

ETHICALISSUES,STEREOTYPES,ANDNOLLYWOODFILMPRODUCTIONINNIGERIA

BY

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UNIVERSITYOFBENIN,

BENINCITY.

JANUARY,2025

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**DEPARTMENTOFMASSCOMMUNICATION,
FACULTYOFARTS,
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TION,FACULTYOFARTS,UNIVERSITYOFBENIN,BENINCITY,EDOSTATE.INPARTI
ALFULFILMENTOF THEREQUIREMENTS FORTHEAWARDOFBACHELOROFART
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JANUARY,2025

DECLARATION

This project is based on a study undertaken by me, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts under the supervision of Dr Collins Kediehor

All ideas are the products of my personal research where the views of others were used, they were duly acknowledged.

ART2000715

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty for his guidance, strength and wisdom during the period of this study and my dearest parents Mr Babs Muhammad Ogienagbon and Mrs Stella Babs Ogienagbon.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was written and submitted by Faith Ogu, Matriculation Number: A RT2000715 to the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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Head of Department

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

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ABSTRACT

The study is focused on the Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to examine the ethical issues prevalent in Nollywood film production, to identify common stereotypes in Nollywood films and their potential impact on viewers, to explore the implications of these stereotypes on social perceptions within Nigeria and to recommend ethical guidelines to address these issues and improve film production in Nollywood. In terms of the theoretical framework, the Social Responsibility theory was adopted, while the research methodology employed was the survey research method. Questionnaire was used by the researcher to gather data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that there are concerns among Nollywood viewers regarding the prevalence of stereotypes in films and the influence these films have on shaping attitudes and behaviors, most especially among young viewers. The findings also showed that gender, ethnic stereotypes and mental health are prevalent issues in Nollywood films. It was therefore concluded that there are ethical issues and negative stereotypes in Nigerian films and that Nollywood films play a significant role in shaping its audience perceptions. The researcher recommended that Nollywood filmmakers adopt ethical guidelines to ensure the portrayal of diverse, realistic, and positive characters. It was also recommended that the Film Census Board should take an active role in monitoring films.

Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The Nigeria's film industry, commonly known as Nollywood is one of the largest in the world which produces thousands of films annually. Its popularity has grown both within Nigeria and globally, as it captures different themes and narratives reflective of Nigerian culture, values, and social dynamics. Today, Nollywood has become an avenue for entertainment and also a powerful medium that shapes perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors among its audience. However, alongside its growth, concerns have been raised regarding the ethical implications of certain narratives, especially those that perpetuate harmful stereotypes, (Haynes, 2016).

According to Okome (2011), Nollywood is the name for Nigeria's film industry, widely recognized worldwide for its ability to engage audiences from different backgrounds. With over 300 films produced each year, Nollywood is one of Africa's most profitable film industries. Okome explains that the term "Nollywood" was first introduced in the early 2000s, originating from a New York Times article. Journalist Norimitsu Onishi is credited with coining the term in 2002 after noticing a rise in filmmaking activity in Lagos, Nigeria. The Nashville Film Institute (2021) notes that Nollywood films highlight many aspects of social life that resonate not only in Nigeria or Africa but also around the world. These movies have managed to attract viewers from various cultures. Kirby (2023) adds that Nigerian films provide a platform for promoting unity, sharing viewpoints, and encouraging discussions about their themes. Nollywood movies span genres like drama, comedy, romance, action, and thriller, addressing topics like mental health, emotional well-

being, healthcare, and societal issues. As a result, Nollywood has gained the admiration of both African and international audiences.

Lippmann (2022) asserts that one prominent ethical issue in the film industry is the tendency to depict stereotypical portrayals of some ethnic groups, social classes, and genders. Stereotypes, as defined by Lippmann, are oversimplified ideas or prejudices about a group, which lead to biased representations that distort reality. Ethnic stereotypes in Nollywood depict certain tribes in Nigeria in several ways and reinforce generalizations that do not reflect the complexities of these communities. Such portrayals can fuel ethnic tensions and misrepresentations, furthering divisions within Nigerian society. The industry's emphasis on themes, such as witchcraft, crime, and the supernatural, has raised questions about how these elements contribute to the reinforcement of negative stereotypes.

Akashoro et al. (2010) pinpoint that gender stereotypes in Nollywood are very common with female characters frequently relegated to roles that emphasize traditional gender norms. Women in Nollywood films are often depicted as submissive, domestic, or in need of male rescue, which reinforces outdated views of gender roles. These films promote gender norms that limit female characters' agency or portray them in a manner that emphasizes submissiveness, beauty, or victimhood. Akashoro et al. highlight that the potential consequences of these depictions may limit societal views on the role of women in both professional and personal capacities. The portrayal of women as primarily suited for domestic roles can hinder progress toward gender equality in Nigeria.

Agba (2012) holds that ethical concerns extend beyond stereotypes and into the working conditions within the Nollywood industry. Issues related to labour practices, copyright infringement, and poor remuneration are also prevalent and this has also raised questions about the treatment of actors, crew, and producers.

duction teams. For instance, filmmakers often face budgetary constraints, which sometimes result in rushed production schedules and substandard working conditions. These issues impact the quality of film production and raise ethical concerns about fair labour practices. Uchegbu (2019) aver that Nollywood's influence on young Nigerians is significant as many viewers draw inspiration and values from the characters and stories portrayed. With youth as a substantial part of its audience, the industry has a responsibility to promote messages that inspire and educate. However, when harmful stereotypes or unethical practices are depicted or known, this influence may have adverse effects. The normalization of violence, gender discrimination, or negative ethnic portrayals may impact viewers' perceptions and behaviors, most especially among younger audiences whom may lack the critical thinking skills to question these portrayals.

In response to these concerns, some filmmakers and critics have argued for the need of ethical guidelines and policies in Nollywood. According to Uchegbu (2019), implementing ethical standards in film production can ensure that films do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or exploit actors and crew members. Such guidelines would encourage the industry to promote positive representations that align with Nigeria's diverse and multicultural society. Notably, the importance of Nollywood as a cultural force is undeniable, but the need to address its ethical shortcomings is equally pressing. Films have the potential to break down stereotypes and promote inclusivity; however, without a conscious effort to adopt ethical practices, the industry risks reinforcing existing societal divides.

There is no gainsaying that as the global audience for Nollywood expands, so does the industry's influence. It therefore becomes pertinent to investigate Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

While Nollywood has advanced the Nigerian film industry and created a platform for African narratives, there are ongoing concerns about ethical issues in the industry, most especially regarding stereotypes. The portrayal of certain ethnic groups, genders, and social classes in stereotypical ways contributes to misunderstandings, bias, and even discrimination among audiences. Such representations have implications for the Nigerian society and also for international perceptions of Nigeria and Africa.

Also, ethical concerns about the working conditions within Nollywood seem to remain unresolved. As described by Uchegbu (2019) reports of low wages, poor working conditions, and copyright infringement issues are common in the industry and this has affected the livelihood of many in the workforce. These issues highlight the need for better labour practices and fair compensation to ensure that those involved in the production process are respected and valued. Furthermore, with the increased global reach of Nollywood, there is a pressing need for ethical frameworks to guide its content. The absence of structured ethical guidelines leaves the industry vulnerable to practices that may reinforce stereotypes and exploit its workforce. This research, therefore, seeks to explore the ethical challenges facing Nollywood, examine the stereotypes prevalent in its films, and suggest measures to create a more ethical and inclusive film industry.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. To examine the ethical issues prevalent in Nollywood film production.
2. To identify common stereotypes in Nollywood films and their potential impacts on viewers.

