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Representation of Alcohol and its Gendering in Nollywood Films

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Abstract

This study examined the depiction of alcohol and its gendering in selected Nollywood films. Its theoretical base is social construction of reality theory. It employed content analysis research method with coding sheet as instrument to code 20 films as sample size from a population frame of forty films from Best of Nollywood (BON) Awards over an eight year period between 2009 and 2016. The 20 films were selected using simple random sampling technique. Descriptive statistics and inferential t-test were employed for the analysis. This study revealed that there is equalisation of alcohol use based on gender as depicted in the selected films. Equalising the depiction of substance usage for the both genders has consequences for the younger female generation who might develop the disposition that using the substance like the male folk is a safe practice. Nollywood is projecting an alcohol drinking society with the portrayal of alcohol beverages far outweighing nonalcoholic beverages. Nollywood professionals should project the social reality of male drinking dominance rather than equalising both genders on their alcohol consumption parity. It was also recommended that stakeholders in the Nigeria film industry should construct the appropriate reality about alcohol and limit its high frequency in their production.

Keywords: Representation, Films, Alcohol, Gender, Nollywood

Introduction

The abuse of alcohol is a social, economic, and health burden on the users, their loved ones and the society. The misuse of the substance accounts for 3.3 million death annually representing 5.9 percent of global death (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2015). Women respond to the effect of the substance differently from their male counterpart with graver consequence to the former(CDC, 2016; Dumbili, 2017). Men are generally believed to drink more than the womenfolk(Taylor, 2018). The mass media through the contents of its different forms of print, radio, television and film, do construct a subjective social reality that influence the judgments of the society about their beliefs and values. This study's objective is the examination of the social reality being constructed by the Nigeria film industry on the portrayal of alcohol based on gender usage and the frequency of the substance alongside non-alcoholic drink.

Problem Statement

The Nigerian entertainment sector of films and home video is a multi-billion Naira industry attracting millions of viewers as Africa's biggest industryand submitted to be the second largest globally in terms of number of films produced annually (Infotainworld, 2016; Stephenfollows.com, 2016). The Federal Government of Nigeria in April 2013 launched Nollywood project grant with a dedicated fund of three Billion Naira to support the industry and restricted same programme in 2016 (Scannews, 2013; Onuba, 2016).The government also in 2017 granted the creative industry "Pioneer Status", which is a business status granted to companies in qualifying industries and products as tax holiday from the payment of corporate income tax and withholding tax on dividend from pioneer profits for an initial period of three years. This status covers music production, publishing, distribution, photography, production and post-production of digital content for motion pictures, videos, television programmes, commercials, and

etcetera (Omoniyi, 2017). With all these benefits to the creative industry in general and the Nigeria film industry in particular, one needs to ask thetype of social reality the stakeholders in the industry are constructing and their health communication role in supporting various public health message dissemination, especially as it concerns the frequency of alcohol depictionand its gendering in their videos which is the focus of this study.

Research Objectives

I. To know the frequency of alcohol portrayal in Nollywood films.
II. Discover whether there is gender difference in the portrayal of alcohol in Nollywood films.

Research Question

I. What is the frequency of alcohol portrayal in the selected Nollywood films?

Statement of the Hypothesis

There is no significant gender difference in the use of alcohol in the selected Nollywood films.
H1: Male characters use alcohol more than female characters in the selected Nollywood films.
H0: Male characters do not use alcohol more than female characters in the selected Nollywood films.

Alcohol Usage and Gender: Review of Realities and Media Representation

A standard drink is measured to be 14.0 grams (0.6 ounce) of pure alcohol. In America, having up to two drinks per day for men and up to one drink per day for women is termed as moderate alcohol consumption (Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC), 2018). Citing National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in CDC (2018), binge drinking is a pattern of alcohol consumption that brings the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of 0.08 per cent or more. This pattern of drinking usually correspond to 5 or more drink on a single occasion for men or 4 or more drinks on a single occasion for women, generally within 2 hours. Just as the same health centre defines heavy drinking as consuming 15 drinks or more for men and 8 drinks or more per week for women (CDC, 2018).

