



Performing Objectification: Analysing Gendered Power Dynamics in the Comedy Skits of Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak

¹Kelechi Uzoma Agoha, ²Isabella Ifeoma Azogu, & ³Judith Akunne Ume

¹National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO)

³Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-6376-428x>

²<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6736-9469>

³<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3422-8251>

*Corresponding Author: alexkcagoha@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: The comedy skit industry in Nigeria has emerged as one of the leading entertainment media for addressing various social and political issues. However, many of these productions amplify sexual objectification, stereotypes, and exploitative narratives that distort the identity of African women. This, if left unchecked, could reinforce harmful gender dynamics, contribute to the normalisation of objectification, and influence societal attitudes towards women. Despite the importance of studies in this area, there remains a glaring lack of research on how these comedic representations shape perceptions of women and inform gender relations in Nigeria.

Objective: This study examines the portrayal of women in selected comedy skits by two prominent Nigerian skit makers, Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak. Anchored on Feminist Objectification Theory, the study examines how these skit makers construct and normalise gender inequality.

Method: Using a qualitative case study design and content analysis, four skits, namely *Beautiful Sheena* (2024) and *The Delivery Girl* (2024) by Mr. Macaroni, and *Schoolmates* (2025) and *Delivery Marriage* (2024) by Kelvinblak, were purposively selected and analysed.

Result: Across the skits, women were portrayed as objects of male pleasure, and victims of the patriarchal system, while men were positioned as providers and dominant figures. Finding also shows that harmful stereotypes are sometimes perpetuated by women themselves, further complicating the struggle for gender balance.

Conclusion: The study concludes that comedy skits shape public perceptions and risk distorting women's identities in society.

Unique Contribution: This study offered a critical examination of how Nigerian skit makers employ humour in ways that objectify women. Its findings will be particularly valuable to feminist media scholars, as it underscores issues concerning the representation of women on social media.

Key Recommendation: The study recommends the need for positive representations of women, and increased participation of female skit makers to challenge patriarchal narratives and promote gender equity in digital media.

Keywords: Comedy, Skit making, Women, Mr. Macaroni, Kelvinblak



INTRODUCTION

The art of comedy skit production has notably transformed digital content creation in recent times. In the Nigerian entertainment industry, several skits have been created by different entertainment personalities and others alike to drive home their point or message (Amadi et al, 2024). Comedy skits shared on all social media platforms gain significant viewership and engagement from subscribers and casual viewers alike.

Skit makers address contemporary societal issues like politics, religion, family values, education, and social relationships, among other topics. Although online comedy skits in Nigeria started with nostalgic family content reinforcing the stereotypic conceptions of “African parents”, more recent comedy skits adopt content centered around romantic man-woman relationships, poverty and money, and the emphasis on women’s bodies” (Akalonu & Ha 2024, p.2346). Often, the portrayal of women in these skits tends to objectify them as mere sources of sexual pleasure (Scarlotta & Rockmore, 2020) a depiction that primarily undermines the true value of women in society.

The exploitation of women and the portrayal of gender imbalance, specifically in comedy skits does not reflect the nature of all women. This therefore underlines the women's question. This study investigates the representation of women in comedy skits produced by two prominent Nigerian skit makers, Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak, whose work frequently probes into exploring the female perspective to develop content for their audience.

Consequently, this study examines the various forms of female objectification depicted in selected comedy skits by Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak, investigating how the various performances portray female characters. It further discusses how the skits reproduce cultural, economic and social stereotypes that underpin the reductionist view of women in society.

Media and the Representation of Women

The media is a potent tool for mirroring society. It influences how people perceive and react to burning issues around them, and in most cases, it is an important way of establishing “identities”, modifying or even defining them (Popa & Gavriuiu, 2015). As a result, “media has the power to influence the popular perceptions held by the public, and can either uplift and strengthen the image of a group or devalue it” (Malike et al, 2021, p.469).

One issue that has remained consistent in media and communication studies over the years is the problem of how women are represented in the media. This is so because despite the many influences on how we view men and women, the media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful” (Wood, 1994, p.1) tools of representing the binary relationship that exists between the female and male genders.

One theory that effectively investigates the binary difference between male and female relationships is the objectification theory. Proposed by scholars like Bartky (1990) Nussbaum (1995), and further advanced by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), this theory is grounded in the belief “that girls and women are typically acculturated to internalised an observer’s perspective as a primary view of their physical selves” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p.173). In other words, women are objectified when they are treated as bodies- and in particular, as bodies that exist for



the use and pleasure of male gaze (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Understanding how women can be treated as a body, Nussbaum (1995) outlines seven perspectives of objectification, namely: instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity. Nussbaum argues that a woman can be objectified using any of the perspectives.