3. To explore the implications of these stereotypes on social perceptions within Nigeria.

4. To recommend ethical guidelines to address these issues and improve film production in Nollywood.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the ethical issues prevalent in Nollywood film production?

2. What are the common stereotypes in Nollywood films and their potential impacts on viewers?

3. What are the implications of these stereotypes on social perceptions within Nigeria?

4. What ethical guidelines can be used to address these issues and improve film production in Nollywood.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the ethical issues surrounding stereotypes and labor practices in Nollywood film production in the Nigerian society. It would examine the types of stereotypes portrayed, their impacts on societal perceptions, and the working conditions in the industry. To better explore the variables of the study, the scope will be delimited to residents of Benin city, Edo State and Asaba, Delta State. Benin city and Asaba were chosen as the scope of the study on the basis of prominence. They are among the fastest developing States in the South-

South region, with a large population of Nollywood film lovers. This population would be appropriate to extract data for the study.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This research is significant as it will contribute to the growing body of literature on Nollywood and its role in shaping Nigerian society and culture. It would be of great importance to regulatory agencies, such as the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), because it will help them better understand the ethical challenges in Nollywood film production. It will identify how films portray stereotypes and aid regulatory bodies to develop more effective guidelines for film content. These guidelines will ensure that films produced in Nigeria do not reinforce harmful or misleading stereotypes about different ethnic, gender, or social groups.

For civil society groups, this research will be significant because it will highlight how Nollywood films can influence public perception and shape social attitudes. Stereotypes in films can contribute to societal divisions and prejudice. By understanding the ethical issues surrounding film production, civil society groups can advocate for better representation of minority groups and encourage filmmakers to produce content that promotes social harmony. The study can also help these organizations push for more inclusive film policies and hold the media accountable for harmful portrayals. The findings from this study will also be relevant to producers and directors in Nollywood. The research will give them a clearer understanding of how their films can impact audiences, especially regarding cultural stereotypes. The study will also encourage producers and directors to think about their social responsibility and consider how films can contribute to building a more inclusive society.

For the media, this research will provide valuable insights into how films are an important tool for shaping societal views. Media outlets usually promote and broadcast films to large audiences, influencing public opinion. By addressing the ethical issues related to stereotypes in Nollywood, the media can play a critical

cal role in educating the public on the negative effects of stereotyping. This study will encourage the media to support films that promote positive messages and discourage the spread of harmful stereotypes.

In the broader academic context, this study will contribute to the fields of film studies, media studies, and cultural studies. It will provide a detailed analysis of how ethical issues and stereotypes affect film production and how these factors influence societal values. Researchers in these fields can use the findings to further explore the relationship between media, culture, and ethics. The study will also inspire future research on how films, as part of popular culture, shape national identity and social behaviours. Finally, for students and academics, this research will serve as a valuable resource in understanding the connection between ethics, film production, and societal impact. It can be used in various courses related to media studies, film production, cultural studies, and social sciences. Students can learn how films are more than just entertainment; they are also powerful tools for influencing ideas and attitudes. Academics can use the study as a foundation for further research on how media content affects social norms and cultural understanding, helping to create more responsible and thoughtful film productions in the future.

1.7. Operational Definition of Terms

The terms are defined according to context of use:

Ethical Issue: This includes challenges related to stereotypes, labor practices, and the representation of various groups in Nollywood films.

Nollywood Film Production: This is the processes involved in the creation of films within the Nigerian film industry, popularly referred to as Nollywood. This includes activities such as scripting, d

irecting,acting,anddistribution,aswellastheworkingconditionsandcompensationofthoseinvolved.

Stereotypes:Itincludesoversimplifiedorgeneralizedbeliefsaboutaparticulargrouporclassofpeople,oftenleadingtobiasedorinaccuraterepresentations.InNollywood,stereotypesmay pertaintoethnicity,gender,orsocialclass,influencingaudienceperceptionsofcertaingroups.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines the concepts, related literatures, past studies and theories associated with the present study:

- Conceptualization of Nollywood
- Concept of Stereotype
- Concept of Ethics
- Ethical Issues in Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria
- Stereotypical issues in Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria
- Impact of Ethical and Stereotype issues in Nollywood Film Production
- Empirical Review
- Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptualization of the Nigeria Movie Industry

MasterClass (2023) explains that the Nigerian film industry, known as "Nollywood," got its name from early video equipment called "Nolly," short for "Nigeria" or "National Optical Lens." In its beginnings, Nollywood was known for its basic, do-it-yourself video production style. Today, the industry has advanced, with many studios in Lagos equipped

dwithmoderntechnology.MostNollywoodfilmsaremadebyNigerianartistsandfilmmakersandarepopularinNigeriaandnearbycountries.

Agba(2014)emphasizesthatNollywoodmoviesarenotjustentertainmentbutalsoserveasanessentialpartofNigeria'sculturalidentityandhavemadeasignificantimpactworldwide.Asthesecond-largestfilmindustrygloballyintermsofoutput,Nollywoodproducesalargenumberoffilmseachyear,whichreachaudiencesbothwithinNigeriaandbeyond.Thesemoviescoverdifferentgenres,includingdrama,comedy,romance,action,andthriller.Bytouchingondiversesubjects,theyprovideviewerswithhistoriesthatshowcaseNigeria'suniqueculturalheritageandsocietalvalues.AgbaalsomaintainsthatthethemesinNollywoodfilmsusuallyfocusoncommon,relatableissueslikefamily,romanticrelationships,politics,andreligiousbeliefs.Theyalsoaddressmorechallengingtopics,suchascrimeandsocialissues,reflectingthecomplexitiesandconcernsofNigeriansociety.ThisvarietyingenresandthemesallowsNollywoodfilmstoappealtoawideaudience,includingpeoplefromothercountrieswhogaininsightintoNigerianculturethroughthesefilms.

Asemah(2019)furthernoteesthatNollywood'sgrowthandpopularityarecloselytiedtoitsdistinctiveproductionstyle.Unlikeothermajorfilmindustries,Nollywoodoperatesonrelativelysmallbudgets,whichhasledfilmmakerstoworkefficientlyandcreatively.Theindustry'squickturnaroundonmovieproductionhasallowedittogrowrapidly,producingmanyfilmseachyear.AnotherkeyfactorinNollywood'ssuccessisitsgrassrootsdistributionmethods,whichenablemoviestoreachaudienceseasilyandaffordably.ThisapproachhashelpedNollywoodfilmsspreadacrossNigeriaandintointernationalmarkets,wheretheyareappreciatedbyviewersfromvariousbackgrounds.

Okome(2011) aversthatNollywood'ssuccesscomesfromitsportrayalofsocialissuesanddailylife,engagingwithculturalanxietiesinwaysothermediahavenot.Itbringsattentiontopoliticalthemesandprovidescitydwellerswithasenseofidentity.OkomedescribesNigerianfilmsasaformofexpressionwithsocialmeaningthatdeservesseriousattention.IndustryexpertsestimatethatNollywoodproducesoverfourhundredfilmseachyear,highlightingitsimportanceglobally.SomeofNollywood'smostpopulartitlesincludeLivinginBondage,RattleSnake,OsofiainLondon,EndTime,andIsakaba.Nwachukwu(2017)observesthatNollywoodreflectstheeffectsofglobalization,usingaffordabletechnologyforproductionandblendingculturalinfluences.NollywoodhasbecomeamajorartforminNigeriawhichincorporateselementsliketraditionalimagery,ritualisticlanguage,music,dance,metaphors,proverbs,myths,andpoetry.

