity building. At the same time, it is important to create awareness in our girls and youths of the possibility of becoming entrepreneurs, parliamentarians, Chief Executive Officers and reputable persons in society. (Women Advancement Forum, 2017)

As is indicated in the above policy statement, there is an urgent imperative to create an awareness in young girls especially the youth, of the need for them to aspire to be future captains of industry and top level politicians and policy makers. One effective

medium amongst others through which to achieve this would be the creation of such desirable role models through filmic narratives.



**Table 4.11: In the Nollywood films that you have watched, are the dramatic representations of the career woman frequently negative or positive?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Very Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Very Positive</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	60 54%	15 13.4%	20 18%	8 7.1%	9 8%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	74 66%	0 0%	31 29%	0 0%	3 2.0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	29 35.8%	8 9.8%	42 51.8%	2 2.4%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	21 21.8%	18 18.75 %	53 55%	4 4%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	40 41%	5 5.2%	50 52%	0 0%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	24 27.5%	14 16%	39 44.8%	10 11.4 %	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b> <b>42.7%</b>	<b>60</b> <b>10%</b>	<b>235</b> <b>40.5%</b>	<b>24</b> <b>4%</b>	<b>13</b> <b>2%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 11 statistics indicate 43% of respondents affirming that career women representations are “very negative.” Added to the 40.5% of respondents who simply perceive representations as “negative,” would amount to a staggering 84%, in comparison to a mere 14% that perceive representations as positive. It becomes obvious to even a very casual observer that the representations and portrayals of career women in Nigeria are largely negative.

Previous research (as encapsulated in this study literature review) by Anyanwu (2003; 83) suggests that there is slightly more than meets the eye in terms of what motivates and sustains these negative portrayals.

Female personalities such as Dr. Victoria Ezeokoli, Dr. Doyin Abiola and May-Ellen Ezekiel have held leadership positions in both electronic and print media in Nigeria, and have led the battle for the recognition of women in Nigeria. Women have appeared in various stereotypical roles on the Nigerian screen, as garrulous characters (e.g. Apena in *The Masquerade*), or showy and materialistic (e.g. Pepeye in *Papa Ajasco*), etc. This reveals that the real woman often gives way for the fictional creations of men who are usually in control of the fabrication of such images (Anyanwu 2003, 83)

Further, international agencies, such as the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), report that “throughout the world, stereotypes are prevalent in everyday media. Women are often portrayed solely as home makers and care givers of the family, dependent on men, or as objects of male attention.” (GMMP Document, 2015)

With the filmic creation of apex career female role models and its prevalence as the established filmic norm; allied family members such as recalcitrant spouses, parents, and family members generally, would begin to see the benefits that would flow down to them. With this possibility extending to several families, it would balloon into geometric proportions to the betterment of the society in general. This underscores the urgent need for enhanced career women filmic representations.

**Table 12: Would you describe some of these frequent representations as:**

- (a) passive victim
- (b) available sexual object
- (c) scheming and very manipulative
- (d) always dependent on other people
- (e) motherly and/or domestic

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Passive victim</b>	<b>Available Sex. object</b>	<b>Scheming/ Manipulative</b>	<b>Always dependent</b>	<b>Motherly/ Domestic</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	30 27%	23 21%	34 30.46%	5 5%	20 18%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	15 14%	50 46.3%	18 17%	12 11%	12 11%	1 1%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	42 51.8%	10 12.3%	9 11%	8 9.8%	10 12.3%	2 2.4%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	33 34%	12 12.5%	23 23.9%	15 15.6%	12 12.5%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	11 11.4%	24 25 %	16 16.6%	25 27%	20 20.8%	0 0 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	32 33.3 %	5 5.2%	33 34,3%	5 5.2%	11 11.4%	1 1%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b> <b>28.1%</b>	<b>124</b> <b>21.3%</b>	<b>133</b> <b>22.9%</b>	<b>70</b> <b>12%</b>	<b>85</b> <b>14.6%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>0.8%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

The table 12 survey percentages seem quite insightful as the “passive victim” scale has the highest percentage (28.1%) of how the career women in the survey currently perceive female dramatic portrayals in Nollywood films. The “scheming and manipulative” option comes second with 21.3%. As a matter of fact, this portrayal is so rampant that sometimes entire films are dedicated to it! A good case in point is Osita IHEME’s *Supermodels* (2010). Not surprisingly, the entire plot and storyline of the film revolved around the schemes and manipulations of the female key characters with one supreme ambition, to worm their way into the director’s bed. Such a “supreme” achievement was guaranteed to ultimately, inevitably earn them the much coveted position of the organization’s supermodel.

Valsa Verghese et al. (1991) through a United Nations organization sponsored research findings accuse the media of “manipulating women.” The trio’s research amongst other clauses, insist that:

The media are responsible for perpetuating and disseminating traditional stereotypes of women. While there are variations from society to society, from culture to culture, the basic images remain the same: women are portrayed as inferior, submissive, subordinate, emotional, irrational, confined to homes and to role assigned by a patriarchal society. Women are also portrayed as sex objects and commodities.

(Verghese, Chadwick and Charnes, 1991:184)

Cross referencing the statistical details of this study, Table 5: Academic Background, will be applied as a mini societal prototype to illustrate the acuteness of these filmic misrepresentations. 13% (74 out of a total of 580 women) who have doctoral degrees can hardly be related to the above described “confined to their homes” and “sex object” stereotypes. While it could be argued that such real life actual women exist, it should equally be of note that there are other female more desirable prototypes whose portrayals should begin to be strongly emphasized, for the advancement and betterment of society.

Mabel Evwiehoma’s (2002) recommendation is apt:

“...there is the need to recommend that creativity should no longer portray the woman as weak. The form, content and structure of screenplays whether by male or female writers should do female characters much more justice. There should not be a deliberate attempt to make women consistently powerless in plays.” (Evwiehoma, 2002:131)

Previous research elucidate the factors Evwiehoma (2002) recommends should be harnessed and utilized in explicit detail.

Clause (c) of chapter 2.7 of this research - Proactive Measures Advocated for Gender Change Paradigm Shift advocates:

Create capable female captains and leaders of industry as role models in films and emphasize how everyone (especially the men – husbands, fathers, uncles, male relations and peers) stand to gain from these female role models; that would ultimately benefit all in society.

The media as an advocacy tool possesses immense capabilities and in fact could be said owe it as a responsibility to help right some of these wrongs and acute misrepresentations that have been somewhat been the pattern over the years.

**Table 13: On many occasions how did you feel after having watched Nollywood filmic portrayals of the Nigerian career female?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Hopeless/ Frustrated</b>	<b>Hopeful</b>	<b>None of the above</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	39 34.8%	11 9.8%	33 29.4%	27 24.1%	2 1.8%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	34 11%	17 15.7%	30 27.7%	24 25%	3 11%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	12 14.8%	9 11%	32 39.5%	24 25%	4 4.9%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	37 38.5%	19 19.7%	10 10.4%	26 27%	4 4%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	22 22.9%	8 8.3%	27 28%	37 38.5%	2 2%	0 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	34 39%	8 9%	22 25%	19 21.8%	4 4.5%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b> <b>30.6%</b>	<b>72</b> <b>12.4%</b>	<b>154</b> <b>26.5%</b>	<b>157</b> <b>27%</b>	<b>19</b> <b>3%</b>	<b>0</b> <b>0%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Women's responses were elicited on a scale of five to the under listed questionnaire questions;

- a. Angry
- b. Happy
- c. Hopeless/frustrated
- d. Hopeful (determined to make a change/in future someone else would)
- e. None of the above

In Azzez's (2010:35-48) study, he gets a cross section of literate and semi-illiterate women and groups them to view exactly the same films. In sharp contrast, there was an outsize distinction between the perception indices of both groups. The non-literate women generally tended to swallow hook, line and sinker, the derogatory concepts in the film that denigrated and degraded women. They passively decided that such was the norm or simply acquiesced to it as the "culture." According to Azzez's (2010:35-48) findings, one of the educated respondents "explicitly confirms the kind of resistant reaction the films trigger in her by saying, 'they do have an effect on me, but the effect is that they make me angry.'"

In this research, similarly a significant percentage (33.1%) responded with an outright "angry!" This is not new actually, as previous research asserts. Approximately twenty nine percent (28.6%) feel hopeless and frustrated about career women portrayals in Nollywood films. However, a significant percentage of (23.1%) nurse high hopes laced with optimism that someone, somewhere in the future would do something; and take proactive action to right these anomalies and shortfalls.

**Table 4.14: What qualities would you prefer to be highlighted in the representation of career women in Nollywood films?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Role models and leaders</b>	<b>Intelligent</b>	<b>Tackle issues</b>	<b>Of Benefit to society</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	24 21.4%	14 13%	45 40.2%	27 24.1%	2 2%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	16 15%	30 28%	28 26%	34 32%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	32 39.5%	10 12.3%	30 37%	9 11%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	35 36.4%	30 31%	18 18.7%	13 13.5%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	28 29%	29 30.2%	23 23.9%	13 13.5%	3 3 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	49 56.3%	9 10.3%	13 14.9%	15 17.2%	1 1 %	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b> <b>31.7%</b>	<b>122</b> <b>21%</b>	<b>157</b> <b>27%</b>	<b>111</b> <b>19%</b>	<b>6</b> <b>1%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>



The options presented in the research question are:

- a. Role models and leaders: professionals, entrepreneurs, political technocrats (31.7%)
- b. Intelligent kind and not bossy (21%)
- c. Tackles head-on, issues peculiar to her (27%)
- d. Of benefit to her larger community (19%)

Actually, some respondents felt so stirred up that they ticked all the options! It is critical to note that the research findings indicate in Table 12, that current Nollywood representations of career women are quite apposite - available sexual objects (21%); scheming and very manipulative persons (23%).

This is an issue that is critical to all career women, not only in Nigeria, but globally. As global filmic research surveys on female filmic representations (captured in the literature review) indicate. This research finding strongly indicates that career women should be portrayed as role models and leaders in key fields of endeavor. It is important for society, especially filmmakers to realize that much as gender roles assigned to women are biologically and culturally determined, there has been a dynamic shift in women's roles over the years as Obono and Obono (2010), keenly enunciate:

In their dual responsibilities, women perform active roles in the industrial, managerial and ministerial sectors of the economy, in addition to family duties. Globally, women's roles have transcended subordination to development partners. They encounter challenging tasks in the society and at family level. There remains opportunities for changing the value systems and norms that define the core of society because change is a constant aspect of human existence. (Obono and Obono, 2010: 74,75)

The very fact that change is a constant factor in life presupposes that inevitably, challenges will arise that must be tackled head-on by specific individuals in society. Such proactive individuals must be equipped to engage and activate the dynamics that would trigger positive societal change. Predicated on this notion, some of the challenges that career woman encounter come up for critical examination in the next table.

**Table 4. 15: In your own experience, what are the challenges that a career woman is likely to encounter in the course of pursuing her career over the years?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Time Management</b>	<b>Self - Improvement</b>	<b>Personal Health</b>	<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	43 38.4%	24 21.4%	7 6.3%	38 34%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	39 36.1%	40 37%	3 3%	26 24%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	35 43%	28 34.5%	9 11%	9 11%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	54 56%	21 21.8%	5 5%	15 15.6%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	56 58%	14 14.5 %	21 21.8%	2 2%	3 3%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	58 66.6 %	12 13.7%	8 9%	9 10.3%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b> <b>49%</b>	<b>139</b> <b>23.9%</b>	<b>53</b> <b>9%</b>	<b>99</b> <b>17%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>0.6%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

A close observation of (table 2) the bio data table on age, reveals that the highest percentage (38%) of the total study respondents, fall within the age category of 30 – 40 years and 20 -30 years, (33%). This culminates in a sum total of (71%) for both age groupings; far more than over half the number of total respondents. This is a very important undergirding factor. It is the age bracket where young career women bear and nurture babies, as well as typically grapple with managing a nuclear or extended family, and perhaps adolescent or adult helps as well. Table 15 above shows that almost half the number of all respondents (49%), considers that balancing the use of time between career requirements and family needs, are issues that are most critical to a career woman. In fact, entire books and other documentation (especially feminine television programs), have been solely devoted to this sore facet of the career woman's life.

The current high rate of divorce in present day society qualifies this as a palpable factor that should be taken into crucial consideration. Quite in addition, other feminine related factors such as personal health, child bearing and rearing, inevitably come to the fore. Roberta Roesch (1995) in her book *The Working Woman's Guide to Managing Timestates*: “women are the primary care givers for family and health needs,” and “women and men experience different life cycles.”

**Table 4. 16: Are some of the actual challenges a career woman encounters in the course of pursuing her career over the years, being highlighted/reflected in Nollywood filmic representations?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	33 30%	60 54%	14 13%	5 5%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	49 45.4%	28 26%	31 29%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	9 11%	40 49.3%	32 39.5%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	11 11.4%	61 63.5%	24 25 %	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	20 20.8%	42 43.7%	26 27%	8 8.3 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	9 10.3%	61 70%	17 19.5%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b> <b>22.5%</b>	<b>292</b> <b>50.3%</b>	<b>144</b> <b>24.8%</b>	<b>13</b> <b>2.2%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 4.16 (above) reflects 24.8% of respondents indicating that career female challenges and feminine related issues are “rarely” addressed in storylines and thematic content. 22.5% of respondents opine that career woman relevant issues have “never” been addressed in Nollywood films; even as 50% acknowledge that career women’s issues are sometimes profiled.

