Gender Stereotypes in Nigerian Films: A discursive analysis

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Abstract
Gender stereotypes influence people's expectations and evaluations of what is appropriate for them and others. Gender stereotypes tend to exaggerate perceived differences of members of different groups and the perceived similarities of a particular man or woman to the general categories of male and female, which, in a way, can have a large effect on the way both sexes see themselves and how they are perceived in social relations. Studies have shown that the Nigerian film industry has the capacity to provide a platform for the positive promotion of Nigerian values. This paper examined the patterns of stereotypes being reinforced in Nigerian films and how these patterns affect the image of Nigerian women. It suggests that adequate information on gender issues such as abrogation of discriminatory customs, empowerment for low income women and men, reorientation of male chauvinism can be possible by using the platform of films to change gender stereotyping of women and projecting their positive images in Nigeria.

Key Words: Influence, Gender, Stereotypes, Male and Female, Nigerian Films.

Introduction

Individuals hold numerous beliefs about what constitutes masculinity and feminity, and these beliefs shape their perceptions of who is likely to perform certain behaviours and what behaviours are appropriate at work. Such beliefs and perceptions constitute gender stereotypes, which are the images of males and females. Thus, gender stereotypes, influence people's expectations and evaluations of what is appropriate for them as well as for others. Stereotypes can limit the types of careers that people select and can facilitate or inhibit the perceptions of an individual's effectiveness. As noted by Finello (2004), gender stereotypes limit the development of a human personality and can lead to social inequality. Indeed, the effects of gender stereotypes and gender inequality can easily be observed in all spheres of life. For instance, studies have shown that there are gender differences in communication styles (Katz, 2003). The way in which individuals in a particular culture think of themselves as male or female and learn to act in accordance

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has created some level of mistrust, unhealthy competition and power imbalance in social relationships between male and female. The marked differences between males and females determine how each group is perceived by the other group. The differences determine the position and status of men in relation to women and roles expected of men in contrast with that of women. Therefore, gender stereotypes tend to exaggerate perceived differences of members of different groups and the perceived similarities of a particular man or woman to the general categories of male and female, which, in a way, could have a large effect on the way both sexes see themselves and how they are perceived in social relations. Studies from Azeez, (2010) and Onyejelem and Ndolo, (2012) have shown that the Nigerian film industry has the capacity to provide a platform for the positive promotion and projection of the values of the Nigerian nation, its culture and people as Hollywood and Bollywood have played complimentary roles in shaping their national images than military actions in international leadership. Thus, Nigerian films, being a form of mass media, could play a role in gender identity of its audience. With this assumption in mind, this paper attempt the patterns of stereotypes being reinforced in Nigerian films with the main aim of ascertaining how the patterns of the stereotypes have changed not only with the wave of modern feminism in Nigeria, but also with the emergence of economically empowered female auteurs producing as many films as their male counterparts.

The Concept of Gender
Gender refers to a set of qualities/behaviour expected from the female or male by the society. It is important to note that gender is what we acquire as we are all born as male or female (engederhealth.org, 2005:2). Gender can also be defined as socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men, and includes expectations held about characteristics, and likely behaviours of both men and women; the roles that we learn to fill from childhood onward (Leong and Lang, 2000). The concept of gender therefore refers to the social construction of the relations between male and female in terms of roles such that certain roles are seen as exclusively female and others for male. It refers to social differentiation or cultural distinction between males and females and the attribution of certain roles on the basis of that differentiation. It is used to explain the apparent commonality in the relations between male and female in terms of roles in power sharing, decision-making, division of labour and remuneration on labour both at home and in the work place (Idyorough, 2005). The term gender role refers to a set of behavioural and socially accepted norms that are deemed socially befitting for the individuals of a specific gender as accepted in the culture of the individual in a particular society. These behaviours and norms vary greatly between cultures (Pleck, 1995). From another perspective, Gupta (2000:) defines gender as:

> a widely shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate
> male and female behaviour, characteristic, and roles. It is a social and
> cultural construct that differentiates women from men and defines the ways
> in which women and men interact with each other.

