

Research Article

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Ideology, Power and Gender Representation in two Selected Nollywood Movies

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Abstract: This paper examines the discursive representation of power distribution between men (as husbands) and women (as wives) in Nollywood movies to unravel the ideological resource(s) against which such power is vested. Gender representation in Nollywood movies is imbued with ideologies that index differential power relations between men and women within the family circle. The bone of contention remains the distribution of power between men and women, with a tendency to always

see women as victimized and sidelined social actors. Movie producers either sustain or subvert these ideological propensities. From this perspective, this paper examines the role of ideology in power distribution between men (as husbands) and women (as wives) within the marriage institution in an attempt to answer the following questions. What resource (s) is/are depicted as power resource(s) in Nollywood movies? Through what discursive means are these ideological propensities sustained or subverted in the two selected movies? As a follow-up to these questions, this paper hypothesized that wealth/money is ideologically tantamount to power within the family unit. Nollywood filmmakers use discursive linguistic and non-linguistic strategies to sustain this ideology. The analysis demonstrates that wealth is represented as a power resource, a representation that engenders unwarranted pursuit for wealth/money to wield power. The representation and understanding of women's domestic roles, sex roles, and other related political roles as marginal rather than complementary have tended to create resistance resulting in miscommunication and unnecessary tensions.

Keywords – Discourse, Gender, Ideology, Power, Representation, Stereotypes

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Declaration of the International Women's Day in 1975 and successive conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995 on the theme "Equality, Development and Peace" gradually transformed discourses on gender. The outcome of this development was the birth and proliferation of feminist movements and scholars drawn from across academia, civil society, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to champion and advocate for the recognition of women's role in development against the backdrop that women have been sidelined hitherto (Omotola, 2007). This has been made more complex with the emergence of technology that has reduced the world into a Global village (Okeke & Iloh, 2020; Chukwuere, 2020). The core of this advocacy is that there is an unnecessary prejudice in men's and women's

locations in every aspect. In fact, it is the firm belief of the feminist movements that women's role in development be mainstreamed into academic discourse as well as national policy and decision making. As these movements grew in steam over the years, women have gradually experienced considerable improvement in their economic, social and political status. The mainstreaming of gender issues into media discourse and political discourse shows considerable bias in representation. Negative images of poverty, domestic violence, and trauma have been feminized (Taylor & Stewart, 1992; Tenuche, 2011). The tendency to consider women as a "weaker" sex in media discourse and academic discourse gradually culminated in a dramatic twist as the struggle up the economic, social, and political rank is progressively changing power relations. Since the "powerless" nature of the woman has been linked to limited access to resources which translate power, the woman is now rapidly asserting and reclaiming this position given that she has access to those resources (Shaka & Ola, 2012; Akinmameji, 2016; Onyenakeya, Onyenakeya & Osunkunle, 2019).

From this premise, this paper argues that such a stereotypical depiction of women in media discourse, academic discourse, and in political texts has, if not, is gradually leading to futile attempts and struggle to overpower. This scenario creates "new men" with new power, leading to domestic violence with men as victims when resources that index power is in these women's hands. In fact, women who make up half of the world's population have contributed to human development and have been agents of positive change following their noble role within the family unit and society (Omotola, 2007). Unfortunately, feminist movements and critics tend to ignore these as noble complementary roles and see these roles as marginal, thereby creating an unnecessary urge in women. It is the conviction, and this paper submits that women have and continue to play complementary roles and that marginalization and patriarchy as represented in mainstream discourse have not been domesticated appropriately. Using two selected Nigerian (Nollywood) movies, this paper intends to contribute in this regard by submitting that filmmakers are gradually becoming conscious of the injurious nature of the failure to adapt feminism appropriately. Nollywood provides us with a medium through which we can (re) define gender discourses in relation to power and ideology to avoid unnecessary and futile encounters.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stereotypes about the roles and positions assigned to men and or women as husbands and or wives have ideological undertones. The distribution of power between men (as husbands) and women (as wives) remains a challenge in the African context. The tendency is to see women as playing marginal roles rather than complementary roles, depicted as resulting from their lack of access to resources in which power is ideologically vested. The tendency among gender/feminist scholars has been to see women as victims and powerless in gender studies in association with lack of wealth and other power indexicals, including education and political status. In fact, gender representation is often associated with women's marginalization. One of the ways through which these discursive social practices are manufactured, sustained, and or subverted is through the film medium. While there is enormous research on gender stereotyping in Nollywood films, little attention has been paid to the role ideology plays in fashioning out these stereotypes as women gradually climb the economic, social, and political ladder in relation to power distribution. Therefore, feminist scholars, especially radical feminism, remains a major challenge in the African society that requires continuous scholarly research.

