

Embedded Feminism and Economic Agency in Nollywood: Interpreting *Love in Every Word* Film within the *Her Money, Her Power* Campaign

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Nollywood's film, *Love in Every Word*, acts as a cultural conduit for The She Tank and BellaNaija's *Her Money, Her Power* campaign; to evaluate the broader implications for feminist discourse in Nigeria and how it contributes to shaping Nigerian women's perceptions of the feminist-aligned campaign with a particular focus on economic empowerment initiatives. It employs focus group discussion as research design to probe into how feminist ideologies are embedded in popular media to attain feminist-aligned objectives. The findings reveal that there exists discontinuity from the prevalent stereotypical depictions of women in the read Nollywood film with the presence of feminist aligned themes that portrays financial independence for women which confirms Nollywood's role as a gendered public sphere where narratives of women's financial and emotional empowerment are negotiated.; as well as give informed understanding about how Nollywood's *Love in Every Word* influence perception and attitude of Nigerian women towards economic independence, which reveals progress in feminist messaging. Study recommends strengthening partnerships with creative industries to amplify feminist messages and leveraging film industry to reach wider audiences.

Keywords: Economic empowerment, Feminism, Film, Nollywood, Perception

INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of Nigerian popular culture, the representation of financially empowered women has become a site of intense cultural anxiety as one of the most prominent anxieties reflected in Nigerian film industry is the perceived threat that financially independent women pose to male authority and patriarchal order (Obiora et al., 2026). In a cultural context where male economic dominance traditionally underpins familial and romantic relationships, the rise of women as breadwinners or self-sufficient entrepreneurs disrupts these power dynamics. Feminist advocacy platforms like The She Tank and BellaNaija through campaigns like *Her money, Her power*, set out to confront this anxiety by positioning financial autonomy as central to women's personal and social agency. That is, celebrating female entrepreneurship and leadership through polished narratives of success, implicitly challenging the notion that economic power must be gendered (Deinde-Sanya, 2024).

Her Money, Her Power campaign emerged to address the financial relegation of women by promoting financial literacy and entrepreneurship. The campaign's messaging aligns with a wider feminist discourse that challenges traditional gender roles and advocates for economic empowerment as a core aspect of gender equality (Mama, 2001; Lewis, 2004). The She Tank and BellaNaija believe that achieving a progressive society is very paramount for women to have economic power, and by launching the *Her Money, Her Power* campaign in 2024, both organizations enkindle a nationwide conversation about the importance of women's financial independence and equality. The campaign was launched with the objective to bring to limelight, the message that women's financial independence is beneficial to them and the society they belong. as well as refute

discrimination, motivate action, and create a better impartial future for Nigerian women through the influence of media and entertainment which include film (Her Network, 2024).

The She Tank is a feminist, multigenerational, black and global creative think-tank, originally established in 2018 by Blessing Omakwu, but went moribund in 2019 and in 2024, it was re-birthered. Its objective is to change mindsets, norms and cultures in line with women's empowerment goals as well as seeks new possibilities in an environment where women have equality and power. The She Tank positions itself as a safe space for women to explore themes such as bodily autonomy, financial emancipation, gender-based violence, and emotional well-being (Deinde-Sanya, 2024). Through short films, essays, and social media dialogues, The She Tank uses visual storytelling and digital activism to challenge patriarchal scripts while elevating women's voices. Similarly, BellaNaija was founded in 2006 by Uche Pedro. It is a leading lifestyle, media, and entertainment company in Africa. It engages over 11 million people across its digital platforms, sparking conversations, celebrating progress, and driving global positive change. BellaNaija focuses on the lived realities of African women across social and economic backgrounds. It revolves around women's professional achievements, personal journeys, and emotional resilience, particularly emphasizing wellness, agency and self-reinvention (Her Network, 2024). Together, The She Tank and BellaNaija operate as parallel feminist media projects: one rooted in creative resistance and social storytelling. Both are instrumental in shaping a media climate where films, even those that do not declare feminism but enact it through characters, emotion and visual poetics can thrive in feminist discourse (Dow, 1996). These initiatives are significant because they provide not only content but also a cultural lexicon that normalizes feminist values in both private and public discourse through the media like the films.

Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, as a culturally dominant medium, can provide fertile ground for women's advocacy. With millions of viewers both locally and across the African diaspora, the film industry has emerged as a significant site of ideological contestation and social reflection (Obiora & Uche, 2025; Obiora & Uche, 2024; Obiora, 2025). Although, Nollywood has been criticized for reinforcing patriarchal tropes, but a new generation of filmmakers is flipping the script by using film to critically explore gendered injustices; from domestic violence to reproductive autonomy and financial marginalization. Films like *For Maria: Egun Pataki* (2020) delve into the emotional and psychological landscapes of women, particularly around postpartum depression, motherhood, and cultural silencing. Others, like short films produced by The She Tank or web series such as *Skinny Girl in Transit* (2015-present), address urban middle-class feminism, body politics, and the emotional labor of Nigerian women navigating modernity and tradition. Moreover, feminist-leaning Nollywood films such as *King of Boys* (2018) and television series like *The Smart Money Woman* (2021), have begun to challenge long-standing patriarchal norms by foregrounding women's economic autonomy. Nollywood seems to no longer confined to entertainment or moralism; it is increasingly becoming a feminist public sphere, a site where political emotions, economic frustrations, and gendered aspirations are enacted, debated, and reimagined (Ezeaka et al., 2025; Bartholomew et al., 2025; Okolie, 2023; Amonyeye & Agbo, 2022; Doghudje, 2019). Whether through commercial cinema, independent digital content, or activist storytelling, film is playing a critical role in shaping Nigeria's cultural and political feminist landscape. However, these narratives may often reveal deep-seated anxieties surrounding shifting gender roles, generational divides, and the erosion of traditional family and marriage structures.

Why *Love in Every Word* film in a feminist discourse, one may ask? *Love in Every Word* film appears to be more than just a romantic drama; it exemplifies a mode of embedded feminism, wherein feminist values are not explicitly declared through rhetoric but are subtly woven into the emotional, relational, and aesthetic fabric of the narrative. This aligns with a broader cultural shift among young Nigerians who engage with feminist praxis through everyday forms of storytelling, intimacy, and artistic expression, rather than through overt ideological discourse (Weiser & Agrawal, 2024; Korsmeyer & Weiser, 2021; Korsmeyer, 2004). Also, the film's narrative strategy represents what Douglas (2010) terms 'everyday feminist aesthetics', embedding feminist ideas within relatable and culturally resonant storytelling rather than overt didacticism. Such aesthetics foreground women's aspirations and struggles in ways that reflect the realities of contemporary Nigerian society, thereby enhancing the accessibility and impact of feminist ideas within popular culture. According to Dow (1996, p. 131), "embedded feminism describes the phenomenon whereby feminist ideas are incorporated into popular culture in ways that appear apolitical or normalized, yet work to challenge dominant

gender ideologies.” This aligns with bell hooks’ advocacy for feminist narratives that move beyond simplistic binaries and engage in intersection with lived experiences. In such films like *Love in Every Word*, the narrative avoids feminist rhetoric but embeds its values through character behaviour. Dow (1996, p. 132) notes that “feminist themes appear not through explicit declaration, but through characters who live feminist realities.” Films like *Love in Every Word* incorporate everyday feminist aesthetics and values, translating activist messages into digestible and emotive narratives.

The launch of the *Her Money, Her Power* campaign in late 2024 and the release of *Love in Every Word* in 2025 suggest that both the campaign and the film emerged within the same socio-cultural moment, shaped by heightened public discourse around women’s economic empowerment in Nigeria. As feminist advocacy increasingly permeates digital platforms, media industries such as Nollywood appear to be responding in near real-time, producing narratives that reflect, amplify, and circulate these concerns. Furthermore, this chronological alignment enhances the plausibility of a feedback loop between advocacy and cultural production. The campaign’s visibility across platforms such as lifestyle media and reality television likely contributed to audience readiness to engage with similar themes in cinematic texts. Conversely, the release of *Love in Every Word* shortly after the campaign’s peak period extends and deepens the conversation by embedding these ideas within emotionally resonant storytelling. This dynamic illustrates how advocacy initiatives and popular media can operate synergistically within compressed timeframes to shape public perception. Thus, the tight sequencing of these two interventions strengthens the study’s argument that Nollywood functions not merely as a reflective medium but as an active participant in the diffusion and normalization of contemporary feminist economic discourse in Nigeria.