The issue of gender could be understood through the role that men and women perform in the society. Hence, gender issues relate to both men and women and the attendant power relations between the sexes. The understanding of the concept of gender cannot be complete without the understanding of gender roles as embedded within the social structure of the society in which people operate. Gender roles are functions performed by individuals in the social positions they occupy. Gender roles are those functions that are culturally allotted to individuals on the basis of their gender but are not related to

biological functions as such those can be carried out by a man or a woman. Furthermore, assigning of such roles varies from culture to culture and over a period of time. What things a man or a woman should do and how a person of a particular gender walks, speaks, and relates with others including outsider are culturally determined. Hence, gender roles are set of expectations of what ought to be the appropriate behaviour for men and women under particular circumstances (Leong and Lang, 2000 and Idyorough, 2005).

However, gender roles are often mistaken for sex roles. Sex roles are those functions that a person requires certain biological characteristics in order to perform. Sex roles contrast with gender roles. Sex roles are responsibilities or biological functions that one needs a particular body organ in order to perform them; such roles are carried out only by members of that particular sex. The necessary qualification to perform those roles is to belong to one particular sex category – female or male. For example, carrying a pregnancy is a female sex role, which only women can perform. To perform this function, a woman needs a womb and a birth canal (vagina). Biological organs are, therefore, needed to perform sex roles. However, child rearing is a gender role and not a sex role since both men and women can carry out this function. Also sweeping a bedroom is a gender role, one does not need a special organ to perform this role since it can be carried out by a man or a woman (Leong and Lang, 2000 and Idyorough, 2005).

In essence, gender roles refer to a set of qualities and behaviour expected from a female or male by the society. Gender roles are learned and can be affected by factors such as education and economics. They vary widely from one culture to another. While an individual's sex does not usually change, gender roles are socially determined and can evolve over time. Gender roles and identity are often identified as factors hindering the equal rights and status of women in society. Gender role is of great concern in the Nigerian film industry because film is a veritable tool for cultural transformation and re-enforcement of traditional values.

Gender Stereotype as a Universal Phenomenon
Stereotype, as a concept, can be understood from two perspectives – psychological perspective and sociological perspective. As already mentioned, from the psychological perspective, stereotype is a rigid and unchanging attitude that is locked within an individual about a group of people (Cohen, 2009). From the sociological perspective, stereotype reflects and determines power relations by establishing positions for individuals in a society. Specifically, gender stereotype refers to the socially determined models which reveal the cultural beliefs about what gender roles should be. In other words, the notion of gender constitutes the expectation that people have of how others should behave. Gender stereotype can also refer to stereotyped images of males and females. Images of males and females are sometimes difficult to see as stereotype because they are strongly connected with deep-seated beliefs about the roles of males and females in the society. Many people find it disturbing when these roles are questioned.

From time immemorial, gender stereotyping is deeply rooted in patriarchal system. For example, in Saudi Arabia and Iran, traditionalists fiercely condemned female expression of beauty, especially in public. To the traditionalists, all 'painted' women flaunting their legs and shoulders in public were bringing about nothing but Sodom and Gomorrah (Gamman and Marshment, 1988). Today, Saudis still ask why a woman would want to show all her arms in public unless she is a prostitute. But, it is indeed the 'male gaze' which turns women into objects. The mystified woman, in the grip of false consciousness, responds with the same kind of self-torture (make up, shoes, hairdo,

corsets, dieting, breast implants and other cosmetic surgery) that men may also require but are never under pressure to toe the same line as their female counterparts.

In Greece, gender stereotyping is noticeable in the distribution of attributes to male and female. The ancient Greeks associated the male with the straight, the light and the good together, while the female with curved, the darkness, and the bad. Among the Greeks, to be free of emotion is superior to being a subject of emotion, whether actively or passively, this is all a system of patriarchal gender stereotypes. In the system of opposites in Chinese philosophy called the *Yin* and *Yang*, the Yin is female, even and darkness, while Yang is odd, male and light. While the Chinese male is active, the female is passive. To the Chinese, the active is better than the passive. In India, the male side of the god *Shiva* is detached, remote, and unmoving, while the female side is active, creative, and powerful. In India, detachment is definitely superior to participation. Therefore, regardless of the socio-cultural context, the male gets the attribute with the higher prestige than his female counterpart (Idyorough, 2005).