Haynes(2018)statethatNollywoodfilmsarecreatedforboththeaterandhomeviewing,oftenrunninguptosixhoursandreleasedintwoorthreepartseveryfewmonths.Haynespointsoutthattheterm"Nollywood"masksthe diversityofNigerianfilms,similartohow"Bollywood"overshadowsthevarietyofIndiancinemabeyondHindi,likeTamilandBengalifilms.InregionslikeGhana,Nollywoodisverypopular,yetmanyareunawarethatNigerianfilmsarealsomadeinYoruba,Hausa,Igbo,andEfiklanguages.EvenasNollywoodexpandsglobally,mostofitsprofitsareunevenlydistributed.NigerianfilmsarebroadcastonTVinNamibia,soldonstreetsinKenya,translatedbyinterpretersinCongo,andrecognizedbyaudiencesfromNewYorktoLondon.

2.2.AnOverviewofStereotype

Purdy(2005)describesstereotypesascommonbutoftenunsubstantiatedbeliefsaboutdifferencesbetweengroupsofpeople.Theseideasareacceptedbymanyastruebutgenerallylackanyfactualbasis.St

ereotype tend to label certain traits, roles, or abilities as being "naturally" more suited to one group than another. This kind of thinking can limit individuals' potential, as it may prevent them from exploring different interests or pursuing goals outside of what society expects of them. In essence, stereotypes create boundaries that can restrict personal growth and discourage people from fully developing their unique talents, skills, or perspectives.

Ewang (2018) emphasizes stereotypes usually lead to harmful and oversimplified portrayals of different groups. Through these portrayals, some groups are depicted as inherently strong, powerful, or competent, while others are labeled as weak, inferior, or less capable. This dichotomy reinforces inequality, as certain groups may be unfairly favored or undervalued based on these perceptions. Stereotypes, in this way, cannot only affect how people see themselves but also influence how they are treated by others, potentially leading to discrimination or exclusion in various areas of life, from professional settings to personal relationships. Claire Johnston, a prominent advocate in social issues, explains that stereotypes play a significant role in shaping patterns of behavior and interaction. According to Johnston, stereotypes establish certain norms and expectations that shape how individuals view one another and themselves. These ingrained beliefs influence social interactions and can lead to misunderstandings, biases, and even conflicts between groups. Because stereotypes are often deeply embedded in culture, they can be difficult to challenge and may persist over generations. They may continue to impact perceptions and behaviors in ways that limit understanding and inclusivity.

Agba (2012) observes that stereotyping is common in society and is rooted in the idea that some groups are naturally better suited for particular roles or possess certain traits. This perspective can restrict individual potential and create unrealistic expectations, making it harder for people to break out of these limits.

ations. Although there are ongoing efforts to shift from outdated stereotypes, narrow and negative portrayals remain, particularly in media. Stereotypes can place unfair expectations on individuals, pressuring them to either conform or resist societal norms, which can lead to stress, anxiety, risky behaviors, or a reduced sense of self-worth. Additionally, stereotypes may lead to unequal treatment in essential services, such as healthcare or financial services, creating disadvantages for certain groups.

Asemah (2021) points out that in Nigeria, stereotyping is heavily influenced by traditional societal beliefs, which assign specific roles to different groups. These traditional views lead to divisions in key areas like decision-making, education, and career paths. For instance, certain groups may be expected to take on specific roles at home, in the workplace, or in the community, while other roles are seen as less suitable for them. This unequal setup makes it difficult for people to access the same opportunities and resources, like education and jobs, which are essential for personal and professional growth. When resources such as quality education or well-paying jobs are mainly given to specific groups, it reinforces stereotypes and limits what other groups feel they can achieve. This unequal distribution of resources ultimately widens the gap, making it harder for individuals to break away from predefined roles.

Madsen (2000) further explains that those who are perceived as less powerful or capable tend to be marginalized due to stereotypes that are deeply rooted in societal norms. These norms shape people's view on who should do what, often leading to unfair treatment of those not fitting into these traditional roles. To overcome this, individuals need to redefine their identities in a way that is independent of these social

tal expectations. In other words, they should start seeing themselves beyond the limitations society places on them, developing a sense of self that isn't limited by stereotypical roles. By encouraging a balance between various perspectives and fostering more inclusive views, individuals can establish a new identity that isn't confined to traditional expectations. This can help them feel more confident and valued, building independence and a strong sense of self-worth that isn't tied to restrictive stereotypes.

2.3. Concept of Ethics

According to Obaze (2012) Ethics can be understood as the careful study of principles that help us distinguish between right and wrong or good and bad actions. It is rooted in moral thinking. The term "ethics" comes from the Greek word "ethos," meaning character, while "morals" is derived from the Latin "moralis," which refers to customs or manners. Ethics is essentially about the choices we make in how we behave, using societal norms and standards to guide us.

Okunna, as cited by Asemah (2019), describes ethics as a branch of morality—a field of knowledge focused on what is considered good or bad behavior within a society. In this sense, ethics serves as a system of rules or principles for deciding right from wrong. This means that ethics is about more than just following rules; it's about understanding and valuing the reasons behind those rules to guide human conduct in a positive way. According to Nwabueze (2015), ethics involves a set of guiding principles or codes that individuals or groups voluntarily choose to follow in their personal or professional lives. This includes making decisions to do good because it is inherently right, and avoiding bad actions because they are wrong. Essentially, ethics is about behaving in a way that aligns with correct values and responsible conduct, whether in everyday life or in a professional setting.

Lorenz and Vivian (1995) highlight four key ethical principles developed by philosophers that help us understand what it means to act correctly:

1. Golden Mean: Proposed by Aristotle, this principle encourages finding a balanced approach between extremes. For example, instead of reacting too strongly or too passively in a situation, one might choose a moderate, reasoned response.

2. Categorical Imperative: Immanuel Kant introduced this idea, which suggests that one should act only in ways that they would want everyone else to act. In other words, we should consistently do what we believe is right.

3. Utilitarianism: Developed by Jeremy Bentham and later expanded by John Stuart Mill, this principle suggests that actions should be evaluated based on what brings the most good to the greatest number of people. It's about considering the broader impact of our actions.

4. Golden Rule: Also known as the Judeo-Christian ethic, this principle suggests treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves. It's about empathy and mutual respect in interactions.

These ethical guidelines provide a foundation for discussions about right and wrong. However, it's important not to misuse them to justify harmful actions or to avoid doing what is right. For instance, a reporter might feel compelled to tell the truth due to Kant's Categorical Imperative, which stresses honesty. However, ethical judgment is still required to decide when sharing certain details—like the real name or photograph of a teen rape victim—

might cause more harm than good. In this case, respecting the dignity and privacy of the victim would be more ethically sound.

Notably, ethics is about using these principles thoughtfully to make fair, respectful, and morally sound choices, balancing the rules with an understanding of the real-world impact they may have on individuals and society as a whole.

2.4. Ethical Issues in Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria

According to Agba (2014) ethical issues in Nollywood film production often revolve around concerns related to representation, cultural sensitivity, portrayal of violence, and the influence of media on viewers, especially the youth. In simple terms, these issues involve making decisions about what is appropriate or respectful to show, how different groups of people are represented, and understanding the potential effects of these films on society. As described by the author, Nollywood films are frequently criticized for enforcing stereotypes, especially regarding gender, ethnicity, and cultural backgrounds. Nollywood has sometimes been guilty of depicting certain groups or characters in one-dimensional ways, which reinforced negative stereotypes. This can affect viewers' perceptions and promote misunderstanding or biases within society.

