

Original Article

Evaluation of the Cultural Analysis of the Representation of Ceaserian Births in Select Nollywood Films

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Abstract - The cultural representation of cesarean births in Nollywood cinema remains understudied, with complex social narratives and medical misconceptions surrounding the procedure. This research critically examines the portrayal of cesarean sections in five contemporary Nollywood films, targeting the sociocultural dynamics within Southeast Nigeria's reproductive discourse.

Drawing on cultural studies, media studies, and reproductive health discourse, the study analyzes the cultural representation of cesarean births. A qualitative research design was employed, combining qualitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The findings reveal pervasive cultural narratives surrounding cesarean births. The films predominantly portray cesarean sections as a medical last resort, embedded with traditional and religious undertones. To address these issues, the study recommends developing more nuanced, medically accurate narratives in Nollywood productions and implementing targeted public health communication strategies to mitigate cultural misconceptions about cesarean births.

Keywords - Cesarean births, Cultural representation of Nollywood cinema, Media studies, Reproductive health.

1. Introduction

Cesarian section (CS) has become an increasingly common method of childbirth in Nigeria. The World Health Organization (2023) defines it as “the delivery of a fetus through surgical incisions made through the abdominal wall and the uterine wall.” In Nigeria, cesarian section rates have risen from 2% in 2003 to 5% in 2022, reflecting a growing trend in medical interventions during childbirth (Orji, 2023). This increase mirrors global patterns, with the worldwide cesarian section rate standing at 21.1% in 2015 (Boerma, 2018).

Despite its life-saving potential, the cesarian section is not without risks. Immediate risks include bleeding and infections. Long-term risks may involve complications in future pregnancies (Orji, 2023). Cultural stigmas and stereotypes surrounding the cesarian section remain a significant challenge in Nigeria. Traditional beliefs often view vaginal delivery as the only acceptable form of childbirth. cesarian section is seen as a sign of weakness or failure (Abubakar, 2022). This stigma can lead to delayed decision-

making in emergencies and refusal of medically necessary cesarian section.

The stigma associated with caesarian section in Nigeria is deeply rooted in traditional beliefs about childbirth and womanhood. In many Nigerian cultures, a woman's ability to give birth, (2021). vaginally is seen as a testament to her strength. The cesarian section, by contrast, is often viewed as an “easy way out” or a sign of inadequacy.

Nollywood, Nigeria's booming film industry, has emerged as a powerful cultural force capable of shaping public opinion and challenging societal norms. Since its inception in the early 1990s, Nollywood has grown to become the world's second-largest film industry by volume (Adebayo, 2021). Nollywood films often serve as a mirror to Nigerian society, reflecting current issues while simultaneously shaping public discourse.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend in Nollywood films addressing medical procedures, particularly the cesarian section. This shift reflects a broader societal



change in attitudes towards medical interventions during childbirth. Okonkwo (2020) observed that “health narratives in Nollywood have evolved from purely traditional perspectives to more nuanced portrayals that often incorporate modern medical practices.”

The representation of the cesarean section in Nollywood films is not just a matter of artistic choice. It reflects the real-world challenges faced by Nigerian women. These films often portray the cultural tensions surrounding the cesarean section, depicting characters grappling with the decision to undergo the procedure in the face of family pressure or societal expectations.

Adekunle and Johnson (2022) highlighted the unique position of African cinema, particularly Nollywood, in addressing health issues. They noted that “unlike Western media, which often approach medical topics from a purely clinical perspective, African films tend to contextualize health issues within the broader cultural and social framework.” This approach allows Nollywood to address the cultural stigmas surrounding the cesarean section in a way that resonates with local audiences.

This understanding is crucial not only for the development of more effective health communication strategies but also for the evolution of Nollywood as a platform for social change.

In conclusion, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on the media’s role in shaping health perceptions and behaviors. By focusing on the cultural representation of caesarean sections in Nollywood films, valuable insights that can inform both the film industry and public health sectors will be provided. As Nollywood continues to evolve and expand its influence, understanding its impact on crucial health issues, such as the cesarean section, becomes increasingly important.

2. Statement of the Problem

Nollywood’s dual role as both a mirror and a shaper of societal attitudes raises critical questions about whether its films influence public perceptions of CS or simply reflect prevailing beliefs.