However, it is a truism of life that if anybody’s story has to be told for others to watch/read, it would be preferable to such a person if his/her story were told from the perspective of the challenges such persons had to tackle and overcome, and the struggles they had to contend with and live through. This inevitably elevates humans to the status of hero and heroines. It undoubtedly constitutes good entertainment, and inevitably teaches a few lessons as well to viewing audiences. Anything short of this ideal reduces the stories to mere stories about rats running around in a sewer maze-a futile and senseless rat race.

Batta and Iwokwagh (2010) point to the mass media as invaluable change agent tools for the advocacy of issues close to the heart of career women.

Since the mass media operate in a gender biased milieu, women need to be gender mainstreamed before they can become effective advocates or be used as veritable means of advocacy. In spite of what has been said, it can also be argued that the media have the innate capacity to identify salient issues concerning women and give prominence and attention to them by creating airtime, for open discussion and debate. (Batta and Iwokwagh, 2010:77, 79)

Of the multiplicity of significant improvements that have been applied to various aspects of the Nollywood film industry, more serious and concerted attention should be accorded the screenplay. It is at this foundational stage that salient issues which distress career women can be given prominence and careful attention to. Chukwuma Anyanwu (2003:84) asserts that: “society’s expectation of the video film when it emerged was that it had come to right the wrongs done to the black race through other media (Hollywood films especially).” This assertion clearly implies that a film has the inbuilt responsibility, laced with societal expectation to carry and convey undergirding and inbuilt messages for positive societal advancement and transformation.

The next table seeks to locate if any insightful lessons are being or, have been learnt from the career women portrayals in the films the study respondents have watched.

**Table 17: Have you learnt any lessons from watching depictions of the career woman in Nigerian films?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	60 53.5%	50 44.6%	2 2%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	78 72.2%	30 27.7%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	70 86.4%	11 13.5%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	81 84 %	15 15.6%	0 0 %	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	50 52%	42 43.7%	4 4%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	65 74.7%	22 25%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b> <b>69.6%</b>	<b>170</b> <b>29%</b>	<b>6</b> <b>1%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

From the research findings in table 17, 29% of respondents clearly assert that they have not learnt anything. However, from the point of view of Azeez's research findings, one can deduce that some of the lessons learnt (69.6%), do not necessarily consist in didactic content that could elicit changes in their morality; but rather hope, in a futuristic determinism to somehow engender change.

Azeez's (2010) observation is quite insightful:

The most important thing is that they (Nollywood films) sensitize them for an action. Women do not see the films as didactic as being designed to produce changes in their morals, as men take it to be. "I don't believe most of what they show in the films about women, and I don't think these things happen in real life. What I do is pick and choose the portrayals that are real and act on them in my own life," opines a respondent. (Azeez, 2010:40)

Human beings are societal animals while society is necessarily interactive by nature.

It was considered necessary therefore, to locate if watching and subsequently discussing a Nollywood film in the company of other women with varying educational backgrounds would possibly influence to realign career women perceptions of filmic portrayals.

**Table 4.18: Have you watched a Nigeria film in the company of other women, or discussed a film you have both watched at different times?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	95 84.8%	16 14.2%	1 0.8%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	80 74%	25 23.1%	3 2.7%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	70 86.4%	11 13.5%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	83 86.4%	13 13.5%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	92 95.8%	4 4%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	72 82.7%	14 16%	1 1%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>492</b> <b>84.8%</b>	<b>83</b> <b>14.3%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>0.8</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>



The figures in Table 18 (above) show a very high percentage (85%) of career women who have watched films in the company of other women. Even till date in many transport companies, the waiting rooms are replete with large TV screens that relay Nollywood films or international football; or both on different screens. In these waiting room viewing situations, frequently there is no avenue for interactive discussions or the overt expression of felt emotions that could derive from personal perceptions. In the early days of the Nigerian video film (mid and late nineties), it was almost inevitable to watch films in the company of other persons. That's because films (CD's or even VHS cassettes) were mostly procured on twenty-four hour duration from rental shops. Another avenue was to join other viewers in video parlors to view specific films that were being played on a large television screen from a VHS or CD player.

Further, it is actually a common habit of women to discuss film(s)/soap operas they have watched (especially the low income stay-at-home mums), who are avid film/soap opera lovers. It is also not uncommon for office secretariat staff to make time out from their office duties to discuss a film they have watched or a soap opera of their liking that they all watch on local television channels at its allotted viewing periods. More recently however, young Nollywood lovers (such as students) now download films through their phones, I-pads or laptops and have the tendency to circulate such amongst colleagues and friends.

**Table 4.19: Have you watched a Nollywood film in the company of other men (such as male family members), and discussed such a film with them?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	61 54.4%	50 44.6%	1 1%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	88 81.4%	20 18.5%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	71 87.6%	9 11%	1 1%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	79 82%	17 17.7%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	91 94.7%	5 5.2%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	70 80.4%	14 16%	3 3.4%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>460</b> <b>79.3%</b>	<b>115</b> <b>19.8%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>0.8%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 4.19 sets forth 79% of career women as having watched Nollywood films in the company of other men. The family unit especially, makes this inevitable on occasions.

Majority of persons live in family clusters and in homes that have only one or two television sets. This invariably makes for compelled sharing of television channels viewing, whereby all family members view the specific channel of choice by the family dominant figures. It must also be borne in mind that the extended family unit is a norm in Nigeria. It is not out of place to live with one's cousins and other members of one's clan as a family unit. Another key factor is that more recently, (in the millennium) most Nollywood films are aired through the television by any of the multiple cable vendors, or television stations. This scenario, thereby readily sets the stage for Table 20.

**Table 20: Have you had divergent views from men, such that you ended up disagreeing and arguing about the depictions?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	71 63.3%	39 34.8%	2 1.7%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	70 64.8%	38 35%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	59 72.8%	22 27%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Porth</b>	78 81%	18 18.7%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	90 93.7%	2 2%	4 4%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	69 79.3 %	17 19.5%	1 1 %	96 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>437</b> <b>75.5%</b>	<b>136</b> <b>23.4%</b>	<b>7</b> <b>1.2%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

The percentages reflected in the statistical survey of Table 4.20 (above) clearly validate the claims and findings in Table 19, that other groups of men and women perceive career female representations in Nollywood films differently – (75.5%).

Table 4.20 (above) indicates a very high differential percentage – 75.5% of respondents are in the affirmative, in contrast to a miniscule dissenting 23%. This favors the assumption that similar fictional interpretations accrue to persons with similar exposures to specific mindsets, given the backdrop of Ayakoroma’s (2008) definition of film. “A film production is a mind share business in the sense that movies from all over the world are in competition to share the viewer’s mind.”

Sometimes discussion of varying opinions of family members of films watched could ensue and could escalate into roaring arguments. Researchers state however, that to locate the differential between male and female perspective, people use critical theories to ask questions. For example, Deborah Tannen (2013) argues that “when men listen to women express their troubles, they listen with the purpose of wanting to fix it. Women are not looking for advice or a fix, but rather empathy from their male conversational partners.”

So, much as women generally tend to naturally possess similar emotional wiring, the level of education and experiences acquired from more complex societal interfacing, invariably better equips the educated women to make more informed decisions and improved life choices that inevitably influence their perceptions.

**Table 4.21: In your experience, do you find that educated women (such as you) tend to see these depictions from a similar perspective?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	93 83%	15 13.3%	4 3.5%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	98 90.7%	2 1.8%	8 7.4%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	65 80.2%	16 19.7%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	75 78%	20 20.8%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	60 62.5%	36 37.5%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	70 80.4%	16 18.3%	1 1%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	461 79.4%	105 18%	14 2.4%	580 100%

Table 21 (above) is indicative by 80% that overwhelmingly confirm the notion that educated women tend to generally see depictions from a similar perspective, in contrast to the 18% that do not agree that there is a differential in the perspectives of uneducated women who are cloyed by a lack of exposure and commensurate knowledge. The educated woman is confident and informed about multiple life choices and options available to her, quite unlike her uneducated counterpart.

Azzez (2010) establishes that “Nigerian educated women are free and have the ability to reject the messages in Nigerian films...” He further references Narayan (1977) and Kumar (1994) in stating that, “educated women who contest and seek to change discourses that are detrimental to women’s lives are labeled as “Westernized” and are therefore, often characterized as “alien traitors to their communities” and “betrayers of their communities of identity.”

**Table 4.22: What are the common responses in other groups of women and men about frequent dramatic feminine representations in Nigerian films?**

- a. That is how life is... reality
- b. That’s the way things are; cannot be changed
- c. Women are very wicked, deceptive and cannot be trusted
- d. A woman’s place is in the kitchen
- e. Women should be submissive

**Table 4.22: What are the common responses in other groups of women and men about frequent dramatic feminine representations in Nigerian films?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	30 26.7%	26 23.2%	14 12.5%	34 30.3%	5 4.4%	3 2.6%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	20 18.5%	30 27.7%	20 18.5%	28 25.9%	8 7.4%	2 1.8%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	19 23.4%	15 18.5%	10 12.3%	6 7.4%	31 38%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	33 34%	15 15.6%	18 18.7 %	9 9.3%	20 20.8%	1 1 %	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	20 20.8%	30 31.25%	15 15.6%	18 18.7%	12 12.5 %	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	21 24%	9 10.3%	13 14.9%	9 10.3%	33 37.9%	2 2.2%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b> <b>24.6%</b>	<b>125</b> <b>21.5%</b>	<b>90</b> <b>15.5</b>	<b>104</b> <b>16.3%</b>	<b>109</b> <b>18.7 %</b>	<b>9</b> <b>1.5%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>



Table 22 (above) indicates that 25% of career women perceive other women with little formal education as having a form of fixated and near servile mindset of “that is how life is.” Not surprisingly, “women should be submissive” ranks a close third place of 19% to the second 22% of “that’s the way things are; cannot be changed.”

Considering that a majority 92% of respondents are Christian, it is not surprising but stands to reason that they would endorse the dictum of “submissiveness” which is a strongly Christian advocated ethic for wives. On the other hand, it is possible to surmise that perhaps the excessive opulence and affluence displayed in Nollywood films act as intimidating factors against the backdrop of being essentially uneducated and under privileged.

As Poopola (2003:135) observes: “Going by the contents of some of the plays, wealth is a major propelling factor. Most of the characters have immense wealth and live opulently.” It becomes obvious that multiple societal factors come into play to determine people’s preferences, biases and perceptions. The next table (23) seeks to examine some of these factors.

**Table 4. 23: What factors contribute to other people having the above perceptions and interpretations?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Male Dominance</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Low Education</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	10 8.9%	15 13.3%	5 4.4%	13 11.6 %	67 59.8%	2 1.7%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	17 15.7%	20 15.5%	6 5.5%	15 13.3 %	48 44.4%	2 1.8%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	18 22.2%	8 9.8%	40 49.3%	1 1%	14 17.2%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	12 12.5%	32 33.3%	20 20.8%	0 0%	31 32%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	8 8.3%	20 20.8 %	10 10.4%	16 16.6 %	40 41.6%	2 2%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	36 41.3%	17 19.5%	17 19.5%	2 2.2%	11 12.6%	4 4.5%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b> <b>17.4%</b>	<b>112</b> <b>19%</b>	<b>98</b> <b>16.8%</b>	<b>47</b> <b>8%</b>	<b>211</b> <b>36.3%</b>	<b>11</b> <b>1.8%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

As observed in the analysis of the previous table (22), Christian beliefs and injunctions such as “submissiveness to one’s husband,” tended to weigh in heavily; considering that respondents are 92% Christian (Table 4) and that 60% of them are married women (Table3). While “low education” still ranks the highest at 36%, family and societal “male dominance” are obvious contributory factors.

Other research indicates that specific variables such as sex and level of education constitute factors that influence the different interpretation patterns among Nigerian film audiences as reflected in. Once again Adesina Azeez (2010) is pertinent:

The relative proportion of capabilities for different interpretation of Nigerian films is mainly influenced by sex and educational background rather than by ethnicity or class. In terms of gender differences, this study found that there is a remarkable difference in the way men and women read the meanings in Nigerian films. Men tend not to see anything significantly wrong with the representations of women in the films... They accept the representation in films as the reality of Nigerian women and wish such representations to continue unmodified for the reinforcement of Nigerian culture. This is not surprising because as it has been repeatedly suggested, the films serve their patriarchal interests.

Women, particularly those that are more educated contrarily perceive the ways Nigerian films portray women as negative, irritating, ideological and derogatory. The factors that significantly determine how an individual woman interprets the meaning of women’s representations in the media are her level of education and the level of her exposure to critical discourses. If she’s less educated and thereby less exposed to alternative discourses, she will be a passive viewer of the media and will therefore have a complaint or preferred interpretation of the representations of women in the media. (Azeez, 2010:44)

It is a fairly commonplace experience in life to watch Nollywood films in the company of friends or family members, especially in the bygone days of video film vending and rental shops and also in these current times where DSTV/Multichoice is one of the key vendors. The other commonplace factor that could generally follow suit is the discussion of the issues raised in the film and in the circumstances generated in the film. Frequently, there are divergent views from other family members/friends. However, a careful observer would notice over time, that whenever these video film arguments and disagreements come up, men tend to see things from a

similar perspective; while less educated women (who are resigned to maintaining the male supremacist status quo), quickly co-tow to the male perspective.

**Table 4.24: In your own experience, would these societal influences elicit similar interpretations across board among highly educated and not so well educated women?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	90 80.3%	20 17.8%	2 1.7%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	70 64.8%	31 28.7%	7 6.48%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	63 77.7%	17 20.9%	1 1%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	66 68.7%	29 30.2%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	62 64.5%	34 35.4%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	65 74.7 %	21 24.1%	1 1%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>416</b> <b>71.7%</b>	<b>152</b> <b>26%</b>	<b>12</b> <b>2%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Respondents validate the above in a “yes” response by a 72.7% margin as described in Table 24 (above). A much less significant number of respondents (26%), espouse the opposite view.