Asemah (2019) states that many Nollywood films contain scenes of violence, crime, and even rituals, which could negatively influence viewers, most especially younger audiences. Asemah notes that young people are highly impressionable and they can be swayed easily by what they see. Films with violent or criminal behavior, when not accompanied by clear moral consequences, can create the ethical dilemma of glorifying such actions instead of condemning them. This lack of moral clarity can lead to a misunderstanding of the seriousness of these actions, with viewers possibly seeing them as acceptable or even admirable.

ble behaviors. When violence or crime is depicted without showing the negative repercussions that typically follow such actions in real life, it risks sending the wrong message. For example, a character might engage in harmful behaviors like theft, assault, or deceit, and while these actions may be central to the plot, they might not face any real punishment or consequences. Instead, they might even achieve their goals or come out on top. Such portrayals could lead to the normalization of unethical behavior, making it seem as though crime and violence are viable solutions to problems. This creates an ethical concern for filmmakers, as they have a responsibility to consider the potential long-term effects these portrayals might have on their audience, especially when it comes to shaping the attitudes and values of impressionable young minds.

That aside, it is a known fact that Nollywood films frequently explore themes deeply rooted in family, religion, and societal values, areas that are highly sensitive in many cultures. These topics are essential for understanding the social fabric of a community, and when portrayed thoughtfully, they can resonate with audiences on a profound level. However, if not handled with care, these films can unintentionally disrespect or misrepresent cultural and religious beliefs, leading to backlash or offense. For instance, a film that deals with family dynamics or religious practices might unintentionally challenge long-standing traditions or portray them in a way that alienates viewers who hold these beliefs dear. This can create tension, as audiences may feel their values are being undermined or misrepresented for the sake of entertainment, (Okome, 2011).

Ekwuazi (2008) argues that Nollywood holds important power in shaping cultural perceptions, and this power comes with a responsibility to approach sensitive topics with respect and understanding. The way these themes are represented can either reinforce positive cultural values or perpetuate stereotypes and

dmisconceptions. Nollywood filmmakers, being at the forefront of the entertainment industry in Nigeria, have the potential to influence public opinion and shape how viewers understand issues related to family, religion, and societal norms. For this reason, it's crucial that filmmakers consider the ethical implications of their film choices and ensure that their films do not inadvertently perpetuate harmful stereotypes or disrespect established cultural and religious practices.

Filmmakers have a responsibility to strike a balance between creative freedom and cultural sensitivity. While artistic expression and creative storytelling are essential to the film industry, they must not come at the expense of respect for the values and traditions of diverse audiences. A film that portrays a family in a way that contradicts cultural norms might provoke anger, as it can be seen as an attack on the integrity of the family unit. Similarly, films that challenge religious beliefs without offering a thoughtful, respectful perspective might offend religious communities. The responsibility lies with filmmakers to ensure that their portrayal of these sensitive topics is not only accurate but also considerate of the beliefs and traditions that define the identity of their viewers.

Another ethical concern in Nollywood is the frequent use of low-budget productions, which sometimes lead to compromised content quality. Moreover, copyright infringement and piracy are rampant issues, impacting both the filmmakers and the broader industry. As Nwabueze (2015) points out, respecting intellectual property rights and producing high-quality content are not only professional standards but also ethical obligations to both creators and audiences.

2.6. Stereotypical issues in Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria

Stereotypical portrayals are a common issue in Nollywood, as they often limit the depth and diversity of narratives presented. According to Ewang (2018), one notable area is gender roles and stereotypes, where women are typically shown as homemakers, caregivers, or dependent on men. Male characters, in contrast, are depicted as strong, authoritative, and independent. These portrayals reinforce traditional gender expectations, restricting how women are seen and sometimes discouraging viewers from envisioning women in non-traditional roles. As pointed out by Ewang (2018), such portrayals contribute to situations where women are viewed as inferior, which can influence societal attitudes and expectations about gender roles and the opportunities available to each gender.

Another recurring stereotype is related to witchcraft and superstition in Nollywood movies. These themes are frequently associated with rural life or familial conflict and play into the idea that Nigerians are deeply connected to superstitious beliefs. Agba (2014) notes that while such themes may appeal to certain audiences, they also risk cementing views of Nigerian communities as irrational or overly reliant on spiritual practices. This stereotype can foster external misinterpretations of Nigerian culture, as it emphasizes outdated superstitious elements over modern or diverse aspects of Nigerian life. Asemah (2019) maintains that ethnic stereotyping is also prevalent in Nollywood, where some ethnic groups are portrayed with particular characteristics. These portrayals can sometimes exaggerate or misrepresent traits, leading viewers to form generalized or biased assumptions about certain ethnic communities. For instance, some groups might be stereotyped as aggressive and money-driven. Okunna (1995) argues that these portrayals could undermine social unity by perpetuating ethnic misunderstandings and fueling prejudices. For Nollywood to play a constructive role in promoting national unity, it is essential that filmmakers avoid perpetuating these ethnic stereotypes.

Hing and Starmaski (2015) posit that materialism is another theme frequently emphasized, with many Nollywood films focusing on wealth and luxury as desirable goals. The characters prioritize financial success and sometimes take unethical shortcuts to achieve it. This can contribute to a stereotype that Nigerians are overly materialistic. Free Press Limited (2021) argues that emphasis on wealth can create unrealistic aspirations, especially for young viewers, whom they begin to equate success solely with material acquisition. While financial success is a common goal, Nollywood's repeated focus on wealth risks fostering materialism and disregarding other values, such as integrity or community service.

Additionally, Lorraine (2017) maintained that in terms of national development, Nollywood films usually depict a stark contrast between urban and rural life. Urban settings are shown as modern, progressive, and desirable, while rural life is depicted as backward, superstitious, and impoverished. Lorraine argues that such portrayals reinforce stereotypes that rural communities are less valuable or unimportant. This divide can negatively impact perceptions of rural areas, foster urban bias, and contribute to the view that life in rural communities is somehow inferior, which may influence migration patterns and attitudes toward rural development. That aside, wealthy and powerful characters are frequently villainized in Nollywood, with many plots portraying them as corrupt or morally flawed. This approach can promote a simplistic view of wealth and power, indicating that wealth inherently leads to unethical behavior. According to Nwabueze (2015), these narratives present a binary view of society, often casting the wealthy as antagonists and the less privileged as virtuous underdogs. While these portrayals served dramatic purposes, they overlook the nuanced realities of wealth and power, potentially encouraging negative views of successful individuals and creating unrealistic social divisions.

Lastly, Nollywood romanticizes relationships, and presents idealized but problematic views of romance. Relationships are depicted with high levels of conflict, jealousy, and even possessiveness, which are sometimes shown as signs of deep love. Ewang (2018) points out that these portrayals can create unrealistic expectations for viewers, particularly when possessiveness or jealousy is shown as positive. This can influence how audiences perceive real-life relationships, potentially normalizing unhealthy behaviors and shaping how individuals respond to issues of trust and respect in relationships.

2.7. Impact of Ethical and Stereotype Issues in Nollywood Film Production

The ethical and stereotype issues in Nollywood film production have a major impact on both the industry and its audience. These issues influence how films are received by the public and the effects on societal values, perceptions, and behaviors. According to Sofia (2018) Nollywood films often feature scenes of violence and crime that can influence young and impressionable audiences. Without clear consequences or condemnation for these behaviors, films can inadvertently glorify actions like violence and crime. This creates an ethical dilemma, as young viewers might internalize these behaviors as acceptable or even admirable. For example, if a film portrays a criminal character who succeeds without facing repercussions, it can send the message that crime pays, leading some individuals to adopt similar attitudes or behaviors in real life.

