
THE CONFLICT OF SEXUALITY IN FILMS: ANALYSIS OF NOLLYWOOD DEPICTION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses a sensitive subject in the context of the socio-cultural, political, legal, and religious opposition to homosexual groups in Nigeria. It addresses the demographic depictions, honest portrayal, and conflicts between heterosexual and homosexual characters based on sexuality in *Nollywood* films. The study adopted a quantitative content analysis of 20 *Nollywood* films. The study revealed that homosexual characters are depicted as physiologically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually misfits. However, the film producers made an educational effort in exposing practices seen as offensive to societal norms and values. Further findings reveal that homosexual characters are portrayed as morally negative. This demonstrates the truism of the normative hypothesis that media take colouration of society in which they are situated. Finally, the study revealed a high level of perceptual conflict of non-acceptance, stigmatisation, rejection, and prohibited reaction by heteronormative characters towards homosexuals based on their sexuality. In this sense, the *Nollywood* films examined by this study illustrate unwelcome, stereotypic, anti-social, and homophobic narratives of homosexual characters that align with Nigerian society's social, civil, cultural, and religious belief systems. It is recommended that well-researched based content on sexual minorities beyond the depiction of the social position on their sexuality to more issues relating to the causal factors and ways of addressing such sexuality should be more focused on since in it has been marked as a crime in Nigeria.

Keywords: *film, depiction, homosexuality, Nollywood, heteronormative*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of appropriate and inappropriate sexuality or practice is topical in any media. This is traceable to the fact that sexuality is central to human existence and tops the number of social, religious, political, and cultural issues in the world. Human sexuality is not just viewed as a system of procreation but as a determinant for social, moral, and cultural acceptability and standard of behaviour (Gagnon & Simon, 2017). Right now, the world is confronted with clashing belief systems regarding what the ideal human sexuality ought to be. From a global dichotomy, this has brought forth two kinds of societies, to be specific: (1) gay tolerant societies and (2) homophobic stereotypic societies. The gay tolerant society accepts that sexual inclination is private, personal, and hereditary, which ought not to be interfered with by cultural norms and stipulations, while the other belief that sexual inclination ought to be determined and defined in line with laid down social norms and values.

Based on the above division, the initial group comprises the European nations that are gay tolerant and permissive societies, while the African nations typify the hetero-stereotypic culture. From a worldwide discussion, the sociological placement of homosexuality is one of the top issues igniting conflicts between most African states and the European ones as such practices are legitimately and socially dismissed by most African countries as unacceptable while seeing any form of sexuality outside the male-female kind as wrongdoing, taboo, demonic, ailment, pervasion or sin (Ukonu, Anorue, Ololo, & Olawoyin, 2021). According to Flett (2021), seventy-four (74) countries, primarily African, consider being gay or homosexual as anti-cultural, unnatural, criminal, and immoral behaviour. Insignificant numbers of these countries have been legal measures taken against homosexuality in any form and even its production in media content.

Nigeria, just as most of her African counterparts sees the act of homosexuality as being against the centrality of the African socio-cultural norms and standards. As indicated by Azuah (2008), despite the different and multiplicity of ethnicities in the country, she has kept a rigid unanimous voice and stands against any non-heteronormative sexual ideology or practices. This could be traceable to the dictation and influence of the two dominant religious groups (Islam and Christianity) who both see the practice from the same points as being sinful, haram or offensive, therefore denouncing and reprimanding homosexuality and whatever accompanies it. Apart from the religious dictation, it is traditionally unwelcomed by almost all socio-cultural groups in Nigeria.

Portraying or displaying media content on homosexuality can get problematic in a society in which such contents go contrary to the belief system of the people. As indicated by the normative tents of the mass media, the media reflect or is expected to reflect the social-cultural beliefs and ideology that governs the very type of society in which they exist. However, some investigations put forth by Miller (2016) say the contrary about the Nigerian film industry where they stipulated that the industry is being utilised to spread the knowledge as well as promotion of homosexuality. As detailed by Arimoro (2019), the acknowledgment and promotion of gay identity is gradually normalising in Nigeria, notwithstanding the Same Sex Prohibition Act (SSPA) which forbids such tendencies. Recently, there seem to be more conversations about homosexuality in Nigerian public spheres, particularly in the film media.

Nollywood as the center of the Nigerian entertainment world takes a neologism American Hollywood. The industry produces significant content distributed far and wide across the nation and abroad. The industry produces about like 50 films month to month and around 2000 films per annum making it the second largest film producing industry globally

as well as contributing immensely to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Nigerian movies are renowned and extensively watched and they are also influential in addressing, validating and countering contemporary happenings or issues. The most facet of society with specific issues tend to use Nollywood which projects such issues to the public as a system of instruction or socialisation.

