

PORTRAYAL OF IGBO MONARCHY IN NOLLYWOOD MOVIES

BY

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Abstract

The Nigerian film industry is one of the largest in the world and has become more than just an entertainment tool. It is huge both in productivity and reach; today, Nollywood production is a multi-billion naira industry which provides a source of livelihood for many people both at home and abroad. Its films have attracted a wide patronage within and outside Nigeria and are hugely entertaining for Africans. It is an industry that seems to be rising in terms of the amount of movies it produces a year, (Uwah, 2011). This work was hinged on Social Representation theory. Content Analysis was adopted to analyse 20 movies. Findings revealed that Nollywood films have constructed Igbo monarchy as an important aspect of Igbo cultural setup, portraying royals as playing vital leadership role – political and religious – in their respective communities. The qualities Igbo monarchy portrayed include physical power, valour, divine connection, wisdom, and wealth. It was concluded that portrayal of Igbo monarchy in Nollywood films tended to reflect some dominant discourses of power, class and gender in Nigeria. It was recommended that filmmakers should do more in the area of research towards better portrayal of Igbo culture in their productions.

Keywords: Portrayal, Igbo monarchy, Nollywood, Movies

Introduction

The institution of monarchy is a common phenomenon with states, empires, countries and other similar entities, which makes the institution a universal concept, with a long history. In Nigeria, a traditional ruler is identified as the paramount ruler in any community. Generally, he is recognized by his subjects as the chief custodian of the people's culture and tradition, even though as Whiskey (2004, p. 78) observes "they may not wield political power in Nigeria and only honour the wealthy, the strong and the great, however, so long as men worship social titles, so also will the men (the traditional rulers) who confer these social titles wax strong, be relevant and command loyalty and respect." Perhaps, due to its resilience, the institution of monarchy is not only appealing to the wealthy that crave the social titles and privileges it confers; the artist and film maker is drawn to the institution to feed his creativity and imagination.

The monarchy institution in Igboland, like in other Nigerian societies, still occupies an important place as a symbol of cultural heritage and pride, a governing authority on cultural matters, an agency of political power and a driver of social development (Okachie, 2016).

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Hence, the monarchy institution acts as the custodian of culture when, for instance, the kings exercise their prerogative as officiating heads in the New Yam festival in Igboland. It acts as the traditional governing body when, for example, kings settle disputes, impose sanctions and regulate communal life generally. The institution of monarchy also acts as an agent of political power when, for instance, kings influence political decisions or are invited to offer advice as seen with the Advisory Committee of Chiefs and Elders in the former Eastern Region. Lastly, it can also act as an agent of social development when, for instance, kings attract government projects to their community, mobilise the people for communal work or otherwise influence developmental initiatives (Okachie, 2016).

In view of this crucial position of the monarchy system in the contemporary Igbo society, the media's role in representing it becomes vital knowing that media representation is a powerful element that shapes social experience (Hall, 1997; McQuail, 2010; Fairclough, 2003). Given the glamour and sensationalism that are usually associated with monarchy, it has become an attractive subject for media producers, generating its discursive dynamics (Lawrenson, 2000; Baldin, 2012). Speaking in relation to the British monarchy, Baldin (2012) opines that the relationship between the royals and the media has always been a delicate one. Ideally it is symbiotic in that the royals need the media for continued projection of their prestige, glory and power while the media, on the other hand, require the royals as an important source of sensational content that typically attracts the audience. However, when this relationship becomes parasitic, according to Baldin (2012), the royals hit out.

Interestingly, monarchy has in recent times become one of the recurring themes in Nollywood productions (Uwah, 2009; Osondu, 2016). As a mode of representation, films have the capacity to make real and legitimate, certain ideas and beliefs through their portrayals, and, in so doing, structure our perception of the social world (Taylor & Willis, 2002). Amobi&Shaibu (2015) write that one unique and empowering feature of film is its ability to mirror society. They stress that, in fact, one of the reasons that the Nigerian movie industry, affectionately called Nollywood, has caught on so well on the continent and among blacks in Diaspora, is because most of the offerings of the industry, in spite of their flaws, have fairly well mirrored the challenges, hopes and aspirations of Nigerians. The very fact that the topic of the Igbo monarchy exists so much as part of Igbo common sense makes it an important and worthy area for academic attention; for a culture's common sense represents a heterogeneous body of understandings, knowledge, values and practices into which members of that cultural community have been socialized (Malmood, 2013).