Societal factors such as religion, male dominance and sex (as in gendered beliefs and biases) have been found to weigh in heavily on viewer’s perceptions and interpretations of filmic narration and discourses. From the findings of this research, it will be safe to surmise that in spite of the differential in their educational levels, and whereas they would easily have divergent views on other issues, both educated and non-educated married Christian women would be offended at filmic portrayals that for instance, encourage a lack of submissiveness to one’s husband.

**Table 4.25: With regard to ethics, do you consider that the duty of filmmakers is to only mirror society, exactly as it is?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	30 26.7%	80 71.4%	2 1.7%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	18 16.6%	90 83.3%	0 0%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	68 83.9%	13 16%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	69 71.8%	26 27%	1 1 %	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	90 93.7%	6 0.6%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	56 64.3%	29 33.3%	2 2%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b> <b>57%</b>	<b>244</b> <b>42%</b>	<b>5</b> <b>1%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 25(above) reflects 57% as being in agreement that storylines and themes should reflect society exactly as it is, while 42% disagree.

It is also important to state that part of the considered duty of film makers is to ensure that their products are development communication oriented. That way, the films would inevitably be change agents that positively affect the lives of its audiences. Emenaku (2003:79) authenticates this view by arguing that “the producers of video films owe the larger society a duty to promote the greater good of the society...”

Society is viewed as both teacher and pupil. As teacher it provides the canvas on which the artiste sketches, but as pupil, it has a responsibility to observe and learn from the re-creative sketches of its artistes that seek to point out societal wrongs and anomalies for rectification purposes or for necessary realignments as the case may be. This is a considered critical component that encompasses the ethic of filmmaking.



**Table 4.26: Should plots and themes be structured to proffer positive, feminine role models who could be leaders in society?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	101 90.2%	11 10%	0 0%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	105 9.7%	0 0%	3 2.7%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	71 87.6%	10 12.3%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	80 83.3%	15 15.6%	1 1 %	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	82 85.4%	14 14.5%	0 0 %	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	64 73.5%	20 22.9 %	3 3.4%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b> <b>86.7%</b>	<b>70</b> <b>12%</b>	<b>7</b> <b>1.2%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Data from Table 26 above clearly indicates that 86.7% of the respondents in the research survey, really desire that films be used to convey positive life-change messages. It is absolutely necessary that the films be development oriented, and prescriptive. That only, would constitute the true measure of its true relevance to the lives of its career women audiences.

The findings from Table 26 would seem to contradict the results of Table 25. In reality, there is no contradiction in essence but rather a consonance. The attendant problem here is that it has been made amply clear within the ambits of this research that career women perceive current Nollywood filmic portrayals of the Nigerian career woman as stereotypic, unreal and fickle. The ongoing cry has been for adjustments to be made to thematic content and storylines to reflect the actual reality of the struggles and issues that dog the lives of career women as well as the need to align filmic statistical demographics.

It is not an aberration therefore that Table 25 reveals 57% of career women as desiring portrayals and representations to be close to real life situational ethics. A suitable example is that of the sexy secretary who is all itchy to worm her way into her boss's pants and sleep her way right up the career ladder. While there may be a few of such unscrupulous women in the workplace, representing that as the prevalent norm amounts to gross distortion of treacherous proportions.

In reality, the way forward is to chart new paths in the dramatic representations of career women in Nollywood films. Various researchers and researches suggest different forms of intervention. Iwedinma Atakpo and Imoh Emeniyi are of the opinion that only women themselves can right these wrongs by becoming active players in the Nollywood field of play.

It is only the conscious participation of women as writers of screenplays, directors and executive producers that can redress the current trend. This will introduce the kind of dialogic practice which shall recreate the role of women in the electronic media. That will bring the kind of gender dialogue which the emergence of Flora Nwakpa and other women writers brought into the print media. (Atakpo and Emeniyi, 2008)

Other suggested approaches may seem quite radical but be the necessary actions of recourse. Annette Khun (1990) suggests using the feminist ideology of ‘deconstruction’ and ‘rupture,’ as an approach.

The distinction between the deconstruction of existing forms of representation and the creation of new ones is to some extent one of degree rather than of kind. In the first place, deconstruction may be regarded as an important – and perhaps even a necessary step toward more radical forms of rupture. And in any case, in a situation where certain forms of representation are culturally dominant, alternative forms will always tend to be construed as a challenge to dominant form (Khun, 1990)

A critical part of the way forward in charting new paths in the dramatic representations of career women in Nollywood films is the conscious inculcation of near accurate statistical details. Courtroom stories for instance where female judges are hardly ever featured, where filmic academic professors and workplace bosses are always male and the receptionist is always the clueless incompetent female, where police stations and operations are always replete with all male police officers (etc), amounts to blatant statistical misrepresentations. Filmmakers owe this to the society as part of their creative responsibility.

**Table 4.27: What have you been impressed with or what has impacted you personally from the Nollywood films you have watched so far?**

- a. Most of the filmmakers are men who do not really understand a woman's heart and mind
- b. The filmmakers do not conduct any/ sufficient research
- c. The filmmakers are already biased and merely want to tell their own story from their own perspective
- d. The filmmakers are not interested in reshaping societal perspectives, but simply want to make a lot of money

**Table 4.27**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	31 28%	33 30%	40 36%	4 4%	4 4%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	33 31%	22 20.4%	35 32.4%	12 11.1%	6 6%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	7 8.6%	26 32%	32 39.5%	16 19.7%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	11 11.4 %	19 19.7%	23 23.9%	42 43.7%	1 1%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	24 25%	22 22.9%	31 32 %	13 13.5%	6 6%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	21 24%	19 21.8%	24 27.5%	22 25%	1 1%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b> <b>21.8%</b>	<b>141</b> <b>24.3%</b>	<b>185</b> <b>31.8%</b>	<b>109</b> <b>18.7%</b>	<b>18</b> <b>3%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Data from table 4.27 indicates that the highest percentage 31.8%(c)feel that the filmmakers are male with patriarchal interests (a) 21.8%,who simply want to tell their stories the way they perceive it. Nineteen percent (18.7%) (d) of respondents feel that male filmmakers are not really interested in attempting to influence and reshape society and as such, conduct little or no research into their subject matter 24% (b), but only want to make a lot of money.

Anyanwu (2003:87) argues that the male supremacist ego is to blame for female negative portrayals. “This negative depiction is an attempt to acquiesce to the dictates of the male dominated audience. Producers believe that they can only make money, if they pander to the male ego through such negative portrayals.”

The basic inference from all the data regarding Table 4.27 (above) is that the picture of the Nigerian career woman as presently painted by Nollywood films is totally at variance with career women’s filmic expectations and desires. This is in contradistinction to the widely held view that Nollywood films present “actual slices of life.” This may be true however in reference to some genres such as comedy, crime, ritual and may be romance, but for now, it is not yet applicable to career women portrayals and representations.

**Table 4. 28: In the past few years, some female filmmakers have come on board the Nigerian film industry as writers and producers, and have made films that espouse some issues that are critical to career women. Would you much rather view such films?**

<b>State Capital</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>ABS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Asaba</b>	62 55.4%	48 43%	2 1.7%	112 100%
<b>Benin</b>	71 66%	33 31%	4 3.7%	108 100%
<b>Calabar</b>	72 88.8%	9 11%	0 0%	81 100%
<b>Port Harcourt</b>	88 91.6%	8 8.3%	0 0%	96 100%
<b>Uyo</b>	70 72.9%	24 25%	2 2%	96 100%
<b>Yenogoa</b>	79 90.8%	8 9%	0 0%	87 100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>442</b> <b>76%</b>	<b>130</b> <b>22.4%</b>	<b>8</b> <b>1%</b>	<b>580</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 28 (above) indicates a high percentage of respondents (76%) stating that they would much rather view films that have positive relevance to career women's lives. In contrast, a dissenting 22% who could be quietly wary of considered "uncharted waters" and may not have seen any feminist films indicate their reluctance.

Further, one of the key thrusts of this research is the advocacy of the utilization of tested and proven intervention strategies, such as the pro social and enter-educate approach. This approach is essentially and critically target audience oriented. The British Council in Nigeria, has effectively utilized it in the production of a drama serial titled *Wetin Dey?* as a viable intervention tool to provide information aimed at checkmating the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that ravaged Africa from the mid-nineties to well over a decade. Bashiru Akande (2008:180) profiles procedures and requirements that are major elements of any enter-educate film.

Essentially, the major element of any enter-educate film includes problem identification, stakeholders analysis and involvement, profiling of the problem, participatory script development as well as production monitoring and evaluation of such project. This process considerably involves the target population in proffering workable solutions to the identified problems. (Akande 2008, 180)

The incursion of many women into the Nollywood film space as screenplay writers, producers, directors and many other capabilities is an emergent but welcome trend that fills one with new hopes and infinite pleasant possibilities. This is not only a Nigerian phenomenon but as global filmic statistics indicate, it actually spans the American, Indian, Chinese and South Korean and Japan and Australian film industries, as is indicated in the analysis of research hypotheses that follow.

### **4.3 Analyses of Research Hypothesis**

To analyze the research hypotheses, it is expedient to lay out and fully articulate the findings of a United Nations sponsored research, which is relevant to this study.

Gender without Bias, sets out to explore the visibility and nature of female depictions in films worldwide. To address this goal, we content analyzed gender roles in popular films across the ten most profitable territories internationally- (Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and United Kingdom). Films analyzed were theatrically released between 2010- May 2013. In total, one hundred and twenty films were examined.



(Stacy Smith, Marc Chaoeti and Catherine Pieper, 2014).

The various results of this encompassing research will be applied to the study hypotheses, where applicable.

**Hypothesis One: That in a male dominated Nigerian filmic world; there is a paucity of themes and storylines that actually present the career woman and issues pertinent to her life.**

Finding Nollywood films that have anything remotely to do with career women is very akin to looking for a needle in the proverbial haystack. This proves the first hypothesis of this research absolutely correct. Quite a number of films that had seemingly suggestive titles such as Osita Ihome's *Supermodels* proved to be nothing more than a stringing together of almost bizarre stories of equally bizarre and acutely desperate street women and girls! Applying the findings of Smith, Chaoeti and Peiper (2014) in *Gender Bias Without Borders*:

Girls are nowhere to be seen! Only 30.9% of all speaking characters were female. Turning to protagonists, only 23.3% of the films had a female as lead or co-lead, driving the plot. Given that females represent 48.6% of the population worldwide we might expect to see more girls/women on the screen. This limited representation varies significantly by country, story genre and content creator gender. (Smith, Chaoeti and Peiper, 2014)

The issue at hand is the statistical paucity of career women in articulate lead roles in filmic representations. In addition to the need for thematic content and storylines that address issues that are relevant to this group under survey, a critical part of the way forward is to chart new paths in the dramatic representations of career women in Nollywood films with a conscious aim to reflect near accurate real life demographic statistical details. For instance, a visitor to any police station in any Nigerian city or state capital will immediately observe that contrary to bygone years, the Nigerian police force is replete with females who could possibly now outnumber the men. The prevalence of female doctors is another case in point, to mention a few. Yet how many Nollywood filmic episodes feature female doctors? Nurses yes, but doctors? He is invariably male.

The other worrisome aspect of these findings is the capability of media content to provide a window to the world of work. Indeed, research reveals that exposure to

media portrayals can contribute to or reinforce viewers' occupational knowledge, career socialization, and even gender stereotypical attitudes and beliefs about work.

Employment was gendered across the sample of international movies. Of those holding a job, 77.5% were males and 22.5% were female. In real life, women comprise 39.8% of the actual global workforce, which is higher (+17.3%) than the percentage observed here in global films (22.5%). Across all the countries examined, females were underrepresented in the film workforce, compared to their actual percentages globally. Discrepancy scores were calculated to determine the degree to which on screen depictions of occupation differ from real world values. India was the only country in which female film jobs revealed a small difference from the real world. Once again, women are underrepresented on screen. This time, they comprise less than a quarter of the workforce in international films, which is well below their share in the real world of work. Given that movies can set an agenda for the next generation entering the workforce, the lack of females in the labor market is a concern. Perhaps even more troubling is the types of occupations women are shown possessing. (Smith Chaoeti and Peiper, 2014)

Women and especially young girls are avid Nollywood viewers. Career women could be spurred on to desire and aspire the peak of their careers by being exposed to positive and inspiring filmic counterparts. Young girls (tomorrow's career women) need filmic role models – and not just the solitary isolated (lucky) captain of industry, minister or head of service but a larger number of filmic professionals in various capacities, to reflect near real life statistics.

**Hypothesis Two: That when the career woman is presented (if only by default), such representations are hardly positive and never as influential captains and leaders of industry, or as role models.**

Smith's findings further indicate that:

Female Executives are an Endangered Species in International Films. Each occupation was classified as belonging to a particular industry. However, just three female characters governed at the very apex of political leadership. As a consequence, young viewers (and aspiring women) are missing the opportunity to see powerful role models in leadership positions within their own countries.

There was no justice either for fictional females in law, medicine and academia. Only two female lawyers were shown across the sample, both of whom appeared in comedic roles. Similarly, just one female judge (versus 19 males) appeared across the one hundred and twenty movies. Powerful males in

the cinematic legal world outnumber females by a factor of 13 to 1. Women in academics face a similar struggle – one female professor to sixteen male professors depicted. Medicine had a ratio of 5:1, while sports and religion had a ratio of 117 males to 5 females. Mediated representations of females working in prestigious professional or specialized roles across these industries could offer female viewers a glimpse of employment possibilities. However, this analysis reveals that global films put these females in these occupational roles quite sparingly (Smith Chaoeti and Peiper, 2014)

Data from Table 26 of the quantity survey of this research probes whether plots and storylines should be structured to proffer positive feminine filmic role models who could be leaders in society. A significant 87% acquiesce obviously in the belief that this would be very desirable outcome.