2.1. Objectives of the study

The current paper seeks to analyze:

- a. The resources depicted as indexing power in the films under study and to
- b. Investigate the discursive ways through which these ideologies are sustained or subverted in the films.

2.2. Research questions

- a. Which resource(s) is/are ideologically constructed as a power resource, and how does ideology (re) shape power relations between men (as husband) and women (as wives?) in the movie understudy?
- b. Through what discursive means are these ideological propensities sustained or subverted in the movie's understudy?

2.3. Research hypotheses

- a. The construction of power relations between men and women in African movies in which wealth, social and political status are power indexes has culminated in unnecessary/futile struggle by women to assert and wield power over the men. Power, therefore, remains an ideological construct in Nollywood movies with an unfair representation in terms of gender.
- b. Nollywood filmmakers continue to produce contents that sustain these ideological propensities: women are "good" wives when they lack access to wealth depicted as a power resource.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Multimodal Discourse Analysis-MDA informs this paper in order to establish a connection between ideology, power, and gender stereotyping in Nollywood movies. Multimodal Discourse Analysis propounded by O'Halloran (2004) and Buckland (2000) helps in analyzing the language used in the selected movies (both verbal and visual). This theory helps in analyzing representational choices as invested with ideology propagated in the two movies in relation to gender and power. Multimodal Discourse Analysis is chosen because it combines both oral and visual elements into its analysis in order to study the films/movies as ideological objects (Blau, 2017). The ways in which certain discursive social practices are represented in movies convey widely held ideologies about them. In this way the distribution of power resources between men (as husbands) and women (as wives) reflect ideologies about gender and power relations. The cinematic representation of these social practices serves either as ideology (de) legitimization (Kress & Leeuwen, 1996).

Multimodal Discourse Analysis is used to analyze how the verbal language used in the movies express unequal power relations between the actors and how this ideology is reinforced by other visual communicative modes such as postures and hedging. To this effect, this theory helps in identifying power resources and how such a resource is discursively invested with vertical power between men and women in the movies (Kress & Leeuwen, 1996; O'Halloran, Tan, Smith & Podlasov, 2011; Onuzulike, 2018). Verbal and visual interactions between actors in the movies are interpreted as communicative modes within which ideologies about power resources are invested.

In Critical Discourse Studies-CDS, within which MDA is just one approach, a power which is referred to as social power is understood as the amount of control or influence enjoyed and wielded by certain individuals over others (Van Dijk, 2015). Based on the resources used to exercise any form of social power, different social actors wield power over others in different contexts. In feminist criticism, the tendency has been to see women as victimized participants, especially within the marriage institution, due to their lack of access to resources used to exercise such power as wealth and social status. However, the study of power in CDS is not a top-down affair but is rather a top-down and bottom-up investigation wherein CDS analysts take an interest not only in unraveling how power is (ab) used by the dominant or powerful groups but also in how much power (ab) use is discursively resisted, accepted, condoned or legitimized through talk and texts (Van Dijk, 2015). Since different powerful groups are embedded with different types of social power which are constrained by different resources, such power may be integrated into different social practices against which society or other groups are expected to act. The relationship between language (discourse) and power is one in which power is embedded and conveyed through discourse as language indexes and expresses power, and where there is contention over power and or challenge to power, language is involved (Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2016; Nawaz, Bilal, Kalsoom, Fayyaz & Nayyar, 2013; Van Dijk,

2017). Therefore, this paper examines the discursive relationship between ideology and power in the Nollywood representation of the family unit.