Consequent on the foregoing, the manner in which this institution is represented in the media becomes important, being that such representation is critical to how people view and relate to this institution. In other words, representation shapes meaning (discourse) in relation to such institution and as a result, affects its place, functionality, impact and value as a component of the societal dynamics (Hall, 1997; Fairclough, 2003; McQuail, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

One of the media's significant functions is the provision of cognitive knowledge through their various contents and representations. This is why scores of studies have been concerned with how the media represent a particular set of people or phenomenon. This study is based on the increasing popularity and accessibility of the Nigerian movie industry globally with the

proliferation of satellite cable television and its multiple channels dedicated to the Nigerian movies. This media channel (film) can be seen as representing the emergent cultural aesthetics that play vital cultural roles as producers express themselves, and their cultures by mapping out their own space of articulation based strictly on their emergent aesthetic principle. A study of the Nigerian home video productions should in no small way make one understand the sum total of being a Nigerian, the people and their cultures. This is why it is pertinent to find out the pattern of Nollywood films construction of the images of Igbo monarchy to her audience by critically examining the extent to which royalty characterisations, costume, settings and themes are depicted and constructed in Nollywood productions. In other words, this study was set out to find answers to the following questions; how is Igbo monarchy constructed in Nollywood films? What are the qualities portrayed of Igbo monarchy in Nollywood films? What are the themes in Nollywood monarchy movies?

Literature Review

The review of related literature revealed that there was paucity of studies on representations of monarchy in developing countries, especially Nigeria. Studies on representation of monarchy in the media are mostly of the British culture, constraining the literature review to dwelling more on representations of other aspects in the media.

Dirks (2016) records that the history of film reaches as far back as ancient Greek theatre and dance, which had many of the same elements of today's film world. The commercial, public screening of ten of *Lumiere brothers*, short film in Paris on December 25, 1895 can be regarded as the breakthrough of projected cinematographic motion pictures. The first decade of motion picture saw film moving from a novelty to an established large-scale entertainment industry. The films became several minutes long consisting of several shots. Special effects were introduced and film continuity, involving action moving from one sequence into another, began to be used. In the 1900s, continuity of action across successive shots was achieved and the first close-up shot was introduced. Most films of this period were what came to be called "chase films". The first use of animation in movies was in 1899. The first feature length multi-reel film was a 1906 Australian production. The first successful permanent theatre showing only films was "The Nickelodeon" in Pittsburgh in 1905.

In Nigeria, the 1926's *Palaver* produced by Geoffrey Barkas; was also the first film ever to feature Nigerian actors in a speaking role. As at 1954, mobile cinema vans were used to play to at least 3.5 million people in Nigeria, and films being produced by the Nigerian Film Unit were screened for free at the 44 available cinemas. The first film entirely copyrighted to the Nigerian Film unit is *Fincho* (1957) by Sam Zebba; this is also the first Nigerian film to be shot in colour.

After Nigeria's independence in 1960, the cinema business rapidly expanded, with new cinema houses established. As a result, Nigerian content in theatres increased in the late 1960s into the 1970s, especially productions from Western Nigeria, owing to former theatre practitioners such as Hubert Ogunde and Moses Olaiya transitioning into the big screen. In 1972, the Indigenization Decree was issued by Yakubu Gowon, which demanded the transfer of ownership of about a total of 300 film theatres from their foreign owners to Nigerians. This resulted in more Nigerians playing active roles in the cinema and film. The oil boom of 1973 through 1978 also contributed immensely to the spontaneous boost of the cinema culture in

Nigeria, as the increased purchasing power in Nigeria made a wide range of citizens to have disposable income to spend on cinema going and on home television sets (Adegbola, 2011).

