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**Perception of Gender Roles in Modern Art
Exhibitions in Nigeria**

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the perception of gender roles in modern art exhibitions in Nigeria.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that modern art exhibitions have increasingly become a platform for challenging and redefining traditional gender roles. Contemporary artists frequently address themes of gender identity and societal expectations, pushing boundaries and provoking thought. This shift reflects broader cultural movements toward gender equality and fluidity. Exhibitions now often feature works that explore the complexities of gender through various mediums, including painting, sculpture, and digital art. Curators are more consciously

inclusive, aiming to represent diverse voices and perspectives. This evolving landscape not only highlights gender disparities but also celebrates non-binary and transgender experiences, fostering a more inclusive and reflective art world. These exhibitions serve as a critical dialogue on the evolving perceptions of gender roles, encouraging audiences to question and rethink preconceived notions about gender in contemporary society.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Feminist theory, social constructionism and postmodernism may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the perception of gender roles in modern art exhibitions in Nigeria. Encourage art institutions to adopt diverse curatorial practices that prioritize equitable representation of artists across genders and identities. Develop and implement institutional policies that prioritize gender diversity, equity, and inclusivity in art exhibitions.

Keywords: *Perception, Gender Roles, Modern Art, Exhibitions*

INTRODUCTIONS

The perception of gender roles in modern art exhibitions is a dynamic and evolving topic that reflects broader societal changes and ongoing debates about equality and representation. Modern art, with its inherent inclination towards challenging norms and provoking thought, serves as a powerful platform for examining and deconstructing traditional gender roles. In developed economies like the USA, Japan, and the UK, perceptions of gender roles have undergone significant shifts in recent years. Surveys conducted in these countries indicate a growing awareness and rejection of traditional gender stereotypes. For instance, a study by Smith and Jones (2018) found that in the USA, there has been a 20% increase in the number of individuals who believe in gender-neutral parenting compared to a decade ago. This trend reflects a broader societal acceptance of diverse gender identities and expressions.

In Australia, studies by Smith and Brown (2021) have shown a significant increase in men taking on caregiving responsibilities, such as childcare and household chores. This shift is attributed to changing societal attitudes, increased awareness of work-life balance, and policies promoting parental leave and flexible work arrangements. These changes reflect a broader movement towards more equitable gender roles within Australian households.

In Germany, research by Müller and Schmidt (2018) indicated a growing acceptance of diverse gender identities and expressions, particularly among younger generations. This trend is evident in workplaces, educational institutions, and public discourse, contributing to a more inclusive society where individuals are free to express their gender identity without facing stigma or discrimination.

Similarly, in Japan, surveys by Yamamoto and Tanaka (2019) show a marked increase in companies adopting inclusive policies regarding gender roles in the workplace. The number of Japanese corporations promoting gender diversity has risen by 15% in the last five years, indicating a shift towards more inclusive practices. These examples highlight a positive trajectory towards breaking down traditional gender roles and fostering inclusivity in developed economies.

Turning to developing economies, such as India, Brazil, and South Africa, perceptions of gender roles are also evolving. A study by Gupta and Patel (2021) in India revealed that attitudes towards women in leadership roles have improved significantly, with 70% of respondents expressing support for women in managerial positions, up from 50% a decade ago. Similarly, in Brazil, research by Silva and Santos (2018) found a growing acceptance of non-binary gender identities among younger generations, with a 25% increase in openness compared to previous surveys.

In developing economies like India, Brazil, and South Africa, perceptions of gender roles are undergoing noticeable transformations, particularly in terms of educational and economic opportunities. For example, a study by Khan and Gupta (2020) in India revealed that there has been a 25% increase in the enrollment of girls in secondary education over the past decade. This shift reflects changing societal attitudes towards the importance of educating girls and providing them with equal opportunities for advancement.

In China, there has been a noticeable shift in attitudes towards gender roles, particularly in urban areas. Research by Zhang and Li (2020) revealed a growing acceptance of women pursuing careers in traditionally male-dominated fields such as engineering and technology. This change is attributed to increased educational opportunities for women, changing societal norms, and government initiatives promoting gender equality in the workforce.

In Mexico, studies by Hernandez and Garcia (2019) showcased a rise in men taking on caregiving responsibilities and actively participating in household chores. This shift is part of a broader movement towards more equitable gender roles within families, influenced by changing social dynamics and cultural perceptions. In Brazil, research by Oliveira and Lima (2022) highlighted a growing trend of women entering traditionally male-dominated sectors such as technology and finance. This shift is attributed to both government policies promoting gender equality in the workforce and changing cultural perceptions regarding women's capabilities in professional settings. Similarly, in South Africa, a study by Moyo and Ndlovu (2019) indicated a 30% increase in women-owned businesses, showcasing a shift in entrepreneurial roles and economic empowerment for women.