This study therefore, sets out to investigate the ideological and cultural resonance of *Love in Every Word* as a filmic extension of the *Her Money, Her Power* campaign to: examine the ideological and aesthetic strategies employed in the film *Love in Every Word* that align with feminist discourses on economic empowerment; analyze the extent to which *Love in Every Word* film influences Nigerian women’s perception and engagement with feminist economic campaigns like *Her money, Her power*; and investigate how embedded feminism and everyday feminist aesthetics shape public discourse and cultural reception among Nigerian women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Her Money, Her Power Campaign in Nigeria

The *Her Money, Her Power* (HMHP) campaign emerged in 2024 as a high-visibility, media-forward intervention designed to catalyze public conversation and behavior change around Nigerian women’s economic power. Jointly crafted by The She Tank, a creative think-tank relaunched by gender advocate Blessing Omakwu, and BellaNaija, a leading digital lifestyle and culture platform founded by Uche Pedro, HMHP positions women’s financial agency as a national development priority rather than a niche “women’s issue” (BellaNaija, 2024a; PiggyVest Blog, 2024). Strategically launched in late August and rolled out in September 2024, the campaign was explicitly framed using entertainment infrastructures and digital culture to “move mindsets” at scale (BellaNaija, 2024a; BellaNaija, 2024b).

The Nigerian political economy is marked by persistent gender gaps in labor force participation, asset ownership, credit access, and leadership representation. HMHP’s core proposition is that economic power, not merely episodic “empowerment”, is indispensable to equality and prosperity, a framing consistent with contemporary feminist economic thought that centers “access, voice, and choice” (Document Women, 2024). Locating change within the circuits of popular media, the campaign leverages audience attention and cultural legitimacy to normalize women’s financial autonomy as commonsense, everyday practice (Marie Claire Nigeria, 2024). BellaNaija’s launch note situated HMHP against macro indicators familiar to Nigerian audiences, such as SME contributions to GDP and women’s entrepreneurial presence, to argue for policy, cultural, and household-level shifts (BellaNaija, 2024a).

Initiators, Partnerships, and Media Strategy. HMHP’s design exemplifies what scholars term “embedded feminism”, the integration of feminist values into mainstream cultural forms to widen uptake (Banet-Weiser, 2018). The She Tank’s remit, working at the intersections of gender, popular culture, and (in Nigeria’s context)

religion, pairs with BellaNaija's mass digital reach to create a hybrid advocacy-entertainment model (PiggyVest Blog, 2024). A signature tactical choice was the Big Brother Naija (BBNaija) integration, using the show's mass audience and "social experiment" format to stage tasks and dialogues about money, gender roles, and decision-making, thereby translating abstract economic debates into relatable scenarios (BellaNaija, 2024a; Nairametrics, 2024; Guardian, 2024).

The campaign circulated a clear message architecture, women's economic power benefits families, communities, and the nation, disseminated through: high-profile launch communications; BBNaija in-show tasks and content hooks; street-level vox-pop videos soliciting public views on money and gender; and live/online events featuring cultural figures (e.g., Funke Akindele) and knowledge partners (BellaNaija, 2024b; BellaNaija, 2024c; YouTube, 2024). These activities were amplified by lifestyle, finance, and women-focused media (Her Network, 2024; She Leads Africa, 2024). HMHP's narrative trajectory emphasized financial literacy, decision-making autonomy, and challenging limiting gender norms, themes that align with Nigerian feminist debates on agency, negotiation, and pragmatic transformation (Nnaemeka, 2016).

HMHP sits at the intersection of feminist advocacy and Nigerian creative industries, adopting a culture-first approach characteristic of recent African feminist praxis that privileges resonance, repetition, and recognizable stories over doctrinal messaging. In doing so, it mirrors the wider Nollywood-adjacent trend where popular platforms and personalities are enlisted to mediate feminist concepts to heterogeneous publics (Okome, 2007; Haynes, 2016). The campaign's deliberate turn to entertainment spaces and its emphasis on everyday practices (budgeting, negotiating, investing) exemplify everyday feminist aesthetics, feminist meanings made legible through familiar formats, humor, and aspirational imagery. Contemporary reportage documents substantial media pickup and social chatter, with coverage across national dailies and women's platforms affirming HMHP's agenda-setting presence in third quarter of 2024 (Her Network, 2024; Punch, 2024). While systematic impact evaluations are not yet public, the campaign's integration into BBNaija programming, its street interviews, and event panels suggest notable success in mainstreaming a vocabulary of women's economic power, narrowing the distance between policy discourse and everyday talk (BellaNaija, 2024b; Guardian, 2024). HMHP represents a strategically hybrid, media-savvy feminist intervention that translates economic justice arguments into popular culture, harnessing Nigeria's entertainment ecosystems to sediment new norms about women, money, and power. Its background, rooted in collaborative design, culture-forward messaging, and broadcast/digital synergy, offers a template for advocacy that is distinctly Nigerian yet conversant with global feminist economics.