Alcohol consumption is known to be largely a tradition of men, but with the rise of alcohol marketing primed towards women and the change in the pattern of gender roles are narrowing the gap between male and female drinking habit (Taylor, 2018). Women from between 1991 and 2006 are at par with the males counterparts in the use of the substance with possibility of surprising them (Taylor, 2018). Generally, men are more likely to consume alcohol and take it in large quantity than women, but different in chemistry and physiological build up make women to absorb more alcohol, while also taking longer time to metabolize it. The retention of alcohol in women for longer time than their male counterparts even after taking some amount of alcohol spells long term health challenges for women than men (CDC, 2016). Comparing the effects of the substance on both genders after consumption, women have been found to get more easily intoxicated (Dumbili, 2017).

Adult women visit the hospital for the treatment of alcohol diagnosis, drinking patterns are also scaling dangerously notably among women who takes alcohol in excess are prone to develop alcohol dependence and other health problems faster than men because women body react to alcohol than men (Taylor, 2018). In an interview chat with Dr Gray Smith-Laing as captured by Campbell says in the last two years, half of her parents with alcohol liver disease were women up from being mostly men before this period. She stated that there are sizable and increasing cases of women in their twenties making up the case files with some having irreversible liver damage as against those in their forties and fifties who came usually making up the list (Campbell, 2008). Women between the ages of 35 to 54 having alcohol related mortality with the rate of 7.2 per hundred thousand in 2006 (Campbell, 2008). It is also

attributable to cancer of the female breast (Esser and Jernigan, 2008, Vanguard, 2017).In recent study related to the world Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research, an average of 10gram of alcohol a day is associated with a five per cent risk increase of breast cancer in pre-menopausal women and nine percent in post-menopausal women. The study is based on the analysis of 119 observational studies on breast cancer risk from around the world which included 12 million women and more than 260,000 cases of breast cancer (Vanguard, 2017).

It has been advanced that excessive alcohol intake may interrupt the menstrual cycle and increase the risk of infertility. Unprotected sexual intimacy which is also tractable to the abuse of the substance leads user into the risk of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy (Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC), 2018; Anderson, *et al.* 2009).Women who consumed alcohol during pregnancy are likely to have baby with mental retardation and birth defects called foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and they are also at risk of having infant mortality due to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) (CDC, 2018).Eniola (2017) corroborates this position that excessive consumption of alcohol has harmful effect on pregnant women and their unborn child, while giving a vivid description of the condition that pregnant women who are alcohol addicts are at risk of giving birth to babies with conditions like small-sized head, low-birth weight, heart defects and delayed developmental milestones. The conditions are prominent features of foetal alcohol syndrome occasioned by alcohol crossing the brain barrier and then negatively impacting the developing brain of the foetus. The risk of the syndrome is higher in the early stage of pregnancy when in many cases the woman is oblivious of being pregnant (Eniola, 2017).

The substance is also usually used to effectuate sexual violence with linkage being established between alcohol consumption and male genders perpetration of sexual violence against their female counterparts (Dumbili, 2017). With all these realities about the difference in the level of exposure to risks attributable to alcohol abuse based on gender use, there is need to move ahead to examine media representation on this issue. The media has been identified to play important role in reporting gender and gender issue, and as well as how gender issues are reported. Kafiris, Thompson, Aliefendioglu, Aslan, &Vassiliadou (2005, p. 8-9) fitly present this claim that:

> The media are also sites, or spaces, where gender and gender issues can be discussed and debated, both in news and in fiction, and they can play a significant role in determining whether or not gender issues will widely be considered important and legitimate social, political and cultural issues in a particular society. By providing both such resources and spaces, the media can play a role in shaping how we think and feel about gender and gender issues (Kafiris, *et al*. 2005:8-9).

