



Reproducing inequality in the Nigerian cinema industry: Nollywood's regime of inequality and the potential for change

Oluwatuminiu Adebayo & Stacey Scriver

To cite this article: Oluwatuminiu Adebayo & Stacey Scriver (24 Mar 2026): Reproducing inequality in the Nigerian cinema industry: Nollywood's regime of inequality and the potential for change, Journal of Gender Studies, DOI: [10.1080/09589236.2026.2647408](https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2026.2647408)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2026.2647408>



© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 24 Mar 2026.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 59



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Reproducing inequality in the Nigerian cinema industry: Nollywood's regime of inequality and the potential for change

Oluwatumininu Adebayo and Stacey Scriver

Centre for Global Women's Studies, University of Galway, Galway, Ireland

ABSTRACT

Nollywood, Nigeria's prolific and rapidly evolving film industry, is financed through a combination of private and corporate investment. The industry is also shaped by numerous professional guilds, which regulate labour and advocate for practitioners' rights. This study focuses on two of the most prominent guilds, the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) and the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN), to examine how they address discrimination, harassment, and gender disparities affecting women. It situates these practices within the framework of Nigeria's National Gender Policy (NGP), which promotes self-regulated gender equity in media. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 11 female film professionals, a key informant interview with a guild president, and an analysis of guild initiatives and policy responses, the study investigates intersectional gender inequality in Nollywood. Findings indicate that while guilds recognise their role in mitigating gender disparities, interventions remain limited. Women continue to face sexual harassment, exploitation, and pay inequities. Using Acker's concept of inequality regimes, the article therefore demonstrates how Nollywood's structures and practices resist change and reproduce systemic inequalities. Finally, the study identifies opportunities to challenge entrenched gendered hierarchies and advance more equitable practices in the industry.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 28 February 2025

Accepted 10 March 2026

KEYWORDS

Guilds; Nollywood; intersectionality; policies; actionable strategies

Introduction

Nollywood, Nigeria's prolific film industry, has evolved into a major global cultural force, producing thousands of films annually and shaping contemporary understandings of Nigerian identity and social life (Worlu & Harcourt-Whyte, 2025). The industry provides diverse employment opportunities across acting, directing, screenwriting, casting, make-up, costuming, set design, editing, and sound production (Otuonye & Oshionebo, 2024), including opportunities for women (Amonyeze & Agbo, 2022). Nollywood encompasses Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and English-language film traditions (Akinsola, 2020; Ezepue, 2020). However, the term *Nollywood* is most commonly associated with English-language

CONTACT Oluwatumininu Adebayo ✉ olutumininu02@gmail.com 📧 Discipline of Gender and Women's Studies, School of Political Science and Sociology, University of Galway, Aras Mayola Building, Galway, Ireland

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

productions, historically shaped by Igbo marketers and entrepreneurs following the commercial success of the film *Living in Bondage* (Haynes, 2007; Okwuowulu, 2025).

Nollywood is characterised by a deeply informal production system that is privately funded, operates on low budgets, and remains largely self-regulated (Odion, 2018; Simon, 2024). This informality permeates the entire value chain. Distribution systems often rely on unregulated and shadow networks marked by piracy, unregistered marketers, and unauthorised exhibition practices (Jedlowski, 2013; Okome, 2004). The result is a fragmented and weakly coordinated sector with minimal formal regulatory oversight (Odion, 2018). Scholars suggest that this structural disorder reflects broader patterns of economic underdevelopment and infrastructural instability in Nigeria (Benson, 2024).

Despite this fragmentation, there is nevertheless some coordination and governance within Nollywood. This governance is dispersed across multiple guilds and professional associations representing actors, directors, producers, cinematographers, and marketers, each operating with distinct authority structures and disciplinary practices relating to its members (Igwe, 2017; Okwuowulu, 2025). In the absence of centralised labour regulation and with limited state enforcement, protections for creative workers remain uneven, inconsistent, and often symbolic. Although organisations such as the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN) and the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) were established to regulate professional conduct, they are frequently fragmented along ethnic lines and have been accused of operating as patronage networks rather than effective labour institutions (Ayakoroma, 2015; Benson, 2024).

Despite Nollywood's economic significance, these structural conditions have profound gendered consequences. Women working in the industry encounter persistent inequalities produced by informality, weak labour protections, and entrenched power hierarchies (2021 Soetan, 2021). This paper examines the gendered labour conditions of female film professionals in Nollywood by identifying critical issues such as sexual harassment, exploitation, discrimination in role allocation, and pay inequality, shaped by intersecting gendered and ethnic hierarchies. Through an intersectional lens and drawing on the experiences of women working in Nollywood, the study analyses existing and proposed policies, governance mechanisms, and industry practices to assess the scope and limitations of protections available to women working in the industry.

Literature review

As a male-dominated sector, Nollywood shares many characteristics with other male-dominated industries internationally. Inequality regimes (Acker, 2006) structure relations of power between individuals and roles within the organization. Processes, practices, meanings, and actions reinforce and sustain these interrelations, reproducing inequality (Acker, 2006) and resisting efforts for change. Acker defines inequality in organizations as

systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. (Acker, 2006, p. 443)

Research into inequality in the male-dominated fields of education (O'Connor, 2020), skilled trades (Bamberry et al., 2022), sporting industries (Hindman & Walker, 2020), and

many others (see, for instance, Gaines, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2023; Wright, 2016), across diverse contexts, has highlighted the subtle and not-so-subtle regimes of inequality that sustain gendered, classed, and racialized power relations, including role segregation, pay and bonus structures, work-place culture, sexual harassment, and bias and stereotyping.

In the cultural and creative industries, this regime of inequality is further supported by precarity and patronage (Been et al., 2024; Hennekam & Bennet, 2017). Research based primarily in Western Europe and North America has noted how women, lower-class and minoritized groups earn lower pay and struggle to sustain a career in the cultural and creative industries (Been et al., 2024). Networks are identified as critical to secure work and yet present a barrier for marginalized groups within the industry (Been et al., 2024). Further, expectations of time flexibility and the precarious nature of the work itself amplify inequalities, resulting in a situation in which 'fields like film, television, the music industry and the arts more broadly, are marked by stark, persistent and in many cases worsening inequalities relating to gender, race and ethnicity, class, age and disability' (Conor et al. 2015).

Recognition of inequalities in the film industry has led to challenges across the world. In Hollywood, movements like #MeToo and Time's Up have led to increased awareness and some policy changes regarding sexual harassment, with studios adopting codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms (Variety, 2018). European countries have more robust gender mainstreaming strategies in their film industries, with policies like the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 influencing funding and production practice (Liddy, 2020). In the Global South, challenges have also been mounted, for instance, in Bollywood-India's thriving film industry, although these movements have also been accused of engaging in and reinforcing gendered and classed hierarchies (Nanditha, 2022).