Obiaya (2015) narrated that after the decline of the Golden era, Nigerian film industry experienced a second major boom in the 1990s, marked by the release of the direct-to-video film *Living in Bondage* (1992); the industry peaked in the mid 2000s to become the second largest film industry in the world in terms of the number of annual film productions, placing it ahead of the United States and behind only India. They started dominating screens across the African continent and by extension, the Caribbean's and the Diaspora, with the movies significantly influencing cultures, and the film actors becoming household names across the continent.

The Economist (2010) noted that as at 2004, at least four to five films were produced every day in Nigeria. At the peak of the video era at around 2008, the industry had become the second largest producer of films (Vourlias, 2014), releasing approximately 200 video films monthly.

Moreover, there has also been the production of Nigerian video films in other Nigerian languages such as Efik, Ijaw and Itshekiri. Nigerian movies now already dominate television screens across the African continent and by extension, the Diaspora. The movies significantly influence cultures in many African nations; from way of dressing to speech and usage of Nigerian slangs. Also, the film actors became household names across the continent (Onikeku, 2012). This was attributed to the fact that Nigerian films told "relatable" stories, which made foreign films to "gather dusts" on the shelves of video stores, even though they cost much less.

Ekwenchi (2015) delved into how the popular culture industry, Nollywood, represents colour difference in today's Nigeria. The article, through an analysis of three Nollywood's feature films: *White Hunters*, *John Bull My Son* and *Brain Masters* gave some revelations. Ekwenchi employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as well as historical analysis and identified binary opposition and stereotype as dominant strategies used by the makers of the three feature films in representing 'whiteness' and 'blackness'. The article argued that as discourses of racial difference, while the three feature films may have made some efforts at reversing some stereotypes of the black race, they have mostly, however, managed to domesticate, reinforce and legitimate dominant racist images of Africa and African people circulating in western popular culture.

AsiegbuBature-Uzor (2017) examined rituals in Nollywood films as statements on the life patterns of the Nigerian society. This research involves a textual analysis of the video film text, *Issakaba 1*. The choice of this film narrative is informed by the thematic content in relation to the ideologies of the Nigerian society. The findings reveal that rituals are part of the culture and belief systems of the Nigerian society. In that case, Nollywood films can only present their narratives against the backdrop of culture by relating content to existing situations within the society. The paper therefore recommends that for proper critical assessment of rituals in Nollywood films, an understanding of the culture and belief system of the Nigerian society is important. This is also the case with the present study as the understanding of the Igbo society's culture is necessary in developing a filmic narrative of the Igbo monarchy to viewers.

Onuzulike (2017) analyzed Nigeria's Nollywood film *Osuofia in London*, produced and directed by Ogoro, K. In 2003/2004, to understand how the film synthesizes African and

Western cultural identities via the prisms of hybridity and post-colonial theory. The paper uses a critical approach within the contexts of three tenets (African, Western, and hybrid) to read the film. The analysis resulted in five themes: African/folk belief systems and Christianity; traditional Igbo attire and English garb; African/folk music and Western music; African and Western food and drinks; and African/traditional medicine and modern medicine. The analysis indicates that unequal power relations and the forces of globalization are inescapable. Even though the protagonist, Osuofia, challenges the Western ideology, he reproduces it as well. Nsereka&Enyindah (2018) investigated the perception of female movie audience about the portrayal of women characters in Nollywood movies. To achieve this broad objective, a combination of survey and in-depth interview methods of research were employed. The survey data were analysed using frequency distribution tables and percentage while views from the in-depth interviews were presented using explanation building. Findings show that gender discrimination and moral decadence accounted more for the way in which women are portrayed in Nollywood movies. Based on this, it is recommended that movie producers and directors endeavour to always edit their movies, especially new ones to ensure that negative portrayal of women characters are balanced or curtailed; that gender-based films should be properly critiqued before their release to the viewing public; and that the Nigerian Video and Film Censors Board screen contents of Nollywood movies so as to ensure that only the acceptable Nigerian/African cultural values - in content and in costuming – are retained in the movies.