Malike et al (2021) opine that in most media productions “the female character counts only for what she provokes and not for what she represents (p.470). As such, women are treated as the object of sexual desire, the target of seduction (focusing on their body and sex) regardless of their characteristics, capabilities or competences (Gogová, 2022). In other context, women are portrayed as objects of domestic violence. Jeremiah and Ewrierhoma (2015) note that “women as objects of domestic violence reveal the depth of psychological pain battered women undergo” (p.xiii).

Unfortunately, the evolution of the digital media has further strengthened the explication of gender stereotypes due to the unregulated nature of newer forms, such as social media, in increasing the risk of victimisation against women (Gender links, 2022). With the advancement of digital technology and social media, the inclination towards misrepresentation of gender identity is ultimately inevitable. Consequently, Sanghavi (2019) note that digital media streaming platforms have played a huge role in not only drawing attention to the various facets of female humour (Sanghavi, 2019) but also determining how female identity and gender stereotypes are constructed (Gogová, 2022) over time.

Freeman (2011) notes that part of the reasons why women are misrepresented in media production could be as a result of the lack of female writers, directors, and producers creating comedy. In essence, the roles women play onscreen are more often than not, the male director’s notion of what roles women ought to be playing and what the director thinks viewers want to see (Nandakumar, 2011). On the contrary An (2022) argues that even the characters created by female creators can still perpetuate gender stereotypes against women.

Ideally, a positive representation of women in media is crucial to maintain the real self-respect and status of women in society, which will help in minimising the gap and disparities between men and women (Bano et al, 2021). It is on this basis that Ewrierhoma (2006) revisionist approach in addressing women-centred issues becomes pungent

Comedy Skit Making

Skit-making is one of the dominant types of content on social media. According to Ojomo and Sodeinde (2021), it is one of the forms of entertainment that has transcended the broadcast media by offering a different experience from traditional broadcast content consumption. In Nigeria, it has become one of the most lucrative jobs and has moved a number of youths out of the unemployment bracket (Amadi et al, 2024). Ojomo and Sodeinde (2021) further note that:



Some of the trending social media skit providers who found fame and started their career through this genre of entertainment include Mark Angel, Olga Kay, Ryan Abe, George Mnguni, Anthony Padilla and Ian Hecox of Smosh, Craze Clown, Jenna Mourey, Mo Gilligan, Arron Crascall, Twyse, and James Veitch. Many of them now have huge audience followership who seek them for entertainment (p.4).

Akalonu and Ha (2024) argue that while “online comedy skit creators have become celebrities and influencers in Nigeria, amassing millions of followers on various social media platforms. The influence of these influencers on their followers and society can be harmful when negative messages like sexual objectification of women are propagated” (p.2344). This is on the premise that though “the sexual objectification of women is not new, its proliferation on social media has far-reaching consequences compared to traditional media” (Akalonu & Ha, 2024, p.2348).

One of the popular skit makers whose works resonate among Nigerians is Mr. Macaroni. The focus of his productions is on relationships (Ojomo & Sodeinde, 2021), especially, “women, and money” (Akalonu & Ha, 2024, p.2349). “Since the launch of his career, he has featured several influential celebrities, political and traditional leaders in his skits, giving him even more credence and more fame” (Akalonu & Ha, 2024, p.2349) in the entertainment industry and political space. Yet, “his content reinforces negative stereotypes about women because of his use of sexually stimulating words such as ‘freaky-freaky’ to address female characters in his series of philanderer comedy skits” (Akalonu & Ha, 2024, p. 2349). Mr. Macaroni’s focus on explicit content is because comedy as an act is a genre where ideas about gender can be reaffirmed, contested, or rethought (O’Keefe, 2019). The effect of the kind of skit produced by Mr. Macaroni is that it sets up a distorted mass-media imagery of women (Qin 2018).