The Nigerian film industry is thus located within a global framework in which film industries have recently, and publicly, come under scrutiny for their gendered regimes of inequality. However, such industries broadly reflect the regimes of inequality experienced within the cultural and creative industries and, indeed, virtually all male-dominant industries globally (Guyan et al., 2026, Banks, 2017; Conor et al., 2015). However, the regime of inequality identifiable in Nollywood (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025; Jedlowski, 2020) is also shaped by the local culture and the peculiarities of the industry and its structure, and thus presents as a case study to deepen understanding of regimes of inequality and efforts to challenge them, outside of the West.

Inequality in Nollywood

Power and status in Nollywood are structured through guilds, decision-making and funding roles, and skilled and unskilled labour (including what labour is perceived as skilled) (Igwe, 2017; Jedlowski, 2013). These structures are highly gendered and intersect with classed and ethnicised forms of inequality, which shape access to work, authority, and professional recognition within the industry (Adam, 2021; Okwuowulu, 2019; Soetan, 2021). As a national cultural industry, Nollywood also reflects Nigeria's broader labour regime, characterised by widespread informality, weak regulatory enforcement, and persistent gender inequalities (ILO, 2020). Women in Nigeria are disproportionately concentrated in precarious and informal employment, where access to legal protections,

workplace safety mechanisms, and collective bargaining remains limited (Daudu & Ka'a, 2021; Ugwu et al., 2024). Gendered labour inequalities relating to unequal pay, maternity protections, sexual harassment, and the double burden of paid and unpaid work continue to constrain women's economic participation and reinforce workplace vulnerability (Mûrage et al., 2022; Ogunkorode & Amujo-Akomolafe, 2023), particularly in highly visible and informal sectors such as film and cultural production.

Nollywood offers women visibility, income, and the possibility of social mobility within an otherwise highly gender-unequal labour market (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025). This promise helps explain the large number of women drawn to the industry. Yet visibility does not translate into power or security. Although women make up a substantial share of on-screen talent (Amonyeze & Agbo, 2022), they remain constrained by structural inequalities that shape access to resources, authority, and long-term career stability (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025). Rather than a simple hierarchy, Nollywood operates through a fragmented gender regime in which opportunity and exclusion coexist. Some women gain prominence, greater autonomy and creative influence, but institutional and financial gatekeeping continues to determine whose stories are funded, whose voices are prioritized, and who controls creative labour (Soetan, 2021) with men continuing to dominate key decision-making and production roles, controlling casting, financing, and creative authority (Okwuowulu, 2019; Udoh, 2025) even while women take on more visible roles in Nollywood. Gender inequality is therefore not fixed but unevenly produced, continually renegotiated through shifting configurations of power, representation, and access.

Gendered inequalities in Nollywood operate through both structural and cultural mechanisms. Women working in the industry face precarious conditions, compounded by a culture of silence surrounding exploitation and harassment (Oloruntobi, 2024). The 'sex-for-roles' culture is a particular concern, where women may be coerced into sexual favours to advance their careers with limited ability to resist such advances, and creates a hostile work environment (Hennekam & Bennet, 2017). While some women have begun speaking publicly about sexual harassment and the expectation of sexual favours in exchange for professional opportunities (Sylvanus, 2021; Oloruntobi, 2024), such practices remain widespread, particularly for those in vulnerable or precarious positions, and speaking out carries significant risks to their careers (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025). These structural and workplace inequalities are reinforced on-screen, where negative portrayals of women persist, reinforcing stereotypes and constraining female agency (Onyenankeya et al., 2019; Osakpolor, 2021). Yet these limitations coexist with emergent counter-trends: women's participation in directing, producing, and other decision-making roles has grown in recent years (Olayiwola, 2023).

Gender inequality in Nollywood is further compounded by ethnicity. The industry's ethnic diversity, which spans Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa (Kannywood), and minority-language film sectors, reflects Nigeria's pluralism but also intensifies structural inequalities (Akinsola, 2020; Olayiwola, 2021). While indigenous-language films promote local cultures, they often marginalise women from minority ethnic groups, limiting access to employment and advancement (Akinsola, 2020; Anyawu, 2022). These exclusions mirror broader patterns of ethnic discrimination in Nigeria's labour market, amplifying disadvantage for women situated at the intersection of gender, class, and ethnicity

(Ugwu, 2025). In Nollywood, this disadvantage often appears in relation to access to professional networks, which are critical to success; however, gender, class, and ethnicity significantly shape who can access these networks. The ethnic fragmentation of the industry complicates collective representation and disproportionately disadvantages women without privileged connections (Nwafor, 2009).

Mapping of gender-related realities within the Nigerian film industry

Historically, control over funding and distribution in Nollywood rested with a small circle of informal financiers and marketers, who determined which projects and performers reached audiences (Ezepue, 2020; Jedlowski, 2013). As one observer noted, 'the marketers are the kingmakers ... you will only get roles if they wish, or if they like you' (Onabajo & M'Bayo, 2009: 75). This opaque, male-dominated system relied on patronage rather than contracts or institutional protections (Ihentuge, 2018), often excluding female ethnic minorities who did not conform to prevailing physical ideals. In Ackerian terms, these early funding structures constituted an inequality regime, embedding gendered and ethnicised hierarchies into the organisation of work, controlling access to resources, and shaping career trajectories to privilege men.

Marketers' focus on quick returns also fostered exploitative practices, including sexual abuse, financial misconduct, and misappropriation of actor payments, reflecting the absence of enforceable standards (Okwuowulu, 2025; Sylvanus, 2021). These conditions prompted the creation of professional guilds in the late 1990s and 2000s, which sometimes clashed with marketers. While marketers' influence has declined, they continue to shape access to resources, including through guilds such as the Video Marketers Association.

Professional guilds, including the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) and the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN), now form the central organizing framework of Nollywood labour. Emerging to address regulatory gaps, guilds set ethical standards, regulate entry, represent practitioners' interests, and mediate disputes (Ayakoroma, 2015; Madichie et al., 2019). In an industry characterized by informal, project-based employment and limited state oversight (Simon, 2022), they act as de facto labour institutions, shaping access to work, professional legitimacy, and workplace norms (Samuel-Okon, 2024). Yet their structures remain embedded within the existing inequality regime: fragmented, male-dominated, and ethnically aligned.

Nollywood's guild system is highly fragmented, with overlapping authority undermining regulation (Bud, 2014; Igwe, 2017). From 16 guilds in 2007, numbers rose to over 30 by 2014, and 22 in 2022 (Igwe, 2017; Okwuowulu, 2025). Coordination efforts such as CONGA (2010) and FRENGAN have been unstable, exemplified by AGN's withdrawal, revealing the fragility of collective labour representation (Okwuowulu, 2025). Weak enforcement of professional standards reinforces the persistent inequality regime. These structural weaknesses have pronounced gendered effects. Guilds remain overwhelmingly male: women comprise only 5% of the Directors Guild, 15% of the Association of Movie Producers, and 2% of the Video and Marketers Association (Okwuowulu, 2019). Leadership dominance by men marginalises issues central to women's work, including harassment, pay inequity, and safety (Nwafor, 2009). In line

with Acker's framework, guilds not only reflect but also reproduce structural inequalities, limiting women's access to decision-making, protection, and professional recognition.