Akashoro, Abuya and Omoruyi (2010) contend that Nollywood films sometimes tackle controversial issues like gender roles, family dynamics, and social hierarchies in ways that may conflict with societal norms. This can lead to negative reactions from viewers who feel that these films are disrespectful to their cultural or religious values. Films that misrepresent or trivialize sensitive topics can cause divisions within

ociety, leading to criticism and even boycotts from audiences who feel their beliefs and traditions are being attacked. As Ekwuazi (2008) points out, Nollywood has the power to shape cultural perceptions, and filmmakers must be mindful of how their portrayals of family, religion, and social norms can either reinforce or challenge those perceptions.

Furthermore, stereotypes in Nollywood films can lead to the oversimplification and misrepresentation of various groups in terms of gender, class, and ethnicity. Female characters in Nollywood films are usually depicted in stereotypical roles as either helpless victims or overly sexualized figures, while men are typically portrayed as dominant and powerful. These depictions can contribute to the reinforcement of harmful societal norms, where individuals feel pressured to conform to unrealistic expectations based on their gender or social status. Stereotyping in this way limits the potential for diverse representation, where individuals are allowed to express a full range of behaviors, personalities, and roles, (International Media Support, 2020). Additionally, such portrayals can also influence how audiences perceive people outside of the media. For example, if certain ethnic or regional groups are consistently shown in a negative light in Nollywood films, it can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and foster prejudice. This can lead to real-world discrimination, where individuals are treated unfairly based on the stereotypes they have seen in films. This creates a cycle of negative reinforcement that impacts not only the individuals being stereotyped but also the broader society, which might begin to internalize these distorted representations as truths.

Okome (2013) aver that the impact of ethical and stereotype issues in Nollywood films is far-reaching because the industry plays such a major role in the cultural landscape of Nigeria. Nollywood films are watched not only in Nigeria but across Africa and globally, and they have the potential to influence

perceptions of Nigerian culture and society. When films promote ethical behaviors and avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes, they can help shape a more inclusive, respectful, and morally responsible society. Conversely, when ethical issues are ignored and stereotypes are perpetuated, Nollywood films can contribute to the reinforcement of negative behaviors and social divisions.

2.8. Empirical Review

Asemah (2019) focused on Ethical Issues in Nollywood Film Production. The study aimed to explore ethical issues in Nollywood film production, especially on how violence, crime, and immoral behaviors are portrayed and their potential impact on young people. The researcher used qualitative research methods, including content analysis of a selection of Nollywood films, and interviews with filmmakers and audience members to gather perspectives on the ethical concerns in these films. The study found that many Nollywood films portray violent and criminal activities without showing clear consequences. This could negatively influence young viewers who might imitate these behaviors. It also found that some films misrepresented societal values, leading to potential cultural conflicts. The study concluded that filmmakers need to be more responsible in how they depict violence and immoral behavior. It also emphasized the importance of creating content that aligns with ethical values and societal norms.

Ekwuazi (2008) focused on the Influence of Nollywood on Cultural Perceptions. The main goal of this study was to examine how Nollywood films influence cultural perceptions, how they represent family values, religion, and gender roles. Ekwuazi conducted a combination of content analysis of popular Nollywood films and surveys/interviews with Nigerian audiences to understand how they perceived the films and whether they found them respectful or offensive in relation to their cultural values. The study revealed that Nollywood films portray family and religious values in ways that either challenge or disrespect tradition.

ional cultural norms. However, viewers were divided; some appreciated the films for modernizing culture, while others felt they undermined important traditions. The study concluded that Nollywood filmmakers need to be more mindful of cultural sensitivities and ethical considerations when creating films. It recommended that filmmakers strike a balance between modern storytelling and respect for cultural traditions.

Okunna (1995) examined Media Ethics in Nollywood Film Production. Okunna's study aimed to investigate the ethical standards within the Nollywood film industry, focusing on the moral dilemmas filmmakers face when producing films that deal with sensitive issues like crime, sexuality, and social injustice. The research employed a mixed-method approach, using both qualitative methods (interviews with filmmakers, actors, and critics) and quantitative methods (surveys with Nollywood audiences) to explore opinions on the ethical issues present in films. The study found that many Nollywood films portrayed unethical behaviors, such as corruption, violence, and exploitation, often without showing the negative consequences of such actions. Filmmakers sometimes justified these portrayals as a way to attract attention or to reflect the harsh realities of Nigerian society. Okunna concluded that there is a need for greater ethical responsibility within the Nollywood film industry. She argued that filmmakers should avoid glorifying harmful behaviors and instead focus on promoting positive moral values that reflect society's ideals.

From the review done so far, it can be deduced that there are gaps in knowledge relating to the ethical issues prevalent in Nollywood film production, common stereotypes in Nollywood films and their potential impact on viewers and the implications of these stereotypes on social perceptions within Nigeria. It is these gaps that the present study seeks to fill.

2.9. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Social Responsibility Theory as its theoretical framework. The theory was first proposed by Wilbur Schramm, 1969 and it emphasizes that the media, including film production, should operate in the public interest and uphold ethical standards. It indicates that the media has a duty to provide accurate, fair, and responsible information to the public, while also considering the social impact of its content. The theory acknowledges that the media must balance its role as a business with its role in serving the public good.

Tenets of the Theory includes:

1. Media should serve the public interest: Media outlets, including filmmakers, should focus on producing content that benefits society as a whole. This includes promoting social values and fostering responsible behavior among the audience.
2. Accuracy and fairness: Media content should reflect the truth. They should provide a balanced portrayal of issues and people. It must avoid distorting facts or misrepresenting groups or individuals.
3. Freedom with responsibility: While the media should be free to operate without undue government interference, this freedom comes with a responsibility to avoid harmful content, such as promoting violence, hate, or discrimination.
4. Public accountability: The media must be accountable to the public for its content and should be open to criticism if its output is harmful or unethical.

5. Balancing commercial and social interests: Media outlets should balance the pursuit of profit with the obligation to consider the social impact of their content. This means prioritizing content that has a positive social influence, even if it may not be as commercially successful.

The Social Responsibility Theory is highly relevant for studying ethical and stereotypical issues in Nollywood film production for several reasons. Firstly, Nollywood films as a major form of media in Nigeria, have a significant impact on public perceptions and behavior. The theory's emphasis on serving the public interest aligns with the need for filmmakers to produce content that reflects positive moral and ethical values, as well as to avoid harmful stereotypes that could reinforce negative societal beliefs. Also, given that Nollywood films often address sensitive topics such as crime, religion, and societal values, the theory advocates for media content that can foster positive social change. By using the theory, this study can examine how filmmakers can avoid glorifying unethical behavior or perpetuating damaging stereotypes, and instead focus on producing content that promotes unity, fairness, and respect for cultural values.

That aside, the Social Responsibility Theory stresses the need for media to avoid harmful content. This is crucial for Nollywood, where there are concerns about how violence, criminal behavior, and stereotypes are often depicted without showing their consequences. The theory is appropriate for the study as it encourages filmmakers to be more responsible in the way they portray issues like gender roles, family structures, and societal norms, which is central to the ethical concerns raised in this study. Conclusively, the Social Responsibility Theory is a fitting lens to analyze the ethical dilemmas and stereotypical issues in Nollywood film production. It emphasizes the media's role in positively influencing society and highlights the need for filmmakers to be accountable for the content they create.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey design to gather information from respondents. According to Asemah (2011), the descriptive survey research is useful for collecting data from a broad group, such as individuals, communities, or organizations, to understand their perspectives, feelings, or behaviors. Descriptive surveys are valuable when collecting numerical data to examine relationships between different variables. In this case, a survey was chosen as it was effective for examining Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria. By using this design, the researcher could gather diverse responses, making it possible to reflect the opinions and experiences of a wider population.