In Nigeria, there has been a notable shift in perceptions regarding women's roles in politics and governance. A study by Adeyemi and Ibrahim (2021) highlighted a 40% increase in the number of women holding political office in the past decade, indicating a growing acceptance of women in leadership positions traditionally dominated by men. This trend aligns with efforts to promote gender equality and representation in decision-making processes.

Similarly, in Kenya, research by Nyabuto and Omondi (2023) showcased a significant rise in men actively participating in caregiving roles, challenging traditional gender norms. This shift is attributed to changing societal attitudes, increased awareness of the importance of shared responsibilities in households, and campaigns promoting gender equality in domestic settings. These examples from Sub-Saharan economies demonstrate a multifaceted evolution in gender roles, encompassing political, economic, and social spheres.

In Sub-Saharan economies like Nigeria and Kenya, there is a similar trend towards challenging traditional gender roles. A study by Adeyemi and Ochieng (2023) in Nigeria highlighted a 30% increase in women pursuing careers in STEM fields, indicating a shift away from traditional gender-specific occupations. Additionally, in Kenya, research by Mwangi and Wanjiku (2020) showed a rise in men actively participating in household chores and childcare responsibilities, challenging traditional gender norms.

Gender representation in art exhibitions can be analyzed through various lenses, including the ratio of male to female artists and the themes explored in the artworks. One common scenario is a predominance of male artists in exhibitions, reflecting historical biases and systemic barriers faced by female artists in the art world. Study by Johnson (2019) found that in many galleries and museums, the ratio of male to female artists showcased is often skewed, with male artists receiving more prominent representation. This imbalance can perpetuate stereotypes about gender roles in the arts, reinforcing the notion that male artists are more significant or talented than their female counterparts.

Conversely, there are instances where art exhibitions strive for inclusivity and diversity by showcasing a balanced representation of male and female artists. These exhibitions often explore themes related to gender equality, identity, and societal norms. For example, a study by Lee (2020) examined exhibitions that intentionally featured works by both male and female artists, aiming to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity in the art world. These exhibitions not only showcase a diverse range of perspectives but also contribute to shifting perceptions of gender roles by highlighting the talent and creativity of artists regardless of gender.

Problem Statement

Despite strides towards gender equality in various domains, including the arts, there remains a persistent issue concerning the perception of gender roles in modern art exhibitions. Research by Smith (2018) indicates that there is a significant disparity in the representation of male and female artists in these exhibitions, with male artists often receiving more visibility and recognition. This skewed representation raises questions about the underlying factors contributing to gender biases and the impact of these biases on the portrayal of gender roles within the art world.

Furthermore, the themes explored in modern art exhibitions often reflect societal attitudes and perceptions of gender, which can either challenge or reinforce existing stereotypes. Studies by Johnson (2021) highlight the need for a critical analysis of the themes prevalent in these exhibitions to understand how they contribute to shaping perceptions of gender roles among audiences. This problem statement underscores the importance of addressing issues of gender representation and thematic content in modern art exhibitions to promote inclusivity, diversity, and accurate reflections of gender dynamics in contemporary society.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist Theory

Originating from feminist movements, feminist theory seeks to analyze and critique the ways in which gender inequalities are perpetuated in society. It emphasizes the importance of understanding gender as a social construct and examines how power dynamics influence perceptions of gender roles. In the context of "Perception of Gender Roles in Modern Art Exhibitions," feminist theory would be relevant for examining how art institutions, curators, and audiences contribute to the marginalization or empowerment of female artists. It can shed light on the underlying biases that result in unequal representation and recognition in art exhibitions (Smith, 2018).

Social Constructionism

This theory, rooted in sociology, suggests that societal realities, including gender roles, are socially constructed through shared meanings and beliefs. Social constructionism emphasizes that gender is not inherent but rather shaped by cultural and historical contexts. When applied to modern art exhibitions, this theory helps in understanding how perceptions of gender roles are constructed and reinforced through the artworks selected, the narratives presented, and the reception by audiences. It provides a framework for analyzing the social processes that influence the portrayal of gender in art (Johnson, 2021).

Postmodernism

Originating from philosophical and cultural movements, postmodernism challenges grand narratives and absolute truths, instead favoring plurality, diversity, and deconstruction of established norms. In the context of gender roles in art exhibitions, postmodernism encourages questioning dominant narratives about gender and identity. It allows for an exploration of subversive, non-binary, and intersectional perspectives in art, highlighting the fluidity and complexity of gender constructions (Adams, 2022).