Theoretical Review: Construction of Social Reality

This theory was developed in 1966 by two sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who argues that humans and their interactions created the society we live in. The interaction tagged 'habitualisation' describes action that is cast into a pattern due to frequent repetition with future performance in the same way and with same economical effort (Lumenlearning.com, undated).Our Perceptions of reality are shaped by our beliefs and backgrounds (sparksparknote.com, undated). The media influence our perception about the world and impact behaviour and response patterns (Maigue, 2013). He affirms that the mass media operate both in the objectification and subjectification of reality in the construction of human reality. Our exposure to the content of mass media influence the realities of our belief, values, and culture which are swayed towards the constructed social reality handed over to us by the media (Maigue, 2013).

We are loaded with plethora of media contents with potent to alter our perception and disposition about social values and realities. These myriad of messages in form of news, talks, drama, films, musicals, reality shows, and etcetera have the capacity to influence the judgment of the audience that are exposed to the reality being constructed and legitimise by the mass media. The mass media and film medium in particularis powerful tool for the construction of social reality. The type of framing and representation given to gender and health issues in films has the potency to alter values and belief about the material and social reality in our milieu. This study examined the construction of social reality Nollywood is giving to alcohol consumption by both sex and the frequency of portrayal the substance with nonalcoholic drinking.

Empirical Review

This study considers the study by Martinez, Roislien, Naidoo, and Clausen T. (2011)which is "Alcohol Abstinence and Drinking among African Women: Data from the World Health Surveys".The study was carried out to know the state of alcohol use among African women. The use of the substance is increasing among African women, so, comparable information about women's current alcohol use is useful for the formulation of national and international health policies.It aimed to provide a comparable description of alcohol use among women across 20 African countries.Survey research design which employed the use of identical questionnaires administered in a face-to-face interview format was adopted for the study in the 20 countries surveyed. The WHO World Health Survey (WHS) data collected between 2002 and 2004 in 20 African countries were used for this study. A stratified, multi-stage answer design was used to give each household a chance of being selected as part of the sample from the national representative sampling frames of the 20 African countries. 77,165 adults aged 18 years and above were included and 40,739 (53%) were women. Data analysis was performed in STATA 9.0 and R. 2.9.0. Descriptive statistics presented as frequencies, percentages, means and multiple logistic regression model were employed as statistical tools.

It was discovered that 33,841 (81%) of Africa women from the 20 countries surveyed were lifetime abstainers while 3,592 representing 10 percent of the women respondents were current drinkers. 584 women (1%) and 713 (2%) of the women were found to be heavy drinkers and a risky single occasion drinker respectively.The proportion of risky single occasion drinkers among heavy drinkers was 70%.More than 95% of women in Comoros, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia were found to be lifetime abstainers. Four countries were in moderate consumption cluster, five in harmful consumption cluster,while four were in the hazards consumption cluster.

Research Design

Content analysis research design was deployed for this research which generated quantitative outcome. The research method is popular with mass media researchers owing to its efficient way of investigating as well as measuring the content of the media (Esiri and Onwubere, undated). Best of Nollywood (BON) Awards was selected for being representative of other awards as it concerns Nollywood in terms of geographical, chorological and numeric representations. This study covered an eight period from 2009 to 2016 of BON Award ceremonies and forty (40) films were the total number of films nominated for the best movie of the year award category within this time frame. Five films were consistently nominated each year for this eight-year period, bringing the population frame to a list of forty (40). The sample size of twenty (20) films was selected from the population frame of forty films. The 20 films were selected using simple random sampling technique (balloting method). Portrayals of alcohol in the selected films were determined per shots because there is meaning in every shot (Ascher and Pincus, 2012). Different shot types of same image/portrayal of alcohol were counted separately. However, a repeat of the same shot type was not counted as part of the frequency count. The data generated was analyzed using

statistical analysis tools of t-test and simple percentage, with frequency tables and charts. SPSS was employed for the analysis.

Data Presentation

Research Question: What is the frequency of alcohol portrayal in the selected Nollywoodfilms?