4. SYNOPSIS OF THE TWO MOVIES

4.1. SYNOPSIS OF WHEN A WIFE IS THE BREAD WINNER BY EKENE EGWE UDO (2017)

This movie presents an uneasy marriage relationship between Eric and his wife caused by the Eric's joblessness and the wife's wealthy and lucrative job. Eric (husband) is a jobless young guy, however, a University graduate. The wife is lucky to work and earn a good salary with which she is able to afford a comfortable flat in which she lives with her husband (Eric), their only son (Junior), and her sister (Juliette). Besides being compelled to carry out all domestic chores and taking Junior to school and back, Eric is subjected to all sorts of verbal and physical abuse from the wife and Juliette due to his joblessness. Juliette takes pleasure in her sister's wealth and sees no reason to be involved in any kind of domestic chores whatsoever while the jobless Eric is there for that, and in so doing, she gets her sister's endorsement. This gives her the audacity to talk to and behave in ways that dishonor the sister's husband. Eric, however, halfheartedly, disregards this behavior of hers in much the same way he helplessly submits to the overbearing wife.

One day Eric coincidentally comes across one Mr. Martin while he goes to the supermarket to buy a few items for the house. Mr. Martin had once worked with Eric's late father as a secretary when Eric was still a little boy and the positive and healthy working relationship between him and Mr. Martin left an unforgettable imprint in him. When Mr. Martin became a rich businessman, he had always wanted to compensate his late boss's generosity by assisting any of his family members but could not locate any of them. Meeting Eric presents an opportunity for him to fulfill this wish that was long overdue, especially after he learns that Eric is jobless though a graduate from the University. He offers a managerial position to him in one of his companies with a salary of 400,000N, a service car, and a flat to live in. With this, Eric assumes his position as a "husband" and can dare talk back and reject to carry out the domestic chores he has been hitherto carrying out reluctantly. However, he does not share the story of his newfound glory (job) with the wife and sister-in-law. He can no longer bear the arrogance of his sister-in-law (Juliette), who fails to see that her brother-in-law has metamorphosed suddenly. She continues with her arrogance with pushes Eric to slap her when she refuses to greet Eric and the friend who is discussing in the living room as she walks in. This is unacceptable to Eric's wife, who retaliates and Eric equally, for the first time, beats her. As a result, he is thrown out of the house, and the sister (Juliette) who cannot bear it any longer, leaves and rushes to meet her fiancé-Brian.

Meanwhile, Eric's wife gradually loses her job and becomes jobless, and the atmosphere around her is unbearable due to loneliness. She gradually realizes the mistake she made and this pushes her to follow the husband and plead with him for forgiveness and to take her back. Eric does not hesitate to take back his wife though, on the condition that she is coming in with nothing of hers into their new flat. She reconciles with Eric and her mother-in-law and they live in harmony afterward as she assumes her role as a "wife" and carry out all domestic chores. Juliette on the other hand who moves in to live with Brian finally packs out to join the sister in her husband's house when she is beaten and driven by Brian for her disrespect and arrogance. She is, however, sent back by Eric and the wife to go and reconcile with Brian.

4.2. SYNOPSIS OF AFRICAN BRIDE BY CHIMA OKOROJI (2018)

African Bride, like *When a Wife is the Bread Winner*, recounts an uneasy marriage relationship between Pascal and Aduku caused by Aduku's pride resulting from her wealthy family status. Pascal is a young gentleman who owns and manages a small business while his wife (Aduku) owns a very big business established for her by her wealthy father. They live in a conspicuous and sumptuous storey building given to them by Aduku's father as their wedding gift, including a car on their wedding day. Before then, Pascal had a very small car that he and his fiancé

had been managing. This wedding gift is unfortunately, the source of their misfortune as it caused them to live in animosity thereafter. Adugu gradually becomes arrogant and overbearing and always claims the gift was given to her by her father and she has full control over the house and the car. Pascal is subjected to all sorts of verbal and physical aggression both in and out of their home. Adugu's pride and egocentric character is nourished by her mother who encourages her to "protect" her house and car given to her by the father.