Embedded feminism and *Love in Every Word* film

Embedded feminism refers to the integration of feminist ideas into mainstream media without explicitly labeling them as feminist (Banet-Weiser, 2018). This approach allows for the normalization of gender equity ideals within popular culture, making feminist discourses accessible and culturally palatable. Rather than functioning as overt political or social protest, embedded feminism in this context subtly shifts cultural values through repetition and emotional resonance. It helps explain why film audience would be able to recognize and affirm the film's feminist messaging even when they do not explicitly identify as feminists. In *Love in Every Word*, feminist values such as financial autonomy, emotional self-possession, and mutual respect in relationships are not presented as radical departures but as normalized expectations. This narrative strategy resonates with Banet-Weiser's (2018, p. 112) argument that popular media can be a site where feminism is "folded into the textures of everyday life". This supports the notion that Nollywood can serve as a cultural mediator for feminist praxis, especially in societies negotiating modernity and tradition (Okome, 2007; Krings & Okome, 2013; Haynes, 2011). So, the influence of campaigns like *Her money*, *Her power*, which offer economic empowerment as feminist praxis, is echoed in plotlines that emphasize financial emancipation as a form of liberation. In doing so, *Love in Every Word*, bridges cultural storytelling with activist intervention. That is, the integration of everyday feminist values, confidence, self-care, emotional expression, professional aspiration, to Nollywood's narratives which marks a shift in how gender is dramatized.

Love in Every Word film revolves around the protagonist, Chioma's life, a representative of independent, hard-working lady who works as a successful marketing executive. She can be described as an ambitious doing a demanding job under an insatiable boss and running an online perfume business. She ended a messy

relationship with Davies, who wasted her investment money. Along the line, her path crossed with Odogwu Obiora, who is rich, has accent, affluent, and business-orientated who showers her with displays of affection, which initially throw her off. She took her time to make her decision of falling in love with Obiora. *Love in Every Word* is produced by Omoni Oboli in 2025, directed by Stanley Obi and distributed virtually on YouTube. The film according to Awo (2025) is said to be released at a time when Nollywood is expected to produce films on topical issues such as correcting stereotypes.

Feminism in Nigeria and gender depictions in Nollywood

Feminism in Nigeria has evolved through complex socio-political, cultural, and economic terrains. Early feminist movements focused predominantly on political rights and legal reforms, as seen in the activism of women's groups in the 1980s and 1990s (Mama, 1995; Bouilly et al., 2016). These movements challenged patriarchal structures embedded in both colonial legacies and indigenous traditions. The rise of feminist-aligned campaigns reflect shift toward more grassroots, entrepreneurial, and lifestyle-centered approaches to feminist praxis. This expansion corroborates with African feminisms' emphasis on intersectionality and local specificity, which critique universalizing Western feminist models (Mama, 2001; Nnaemeka, 2016). Nigerian feminist scholars stress the need to negotiate global feminist ideals with indigenous cultural realities, creating a dialogic space for both resistance and adaptation (Oyèwùmí, 1997).

Feminist media studies have long interrogated the representation of gender in popular culture, highlighting the media's role in either reinforcing or challenging patriarchal ideologies (Mulvey, 1975; hooks, 1992). In African contexts, scholarship points to how local media industries negotiate gender discourses through culturally specific forms and genres (Okome, 2004; Haynes, 2016). Nollywood, as a prolific industry, offers rich terrain for exploring these dynamics. Nollywood has traditionally portrayed women through stereotypical archetypes such as the virtuous wife, the scheming rival, or the victim of circumstance (Worlu & Harcourt-Whyte, 2025; Onyenankeya, Onyenankeya, & Osunkunle, 2019). Some critics argue that Nollywood still perpetuates harmful stereotypes of women, portraying them as sex objects, weak, or dependent. They stress that some Nollywood films reinforce traditional gender norms, with women often depicted in domestic contexts and roles as sexual partners and homemakers (Worlu & Harcourt-Whyte, 2025; Gwam-Nzekwu, 2021; Emwinromwankhoe, 2021, Obiora, 2025). Some studies also note that certain Nollywood films can lead to the subjugation of women as they increase men's disdain for women, sowing distrust between women, undermining women's confidence, and strengthening forces that push women to the background (Kidwai & Ahmad, 2016; Onyenankeya et al., 2019).