Lately, *Nollywood* filmmakers have featured the issues of homosexuality with the depictions shifting from known cultural standpoint of the Nigerian society on gay individuals and homosexuality. Ango (2019) submits that there are foreign impacts of media on the depiction of gays in Nigerian films which are systemic in advancing, popularising and propagating the practice. This has prompted the advancement of well-known content such as in films, and books, among others by supporting gay associations like the Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs), Queer Alliance Nigeria (Q.A.), Global Right Nigeria and the Nigerian Humanist Movement (NHM).

However, contending with the above stand of Ango (2019) by Bradshaw, Kahn, and Saville (2010), they argue that the increase in the portrayal doesn't result to increment in agreeableness or acceptability of homosexuality as the examined depictions are predominantly negative and stereotypic. They contended that most times, gays are depicted as impulsive, savage, comic, unserious and vulnerable people. Inversely, Staley (2011) submits that the presence of gay in the media assists with decreasing the heteronormative arrangement and utilisation of hetero-generalisation, along these lines advancing the connection among gay people and heterosexuals. Despite this position, the dominant position holds that portrayals can prompt more noteworthy acknowledgement, or if nothing else, strengthening of voiceless groups in society and can also impact the perspectives, values and activities of individuals who view them. Hence, under this foundation, this study analyses the cultural conflict in Nollywood films on the acceptability and rejection of homosexuality.

Statement of Problem

Media occupy a central position in shaping the ideology that determines the socio-cultural reality in society. This role is pivotal to the survival and extension of beliefs, ideas and practices over the years. In recent times, one of the issues lingering in the public spheres cum media spaces is the issue of human sexuality. The media's role in propagating either heteronormative or homosexual practice has attracted scholarly attention. Based on the knowledge that the media exert a significant level of influence on social construction and deconstruction of perception on societal issues, very countable empirical studies exist as regards media in Nigeria and the portrayal of homosexuality in Nigerian media space, especially the video-film industry (*Nollywood*) which accounts for a significant level of influence on the citizens' perception and education on social issues.

According to (Tsika, 2015), the Nigerian media is gradually tilting toward accepting homosexual practices despite African society considering such practices as detestable, un-African, and un-cultural. A survey by Makanjuola, Folayan, and Oginni (2018) lamented a 7% to 10% annual increase in the acceptance of homosexuality in Nigeria from 2015 through 2017. Supporting this, Arimoro (2019) howled that Nigerian media portrayal of homosexuality is growing slowly despite the Same-Sex Prohibition Act enacted in 2014. Observing this from the media-effect or influence standpoint, Calzo and Ward (2009) assert that media representations of social groups have implications on society and submit that an average

person is influenced by what they hear or view in the media directly or indirectly. On the other side to the argument and lamentation of promoting homosexuality via movie content, Green-Simms (2012) argue that despite the increase in visibility of homosexual characters in movies, the portrayal of these characters is derogatory, demonising and dehumanising which does not advocate its practice among Nigerian viewers. Therefore, this study addresses this cultural conflict in the film industry on social depiction, moral portrayal, and acceptability of homosexuality in Nollywood films.

This study covers the demographic depiction, moral portrayal and acceptability of homosexuality in Nollywood films in the following films: (1) *Women Affair*, (2) *Emotional Crack*, (3) *My School Mother*, (4) *Beautiful Faces*, (5) *Corporate Maid*, (6) *Mr Ibu and Keziah*, (7) *Men in Love*, (8) *3some*, (9) *Girl on Girl*, (10) *School Boys*, (11) *Veil of Silence*, (12) *October 1st*, (13) *Abba*, (14) *Woman to Woman*, (15) *Clash of Lesbians*, (16) *Hell or High Water*, (17) *Promiscuous Pastor*, (18) *Girls Hostel*, (19) *We Don't Live Here Anymore* and (20) *Selfish Desires*.

Homosexuality and the Mass Media

The concept of sexuality covers the affinity to have physical fantasies, attraction or desire to be carnally involved with a particular (Cochran et al., 2014). Each human has a self-held or perceived perspective on sexuality known as “sexual orientation”. Nonetheless, there is generally different variation in people’s sexual orientation or inclinations. Essentially, the possibility of sexual orientation is grouped into heterosexuality (having sexual attraction towards other sex types), gay (having sexual desires towards same-sex type) and bisexuals (having sexual attraction towards both sexes).