On the other hand, Kelvinblak, a rising star in the entertainment industry, focuses on reinforcing patriarchal norms that depict women as helpless figures in society both in his earliest works and current political skits. This contrast in approach highlights the diverse perspectives and themes explored by different skit makers in shaping societal perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles. The choice of explicit contents in comedy skits, as seen in the works of Mr. Macaroni, serves as a platform to challenge, reaffirm, or reconsider societal norms and beliefs about gender. This approach can have a significant impact on how women are portrayed in mass media, contributing to a distorted representation of women in popular culture. Through their respective skits, both Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak play a role in shaping public discourse on gender issues and influencing cultural perceptions in Nigerian society.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative research method, specifically utilising the case study approach to analyse comedy skits from Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak. A total of four comedy skits were selected using purposive sampling techniques due to the thematic relevance to the study's problem. The selected skits from the stables of Mr. Macaroni comedy were *Beautiful Sheena from Ghana* (2024), and *The Delivery Girl* (2024), while *Schoolmates* (2025) and *Delivery Marriage* (2024) were selected from the stables of Kelvinblak comedy. Through content analysis, the study examined characters, language, costumes as unit of analysis to identify patterns and themes that buttress the portrayal of women as mere objects.



A Feminist Objectification Reading of the Selected Skits by Mr. Macaroni and Kelvinblak

i. Mr. Macaroni's *Beautiful Sheena from Ghana*

In the comedy skit *Beautiful Sheena from Ghana*, the scene opens with Sheena standing on the roadside, appearing to make a phone call. Her voluptuous physic attracts Otunba to woo her over. After a brief negotiation, involving the exchange of money, Freaky-Freaky enters the scene, also seeking to court Sheena. He offers her a sum greater than Otunba had offered, leading to an unexpected twist in the narrative. To their shock, Sheena proposes to willingly entertain both men simultaneously. This revelation sparks a competitive frenzy between the two men as they jostle for her attention, driven by a mixture of desire and greed. As the plot unfolds through a flashback, it is revealed that Sheena's flirtation was orchestrated by two disgruntled wives intent on exposing the infidelities of their husbands.

Feminist objectification theory provides a framework for understanding how women are reduced to commodities, sexualised bodies, and tools for the male gaze and gratification. As unfolded through the interactions between Sheena, Otunba and Freaky Freaky, the skit reinforces cultural narratives in which women's value is constructed through male desire, economic power, and the eroticisation of foreign femininity.

From the outset, Sheena is positioned as an object of fascination and acquisition. Her foreignness becomes a key factor in this objectification, as Otunba immediately reacts to her accent and origin with possessive interest: "When I see someone like you, I say first class. You deserve first class." Here, the language frames her as a premium, luxury commodity and someone whose worth is linked to scarcity and exotic appeal rather than individuality. The offer to buy her a "first-class ticket" back to Ghana further intensifies this commodification where her mobility becomes a purchasable item, and her identity becomes intertwined with what she is worth financially.

However, the sexual and territorial nature of male entitlement is evident when Otunba tells her that "This is my street. I own this street... I care about you." His claim of owning the territory positions Sheena as someone under his authority, casting her not as an autonomous visitor but as a subject within his domain. By personalising the public space and declaring himself its guardian, he asserts not only physical control but also emotional claim over her presence. The situation resonates with feminist critiques of patriarchal ownership, in which women become extensions of male-controlled environments.

The entrance of Freaky Freaky intensifies the representation of Sheena as an object of contention. The rivalry between these two men centres not on Sheena's personality or needs but on who can offer more money. When Sheena mentions that she has received "25,000 naira" from Otunba, Mr Freaky Freaky ridicules his rival's generosity and attempts to outbid him immediately by sending "200,000 naira." The exchange transforms Sheena into a marketplace commodity, where her attention and approval can be won through financial superiority. This bidding war exemplifies instrumentality and fungibility, which are aspects of objectification.



Significantly, Sheena's beauty and foreign identity further reinforce her objectification. The men reduce her to physical allure and cultural exoticism, with exaggerated attempts at speaking Ghanaian languages, "Akwaba... You are beautiful in Ghana, right?" The fumbling, performative mimicry of both men stresses their interest not in cultural understanding but in using her "foreignness" as a marker of desirability; a treatment feminist scholars identify as "exotic objectification," in which foreign women are fetishised and stripped of purpose.

The introduction of Otunba and Freaky Freaky's wives at the end complicates the narrative. Their demand from Sheena to send their own share of the money because it is "business" highlights that objectification becomes normalised to the point where women participate in the very system that commodifies them. This aligns with the argument posed by feminist objectification theorists that patriarchal cultures can compel women to internalise and reproduce objectifying norms for economic survival or social advantage.

ii. Mr. Macaroni's *The Delivery Girl*

The skit centres around Freaky and his side chick, Sisi, as they plan a weekend getaway to attend an AY live show. Sisi, aiming to secure her financial independence, negotiates a fee of ten million naira to cover her expenses, but ultimately accepts a reduced sum of five million from Freaky. However, their plans unravel when Mummy Wa confronts them, leading to Sisi leaving with the money intended for her and an additional delivery fee paid by Mummy Wa.