Gauntlet (2002) argues that the modern Western World is an odd mix of equal and unequal. Women and men may 'feel' equal, but at the same time are aware that this is not entirely accurate. Women have the formal *right* to do most things that a man can do, and vice versa; situations where this is not the case can become well-published courtroom battles. More informally, women and men generally believe themselves to be equals within the sphere of personal relationships. It is undeniable that there exist physiological differences between men and women. This fact is used to justify the unequal treatment of women on all levels of human interactions. In addition, most men believed that physiological differences limit women in their choice of career, their intellectual maturity, their credibility, as well as their ability to effectively contribute to the advancement of human society. Based on the obvious differences that exist between the male and female, it has been argued that both be treated based on their peculiar nature. In traditional African societies, the woman's responsibilities primarily constitute being a wife, mother and home maker. A woman's child bearing function encourages early marriage. As the woman's daughters assist her in domestic duties, they are in turn socialized in the cultural norms of their respective societies and role expectations are thus transferred from one generation to the next (Idyorough, 2005).

Gender Stereotype in Films

Johnson (2009) observes that the fixed and unchanging nature of the iconographical image of women in comparison to that of men can be traced to the sexist ideology of the American society which places man inside history. Thus as cinema developed, the stereotyping of man was increasingly considered as contravening the realization of the notion of character. For the woman, the dominant ideology presented her as eternal and unchanging, except for modifications in terms of fashion. Johnson further states that the fixed unchanging image of women helped to create a myth of woman in the cinema. In this regard, she states that the myths governing the cinema are not different from those governing other cultural products in the sense that they relate to a standard value system informing all cultural systems in a given society. Indeed, it is through the cultural products such as films and other mass media that society sustains discourses that carry meanings about men and women with the purpose of delimiting, restricting, defining and controlling how each of them should or ought to behave.

In Nigerian film and literature of the 1960s, which is before the advent of feminist consciousness on Nigerian literacy scene, men were dominant in writing and publishing. Most of the writings portrayed and still continue to present women in subordinate roles to their male counterparts. In the Yoruba culture, exploitation of women in favour of men is also rampart and it is adequately represented in Yoruba mythologies and drama. In the

pre-colonial time, up to recently, virginity, among the Yoruba was so valued that a bride must prove that she was a virgin on her first night with her husband. The test was usually done by asking the bridegroom to lay a piece of immaculate white cloth on her bride's torso. The blood that was expected to flow from the break of the bride's hymen onto the white cloth was the proof that the bride was a virgin. If such a proof was obtained, and it was confirmed by the bridegroom that his bride retained her decency until that night, it would be celebrated. If the outcome of the test was on the contrary, the bridegroom's family would send an empty box of matches to the bride's family to denote that their daughter was empty. She could be returned to her family, and this could cause lasting humiliation and disgrace to her entire clan or kinship. This form of exploitation of women in favour of men was represented in one of Tunde Kilani's film entitled *Narrow Path* (2007).

So, gender role stereotyping is a constant attribution of different certain social roles to men or women according to the traditional gender division of labour in a particular society even when such attributions are not built on reality or are discriminatory. Gender role stereotyping works to support the existing structural arrangement which are discriminatory and are in favour of a particular gender. This is done to portray such gender roles as "natural" and "normal" with a gender (Hall, 1989). The media carries out this propaganda; for example, the use of air hostesses to advertise an airline and its hospitality, while the fastness of an airline is shown by the serious actions of male pilot. In films, male doctors are shown involved in a surgery to save life while female nurses provide only supportive services. Men are seen as hardworking and women are lazy; whereas in reality some women work harder than some men. Although both men and women cry or are tough or discuss or gossip yet these are stereotyped to a particular gender.

The ability to exhibit the capacity to recognize gender issues and especially to recognize women's different perceptions and interests in relation to their different social positions and gender roles consideration is commonplace. Gender sensitivity is the same thing as gender awareness but it goes beyond mere possession of awareness to include practical demonstration of that awareness. Gender insensitivity exists where there is discrimination and oppression yet no one feels concerned about it.

The Standpoint Theory
The standpoint theory, whose major proponents are Sandra Harding, Smith and Julia Wood, claims that individuals' standpoint affects their worldview. In other words, the theory proposes that the "social groups within which we are located powerfully shape what we experience and know as well as how we understand and communicate with ourselves, others and the world" (Griffin, 2009: 441). Essentially, the theory assumes that when people speak from the opposite sides of power relations, the perspective from the lives of the less powerful can provide a more objectives view than the perspective from the lives of the more powerful (Wood, 1994). To put it in another way, feminist standpoint has the highest tendency of being more objective or less partial than the other starting points for inquiry.