### **Hypothesis Three**

That the position in Hypothesis One and Hypothesis Two can be adequately remedied by feminist oriented filmmakers coming on board the Nigerian film industry as screenplay writers, producers, executive producers and directors, to make films that espouse issues that are critical to career women. The findings in Table 4.28 locate 76% of respondents endorsing the incursion of female filmmakers into the country's filmic space. It is considered by respondents that as writers, producers, directors (etc), women are more likely to make films with storylines that address issues critical to women but also inevitably, give greater visibility to women by assigning them key roles and apex positions. Again, Smith through her research findings indicates that:

Content creator gender factors in; as more female filmmakers, depict more female characters on screen. Director and writer gender was related to on screen portrayals of girls and women. Films with a female director attached had 6.8% more females on screen than did those without a female director attached. A similar increase of 7.5 % was observed for movies with female screenwriters versus those without a female screenwriter credited. Producer gender was not related to gender prevalence however. From the results presented, one conclusion is clear. Gender inequality is rampant in the global films. Not one country is anywhere representing reality; girls and women comprise fully half of humanity. Not a third, not a quarter. Half! (Smith Chaoeti and Peiper, 2014)

Part of the research findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) relate that, “stories of female reporters are more likely to challenge stereotypes than those

filed by male reporters.” It also significantly corroborates that, “as such, there is a link between the participation of women in the media, and improvements in the representation of women.”

*Lonely Heart* produced and directed by Ini-Edo for instance is a suitable illustration centered on the theme of spousal jealousy. The husband and wife are in the movie industry as career producer and director respectively. However, the husband resents the fact that his wife is obviously recording far better success than he is in their chosen career and resorts to being extremely difficult at home. He torments her at every opportunity, which results in the eventual breakup of the marriage.

Male spousal jealousy of a higher income, career progress and even different family pedigree and class (especially of the female above the male), is a factor that is frequently overlooked in society, but can be very insidious to marriages, and could trigger eventual marriage collapse. This indeed is a sore problem within the home for many a career woman. Only the heart of a woman can come up with a filmic representation of a core female issue such as this.

To effectively articulate this objective, it becomes necessary to examine a number of Nollywood films closely, in order to ascertain and establish the veracity of the findings of Table 28 and the results of the probe of RQ1. Quite apart from the fact that career women are almost always vilified in dramatic representations, a number of other factors are emergent, such as its gross underepresentations.

#### 4.4 The Content Criteria

The content criteria mostly derive from the following:

- The Synopsis
- The thematic content and situational ethics
- The structure – form or organization of the dramatic piece
- The Setting
- Characterization of especially the key characters - the protagonists.

A close analytical examination of ten films would bring other multiple factors to light. Primarily, a synopsis of all eight films is outlined to facilitate analytical exegesis and comprehension.

##### 4.4.1 Synopsis: Nollywood Film One: *Ije (Journey of Life)*

Written by: Chineze Anyaele

Producer: Emeka Anyaele

Director: Chineze Anyaele

Starring:

Genevive Nnaji as Chioma

Omotola Jalade-Ekehinde as Anyanwu

George Gaede as Attorney

##### **Synopsis:**

A well-made film that has won a good number of international awards, *Ije* signifies the “journey of life” of one of its main characters Anyanwu, which means ‘sunshine’ in Igbo language. Ironically, the sunshine of her life had become effectively dimmed as the drama opens with her behind bars in a prison, very far away from her homeland. The many twists and ironies of the tale reflected in frequent flashbacks is better told as the age old tale of “great expectations.”

Her sojourn overseas was in quest of a career of success and fame. She desired to establish her life in her sole passion and in the career of her dreams. The singular

objective of becoming a pop music star was what propelled her to “the land of opportunities.” But this lofty dream not only eluded her; conversely, she is now actually locked up behind heavy bars, denied of even the fundamental human right of liberty.

The story starts with Chioma, flying across land and sea, to the United States, to aid her only sibling, her elder sister. A series of montage shots simultaneously reflects the rigor she endures to be checked through immigrations on arrival, as being very similar to her sister’s ordeal of being checked into a maximum security prison. Not much hope was held out by the American justice system either, and all seemed lost, as of a drowning man merely clutching at straws.

A few days later after her sister’s court hearing, Chioma was in the court premises waiting to see Anyanwu’s attorney. Through sheer coincidence, she overhears an accused who had just been convicted for capital punishment, ranting and yelling at his young black attorney, and deprecating the American justice system generally. Intuitively, she sees hope in this attorney as different to the cocky, confident, if not arrogant much older lawyer provided by the state for her sister, and through persistence, manages to get him to take on her sister’s case. Amidst various obstacles of mugging and an attempted robbery attack, her dogged determination never wanes. At much risk to her personal safety, she even conducts some investigations on her own, though the American law system strictly forbids it and becomes a victim herself as she falls fowl of the law, is locked behind bars but later released.

A final twist in the tale however, eventually reveals that Anyanwu’s middle aged American/Italian husband had actually intended and planned to regularly gang-rape her with his dubious gambling, gun-toting, hard drugs using cronies! In the ensuing melee, she managed to dispossess one of her armed attackers and fired and killed all three in self defense.

The story ends brilliantly with Anyanwu regaining her freedom, instead of a stiff capital offence sentence. What remains doubtful that she would ever regain is the career she had travelled across land and sea to seek in the first place. The one who actually regained his career is the young black attorney who had thrown in the towel, but who Chioma had pluckily challenged and taken on against all odds.

#### 4.4.2 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Two: *Guilty Pleasures*

Producer/Writer: Emen Isong

Director: Desmond Elliot

Starring:

Ramsey Nouah as Teso

Nse Ipke Etim as Lizzie

Majid Michael as Bobby

Omoni Oboli as Nse

Mercy Johnson as Boma

##### **Synopsis:**

The story opens with two hitherto strangers meeting at the airport while waiting for their respective flights. They fall into an easy acquaintance and begin to relate to one another, the ordeals they have had to contend with in marriage. The plot structure begins in the present and uses flashbacks to tell the stories. Nse's anguish is that her husband Kenechi had been nothing but a struggling events coverage photographer, who could barely feed himself. Nse becomes his wife, gives him a home, and polishes him up. While she is overseas in Venice on a trip in pursuit of her career, Kenechi her husband enters into an extra marital relationship with another woman Boma, even though he is now legally married. Boma in the long run learns that she has been copiously lied to. In her thirst for revenge, she finds her way into Kenechi's home and is determined to seduce him, strategically, for his wife to 'catch' them in their frenzied passion. It happened just as she had planned and the fledgling marriage was put paid to.

On the other hand, the main plot has Teso, the demure "prim and proper" ever business minded husband who is determined to carve out a career identity for himself and his wife, among the classy rich; quite at the expense of his wife, Lizzie. While nobody can fault his ambition to achieve the utmost apex of his career, he however conversely, with rugged determination, acutely truncates his wife's modeling career that she loves so much. Lizzie squirms in the straight jacketed mold her husband has selected for her to live in. Teso almost sounds like a military General, as he issues orders to Lizzie his wife, "henceforth, you will do what I ask you to do, you will wear what I ask you to wear, and you will go where I ask you to go..." Repressed Lizzie

complains with suppressed disappointment and much pain to a friend. In her own words “he (her husband) is controlling and possessive, he would not dream of me working or have a business...impossible!”

Teso has a struggling younger brother Bobby who moves in with them temporarily, trying to secure a good contract to establish his own career as a models photographer. At first Lizzie is hostile to him because of a careless deprecating statement he had passed on her, that she was a bit too thin. Though Lizzie took a strong exception to that remark which she considered rude and uncomplimentary, with time and Bobby’s continuously profuse apologies, she sheathed her sword and they began to live as one big happy family, much to the joy of her husband Teso.

Bobby was in dire need of a model and had approached his girlfriend who turned him down flat. Determined to make headway somehow, he was taking shots of the sitting room at home after having copiously experimented with the environment, when Lizzie walks in. Being trigger happy, he immediately began to take successive snapshots of her, in spite of her lame protests. Like a duck to water, suddenly in her element, she begins to pose for him and much to his delight, he clicks away! Teso comes home and they both cajole permission out of him to allow Lizzie his wife, to be Bobby’s experimental guinea pig.

All goes well, in fact too well as the pictures are an absolute bombshell, and Bobby secures far more than he expected, the mega millions contract of a life time! He rushes home ecstatic and in an absolute frenzied celebrative mood, quite without thinking, physically sweeps Lizzie off her feet! It was only after they had exchanged a long passionate kiss that they realized too late, what had just transpired. And more worrisome, was the fact that an unspoken and unacknowledged attraction had crept in between them as they were thrown together, in work for Bobby’s trial product. At first Lizzie felt guilty, then, tried to reason things out. Was it because she was so acutely lonely, twiddling her fingers all day long while her husband was gone all day long on endless business engagements? Could it be because she’d been intrinsically missing her deep seated love of her modeling career, and as such at first opportunity, started to have feelings for the man who presented her with the love of her life, irrespective of societal taboos? As the heart searching questions twirled endlessly in her mind, one thing became clear- the feeling was so hypnotically, blissfully liberating that she felt



helpless in trying to resist it. And so the affair blossomed, in spite of the guilt Bobby felt and Lizzie no longer felt after a while, due to incessant misunderstandings with her husband as a result of his hard-line position over her life.

Inevitably though, Teso leaves for work one morning, forgets something at home and comes back to fetch it. His wife Lizzie is in the shower and on hearing his approaching footsteps, assumes it is Bobby's and calls out to him to come join her in the shower for a nice time, thinking her husband had gone to work and the coast was clear. She finds out too late that she had inextricably let the cat out of the bag, and the deed was done. Teso descends on his brother and gives him the beating of his life, but the marital milk was all too spilt and as such, the hitherto 'happy' (or perhaps unhappy) family was finally split.

#### **4.4.3 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Four: *Mr. & Mrs***

Writer/Producer: Chinwe Egwuagwu

Director: Ikechukwu Onyeka

Starring:

Nse Ikpe Etim as Susan

Joseph Benjamin as Kenneth

Thelma Okoduah as Linda

Barbara Soky as Mrs Abbah

Paul Apel as Charles

Chioma Nwosu as Mrs Brown

#### **Synopsis:**

Mr & Mrs is a sizzling block buster Nollywood film that has won many awards. The reason for this is not far- fetched. The fact that the thematic content of the story is located right in the epicenter of the issues that an over ninety percent estimate of career women grapple with daily - how to perform the indomitable feat of keeping career and home, and finding fulfillment and happiness in family life.

The story opens to a main plot of a wife (Susan) of an affluent businessman (Kenneth). She is completely servile to her thoroughly demanding husband, is tied to household chores round the clock, quite in addition to performing her wifely duties.

This state of affairs becomes increasingly intolerable to her as she succumbs to bouts of uncontrolled weeping. Every time she tries to air her feelings to her husband, she inevitably meets an implacable brick wall, so to speak.

The subplot features another family with a completely reverse scenario. Charles is the henpecked husband of Linda, an overtly total career woman to the point of exclusion of all her family duties that she relegates to a maid. The two couples are family friends and Linda on a visit, finds out that her friend Susan is at breaking point and in desperate need of counseling help with her marital situation. They visit a marriage counselor who schedules subsequent marriage counseling meetings with Susan and her husband Ken.

Things however, quickly go from bad to worse for the marriage as Ken begins to ask to divorce his wife, who in his own words, “always nags.” Much to his surprise Susan accepts to be divorced, but for the timely but selfish intervention of Ken’s mum, Mrs Abbah. Her reason? Her husband (Ken’s Dad) would be running for governorship position in the imminent elections. The scandal would jeopardize his chances. She instructs Susan and her son to stay the divorce proceedings until after the forthcoming elections. Susan is adamant and settles for having a quiet divorce but staying on as housemates, in order to keep up appearances.

She makes sure that over this period, she passes her erstwhile husband through the grill, as she emerges like a chrysalis from its cocoon and blossoms into a beautiful butterfly. She dusts her law degree certificate and obtains a high profile employment as company secretary, with household chores thrown to the wind. She pretends to date other men much to the chagrin of her mother-in-law, and to the consternation of her husband, who admits that he only threatened divorce in order to intimidate and keep her quiet. This new personality that was happy, always laughing and free rather intimidated him. His feeble attempt to bring in another woman into their home to arouse jealousy in his estranged wife failed woefully as Susan was able to maneuver the situation to her advantage, so that they became friends instead of rivals.

As the situation became increasingly unbearable for Kenneth, he realized that this was indeed the wife of his dreams and he was about to really lose her. He decided to come off his high perch, eat humble pie and plead with her. With tears (that were rather too profuse, that comes from overdone acting), he pleads earnestly with her to reconsider,

apologizing for all the torment he'd put her through and promised to change. Well, in her heart, this was actually music to Susan's ears. She'd been playing out a charade of dating different men all this time with the complicity of the marriage counselor. Kenneth trots her off the marriage counselor, insisting that the divorce papers they had signed be withdrawn. Susan sticks to her guns wanting a quiet retake of their marital vows, followed with a reception ceremony. The beautiful party that followed would have been quite a sufficient climax, but then, again with the advice of the marriage counselor, the big lie that was the façade of Linda's seemingly happy marriage, was exposed. She comes home unexpectedly one afternoon only to catch her husband and the house maid in bed, red handed!