Futhermore, Omoera and Emwinromwankhoe (2024, p. 20) stated that "Nollywood filmmakers are really male-controlled and they deliberately match up the demands of their audience who are used to the superiority of men and the objectification of women" So, filmmakers slant heir storylines to such representations to attract huge viewership since that is what the Nigerian audience is accustomed to. In the same vein, Nollywood framed violence against women and girls in two selected films to show various common societal ills meted against women and girls in a typical Nigerian society. Minimal screen time was allocated to the representations of the consequences or punishment on perpetrators which suggests that the films primarily present toxic gender relations for entertainment rather than promoting societal change (Obiora et al., 2025). The stereotypical depictions of women in Nigerian films can be said to be as old as Nollywood; however, there is a growing body of scholarship documenting a gradual shift toward more complex female characters embodying economic independence, professional ambition, and emotional complexity (Okolie, 2023; Amonyenze & Agbo, 2022; Doghudje, 2019). This study sets to join the scholarship in ascertaining the evolution of this shift; whether there is continuity or discontinuity of stereotypical depictions against women.

Theoretical Framework

Stuart Hall's reception theory as a media and communication theory focuses on how audiences interpret and make meaning of media messages (Hall, 1973). The theory proposes that media messages are not fixed or static. Rather, the audience interprets them in relation to their social, cultural, and personal experiences. Here, meaning is not solely determined by the creator but is actively constructed by the audience through their interaction with the text. This implies that reception theory shifts the focus from the author's intended meaning

to the audience's interpretation and how they engage with the text. Factors like age, gender, race, class, and cultural background determine how audiences interpret media texts (Colley,2023, p. 413). In film, reception theory stresses that what may appear as irrelevant action in a film, audiences can make create meaning out of it. So, meaning of the message in a film to specific audience can change in the way they see it in relation to their social context. In the context of this study, reception theory stresses that meaning is created as the viewer watches and processes the film. Women as audience of Nollywood film narratives may be influenced in perception and attitude toward the aim of *Her money, Her power* campaign based on the interpretation and meaning they make out of Nollywood films. The interpretation or meaning they make may be dependent on their different social and cultural backgrounds, age, class, beliefs and so on.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design that integrates focus group discussions in ascertaining the feminist ideological and aesthetic dimensions of initiatives like *Her Money, Her Power*, and how these relate to representations of women in Nollywood’s *Love in Every Word* film which can be a sort of influence on women’s perception and attitude. The primary case study is the film, *Love in Every Word*, chosen for its portrayal of economic and emotional empowerment through a gendered lens which frame women's empowerment within everyday narratives. This provides a dynamic view of how localized feminist advocacy interfaces with global feminist trends. 6 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with diverse groups of Nigerian women who were drawn from Anambra, Ondo, Akwa Ibom, Kaduna, Plateau, and Gombe states to represent the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria to ensure regional diversity. Criteria include age (19–57) and occupation (formal and informal sectors), using purposive and stratified sampling technique. Purposive sampling was necessitated due to researchers’ network in getting research assistants that helped with the coordination of the FGDs. Each group ranged from 6 to 9 discussants who were willing and available to be exposed to the read film and took part in the discussion sessions. However, discussion session did not hold in Gombe State due to inability to gather women for the discussion which is a key methodological limitation of this study resulting in the omission of one zone and a partial representation of Northern Nigeria. Given the socio-cultural heterogeneity of the North, the absence of one zone constrains the breadth of perspectives captured, particularly in relation to variations in women’s economic agency and responses to feminist messaging. This limitation affects the study’s comparative balance and reduces the extent to which findings can be fully generalised across all Northern contexts. However, consistent with qualitative research principles and Reception Theory (Hall, 1973), the study prioritises depth of insight over statistical generalisation; thus, the selected states still provide rich, contextually grounded interpretations of *Love in Every Word* and the *Her Money, Her Power* campaign.