There have been several investigations, debates, and discussions on whether homosexuality should be acceptable in society. According to Wren, Launer, Reiss, Swanepoel, and Music (2019), few people are inclined to believe that sexual preference is hereditary, determined by pre-birth hormonal impacts or other physical or mind dissimilarities to have characteristics that are fit for making them vulnerable to biological factors that can invigorate the craving for homosexuality. In light of the acknowledgement that homosexuality is immense and frequently twisted because of cultural predisposition, generalisation and shame, the American Psychiatric Association submits that the issue of gay or same-sex inclination is either communicated in real life, desire, or character. There is no agreement on the causes of a gay tendency among scientists or researchers on why individuals have preferences for gay practice or homosexuality or are drawn to such sexual preferences. It tends to be accepted now that such factors could be either or blend the hereditary, hormonal, societal or cultural orientation of people (Elia, 2014).

Most people see homosexuality to be a high level of social pervasion (Pizer, Sears, Mallory, & Hunter, 2011). Nonetheless, this is not extremely obvious, as Epprecht (2012) contended that homosexuality had been labelled as a Western cultural practice among the African nations. In African societies, religion plays a significant role in defining rights and wrongs. In this case of homosexuality, it has played a severe position in suppressing it. It is considered a sin or haram to Christianity and Islam, the two most practised religions on the continent. In particular, the Christian literature has frequently ascribed the practice of homosexuality to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as written in the Bible, in Genesis chapter 29. The declaration of homosexuality as a taboo was equally established in the theological-juridical write-up of Medieval Islam, which is the most fundamental law of

the significant Islamic Schools of Thought (*madhhab*) of fiqh inside Sunni Islam settled upon and acknowledged by most contemporary Islamic researchers (Singh, 2015).

In Nigeria, there is a very narrow perspective and disdain toward the practice of homosexuality. Nigeria, by legitimate and social belief, is a homophobic country. In 2016, there was a report by the Human Right Watch that Nigeria, from the year 2014, when it was passed into law, the SSMPA has experienced a high level of growth of homophobia (Miller, 2016). Among the 73 countries recorded with homophobic submission, 34 were African countries led by Nigeria and Uganda. Regardless of this, there is a scholarly deviation towards homosexuality and eccentric culture in Nigerian Literature, particularly in her Film industry, Nollywood, which has been recorded to highlight more homosexual or gay-themed content (Parker, Sadika, Sameen, Morrison, & Morrison, 2020).

In an assessment of homosexuality in *Nollywood* by Abah (2012), he submits that there is a high level of progression in the portrayal of homosexuality in the Nigerian media. This has been viewed as a patterning to other popular entertainment film industries like *Hollywood* (Haynes, 2016) and *Bollywood* (Meghani, 2020), which appear to be concentrating recently on the rights of sexual minorities in the society. With the prominence of film as a medium, Haynes (2016) submits that the place of film as a medium of educational messages is essentially significant in reaching a large number of people. Many Nigerians put effort into watching movies or motion pictures as a tangible way of relaxing or enjoying amusement with their loved ones, even kids (Tsika, 2015).

Adesokan (2009) opines that film has turned into a significant element of influence and learning for young and adults alike in Nigeria. Therefore, the presence cum type of depiction of homosexuality in Nollywood content will shed light on how people should or would perceive homosexuals in real life. However, history has shown that Nigeria has a high level of intolerance for this type of sexuality because of the socio-cultural stands on such practices. Notwithstanding the country's difference in ethnicity and cultural beliefs, there has been a collective voice in saying "NO" to homosexuality, with overpowering Pentecostal Christians in the south and Muslims in the North. Thus, Nigeria keeps a bound together voice against homosexuality and whatever appears to accompany it (Onanuga & Alade, 2020).

Equally, Abah (2012) reports that from the cultural submission of Africans on homosexuality as projected by media as a societal educator, the underlying position of Nollywood on homosexuality is portrayed as a subject or object typical of the western world. Specific analysts have sufficiently tended to the possibility of lesbianism in these movies (Azuah, 2008; Green-Simms, 2012). It was that Nollywood got brave enough to address male homosexuality. Nollywood, therefore, has been used recently to address the issue of homosexuality the same way it has always been used in all matters, reasonable from the beginning, and suddenly, an excess of movies regarding the matter. Nonetheless, from the current portrayal and show, it is indispensable to examine Nollywood accounts about homosexuality as outlined regarding its risk to a heteronormative society like Nigeria.