At the marriage counseling session, Charles insists that Linda has solely focused on her career to the total exclusion of her home and family. In fact, that she has a marriage at all, is courtesy of her housemaid, Kate. While they are at the marriage counseling session, Susan the ever faithful friend goes to their home and with some intimidation and a monetary incentive, sends the house maid packing. When the couple get back home, all they meet is faithful family friend Susan, and a note from Kate, saying that she's left thus leaving the couple room to make amends and have a new start, having learnt their lessons. As Susan wisely sums it up, "any woman who cannot keep her home has failed. A woman has a home and a career; she has to marry them both."

#### **4.4.4 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Four: *Lionheart***

Director: Genevive Nnaji

Producer: Chiny Onwugbenu

Screenplay: Emil Garuba

Starring:

Nnaji Genevive was Obiagwu Adaeze

Pete Edochie as Earnest Obiagwu, a chief. (Adaeze's father)

Onwenu Onyeka was Obiagwu Abigail (Mother to Adaeze)

Owoh Nkem Owoh was Obiagu Godswill (A chief and Adaeze's uncle)

Igwe Pascal was Kanayo O. Kanayo

Chibuzor Azubuike (Phyno) as Obiora Obiagu (Adaeze's brother)

**Synopsis:**

*Lionheart* is the name of a transport company owned by a longstanding and renowned entrepreneur, Chief Obiagu (Pete Edochie). The company fortunes take a nosedive, much thanks to the underhanded sharp practices of a competitor; the owner of IG Motors – Igwe Pascal (Kanayo O. Kanayo) who was desperate to wreck the company through underhanded means, to divest the rightful owners of it, and acquire the company at all costs. Chief Obiagu's health suffers a downturn as direct result of these pressures. However, Adaeze (Genevive Nnaji) his astute business minded daughter pitches in her full might and capabilities into the fray. Through twists, turns and in spite of financial hurdles set up by the competition, she beats the competitor by obtaining a favorable partnership deal with an even bigger and equally reputable transport company in the northern part of the country, thereby restoring her family's fortunes, goodwill and wellbeing.

**4.4.5 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Five: *Isoken***

Screenplay/Producer/Director: Jadesola Osiberu

Starring:

Dakore Akande as Isoken

Marc Rhys as Kevin

Joseph Benjamin as Osaze

Funke Akindele as Agnes

Patrick Doyle as Papa Isoken

Tina Mba as Mama Isoken

**Synopsis:**

Isoken (Dakore Akande) is an academically inclined and a career minded young woman with a mind of her own who did not share her mother's fears and trepidations that she would most likely be "left on the shelf" as an unmarried old spinster. The story opens with a wedding party where an old schoolmate jabs Isoken really hard about her continued unmarried state. Then, much to her mother's delight and sheer joy, "Mr. Right" – Osaze (Joseph Benjamin) turns up at the party, expresses an interest in Isoken and they begin to date. He eventually proposes marriage to Isoken at

her surprise birthday party. It certainly looked for a while like all would indeed “end happily ever after,” at least for Isoken’s mum. Unbeknown to anyone, she had struck up a platonic friendship with a white carefree young man named Kevin (Marc Rhys) and they had gradually fallen in love with one another, even without their realizing it. Isoken had to find courage with her father’s and sister’s backing and support to opt out of the scheduled marriage, on the wedding morning.

Interestingly, her sister makes revelatory admissions that falling into the marriage mode as society expected of her has not really fetched her happiness but an endless string of chores and responsibilities. She opined that she should have explored her life possibilities a bit more before jumping into marriage and encouraged her sister Isoken to take her chances and avoid making the same mistake she had made.

Isoken goes with her family in search of her true love Kevin, who though was broken hearted, had found occasion to insist and press on her that she should not marry this other gentleman, being that she knows that they really love each other. They finally locate and join him at his send off to England party organized by friends.

#### **4.4.6 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Six: *Rough Diamond***

Producer: Juliet Etche

Writer: Emeka Etche

Screenplay: Chuks Obiora

Director: Victor Eneghara

Starring:

Monalisa Chinda as Temena

Artus Frank as Pedro

Yvonne Nelson as Maggie

#### **Synopsis:**

Monalisa Chinda is appropriately cast as Mena, a career woman in her forties. However, she has had to make a number of costly sacrifices to achieve her lofty career as a lawyer company secretary. Chief of these sacrifices is the fact that she had to forgo many marriage proposals and marital opportunities, to give her career a firm footing. Finally, when she felt ready for marriage, all the eligible bachelors seemed to have ‘gone.’ Out of sheer desperation, she clutches at a much younger unemployed

graduate, Pedro that she meets by chance. Pedro on the other hand is equally, if not more desperate and is determined not to let go of this seemingly once in a lifetime short-cut opportunity, to get rich quick. He is full of professions of his undying love, acutely laced with profuse marriage proposals; which is all music in Mena's ears. Within a few weeks of their initial meeting, they are married and ensconced in their own home, as Mena already used one of her multiple contacts, to secure Pedro an equally well paying position in an establishment.

However, in no time Mena's seemingly idyllic marriage quickly sours up as her mother in law visits and begins to make scathing remarks about her inability to bear a child even after five years of marriage. Sad to say, the storyline quickly winds up in the hackneyed cul-de-sac of childlessness within a marriage. Strangely, Mena, the hard-line career woman who hitherto had been a capable 'go-getter' almost lets go of her career, as she sits around all day long, and broods over her illiterate mother-in-law's wicked taunts like an immature young girl from the village. The plot and storyline take a nosedive at this point and becomes entirely focused on her desperate desire to have a child at all costs – a desire that leads her into an illegal if not criminal liaison with a young girl (Maggie) whom she befriends, with an unwanted pregnancy, out of wedlock. Mena enters into a deal to take Maggie into isolation and cater to all of her needs, in return for Maggie's baby when she delivers. Infact, how she actually grapples with her career all the while she is seen tending to Maggie, is a mystery as her career simply becomes a tool to aid the grand deception of securing a child at all costs to shore up her crumbling marriage.

The development of the storyline leaves much to be desired as an enlightened and capable career woman resorts to questionable and dubious actions to secure a baby. Being rich, she could have explored a variety of possibilities such as artificial insemination, surrogacy, - the entire range that scientific advancement has to offer. Perhaps it may be safe to assume that the script writer is completely unaware of hi-tech advances science has made in this field.

Hence a promising story line is seriously compromised as it quickly loses credibility and begins to lack believability.

#### **4.4.7 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Seven: *Tango with Me***

Screenplay Writer: Femi Kayode

Producer/Director: Ali – Balogun Mahmood

**Featuring**

Nnaji Genevive as Lola

Benjamin Joseph as Uzo

Tina Mba as (Uzo's boss)

**Synopsis:**

The story begins on the very high note of a blissful romantic wedding which quickly progresses into the much cherished and hoped for first honeymoon night. The horrific intrusion of armed robbers suddenly crashes and dissipates all the hitherto felt joy and bliss and plummets the story into terrible calamity as the hapless bride is brutally sexually violated with her husband as spectator! The marriage suddenly crashes into fragments in the face of this awful tragedy, leaving the couple to pick up the pieces.

As they face an uphill battle in merely trying to cope with the resultant trauma, they are further subjected to the horrific discovery that the bride had become pregnant from the sexual violation of the armed robber/rapists.

The story quickly takes on the theme of pro-life or anti pro-life. Husband Uzo (Joseph Benjamin) is willing to grapple with the issues pertaining to his wife's violation and his guilt at his being completely unable to defend her when she needed him most; but keeping the baby - an offspring and permanent reminder of his wife's unspeakable violation was totally unacceptable to him. As such, he wanted the baby, completely severed from their lives, so they could have as near a clean break from the reprehensible incident as possible, leave it in the past, and not drag it along in the form of a not solicited for baby.

His wife Lola (Genevive Nnaji), on the contrary, felt that the resultant baby that was most painfully thrust on her, and that she didn't bargain for; was also intrinsically, a part and parcel of her as well. To make matters worse, the baby was equally a hapless victim of the circumstances that resulted in its enforced conception and should

therefore not be further subjected to the violation of being killed by the sole persons who should hold the sacred responsibility of preserving its life.

This difference in opinions and perception finally breaks down the hitherto tottering on its knees marriage. Lola moves out of her marital home, into her parents' home. Uzo was even more lost and drifts into adultery with his morally loose boss a - stereotypic career woman media characterization played by Tina Mba.

With much counseling from experts, friends and family, and the passing of time, all becomes well as Lola eventually gives birth to a bouncing baby girl. Hubby Uzo repents of his adultery and decides not to give off the baby for adoption, but to rather keep and father it.

#### **4.4.8 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Eight: *100% Secrete***

Screenplay/Director: Ubong Bassey Nya

Producer: Uchenna Mbunabo

Story/ Executive Producer: Prince Kingsley Ugochukwu

Starring:

Jackie Appiah as Anita

Prince David Osei as Greg Nweke

#### **Synopsis:**

*100% Secrete* best defines a love that existed between two lovers Anita and Greg Nweke. The lover's secret bursts into the open when Anita (Jackie Appiah) who was still under her father's roof was found to be with child. A crisis immediately erupts as her father, a retired trigger happy veteran who is confined to the wheelchair threatens, fire and brimstone! The culprit lover boy is produced. He turns out to be homeless and unemployed and absolutely has no way of supporting the nucleus family he is initiating. Anita's livid father threatens to throw her out of his home. The pregnancy grows and with a lot of tactful pleading and entreaties from Anita's Mom, Anita is allowed to stay on in her father's home. The baby is born and all seems well until the absurd scenario repeats itself all over again! The culprit lover boy (Greg) emerges and



is once again hounded out by an irate father. Only this time, with the pregnant Anita and her little toddler in tow!

Soon afterwards Greg, Anita's fiancée in waiting hits upon a brilliant plan of temporarily emigrating to South Africa in search of greener pastures. His uncle who was briefly visiting, offers him hope but swears him into one hundred percent secrete pact of not telling anyone, (not even Anita!) and simply absconding. He leaves a ragged letter with a neighbor in which he does not even promise he would send his family money and provisions, but rather blandly states that Anita should look for a way to support herself and their children as he wasn't even sure of what he would engage in when he arrives his proposed destination. Anita's high hopes of all the endless love Greg had avowed her crashed as she fainted and had to be rushed to her parents home.

After she had the baby, it finally dawns on that she has to pick herself up and take charge of her life; to provide for her needs and that of her "father abandoned" two children. She encounters immense difficulties job hunting, not having even a minimum basic academic qualification. She eventually lands a receptionist job and is so happy! Quaintly, her boss picks a keen interest in her, to the point of desiring to make her his wife. She carefully hides her history of two children and their father's abandonment. The boss cum fiancé soon learns the awkward details of her life. But while he is undeterred, his family is livid and promptly arranges a bride for him. He accepts the new comer bride and wastes no time forgetting all about Anita and all the undying love he had pledged her. Inevitably, she is thrown back on the beat, pounding the streets, looking for a job, all over again! In tandem with the pattern of this story, she manages to land another job and a repeat of the same scenario ensues all over again, but with slight variations.

While she seems inextricably enmeshed in this tread mill Greg, her former fiancé who absconded, had become affluent and returns from South Africa with a wife in tow. As if that was not bad enough, he begins to demand the custody of the children that he abandoned years ago without any compunction and keeps harping on the point that he is better positioned to look after and care for his children. Though filled with chagrin, Anita is sufficiently tempted with the idea of loading the children off on their Dad. For starters, it had been a constant scuttling factor in her previous relationships and

also, she considered it high time their father participated in their upkeep. That would further free her to pursue her education as her lack of a proper education had proved a constant limiter to her ability to get a quality job to take charge of and better her life. She allows Greg the custody of her children, even against the children's wishes. They are shipped off to live with their father and a harsh, unloving and controlling stepmother in a home atmosphere that is fraught with constant tension and strife.

#### **4.4.9 Synopsis: Nollywood Film Nine: *Ghana Must Go***

Screenplay/Producer Yuvonne Okoro

Director: Frank Rajah Arase

Starring:

Yuvonne Okoro as Ama

Kofo Adorololo as General (Ama's father)

Blossom Chukwujekwu as Chuks (Ama's Groom)

Nkem Owoh as Chukwuemeka's ((Chuks) Father

#### **Synopsis:**

Ama (Yuvonne Okoro) a Ghanaian, newly wedded bride returns home to Ghana from overseas with her cherished groom – Chuks (Blossom Chukwujekwu) who (sadly for her family), is a Nigerian. Though she is fully aware of her family's long standing firmly held bias against all Nigerians, the acidic rejection levels she encounters far exceeds all her apprehensions. Her father a retired military General (Kofo Adorololo) cascades the bias and prejudice into an inglorious storm of fury by shipping Chuks the groom off to the airport and ordering him to step off his car at gunpoint and board a Nigerian bound plane. In exasperation, Chuks puts a call across to his father in Nigeria, requesting him to travel to Ghana in order to try and reason with his father in law. General's strong bias is rooted in a 1983 historical event where all Ghanaians resident in Nigeria were brutally evicted by the government of the day. They faced insurmountable hardships that inevitably resulted in the loss of live of family members, with General's family, suffering severe casualties. Thus the sad incident and everything associated with it (in this case, the cheap make-shift bags that were used to accommodate their sparse belongings; and as such acquired the acronym of "Ghana Must Go"), became aggressively and negatively etched in his mind.

At the end of a long insufferably difficult day, Chuks had to swallow that morning's total humiliation - not to mention ill treatment - and return to General's house in a defiant determination not to abandon his bride, but stake his claim on her against all odds.