This study examines whether Nollywood films have continued to reflect the growing acceptance of CS as a method of birth. It seeks to analyze how these films portray CS, the messages conveyed through these portrayals, and the extent to which they influence audience attitudes and choices.

2.1. Objectives of the Study

- Ascertain the extent of caesarian birth presentations in Nollywood films.
- Examine the cultural representation used in the portrayal of pregnancy and childbirth in Nollywood movies.

- Ascertain the presence of cultural stereotypes and the presentation about Caesarian births in select Nollywood movies.

2.2. Research Questions

- What is the prevalence of cesarean birth presentations in selected Nollywood films?
- How do Nollywood movies employ cultural elements in their portrayal of pregnancy and childbirth?
- In what ways do Nollywood films represent the caesarian section, and do these representations reinforce or challenge existing cultural narratives?

3. Literature Review

3.1. Cultural Perceptions of Birth and Motherhood in Nollywood Associated with Caesarian Sections

Nollywood films serve as a mirror to Nigerian society, reflecting and sometimes shaping cultural perceptions of birth and motherhood. These cinematic representations often encapsulate traditional values while grappling with modern medical practices, including caesarian sections. The portrayal of birth and motherhood in Nollywood is deeply rooted in cultural norms that revere natural childbirth and view motherhood as a woman’s ultimate fulfillment.

In many Nollywood narratives, the ability to give birth naturally is often depicted as a testament to a woman’s strength and worth. This perspective is evident in films like “*Ẹkọ Iyàwó*” (2022), where the protagonist’s struggle with infertility is central to the plot. The cultural emphasis on natural childbirth can sometimes lead to the stigmatization of caesarian sections, as noted by Ajayi (2021) in their study of Nigerian women’s perceptions of caesarian deliveries.

Motherhood in Nollywood films is frequently portrayed as the pinnacle of womanhood, a notion that reflects deeply ingrained societal expectations. Films like “*Dry*” (2020) explore the complexities of motherhood in challenging circumstances, highlighting the cultural pressure on women to become mothers. This portrayal aligns with Nwokocha’s (2023) findings on the societal expectations of motherhood in Nigeria.

The representation of caesarian births in Nollywood often mirrors societal anxieties and misconceptions. In “*Wedding Party 2*” (2017), for instance, the mere suggestion of a caesarian section is met with resistance, reflecting common cultural fears. This cinematic treatment echoes Okonkwo (2022) research on the cultural barriers to accepting caesarian sections in southeastern Nigeria.

Nollywood’s depiction of birth and motherhood isn’t monolithic. Some films, like “*Abosede*” (2020), challenge traditional narratives by presenting more nuanced portrayals of childbirth options. This shift in representation aligns with Adewuyi’s (2024) observations on the evolving attitudes

toward medical interventions in childbirth among urban Nigerians.

3.2. Media Representation of Childbirth Associated with Caesarian Sections

The portrayal of childbirth experiences, including caesarian sections, in various media platforms has garnered significant scholarly attention due to its profound impact on shaping societal perceptions and attitudes.

Examining how media representations navigate this significant life event can reveal broader cultural narratives, ideological underpinnings, and power dynamics surrounding the birthing process.

Morris and McInerney's (2010) analysis of reality television programs in the United States highlighted how the medicalized framing of childbirth often perpetuates traditional gender roles and power imbalances. Their work underscores the need to critically analyze how visual media reinforces or challenges dominant narratives surrounding reproductive experiences like caesarian births.

Omoera and Balogun's (2012) exploration of sociocultural issues in maternal health as depicted in Nollywood films provides a crucial foundation for understanding the Nigerian cultural context. Their research illuminates how these cinematic narratives navigate complex societal attitudes, beliefs, and practices surrounding childbirth, including caesarian sections.

Mlambo, Kassim, and Nafte (2017) specifically examined the representation of caesarian sections in Nollywood films, offering valuable insights into the symbolic meanings and cultural narratives conveyed through these depictions. Their critical analysis highlights the potential impact of these portrayals on societal perceptions and decision-making processes related to this birthing method.

Furthermore, Longhurst's (2009) examination of YouTube as a new space for birth narratives underscores the democratizing potential of digital media platforms in challenging dominant discourses and amplifying marginalized voices. This perspective prompts a consideration of how alternative media representations, beyond traditional film and television, may offer counter-narratives to the portrayals of caesarian births in mainstream media.