AGN and TAMPAN, representing substantial segments of the industry and rooted in distinct regional and ethnic networks, exemplify how labour governance in Nollywood produces and maintains intersecting inequalities. Their organizational histories, membership bases, and ethnic alignments reinforce access disparities, particularly for women at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and occupational precarity (Miller, 2016).

Digital technologies and new funding models, such as streaming platforms, crowd-funding, grants, and direct-to-audience distribution, have partially disrupted traditional gatekeeping, offering women filmmakers avenues to self-produce and reach global audiences (Okwuowulu, 2024; Oguamanam, 2020; Miller, 2016). Yet benefits remain uneven, contingent on capital, digital literacy, and platform algorithms. Large-budget projects and lucrative deals continue to favour established networks, and new gatekeepers may reproduce existing biases (Ojieson, 2017). While digitalisation opens opportunities to challenge Nollywood's inequality regime, structural barriers persist, requiring targeted funding, capacity-building, and regulatory reform to translate technological possibilities into sustained advances in gender equality.

Implications of Nigeria's National Gender Policy on Nollywood

Although Nollywood is informal, it is subject to national labour policies. Nigeria's National Gender Policy (NGP), first introduced in 2006 and updated in 2021, aims to integrate gender perspectives across sectors, including media, to address inequalities rooted in patriarchy, discrimination, and violence (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006). By recognising power imbalances as the source of gender disparities, the NGP promotes mainstreaming strategies, monitoring mechanisms, and initiatives against gender-based violence and harmful stereotypes (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006:7; 2021). In entertainment, it targets derogatory content and encourages self-regulation, with oversight by the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and evaluation by a multi-sectoral council (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2021). As the policy states, 'All public and private stakeholders are responsible for employing gender mainstreaming strategies ... monitored and evaluated by a multi-sectoral council' (NGP, 2021).

Despite this framework, the NGP's impact on Nollywood remains limited. Its broad scope lacks industry-specific measures to address challenges such as women's underrepresentation in directing roles or vulnerability to harassment. Reliance on voluntary compliance by private stakeholders (PolicyVault, 2021) and weak enforcement has limited effectiveness, while Nollywood's self-regulatory mechanisms are fragmented (CFR, 2019). As a private-sector-driven industry led by investors, studios, and independent filmmakers (Ezepue, 2020), Nollywood relies on professional guilds like the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) and the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN) to uphold gender principles. These guilds have introduced initiatives such as workshops and mentorship programmes (Businessday, 2021), yet their impact on systemic inequalities is unclear.

Scholarship critiques gender representation in Nollywood (Onyenankeya et al., 2019) but rarely evaluates policy impact or guild efficacy through an intersectional lens. Also, industry-wide reforms are absent, leaving small-scale initiatives insufficient. This study addresses the gap by examining the efforts of AGN and TAMPAN to tackle harassment and pay disparities, alongside insights from a key informant and female film professionals.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the impact of initiatives of Nollywood guilds on structural inequalities faced by female film professionals in Nollywood, grounding its approach in Acker's regimes of inequality (2006), which is inclusive of an intersectional feminist framework (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2022). The study, guided by an ethical¹ approach to knowledge production, included the voices of the women affected by the regime of inequality in Nollywood. Blending inductive and deductive strategies, it examines how gender and ethnicity intersect to shape systemic barriers, while assessing the efficacy of the National Gender Policy (NGP) and industry guild initiatives, specifically from the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) and the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN). The design prioritizes depth over breadth, capturing nuanced experiences and institutional responses to inform actionable solutions.

Data collection and sample

Data was gathered through two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and content analysis of secondary sources. Between March 2023 and January 2024, 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with female Nollywood professionals (see Table 1), selected for their diverse roles (e.g. directors, actresses, producers), ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Yoruba, Igbo, minority groups), and career stages (early-career to established, gauged

Table 1. Participant demographics.

Pseudonyms	Portfolios	Years of experience	Gender	Ethnic Background	Category of Followers on Instagram
Malaika	Producer/ Actress	15	Female	Igbo	100–500k
Zimmer	Actress	8	Female	Igbo	100–500k
Ezinne	Producer/ Actress	12	Female	Yoruba	500–1 M
Aminat	Producer/ Actress	18	Female	Yoruba	1 M+
White	Actress	30	Female	Igbo	1 M+
Rosaline	Scriptwriter	5	Female	Igbo	5–10K
Chizzy	Costumier/ Actress	5	Female	Igbo	100–500K
Antonia	Actress	7	Female	Igbo	10–20K
Ijeoma	Producer/ Actress	10	Female	Ijaw	10–20K
Ade	Actress	25	Female	Yoruba	300–500k
Kenny	Actress/Director	28	Female	Yoruba	500–1 M

by Instagram followers ranging from 5000 to over 1 Million). Participants were recruited via email and Instagram and identified through public profiles. They were invited with detailed information sheets outlining the study's purpose and consent process. An additional key informant interview was conducted in December 2023 with the current President of TAMPAN to better understand the insider perspectives on guild policies and their implementation.

Interviews utilised an open-ended guide with prompts, fostering flexibility and rich responses (Jackson et al., 2007). Questions probed experiences of discrimination, harassment (e.g. 'sex-for-roles'), barriers to leadership, and perceptions of policy effectiveness, tailored to capture intersectional dynamics (e.g. ethnic bias in casting, discrimination in pay disparities). The TAMPAN President's interview focused on guild strategies, policy alignment with the NGP, and challenges in addressing gender inequities. All interviews, averaging 60–90 minutes, were recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised.

Secondary data included content analysis of industry reports, newspapers (e.g. Vanguard, Nation), policy documents (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2021), academic articles, and official statements from AGN and TAMPAN websites. These sources, spanning 2019–2025, were selected to evaluate institutional commitments and contextualize primary findings to ensure a comprehensive view of Nollywood's gender landscape.

Participants were purposively chosen to reflect Nollywood's diversity and relevance to structural inequalities. The women ranged in age (25–50), ethnicity (e.g. Yoruba, Igbo, Ijaw), and experience (5–37 years), with Instagram followers indicating visibility and professional status (5000–1 Million). Roles included directors, actresses, producers, script-writers, and costumiers, capturing varied perspectives on leadership and vulnerability. The TAMPAN President was selected for his strategic position and ability to offer informed insights into guild policies, providing voluntary consent after email outreach.

Data analysis

Data analysis combined thematic and content approaches, guided by intersectionality, to uncover structural and cultural factors. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2006), coded interview transcripts inductively to identify emergent themes, e.g. harassment, ethnic bias in casting, and policy awareness. Initial codes (e.g. 'pay inequality', 'harassment', 'professional status', 'colourism') were categorised into broader themes (e.g. 'intersectional barriers', 'institutional responses'), iteratively refined with deductive checks against prior concepts (e.g. NGP goals, guild advocacy). This dual approach ensured findings reflected lived experiences while engaging existing frameworks.