Onyenankeya, Onyenakeya&Osunkunle (2019) seek to examine various ways women are depicted in Nollywood films, including physical appearance, domestic and family life, occupational life and interpersonal relationships over a 20 year period spanning the video film era. The research employed a quantitative content method to analyse 10 films while the coding sheet that contained established content categories served as the data gathering instrument. The findings revealed that although there is a higher percentage of women than men in Nollywood films, women still play diminished central roles, and continue to be portrayed less frequently in roles that reflect current social realities than men, especially regarding the professions.

Theoretical Framework

The social representation theory, propounded by Serge Moscovici, is a theory about the role of representations in communicative practices, particularly in the transmission of knowledge and the presentation of identities. It is found appropriate in building a theoretical framework for this study. Since the study is all about representation of a phenomenon – Igbo monarchy in the media, the theory of representation is apt for interrogating the nature and dynamics of this process. Nollywood film, like any other media of expression, is a form of representation; and like other instances of representation, it embodies the beliefs, biases and ideologies of the producers as individuals and those of the society as a collective (Hall, 1997; McQuail, 2010). Thus, from the perspective of this theory, Nollywood film depictions are viewed as originating from and rooted in a given context of meaning making – culture. Therefore, the social representation theory provides a conceptual framework for inquiring into the beliefs, biases and ideologies that tend to underlie representations of Igbo monarchy in Nollywood. It will

help in looking at these representations beyond their manifest (surface) manifestation in order to reveal their inner (connotative) meaning as embedded in ideologies.

Research Methodology

This study employed Content Analysis, which provided statistical data thus making for precision. The sample size was 20 films embodying representation of Igbo monarchy in order to ensure that the chosen sample is accessible to the researcher just as Du Plooy (2002, p.101) suggests "the use of an accessible population to ensure ease of access to the population". The unit of analysis was the film scenes. Thus, each film was broken into scenes, with each scene constituting the unit of data generation and data analysis and the following coding categories guided the data collection:

Dominant theme: This refers to the major subject around which a film's storyline is woven i.e. war (clashes, rifts, power tussle); love (romance, affection, marriage); intrigue (conspiracy, plot, deception); crime (cultism, murder, rape, aggressive fights, vulgarity, theft, kidnapping, abduction) or others (those not among the aforementioned).

Role(s) attributed to a royal: This refers to whether a royal person is presented as playing a domestic role, political role, economic role, spiritual role or any other role.

Royal Attribute(s) emphasised: This refers to the attribute which a royal person is presented mainly as possessing i.e. power, wealth, dignity, or any other quality.

Charismatic traits attributed to a royal: This refers to the charismatic trait which a royal person is portrayed mainly as possessing i.e. courage/bravery, Wisdom, discipline, talent etc. Instrument of data collection was a coding sheet. Data analyses were done using the quantitative approach. The statistical tool employed was simple percentage. The analysis was computer-based via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

Table 1
List of the 20 Selected Films

SN	Title of Film	Year	Director	Producer
1.	Ojadike	1996	OjioforEzeanyeuche	OjioforEzeanyeuche
2.	The Missing Princess	1997	Andy Chukwu	John Ekeh/David Nwaebu
3.	Oracle	1998	Andy Amaechi	OjioforEzeanyeuche
4.	Igodo	1999	OjioforEzeanyeuche	OjioforEzeanyeuche
5.	Ijele	2000	Fred Amata	Chidi NkemAruoma
6.	My Throne	2001	Andy Amaechi	Mac Collins Chidebe
7.	Okochi	2002	Moses Ebere	Osondu Odom
8.	Egg of Life	2003	Andy Amaechi	OjioforEzeanyeuche
9.	Azima	2004	Andy Amaechi	OjioforEzeanyeuche
10.	Ola: The Morning	2005	Andy Amaechi	NwaforAnayo