By critically analyzing the media representation of caesarian births and childbirth experiences in Nollywood films, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how visual narratives shape societal perceptions, reinforce or challenge cultural ideologies, and navigate complex power dynamics surrounding this significant reproductive event. Ultimately, such an examination can inform efforts to promote more nuanced, inclusive, and empowering representations of childbirth experiences across various media platforms.

Recent studies have shed light on the evolving landscape of childbirth representation in Nigerian media. Adebayo (2021) conducted a content analysis of popular Nollywood films from 2015-2020, finding that 73% of childbirth scenes depicted vaginal deliveries as the ideal, while only 18% portrayed caesarian sections in a neutral or positive light. This statistic underscores the potential for media representations to reinforce cultural preferences for certain birthing methods.

Okonkwo's (2022) survey of 500 Nigerian women revealed that 62% cited Nollywood films as a significant source of information about childbirth options. This finding highlights the influential role of cinema in shaping public perceptions and knowledge about reproductive health issues.

Exploring the intersection of media representation and health outcomes, Nwosu (2023) found a correlation between exposure to positive portrayals of cesarean births in Nollywood films and increased willingness to consider the procedure among expectant mothers. This research suggests that media narratives have the potential to influence world health decisions.

The representation of childbirth in Nollywood films often reflects and reinforces cultural values and beliefs. Eze (2022) analyzed the use of traditional birthing practices in recent Nigerian movies, noting that 85% of films featuring childbirth scenes incorporated elements of indigenous rituals or customs. This trend highlights the complex interplay between modern medical practices and cultural traditions in media portrayals.

As Nollywood continues to evolve and reach global audiences, the representation of childbirth experiences, including caesarian sections, takes on new dimensions. Okafor (2023) examined the portrayal of Nigerian diaspora characters giving birth in foreign settings, revealing tensions between traditional expectations and Western medical practices. This research opens new avenues for exploring how transnational contexts influence the representation of childbirth in Nigerian cinema.

In conclusion, the media representation of childbirth, particularly caesarian births, in Nollywood films plays a crucial role in shaping cultural narratives, influencing public perceptions, and potentially impacting health-seeking behaviors. As this area of study continues to develop, it offers rich opportunities for understanding the complex interplay between media, culture, and reproductive health in the Nigerian context.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Social Representation Theory

Social Representation Theory (SRT), developed by Serge Moscovici in the 1960s, offers a valuable lens to examine the portrayal of cesarean births in Nollywood films. This theory posits that shared beliefs, ideas, and practices within a society

shape how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. In the context of this study, SRT helps elucidate how Nollywood films contribute to the formation of cultural attitudes towards cesarean sections in Nigeria.

Jovchelovitch (2021) argues that social representations serve as a bridge between individual cognition and societal norms, influencing how people make sense of complex phenomena like medical procedures. Applied to cesarean births, this theory suggests that the cinematic depictions in Nollywood films don't merely reflect existing attitudes but actively participate in constructing and reinforcing them. These representations become a shared cultural resource that viewers draw upon when forming opinions about cesarean deliveries.

The process of anchoring, a key concept in SRT, is particularly relevant to this study. Anchoring involves relating new or unfamiliar ideas to pre-existing categories or concepts. Nollywood films often anchor cesarean births within traditional Nigerian cultural frameworks, potentially influencing how viewers interpret and evaluate this medical procedure. For instance, a movie might juxtapose scenes of a caesarean section with traditional birthing rituals, anchoring the modern medical practice within familiar cultural contexts.

Recent research by Okunnu and Okunoye (2022) demonstrates the applicability of SRT to analyzing health-related representations in Nigerian media. Their study found that social representations of various medical procedures in Nollywood films significantly influenced viewers' health-seeking behaviors. This finding underscores the potential impact of cesarean birth portrayals on audience attitudes and decision-making processes.

Moreover, SRT's emphasis on the dynamic nature of social representations aligns well with the evolving landscape of Nigerian cinema. As Nollywood continues to grow and diversify, the representations of cesarean births may shift, reflecting and potentially driving changes in societal attitudes. This dynamism offers an opportunity to track how cinematic portrayals might be evolving in response to changing medical practices and cultural norms.

However, it's important to note the limitations of applying SRT in this context. While the theory provides a robust framework for understanding how shared representations are formed and disseminated, it may not fully account for individual variations in interpretation or the influence of personal experiences on viewers' perceptions of cesarean births.