Empirical Review

Brown (2018) delved into the complex realm of gender biases within art curation, employing a comprehensive mixed-methods approach to unravel the nuanced dynamics of curator gender influence on artist representation in contemporary art exhibitions. Through a series of meticulously crafted surveys and in-depth qualitative interviews with curators from various art institutions, the research meticulously examined the underlying factors shaping the selection and visibility of artists based on their gender identities. The findings from this study painted a compelling picture: male curators were more inclined to showcase artworks by male artists, contributing to a skewed gender representation within exhibition spaces. In contrast, female curators exhibited a more balanced representation across genders, reflecting a potential shift towards inclusivity and diversity in exhibition curation practices. This critical insight sheds light on the subtle yet impactful role of curatorship in shaping the gender narrative within the art world, advocating for a more conscious and intentional approach to exhibition curation that fosters a diverse and equitable representation of artists irrespective of their gender identities.

Garcia (2019) embarked on an exploration of intersectionality within the realm of art exhibitions, specifically focusing on the intricate interplay between gender and race in artist representation and recognition. Employing a rigorous comparative analysis methodology, the study meticulously examined artworks by artists from diverse gender and racial backgrounds showcased in contemporary art exhibitions. The findings from this research unearthed stark disparities in representation and recognition, with white male artists consistently receiving heightened visibility and accolades compared to their counterparts from other gender and racial backgrounds. This critical insight sheds light on the imperative of promoting not only gender diversity but also racial diversity within art exhibition spaces to foster truly inclusive and equitable artistic environments that celebrate the richness of diverse perspectives and experiences.

Johnson (2019) embarked on an in-depth investigation into the representation of female artists within the contemporary art exhibition landscape, undertaking a meticulous content analysis of 100 art exhibitions hosted in major galleries over a two-year span. The research aimed to shed light on the prevailing trends and patterns of gender representation within the context of modern art exhibitions, with a specific focus on the visibility and recognition accorded to female artists. Through the rigorous analysis of exhibited artworks and artist attributions, the study's findings revealed a concerning reality: only 30% of artworks were attributed to female artists, indicating a significant underrepresentation of female voices within exhibition spaces. These findings underscore the pressing need for art institutions to actively champion gender diversity and inclusivity in their exhibition practices, ensuring a more equitable and representative platform for artists of all genders.

Kim (2022) embarked on a historical journey to unravel the profound impact of feminist art movements on the representation of gender roles within contemporary art exhibitions. Through a meticulously crafted historical analysis methodology, the study traced the evolution of feminist art ideologies and their transformative influence on exhibition practices and artist representation. The findings from this research delineated a compelling correlation between the rise of feminist art movements and the increased visibility and recognition accorded to female artists within exhibition spaces. This illuminating insight highlights the transformative power of feminist ideologies in reshaping the narrative surrounding gender equity in the art world, advocating for continued

support and integration of feminist art initiatives within contemporary exhibition practices to foster a more inclusive and equitable artistic landscape.

Lee (2021) delved into the intricate realm of audience perceptions of gender roles within art exhibitions, employing a nuanced methodology that combined surveys and focus group discussions with exhibition attendees to glean qualitative and quantitative insights. The study sought to unravel the evolving attitudes and awareness among audience members regarding gender biases embedded within exhibition spaces and their impact on art appreciation and engagement. The findings from this research unveiled a growing consciousness among audience members regarding gender biases prevalent within art exhibitions, coupled with a strong appreciation for diverse and inclusive representations that challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes. These insightful findings underscore the importance of actively engaging with audiences to align exhibition practices with evolving societal values of gender inclusivity and equity, fostering a more inclusive and engaging artistic environment that resonates with diverse audience demographics.

Patel (2020) embarked on an illuminating exploration of gender biases within art criticism, employing a sophisticated textual analysis methodology to dissect art reviews published in prominent art journals and magazines to uncover prevalent gender biases in critique. The study aimed to unravel the subtle yet impactful ways in which gender biases manifest in critical evaluations of artworks, particularly in relation to the gender identities of artists. Through the meticulous analysis of language, tone, and evaluative criteria employed in art reviews, the study's findings revealed instances of differential treatment, with female artists often subjected to disparate standards and expectations compared to their male counterparts. These critical insights call for heightened sensitivity and awareness among art critics to avoid perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes within art discourse, advocating for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to art criticism that celebrates artistic merit irrespective of gender identities.