The skit begins with a situation in which Sisi is positioned as an object of male pleasure and validation. Mr. Freaky's character frames their relationship in transactional terms, announcing with excitement, "Easter Sunday, we are spending Easter Sunday together... bring your friends. I want my money to be chopped." This statement foregrounds his readiness to spend money not for companionship rooted in mutual respect, but for the pleasure and spectacle that the women will provide. By inviting her friends and explicitly stating that he wants his money to be spent, he presents female presence as a consumable good and an entertainment package he is willing to finance. This objectification becomes more profound in his sexualized metaphor: "You have given me honey to lick and you have not given me your own honey to lick." In this situation, the woman is overtly reduced to a body for sexual access, a situation that feminist theorists and scholars identify as the foundation of objectification.

Appearance plays a crucial role in reinforcing objectification. Sisi herself articulates internalised standards that fashion her body as a commodity requiring upkeep. This is evident in her demands for money from Freaky to "make my nails, my lashes, pedicure, manicure... I have to look good. I can't be looking rough." Her insistence on beauty maintenance reflects the notion of self-objectification, where women come to evaluate themselves through an external, typically male, gaze. The idea that she must look a certain way to maintain her desirability and bargaining power underscores how deeply objectification shapes feminine identity.

Ultimately, economic exchange dominates the interactions, with Sisi placing a price on her companionship and Freaky negotiating it in the same manner one bargains over a purchasable item. Her bold request for "Ten million naira" and his counteroffers of "two million... okay, five million" establish her body and presence as commodities within an economic transaction. While



framed as humour, the back-and-forth negotiation turns intimacy into an object with fluctuating market value.

In a twist of plot, the arrival of Mummy Wa introduces another layer of objectification involving Sisi. Feigning to be a delivery girl to conceal her identity from Freaky's wife, Mummy Wa, her presence is immediately dehumanised when Mummy Wa asks: "Who is this one that you are using as a vulcaniser?" The phrase "this one" strips Sisi of her individuality, reducing her to an anonymous object. Even as Mr. Freaky attempts to clarify the situation to contain the imminent embarrassment from his wife, Sisi is largely spoken about rather than spoken to, reinforcing the denial of subjectivity that objectification theory highlights.

iii. Kelvinblak's *Schoolmates*

Schoolmates depicts how young women in academic institutions are positioned as sexual commodities within male-dominated power structures. The story revolves around Queen and Joy who set up their classmate with Chief for a one-night stand. Unfortunately, the Chief dies in his attempt to rape his victim.

At the heart of the narrative is the portrayal of young women's bodies as objects of sexual use and economic exchange. The Chief's role exemplifies the instrumentality dimension of objectification in which his idea of masculinity is totally tied to his lust for younger women. To bait his victims, he masks his lust by acting as a provider. He shows this by promising to act as an alternative support system, as he brags to his victim, "If your parents are not capable of supporting you, I can assist. That is what men like us do". His narcissistic ideology frames the transactional nature of his engagements with vulnerable girls whose insatiability and moral depravity endanger them in situations where their bodies become the instrument for pleasure. This thus echoes the cultural scripts that legitimise male control over female bodies under the guise of financial support.

Instructively, the young woman's participation, as seen through Queen's mocking encouragement to her friend to exchange her body for material gains, reveals internalised objectification and peer-enforced conformity to a system that commodifies sex as a currency for social mobility. By stressing that "You want to chill with the big girls, but you don't want to do what the big girls do... You want to live a quick, soft life, but you don't want to open your legs." Queen highlights how peer pressure functions as a mechanism for enforcing self-objectification.

Relatively, the skit also underscores the fungibility and ownership aspects of objectification, as women are exchanged within social networks, pushed into sexual encounters to repay or gain access to resources. Queen and Joy's betrayal of their course mate by setting her up with the Chief demonstrates how objectification can be perpetuated by women themselves within patriarchal contexts, complicating narratives of victimhood and illustrating how survival strategies may reinforce oppressive systems. This intra-gender complicity also contributes to men's perception that women's problems are reducible to economic dependence and emotional care, obscuring structural violence and agency.