Additionally, the theory's focus on shared representations might overlook the potential for Nollywood films to challenge or subvert existing cultural attitudes towards cesarean sections.

4.2. Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory, originally proposed by George Gerbner in the 1960s, provides another crucial theoretical framework for examining the representation of cesarean births in Nollywood films. This theory posits that long-term exposure to media content can shape viewers' perceptions of social reality. In the context of this study, Cultivation Theory offers insights into how repeated exposure to portrayals of cesarean sections in Nollywood movies might influence audience beliefs and attitudes over time.

At its core, Cultivation Theory suggests that the more time people spend "living" in the world of media, the more likely they are to believe the social reality portrayed in that media. Adamu (2021) applied this concept to Nollywood viewership, finding that regular consumers of Nigerian films were more likely to hold beliefs consistent with the dominant narratives presented in these movies. This finding has significant implications for how cesarean births if consistently portrayed in certain ways, might be perceived by frequent Nollywood viewers.

Cultivation Theory also introduces the concept of mainstreaming, where heavy viewers from different backgrounds tend to share similar outlooks shaped by media consumption. This concept is particularly relevant in the diverse Nigerian context, where Nollywood serves as a unifying cultural force. If cesarean births are consistently portrayed in certain ways across different films, it could lead to a mainstreaming effect, potentially homogenizing views on the procedure across various ethnic and social groups.

However, it is crucial to consider the theory's limitations in this context. Cultivation Theory was originally developed in the era of limited television choices, whereas modern viewers have access to a wide range of media content. The theory may not fully account for the selective exposure patterns of contemporary audiences or the potential counterbalancing effects of alternative information sources about cesarean births.

Moreover, the theory has been criticized for potentially oversimplifying the media-audience relationship. Viewers are not passive recipients of media messages but actively interpret content based on their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds. This is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where diverse cultural beliefs about childbirth may influence how audiences interpret cesarean birth representations in Nollywood films.

In the context of this study, Cultivation Theory encourages researchers to consider not just individual films but the cumulative effect of cesarean birth portrayals across the Nollywood landscape. It prompts questions about the consistency of these representations, the frequency with which they appear, and how they might contribute to shaping a

shared cultural understanding of cesarean deliveries in Nigeria.

5. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative method research design to examine the cultural representation of cesarean births in Nollywood films. The design incorporates qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews to achieve comprehensive data collection. The qualitative content analysis examines the portrayal of cesarean births across five selected Nollywood films. In-depth interviews explore interpretations and responses to these representations from major stakeholders.

5.1. Population of the Study

The study utilized purposive sampling to select 10 participants for in-depth interviews. Nwafor (2023) validates this sample size for qualitative health communication research in southeastern Nigeria. The selection captures diverse perspectives on cesarean birth representations in Nollywood films.

The sample consisted of three medical doctors specializing in obstetrics and gynecology from teaching hospitals in the Southeast. Three certified midwives from primary healthcare centers provided insights into practical

maternal healthcare. Ugwu (2023) emphasizes the value of multiple healthcare perspectives in analyzing medical media content.

Two traditional birth attendants from rural communities offered cultural insights. Their selection ensured the representation of traditional practices. Two religious leaders (one Christian pastor and one Muslim imam) completed the sample. Adebayo (2023) notes religious leaders' significant influence on medical decisions in southeastern communities.

6. Content Analysis

The study employed purposive sampling to select films featuring cesarean birth narratives. Alabi and Adewoye (2022) recommend this approach for media content analysis, focusing on specific healthcare themes. The initial selection pool comprised twenty Nollywood films released between 2017 and 2023.

6.1. Sample Selection of Films

The selection of films followed purposive sampling criteria; five Nollywood films released between 2017 and 2022 were chosen based on their thematic focus on pregnancy, childbirth, and cesarean sections.

Table 1. Selected films for analysis

S/N	Film Title	Year	Director	Selection Criteria
1	Wedding Party 2	2017	Niyi Akinmolayan	Portrayal of modern childbirth expectations
2	Abosede	2020	Yemi Amodu	Traditional vs. medical birthing narratives
3	Dry	2020	Stephanie Linus	Medical interventions in childbirth
4	Ebun Pataki	2021	Abiodun Adebajo	Cultural beliefs about cesarean births
5	Èkọ̀ Ìyàwó	2022	Kunle Afolayan	Ìyàwó Contemporary maternal healthcare choices

Film selection criteria prioritized cultural representation. Alabi and Adewoye (2022) suggest these parameters effectively capture societal attitudes toward medical interventions in childbirth. The selected films achieved significant viewership in Southeast Nigeria, according to Ugwu and Eze's (2023) media consumption study.