Review of Empirical Studies

In examining the media portrayal of sexual minorities, studies such as Michaels, Parent, and Moradi (2013), Wolff and Himes (2010), Storey (2018) as well as Cook (2018) revealed that there is a gradual growth in the presence of homosexual characters in movies even though such portrayal may not be explicitly obvious as being LGBT. Specifically, Storey (2018) submits that

queer media characters represent the voice of moral authority and the invasion of the media by the queer community, and this has grown from the initial comic and humorous depiction of the community to a political and societal concerned representation that is no longer at the margin but at the centre of the popular culture. Odabasi (2019) revealed a progressive improvement in the representation of queer characters in Hindi videos. It acknowledged the potency of positive representation of such characters as a remedy to hostility and non-acceptance of the sexual minorities in Indian society. Cook (2018) revealed that there was a significant difference between the frequency of LGBT representation on mainstream broadcast television programming and streaming, a significant improvement in the representation of LGBT between year 2016 and 2017, there is more representation of homosexuality (gays and lesbians) than the bisexual and transgender and a significant improvement (positive) representation of homosexual as they are allowed to express public emotion, decent, relate as un-harmful or not based on any negative stereotype. This study revealed a significant improvement in the (positive) representation of homosexuals as they are allowed to express public emotion, decent, relate as un-harmful or not based on any negative stereotype.

On the contrary, Rudy (2016) submit a marginalized representation of homosexual characters. Rudy (2016) revealed that the genres of films with the dominant gay characters were drama, comedy, detective, Western and horror, that gay characters are marginalised and form the minority set in films with a population of 1 to 2 per movie and a reflection of the reality of gay population in the actual society as sexual minorities. Natarajan (2022) showed that there is an under-representation of homosexuals in Indian films. It also identified the challenge of conflict and resistance and the power of the media to make visible to promote mass culture. However, both studies revealed established that films serve as amplifiers to make LGBTQ or homophobia issues heard, understood and valued. The analysis showed that the films provided a transformational approach to homosexual presentation, which will help evolve knowledge and strategies to deal with homophobic tendencies.

On factors influencing the nature of representation accrued to homosexual characters, (Paralik, 2017) submits that the depiction accrued to homosexual characters is significantly influenced by gender classification as “interrelated”. In the same vein, Boyagoda (2018) revealed that there is a replication of the hegemony of male-female played a role by the homosexual character depicting a man and woman relationship. The study submits that there was a high level of conformity with the realistic experiences of homosexuals in the set society, characterised by misery, sadness, isolation, hopelessness and depression. It also revealed an unequal treatment of gays and lesbians in terms of sexual display in films. The lesbians’ nakedness is more displayed than the gays reinstating the utilisation of female sexuality. (Onanuga & Alade, 2020) opined that Nollywood films reflect African social inequalities, minoritisation and disapproval of homosexuality. It further submitted that the examined films do not make a case or advocate for the acceptance of homosexuality, but rather a ‘humanisation’ of homosexual characters. The study concludes that the representations of homosexuality in the films are simply used to mobilise consciousness on the social situation of homosexuality.

On the social cum moral depiction of homosexual characters, Pooja and Rekha (2018) disclosed that there is an unrealistic, odd and satirical/comic representation of homosexuals (an objectification of seriousness) for fun and little attention to their human side with the same fear, needs, pain and aspirations as the heterosexual populace. Equally, (Forshaw, 2015) revealed that the portrayal of homosexuals is stereotypic with specific elements such as selfishness, corruption, deceit, unclean, demonic, unholy, religiously unwelcomed, and disgusting or

irritation and rejection. Zhang (2014) discovered that there was an insignificant level of prominence given to homosexual feelings; the majority of the gay characters were portrayed in a negative light through depiction such as sadness, isolated, powerless, and depressed and mostly hiding their sexuality as a result of fear of societal rejection or isolation, evoking of sympathy, betraying the morals of society and non-homosexuals characters reaction towards them was depicted as disgusting, sick, abnormal, filthy, and unacceptable. In like direction, Ukonu et al. (2021) disclosed that homosexuality is projected to be against the legal, social and political bases. The study uncovered that while Nollywood features more plots and portrayals to make homosexuality striking to the general public, the portrayals of homosexuality are questionable, anti-social, and anti-religious. Despite the areas covered by the above empirical studies, this study examines the missing areas such as socio-demographics, moral depiction and reactions, which are a whole system of describing, categorising or identifying homosexual characters as minorities in society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is hinged on the framing theory. Gregory Bateson propounded this theory in 1972. It is a media perspective sharpening theory that shares a similar view with the agenda-setting theory. Some scholars have alluded to it as an adaptation of the second level of Agenda Setting theory. The framing theory submits that the mass media consumers' or audience's perception of a specific issue or matter depends on how they are being 'framed' or presented by the media (Cole & Greer, 2013). Even though there is an absence of agreement among scholars of communication concerning the definition and conceptualisation of media framing, it is by and large concurred that there is a connection between how messages are framed and how such messages are received and perceived by the audience.