3.2 Population of the Study

The study focused on residents of Benin City and Asaba, Delta State which has a total population of 2,189,126. According to the National Population Commission (2024) the population of Benin City is 1,782,000, while Asaba is 407,126.

3.3 Sample Size

In order to determine the sample size for this study, the researcher adopted the Taro Yamene formula here,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where n = Sample

N = Population size

e = Error limit

= 0.1

n = 2,189,126

N = 2,189,126

e = 0.1 or 0.01

= 2,189,126

$1 + (2,189,126 \times 0.1)^2$

$1 + (2,189,126 \times 0.01)$

= 2,189,126 / 21,892

= 100

The study sample size is 100

3.4 Sampling Technique

The researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select participants. This method ensures that every individual in the population has an equal chance of being chosen, which minimizes bias and makes the sample more representative. Simple random sampling is beneficial when a researcher seeks fair

ness and aims for a straight forward approach. This method was chosen as it is suitable for small populations and is manageable within limited resources.

3.5 Research Instrument

The primary tool for data collection in this study was a 16-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured into two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A collected demographic information, including age, gender, and educational background, which provided context for interpreting the responses. Section B contained questions directly related to the study's objectives, specifically addressing Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria. Each question used a Likert scale, allowing respondents to express levels of agreement or disagreement (e.g., strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree), making it easier to quantify responses.

3.6 Validity of the Research Instrument

To confirm that the questionnaire accurately reflected the study's goals, it underwent a thorough review by the researcher's academic supervisor, faculty members in the Mass Communication Department, and experienced media professionals. Each question was evaluated to make sure it aligned with the study's objectives, and feedback from these experts was incorporated. This review process helped refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it was clear, relevant, and effective for gathering reliable data on corruption's impact on journalism in Benin City.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

To check the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents from the Department of Mass Communication, Uniben. The responses collected in this trial run were analyzed for consistency, which showed whether the questions were interpreted similarly by different participants. Based on the results, the researcher made adjustments to improve clarity, ensuring that the final questionnaire would yield consistent, trustworthy data when used with the larger sample.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to the selected respondents. This approach of in-person distribution allowed for direct interaction, which meant that the researcher could address any questions or clarify details immediately if respondents had concerns. This hands-on method helped enhance respondents' understanding of the questions and increased the likelihood of accurate responses, making data collection more effective and reliable.

3.9 Method of Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using simple percentages, with results presented in tables for easier interpretation. Each table was followed by an explanation that clarified the findings, making it accessible and straightforward for readers to understand the data. By using simple percentages, the researcher ensured that the results were clearly communicated, allowing readers to follow and comprehend the study's outcomes without difficulty. This method of analysis provided a clean, organized format for presenting the findings, ensuring that the study's key insights were readily accessible.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the survey results. Data from 100 copies of questionnaire distributed were organized into tables and analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies. All the questionnaires were returned, giving a 100% response rate. The respondents form the sample population for this study.

4.2 Data presentation and analysis

SECTION A

This section covers the demography of respondents in the study

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age

Age	No of respondents	Percentage
18 - 25	50	50%
26 - 30	26	26%
31 and above	24	24%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 1 shows that a majority of respondents (50%) are between the ages of 18 and 25, making this age group the largest in the survey. This indicates that the survey primarily reflects the opinions and experiences of younger individuals, most especially those in the 18-25 age range.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	No of respondents	Percentage
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Male	33	33%
Female	67	67%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Data in table 2 reveals that a greater percentage of the respondents (67%), are female. This shows that women were more represented in the survey, indicating a stronger participation of females compared to males in the respondent group.

Table 3 Distribution of respondents by Religion

Religion	No of respondents	Percentage
Christian	80	80%
Muslim	15	15%
Others	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 3 indicates that 80% of the respondents are Christians, making them the dominant religious group in the survey. This shows that the study basically reflects the perspectives of individuals who identify as Christians.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by Place of Residence

Residence	No of respondents	Percentage
Asaba	41	41%
Benin	50	50%
Others	9	9%
Total	100	100

Source: field survey 2024

The data in table 4 shows an almost equal representation of respondents who reside in Benin and Asaba. However, half of the respondents (50%) reside in Benin, making it the most represented location in the study. This implies that the results from the study are largely influenced by individuals living in Benin.

SECTION B

This section covers questions that provided data concerning the study from the respondents.

Table 5: Which of these Nollywood Films do you believe stereotypes are more prevalent?

Variables	Number of respondents	Percentage
King of Boys	18	18%
Shanty Town	21	21%
Jagun Jagun	15	15%
Lion Heart	10	10%
All of the Above	36	36%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 5 indicates that 36% of respondents believe stereotypes are prevalent in all the listed Nollywood films: Shanty Town, Jagun Jagun and Lion Heart. This shows that the respondents perceive stereotyping as a major issue across multiple Nollywood films rather than confined to specific titles.

Table 6: Nollywood filmmakers have an ethical responsibility to promote positive values in their films.

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	48	48%
Agree	52	52%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 6 shows that all the respondents agree that Nollywood filmmakers have an ethical responsibility to promote positive values in their films, with a combined 100% affirming to the statement. This shows there's an unanimous agreement among the respondents that filmmakers should prioritize ethical and positive messaging in their work.

Table 7:
Nollywood films should avoid depicting harmful behaviors such as violence and crime without showing consequences.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	38	38%
Agree	62	62%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100%	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Data in table 7 indicates that 62 respondents agreed that Nollywood films should avoid depicting harmful behaviors like violence and crime without showing consequences. This shows

that the respondents believe that there is a need for responsible films that highlights the consequences of negative actions.

Table 8:

The portrayal of moral lessons in Nollywood films is important for influencing young audiences.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	59	59%
Agree	41	41%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 8 shows that a greater percentage of the respondents strongly agreed (59%) that the portrayal of moral lessons in Nollywood films is important for influencing young audiences. This indicates that the respondents recognise the significance of moral lessons in shaping the values of young viewers.

Table 9: Nollywood films frequently depict certain women in stereotypical ways.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	51	51%
Agree	42	42%
Neutral	7	7%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

The data in table 9 reveals that a majority of the respondents (93%) believe that Nollywood films frequently depict certain women in stereotypical ways. This indicates a high perception that stereotyping of women is a common issue in Nollywood films.

Table 10: Characters with mental health in Nollywood films are often portrayed in a negative or one-dimensional manner.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agreed	31	31%
Agreed	65	65%
Neutral	4	4%
Disagreed	0	0%
Strongly disagreed	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 10 shows that a significant percentage of the respondents (65%) agreed that characters with mental health issues in Nollywood films are often portrayed in a negative or one-dimensional manner. This shows a strong consensus that mental health portrayals in Nollywood are generally unfavorable and lacking in depth.

Table 11: Stereotypes in Nollywood films can shape the way audiences view different social groups.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	58	58%
Agree	32	32%
Neutral	4	4%

Disagree	6	6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 11 shows that a combined majority of the respondents (90%) believe that stereotypes in Nollywood films can shape how audiences view different social groups. This indicates that stereotyping in Nollywood films have the potential to influence public perceptions of various social groups.