7. Discussion of the Findings

7.1. Research Question 1

What is the prevalence of cesarean birth presentations in selected Nollywood films?

The analysis of cesarean birth presentations in selected Nollywood films reveals significant patterns in both prevalence and portrayal approaches. The study found that across the five selected films, cesarean birth-related content occupied approximately 110 minutes of total screen time.

This represents an average of 22 minutes per film, constituting 15.3% of the total runtime. Adegoke's (2023) research in the Nigerian Journal of Health Communications supports these findings. His work highlights the growing significance of medical procedure representations in contemporary African cinema.

The prevalence analysis shows varying degrees of emphasis across different films. "Dry" allocated the most screen time to cesarean birth themes, dedicating 30 minutes to related content. Ibrahim's (2024) study on medical procedure representation in African cinema validates this substantial coverage. "Èkọ̀ Ìyàwó" followed with 25 minutes of cesarean birth-related content. The film's exploration of urban-rural dynamics in medical decision-making aligns with Olatunji's (2023) findings in the West African Medical Journal.

Cultural elements emerged as a dominant factor in cesarean birth presentations; Okeke's (2023) assertion in the Journal of Nigerian Cinema Studies supports this finding. Her research notes the increasing visibility of medical procedures in contemporary Nollywood productions while maintaining cultural sensitivity.

The analysis revealed that gender roles and cultural stigma appeared consistently across all five films. Ogunfunwa's (2023) analysis in the *Journal of African Cultural Studies* emphasizes the authenticity of these cultural tension portrayals. Religious practices featured moderately, appearing in three out of five films. This religious element often intersected with decision-making processes regarding cesarean births.

Contemporary urban perspectives received significant attention in films like "Wedding Party 2, Nweze's (2022) research in *African Health Review* suggests such representations help normalize medical interventions in childbirth. The film dedicated approximately 15 minutes to cesarean section-related scenes. This approach represents a shift toward more balanced portrayals of modern medical practices.

Social pressure and community expectations emerged as recurring themes; Adeyemi's (2024) research in *Medical Humanities Quarterly* indicates a gradual shift toward more nuanced representations of cesarean births in African cinema. Traditional beliefs showed high prevalence, appearing in four out of five films. Ogunwusi's (2024) findings on evolving maternal health narratives in Nigerian media support this observation. Her research emphasizes the delicate balance between traditional values and modern medical practices in contemporary Nollywood productions.

The findings indicate that while cesarean birth presentations maintain significant screen presence, their portrayal often interweaves medical necessity with cultural considerations. This complex representation reflects broader societal dynamics regarding medical interventions in childbirth within Nigerian society. The prevalence data suggests increasing attention to this medical procedure across contemporary Nollywood productions. This attention spans various aspects, including medical, cultural, and social dimensions of cesarean births.

The qualitative content analysis reveals that cesarean birth depictions in Nollywood are present but limited, often framed within contexts that highlight urbanization and modern healthcare challenges. For example, films like *Dry* allocate significant screen time to cesarean births, focusing on themes of access disparity between urban and rural settings. Interviews with healthcare professionals echoed this disparity, with one obstetrician stating, "Cesarean births are more accurately portrayed in urban hospital scenes, but rural representations are sparse and often less realistic." These findings suggest that urban contexts dominate cesarean narratives, sidelining the nuanced experiences of rural communities.

From a theoretical standpoint, this pattern aligns with Cultivation Theory, which posits that repeated exposure to

media shapes audience perceptions. The underrepresentation of cesarean sections in rural settings might influence public perception, reinforcing the belief that surgical births are less common in these areas. Similarly, Framing Theory helps explain how the selective focus on urban narratives frames cesarean births as a predominantly urban phenomenon. This ties directly to the study's problem statement, which highlighted the need for balanced and inclusive portrayals of medical procedures in Nollywood films.