Content analysis systematically evaluated secondary sources, adapting Neuendorf's (2017) methodology. Predefined categories included guild commitments (e.g. anti-harassment policies), NGP provisions (e.g. media gender sensitivity), and industry practices (e.g. beauty standards). Documents were coded for explicit mentions of gender equity measures and their implementation, assessing alignment with interview themes. The NGP analysis specifically scrutinized its relevance to Nollywood, focusing on gaps in addressing intersectional issues like ethnic discrimination or socio-economic access. The study identifies a research gap due to limited studies on policy responses to gender inequities in

Nollywood. By triangulating interview insights with secondary data and the TAMPAN President's perspective, the analysis highlights deficiencies in current initiatives, such as weak enforcement and ethnic biases in advocacy. These findings inform targeted recommendations, strengthening the study's contribution to both scholarship and practice.

Limitations

The study did exhibit some limitations in its design. Recruitment of key informants was a challenge, with only the President of TAMPAN available to participate. Furthermore, the number and fragmented structure of Nollywood guilds, where policies and actions often develop independently, made initiatives and policies resulting in the potential of overlooking some current actions. Nevertheless, this study provides rare insight into the functioning of Nollywood's regime of inequality and the role of guilds in challenging and/or supporting this regime.

Findings

Intersectional inequalities and responses in Nollywood

In the following sections, we present the key findings focusing on two key gender equality issues: gendered pay disparity and sexual harassment. These issues act as indicators to assess the extent to which guilds are addressing intersecting gender equalities. The participant interviews were conducted between November 2024 and January 2025, with the issues of harassment and pay inequality emerging organically during the interviews. The interviews are analysed through an intersectional framework that considers the interplay of gender, ethnicity, and professional status. The responses of industry guilds, the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN) and the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN), and the broader policy context, including the National Gender Policy (NGP), are evaluated to assess their impact on these structural inequalities.

The challenges of working in Nollywood for female film professionals

Gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Gender-based violence and sexual exploitation are pervasive in Nollywood, constituting significant human rights violations that demand urgent attention. Virtually all participants reported frequent experiences of harassment, particularly 'sex-for-roles' demands. These experiences appeared to disproportionately affect early-career women reliant on informal networks for opportunities. Aminat, an actress with 18 years of experience, recounted an experience of sexual harassment in the earlier part of her career:

You know, sometimes, you may stay for some months without getting any role. So when you are called, you quickly jump at the opportunity. [Early in her career] I was called for a role ... my aunt drove me to the producer's place, but was skeptical. The producer told my aunt, madam, don't worry your daughter is in safe hands. After my aunt left, I was surprised to see that I was lured. I asked the producers, where are the other crew members? ... The next thing, he said I should follow him to a restaurant. I did not want to be left alone in the house, so I followed. On our way back, I heard him asking the director [a man], Is there any role or extra role for this lady? The director said, Yes. So he told the director that after chucking me (That is, after having sex with me), he will give me the role. ... He said either I suck his dick or I allow

him to finger me. (She burst into laughter), there is nothing I have not seen in this industry (Aminat, Yoruba, 1 M+ followers, 2023)

This account highlights the normalization of sexual harassment within Nollywood's occupational culture, where power imbalances exacerbated by gender and professional status enable perpetrators to act with impunity. Kenny, a producer with 7 years of experience, further emphasized the role of victim-blaming in silencing survivors: 'They know you can do nothing . . . Even if you go online and call them out, you hear people asking what you were also wearing, you know. How did you find yourself in that position?' (Kenny, Yoruba, 500–1 M Followers, 2023).

Intersectional factors intensify these vulnerabilities. Women face heightened risks due to limited access to influential networks which are themselves shaped by ethnicity and patronage. Participants with existing networks, such as those who had family already embedded in Nollywood, appeared to an easier time finding work, thus reducing vulnerability. Similarly, early-career professionals lack the status to resist coercion, aligning with Hennekam and Bennet's, (2017) findings that precarious employment increases susceptibility to harassment in creative industries. The absence of effective reporting mechanisms compounds this issue, as illustrated by Sylvanus (2021), who quoted Nollywood female actor with 20 years of experience:

Men feel they can do as they like because they cannot be reported to any court of law or police. They feel entitled to women and their bodies. This is why I decided to quit after putting twenty years into the job . . . if we had laws that worked, I would have used them to my advantage many times, but there are none (Sylvanus, 2021, p. 142).

This statement shows how Nollywood's decentralised structure and lack of enforceable legal frameworks perpetuate a culture of entitlement and exploitation, driving women, particularly those with intersecting disadvantages, out of the industry.

Intersectional discrimination and pay disparities

Pay inequality is another critical challenge, with women consistently earning less than their male counterparts for similar roles, a disparity worsened by Nollywood's opaque fee structures. Adebayo and Stacey (2025) found that actors performing identical roles receive vastly different compensation, often uncovered through informal 'kiss and tell' exchanges rather than transparent policies. Emerging female talent, especially from minority ethnic backgrounds, is frequently offered 'exposure' instead of payment, reinforcing economic disadvantage (Fortmueller, 2019). Intersectionality shapes these disparities profoundly. Women face compounded discrimination due to ethnic biases, colourism, and beauty standards favouring light-skinned, conventionally attractive actresses (Balogun et al., 2024). Chizzy, an Igbo woman with darker skin, described losing roles to women with lighter skin and markers of class, like having a British accent²:

I was given a script and told to rehearse for the classic girl role. Of course, I did my best, but I was wondering why the director was smiling sheepishly. I asked him if I performed well, and he nodded but still smiled. After a while, they called me and said they had to give another lady the lead role. I was like . . . What? The lady they gave the role . . . is light-skinned, has a good body physique, and even has a British accent. I will never forget that day . . . I cried, but they had to give me another role, but not a lead role (Chizzy, Igbo, 100–500K followers, 2023)

Professional status further disadvantages early-career women, who lack the market leverage to negotiate fair pay. For instance, established actors may earn up to US \$1,700 per film, while newcomers, particularly women, might receive as little as US\$100 or nothing at all (Fortmueller, 2019).

Participant interviews clearly indicate that sexual harassment is a common, almost everyday occurrence, for women in Nollywood, particularly for those in the earlier stages of their career. This vulnerability, marked by gender and status, is exacerbated by ethnicity where informal networks are more difficult to access. Although pay was less frequently mentioned, despite their being a gendered pay disparity of up to 40% (Dukeh, 2025) with some participants, particularly the more established participants, arguing that pay was based on merit and negotiating capacity, early-career women were more likely to note pay disparities and limited options to negotiate this inequality.

Responding to inequality: guild responses and measures in relation to sexual harassment and pay inequality

Sexual harassment and the responses of Nollywood guilds. Guilds, as powerful actors in Nollywood, have an important role in addressing intersectional inequalities. This role has been recognized in Nollywood, with key guilds such as the AGN and TAMPAN introducing measures to address sexual harassment. For example, the AGN, under President Emeka Rollas, established a reporting mechanism in 2021, including a dedicated email, phone line, and app for anonymous complaints about sexual harassment, alongside a committee to handle cases discreetly. Rollas describes the issue as below:

A lot of people think that you cannot act in good movies if you don't pay a producer to give you a role or if you don't sleep with a producer to give you a role ... We have arrested people in Abuja, and we have tried them in a court of law without revealing the identity of the people who reported them. (The Sun Nigeria, 2021)

Despite these efforts, Rollas acknowledged low reporting rates, noting:

We have not been receiving reports from people, and I don't know why ... I also found out that some people were framing people up, claiming it was because of sex-for-roles that they did not succeed in the industry. (Tugbobo, 2022)

This suggestion of false accusations risks fostering scepticism that deters legitimate reporting, particularly among women fearing disbelief. The potential offered by the establishment of measures is consequently undermined by gendered attitudes, thus subverting the intent to challenge regimes of inequality and instead supporting those same regimes through norm reinforcement.