Her love for wealth and pride push her into the hands of a confident man who will dupe her on the guise of introducing her into a line of business. The luxurious lifestyle of this young man feeds Adugu's pride and ego as she sees her husband not as her equal. The husband is constantly abused because he cannot afford a good and sumptuous car like the one her father gave them as a wedding gift and which she has claimed total ownership. Adugu blindly accepts the proposal of the confident man to introduce her into his line of business and in the process, he starts making advances towards her. Her husband starts suspecting their dealings but Adugu keeps ignoring his warnings as she claims "he is not her kind of man". The exchange of love related messages between him and Adugu pushes Pascal to beat Adugu mercilessly. When her mother learns of this she immediately invites some men who come to their home and retaliate by equally beating Pascal. The helpless Pascal is abandoned to himself in a pool of blood. Fortunately, his friend (Raphael) rushes in and takes him to the hospital. When he returns from the hospital, his father-in-law ordered his arrest, though as a corrective measure. While he was in the cell, his mother-in-law locks their house, and when Pascal is released on bail by his friend, he goes and lives with his friend (Raphael).

Encouraged by her mother and friend Adugu accepts and starts having an affair with this confident man, who in turn pressurizes her to file a divorce against Pascal so that they could get married and travel out. Carried away, Adugu accepts and blindly gives him twenty million Naira to deposit in his account for their Visas to be approved. He collects the money and disappears while advising Adugu in a text message to go back to her husband. Reading this message she collapses and within the same time the divorce is granted, signed and delivered to Pascal. Within this time, Pascal has become a multi-millionaire businessman initiated into importation of cars by his friend, Raphael who ships cars from abroad and he sells in Nigeria. When Adugu regains consciousness, she struggles in vain to annul the divorce process. Faced with this harsh reality, she decides to plead for forgiveness from Pascal but Pascal would not listen to her and even to her parents. Due to frustration, she decides to commit suicide and drinks poison. While in the hospital, Pascal is informed and he rushes and pleads with her telling her he has forgiven her but it was rather too late. Adugu dies in the hospital in the presence of her husband and the whole family.

5. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This paper analyzes the ideological representation of power and gender within the family unit in Nollywood movies. Two movies, *When a Wife is the Bread Winner* and *African Bride* produced in 2017 and 2018 respectively, were intentionally selected for the study as the thematic issues portrayed in the two movies are congruent with the topic and the timeframe within which they are produced equally makes these thematic concerns current. In order to attempt a connection between ideology and power in gender stereotyping, a qualitative research design was chosen and utilized. The design permitted the researcher to carefully watch the movies and examine the thematic concerns through content analysis, which included linguistic and non-linguistic elements such as hedges, tone, and postures.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Power resource(s) in constructed in the films

This section considers the resource(s) that index power and against which there is the struggle for and overpower in gender discourse as represented in *When a Wife is the Bread Winner* and *African Bride*. As Omotola (2007)

postulates, power is central in understanding gender discourse and at the heart of gender politics. In gender discourse, power or the struggle to wield it remains the struggle to have access to and control those resources in which such power is ideologically endowed. The continuous depiction of women within the family circles as “powerless” due to their lack of access to and control over power resources has produced a new wave of feminist known as an extreme feminist who, in their quest for empowerment, see men as “domineering” and as the “source of their misfortune”. Given that wealth and education are represented as power resources in gender discourse/feminism, gender scholars who advocate for gender equality have promoted this ideology that “wealth/money and education are power resources”. So, women who have access to and control over these resources can wield power, while men who are deprived of them are equally deprived of power. Money as an index of power has been a widely held and represented ideology in gender discourse in Nollywood movies producing and depicting “poor”, “powerless” and “helpless” women as wives compelled and confined by wealthy men as husbands to carry out boring domestic chores and to fulfill their sexual desires. The tendency is to portray women in marital homes as servants who basically lack a voice in decision-making (Alzahrani, 2016; Ugondo & Adikpo, 2016; Ibbi, 2017).