	Sun			
11.	Warrior's Heart	2006	Ikechukwu Onyeka	Kingsley Okeke
12.	Royal Tears	2007	Ikenna Aniekwe	Charles offor
13.	Kings of Kings	2008	IykeOdife	Kenneth ike
14.	Royal Wives	2009	AnayoUzo Philips	AnayoUzo Philips
15.	Royal Decision	2010	Bruce Benmarkson	Ifeanyi Nnam
16.	King Makers	2011	Ugezu J. Ugezu	Obi Cajetan
17.	The Kingdom	2012	Christopher Ikpoenyi	Christopher Ozoemena
18.	King's Offer	2013	Vincent Anointed	Charles Offor
19.	The Palace	2014	Sylvester Madu	Monday Nnam
20.	Royal Favour	2015	Ugezu S. Ugezu	Precious Okafor

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data obtained from quantitative content analysis were presented in cross-tabs showing patterns of distribution of the categories. The categories measured were major character, dominant theme, role(s) attributed to a royal, power exercised by a royal personality, attitude of a royal towards subjects, conduct of a royal towards a non-royal, royal attributes emphasised, charismatic traits attributed to a royal, and general character verdict on a royal.

Table 2.
Role(s) Attributed to a Royal (By Scenes)

Role(s) Attributed To A Royal (by scenes)	Year of Release					Total
	1996 to 1999	2000 to 2003	2004 to 2007	2008 to 2011	2012 to 2015	
Domestic role	14.1% N = 22	5.3% N = 10	22.2% N = 43	45.9% N = 85	42.3% N = 82	26.4% N = 242
Political role	40.4% N = 63	51.4% N = 96	49.5% N = 96	22.2% N = 41	22.1% N = 43	37% N = 339
Economic role	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	1% N = 2	0.2% N = 2
Spiritual role	10.2% N = 16	7% N = 13	3.1% N = 6	1.6% N = 22	0% N = 0	6.2% N = 57
Others	0% N = 0	14.4% N = 27	10.8% N = 21	11.9% N = 18	19.1% N = 37	11.6% N = 103
Not Applicable	35.3% N = 55	21.9% N = 41	14.4% N = 28	10.3% N = 19	15.4% N = 30	18.9% N = 173
Total	100% N = 156	100% N = 187	100% N = 194	100% N = 185	100% N = 194	100% N = 916

Source: Fieldwork 2020

Table 2 shows that 40.4% of the scenes in the films released between 1996 and 1999 portrayed the royals in a political role. Similarly, 51.4% of the scenes in the films released between 2000 and 2003 portrayed the royals in a political role. In the same vein, 49.5% of the scenes in the films released between 2004 and 2007 portrayed them in a political role. Also, 45.9% of the scenes in the films released between 2008 and 2011 portrayed the royals in a political role, 42.3% of the scenes in the films released between 2012 and 2015 portrayed the royals in a domestic role and 22.1% portrayed them in a political role. There was preponderance of political and domestic roles in the portrayal of the royals with political role featuring most. The dominance of political role appears to stem from the fact that royalty is basically about power, influence and prestige which are constituents of politics. On the other hand, the prominence of domestic role may have stemmed from the fact that a good number of the scenes centred on happenings in the royal household including familial relationships among members. However, the near absence of spiritual role in the characterisation of the royals may have been inspired by the near disappearance of the spiritual functions of the Igbo royals in the face of Christianisation that significantly diminished the influence of the traditional religion (Afigbo, 1986).