The coding process combined both deductive and inductive approaches. An initial coding framework was developed deductively from the study’s research objectives, theoretical frameworks (e.g., Reception Theory and embedded feminism), and key themes such as women’s economic agency and media influence. Subsequently, inductive coding was employed to allow new themes and patterns to emerge directly from the focus group discussions, ensuring that participants’ voices and contextual nuances were fully captured. The FGD transcripts were systematically organised and analysed using qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, which facilitated efficient coding, theme categorisation, and retrieval of data segments for interpretation.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Demographics of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Participants

FGD Group	Location (State)	Age Range	Dominant Occupations	Participants’ Profile
FGD 1	South-East (Anambra State)	19–57	Students, Interns, Small-scale entrepreneurs	Media-exposed participants with high digital engagement
FGD 2	South-West (Ondo)	23–55	Civil servants, Business	Career-oriented women balancing

	State)		owners, Professionals	work and family roles
FGD 3	South-South (Akwa Ibom State)	21–45	Students, Traders, Freelancers	Mixed socio-economic background with strong urban influence
FGD 4	North-Central (Plateau State)	25–47	Public servants, NGO workers, Entrepreneurs	Policy-aware participants with exposure to advocacy campaigns
FGD 5	North-West (Kaduna State)	22–51	Traders, Artisans, Homemakers	Participants reflecting more traditional and religious contexts

Source: Field Study, 2025

The above demographic spread table reflects a diverse cross-section of Nigerian women across age, occupation, and geopolitical contexts. The inclusion of both younger (19–25) and older (up to 57) participants enables generational comparisons, while the occupational diversity captures varying levels of economic participation from informal sector traders to formal professionals. Geographically, the selected locations provide a broad representation of Southern and Northern Nigeria, although the absence of one geopolitical zone constitutes a noted limitation. Overall, this diversity enhances the depth and richness of audience reception insights regarding *Love in Every Word* and the *Her Money, Her Power* campaign.

The following themes emerged from the FGD

Identification of feminist ideologies and shift from stereotypical depictions

Participants consistently identified themes of self-reliance, ambition, and emotional autonomy in the film. Comments such as ‘She didn’t wait for a man to save her’ and ‘She had her own goals’ illustrate how embedded feminist messages resonated with viewers. A discussant notes thus: ‘The way Chioma managed her emotional, professional, and social aspects of her life is so different.’ This implies that the depictions in the read film marks a departure from stereotypical portrayals of womanhood in Nollywood films. Other responses indicate that younger women, particularly who may be termed digital natives, interpret the film as empowering and relatable. Another discussant opines:

Chioma’s financial independence, career success, and romantic self-sufficiency show that women can achieve economic excellence when they pursue it. Chioma’s character is so different from what I used to watch in movies. Not just only Chioma, her friend Ify, is also an efficient law professional, who helped Chioma to recover the lost invested funds of \$12,000 from Davies through a lawsuit. If you take a closer look at the jewelry store the three female friends visited, you will see it is being managed by a woman. Let’s go back to Chioma’s office, did you all see that it has all women as staff, the male presence was only implied in dialogue but we never saw the Seun guy. I think this is one of the purposes of feminism in terms of women being allowed to work and make their own money.

Participants further identified with the protagonist’s struggles and triumphs, suggesting that the film succeeds in normalizing feminist aspirations within everyday experience.

Furthermore, some participants noted that the protagonist’s assertiveness clashed with traditional Nigerian gender expectations. This reflects the ongoing negotiation between continuity and change in gender discourse. One of the discussants notes thus:

I am one of those who always believe that all a woman want from a man is money. But Chioma’s character just proved otherwise. She was not interested in Obiora’s money. In fact, she was used to being the provider in her past relationships, so she was never the type to be swayed by wealth.

Another discussant supports in these words:

She did not fall in love with Obiora just because he was a billionaire; no, she actually made sure she liked him and not his bank account. Chioma had the discipline to separate the two and that has really affected my viewpoint. This will definitely make me do better, I believe.

A younger discussant wages in:

Even when Odogwu gave her lots of gifts, she was not so moved by them. She took her time to make her choice on what exactly she wanted in a relationship till she got the conviction because she needed to be sure that her decision was not influenced by material things. She was ambitious and focused on her goals, and not even a billionaire offering her the world could make her forget that. That level of self-awareness is rare and conflicts with what our society believes in. In all sincerity as women, we need to learn from that and make changes.

Older participants, however, expressed indecision, indicating that generational attitudes toward gender roles still influence audience reception. An older discussant states contrarily:

I saw that women in the film were doing domestic roles like I am used to but rather as busy career women, so who takes care of the home? To also see the opposite of what our Nigerian society believes in is sort of make me question where we are heading to. In a typical Nigerian society, men are providers to women. However, the character Chioma is the opposite because she is the provider to her boyfriends. She fed, sheltered, clothed, and even gave them money as investment to their businesses. This character makes women look like they are changing our culture and role allocation to become men themselves.