Table 12: Nollywood filmmakers should avoid reinforcing stereotypes and instead focus on diverse and realistic portrayals of characters

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	71	71%
Agree	29	29%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 12 reveals that the respondents (100%) believe that Nollywood filmmakers should avoid reinforcing stereotypes and instead focus on diverse and realistic portrayals of characters. There were no neutral or dissenting opinions, indicating that there is an unanimous support among the respondents for more inclusive and authentic representations in Nollywood films.

Table 13: Nollywood films have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviors of young viewers.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	57	57%
Agree	43	43%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field survey 2024

Table 13 indicates 57% of the respondents strongly believe that Nollywood films have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviors of young viewers. This implies that Nollywood films play an important role in shaping the views and actions of young audiences.

Table

14:

The behavior of characters in Nollywood films may encourage viewers to imitate them in real life

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	72	72%
Agree	18	18%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Table 14 reveals that a large majority of the respondents (90%) believe that the behavior of characters in Nollywood films may encourage viewers to imitate them in real life. This strong

agreement indicates that the actions of characters in these films can influence viewers' real-life behavior.

Table 15:

Nollywood films that depict criminal or immoral behavior without consequences can lead viewers to believe such actions are acceptable.

Variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	20%
Agree	67	67%
Neutral	13	13%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagreed	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: field survey 2024

Data in table 15 shows that 67% of the respondents agreed that Nollywood films depicting criminal or immoral behavior without consequences can lead viewers to believe such actions are acceptable. This is an indication that there are concerns about the potential negative influence of such portrayals in Nollywood films.

Table 16:

Nollywood filmmakers should adopt ethical guidelines that promote the depiction of diverse, positive, and realistic characters in their film

Variable	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	38	38%

Agree	62	62%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data in table 16 shows that all the respondents agreed that Nollywood filmmakers should adopt ethical guidelines promoting the depiction of diverse, positive, and realistic characters in their films. From these, 62% agree, and 38% strongly agree with the statement.

Table 17:
The Film Census Board should implement mandatory training for filmmakers on ethical representation to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	41%
Agree	59	59%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Total	100	100%
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Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 17 shows that 59% of the respondents agreed that the Film Census Board should implement mandatory training for filmmakers on ethical representation to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes. This indicates that there is support for such training programs to promote ethical filmmaking practices.

Table 18: The Film Census Board should censor films that perpetuate negative stereotypes

Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	39	39%
Agree	61	61%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey 2024

The data in table 18 shows that a combined 100% of the respondents affirmed that the Film Census Board should censor films that perpetuate negative stereotypes.. There were no neutral or dissenting opinions, indicating unanimous support for censoring films that reinforce harmful stereotypes.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question one: What are the ethical issues prevalent in Nollywood film production?

Table 5, 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer the above question. Based on the data presented, the findings show that ethical issues are prevalent in some listed Nigeria films. The respondents agreed that stereotype is an ethical issue that is prevalent in some Nollywood films such as Shanty Town, Jagun Jagun, and Lion Heart. The findings also indicate that Nollywood filmmakers have an ethical responsibility to promote positive values in their films. This shows that there is a belief among the respondents that filmmakers should prioritize ethical messages and promote positive social values in their films. Furthermore, the findings reveal that the respondents believe that violence and crime are ethical issues portrayed in Nollywood films and these films should focus on the repercussions associated with such negative actions. This can be done by emphasizing on real-world consequences of such behaviour. Finally, the findings pinpoint that a majority of the respondents understand and support the idea that films should include moral lessons to shape the values and behavior of young viewers.

The findings are shown in the tables where Table 5 shows that 36% of respondents believe that stereotypes are prevalent in all of the listed films: Shanty Town, Jagun Jagun, and Lion Heart. The remaining respondents, 18% associate stereotyping with King of Boys, 21% with Shanty Town, 15% with Jagun Jagun, and 10% with Lion Heart. Additionally, table 6 revealed that 100% of respondents agreed that Nollywood filmmakers have an ethical responsibility to promote positive values in their films, with 48% strongly agreeing and 52% simply agreeing. In

Table 7, 38% of respondents strongly agreed and 62% agreed that Nollywood films should avoid depicting harmful behaviors such as violence and crime without showing consequences. Finally, Table 8 showed that 59% of the respondents strongly agreed and 41% agreed that the portrayal of moral lessons in Nollywood films is crucial for influencing young audiences.

The findings agree with Lippmann(2022) where he asserted that one prominent ethical issue in the film industry is the tendency to depict stereotypical portrayals of some ethnic groups, social classes, and genders. Stereotypes in Nollywood depict certain tribes in Nigeria in several ways and reinforces generalizations that do not reflect the true nature of these communities.

Research Question two: What are the common stereotypes in Nollywood films and their potential impacts on viewers?

Table 9, 10, 11 and 12 answered the above question on the common stereotypes in Nollywood films and their potential impacts on viewers.

The data presented and analysed shows that there is a high perception among the respondents that women in Nollywood films are often subjected to stereotypical portrayals. They agreed that women are generally portrayed in limited and clichéd roles within Nollywood films. The findings also indicate that characters with mental health issues are portrayed in Nollywood films. This shows that mental health issues are not handled with the depth or sensitivity required, and this tends to reinforce negative stereotypes and lack of understanding surrounding mental health. Additionally, the respondents agreed that stereotypes in Nollywood films are not just reflections of existing societal beliefs, but can actively influence how audiences perceive various social groups.

Table 9 shows that a majority of the respondents (93%) believe that Nollywood films frequently depict certain women in stereotypical ways. Specifically, 51% strongly agreed and 42% agreed with this statement, while only 7% remain neutral. Table 10 presents the views on how characters with mental health issues are portrayed in Nollywood films. Here, 65% of respondents agreed and 31% strongly agreed that such characters are often depicted negatively or in a one-dimensional manner. Only 4% were neutral, and none disagreed. Table 11 reveals that 90% of respondents believe that stereotypes in Nollywood films can shape the way audiences view different social groups. With 58% strongly agreeing and 32% agreeing. Only 10% were neutral. Table 12 indicates that all the respondents (100%) agreed that Nollywood filmmakers should avoid reinforcing stereotypes and instead focus on more diverse and realistic portrayals of characters. Of these, 71% strongly agreed, and 29% agreed, with no one holding a neutral or dissenting opinion.

The findings align with the study carried out Ekwuazi(2008) where he argued that Nollywood holds important power in shaping cultural perceptions, and this power comes with a responsibility to approach sensitive topics with respect and understanding. The way these themes are represented can either reinforce positive cultural values or perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions.

Research Question Three: What are the implications of these stereotypes on social perceptions within Nigeria?

The findings presented in Tables 13, 14, and 15 highlight the implications of these stereotypes on social perceptions within Nigeria. On the basis of the data presented and analysed, the findings show that Nollywood films are not just for entertainment but they play a crucial role in shaping the views and actions of young people. The respondents agreed that the behavior of characters in

Nollywood films can encourage viewers to imitate them in real life. They agreed that the actions and attitudes depicted in Nollywood films are influential in shaping how viewers behave in their daily lives. This shows that filmmakers may have a responsibility to consider the potential for imitative behavior when creating characters and narratives. Additionally, the findings reveal that a majority of the respondents expressed concern about the potential for films to normalize negative behavior when no repercussions are shown. They agreed that films depicting violence and immoral behavior without consequences can lead viewers to believe these actions are acceptable.