The guild TAMPAN has also instituted measures to address sexual harassment, described as being guided by Yoruba cultural values:

As far as I know, my Association is guided by certain principles and values that are in tandem with the Yoruba culture. No culture encourages harassment or assault against women. However, because TAMPAN members are circumscribed by rules, anyone who misbehaves is dealt with according to the extant rules regardless of gender if the gender harassment protective framework could be strengthened in other associations, I believe that sexual

harassment against female professionals could be effectively addressed. (Interview with President of TAMPAN, 2023)

The above statement suggests a limited recognition of the constraints to reporting for women. In highlighting TAMPAN's efforts, the president cited instances where TAMPAN refrained from defending members accused of sexual harassment, described as signalling a commitment to protecting female professionals. While not actively undermining women, this approach doesn't directly support women who have experienced sexual harassment either. Such a neutral stance is unlikely to change the regime of inequality where power is already so unbalanced at the intersections of status, gender and ethnicity.

Pay disparities and guild actions in Nollywood. In relation to pay disparities, relatively few efforts by the guilds to address this issue have been identified. TAMPAN, for instance, adopts a meritocratic perspective:

There is nothing like gender discrimination or consideration when it comes to remuneration. The pay structure in the creative industry is determined by factors that are peculiar to the industry. We have different grades of artists. We also have different grades in the production professionals. Experience and market ratings play a vital role in determining the pay entitlement of people in the creative setup. People are paid according to their market rating as well as their creative contributions and relevance within the production and creative process. So, there is no need for policy initiation. (President of TAMPAN, 2023)

The failure to identify the vast gender differential in pay, up to 40% for similar roles, as relating to gender inequality rather than differences in skills, signals a significant undervaluing of women's work. A supposedly meritocratic approach to pay disparities thus permits the perpetuation of inequality unchecked by the key policy actors in Nollywood.

When challenged on whether there are gendered factors that may influence pay, the TAMPAN president acknowledged that beauty standards influence role acquisition, and consequently pay. He noted that,

The creative industry grows with societal trends. That being so, it is difficult to separate realism from the creative business. So, the celebration of beauty is a recurrent reality therefore, there is nothing much that one can do to mitigate the exhibition and celebration of beauty and aesthetics. (The President of TAMPAN, 2023)

While the TAMPAN president emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of the creative business, he also highlights its alignment with prevailing societal norms. What remains unsaid is that these norms are also built around gendered and ethnicised ideals. For instance, lighter skinned and more 'European' actresses can often command higher rates and are more likely to be cast in on-screen roles than those who are darker-skinned (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025). These features thus shape pay, wealth and influence in intersectional ways that are overlooked by policies that suggest pay is only based on skills and in so doing leave the regime of inequality unbothered.

The largest guild in Nollywood, AGN, has made no public comments on gender pay disparities, and no policies or measures could be identified in relation to this. They have, however, advocated recently for a minimum payment benchmark for all acting roles of N10 000 or €6 (Dukeh, 2025). While minimum pay would be welcome, the amount suggested is insufficient to cover even the expenses of being on-set. Given that the majority of on-screen roles are held by women, it is instead likely to set a threshold for

women's pay in Nollywood that actually reinforces gender equality and does not address the vulnerabilities of female actors in Nollywood to sex-for-roles exchanges and other forms of exploitation.

Further, pay disparity may hide behind public presentations of wealth and status. Female actors are often expected to display great wealth and beauty, something which is not discouraged by the guilds. Although the wealthiest actors in Nollywood are men, and women earn 30–40% less than men for comparable roles (Dukeh, 2025), the public perception, largely based on 'spectacular' lifestyles, is that women are paid more. Consequently, the regime of inequality structures Nollywood in ways that disguise pay and wealth inequalities through role differentiation and the perception of pay based on merit. In this way, unequal wealth distribution persists with few challenges by either actors themselves (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025) or their representative guilds.

Reproducing regimes of intersectional inequality in Nollywood

Sexual harassment and pay inequalities are indicators of the deep-rooted structural inequalities continuing to operate in Nollywood. These factors are shaped by the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and professional status. Despite some recognition of the intensity of the problem of sexual harassment, measures introduced by powerful Nollywood guilds continue to underplay the seriousness of the issue and contribute to victim-blaming through the suggestion that accusations are made for personal gain. Instead of addressing the issue with policy and action, harassment and sexual exploitation continue to thrive in an environment of significant power imbalances, where early-career women and those from marginalized ethnic groups face heightened vulnerability. The normalization of 'sex-for-roles' exchanges, coupled with victim-blaming attitudes, perpetuates a cycle of silence and impunity, as Kenny's and Chizzy's experiences illustrate. The positioning of women in Nollywood as innocent victims or as power-hungry schemers and career climbers contributes to a culture of impunity and retrenchment in the gendered power structures.

Guild responses currently fall short of dismantling these systemic issues. The AGN's reporting mechanisms and TAMPAN's disciplinary actions in relation to sexual harassment give the appearance of efforts to address gender-based harassment, but low reporting rates, scepticism of claims, and reliance on cultural values over enforceable policies indicate that such efforts are primarily at the surface with little substantive change. Perceptions that women will make false reports discourage reporting (Garrett & Hassan, 2020). These societal regimes of power and inequality are consequently reproduced within Nollywood through gendered attitudes that position women as untrustworthy, scheming, and vindictive.

Pay disparities, masked by opaque fee structures and meritocratic rhetoric, further entrench economic disadvantage, particularly for women lacking market leverage. We see marked pay inequalities disguised through expectations of spectacular lifestyles that women in Nollywood are expected to adhere to, the processes of wealth accumulation that women are largely excluded from, and a failure to regulate pay and reward within the industry. Little effort appears to be made through policy or measures, either within the industry or through national labour policy, to address this issue. While guilds are well positioned to try to address such issues, there is a clear failure to do so, with pay inequality

being invisibilised (see Acker, 2009) within the industry. Instead, those in a position to advocate for equal pay fail to recognize the role of intersectional gender discrimination in pay inequality, leading to situations of ongoing vulnerability for female film professionals in Nigeria.