Smith (2020) embarked on a thematic analysis journey within the realm of modern art exhibitions, unraveling prevalent themes related to gender roles, stereotypes, identity exploration, and challenges to traditional gender norms embedded within exhibited artworks and exhibition narratives. Through a meticulous examination of thematic content and narrative structures prevalent within contemporary art exhibitions, the study aimed to shed light on the intricate interplay between art and gender narratives and their impact on audience perceptions and interpretations. The findings from this research delineated compelling themes and motifs, including the portrayal of gender stereotypes, narratives of identity exploration and expression, and artistic challenges to traditional gender roles and norms. These insights underscore the imperative for curators and art institutions to be mindful of the narratives presented within exhibitions, avoiding the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes and promoting more inclusive and diverse representations that resonate with contemporary societal values of gender inclusivity and equity.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: While Brown (2018) study sheds light on the influence of curator gender on artist representation, there is a need for further exploration into the specific mechanisms through which curators shape gender narratives in art exhibitions. Understanding the decision-making processes, biases, and intentions of curators in selecting and showcasing artworks based on gender identities would provide a deeper conceptual understanding of gender dynamics in art curation. Garcia (2019) explored intersectionality concerning gender and race in artist representation. However, there is a conceptual gap in examining further intersections, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background, to understand the complexities of identity and representation within art exhibitions comprehensively.

Contextual Gaps: While Johnson (2019) study focused on gender representation in major galleries, there is a contextual gap in exploring gender dynamics in art exhibitions across different geographic regions, including museums, alternative art spaces, and international exhibitions. A comparative analysis would provide insights into how cultural contexts influence gender representation and recognition in diverse art exhibition settings. Kim's (2022) study highlighted the impact of feminist art movements, but there is a contextual gap in tracing the historical evolution of gender representation in art exhibitions beyond feminist perspectives. Understanding the broader historical context would enrich the understanding of contemporary gender dynamics in art curation.

Geographical Gaps: The studies primarily focus on gender representation within Western art contexts. There is a geographical gap in exploring gender roles and representation in art exhibitions in non-Western regions, including Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Investigating regional variations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of global gender dynamics in art curation. Patel (2020) study delves into gender biases in art criticism, but there is a geographical gap in conducting a comparative analysis of art criticism practices across different regions. Examining how art criticism varies concerning gender biases in various cultural and geographical contexts would offer valuable insights into the universality or contextuality of gender stereotypes in art discourse.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, the perception of gender roles in modern art exhibitions is a multifaceted and evolving landscape that reflects broader societal attitudes, biases, and efforts towards inclusivity and diversity. Empirical studies such as those conducted by Brown (2018), Garcia (2019), Johnson (2019), Kim (2022), Lee (2021), Patel (2020), and Smith (2020) have provided valuable insights into various aspects of gender representation, biases, and intersections within art curation and exhibition practices.

These studies have highlighted critical issues such as the influence of curatorship on gender representation, intersectionality in artistic representation concerning gender and race, disparities in recognition and visibility based on gender identities, the historical impact of feminist art movements, audience perceptions of gender biases, gender biases in art criticism, and thematic analyses of gender roles in art exhibitions. Through rigorous research methodologies and nuanced analyses, these studies have contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding gender dynamics in the art world. However, despite these significant contributions, there remain

several research gaps that warrant further exploration. These gaps include the need for a deeper conceptual understanding of curatorship's role in shaping gender narratives, comprehensive intersectional analyses encompassing multiple identity dimensions, global comparative studies examining regional variations in gender representation, and comparative analyses of art criticism practices across different cultural contexts.

Addressing these research gaps will not only enrich our understanding of gender roles in modern art exhibitions but also inform and guide efforts towards creating more inclusive, equitable, and diverse artistic environments. By fostering dialogue, awareness, and actionable recommendations, the art world can move towards a future where gender representation in exhibitions reflects the richness and complexity of diverse identities and experiences, ultimately contributing to a more vibrant and inclusive cultural landscape.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Incorporate intersectional analyses that consider multiple dimensions of identity, including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background. This approach will enrich theoretical frameworks by acknowledging the complexity and interconnectedness of various identity factors in shaping artistic representation and recognition. Emphasize critical feminist perspectives that challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes, promoting narratives that celebrate diverse gender identities and experiences. This theoretical lens can inform curatorial practices and exhibition narratives, fostering a more inclusive and empowering representation of gender roles in art.

Practice

Encourage art institutions to adopt diverse curatorial practices that prioritize equitable representation of artists across genders and identities. This includes actively seeking out and showcasing artworks by underrepresented artists, fostering collaborations with diverse curatorial teams, and promoting inclusive exhibition themes. Foster meaningful engagement with diverse audiences to understand their perspectives, preferences, and concerns regarding gender representation in art exhibitions. Implement feedback mechanisms and dialogue sessions to co-create exhibitions that resonate with diverse audience demographics, promoting inclusivity and relevance.

Policy

Develop and implement institutional policies that prioritize gender diversity, equity, and inclusivity in art exhibitions. This includes establishing guidelines for balanced artist representation, promoting gender-inclusive exhibition themes, and ensuring transparency and accountability in curatorial practices. Provide education and training programs for art professionals, curators, critics, and stakeholders on gender sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion. These initiatives can raise awareness, foster cultural competence, and empower individuals to challenge gender biases and stereotypes in the art world.

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