General "Daddy," with his back against the wall and in the face of his daughter's protestations, had no option other than to allow Chuks back into his home. The next day, he takes "hubby" Chuks out to the horse race club in order to further humiliate him by making him ride a horse, even though he had never ridden one all his life! Chuks is resilient and is determined to hang in there with his wife no matter what he has to endure. Ironically, spending time with General "Daddy" begins to bond them ever so slightly at first. He couldn't help but reluctantly begin to notice and observe his son in law's gentlemanly good points; most of all his simple humility, as well as the fact that he genuinely loved his daughter, while his own son in contrast, was a complete sham and a totally irresponsible young man who would get drunk in clubs and hang out with prostitutes!

The story devolves into full blown farce with the entrance of Chuks' father (Nkem Owoh), with his motley retinue of wives, domestic animals and unwieldy luggage of assorted Ghana Must Go bags! They are admitted into the house with the utmost reluctance. They settle in and within a few days, a "man to man" pugilistic faceoff between the bride's and groom's fathers ensued; which was totally contra-wise to the cordial gentlemanly chat Chuks had hoped for. Eventually, tempers simmer down and a truce is called between the warring factions. Interestingly, within a few short days, a subsequent wedding/marital blessing is conducted by a priest with family members, friends and well-wishers in attendance. To quote the groom's father, "all that was not well, eventually ended well!"

#### **4.4.10 Synopsis of Nollywood Film Ten: *Iyore (The Return)***

Screenplay: Frank Rajah Arase

Producer/Director: Frank Rajah Arase

Starring:

Rita Dominic as Osarugue

Paul Obazele as Oba N’edo

Yemi Blaq as Ovie (Osarugue’s husband)

Joseph Benjamin as Azuwa Eweka

Bukky Wright as Ameze

**Synopsis:**

The drama is set in the ancient Bini Kingdom with all its rich splendor and traverses time to the modern day in the Nigerian cities of Lagos and Benin. It is a tale of a perpetual love that never manages to be established nor find fulfillment, even though several incarnations and re-incarnations.

Ameze (Bukky Wright) in a previous incarnation was deeply in love with Azuwa who was the chief warlord of the Bini kingdom. They decide to elope because, though she was a virgin bride, she had conceived a child for her warlord lover. It was a fatal decision that quickly ended in total doom. Ameze’s mother died in childbirth and reincarnated as Ameze, while the warlord reincarnated as the king’s heir apparent, Azuwa Eweka (Joseph Benjamin). Azuwa however, in this present incarnation falls deeply in love with some other woman, Osarugue (Rita Dominic). Circumstances separate them as he goes abroad for so many years to study and eventually comes back home, hoping to fall into the waiting arms of his erstwhile young love, only to find she’s long since been married to Ovie, her present husband. Undaunted, he pursues her doggedly while quietly fanning the embers of their long lost love to the point that her marriage breaks as her suspicious husband throws her out of their marital home. Azuwa is only too happy to receive and shelter her.

Ameze (Bukky Wright) who had metamorphosed into a Yoruba princess in the meanwhile, had been presented to the Oba as a potential bride to Azuwa, the heir apparent of the Bini throne. She promptly falls in love with her ancient incarnated paramour, only to find that he is deeply engrossed with this other woman – Osarugue, who was now with child for him. All Ameze’s efforts to secure Azuwa for herself fail as he even abdicates his claims to the throne, just to be with Osarugue. He moves to Lagos with her and sets up home. They are finally happy together even at great cost, but it was not to be! Ovie pops up demanding the child of her pregnancy and an

argument ensued. She shoves him slightly, he falls and hits the back of his head on a sharp object and dies.

Sadly, this Odepodian tragic hero - Azuwa Eweka, claims responsibility for the accidental death and is incarcerated for thirty long years! For a second time, he was yet again separated from the love he fought so hard and sacrificed so much to win. He's eventually released at the end of the imprisonment tenure only to find Osarugue had remarried another man and had several children, in addition to their son. Utterly dejected, he returns to the palace in Benin City, only to find his father in the throes of death and Ameze still waiting faithfully. He is once again declared the crown prince and takes on the longsuffering Ameze as his bride.

#### **4.5 Content Analysis of Nollywood Films Utilized in the Study**

The research content analysis seeks to analyze video texts of various formats in a systematic manner, utilizing and factoring in the study conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Eight Nollywood films - *Ije (Journey of Life)* by Chineze Anyaele, *Guilty Pleasures* by Emem Isong, *Rough Diamond* by Emeka Etche and *Mr. & Mrs* by Chinwe Egwuagu, have been grouped together for analytical study, as different from the second group that consists of *Tango With Me*, *100% Secret*, *Ghana Must Go* and *Iyore (The Return)*. This is because each film is either basically or remotely centered on the theme of a woman's career; her desire, need or attempt to enter into and fulfill this career, and the obstacles she encounters that allow or permanently debar her, from fulfilling these felt needs.

##### **4.5.1 How is the Nigerian career woman frequently represented in Nollywood films?**

Anyanwu's husband (*Ije: The Journey*) who initially pretended he was supporting her desired music career as her greatest fan, but rather ended up by sadly truncating it, is just as exploitative as Teso (*Guilty Pleasures*) and Ken's (*Mr. & Mrs*) bold and hard decision that their wife's would not be career women.

This is reflective of the Cultural Norms theory from the backdrop of the original African male prototype, who makes all family decisions, and is the sole provider as

well, thus reinforcing his position as lord and master of the family. According to Cultural Norms theory, “are the agreed expectations and rules by which a culture guides the behavior of its members in any given situation, and thus stands as a strong supporting factor in the validity of moral conventionalism.” As such, though their wives were qualified and capable professionals in their own right, their husbands feel justified to operate from the perspective of the Cultural Norms theory, feeling fully justified by the fact that in their own estimation, they provide enough money for their wives to literarily swim in as in a swimming pool; and that that was quite sufficient to guarantee them all the comfort, security and fulfillment they would ever need in life.

It is worthy of note that these female protagonists were not mere passive victims but as is reflected in Table 14 of the survey are “intelligent,”(21%) and exercised “ability to tackle issues” (27%) to turn their life situations around.

Nse (*Guilty Pleasures*), Mena (*Rough Diamond*) and Linda (*Mr. & Mrs* subplot) fall foul of properly nurturing their homes and family responsibilities as they pursued their careers. The two sets of challenges presented in the above stated scenarios constitute real life situations that hurtfully affect many women and their loved ones, parents inclusive. Meri Lisa Johnson (2007) advocates the application of a feminist framework “that provides a forum for the multifaceted experiences of young women. Such issues are addressed by third wave feminists who are generally marked as rhetorical critics who use popular culture as a means of negotiating issues of struggle, to harvest positive societal change.”

Due to the presently taxing economic situations in Nigeria, the intricacy of career women effectively balancing career and family needs (time management) is becoming more statistically prevalent. Such issues must not stay unresolved but should be brought to the front burner of societal discourse, for critical analysis with a view to locating much needed solutions. *Lioheart* by Genevive Nnaji and *Isoken* by Jadesola Osiberu find common ground in their depiction as hardline and focused career women

According to Haynes and Okome (2000), “feminist criticism is an applicable method of analysis in discovering the underlying meaning of the rhetoric that undergirds the (*career*) female and hereby making the marginalization and struggle of women visible; as well as giving them a voice.” The empirical results of this research study

state in Table 15 that 37.2% of the respondents - all career women, indicate that this is a priority issue with career women.

*Tango With Me* by Mahmood Ali-Balogun, *Rough Diamond* by Juliet/Emeka Etche, *100% Secrete* by Uchenna Mbunabo, *Ghana Must Go* by Yuvonne Okoro and *Iyore (The Return)* by Frank Rajah Arase, will be tested to determine if each film is either basically or remotely centered on the theme of a woman's career, her desire, need or attempt to enter into and fulfill this career; and the obstacles she encounters that allow or permanently debar her, from fulfilling these felt needs.

The sole career woman played by Tina Mba, was portrayed by default in study film five, *Tango With Me*. Already a successful career woman who was the boss in the establishment where Uzo is employed, she would have been a suitable role model if she was simply decent and offered help, advice and support in the event that her employee was embroiled in a family heartrending crisis - a function that she attempts to she tries to fulfill in the long run, after it had become too late. But no! Being that she has to be cast in a stereotypic mode of either sleeping her way up the career ladder, or of being a seductress boss/predator; she brazenly proceeds to take advantage of his moment of confusion and weakness to seduce him. This is neither a positive image for a captain of industry, nor a positive representation. In Table 11 of the study, 42.7% of respondents perceive that career women representations are "frequently very negative." Even though she is a captain of industry, yet her portrayal reduces her to the status of a mere sex symbol. Table 12 research findings by 21.3% identify such portrayals as "available sex object."

*Tango With Me*, has a pro-life thematic structure and has little or no relevance to the issues that bedevil career women. This is neither its central theme, nor are they addressed. It is not even as much as stated if the female protagonist played by Genevieve Nnaji is formally engaged in any labor force or entrepreneurial capacity. This lends credence to the assertion that there is a paucity of themes and storylines that actually present the career woman and issues pertinent to her life, positively.

The story of Mena (*Rough Diamond*), is a case in point. Granted that some of her issues have been presented, but the question is, how adequately? A woman as well as her male colleagues, would be equally under pressure to build a career. Conversely, quite unlike her male counterparts, she may not be able to afford all the years she

perceives she needs to build up that career, because her biological clock is ticking away. So, inevitably, well-meaning friends and relations would mount pressure on her to get married and start a family. Luckily, as in the case on Mena, she does find someone and gets married. The next obstacle course would be to bear children which sadly, Mena falls foul of, and now resorts to questionable criminal and deceptive means to obtain a child. But the question that arises is, 'should the responsibility of conceiving a baby have devolved solely on her, to the extent that her mother in law travels to her marital home to insult and ridicule her?' This is clearly a case of an abject lack of enlightenment on the part of the screenplay writers and script content/story line developers. Much as the Feminist Gender Theory states that "the primary purpose of the feminist movement is for greater equality; to fight for what should be regarded as right for either male or female," Elliot (1996, 4) takes it further: "the question is how to balance the emotional and practical demands of family members with their own needs and priorities."

In Table 12, 23% of respondents locate this Nollywood stereotypic filmic representation as being "scheming and manipulative." Being a wealthy woman, she could have simply fixated her mind on legitimately adopting a child and discussed the possibilities with her husband. But sadly no! A high class knowledgeable career woman who is well acquainted with the nuances of the law, sets out to acquire a child through dubious means, just so she can be labeled as "a scheming and manipulative career woman."

This is reminiscent of the Gender Framing theory. Gramsci's (1991) Concept of Hegemony, using the power of frames states how power holders maintain their status through diffusing meaning and value to subordinate groups. "This concept highlights how sources (*filmmakers in this context*), maintain power in the filmic space by imposing their personally perceived meaning and knowledge to the general public."

Though there are very few Nollywood films that depict career women issues, the depictions in three of the eight study films showcase several career denied women – Anyanwu in (*Ije, Journey of Life*), Lizzie in (*Guilty Pleasures*) and Susan in (*Mr and Mrs*); as victims and certainly not as role models and leaders. It is a sad fact of life that there will always be victims in society, but on the other hand the stories of career men (their male counterparts) are better balanced, necessarily as victors, and as very



occasional (if ever) victims. Gender Equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including especially economic participation and decision making. According to the United Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2001), “gender equality is not a woman’s issue, but should fully concern and engage men as well.”

Film six, *100% Secret* is set in a Nigerian cosmopolitan low income family. The issue of the desirability of a career perennially hovers in the background, but is never actually mentioned. *100% Secrete* does present a Nollywood prevalent representation of a completely incapacitated young woman who is devoid of a career and all its attendant benefits. The entire story is undergirded by the unspoken concept of a faithless unfeeling man who goes out on a limb to capitalize on her foolishness to truncate her education that would have built capacity in her and equipped her to handle life’s challenges. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents in Table 12 illustrate such portrayals as “passive victims.” She’s therefore left bereft of any personal resource, and is continually cringing on the fringe of life. Twelve percent of respondents in Table 12 identify this portrayal of “always dependent on others.” SONKE Gender Justice runs programs for multiple African countries to empower such women and girls, men and boys through community education, individual skills building, capacity building and training with partner organizations.

Film nine, *Ghana Must Go* does not profile any of the women in any career status, even of the female protagonist who is so highly read with an enviable string of internationally acquired degrees. This as such confirms the assertion that there is a paucity of themes that espouse career women issues and challenges. And so confirms the assertion that there is a paucity of themes that espouse career women issues. Quaintly, much emphasis is given to the bride’s father’s military career, even before he makes his first entrance. It mattered little though that the much talked about military career was already expired. *Ghana Must Go*, makes no mention of any of the female characters having a career.

Film ten, (*Iyore, The Return...*) tells the tale of a dynasty where rules and regulations that must be adhered to rigorously at all costs, strictly order the lives of its citizens. There is no mention of a female career, though the second female protagonist Osarugue (Rita Dominic) is briefly seen in the opening sequence teaching history to a

secondary school class. *Iyore (The Return...)* has no relevance whatsoever to career issues or its attendant benefits and shortfalls.