According to (Grant, Motter, & Tanis, 2011), frames are dependent on stereotypes and generalisations to make psychological ground by which the audience or individuals take a stand or draw a conclusion on communication contents. This is a made reality in individuals' psyche, which starts from birth through nearly their lifetime. According to this school of thought, framing is characterised as socially shared rules and beliefs over time, which work emblematically to structure the social world or how people see realities around them. It is accepted that people have their own socio-cultural and personal frames of seeing or viewing the world.

Selviani and Sunarto (2022) opines that 'to frame' means to pick a particular part of an evident event or reality and make them more absolutely striking in a message to propel a particular understanding, interpretation, evaluation or treatment. From the media explicitness, the collection, production, and packaging of media content affect or influence the mental picture of the issue (s). The major tenets of the framing theory are summed up as follows: (i) framing is instrumental to the development of social perceptions, (ii) framing impacts the translation of knowledge or meaning, (iii) Mass media communications encourage specific stories, as well as understanding and turn-down others, (iv) events in the society, are perceived, made sense of and deciphered in view of the light of which frames are being used in communicating them and (v) changes in framings take place unconsciously without almost anyone knowing except with a critical mind (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2004). In its application to this study, the social depiction, moral portrayal and conflictual display given to homosexual characters and responses of heteronormative characters framed in Nollywood

movies will form a social perception of how viewers will perceive sexual minorities in society. It is equally instrumental in understanding the interpretation of the media frame given to anti-social characters and minorities in media content. Thus, the utilisation of framing theory here submits that *Nollywood* makers and directors utilise different framing techniques to develop content about homosexuals, either as pro-social or anti-social, positive, neutral or negative, accepted or rejected. In summation, it is concluded that media framing of homosexual characters as portrayed in movies has the psychological potential of shaping the audience's idea, impression, perspective, and reaction to homosexuals, gays, or sexual minorities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative content analysis of twenty (20) purposively selected *Nollywood* homosexual themed films based on the requirement that such film has homosexual related theme, narrative and character(s). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which focuses on particular characteristics of the population. The choice of purposive sampling among other non-probability sampling techniques was motivated by the position of Wimmer and Dominick (2013), that purposive technique is adopted where the researcher draws on the knowledge of the subject(s) under study. The criteria for the selection of the videos were (i) The film must be centered on homosexuality; (ii) It must feature explicit homosexual character; (iii) The film must be scripted by a Nigerian; (iv) It must be acted by Nigerian actors and actresses; (v) It must be set in Nigeria; (vi) It must be produced between 2000 to 2019; (vii) And it must have a running time of minimum of twenty five (25) minutes and such movie must be rated by the Nigerian Film and Video Censorship Board. By this selection, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the twenty selected films. For the unit of analysis, scenes and characters were utilised as submitted by Wimmer and Dominick (2013) as the smallest element of content analysis. By definition, scenes are film divisions into continuous action or dialogue taking place in a particular location, while characters are individual actors cast in the select film.

With explicit sexual indicators, homosexuals were identified by sexual or romantic expressions such as kissing, holding hands, kissing, cross-dressing, raping, and sex implying either by action or verbal expressions. For social depiction of homosexuals, the following were coded; Age (A) (Adult=1, Youth=2, Child=3), Educational Status (Highly Educated=4, Semi-Educated=5, Uneducated=6), Marital Status (3) (Single=7, Married=8, Divorced=9, Widowed=10), Occupational Status (Employed=11, Self-employed=12, Unemployed=13), Religious Affiliation (Christianity=14, Islam=15, African Traditional Religion=16, Atheist/Humanist=17) Economic Status (Rich=18, Average=19, Poor=20), Social Status (Sociable=21, Not sociable=22) Medical Status (Fit=23, Not Fit=24) and type of Homosexuals (Born Homosexual=25, Acquired Homosexual=26). For the moral portrayal of homosexuals, the following were coded; (1) Positive (the depiction of a homosexual character in a socially satisfactory, admirable or celebrated manner such as being kind, peaceful, charitable, hard-working, successful, influential or other praiseworthy elements), Neutral (2) (The projection of a homosexual character in a sphere of day-to-day experience without emphasis on character's personality and Negative (3) (Projection of homosexual characters in an ill-mannered form or behaviours that are as socially unhealthy, damaging or harmful to him or herself or others). For reaction, the following were coded heterosexuals' reactions; celebrated (1), admired (2), indifferent (3), tolerated (4), verbal antagonism (5), physical harassment (6), communal rejection (7) and communal hostility (8).