Smith, in particular, uses the notion of standpoint to emphasize that what one knows is affected by where one stands (one's subject position) in society. We begin from the world as we actually experience it, and what we know of the world and of the other is conditional on that location. Yet, Smith's argument is not that we cannot look at the world in any way other than from our given standpoint. Rather, her point is that no one can have complete, objective knowledge; no two people have exactly the same stand-point; and then finally we must not take the standpoint from which we speak for granted.

Instead, we must recognize it, be reflexive about it, and problematize it. Our situated, everyday experience should serve as a point of entry of investigation.

This theory, particularly from Smith's perspective, underscores not only that the standpoint of men is consistently privileged and that of women devalued, but also that the standpoint of the (white) male upper class pervades and *dominates* other worldviews. This is what Wood later developed to mean that women's perspective is usually less partial. This idea—that not all standpoints are equally valued and accessed in society— clearly reflects Smith's critical/Marxist roots. Thus, using Marxist perspective, the theory, as explained by Smith, establishes how "objective social, economic and political relations . . . shape and determine women's oppression" (Smith, 1990). She focuses on "the relations between patriarchy and class in the context of the capitalist mode of pro-duction" and emphasizes how "the inner experiences which also involved our exercise of oppression against ourselves were ones that had their location in the society outside and originated there". Smith's standpoint theory also demonstrates the extent to which men and women bracket and view the world in distinctive ways, in conjunction with their distinct, biographically articulated life worlds. The theory as developed by Smith builds on the concept of *bifurcation of consciousness.,* which refers to a separation or split between the world as you actually experience it and the dominant view to which you must adapt (e.g., a masculine point of view). The notion of bifurcation of consciousness underscores that subordinate groups are conditioned to view the world from the perspective of the dominant group, since the perspective of the latter is *embedded* in the institutions and practices of that world. Conversely, the dominant group enjoys the privilege of remaining oblivious of the worldview of the other, or subordinate group, since the Other is fully expected to accommodate them. The "governing mode" of the professions, then, creates a bifurcation of consciousness in the actor: "It establishes two modes of knowing, experiencing, and acting—one located in the body and in the space that it occupies and moves into, the other passing beyond it" (Smith, 2005.:82). It then means that the group of people like women that suffer this kind of bifurcation of consciousness or what is otherwise called double consciousness will have to live with the rules of the dominant group and the rules of their world. If the less privileged or oppressed (like women) are found in the world of the dominant group (men), they must continually accommodate themselves to the dominant group in order to gain acceptance in a world that is not theirs, and in this way, members of oppressed or minority groups become alienated from their "true" selves. This theory is related to this paper because of its emphasis that in modern, Western societies, social domination operates through *texts* that facilitate social control. This is the reason why Smith (1990:6) describes relations of ruling as including not only forms such as "bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, but also the media," and "the complex of discourses, scientific, technical, and cultural, that intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate" them. Smith (1987:4) maintains that behind and within the "apparently neutral and impersonal rationality of the ruling apparatus" is concealed a "male subtext." Women are "excluded from the practices of power within textually mediated relations of ruling" (Smith, 1990). Thus, the absence of women in the Nigerian film industry could not allow them to represent true women's lives and characters from their standpoint in Nigerian films. Even when they are present in the industry as evidenced recently, they have to live, adapt and accommodate to the rules of the industry that is not theirs per se. Thus, whatever privilege they might have with the entrance of a few of them into the industry, they might still have to dance to the prevalent, dominant and masculine or patriarchal views about women. These are the assumptions derived from the theory, which only further studies on this issue can validate or invalidate.