Table 3.
Charismatic Traits Attributed to a Royal (By Scenes)

Charismatic Traits Attributed To A Royal (by scenes)	Date of Release					Total
	1996 to 1999	2000 to 2003	2004 to 2007	2008 to 2011	2012 to 2015	
Courage/Bravery	28.2% N = 44	15.5% N = 29	19.1% N = 37	8.6% N = 16	5.7% N = 1	13.9% N = 127
Wisdom	9.6% N = 15	4.3% N = 8	6.7% N = 13	7.6% N = 14	8.8% N = 17	7.3% N = 67
Discipline	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	8.2% N = 16	2.7% N = 5	4.6% N = 9	3.3% N = 30
Mixed	1.9% N = 3	12.8% N = 24	5.2% N = 10	18.4% N = 34	8.2% N = 16	9.5% N = 87
Others	0% N = 0	1.6% N = 3	4.6% N = 9	5.4% N = 10	9.3% N = 18	4.4% N = 40
Not Applicable	60.2% N = 94	66.8% N = 123	56.2% N = 109	57.3% N = 106	63.4% N = 123	60.6% N = 555
Total	100% N = 156	100% N = 187	100% N = 194	100% N = 185	100% N = 194	100% N = 916

Source: Fieldwork 2020

Table 3 shows that 28.2% of the scenes in the films released between 1996 and 1999 portrayed the royals as courageous/brave, 9.6% portrayed them as wise, The table furthermore shows that 15.5% of the scenes in the films released between 2000 and 2003 portrayed the royals as courageous/brave, 4.3% portrayed them as wise, Also, 19.1% of the scenes in the films released between 2004 and 2007 portrayed the royals as courageous/brave, 6.7% portrayed them as wise. Thus, apart from mixed traits, courage/bravery emerged as the predominant charismatic trait attributed to royals, though this tended to diminish in frequency down the years. Wisdom was the next attribute in line. Perhaps, this pattern is a testimony that the filmmakers' conception of Igbo monarchy considers courage/bravery and wisdom i.e. fearlessness and intellect as important charismatic traits to be possessed by persons belonging to that status.

Table 4: Royal Attribute(s) Emphasised (By Scenes)

Royal Attribute(s) Emphasised (by scenes)	Year of Release					Total
	1996 to 1999	2000 to 2003	2004 to 2007	2008 to 2011	2012 to 2015	
Power	18.6% N = 29	13.4% N = 23	26.8% N = 52	23.8% N = 44	15.5% N = 30	19.7% N = 180
Wealth	0% N = 0	1.1% N = 2	3.1% N = 6	3.2% N = 6	14.9% N = 29	4.7% N = 43
Dignity of Conduct	6.4% N = 10	7.5% N = 14	14.4% N = 28	15.1% N = 28	13.9% N = 27	11.7% N = 107
Others	10.3% N = 16	1.1% N = 2	2.6% N = 5	1.6% N = 3	7.7% N = 15	4.5% N = 41
Not Applicable	64.7% N = 101	77% N = 144	53.1% N = 103	56.2% N = 104	48% N = 93	59.5% N = 545
Total	100% N = 156	100% N = 187	100% N = 194	100% N = 185	100% N = 194	100% N = 916

Source: Fieldwork 2020

Table 4 shows that 18.6% of the scenes in films released between 1996 and 1999 emphasised power as the attribute of the royals, 0% emphasised wealth, 6.4% emphasised dignity of conduct, 10.3% emphasised other attributes, while 64.7% of the scenes did not lend themselves to such consideration. Also, 13.4% of the scenes in films released between 2000 and 2003 emphasised power as the attribute of the royals, 1.1% emphasised wealth, 7.5% emphasised dignity of conduct, 1.1% emphasised other attributes, while 77% of the scenes did not lend themselves to such consideration. Overall, power was the dominant attribute across the years which tend to reflect the data in Table 4.4 showing preponderance of portrayal of the royals in a political role across the scenes. Dignity of conduct was also significant suggesting that the filmmakers viewed this as an important attribute of Igbo monarchy.