The instruments for the collection of data were priori and emergent coding systems. For prior coding, it was based on the common elements as envisaged from reviewed literature, while the emergent coding was ascertained from the actual depictions from the examined movies or films. The validity of the instruments was proved via face validity, while the reliability was done through the instrumentation of an inter-coder reliability test using three independent coders recommended by Krippendorff (2018) and Neuendorf (2009). Through the utilisation of the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients test, using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS Version 16), the analysis revealed results of .898 for socio-demographics, .846 for moral depiction and .892 for heterosexual reactions, which, as interpreted by Neuendorf (2009) benchmark are almost perfect for socio-demographics, type of moral depiction and reactions. This indicates the instrument was reliable for the study. Finally, the data collected were reported through descriptive analysis using simple descriptive statistical tools such as tables and percentages.

FINDINGS

This section of this study focuses on the data collected and analysed. The findings are according to the areas of focus and their corresponding indicators.

Table 1: Demographic Depiction of Homosexual Characters

Social Depiction	Frequency	Percentage
Age	No	%
Adults	47	54.7
Youth	38	44.3
Child	1	1.0
Total	86	100
Educational Status	No	%
Highly Educated	25	29.1
Semi Educated	38	44.2
Not Educated	0	0.0
Not Depicted	23	26.7
Total	86	100
Marital status	No	%
Widowed	1	1.2
Married	5	5.8
Divorced/Separated	1	1.2
Single	56	65.1
Not Depicted	23	26.7
Total	86	100
Occupational Status	No	%
Employed	17	19.8
Self-Employed	3	3.5
Unemployed	53	61.6
Not Depicted	13	15.1
Total	86	100

Political Status	No	%
Political Leader	0	0.0
Political Affiliation	0	0.0
Anti-political	0	0.0
Not Depicted	86	100.0
Total	86	100
Religious Affiliation	No	%
Christianity	12	14.0
Islam	0	0.0
African Trad.Religion	0	0.0
Atheist/Humanist	1	1.0
Not Depicted	73	85.0
Total	86	100
Economic Status	No	%
Rich	18	21.0
Average	26	30.0
Poor	10	12.0
Not Depicted	32	37.0
Total	86	100
Social Status	No	%
Sociable	31	36.0
Not Sociable	35	40.7
Not Depicted	20	23.3
Total	86	100
Medical Status	No	%
Fit	16	18.6
Not Fit	38	44.2
Not Depicted	32	37.2
Total	86	100
Type of Homosexual	No	%
Born Homosexual	27	31.4
Acquired Homosexual	30	34.9
Not Depicted	29	33.7
Total	86	100

In line with the first objective of the study which seeks to identify the demographic depiction or description of homosexual characters in *Nollywood* movies, the study revealed that homosexual characters mainly were depicted as single adults who are physiologically, psychologically, economically, socio-culturally abnormal; as well as poses as challenges to the norms, beliefs and legal stipulations of the society. Evidently, from Table 1 above, it is seen that out of the 86 homosexual characters featured in the 20 films, the majority (65%) were socially depicted as single adults (55%), which indicates that the practice of such sexuality is majorly attributed to grown-ups. By implication this goes to express the non-marital union among homosexuals. Regarding educational qualification, it reveals at 44% that most homosexual characters are averagely educated. Also, homosexual characters were depicted as unreligious people with no faith affiliation. By inference, this can be related to the homophobic stand of the dominant religious groups in Nigeria. Furthermore, socially, they were depicted as

not sociable (40.7%) while revealing that their medical status also describes them as not fit (44.2%). Finally, it was shown that such sexuality was socially influenced (30%). Abruptly, from these depictions, it is manifest that homosexual characters are depicted as social misfits. This finding is in agreement with the earlier submission of Osisiogu, Osarenren, and Kalunta-Crumpton (2019), who disclosed that homosexual media depiction is characterised by unmarried adult individuals whose self-identity, sexual orientation and gender are anomalous to societal standards.

By implication, this portrayal presents sexual minorities as individuals with socio-psychological challenges like isolation, rejection, and depression. With specificity to some of the films examined, such as *we don't live here anymore*, *emotional Crack* or *schoolboys*, homosexual characters were depicted to have committed suicide due to the abnormality and nonconformity they felt and experienced from the larger society. In terms of the occupational life of homosexual characters, Nigerian or mostly all African communities do not distinguish personal private life from official cum professional life as the films depict the sexuality of the characters affecting the employability or patronage of the character. Resultantly, this harms their economic status. As predominantly portrayed in the examined movies, they are average even though most are at their productive age.