TAMPAN's rejection of gender-specific pay policies disregards substantial evidence of systemic bias, with disproportionate consequences for women facing intersecting disadvantages. Gender pay inequality is a global feature of the film industry. In Hollywood, for example, female stars earn on average over US \$2 million less per film than male stars, with the unexplained earnings gap driven disproportionately by action films and smaller or statistically insignificant in other genres once controls are applied (Heywood et al., 2025). Comparable patterns are evident elsewhere: Bollywood actor Sonam Kapoor has publicly criticized the scale and slow pace of change regarding gender pay inequality in the Indian film industry (Ramachandran, 2023). These dynamics align with broader critiques raised by movements such as Time's Up, which foreground systemic discrimination and exclusion in creative labour markets, particularly affecting women, and those in precarious roles (Rendon, 2019). In Nollywood, pay disparities are commonly attributed to the absence of transparent fee structures and formal salary regulation (Adebayo & Stacey, 2025; Okonkwo, 2023). When questioned about measures to address pay inequality, the president of TAMPAN emphasized the complexity of remuneration in creative work, citing experience, market value, and professional grading as determinants of pay. While such factors acknowledge industry-specific dynamics, their invocation without transparency raises critical concerns about whether they are applied equitably across gender lines.

Although, the national policy offers the potential for oversight, Nigeria's National Gender Policy's broad framework exacerbates these gaps by entrusting enforcement to a decentralised industry ill-equipped to address intersectional inequalities. Nollywood's ethnic and organisational fragmentation hinders unified oversight, leaving accountability inconsistent and protections uneven. Women from minority ethnic backgrounds or with lower professional status remain most vulnerable, as cultural biases and power dynamics unaddressed by self-regulation reinforce their exclusion.

For meaningful change, Nollywood requires centralised, enforceable policies that tackle these intersectional challenges head-on. Models like the Swedish Film Institute's '50:50 Policy' offer a blueprint, mandating equal representation across gender and ethnic lines (Swedish Film Institute, 2022; Liddy, 2020). Such reforms must dismantle entrenched power structures, promote gender equity in leadership (Bull, 2023), and ensure transparent pay systems. For policies to have maximum impact, they must be accessible to all industry members, not just leadership, with clear definitions (e.g. 'zero tolerance'), reporting procedures, and consequences for perpetrators (Bull, 2023).

Further, change requires addressing attitudes among leadership. So long as those with the capacity to make change are blind to gender inequalities, they are unlikely to support actions, measures or policies to effectively address these. However, as Acker points out, changes to inequality regimes are 'difficult, because of entrenched economic (class) interests, the legitimacy of class interests, and allegiances to gendered and racialized identities and advantages' (2009, 640). However, those whose status and wealth are secure, including those at the top of the hierarchy, may be more willing to support those at the bottom of the hierarchy than those in the middle (Acker, 2006), pointing towards the potential of guild leaders to become genuine advocates of gender equality, where inequitable attitudes

can be addressed. The willingness of the President of TAMPAN to participate in this study does offer hope that advocacy among leadership can be developed. Without these interventions, Nollywood risks perpetuating a culture where harassment, discrimination, and inequality persist, disproportionately harming its most marginalized female professionals and ultimately reproducing the regime of inequality.

Conclusion: opportunities for change in Nollywood

This study shows that despite some efforts by Nollywood guilds, harassment and pay inequality persist, especially for women marginalized by gender, ethnicity, and professional status. Existing initiatives are limited in effectiveness and, at times, reinforce entrenched hierarchies rather than challenge them, resulting in the reproduction of regimes of inequality. Leadership often frames pay disparities as merit-based and downplays harassment, while the absence of independent advocacy reflects broader societal failure to address workplace gender inequality. Nigeria's National Gender Policy (NGP), reliant on voluntary compliance, is ineffective in a fragmented industry marked by ethnic divisions, guild autonomy, and uneven enforcement. This decentralization leaves marginalized women vulnerable to intersecting discrimination. Nollywood lacks a unified, enforceable framework, allowing cultural biases and power imbalances to persist, sustaining harassment, pay gaps, and exclusion.

Opportunities for change lie in centralized leadership and intersectional policy reform that directly confronts inequitable attitudes. A robust framework could unify producers, directors, and guilds to enforce consistent, inclusive measures addressing gender, ethnicity, and professional status, dismantling the structural and cultural dynamics that sustain inequality. Progress depends on raising awareness, mobilizing leadership and collective support, and implementing enforceable policies with clear accountability.

This study has several limitations. First, the small number of participants and guilds that could be included, reducing the capacity for generalizability. Secondly, it focuses on three axes of inequality – gender, ethnicity, and status – to the neglect of other potential categories of inequality including sexuality, gender identity, age, disability and more. Third, the informal nature of much of Nollywood, which also permeates the function of guilds, makes identifying all policies and practices a challenge and leaving open the possibility that some are overlooked. Nevertheless, this study makes an important contribution to understanding the persistence of gender inequality in Nollywood specifically, the Creative and Cultural Industries more generally, and male-dominated industries more broadly. Using the concept of inequality regimes, this study demonstrates how the Nollywood regime not only resists challenge to intersecting inequalities but also subverts these challenges, effectively shoring up the regime and maintaining structures of inequality through gendered, ethnicised and classed hierarchies.

While challenging Nollywood's regime of inequality is difficult, it is possible. Future research should focus on disrupting inequitable leadership attitudes, testing centralised regulatory models, and exploring comparative strategies across creative industries. Although grounded in Nollywood, these insights offer lessons for dismantling entrenched inequality in male-dominated industries worldwide.

Notes

1. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Galway Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent of the participant was secured and obtained online before commencing the interviews, and individual interviews were anonymised, and pseudonyms were assigned. Data from the key informant interview was not anonymised, and the participant agreed for their name and role to be identified in the study.
2. English speaking with a British accent is often associated with higher class and educational status in Nigeria, with wealthy parents and individuals paying significant sums to private schools and diction and phonetic classes to learn Received Pronunciation (Orjinmo, 2023).

Author contributions

Dr. Oluwatumininu Adebayo: Data collection, data analysis, and writing; **Dr. Stacey Scriver:** Data analysis and writing.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Dr. Oluwatumininu Adebayo holds a PhD in Global Women's Studies. Her research focuses on gender, women's lived experiences, precarity, power, and inequality, with a particular interest in intersectionality and feminist theorising. Her work critically examines the experiences of women, exploring issues of marginalisation, workplace dynamics, and social exclusion. She is especially interested in how structures of power shape everyday experiences in both public and professional spaces.

Dr. Stacey Scriver is a Lecturer in Political Science and Sociology and Head of Discipline, Gender and Women's Studies, at the University of Galway, Ireland. Her research focuses on gender, violence, and inequality, with particular interest in intersectionality and feminist theorising. She has published widely on gender-based violence and inequalities, and is currently completing a book on Violence against Women and the Global Economy.