#### **4.6 Analysis of Content Criteria**

##### **4.6.1: Thematic Content**

The themes of all ten plays revolve around a protagonist female: Anyanwu in *Ije-The Journey of Life*, Lizzie in *Guilty Pleasures*, Adaeze in *Lionheart*, Isoken in *Isoken*, Mena in *Rough Diamond*, Susan in *Mr. and Mrs.*, Lola in *Tango With Me*, Anita in *100% Secrete*, Ama in *Ghana Must Go* and Iyore in *Iyore (The Return)*. Anyanwu, Lizzie and Susan find common ground in their crying desire to practice their chosen career which escalates into sheer desperation in the face of restraining and restrictive husbands, who would have none of it. Anita (*100% Secrete*) is also desperate for a career except that she had denied herself the privilege of being formally trained for any career, by prematurely saddling herself with breeding children. Mena (*Rough Diamond*), an already successful career woman and Lola (*Tango With Me*), are entangled in undesirable marital circumstances and the desire to bear a child, while Ama (*Ghana Must Go*), and Iyore (*Iyore, The Return*), are caught in the web of needing spousal approval from family who rather frowns upon their husbands in disapproval.

The situational ethics that undergirds most of the stories is the uppermost need for a woman to equip herself with requisite training for a career in life, so she will not have to be “always dependent on others,” as in the case of Anita in *100% Secrete*. This key factor would essentially arm any woman with a prerequisite for a balanced family/marital life. Another strongly underlined necessity, is the need for a woman to be allowed the freedom to exercise her inalienable fundamental human right to hold down a career job, within the ambits of a marital union, should she so desire. This inevitably would engender a desirable sense of fulfillment within her, as is displayed in contra distinction in the situational ethics of repressed Anyanwu in *Ije-The Journey*, Lizzie in *Mr & Mrs*, and Nse in *Guilty Pleasures*. The obvious underlying situational ethics and message of *100% Secrete* (as is made clear by Anita’s near

destitution), is for a woman to be wise and make sure to acquire a career first and foremost in life, before embarking on starting a family and rearing children.

#### **4.6.2 The Structure**

Some of the dramas are organized around a complex plot, with several sub plots and even sub themes encapsulated in flashbacks, while others such as *Lionheart*, *Isoken*, *Tango With Me*, *Rough Diamond*, *Ghana Must Go* and *100% Secrete*, have simple linear plots, although boasting mini subplots. *Guilty Pleasures* is particularly adept at the subtle weave-in of flash backs, that starts with a chance meeting of two women at the airport departure lounge. They get talking (which constitutes the entire narrative in flashbacks); only to discover they had each just suffered a most painful marital breakup. Also, *Ije*, (*The Journey of Life*) the complex plot is so beautifully structured that the viewer is carried along smoothly, as one piece of the story dovetails into another. The structuring of *Iyore* (*The Return*) is not quite as deft, as the generational issues of reincarnation and royalty get into a tangle, not to mention the near epileptic flash backs from between incarnation eras and migrations from city to rustic village.

The stories generally evolve from the nucleus family where all the conflicts are basically generated and ensue. These crises inevitably constitute major trauma for these female protagonists, as the situations revolve around a ‘make or break’ turn out. Anyanwu’s story in *Ije*, (*The Journey of Life*) is a classic example. Related mostly in beautifully sequenced flashbacks, she was forced to shoot her husband dead, as he made a gambling move to pimp her to other men on a regular basis through a game of cards. As such, she was incarcerated in a maximum security prison in the United States on a charge of murdering her husband. Her case seemed particularly hopeless in the face of a justice system that is sadly flawed with racial discrimination and petty prejudices. She faced the plausibility of being permanently incarcerated or being electrocuted to death in the electric chair.

On the one hand, her sister Chioma had to fight all the way, right from her immigration entry point. She encounters an extremely, unfriendly and unnecessarily harsh immigration as she disembarks from the Nigeria to United States bound flight. She subsequently had to battle cheating/pilfering Chinese landlords with overpriced rickety accommodation, New York street gangs, as well as highly racially biased and prejudiced law enforcement agents who were poised to incarcerate her also, should she fall foul of the law in her bid to help her sister.

Anyanwu in prison is having drugs planted on her to tempt her into taking the drugs to dull her pain, considering her dismal circumstances which was enough to put her in a depressed state. If she as much as took any of the drugs, it would be found in her blood system, thereby facilitating the prosecutor's case. They equally planted drugs in her home which Chioma pluckily disposed of by flushing them down the toilet, just before the law enforcement agents arrived. Even the solicitor Chioma eventually hired was having a Herculean struggle to be freed from being a mediocre lawyer, who has never won any case. In all the dramatic scenarios Anyanwu's (*Ije, The Journey*), Lizzie's (*Mr. & Mrs*) and Anita's (*100% Secrete*) marriages broke while Anita even almost became a vagrant.

#### **4.6.3 Setting**

All the drama settings are mostly cosmopolitan, except for frequent flashbacks to the village (rural setting) of Anyanwu's (*Ije*) childhood, was stylishly utilized to punctuate and color the narrative and provide sharp contrast in the setting of both cultures. The rustic culture in Nigeria was essentially peaceable and serene, in sharp contrast to New York City ghettos - a rough maze of greedy land lords who overcharged for pitiful, rat infested accommodation, and streets riddled with criminals, petty thieves and muggers. Contrarily, *Iyore, (The Return)* starts off in a very rustic ancient environment and culture, which transcends into the modern as the story unravels. *Guilty Pleasures, Rough Diamond, 100%Secrete, Ghana Must Go and Tango With Me* all have cosmopolitan settings. *Iyore (The Return)* makes a stab at the cosmopolitan setting of the 1970s at some point in the narrative flashbacks. Though a good attempt, it was not convincingly articulated as one could easily locate some loopholes and oversights such as in dress, hairdo, cars and house furniture.

#### **4.6.4 Characterization**

Interestingly, the protagonists in all ten dramatic pieces are all female. Of all ten, only three protagonists – Adaeze in *Lionheart*, Isoken in *Isoken* and Mena in *Rough Diamond* are career women. Ironically, Mena was so desperate to have a child to stabilize her late marriage, that she became reckless with her career and almost threw it overboard. *Tango with Me* is so enmeshed in the pathetic story of strongly principled protagonist Lola who was determined to keep her child conceived from the rape she suffered on her wedding night, which her husband would have none of. They both grapple with the prolife issue that confronts them, that threatened to break their nascent marriage. In sharp contrast, Iyore in (*Iyore, The Return*) does not seem to be so strongly principled as she migrates from one husband to another, purely on the sheer strength of persuasion from her paramour and a not too clear ‘reincarnation pull.’ Susan in *Mr. & Mrs* similarly, translates into a shrewd and clever but deft strategist and manipulator. Though she didn’t start off that way, her naiveté soon disappeared as her husband passed insults at her and frequently meted unfair treatment to her. This particular factor consists the thrill and exhilaration the drama supplies. She deftly swung from being the timid harassed and oppressed wife to being the sharp woman completely in charge of her own life, which left her husband totally flustered and unable to cope with the ‘new’ personality of his wife.

Of all ten dramatic personae, Lizzie (*Guilty Pleasures*), Mena (*Rough Diamond*), Anita (*100% Secrete*), Iyore (*Iyore The Return*) and Ama (*Ghana Must Go*) were mere victims who did or could do little or nothing to alter the circumstances that dictated their lives. However, Lola (*Tango With Me*) and especially Anyawu’s (*Ije*) situations were dire and fraught with possible long standing disastrous consequences, yet they displayed extreme gumption of character to take the bull by the horns and take life changing decisive action. Susan (*Mr & Mrs*) in a non-similar domestic scenario, blossoms from a timid and servile woman into a capable and effective crisis manager.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the study. It also highlights some recommendations that are of relevance to Nollywood filmmakers, government and non-governmental organizations and interest groups, and of course scholars who are desirous of pursuing studies in female dramatic representations and related gender issues. It locates experiments and filmmaking techniques that have been used with resounding success elsewhere that could be utilized and applied to making films that have relevance to its target audiences and as such can carry development messages.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The study has critically examined the perception of Nigerian career women of the dramatic representations and portrayals of the career woman, in Nollywood films. The study utilises several operational modus to focus on its aims and objectives; using two main hypotheses and three key research questions, coupled with the research methodology with which to test the hypothesis and the research questions.

Relevant literary works concerning this nascent burgeoning industry - the Nollywood film, are utilised in an empirical review, noting other considerations such as genre categorizations and the communication model that the Nollywood films should espouse; as well as television in its central role of being the main vehicle for the dissemination of Nollywood films.

The need for the proper encoding of film messages, so the viewer/end user receives only the intended set of impulses, and not a mish-mash of mangled ideas, is also spelt out, while the Hollywood and Bollywood paradigms are briefly examined, as well as

the all-important issue of ethical filmmaking and a brief examination of change agent films - the pro-social and enter-educate experiments that have been successfully made and are effectively being utilized to realize its set objectives.

Three research instruments - qualitative and quantitative survey, hypothesis testing and content analysis are adopted for the study. For the quantitative survey, the three research questions of the study were developed into a set of twenty-one questions using the purposive sampling technique to generate data from specific, study related respondents, which was meticulously analyzed. A set of three hypotheses was set forth as perception theories which were tested against the research findings.

For the qualitative analysis, ten Nollywood films were critically examined and analyzed against the backdrop of being or not being structured as change agent instruments, that have relevance to career women target audiences and as such, would positively influence their lives and capacitate a numerical increase in career women feminist oriented films. For analytical purposes, the ten study films were tested against the above criteria. Four of the films stood out in sharp contrast, and had no contribution or relevance whatsoever to the endemic issues of career women, though some of the films had a marital or workplace setting. Five out of the ten, were notably scripted by women and variously highlighted issues that are intrinsically critical to career women with a view to locating solutions. The sampling technique (quantitative survey) and the thrust of the study – to locate how career women perceive their representations in Nollywood films, required respondents to comprise solely of career women.

It was determined that there is indeed a scarcity of films that actually have a bearing to the pressing needs of the career woman in Nigeria. Also, that some of the career woman representations are offensive to career women, instead of being didactic change agents that carry development messages. The research findings also indicate that for the films to have any relevance to its society, films must be directed at specific target audiences.

## **5.2 Conclusion**



The research is centered on the paucity of career female portrayals in Nollywood films, the perceptions of career women about these representations and the need to increasingly present the career woman as well as her life aspirations in positively structured themes. Traditional stereotypic portrayals of career women still abound and career women generally, are offended at these unrealistic dramatic presentations, and strongly desire immediate positive change.

The findings of this study also show that very few films that address issues relevant to career women in Nigeria in terms of ratio, have been produced. Secondly, when career women issues are addressed, the themes and stories are so skewed and lopsided that they end up lacking any relevance to the very group of persons that the communication was originally intended to address; or even cause offense. It is perceived that more of the stories of career women in Nigeria need to be appropriately told, in order to have relevance to the intended target audience, carry development messages, and positively affect lives. As such the need for the acquisition of relevant skills by filmmakers for the proper encoding of messages in films, so that the viewer only receives the intended sets of responses is strongly emphasised. Further, the utilization of tested and proven filmic experiments such as enter-educate films that carry pro-social messages and where persons from the particular target audience group are active participants in the filmmaking process, ensures relevance.

A critical examination of the censors board (NFVCB) - the sole national film regulatory agency, reveals some measure of successful achievements in its almost 20 years of existence, marred by totally inefficient lopsidedness displayed in its inability/inadequacy, to effectively man its vast geographical spaces.

On a final note, the research was able to locate that within the past five years, a fresh crop of female writers/producers who produce feminist films have made incursions into the Nollywood filmmaking space, and are making films that have some relevance to the Nigerian career woman. There is hope in the horizon for more of these films that carry development messages to influence positive life change.

### **5.3 Contribution to Knowledge**

This study immensely contributes to knowledge by focusing attention on a significant but seemingly obscure segment of the Nigerian population, and brings the following factors to the fore as well as locating and recommending solutions.

- There is an acute paucity of studies on Nigerian career women. The study primarily locates and addresses the critical areas that hinge on career women's fundamental human rights that has hitherto been largely unsearched for critical examination and analysis.
- The absolutely unique and pervasive challenges that career women are relentlessly confronted with; of how to balance the emotional and practical demands of family members with career demands as well as their own needs and priorities is critically examined as the research clearly indicates and illustrates that the adept handling of this critical factor is vitally essential to the sustenance or breakup of the nucleus societal unit - the family. Sadly, incidences of the latter are pervasive in today's society.
- Current dominant career women portrayals are largely stereotypic, showing career women as available sex objects who are sufficiently desperate and fully prepared to unscrupulously sleep their way up their career ladder. It cannot be denied that some cases of this malady exists in contemporary society. However, in proportion to the entire percentage of all Nigerian career women, this vice will be quite miniscule. But painfully, frequently repeated, stereotypic negative presentations have made it out as the ugly norm, which is far from the truth. Most Nigerian career women have integrity, are hardworking, intelligent and honest, fit for leadership, as captains of industry.
- Further, such negative and stereotypic portrayals pose a lethal danger to the societal young female population at large, in that some impressionistic young girls and adolescents (as well as boys), who are avid viewers of Nollywood films, take in mostly all they see as the actual reality and the ultimate truth of life. Campbell (2003, 170) affirms this with the assertion that, "culturally, television dramas function as a window into the hopes and fears of the human psyche." The negative portrayals would shape their psyche to be prepared to adopt the "norm" they see, frequently displayed on television in Nollywood films.