Wealth as a power resource in the two films

The gradual, if not rapid, improvement in women's economic and social status in contemporary society in which we now have self-employed women in marital homes with jobless husbands has begun shifting gender relations in terms of power. In fact, men are seen as “head of the family” with all its connotations when they have those resources against which such discourse is anchored. In *When a Wife is the Bread Winner*, Eric (husband) is depicted in the first part of the movie as a voiceless and compelled-to-be-submissive husband due to his lack of a job. His dependence on his employed wife leaves him with no choice but to succumb to her over-demanding nature. This is seen in this discussion between Eric and Donald:

Eric: I..I..I am sorry, really sorry for what happened in there....

Donald: I Understand. I am a man like you, so I understand everything. You see, I have a whole lot of friends who got married to rich and enhh worthy class of ladies who had worst experience than what you are passing through...let me tell you something, once you make money you have the respect and you have love but when there is no money you lose it all. Certainly, you are dead...wake up from your slumber and when you make money all these insults will come to an end...when you control money everything will change...(44:54-46:47).

The above discussion follows a humiliating scene in which Eric's wife sends him and his friend out of the living room when she returns from work with her friend and finds the husband seated in the living room as depicted in the images below.



Image one (43: 20)



Image two (44: 04)



Image three (44: 09)



Image four (44: 14)

The four images above, taken from *When a Wife is the Bread Winner* depict a humiliating scene in which Eric and the friend are ordered by Eric's wife not only to leave the living room but asks the husband to clear the table and serve them drinks. Image one projects the furious and over-confident wife staring at the bewildered husband as depicted in images three and four. Image two portrays the bewildered husband who tries to explain who the friend is to the wife, who continuously and furiously glares at them, while in image three, her thumb pointing at the door behind her shows her ordering the husband and friend to leave. Donald's posture in image three shows him already walking out and Eric the following suit before he is called back by the wife to clear the table and serve them drinks as depicted in image four wherein we find the wife pointing at the stool on which there is a bottle of wine and glasses. In all four images, the wife's posture shows an authoritative woman with all confidence in contrast to the dominant husband, as shown by his feeble temperament. The gaze in images three and four depict power and powerlessness, respectively. The forward gaze of the wife depicts power while the backward gaze of the husband which is reinforced by the posture of his hands in both images, depict powerlessness.

The money/wealth as a power-resource discourse is reinforced in the movie by Eric's wife and her sister in different scenes where they evoke Eric's joblessness as the reason for his powerlessness. In the discussion between Nnina and Juliette the latter makes the former understand that Eric (her sister's husband) does not deserve her respect because he does not work. She says, "...can you imagine that since he got married to my sister he has never worked in his whole life?...if he can't work if he can't earn money he needs to get himself busy in this house..." (19: 02). This is equally evoked in the discussion between Eric and her wife in the dialogue below.

Eric: Where is your car?

Wife: It developed a fault...take the key, go and see what you can do and bring it back home.

Eric: Enhhh...why don't you just keep ehth there...it's safe there, the car is safe...

Wife: Eric...I have always known that you are a daft but I never knew you were also a fool. I should leave my official car there? That car cost four million Naira. Anyway, I don't blame you. You have never worked nor made money so you don't know the worth...

Eric: If it's so expensive why don't you get a mechanic to fix it?...

Wife: What do you do for me in this house? What do you contribute? I salve and work for you every day, yet you don't show any gratitude... (23: 41-24:39).