These differences underscore the broader cultural and generational anxieties addressed by feminist filmmaking in Nigeria. While some audiences (younger women) embrace the transformations represented in the film, others (older women) view them as disruptive to traditional norms.

Campaign engagement and influence of film

Discussants who are familiar with the *Her Money*, *Her Power* campaign (most younger women) felt that the film reinforced its messages. Some mentioned that the film prompted them to further dig into aligning the objectives of the campaign into their financial and emotional aspects of their lives. Discussants affirmed that themes from the film have made them see more reasons to get financially independent. They explained how the movie reflects the lives of some Nigerian women who are ambitious in making their own money through entrepreneurship or professional career and have turned out successful which is worthy to emulate. A discussant states thus:

Chioma is a successful marketing professional, doing all within her capability, which fetches her money. The branding company she works with pays her ₦750,000 per month and she still, has an online perfume brand, and ventures into digital currency and other businesses through her boyfriend. All of these demonstrate that women can attain success on their own terms and I am moved by that ambition.

Another discussant opines: ‘The role of Chioma has made me realize that when I have my own money, it helps me to think clearly without being biased of the financial gains from the other people. It will make my sense of objectivity to be firm without prejudice.’

Reception of feminist discourse

Discussants opine that *Love in Every Word* foreground financial literacy, entrepreneurial activities, and narrative rebranding of women’s economic participation. Its representation of a woman navigating and overcoming economic hardship mirrors the everyday feminism, functioning as a cultural echo of feminist praxis. In particular, they discussed the protagonist’s journey, marked by agency, emotional labour, and

economic negotiation; that demonstrates how cultural products contribute to ideological shifts in public consciousness. A discussant asserts:

Chioma is an independent and successful woman who makes her life choices without depending on anyone. She practically fed, sheltered, clothed and invested in her ex-boyfriends as evident with Davies; which her friends Ivie and Ify confirmed that it has been a pattern in all her past relationships. These elements make me describe the film as an instrument for a bigger conversation about economic freedom as a key aspect of gender equality in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The focus group discussions of the film *Love in Every Word* indicate the presence of feminist ideologies projecting women's economic empowerment which is all about women gaining financial independence. Discussants affirmed that the film presented a compelling case of embedded feminism. The narrative centers on a female protagonist whose journey reflects the tensions and triumphs of negotiating personal ambition with societal expectations. Discussants resonated with the film through character development, cinematography and dialogue, and averred that the film articulated a vision of empowered femininity that resonates with contemporary feminist discourses. The convergence of *Her Money*, *Her Power* and *Love in Every Word* illustrates how feminist discourse in Nigeria is increasingly channeled through cultural production. This convergence seems not to be accidental as it reflects the strategic use of soft power by feminist movements to infiltrate popular consciousness (Lewis, 2004). This resonates with Banet-Weiser's (2018) argument that popular media can be a site where feminism is folded into the textures of everyday life. Rather than functioning as overt political protest, embedded feminism in this context subtly shifts cultural values through repetition and emotional resonance. It also validates the experiential realities of women navigating economic independence, thereby reinforcing feminist-aligned *Her money*, *Her power* campaign's objectives through emotional identification (Douglas, 2010). However, this finding has shown a shift from the studies of Nollywood's critics (Obiora & Uche, 2024; Gwam-Nzekwu, 2021; Emwinromwankhoe, 2021), who have through different studies expressed that Nollywood films perpetuate stereotypes against women, portraying them as sex objects, weak, or dependent.

Furthermore, younger audiences, familiar with *Her money*, *Her power*, campaign perceive the film's message as affirming and empowering rather than confrontational. This reflects a broader trend in contemporary feminism, where empowerment is often framed as both self-expression and economic agency (Dow, 1996). *Love in Every Word* exemplifies this trend by foregrounding women's financial and emotional empowerment, thereby contributing to new feminist imaginaries within popular culture and affirming discontinuity in stereotypical depictions of women in Nollywood.