- The construction of a dramatic piece frequently starts with the scripting or screenplay. A necessary requirement in the structuring of dramatic content, is that utmost care should be given to address it to a specific target audience grouping. A part of this research observation is that this essential paradigm has not been adhered to in career women portrayals in much of the utilized, selected Nollywood films. The study has located and advocates the application and utilization of the experimentally John Hopkins University tested and proven “Enter-Educate” drama scripting and construction models that applies the paradigms of working in tandem with a target audience sample, right through from inception. The processes and benefits that have the capability to make right many wrongs identified by the research, are elucidated in detail in Chapter 2, 2.11.7 segment of this work.
- The study also locates that a nascent crop of filmmakers (especially female), have embarked on making gender sensitive films that are desirous not only to career women, but to the generality of women and even girls as well.
- This research is one out of a little minority within a multiplicity of researches, in that it sets out to investigate, locate and critically examine the dispositions, feelings and perceptions of Nigerian career women, about their representations in Nollywood films. This factor in itself, is an immense addition to extant knowledge and has yielded much long desired results as well as generated multiple recommendations.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Nollywood films are popular and poignantly African because of the mixing of melodrama with homegrown indigenous peculiar-to-Nigeria-conflicts, which are strong cultural indices of the Nigerian society; closely linked to societal, financial, sexual and spiritual corruption. In deed Nollywood films, quite unlike their alien American, Indian and Chinese counterparts, are highly attractive to Nigerians (and Africans in general), for the simple reason that they espouse issues that are relevant to the lives of many a Nigerian. This albeit overwhelming advantage however, becomes an insidious shortcoming, if the very films that should be structured for relevance to Nigerians are dislocated at the fulcrum of their pivot, thus truncating completely, their *raison d’etre*! Jonathan Haynes a foremost researcher and scholar of the Nollywood

film industry posits that Nollywood films constitute an ineluctable avenue to tell the multiple but varied and variegated stories of Nigerians, and of Nigeria. But alas, some of the stories seem to be left out, albeit, not being appropriately told.

To avoid such anomalies, and misappropriated communication, after extensive evaluation and assessment, the study has come up with recommendations that are by no means completely exclusive, that would undoubtedly constitute effective target audience oriented relevant-to-lifestyle-communication.

- There is a need to sensitize filmmakers to recognize and be conscious of the fact that they have a social responsibility to their audiences. It is important that filmmakers begin to perceive their audiences as “master” and not as “servant.” Who is the filmmaker without her/his audience? According to Stephen Spielberg a highly successful and famous Hollywood filmmaker, “I always think of the audience when I’m directing.” It would amount to foolhardiness, for a manufacturer not to give proper and detailed attention to the desires and preferences of the end users of a product that he is manufacturing. Indeed, the symbiotic relationship between the audience and filmmakers must not only be sustained but carefully nurtured.
- The Imperative to Recognize that Films Should Have a Target Audience: Part of the pressing demands of the Nigerian film industry today is for the filmmakers to learn the technical processes of how to structure films that are relevant to and meet the requirements of specific target audiences, in a constantly evolving environment and fast changing world. It is only when a film is targeted at a specific audience grouping, that it can be effectively structured to be sufficiently relevant to address the peculiar needs of that group and carry development messages that would impact the audience group.
- The Need for Capacity Building: Nigerian filmmakers must come to the realization that all communication is goal driven, whether the goal is purposive or not. A person, who makes out time to watch a film, is being communicated to. What might not be quite as obvious is that much of communication could be quite subjective. That is, the receiver grasps what is being communicated alongside other perceptions that the initial communication triggers. The latter comes from the viewer’s bundle of

previous experiences and scholarship. There is therefore an emergent dire need for capacity building on the part of Nollywood filmmakers. The capacity building needed for the filmmakers today is the urgent need to learn the technical processes of how to structure films that are relevant to the demands, yearnings and aspirations of the specific target audience of a film.

- The Need for the sponsorship of career female centered intervention films using successful experiments such Enter-Educate and pro-social model films: To sustain the audience of tomorrow, we have to know who they are, what their problems are, as well as the challenges, prospects and opportunities open to them. The time of producing films that merely entertain, has gradually given way to more dynamic and purposeful focus, the world over. Enter-Educate films just like its pro-social paradigm, are being used today as an effective communication tool for almost all communication development messages.
- More females should purposefully, be sponsored by government in compliance with United Nations stipulated gender equality policies; into the Nigerian Legislatures. There is an urgent need for Nigeria to be at par with other African countries such as the (the Kenyan parliament that has for instance, tackled issues of inheritance, especially of landed property that perpetually ties females to poverty;
- Educating men (and women) for gender Justice is an immediate imperative. For example, the high successes of a gender justice based NGO - SONKE in South Africa and their tested intervention modes and strategies should be adopted and extended to all local governments, in collaboration with the relevant NGO's and governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Women Affairs.
- Gender Equity studies should be made compulsory subjects through relevant legislation, at the secondary and tertiary levels of education.
- The Need for Continuous Governmental Interventions: The Nigerian government must express an unflinching commitment and a strong political will to be continuously involved in financing and sanitizing the Nigerian film

industry. The “Project Nollywood” interventions of 2006, 2010, and 2013, (wikipedia.org) under the Jonathan Goodluck administration are laudable initiatives. The bane of governance in Nigeria is the discontinuation of positive policies when a change of guard occurs. Obviously, the present government seems to be unaware of the potentials of the film industry as a very potent socio- political, and economic tool. This extremely potent tool must not be left to the mercy of “all comers,” as seems to presently be the case. Myriad issues bedevil the fledgling industry, such as the monster of piracy, which cry for bolder governmental intervention. Until such issues are better articulately addressed, large budget movies may yet be elusive in the near future.

- The National Film and Video Censor’s Board must place gender issues on its front burner, and promptly legislate accordingly, as part of its gender policy. The present NFCVB Act (1993), as a legislative instrument, makes no mention whatsoever of feminist issues and is completely devoid of a gender policy. This is anomalous in a country that is signatory to the United Nations Gender Policy Act, and must be rectified immediately.
- Collaborations with NGO’s and Interest Groups: Some Non- Governmental Organizations and some interest groups have from time to time forayed into film making to serve their specific goals. For instance, the African base organization against rape of women, (VOW) has sponsored the multiple award winning film *Ije (The Journey of Life)*. This is an evergreen film that would always be relevant to the issues of rape. There have been previous collaborations that decry dehumanizing cultural practices such as ugly widowhood rites and female genital mutilation. More of these should be encouraged.
- The Need to Implement the Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Policies: The United Nations resolutions on gender mainstreaming should stop being mere clauses that are confined to a paper document. This research recommends that the Ministry of Women Affairs takes on the responsibility of providing enlightenment for life change to Nigerian audiences through packaging gender relevant Nollywood films, of which career women issues must not be left out.

The tendency to focus on only the seemingly poor and brutally marginalized of society when it comes to gender issues must be changed. Whoever suffers, does suffer and has an inalienable right for her/his grievances to be addressed, whether rich or poor, high or low class. Closely allied, research findings in Benin City, Ibiam (2010) indicate that even media organizations (private and governmental) acknowledge they have no gender policy, or are even aware of its existence. Of all the institutions (media organizations inclusive), covered by the research, only the Nigeria Police public relations office, had knowledge of a gender policy being in place in their organization.

- Individuals and women groups should also become media monitors and protest offensive filmic representations of the career women. Perhaps, the only such notable such occurrence was in the early 2000's when the Association of Nigerian Female Lawyers threatened to sue MTN (a South Africa owned Nigeria based prominent telecom company), if an offensive sexist advert is not withdrawn. MTN promptly complied by editing and amending the offensive part of the advert. Various female associations such as the National Association of Media Women (NAMW), and the Nigerian Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) to name a few, should constitute a vanguard to watch media portrayals and promptly protest if need be; as well as to proffer desirable options.
- Nigerian career women therefore need to embark on an intellectual/media sustained battle for the media (especially filmmakers), to focus more on positively portraying the achievements of the Nigerian career women and increasingly represent career women in proactive dynamic roles as leaders and captains of industry. No doubt Nigeria has representatives in international agencies such as the Global Monitoring Media Project (GMMP) and the UNESCO sponsored Global Forum on Media and Gender (GFMG). A slightly similar case scenario in point is the Hollywood consistent portrayals of a black president of the United States of America in various feature films, many years before it actually happened.
- The Need for Ongoing Research: It is also recommended that further research be carried out periodically, to assess how much of a dynamic positive shift (if

any) has occurred in career women Nollywood representations. More so, this modest attempt covers only a limited area of the country. It is therefore necessary to conduct a more encompassing Nollywood audience/viewership research that covers other parts of the country. The Ministry of Women Affairs in collaboration with competent international organizations/researchers are suitable to undertake and supervise this type of wider study for a better understanding and assessment of the crucial place and critical developmental role of career women in Nigeria. These supervising ministries should link up active representatives as participants in international forums such as the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). The IAMCR, is the leading worldwide professional organization in the field of media and communication research. Its members promote global inclusiveness and excellence within the best traditions of critical research in the field. Above all, it represents an international community of scholars who focus on media and communication research. IAMCR is pleased to work with UNESCO and other organizations around the world as part of the Global Forum on Media and Gender (GFMG).



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## APPENDIX

### RESEARCH QUESTIONIAREPART ONE: DEMOGRAPHICS

**(Please tick as appropriate)**

**1. Sex:**

- (a) Female
- (b) Male

**2. Age:**

- (a) 20-30 years,
- (b) 30-40 years,
- (c) 40-50 years,
- (d) Over 50 years

**3. Marital Status:** (a) Married (b) Single(c) Others

**4. Religion:**

- (a) Christian
- (b) Muslim
- (c) Other

**5. Academic Background:**

- (a) PhD or Masters Degree,
- (b) First Degree or HND,
- (c) Diploma/OND,
- (d) Other (please specify)

**6. Occupation:**

- (a) Civil Servant
- (b) Private Sector
- (c) Business
- (d) Para (Military)
- (e) Others

**7. Present employment level /previous (if retired):**

- (a) Senior Management cadre,
- (b) Middle Management,

- (c) Non-Managerial cadre
- (d) Other (please specify)

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE: PART TWO**

### **Table 8**

Do you like Nollywood films?

- (a) Yes (b) No

### **Table 9**

Would you say Nollywood films are popular with Nigerian women?

- (a) Yes (b) No

### **Table 10**

In your experience, are there many films that you have watched that portray the career woman, especially as role models (people one can look up to) and decision makers?

- (a) Only a few (b) A lot (c) None at all

### **Table 11**

In the video films that you have watched, are the dramatic representations of the career woman frequently negative or positive?

- (a) Very negative (b) Positive (c) Negative (d) Very positive

### **Table 12**

Would you describe some of these frequent representations as:

- (a) Passive victim
- (b) Available sexual object
- (c) Scheming and very manipulative
- (d) Always dependent on other people
- (e) Motherly and/or domestic

### **Table 13**

On many occasions, how did you feel after having watched Nollywood filmic portrayals of the Nigerian career female?

- (a) Angry
- (b) Happy
- (c) Hopeless/ frustrated (wishing there was something you could do to make a change)
- (d) Hopeful (determined to make a change/ hopeful that in future someone else would)

- (e) None of the above

**Table 14**

What qualities you would prefer to be highlighted in the representation of career women in Nollywood films?

- (a) Role models and leaders-political, professional, employer of workforce
- (b) Intelligent, kind and not bossy
- (c) Tackle issues that are peculiar to her, head on
- (d) Of benefit to her larger community

**Table 15**

In your own experience, what are the challenges that a career woman is likely to encounter in the course of pursuing her career over the years?

- (a) Time management: Balancing time between career and her family
- (b) Self improvement needs against the backdrop of family demands
- (c) Personal health and issues of child bearing and rearing
- (d) Sexual harassment in the workplace; expected to be sexually available

**Table 16**

Are some of the actual challenges a career woman encounters in the course of pursuing her career over the years being highlighted/reflected in Nollywood film representations?

- (a) Never
- (b) Sometimes
- (c) Rarely

**Table 17**

Have you learnt any lessons from watching depictions of the career woman in Nigerian films?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

**Table 18**

Have you watched a Nigerian film in the company of other women, or discussed a film you have both watched at different times?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

**Table 19**

Have you watched a Nollywood film in the company of other men, (such as male family members) or discussed a film with them?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

**Table 20**



Have you had divergent views from men, such that you ended up disagreeing and arguing about the representations?

- (a) Yes (b) No

**Table 21**

In your experience, do you find that educated women (such as you) tend to see these depictions from a similar perspective?

- (a) Yes (b) No

**Table 22**

What are the common responses in other groups of women and men about frequent dramatic feminine representations in Nigerian films?

- (a) That is how life is...reality
- (b) That's the way things are; cannot be changed
- (c) Women are very wicked, deceptive and cannot be trusted
- (d) A woman's place is in the kitchen...
- (e) Women should be submissive...

**Table 23**

What factors contribute to other people having the above perceptions and interpretations?

- (a) Religion
- (b) Male dominance and influence
- (c) Ethnicity/culture
- (d) Age
- (e) Low educational status

**Table 24**

In your own experience, would these societal influences elicit similar interpretations across board among highly educated and not-so-well educated women?

- (a) Yes (b) No

**Table 25**

With regard to ethics, do you consider that the duty of moviemakers; is to only mirror society exactly as it is?

- (a) Yes (b) No

**Table 26**

Should plots be structured to proffer positive, feminine role models who could be leaders of society?

- (a) Yes (b) No

**Table 27**

What have you been impressed with or what has impacted you personally from the Nollywood films you have watched so far?

- (a) Most of the film makers are men who do not really understand a woman's heart and mind
- (b) The film makers do not conduct any/or sufficient research
- (c) The film makers are already biased and merely want to tell their own story, strictly from their own perspective
- (d) The film makers are not interested in reshaping or influencing societal perspectives, but merely want to make a lot of money

**Table 28**

In the past few years, some female filmmakers have come on board the Nigerian film industry and have made films that espouse some issues that are critical to career women. Would you much rather view such films?

- (a) Yes (b) No