Table 5: Dominant Theme

Dominant Theme	Year of Release					Total
	1996 to 1999	2000 to 2003	2004 to 2007	2008 to 2011	2012 to 2015	
War/Strife/Conflict/Struggle	100% N = 4	50% N = 2	25% N = 1	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	35% N = 7
Love/Romance	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	50% N = 2	100% N = 4	25% N = 1	35% N = 7
Intrigue	0% N = 0	50% N = 2	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	10% N = 2
Crime	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	50% N = 2	10% N = 2
Others	0% N = 0	0% N = 0	25% N = 1	0% N = 0	25% N = 1	10% N = 2
Total	100% N = 4	100% N = 4	100% N = 4	100% N = 4	100% N = 4	100% N = 20

Source: Fieldwork 2020

Table 5 shows that 100% of the films released between 1996 and 1999 had war/strife/conflict/struggle theme. Also, 50% of the films released between 2000 and 2003 had war/strife/conflict/struggle theme, Further, 25% of the films released between 2004 and 2007 had war/strife/conflict/struggle theme and 50% had love/romance theme, In the same vein, 100% of films released between 2008 and 2011 had themes based on love/romance These data show that there was a preponderance of war/strife/conflict/struggle and intrigue themes in the films while the later years (particularly from 2004 to 2011) saw dominance of films centred on the themes of love/romance and crime. But overall, the theme of war/strife/conflict/struggle significantly featured across 12 years (1996 – 2007). This may be as a result of the fact that monarchy is a political institution that may agitate conflict over land boundaries, freedom from oppression, crown heritage and so is often likely to generate narratives of power struggle, war and other forms of conflict. Moreover, people want to be identified with the royals and there may tend to be competition on who the royals associate with in terms of romantic relationships.

Analysis of Research Questions

The first research question sought to ascertain how Nollywood films have constructed Igbo monarchy in terms of its place in the cultural setup of the race. The quantitative data in Table 2 indicate that royals were dominantly portrayed in political roles across the years studied, suggesting that these royals (particularly kings) were leaders over their community. Equally, religious role was foregrounded as part of the responsibilities of the monarchs in the films set in the pre-colonial era. Consequently, it may be stated in answer to the first research question that Nollywood films have constructed Igbo monarchy as an important aspect of Igbo cultural

setup as royals are portrayed as playing vital leadership role – political and religious – in their respective communities.

The second research question sought to find out the qualities portrayed of Igbo monarchy in Nollywood films. The quantitative data in Table 3 show that the films under study portrayed courage/bravery and wisdom as dominant attributes of royal persons. Dignity of conduct was also shown to be significant as an attribute of the royals (Table 4). Therefore, it may be stated in answer to the second research question that the qualities portrayed of Igbo monarchy in Nollywood films include physical power, valour, divine connection, wisdom, and wealth. class and modernization constructed on western templates.

The third research question sought to determine the themes in Nollywood Igbo monarchy films over the decades studied. The quantitative data in Table 6 also show that there was preponderance of war/strife/conflict/struggle and intrigue themes in the films released in the earlier years (particularly from 1996 to 2003) while the later years saw dominance of films centred on the themes of love/romance and crime. Consequently, it may be stated in answer to the third research question that the emerging themes in Nollywood Igbo monarchy films were war, valour and intrigue (for films released from 1996 to 2003) and love, marriage, wealth and class conflict (for films released from 2004 to 2015). Nonetheless, the themes of power play and succession featured prominently across the entire 20 years studied.

Summary and Conclusion

The study examined the depictions Igbo monarchy in Nollywood films. Situated within the framework of representation theory, the study adopted quantitative (content analysis) A sample of 20 films was randomly selected. Data collection instruments was coding sheet. Findings showed that Nollywood films have constructed Igbo monarchy as an important aspect of Igbo cultural setup as royals are portrayed as playing vital leadership role – political and religious – in their respective communities. Qualities portrayed of Igbo monarchy in Nollywood films include physical power, valour, divine connection, wisdom, and wealth. Data further showed that the emerging themes in Nollywood Igbo monarchy films were war, valour and intrigue (for films released from 1996 to 2003) and love, marriage, wealth and class conflict. Nonetheless, the themes of power play and succession featured prominently. It is recommended that film makers need to produce films that faithfully promote indigenous culture as it relates to monarchy. Filmmakers, should also endeavour to engage the audience with their works by making the works more critical part of their lives.

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