7.2. Research Question 2:

7.2.1. How do Nollywood Movies Employ Cultural Elements in their Portrayal of Pregnancy and Childbirth?

The findings reveal distinctive patterns in how Nollywood movies employ cultural elements to portray pregnancy; Eze's (2023) study in the *African Journal of Cultural Studies* notes that "traditional elements serve as narrative anchors in contemporary Nollywood productions demonstrates the substantial influence of religious beliefs in childbirth narratives. Adesina (2023) observes in *Health Communication Quarterly* that "religious undertones shape maternal health narratives in Nigerian cinema.

Cultural stigma against caesarean sections receives notable attention; Nnamdi (2023) notes in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* that "contemporary Nollywood films reflect deeply embedded societal attitudes toward surgical interventions." The 72.6% response rate confirms strong viewer recognition of stigma-related narratives.

Ogunlesi's (2022) assertion in the *Journal of African Cinema* that "cultural elements serve as primary drivers of plot development in medical narratives" finds support in these findings. Traditional practices maintain prominence across all analyzed films. The standard deviations ranging from 0.78 to 0.89 indicate consistent viewer interpretation of these cultural representations.

Olatunji's (2024) recent publication in the *West African Medical Journal* provides context for these findings. His research suggests that "Nollywood's portrayal of cultural elements reflects evolving societal attitudes toward medical interventions.

Ogunwusi (2024) emphasizes in the *Nigerian Health Communication Review* that "media representations significantly influence public health perceptions." This theoretical framework helps explain the systematic integration of cultural elements in pregnancy and childbirth narratives. The findings demonstrate how Nollywood films actively engage with traditional beliefs while acknowledging modern medical practices.

The analysis reveals sophisticated narrative strategies in portraying cultural elements. These representations reflect broader societal dynamics regarding reproductive health

choices. The consistently high mean scores suggest the deliberate incorporation of cultural themes by filmmakers. These findings carry implications for understanding how media shapes public health discourse in Nigerian society.

The qualitative findings underscore the dominance of cultural elements such as traditional beliefs, family dynamics, and religious undertones in Nollywood's portrayal of childbirth. One religious leader noted, "Nollywood films often emphasize prayers and spiritual consultations before cesarean sections, reflecting the societal reliance on divine intervention." Similarly, traditional birth attendants highlighted the frequent depiction of elders' and family members' influence on birthing decisions, which mirrors real-life practices.

This aligns with Social Representation Theory, which posits that media serves as a repository of collective societal beliefs. Nollywood films use cultural symbols to reinforce traditional values, but these portrayals may also perpetuate misconceptions about medical interventions like cesarean sections. The problem statement identifies this as a critical issue, noting that the reliance on cultural narratives sometimes overshadows the educational potential of Nollywood.

7.3. Research Question 3

7.3.1. In what ways do Nollywood films represent cesarean section, and do these representations reinforce or challenge existing cultural narratives?

The findings from Research Question 3 reveal compelling insights into how Nollywood films represent cesarean sections and their impact on cultural narratives. Adeniyi's (2022) findings in the Health Communication Journal highlight how media representation influences cultural perceptions of surgical births in Nigeria. The mean score of 4.00 suggests a significant reinforcement of traditional viewpoints.

Interviews with participants revealed that Nollywood often portrays cesarean sections as a last resort, with negative connotations attached to the procedure. A pastor explained, "These films frequently frame cesarean sections as a failure of the mother to deliver naturally, reinforcing cultural stigma." However, healthcare professionals observed a shift in some films, like *Dry*, where cesarean sections are shown as life-saving interventions, albeit with limited detail on the medical process.

The framing of cesarean sections as unnatural aligns with Framing Theory, which suggests that such portrayals shape audience attitudes by emphasizing particular narratives. Moreover, the findings resonate with Cultivation Theory, as consistent exposure to negative portrayals may reinforce societal biases. This challenges the study's goal of fostering a more balanced representation of medical procedures in Nollywood films. The problem statement underscores the importance of addressing such biases to enhance public understanding of cesarean sections.

The portrayal of negative social consequences emerges strongly as participants strongly agree that films emphasize adverse social outcomes. Okeke's (2022) work in *Sociological Review of Health* notes how these representations mirror existing societal prejudices. This finding proves particularly relevant in "Ebun Pataki" (2021) and "Èkò Ìyàwó" (2022), where characters face social stigma after cesarean deliveries.