References

- Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender and Society*, 20(4), 441–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206289499>
- Acker, J. (2009). From glass ceiling to inequality regimes. *Sociologie Du Travail*, 51(2), 199–217. <https://doi.org/10.4000/sdt.16407>
- Adam, E. (2021). Nollywood and women. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studies* (pp. 1073–1991). Palgrave Macmillan Cham.
- Adebayo, O. O., & Stacey, S. (2025). Negotiating Nollywood: Women, violence, and postfeminist sensibilities in the Nigerian film industry. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, 33(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.70049>
- Akinsola, I. T. (2020). Nollywood reception preferences among selected multilingual Nigerian undergraduates in the University of Ibadàn: Does ethnicity still matter. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 4(1), 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/8210>

- Amonyeye, C., & Agbo, O. (2022). On new voices in Nollywood: Female agency and value in selected Nigerian movies. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 9(1), 2064080. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2064080>
- Anyanwu, C. (2022). Nollywood and the national question. *Quarterly Review of Film & Video*, 39(4), 799–814. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2021.1881398>
- Ayakoroma, B. F. (2015). *Trends in Nollywood: A study of selected genres*. Kraft Books.
- Balogun, S., Nwanko, B., Okechie, H., & Aruoture, E. (2024). Beauty and sexuality in African setting. *Nigerian Journal of Social Psychology*, 7(2), 175–186.
- Bamberry, L., Bridges, D., Wulff, E., & Krivokapic-Skoko, B. (2022). Inequality regimes in male-dominated trades: What role do apprenticeship intermediaries (GTOs) play? *The Economic & Labour Relations Review*, 33(3), 547–565. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10353046221096270>
- Banks, M. (2017). *Creative justice: Cultural industries, work and inequality* (pp. 1–10). American Standard for Information Sciences.
- Been, W., Wijngaarden, Y., & Loots, E. (2024). Welcome to the inner circle? Earnings and inequality in the creative industries. *Cultural Trends*, 33(3), 255–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2023.2181057>
- Benson, T. (2024). A case for self-regulation, unified code of ethics & professional practice in Nollywood. The culture newspaper. <https://www.theculturenewspaper.com/a-case-for-self-regulation-unified-code-of-ethics-professional-practice-in-nollywood>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bud, A. (2014). The end of Nollywood's guilded age? Marketers, the state, and the struggle for distribution. *Critical African Studies*, 6(1), 91–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2014.885784>
- Bull, A. L. (2023). Safe to speak up? Sexual harassment in the UK film and television industry since #MeToo. Screen industries growth network. <https://screen-network.org.uk/publication/safe-to-speak-up-sexual-harassment-in-the-uk-film-tv-industry/>
- Businessday. (2021). Inkblot women in film seeks to tackle key challenges facing feminine gender in Nollywood. <https://businessday.ng/arts-bdlife-arts/article/inkblot-women-in-film-seeks-to-tackle-key-challenges-facing-feminine-gender-in-nollywood/>
- CFR. (2019). Nigeria's laws hold women back. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/nigerias-laws-hold-women-back-and-economy-suffers>
- Collins, P. H. (2022). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.
- Conor, B., Gill, R., & Taylor, S. (2015). Gender and creative labour. *Sociological Review*, 63, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12237>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241–1299. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Daudu, B., & Ka'a, N. I. (2021). Gender and collective bargaining in the work place. *Nigerian Bar Journal*, 12(1), <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/nba/article/view/238364>
- Dukeh, S. (2025). Who is the richest actor in Nigeria? *The Guardian*. 15th Nov. <https://guardian.ng/nigerian/who-is-the-richest-actor-in-nigeria/>
- Ezepue, E. M. (2020). The new Nollywood: Professionalization or gentrification of cultural industry. *SAGE Open*, 10(3), 2158244020940994. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020940994>
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. (2006). National gender policy. <http://ngfrepository.org.ng:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/6646>
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. (2021). National gender policy. <http://ngfrepository.org.ng:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/6582>
- Fortmueller, K. (2019). Time's up (again?): Transforming Hollywood's industrial culture. *Media Industries Journal*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.3998/mij.15031809.0006.201>
- Gaines, J. M. (2017). Women in male-dominated careers. Cornell HR Review. (1–7. <https://files01.core.ac.uk/download/pdf/83527341.pdf>
- Garrett, A., & Hassan, N. (2020). Understanding the silence of sexual harassment victims through the #WhyIDidntReport movement. Proceedings of the 2019 IEEE/ACM International Conference on

- Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM '19) (pp. 649–652). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3341161.3343700>
- Guyan, K., Eikhof, D. R., & Coles, A. (2026). Gender equity policy and visibility politics in the film and television industries. *Policy and Politics*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1332/03055736Y2025D000000081>
- Haynes, J. (2007). Nollywood in Lagos, Lagos in nollywood Africa today. 131–150.
- Hennekam, S., & Bennet, D. (2017). Sexual harassment in the creative industries: Tolerance, culture and the need for change. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, 24(4), 417–434. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12176>
- Heywood, J. S., Izquierdo Sánchez, S., & Navarro Paniagua, M. N. (2025). The Hollywood gender gap: The role of action films. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 49(3), 459–485. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-024-09514-0>
- Hindman, L. C., & Walker, N. A. (2020). Sexism in professional sports: How women managers experience and survive sport organisational culture. *The Economic & Labour Relations Review*, 33(3), 547–565.
- Igwe, E. M. (2017). Structure and power struggle in contemporary Nollywood: An ethnographic evaluation. *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering*, 11(6), 1266–1279.
- Ihentuge, C. U. (2018). Nollywood marketing system: The economics of survival. *Interdisciplinary Journal of African & Asian Studies (Ijaas)*, 4(1), 1–13.
- ILO. (2020). *Policy brief on sexual harassment in the entertainment*. ILO Publications.
- Jackson, D., Firtko, A., & Edenborough, M. (2007). Personal resilience as a strategy for surviving and thriving in the face of workplace adversity: A literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60(1), 1–9.
- Jedlowski, A. (2013). From Nollywood to Nollywood: Processes of transnationalization in the Nigerian video film industry. In M. Krings & O. Okome (Eds.), *Global Nollywood: The transnational dimensions of an African video film industry* (pp. 25–34). Indiana University Press.
- Liddy, S. (2020). The road to 5050: Gender equality and the Irish film industry. In S. Liddy (Ed.), *Women in the international film industry: Policy, practice and power* (pp. 77–95). Palgrave Macmillan Cham.
- Madichie, N. O., Ajakaiye, B. O., & Ratten, V. (2019). The impact of new media (digital) and globalisation on Nollywood. In N. Taura, E. Bolat, & N. O. Madichi (Eds.), *Digital entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, opportunities and prospects* (pp. 89–121). Palgrave MacMillan CHAM.
- Mürage, A., Oyekunle, A., Ralph-Opara, U., Agada, P., Smith, J., Hawkins, K., & Morgan, R. (2022). Gendered and differential effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on paid and unpaid work in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1), 2117927. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2117927>
- Nanditha, N. (2022). Exclusion in# MeToo India: Rethinking inclusivity and intersectionality in Indian digital feminist movements. *Feminist Media Studies*, 22(7), 1673–1694. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2021.1913432>
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The content analysis guidebook*. Sage Publications.
- Nwafor, F. (2009). The Igbo ethnic nationality: Key players in the Nigerian video film industry. *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*, 3(1), 112–122.
- O'Brien, W., Hanlon, C., & Apostolopoulos, V. (2023). Women as leaders in male-dominated sectors: A bifocal analysis of gendered organizational practices. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, 30(6), 1867–1884. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.13019>
- O'Connor, P. (2020). Why is it so difficult to reduce gender inequality in male dominated higher educational organisations? A feminist institutional perspective. *Interdisciplinary Science Review*, 45(2), 207–228.
- Odion, F. O. (2018). The paradox of Nollywood: The structural intricacies and cultural significance of the world's fastest-growing film industry. *Flinders University*.
- Oguamanam, C. (2020). Nollywood phenomenon: “The Nollywood phenomenon: Innovation, openness, and technological opportunism in the modeling of successful African entrepreneurship”. *The Journal of World Intellectual Property*, 23(3–4), 518–545. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jwip.12162>
- Ogunkorode, O. O., & Amujo-Akomolafe, M. E. (2023). Sexual harassment: Vulnerability of domestic workers in Nigeria. In E. Dujaye, S. Nabaneh & T. Adebajo (Eds.), *Sexual harassment, law and*