Table 1: Alcoholic and Nonalcoholic Beverage Portrayed in the Selected Nollywood Films

YEAR	ALCOHOL PORTRAYAL	PERCENTAGE	NONALCOHOL PORTRAYAL	PERCENTAGE
2009	14	4.1%	13	8.1%
2010	74	21.5%	9	5.6%
2011	54	15.6%	35	21.7%
2012	72	20.9%	41	25.5%
2013	31	9%	9	5.6%
2014	36	10%	12	7.5%
2015	59	17%	34	21%
2016	5	1.5%	8	5%
Total	**345**	**100%**	**161**	**100%**

Table 1 and Figure 1 show that with a frequency of 345 for alcohol depiction and 161 for nonalcoholic in the selected films examined, frequency of portrayal of alcohol doubled that of nonalcoholic drinks. The year 2010, 2012 and 2015 have the highest frequency of alcohol representation with 21.5 per cent, 20.9 per cent and 17 per cent respectively, while 2011 with 15.6 per cent followed in fourth position. At the lower level of depiction are 2014 (10%), 2013 (9%), 2009 (4.1%) and 2016 (1.5%) in that order. For the nonalcoholic drinks, 2012 (25.5%), 2011 (21.7%), 2015 (21%) were top in the order of frequency, while 2009, 2014, 2010, 2013 registered the lower frequency of 8.1 percent, 7.5 per cent, 5.6 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively. 2016 has the lowest frequency of portrayal of non-alcoholic drinks with 5 per cent.

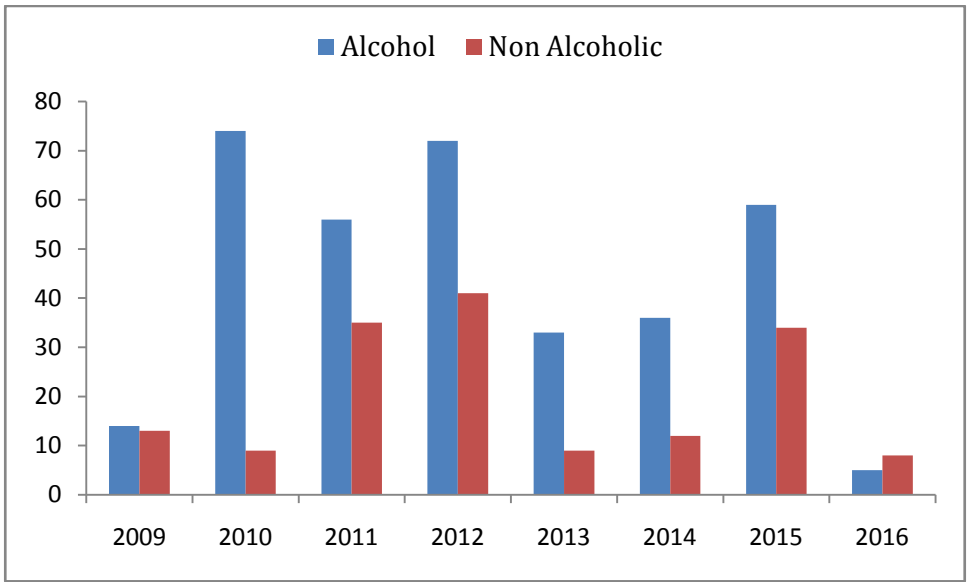

Figure 1: Alcoholic and Nonalcoholic Beverage Portrayed in the Selected Nollywood Films

Hypothesis: There is no significant gender difference in the usage of alcohol in the selected Nollywood films.

a. Null hypothesis: Male characters do not use alcohol more than female characters in the selected Nollywood films.
b. Alternative hypothesis:Male characters use alcohol more than female characters in the selected Nollywood films.