Moreover, the film's reception reveals a generational shift in feminist engagement. Focus group discussions show that *Love in Every Word* appeals particularly to younger Nigerian women, who perceive its themes as affirming and progressive. Older discussants exhibit more contradiction, reflecting the tension between traditional gender expectations and emergent feminist ideologies (Mama, 2001). This finding aligns with Hall's reception theory, women as audience of Nollywood's *Love in Every Word* are influenced in perception and attitude toward the financial empowerment based on the interpretation and meaning they make out of the film content depending on their age, social and cultural backgrounds (Colley, 2023). By fostering dialogue, identification, and introspection around issues of gender and financial power, *Love in Every Word* contributes to the theorization of Nollywood as a feminist public sphere (Lewis, 2004). It demonstrates that feminist discourse need not be confined to academic or activist spaces but can be transmitted through emotional storytelling and cultural production, thus extending the reach and texture of feminist thought to the local level.

In addition, the emerging themes from the FGDs have shown the power of film in empowering campaign as women disclosed how characterization, dialogue, depictions and plot of the film have changed their perspectives in one way or the other towards women having financial independence. It validates the experiential realities of women navigating economic independence, thereby reinforcing the feminist aligned campaign's, *Her money*, *Her Power*, objectives through emotional identification (Douglas, 2010). This also answers the interrogation of Mulvey (1975) and hooks (1992) on representation of gender in popular culture as

the read film highlighted the media's (Nollywood film) role in challenging patriarchal ideologies. This as well, supports the idea that media can serve as a pedagogical tool, shaping not just perceptions but also attitudes towards financial independence (Banet-Weiser, 2018). This subtle integration reflects a shift in feminist praxis in Nigeria from overt activism to everyday aesthetics and storytelling.

In reflecting on the contemporary Nigerian feminist landscape, it becomes evident that platforms like She Tank and BellaNaija are shaping what might be called a "glocal feminism" (global + local); a feminism that is at once deeply Nigerian and globally engaged. This aligns with African feminisms' emphasis on intersectionality and local specificity (Mama, 2001; Nnaemeka, 2016). This study situates women's economic agency within indigenous Nigerian value systems that emphasise communal interdependence, reciprocity, and collective advancement. These frameworks illustrate that women's empowerment is often pursued not as isolated individualism but as relational agency, where personal financial success is intertwined with obligations to family and community. Within a glocal feminist lens, global ideals of autonomy and economic independence, as promoted by campaigns like *Her Money*, *Her Power*, are therefore not simply adopted but reinterpreted and domesticated to fit local moral economies. This negotiation aligns with African feminist thought, particularly the emphasis on complementarity and negotiation in Nnaemeka's (2016) Nego-feminism, and helps explain why participants in the study frame empowerment in terms of both self-advancement and collective uplift. Consequently, *Love in Every Word* can be read as articulating a glocal feminist sensibility, where modern aspirations for financial independence coexist with enduring cultural logics of social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals Nollywood's increasing engagement with feminist aesthetics and embedded feminism, presenting women's empowerment not only as a political goal but also as an everyday practice. The cinematic portrayals, along with activist campaigns, contribute to reframing women's financial emancipation as an attainable and desirable form of agency. The film's nuanced characterisations and alignment with feminist economic discourses underscore Nollywood's role as a vital site for negotiating cultural meanings of gender. This study emphasises the importance of recognising media as both a reflection and catalyst of social transformation, where feminist ideals are negotiated, contested, and reimagined within the everyday lives of Nigerian women. The interweaving of Nollywood narratives with feminist campaigns like *Her Money*, *Her Power* underscores the evolving nature of gender discourse in Nigeria. *Love in Every Word* film functions as a cinematic embodiment of embedded feminism, offering representations that normalise women's financial autonomy and emotional agency. By mobilising popular culture to disseminate feminist ideas, both the campaign and the film illustrate how media can facilitate ideological transformation. They demonstrate that the path to economic empowerment is not only a political project but also a cultural one, requiring imaginative, affective, and narrative interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Filmmakers and Producers should continue with investment in narratives that foreground diverse and intersectional representations of women's experiences which will further enrich Nollywood's feminist discourse potential.
2. Strengthening partnerships with creative industries can amplify feminist messages, leveraging popular culture to reach wider audiences. Feminist-aligned campaigns might consider multimedia storytelling strategies that incorporate film, digital media, and social engagement.
3. Future studies could expand to include male perspectives on feminist discourses in Nigerian film industry, or comparative analyses across African film industries, to deepen understanding of gendered cultural production on the continent.
4. Support for the creative sector, particularly projects that promote gender equality, is vital. Policies encouraging funding, training, and distribution of feminist-oriented media content can foster a more inclusive cultural landscape.

5. Women should start coming forward to tell and engage with stories that resonate with their experiences as women in order to be well-informed and self-aware members of the society.

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