Gender Stereotype in the media

From 1954 when the earliest systematic analyses of television content were carried out to 1975, researchers have found that media have been portraying gender stereotypes. Such multiple studies have found that either in form of condemnation, trivialization or absence or low representation, various media have symbolically annihilated women in their representations, while positively portraying men. The earliest studies such as the content studies of scholars like Courtney and Whipple (1974), Dominick and Rauch (1972) and Tuchman (1978) confirmed that relatively few women are portrayed in the mass media although women constituted 51% of the population of the time and 41% of the labour force. According to the studies, women were trivialized, symbolized as child-like adornments that needed to be protected and were dismissed to the protective confines of the home.   Tuchman's study is perhaps one of the most outstanding studies of portrayal of gender stereotypes in the earliest television texts. In the study entitled "The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media", Tuchman (1981) found that except in soap opera of the time where women made up a mere majority of the fictional population, television showed two men for every woman on television. She averred that in 1952, 68% of the characters in prime-time drama were male. In 1973, 74% of those characters were male. In 1973, women were concentrated in comedies where men made up only 60% of the fictional world. Tuchman (1981) further found that when television showed someone's occupation, the worker was most likely to be male. The few working women included in television plots were symbolically denigrated by being portrayed as incompetent or inferior to their male colleagues. Turow (1974) had earlier confirmed this in a study that female workers in soap opera were subservient to their competent colleagues. Turow's study added that where women were portrayed in a profession, they were portrayed in a lower profession compared with men's professions. While men were doctors, women were nurses; when men were lawyers, women were secretaries; while men worked in corporation, women were in boutiques. Gerbner (1972)'s study which was one of the earliest classic studies on the portrayal of gender on television, looked into another dimension of the issue. Gerbner did not focus on the number of women that appeared on television and how they appeared; rather he sought to understand how they were victimized through violence on television. He concluded that when television women involved in violence, unlike men, they were more likely to be victims than aggressor. Equally important, his study found that the patterns of women's involvement with television violence revealed approval of married women and condemnation of single and working women because single women were more likely to be victims of violence than married women and working women were more likely to be villains than the housewives. This was to mean that married women who did not work outside the home were most likely to be treated sympathetically. Just like Lierbert et al's study (1973) later confirmed, Gerbner found that television mostly approved those women who were presented in a sexual context or within a romantic or family role. This was to corroborate Tuchman's (1981) finding that two out of the three television- women were married or were engaged. To join the bandwagon in the 1970s' frenzy for analyzing how women were being portrayed particularly in the television adverts, Busby (1975) carried out four major studies of television adverts and reported the following findings:

- 37% of commercials showed women as men's domestic adjuncts.
- 33.9% of the commercials showed women as dependent on men.
- 24.3% showed women as submissive.
- 16.7% showed women as sex objects.
- 17.1% showed women as unintelligent.
- 42.6% showed women as household functionaries. (Busby 1975:107-131).

While most of the earliest studies were classic and authoritative, yet, a few of them did not reflect the most systematic procedure in terms of reliable and verifiable coding schemes that could be replicated in the later studies. The study which became a watershed in the verification of how women were being portrayed in the media was carried out in 1975 by McArthur and Resko. They designed a nine point coding scheme for analyzing how women were being portrayed in television adverts and the coding scheme became a point of reference which later researchers all over the world adopted verbatim or adapted for their own analysis of the portrayal of women in television advertisements. The variables in the coding scheme include; mode of presentation, credibility bias, roles, location, age, argument, reward type, product type and end comment.

By 1980s, most of the researches on the portrayal of women particularly in television adverts had become so excessive but more systematic than the earliest ones. Meanwhile, Busby's wider examination of a variety of media contents and texts in 1985 became the classic of the decade. The study concluded that in most media-from textbooks, comic books to prime-time television, the following prevailed:

- Females appeared in limited roles in media content compared to roles of men.
- Females were most often associated with domesticity and males with paid employment, entertainment and leisure activities.
- Females were frequently cast as victims of violence and males as perpetrators of violence.
- Females were identified by their relationships to males- wife, fiancée, mother, girlfriend-much more often than males were identified by their relationship to females.
- Females in the media contents tend to be younger than their male counterparts.
- Older women were under-represented in media content.
- Television advertising directed at boys used many camera cuts and sound effects; television advertising directed at girls used fades, dissolves and background music.

Pierce (1989: 231-328) in a research project established gender attributes of all characters under the age of 20 telecast by the three major networks during a week of prime-time broadcasts and found that out of thirteen personality traits categorized by naive codes, four turned out to be significant. Young male characters were more active, aggressive, rational and unhappy than their female counterparts. Particularly striking as Pierce's project established were the kinds of activities the characters were undertaking. Girls were found to be playing with dolls, playing dress-up, helping in the kitchen and talking on the phone; whereas boys were participating in sports, playing roughhouse and behaving mischievously. The inference made from the findings was that the girl's place is in the home and the boy's place is wherever he wants to be.