The above scene legitimizes the ideology that "money/wealth is a power resource in gender relations as far as the family unit is concerned. The distribution of power relations between men (as husbands) and women (as wives) as represented in Nollywood movies is ideological depending on the party who has access to and control over this power resource.

This ideological propensity is also held and sustained in *African Bride* where money/wealth is equally depicted as the main power resource within the family unit. Men (as husbands) who lack access to this resource are portrayed as grudgingly docile. The uneasy marriage relationship between Pascal and Adugu is caused by Adugu's wealthy nature. Pascal is subjected to domestic verbal and physical violence perpetrated by his wife

(Adugu) who refuses to show any iota of respect towards him due to his relatively “poor” condition. In the scene below this is depicted through her tone of voice, action and choice of words.

Pascal: ...why can't you even have a single respect for your husband?

Adugu: eh...ehh...you? Husband!! If you are ready to watch the movie with me go upstairs and sleep.

Pascal: let me have that remote control.

Adugu: Pascal...Pascal, if you hand comes close to me, if you hand touches me you are going to tell me if you contributed to buy this TV.

Pascal: Is that what you are saying?

Adugu: do I have water in my mouth?

Pascal: Ok.

Adugu: always carrying your shoulders up. You don't have anything, you can't afford anything yet you are carrying your shoulders up. You come and make noise in my house. (37: 45-39:12).

The above scene depicts a husband who is the subject of abuse in the hands of his wife as result of the wife's affluence which places her in a position of control and power over the husband. The “poor” husband who loses grip over the overbearing and domineering wife goes through psychological and physical trauma. The observation is that men (as husbands) are represented as victims of domestic violence (both verbal and physical) in the hands of women (as wives) when the former is deprived of material wealth and the latter blessed with such wealth. Such a representation underpins widely held ideologies about power relations in gender discourse about the family unit. Women (as wives) begin nurturing the desire to exert power over their husbands when those resources in which power is vested (wealth) are entirely in their hands. The images below depict scenes where Adugu abuses and challenges her husband who lacks control over such material wealth that she commands.



Image one (36: 06)



Image two (38: 29)



Image three (1: 08: 50)



Image four (1: 10: 41)

The four images above taken from *African Bride* portray instances in the movie where Pascal (Husband) is openly abused or challenges by Adugu (wife), who claims Pascal cannot afford “anything” but wishes to wield power, a move she cannot tolerate. In image one, power is indicated by her glaring eyes, her head posture, and her right handset fix on the table, while the husband's helplessness is shown by his head posture lowered as though to avoid eye contact. This is reinforced in image two, where her wide-open eyes stares directly into Pascal's face with her

left hand, sounding a warning to the husbands whose mouth that is left ajar shows bewilderment. In images, three and four, her postures show her exercising power over the husband, who is both perplexed and helpless.

This ideological predisposition is equally sustained in both movies when both husbands gain access to wealth as their wives lose control over this resource leading to a radical shift in power relations between them. The husbands' sudden access to wealth lifts them above their wives. In *When a Wife is the Bread Winner* Eric's wife only realizes that she has been arrogant to her husband when she loses her job and is compelled to live alone while the husband gets a white-collar job. Her decision to plead with her husband to forgive her is motivated by her joblessness. She is obliged to accept to carry out domestic chores in their new home, which now is depicted as an "ideal" home where the wife is "subordinated" without money. The husband on the other hand assumes full control of the home due to his control over money.

In like manner, this is equally evident in *African Bride* as Adugu's futile attempt to annul the divorce case filed against Pascal comes when she is duped. Realizing that she has lost everything and that Pascal has suddenly grown in business, she decides to beg for forgiveness. However, this turns out to be fruitless as the divorce was already duly signed and Pascal would accept her back, compelling her to commit suicide. In both cases, as depicted in the images below, we find wives who are ready to be submissive in as much as they have no access to money/wealth.