The finding also reveals the institutional absence of homosexual characters both in religion and political affiliation. To the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2019), homosexual characters were depicted as lacking physical and mental well-being. With specificity, this is seen in the films such as *Mr Ibu and Keziah*, with Keziah seeking medical attention for her sexual disorder, and in *Hell and High waters* with Pastor Gbolawan's spiritual cleansing exercises as well as Chidi and Tolu's psychological and spiritual seeking process in *We don't live here anymore*. This submission aligns with Bradshaw, Kahn and Saville (2010) argument that homosexuals are portrayed as traumatized people by the media. Regarding the causes of homosexual tendencies as portrayed in the films, it was submitted that homosexuality is genetically acquired, therefore, aligning with the stand of Chambers (2022) submit that homosexual attraction springs up basically from psychological or environmental effects from the early stages of human experiences and then manifest in adulthood. In all, it can be deduced that the demographic description of homosexual characters in the films is predominantly single adults who are semi-educated, average class, not sociable, medically unfit, economically and politically regressive with religious apathy and have acquired such sexuality as a result of one's societal influence or the other.

In response to the objective of the study which focused on the moral portrayal of homosexual characters in Nollywood films, reveals that homosexual characters are portrayed as morally negative. From Table 2, it shows that out of 424 appearances of the homosexual character, there were 284 (67%) times depicted as morally negative which indicates they were predominantly portrayed as morally negative with such portrayal depicting them as being violent characters, sexually perverted, emotionally unstable, martially unfaithful, manipulative, diabolic, psychologically unbalanced and guilt-minded as well as affected by the aftermath of their choice of sexuality which is the nemesis for such abnormal sexuality. This implies the Nigerian media space has an uncompromising stand against any non-heteronormative sexuality, describing them as abnormal, unsociable, perverse, sinful, taboo demonic or barbaric. This aligns with the submission of Azuah (2008) that homosexuality is seen as shameful and dishonorable not just at the micro-level but even at the macro level

of African cum Nigerian societies. By reference, the apathy or absence from the religious and political association is traceable to the ridiculing of homosexual characters by religious institutions as depicted in films such as *Hell and High water*, *Promiscuous Pastor; we don't live here anymore*, *woman to woman*, *among* others. Subsequent, further portrayal relates to the cumulative anti-moral portrayal of homosexual characters as unworthy elements associated with one form of vices or the other such as sexual perversity, drug intake and abuse, barbarism, witchcraft or cultism.

Table: 2: Moral Portrayal of Homosexual Characters in the Select Films

Name of Movies	Morally Positive	Morally Neutral	Morally Negative
<i>Women Affair</i>	0	6	13
<i>Emotional Crack</i>	2	3	11
<i>My School Mother</i>	0	1	9
<i>Beautiful Faces</i>	2	0	22
<i>Corporate Maid</i>	3	9	18
<i>Mr. Ibu & Keziah</i>	1	8	22
<i>Men in Love</i>	6	7	14
<i>3some</i>	2	8	7
<i>Girl on Girl</i>	1	7	29
<i>School Boys</i>	0	3	11
<i>Veil of Silence</i>	6	4	13
<i>October 1st</i>	1	2	5
<i>ABBA</i>	3	7	13
<i>Woman to Woman</i>	4	10	7
<i>Clash of Lesbians</i>	0	2	9
<i>Hell or High Water</i>	4	3	5
<i>Promiscuous Pastor</i>	1	5	39
<i>Girls Hostel</i>	1	1	3
<i>We Don't Live Here Anymore</i>	1	9	28
<i>Selfish Desires</i>	1	6	6
Total	39	101	284
Percentage (%)	(9.2)	(23.8)	(67.0)

This finding conforms with that of Zhang (2014) in his study of the portrayal of homosexual characters in Chinese films which portrayed homosexuals as disgusting, sick, abnormal and filthy, therefore negating the position of Gomillion & Giuliano (2011) that these characters are presented as role models to the society. In all, the moral depiction of homosexual characters in the examined films are simply anti-social, in nonconformity with the Nigerian's socio-cultural norms and standard and therefore descriptively places them as disadvantaged, problematic, challenging, misfit and corrupt individuals.

Table 3: Conflicts of Acceptability between Heterosexual and Homosexual Characters

Films	Reactions of Heteronormative Characters towards Homosexual Characters								
	Reactions:	Cel.	Adm.	Indif.	Tol.	Ver. Ant.	Phy Hass.	Com Rejt	Com Host.
Women Affair	1	1	1	1	2	2	0	1	9
Emotional Crack	0	0	0	6	4	2	1	0	13
My School Mother	1	0	1	2	4	0	0	0	8
Beautiful Faces	1	0	1	2	8	0	0	0	12
Corporate Maid	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Mr. Ibu & Keziah	0	0	1	0	4	3	0	0	8
Men in Love	0	3	1	3	6	2	0	0	15
3some	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4
Girl on Girl	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
School Boys	0	0	1	2	2	1	4	1	11
Veil of Silence	0	0	2	6	5	0	4	2	19
October 1 st	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	5
Abba	0	0	0	6	12	9	2	3	32
Woman to Woman	1	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	9
Clash of Lesbians	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	0	8
Hell or High Water	0	2	1	0	3	2	2	1	11
Promiscuous Pastor	0	0	0	1	2	5	0	0	8
Girls Hostel	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
We Don't Live Here Anymore	0	1	1	10	14	6	6	3	41
Selfish Desires	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	6	8	11	53	76	39	22	11	226
Percentage (%)	2.7	3.5	4.9	23.5	33.6	17.3	9.7	4.9	100
	Acceptance =78 (34.5%)				Rejection = 148(65.5%)				