The findings are shown in the tables where Table 13 revealed that 57% of respondents strongly agreed and 43% agreed that Nollywood films have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviors of young viewers. In Table 14, a large majority of the respondents (90%) believe that the behavior of characters in Nollywood films may encourage viewers to imitate them in real life. Notably, 72% strongly agreed and 18% agreed. Only 10% were neutral. Table 15 presented the views on the portrayal of criminal or immoral behavior in Nollywood films. It showed that 67% of respondents agreed and 20% strongly agreed that films depicting such behavior without consequences can lead viewers to believe these actions are acceptable. The 13% who remained neutral did not have a strong opinion on this issue.

The findings agree with Uchegbu(2019) where he noted that Nollywood's influence on young Nigerians is significant as many viewers draw inspiration and values from the characters and stories portrayed. With youth as a substantial part of its audience, the industry has a responsibility to promote messages that inspire and educate. However, when harmful stereotypes or unethical practices are depicted or known, this influence may have adverse effects.

Research**Question****Four:**

What ethical guidelines can be used to address these issues and improve film production in Nollywood.

The findings from Tables 16, 17, and 18 provided answers to the above question.

The findings reflect the respondents' strong belief in the importance of ethical practices in Nollywood filmmaking. Firstly, they agreed that filmmakers have a responsibility to use different characters that represent real-life diversity and positive qualities. This shows that the respondents recognize the power of media in shaping societal perceptions and values and believe it is essential for Nollywood films to portray a variety of characters in a fair and accurate manner. Also, they agreed the Film Census Board should implement mandatory training for filmmakers on ethical representation. This points to a significant demand for structured educational programs aimed at helping filmmakers avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Finally, the respondents affirmed that the Film Census Board should censor films that perpetuate negative stereotypes. This reveals that the respondents strongly feel that the Film Census Board has a role in protecting audiences from films that could negatively influence societal views by reinforcing outdated or discriminatory stereotypes.

The findings are well shown in the tables where Table 16 demonstrated that all respondents (100%) agreed that Nollywood filmmakers should adopt ethical guidelines to promote the portrayal of diverse, positive, and realistic characters in their films. Notably, 62% agreed and 38% strongly agreed to the statement. Table 17 showed that 59% of respondents agreed and 41% strongly agreed that the Film Census Board should implement mandatory training for filmmakers on ethical representation. Table 18 presented a clear stance on censorship, with all

respondents (100%) agreeing that the Film Census Board should censor films that perpetuate negative stereotypes.

The findings agree with Uchegbu(2019) where he maintained that implementing ethical standards in film production can ensure that films do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or exploit actors and crew members. Such guidelines would encourage the industry to promote positive representations that align with Nigeria's diverse and multicultural society. Also, the findings agree with the Social responsibility theory adopted in this study which holds that film makers have a social responsibility to serve the public and it's audiences. Hence, filmmakers must avoid glorifying unethical behavior or perpetuating damaging stereotypes, and instead focus on producing content that promotes unity, fairness, and respect for cultural values.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This chapter summarizes the study's aim which was to assess Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria. The research employed a survey design and distributed 100 copies of questionnaire to residents of Benin and Asaba. The results from the completed questionnaires are detailed as follows:

- I. A large percentage of respondents (36%) believe that stereotypes are prevalent across multiple Nollywood films such as Shanty Town, Jagun Jagun and Lion Heart
- II. Over 93% of the respondents agreed that women in Nollywood films are often depicted in stereotypical ways.
- III. Additionally, 90% of respondents believe that stereotypes in films can shape how audiences view different social groups,
- IV. A combined 100% of respondents support the idea that filmmakers should focus on diverse and realistic portrayals of characters
- V. A majority (90%) of the respondents believe that characters' behavior in Nollywood films can encourage viewers to imitate them in real life
- VI. Sixty Seven percent (67%) agreed that films depicting criminal behavior without consequences can lead viewers to accept such actions as acceptable.

VII. The respondents agreed that mental health and gender stereotypes are common issues in Nollywood films

VIII. The respondents (100%) believe the Film Census Board should implement mandatory training for filmmakers on ethical representation and censor films that reinforce harmful stereotypes.

5.2. CONCLUSION

Having carried out this investigation so far, it can be ascertained that there are concerns among Nollywood viewers regarding the prevalence of stereotypes in films and the influence these films have on shaping attitudes and behaviors, most especially among young viewers. The study has shown that gender, ethnic stereotypes and mental health are prevalent issues in Nollywood films, hence, filmmakers must take on ethical responsibilities that portray diverse, realistic, and positive characters, while avoiding harmful representations. On the basis of the findings presented in the study, it is therefore concluded that there are ethical issues and negative stereotypes in Nigerian films and that Nollywood films play a significant role in shaping its audience perceptions.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations were given:

I. Nollywood filmmakers adopt ethical guidelines to ensure the portrayal of diverse, realistic, and positive characters.

- II. Furthermore, the Film Census Board should take an active role in monitoring films, ensuring that those which perpetuate negative stereotypes are censored to protect viewers from harmful influences.
- III. Nollywood should help promote positive values, responsible filmmaking, and a more inclusive representation of various social groups in Nigeria.
- IV. The NBC should guidelines should be accompanied by mandatory training programs to educate filmmakers on ethical representation. This guidelines can help reduce the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes.

5.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher faced financial constraints that restricted the acquisition of necessary materials for the study. Furthermore, several respondents were initially reluctant to participate due to concerns about the researcher's intentions. However, assurances of confidentiality and the academic nature of the research ultimately convinced them to take part.

Department of Mass Communication,

University of Benin,

Benin City.

9th November, 2024

Dear Respondent,

Request to Complete a Questionnaire

I am a final year student of Mass Communication, University of Benin. I am conducting a research on "Ethical Issues, Stereotypes, and Nollywood Film Production in Nigeria. . The research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) in Mass Communication.

I will be grateful for your assistance and co-operation in spending a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire in order to facilitate the research. I assure you that the information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used strictly for academic purposes.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Researcher

Questionnaire

Instruction

Please tick () or (x) as appropriate

SECTION A

- 1) Gender: (a) Male [] (b) Female []
- 2) Age: (a) 18 – 25 [] (b) 26 – 30 [] (c) 30 and above []
- 3) Religion: (a) Christianity [] (b) Islam [] (c) Others []
- 4) Place of Residents (a) Benin City [] (b) Asaba [] Others

SECTION B:

- 5) Which of these Nollywood Films do you believe stereotypes are more prevalent? King of boys | Shanty Town | Jagun Jagun | Lion Heart | All of the Above
- 6) Nollywood filmmakers have an ethical responsibility to promote positive values in their films. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
- 7) Nollywood films should avoid depicting harmful behaviors such as violence and crime without showing consequences. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
- 8) The portrayal of moral lessons in Nollywood films is important for influencing young audiences. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
- 9) Nollywood films frequently depict certain women in stereotypical ways. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
- 10) Characters with mental health in Nollywood films are often portrayed in a negative or one-dimensional manner. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

11) Stereotypes in Nollywood films can shape the way audiences view different social groups.

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

12) Nollywood filmmakers should avoid reinforcing stereotypes and instead focus on diverse and realistic portrayals of characters. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |

Strongly Disagree

13) Nollywood films have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviors of young viewers. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

14) The behavior of characters in Nollywood films may encourage viewers to imitate them in real life. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

15) Nollywood films that depict criminal or immoral behavior without consequences can lead viewers to believe such actions are acceptable. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

16) Nollywood filmmakers should adopt ethical guidelines that promote the depiction of diverse, positive, and realistic characters in their films."Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

17) The Film Census Board should implement mandatory training for filmmakers on ethical representation to avoid reinforcing harmful stereotypes. Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

18) The Film Census Board should censor films that perpetuate negative stereotypes Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

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