Gallagher (1980, 1985) summarized various projects on the media portrayals of women and found many similarities between western industrialized, eastern communist and southern developing countries that:

- Women are underrepresented in the media in production as well as in content.
- Women that do appear in media content tend to be young and conventionally pretty, defined in relation to their husband, father, son, boss or another man.
- Women are portrayed in mass media as passive, indecisive, submissive, and dependent.

In the 1990s, there was also a multiplicity of studies on the portrayal of women in the media especially those that replicated earlier studies. One of such studies was the replication of 1979 gender analysis in magazine advertisements by Kang ME in 1991 using Goffman's categories of decoding behaviour which included: relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination and licensed withdrawal. The findings indicated that the images of women in 1991 advertisements did not significantly change from the image found in 1979 advertisements. However, distribution or dispersion of stereotypical portrayal of women did change. Perhaps one of the most popular studies in the 1990s was the content analyses of the portrayal of women on British television carried out by Cumberbatch Guy, Andrea Maguire and Samantha Woods in 1994. The study found that women portrayed in the British television were younger, more likely to be shown as married and less likely to be shown in paid employment. Generally, most of the studies carried out in 1990s echoed the findings of the content analyses of gender images done in 1970s and 1980s.

The review above could give the impression that studies on the portrayal of women in the media were mostly on television adverts. While majority of them particularly the earliest ones were indeed on television adverts, there were still a few that were conducted on other specific media texts. One of such outstanding and interesting studies was Meehan's content analysis of the presentation of women in soap operas. She found out that:

- Women are rarely portrayed as either good or evil.
- Good women are portrayed as submissive, sensitive and domesticated.
- Bad women are portrayed as rebellious, independent and selfish.
- Male evil characters are always counterbalanced by good ones which is not usually so with female evil characters.
- The number of occupations which women are portrayed as holding is limited to a few primarily as a housewife, receptionist or a whore.

Gender Stereotype in Nigeria films
The studies on gender stereotypes in Nigeria have also grown over the years. Nevertheless, we shall examine both classical and recent studies in this regard. Ezeigbo (1996) classical study which was reported in her book entitled *Gender Issues in Nigeria: a feminist perspective*. Ezeigbo found that there is marked differences in the ways women and men are being portrayed in Nigerian films. According to her, while women are being portrayed as "vicious, diabolical and morally bankrupt", men are neither too good nor completely bad. She notes that their positive and negative attributes are highlighted making them more complex and more psychologically satisfying as characters. Nevertheless, the few good women she found in Nigerian films are unfortunately docile, passive and extremely accommodating, even when their interests are threatened.

Tapfumaneyi and Rupande (2013) explore the concept of gender stereotypes and how the media through its cultural products expresses views about gender thereby promoting stereotypes. The paper focuses on the need for gender neutral programming in the media, a paradigm shift from the sexist programming which pervades the media today. The paper also shows that media texts are replete with gender biases, leading to the symbolic annihilation of women. The paper argues that the media is a powerful ideological tool which can be modelled in ways that can address gender imbalances in society. The paper advocates for the enactment of media policies that will compel the media to portray gender relations in non discriminatory ways.

Brock (2009) study analyzes the ways in which women are portrayed in film and how the media contributes to this influence. It explores certain themes such as sexual

objectification, social constructions of gender, modernity, religion/morality, beauty and love and compares them with reality of life for women in Nigeria. It examines Nollywood from a traditional and modern perspective. This research places emphasis on the role of women in relation to sexual objectification, social constructions of gender, modernity, religion/morality, beauty, and love in all of the five films that were analyzed. Through a content analysis of five Nollywood films findings show that the imagery of women in media significantly impacts how viewers perceive women in Nigeria. The images which are being portrayed result from the influences in Nigerian society. Additionally, it shows how Nigerian society has been impacted by modernity which creates a wide range of problems. More importantly, even with all of the issues within the Nollywood industry it seeks to serve as a moral teacher and provides valuable lessons to its viewers.

In another study by Azeez (2010) on "Audience perception of portrayals of women in Nigerian home video films" which investigates how Nigerians, particularly women, interpret the meanings of the representations of women in Nigerian films with a focus on investigating whether or not there is a marked difference in the ways different individuals and groups interpret the representations. The study finds that there is a marked difference in the ways women and men interpret the meanings embedded in the representations of women in Nigerian films. It also concludes that there is a marked difference in the ways women, with high education and those with little or no education, perceive the representations of women in Nigerian films. The difference is related to the way each group of women understands and identifies or dis-identifies with the meanings of the images of the films. Hence, the study proposes a new model for understanding how women in Nigeria interpret popular culture.