Table 2: Gender difference portrayal of alcohol usage in the selected Nollywood films

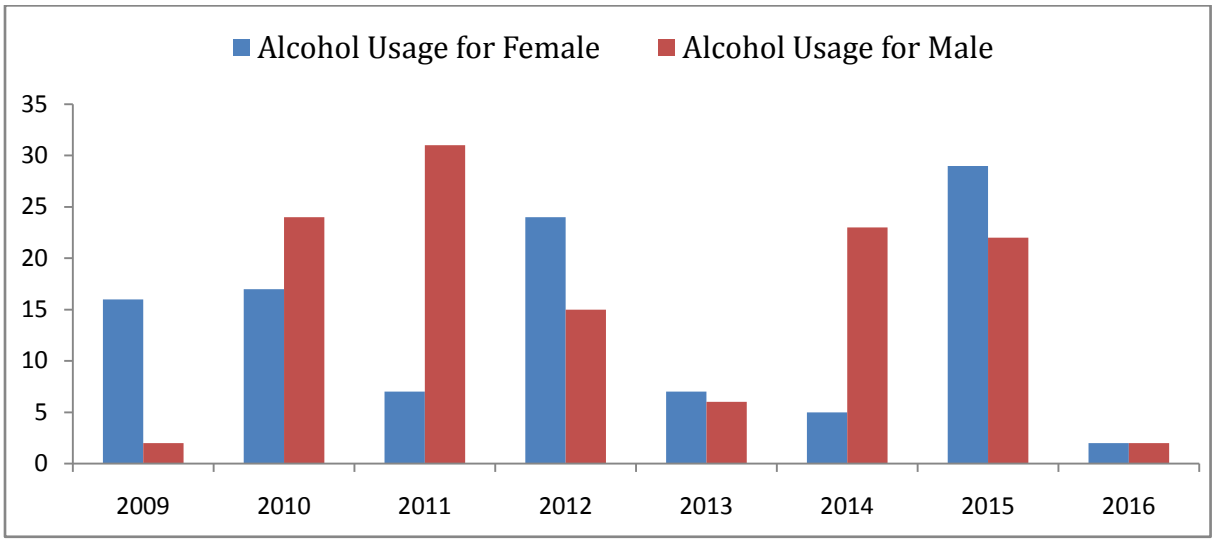

Figure2: Gender difference portrayal of alcohol usage in the selected Nollywood films

Table 3: Paired samples statistics for gender difference in the portrayal of alcohol usage

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Alcohol Usage for Female	13.3750	8	9.69444	3.42750

Alcohol Usage for Male	15.6250	8	11.12189	3.93218

Table 4: Paired samples correlationsfor gender difference in the portrayal of alcohol usage in the selected Nollywood films

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Alcohol Usage for Female & Alcohol Usage for Male	8	.191	.651

Table 5: Paired samples testfor gender difference portrayal of alcohol

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Alcohol Usage for Female - Alcohol Usage for Male	-2.25000	13.28533	4.69707	-13.35681	8.85681	-.479	7	647

From table 2, 3, 4, and 5above, the mean for the alcohol usage for Female and alcohol usage for Male is -2.25000 and a standard deviation of 13.28533. In this same vein, the t value is -0.479 and a degree of freedom of 7 at 0.647 significant values. Since the significant value of 0.647 is greater than 0.05 preset alpha level of significance ($P \leq 0.05$);it can thus be deduced that there is no significant relationship between alcohol usage for Female and alcohol usage for Male. As a result, the Null hypothesis which says that there is no significant gender difference in the usage of alcohols in the selected Nollywood films is therefore accepted, becausethere is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female lead characters.

Decision: Null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant gender difference in the usage of alcohol in the selected Nollywood films; as such male characters do not use alcohol more than female characters in the selected Nollywood films. This study outcome shows that the depiction of alcohol use by both genders in the Nollywood films examined have been equalized. Nollywood filmmakers represented both male and female as having equal access to alcohol use.

Discussion of Findings

Research Objective One:To know the frequency of alcohol portrayal in Nollywood films.