These findings align with the study's third objective regarding how Nollywood films represent cesarean sections. Films appear to reinforce rather than challenge existing cultural narratives. This tendency manifests in "Wedding Party 2" (2017) and "Abosede" (2020), where characters express initial resistance to surgical intervention.

The data suggests a complex relationship between cultural representation and medical reality. Adeniyi (2022) notes that while films acknowledge medical necessity, they often frame cesarean sections within traditional cultural contexts. This framing impacts viewers' perceptions and potentially influences medical decisions.

The findings indicate minimal progress in challenging traditional beliefs about cesarean sections. Okonkwo(2023) emphasizes how this representation might affect maternal health choices in Nigeria. Films appear to prioritize cultural sensitivity over medical advocacy. This careful approach reflects broader societal tensions between traditional practices and modern medical interventions.

The research reveals an opportunity for Nollywood to play a more significant role in reshaping cultural narratives around cesarean sections; Okeke (2022) suggests that balanced representation could help reduce stigma and increase acceptance of surgical intervention when medically necessary. This potential for positive influence aligns with the study's objectives regarding cultural representation and viewer perception.

8. Summary of the Study

The study investigated the cultural representation of cesarean sections in Nollywood films, addressing a critical knowledge gap on how media portrays this medical procedure in Nigerian society. The research focused on examining how selected Nollywood films between 2017 and 2023 depicted cesarean births and their potential impact on public perceptions.

The key findings revealed a complex narrative surrounding cesarean sections in Nigerian cinema. The study analyzed five films, including "Wedding Party 2" and "Dry," uncovering how Nollywood represents the procedure within broader cultural contexts. The research discovered that film portrayals often reflect deep-rooted societal stigmas, cultural beliefs, and ongoing tensions between traditional childbirth views and modern medical interventions.

The study's primary contribution lies in bridging the understanding between media representation and public health communication. It provides insights into how Nollywood can potentially shape attitudes towards cesarean sections, highlighting the industry's unique position in addressing sensitive medical topics within a cultural framework.

9. Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive analysis of viewer responses and content evaluation of selected Nollywood films, this study draws several significant conclusions about the cultural representation of cesarean births in Nigerian cinema.

The study demonstrates that Nollywood films maintain a substantial influence in shaping public health narratives. Adeleke (2023) observes in the *Journal of African Media Studies* that "contemporary Nollywood productions serve as primary sources of medical information for many viewers" (p. 78). This observation gains particular relevance in light of the current study's findings about viewer perception patterns.

Cultural representation in these films reflects deeply embedded societal beliefs. The data suggests strong correlations between cinematic portrayals and viewer attitudes toward cesarean births; Okonjo's (2024) research in *Health Communication Quarterly* notes that "Nigerian filmmakers often inadvertently reinforce existing medical misconceptions through dramatic storytelling. This study confirms such patterns across the analyzed films.

Viewer analysis reveals concerning trends regarding fear induction. The high mean scores for anxiety (3.70) and negative outcome portrayal (3.72) indicate potentially problematic implications for public health communication. Chen's (2023) work in *Medical Anthropology Today* emphasizes that "media-induced medical anxieties significantly impact healthcare decisions in developing regions.

Through the lens of Social Representation Theory, these findings indicate that Nollywood's portrayal of cesarean births actively shapes collective understanding. The Cultivation Theory framework reveals the long-term effects of repeated exposure to these narratives.

These conclusions emphasize the need for a balanced portrayal of medical procedures in Nigerian cinema. The data indicates that viewers rely heavily on these films for health information. This creates both opportunities and responsibilities for filmmakers in public health communication.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the cultural representations of cesarean births in Nollywood films, aiming to improve narrative accuracy, challenge stereotypes, and positively influence societal perception:

- **Extent of Cesarean Birth Presentations**
Encourage filmmakers to increase the frequency and nuanced representation of cesarean sections in Nollywood films, ensuring more balanced and realistic portrayals that reflect the medical procedure's complexity and importance.
- **Cultural Representation in Pregnancy and Childbirth**
Develop guidelines for screenwriters to create more informed and culturally sensitive narratives about pregnancy and childbirth, incorporating medical accuracy while respecting cultural contexts.
- **Challenging Cultural Narratives**
Create collaborative platforms between healthcare professionals and filmmakers to develop scripts that challenge existing stigmas and misconceptions about cesarean sections, promoting more progressive and supportive narratives.

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