Adewoye, Odesanya, Abubakar and Oloroede, (2014) study analysed the forms and pattern of portrayal of women and gender role stereotypes in selected Nollywood movies. Two movies – Ije (2012) and Mr. and Mrs. (2012) were selected using purposive sampling technique and content-analysed. Findings revealed that women were generally portrayed in the movies as sex objects and objects of erotic gaze for men, domestic servants, "the weaker sex", "the wicked mother-in-laws" and working class women as insubordinate wives and uncaring mothers, among other negative forms of portrayals. It also found that the forms of portrayal and stereotypes of women in the movies reviewed fit into and can reinforce widely held social beliefs and gender role expectations from women in the larger Nigerian socio-cultural environment.

The bibliography and studies on gender stereotypes in the media have become so large over the last four decades that their review cannot be exhausted. The essence of reviewing a few of them in this paper was to reveal one shortcoming about most of them. Most studies on the portrayal of women in the media had been ordinary time series content analyses that did not focus on the audience's perception of the portrayals in the media. In the large bibliography, only a few sought to establish what women and perhaps men think about how they (women) had been portrayed in the media over the years. In relation to that, not many of the studies on the portrayal of women in the media endeavoured to understand how the audience read the images so as to establish whether or not they influence or affect the gender identity or the whole personality of the female audience. With the analysis of various studies on gender stereotypes in the media and also present in Nigeria film industry, the question is who is to blame?. The script writer, producers and directors, many research studies are yet to answer this question.

Bridging the Gap of Gender Stereotype in Nigeria
The issue of gender has come a long way in Africa cultural tradition that solution from studies could not even bridge the gap. The challenges stated by Okpalaobi, (2011) will be

reviewed as issues of discussion in this paper. We shall examine five of the challenges that pose as hindrance to solving gender stereotyping in Nigeria. These challenges also affect the film industry which is part of the Nigeria social structure.

Lack of Role Models on the Female Gender: There are not enough role models among women also in film production to re-shape the image given to women especially as sex objects. Okpalaobi, (2011) emphasised that because of this gap, there has been a lot of criticism on the failures of these women which has ridiculed the female gender and deprived them of positions they would ordinarily been opportune to occupy. Women in Nigeria have not, to a very great extent, shown that degree of responsibility that will outweigh their male counterpart.

Policy Disconnect: The efforts of special legislation, state bye-laws and gender specific policies at all levels of government and by the civil society, through networking, have failed to contribute to the development of women and men equitably. Hence, the history of women empowerment in Nigeria do not coalesce with the current situation analysis with respect to all the gender issues suffered by majority of women(Okpalaobi, 2011).

Right Protection: The existing policy documents on women failed to challenge the structure, which continues, to reproduce gender inequality and the overall dis-empowerment of women. Thus, using a development oriented approach; gender inequality is no longer seen only in human rights terms, but also as a cost to the development process (Okpalaobi, 2011).

Global Goals and Commitment: A major challenge now is how to integrate the principle of gender awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness such that gender equality becomes more than just the concerns of women and the few gender-sensitive institutions and people but becomes part of everyone's consciousness including the film industry (Okpalaobi, 2011).

Policy Direction and Gender Conceptualization
Okpalaobi, (2011) stated further that "other challenges in defining a gender policy that will have direct effect on overall development goals as well as gender justice are reconceptualizing gender ideologies, especially gender equality, not only from the context of legal equality and human or women's rights, but within a broad development context. This has led to the retooling of development frameworks that would fit into the expression of gender equality and gender equity". Hence, redefining gender issues in film production can further promote the right identity of women in Nigerian films.

Conclusion
According to Tapfumaneyi and Rupande (2013), the media, including film, plays a crucial role in society as it shapes ideology and influences people's world views and how they perceive gender relations. Sadly the media has been one of the platforms upon which gender inequality has been purveyed. Hence, there is need for adequate information on gender issues, abrogation of tradition and discriminatory customs, empowerment for low income women and men, reorientation of male chauvinist and other gender bias activities. However, using the platform in film production will be the best channel to change gender stereotype in its portrayal of women by projecting their positive images in various film productions in order to improved gender balance worldview among consumers of film industry products in Nigeria.

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