The use of alcoholic beverages in the selected films for this study is more than double of non-alcoholic beverages over the period examined. Based on this outcome, Nollywood has painted a social reality of Nigeria as an alcohol consumption nation. This position may not be far from the actual drinking culture existing in the society. Nigeria is pegged in 4th position in Africa as the top drinking nation (WHO, 2015) and the largest beer consuming nation(Adaramodu, 2016, Taiwo, 2017).The proliferation of breweries, distilleries,and drinking bars in the country (Adaramodu, 2016; Taiwo, 2017) lends credence to this media social construction of reality that the country is soaked in alcohol.

Research Objective Two: To discover whether there is gender difference in the portrayal of alcohol in Nollywood films.

There was no gender difference in the portrayal of alcohol usage by both genders in the selected Nollywood films according to this research outcome. This study reveals that Nollywood filmmakers have created an equalisation in the usage of alcohol in their films passing the message to the audience that both genders have free and equal access to the substance without recur to health, economic, social and cultural reasons why this equalisation is not justifiable in our social milieu.

If the use of alcohol by African women has been reported to be so low with abstinence a typical practice in many African countries (WHO, 2014; Martinez, Roislien, Naidoo, and Clausen, 2011); then the portrayal of alcohol use by women as not different from that of men by Nollywood filmmakers in the films content analysed for this study is in dissonance with reality in our milieu in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. Though, Martinez, *et al.* (2011) averred that there is increase in alcohol use among women in Africa, but the outcome of their study on drinking among African women analysed from the data collected as part of WHO World Health Survey supported the existing reality of low alcohol use by African women. Out of the 40,739 women in the study, 33,841 representing 81 per cent were lifetime abstainers, while a total of 3,592 (10%) women were current drinkers with 584 (1%) and 713 (2%) of the women accounting for heavy drinkers and risky single occasion drinkers respectively (Martinez, *et al.* 2011). Men are more likely than women to be current drinkers in Nigeria with lifetime abstention from alcohol usually recorded among women than men (Wilsnack, Wilsnack, Kristjanson, Vogettanz-Holm and Gmel, 2009).

The media of which film is an integral part is seen as the mirror of the society, that is, it holds itself up as a mirror to the society and reflect what already is (McQuail, 2010; Hasan, 2013). But there are those that believe that media content are purposely selective and manipulated, therefore, there is unequal representation of the various strata of the society as some are over represented or under represented or not even represented at all (Hasan, 2013). It is obvious that there is over representation of drinking portrayal by women in Nollywood films; therefore, is need to address this current level representation of alcohol use by women in Nigeria films. Nollywood filmmakers in their construction of social reality should be mindful to give an accurate representation.

Equalising the depiction of alcohol use for the both genders has grave consequences for the younger female generation who might develop the disposition that using the substance like the male folk is a safe practice for them as a result of exposure to these films. Many health risks have been documented on the consequences of alcohol usage by women. Women have been reported to have death rates of 50 to 100 percent higher than that of men and this have been accounted to include deaths from suicides, alcohol-related accidents, heart disease, stroke and liver disease (NIH, 2018).There are also associated risks of engaging in unprotected sex, being victim of violence, sexual assault and unwanted pregnancy (NIH, 2018, Dumbili, 2017). Depression, mental disorder, substances dependence, domestic violence, birth disorder, cancer, and mortality among others are attributable to alcohol abuse (Martinez, *et al.* 2011; Sweet, 2014; Eniola, 2017).

Conclusion

The mass media and in this case films through repeated portrayals do construct social reality about issues in the society which affects the perception and judgment of the members of the society exposed to their content.Nollywood depicted alcohol as a substance that is equally beneficial to both genders. This equalization of gender alcohol usage is harmful to the female folk because of the move severe consequence on women health than their male counterpart.

Recommendations

It is therefore, recommended that stakeholders in the Nigeria film industry should:

1. Should tone down the high frequency of alcohol depictions in their productions and limit it to ineluctable use.
2. Should give true gender representation on the depiction of alcohol usage to reflect the reality of male drinking dominance as against the current equalisation of both genders by Nollywood on alcohol use.

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