- human rights in Africa* (pp. 199–229). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32367-6_7
- Ojieson, S. A. (2017). Interrogating Nollywood and its sources of funding: The case of invasion 1897. *EJOTMAS: Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, 6(1–2). <https://doi.org/10.4314/ejotmas.v6i1-2.14>
- Okome, O. (2004). *From the periphery of the visual space: Women and the video film in Nigeria*. Department of Theatre Arts University of Calabar, CRS Nigeria.
- Okonkwo, E. (2023). Gender equity in Nollywood: Challenges and achievements in the film industry. *Inside Nollywood*. <https://insidenollywood.ng/archives/4308>
- Okwuowulu, C. (2019). Nollywood and the (re) construction of femininity in female narratives: A critical appraisal. *African Performance Review*, 11(1), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.30817/0111.apr0174>
- Okwuowulu, C. (2024). Reimagining storytelling: Nollywood's digital revolution against Hollywood structures. *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, 32(4), 32–43. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2853-4480>
- Okwuowulu, C. (2025). Processes of formalising Nollywood practice: Policy propositions and contestations. *Gradiva: International Journal of the Semiotics of Literature and Art*, 64(1). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2853-4480>
- Olayiwola, E. (2021). Chapter nine Tunde Kelani and the woman's film genre Elizabeth Olayiwola. In T. Onikoyi & T. Afolabi (Eds.), *The cinema of Tunde Kelani: Aesthetics, theatricalities and visual performance* (pp. 156–170). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Olayiwola, E. (2023). New Nollywood and the female gaze: Changing female stereotypes in Nigerian cinema. *Quarterly Review of Film & Video*, 40(1), 94–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2021.1984822>
- Oloruntobi, T. (2024). On intersections of power and vulnerability: A critique of Nollywood, hetero-patriarchy, and ideologies of motherhood. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 35(3), 294–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2023.2264232>
- Onabajo, O., & M'Bayo, R. (Eds.). (2009). Emergence, growth and challenges of films and home videos in Nigeria. *African Renaissance Books*, 19–52.
- Onyenankeya, K. U., Onyenankeya, O. M., & Osunkunle, O. (2019). Sexism and gender profiling: Two decades of stereotypical portrayal of women in Nollywood films. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(2), 73–90.
- Orjinmo, N. (2023, September 9). The Nigerians learning to speak with British accents. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-66569668>
- Osakpolor, E. (2021). Portrayal of women in contemporary Nollywood films: Isoken and King of Boys in focus. *CINEJ Cinema Journal*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.5195/cinej.2021.299>
- Otuonye, N. N., & Oshionebo, B. (2024). Impact of the Nigerian film industry (Nollywood) on job creation (2013–2023). *The Abuja Communicator*, 4(2), 195–207. <https://doi.org/10.70118/TACJ0015>
- PolicyVault. (2021). Deconstructing Nigeria national gender policy analysis. <https://policyvault.africa/national-gender-policy/>
- Ramachandran, N. (2023). Sonam Kapoor calls out the 'humongous' gender pay gap in Bollywood, diversity tokenism in western casting. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2023/film/global/sonam-kapoor-gender-pay-gap-diversity-tokenism-1235707999/>
- Rendon, J. (2019, June 4). New report details the barriers that leaders of color face in the nonprofit world. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. <https://www-philanthropy-com.proxy.ulib.uits.iu.edu/article/new-report-details-the-barriers-that-leaders-of-color-face-at-nonprofits/>
- Samuel-Okon, A. D. (2024). Behind the screens: A critical analysis of the roles of guilds and associations in standardizing contracts, wages, and enforcing professionalism amongst players in the entertainment industry. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting*, 24(9), 166–187. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajeba/2024/v24i91484>
- Simon, G. I. (2022). Producing Nollywood portal films: Navigating precarity through informal social relations and hope. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(5), 500–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779221094859>
- Simon, G. I. (2024). Ambivalence of informality: COVID-19 and unmasked precarity in Nollywood. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 27(4), 510–527. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779231222029>

- Soetan, O. (2021). Transnational agency, Nollywood feminist auteurs, and patriarchy. In C. Sterling (Ed.), *Transnational African women's fictions* (pp. 117–129). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-07-2020-0280>.
- The Sun Nigeria. (2021). Sexual harassment in Nollywood: AGN sets up committee to track offenders. <https://thesun.ng/sexual-harassment-in-nollywood-agn-sets-up-committee-to-track-offenders/>
- Swedish Film Institute. (2022). 406 Days – It's About Time: Gender equality report 2021-2022. Swedish Film Institute Publications. Swedish Film Institute. <https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/2.-fa-kunskap-om-film/analys-och-statistik/publications/other-publications/406-days-its-about-time.-gender-equality-report-2021-2022.pdf>
- Sylvanus, E. P. (2021). Women as composers in Nollywood. In EGODI. Uchendu & NGOZI. Edeagu (Eds.), *Negotiating patriarchy and gender in Africa: Discourses, practices, and policies* (pp. 133–143). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Tugbobo, B. (2022). Nollywood lacks structure – Emeka Rollas. Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/nollywood-lacks-structure-emeka-rollas/>
- Udoh, C. (2025). Gender representation in Nollywood movie dialogues: A discourse analysis of select contemporary films. *AJAP-Amamihe Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 23(7), 144–153.
- Ugwu, A. (2025). Experimenting with budgetary minimalism in the film production of Beyond the Badge (2024). *Abuja Journal of Humanities*, 6(1), 174–186. <https://doi.org/10.70118/TAJH0017>
- Ugwu, I. P., Antai, G. O., John, D. J., & Igwe, I. (2024). Workplace discrimination and labour rights: Examining the effectiveness of anti-discriminatory laws in protecting vulnerable workers in Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, 16(4), 1451–1463.
- Variety. (2018). *Hollywood's response to #MeToo*. Variety Magazine.
- Worlu, O. L., & Harcourt-Whyte, D. O. (2025). Gender dynamics in developing countries: Evaluation of Nollywood depiction of women in Rivers State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(13), 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.913COM007>
- Wright, T. (2016). Women's experience of workplace interactions in male-dominated work: The intersections of gender, sexuality and occupational group. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, 23(3), 348–362. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12074>