Image one (1: 35: 05)



Image two (1: 35: 47)



Image three (1: 41: 42)



Image four (3: 47: 49)



Image five (3: 47: 51)



Image six (4: 11: 11)

The first three images are taken from *When a Wife is the Bread Winner*, and the last three taken from *African Bride* depicting a rapid change in power paradigm in both movies. In the first two images, Eric's wife is portrayed as being taken aback upon noticing the sumptuous house in which her husband lives while image three shows her seated and taking instructions from the husband on how they are to live thenceforth. Images four and five depict self-confidence and shock, respectively. Pascal, who has risen above the poverty line and now commands wealth/affluence, proudly stares at his wife as he alights from his gorgeous car and accidentally comes face to face with Adugu (his wife), who is flabbergasted in seeing the husband drive such a gorgeous car. The mood in her face as seen in image five both convey shock and yearning. Her craving for reconciliation with her husband is indicated in image six, where she kneels down and pleads for forgiveness after being duped. Her lack of money pushes her to realize her mistakes and seeks to reconcile with her husband. In all the images taken from both movies, we notice women who now crave for reconciliation ready to be submissive to their husbands as they lose control over money which is represented as a power resource in both movies with respect to the family unit. This ideology is reechoed in *When a Wife is the Bread Winner* by Donald where he posits that "...you make money and you have power and you have authority..."

7. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This paper sought to investigate the representational power distribution between men as husbands and women as wives in two selected Nollywood movies to unravel how ideologies shape the relationship between men and women within the family circle. Through Critical Discourse Analysis as a theoretical framework that informed methodological tools applied in the analysis, this paper offers a new dimension of investigating gender-based ideologies in film production. This, however, does not suggest that this is the pioneer paper in this direction, but it contributes to the literature within the domain with novel material that demonstrates the relevance of the problem in contemporary society. Therefore, this study hopes to inspire more research into the domain of gender representation in film, especially within the family unit, to challenge Eurocentric ideologies.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper set out to investigate the gender stereotyping phenomenon in two selected Nollywood movies with respect to ideology and power within the family unit against the backdrop that power relations/distribution between men as husbands and women as wives is discursively depicted as dependent on affluence/wealth. The ideological predisposition that wealth within the family unit is tantamount to power as portrayed in Nollywood movies remains a challenge in gender relations. It engenders conflicts or domestic violence, both verbal and physical. Omotala (2007) attested that feminist movements saw the limelight in the late 1970s and proliferated thereafter following the declaration of the year 1975 as the “International Women’s Year” by the United Nations. As a result, many aspects of human society changed and have continued to be a subject of debate within academia, especially the distribution of power between men and women. The tendency has been to feminize poverty, education and to represent women as victims of unwarranted discrimination. In fact, studies in gender-related issues are almost always linked to the “fight for equality” between men and women. While this paper advocates “equal opportunities for all,” it, however, holds the view that the distribution of power between men and women within the family unit as represented in gender studies is somehow misleading.

Representing women as “powerless” and passive when they are wives due to their lack of access to the power resource (wealth) remains the most challenging ideology in gender stereotyping, which has led to an uneasy understanding between men and women. The modern woman who now controls wealth tends to see no reason to be submissive talk less of performing domestic chores. This paper holds the view that this stems from the discursive construction of power as dependent on wealth. The resultant effect has been to feed the desire in women to rise and wield such power when they attain economic progress. This ideological propensity which is held and propagated through Nollywood movies needs much to be desired in much the same way gender studies are to be reconsidered and decolonized to give an African perspective. The roles assigned to men (as husbands) and women (as wives) are to be understood as complementary rather than been discriminatory at the expense of the feminine gender. Therefore, African movies stand out as one of such media through which such ideological predispositions could be redefined, spread, and or subverted to critically appraise the gender stereotyping phenomenon in the 21st-century African context. Unfortunately, filmmakers continue to produce contents that seek to sustain the ideology that power distribution between men and women within the family unit is based on wealth/money. To this effect, it will be worthwhile for filmmakers to properly engage their audiences with content that considers the realities of the African context to foster intercultural communication.

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