Keys: Cel: Celebrated, Adm: Admired, Indif: Indifference, Tol: Tolerated, Ver. Ant: Verbal Antagonism, Phy Hass: Physical Harrassmen, Com Rejt: Communal Rejection, Com Host. Communal Hostility.

Addressing the final objective of this study which is on the conflicts between heterosexual and homosexual characters based on sexuality, revealed a high level of perceptual conflict of non-acceptance, stigmatisation, and rejection, forbidden and prohibited reactions by heteronormative characters towards homosexual characters based on their sexuality. Table 3 shows that out of a total of 226 reactions recorded in response to the sexuality of homosexual characters in the examined movies, there was higher rejection (65.5%) than acceptance (34.5%) of homosexual characters by heteronormative characters. These were

expressed in the form of communal disapproval and hostility, spouse disengagement, parental disownment, organisational expulsion, social dis-association and legal persecution, among others. By implication, this reflects the reality of homophobia in Nigerian society through the films. The majority of the films displayed a weird or out-of-place description of homosexual characters. This is conformity with the lamentation of Kaur (2017) that there is a significant level of homophobia in Nigeria's media content. It aligns with Lev (2013) submission that homosexual characters are treated as abnormal individuals. By further implication, this finding disclosed that the Nigerian media feature a significant level of intolerance to non-heteronormative sexualities, which is displayed in the form of harassment discrimination, ostracism, rejection and molestation. There is also a point of agreement between this finding and that of Adewumi (2021), who submits that there is a dramatic display of hostility against homosexual characters in film content. Also, Zhang (2014) is equally in conformity with this study as he submits that homosexuals are described as being filthy, disgusting, abnormal, sick, abnormal and filthy by heteronormative characters. With specificity to the movies examined, this is seen in movies like *veil of silence*; *We don't live here anymore* and *women's affair*, where homosexual characters were subjected to several forms of humiliation, harassment and hostility. In fact, most of the homosexual characters ended tragically. Despite the soft appeal and agitation to be heard and understood by homosexual characters in the movies, they all had bad endings. Another point of conflict is the Westernisation or Americanisation of homosexuality as projected in some of the movies in which homosexuality was portrayed to be sexual practice imported from the western world into African society. This is depicted in movies such as *Abba*, in which *Abbanobi*, a medical student from America, returned as transgender. There were also antagonistic reactions of heterosexual characters, such as verbal insults, nicknaming and curses. In submission, *Nollywood* content projects homosexuality as against the country's norms, morale, and religious standard.

CONCLUSION

Following the normative expectation of the media that each medium takes into consideration and colouration of the society in which it operates and represents, this study proved empirically that *Nollywood* takes the reflection of the stand and position of the Nigerian society in her social depiction and moral portrayal of a homosexual character in her film content as well as reaction to the practice of homosexuality. Conclusively, the study states that although there is a significant presence of homosexual characters, such presence is simple educational and non-promotional. Thus, the media (*Nollywood*) holds the social responsibility of enlightening the public on issues as sensitive as homosexuality as the public educator. It equally intimated the audience about the existence of such sexuality and society's legal cum social placement (African and Nigerian Societies, respectively).

From the perspective of the framing theory, it infers that *Nollywood* content is instrumentally significant in shaping the social perception of the issue of homosexuality in Nigerian society, which by implication makes the industry influential as a mind shaper on the presence of homosexuality and how they relate with homosexuals in real life. With media framing being a negative, hazardous, unpleasant, hostile and unwelcoming portrayal of such characters, experiencing the same thing in real life would not be far from the truth as influenced by viewers' impressions about homosexuality. In view of this submission, it is suggested that producers should concentrate more on the holistic depiction of homosexuals rather than just the sexuality of homosexuals, such as the causal factors and how the

homophobic culture of Nigerians can be addressed in the best way possible. Subsequently, the focal point of production should not just be restricted to social depiction but a qualitative exposition of the experiences of sexual minorities in an intolerant society like Nigeria.

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