However, the narrative subverts traditional objectification scripts by having the victimised woman overpower the Chief during the latter's attempt to rape his victim, resulting in his death and subsequent arrest of Queen and Joy. This twist reclaims a measure of agency for the female characters, disrupting the male gaze and power unevenness. As such, while women remain enmeshed in systems of commodification and exploitation, the skit gestures towards a redefinition of power, highlighting that the victimiser can also become a victim of consequence. This twist in fate thus challenges the basic binaries of passive female victim and active male aggressor.

iv. Kelvinblak's *Delivery Marriage*

Delivery Marriage portrays a humorous domestic conflict that unfolds when a man receives a surprise delivery from his village, only to discover that his mother has sent him a young woman to marry. Agitated by the situation, the man's current partner attempts to assert her authority. Unfortunately, the situation escalates as the mother attempts to conduct a full traditional and Christian wedding on the spot.

In the skit, Kelvinblak depicts the ways patriarchal cultures continue to objectify African women within marital arrangements. The mother's action of sending a young woman from the village as a "delivery" embodies the notion of instrumentality and transferability, as the girl is treated as an item that can be shipped, inspected, and used to solve the son's supposed marital problem. Her inquiry, "Have you seen the girl? That fine potato girl that I sent," reveals a deep commodification, as the metaphor of a "potato" collapses the woman's humanity into consumable goods. The delivery man's detached statement, "Delivery, sir... you can check it yourself", further strips the girl of subjectivity, framing her as a package rather than an autonomous individual. Implicitly, the situation exemplifies how the value, voice and choice of women are repressed in African culture, as such, presenting them as marital objects.

Furthermore, fungibility is evident in the current partner's desperate declaration, "I clean the house, I do laundry, I do everything," which reflects her fear of being replaced like a domestic machine if she fails to meet expected standards. Her self-description positions her value entirely in terms of labour output, revealing the internalised objectification of women within domestic spheres. Similarly, the voiceless girl from the village is presented as an interchangeable alternative bride, reinforcing the idea that women in such contexts are replaceable units rather than irreducible persons.

The intrusion of the kinsman and the priest amplifies the theme of ownership and violability. When the kinsman declares, "I am here to represent Umugu village and the whole kinsmen," he assumes communal authority over the woman's marital fate, displaying the patriarchal belief that women's bodies and futures belong collectively to family structures. The priest's chaotic declaration, "I pronounce you husband and wife... bring your lips," ultimately enacts reduction to the body, treating the woman's physical presence as merely a ritual object necessary to complete a traditional performance.



DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reinforce a substantial body of scholarship that highlights the persistent reduction of women to objects across various media forms. Drawing first on Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory, which provides a foundational framework for understanding how women's bodies are fragmented, instrumentalised, and valued primarily for their utility, the analysis of the comedy skits demonstrates clear patterns of objectifying representations. Consistent with the observations of Ojomo and Adekusibe (2020) and Endong and Emike (2023), the skits reveal that objectification remains a pervasive narrative device within contemporary entertainment, where women are routinely positioned as commodities rather than full subjects.

Importantly, this objectification is not generic but embedded within local socio-cultural contexts. The commodification of women observed in *Beautiful Sheena from Ghana*, *The Delivery Girl*, *Schoolmates*, and *Delivery Marriage* reflects Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994) argument that African women experience layered forms of oppression shaped by patriarchy, economic exclusion, and cultural expectations. Across these skits, women's bodies are framed as negotiable or exchangeable assets, whether through financial bargaining, sexual access, or marital arrangements, underscoring the intersection of economic and cultural logics that regulate female worth.

By and large, the findings illustrate the complex interplay between cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and mediated representations of women, affirming that humour often serves not only as entertainment but also as a vehicle for normalising gendered power imbalances.

CONCLUSION

Base on the findings, this study concludes that the rise of social media platforms as dominant space for contemporary storytelling has amplified the misrepresentation and subjugation of women. The comedy skit industry, which relies heavily on the new media to shape public perception, has significantly contributed to this problem by reinforcing harmful stereotypes that distort the true representation of women. Consequently, there is an urgent need for more positive and authentic depictions of women in media in order to advance gender equality and challenge entrenched stereotypes. As Evwierhoma (2009) argues, such efforts are essential in tackling the minority rights of women that are often undermined in society. To achieve this, female dramatists and artists are encouraged to take the lead in producing ideologically driven comedy skits (Evwierhoma, 2012) that redefine how women are portrayed in social media content.

Ethical clearance

The research involves only the analysis of publicly accessible online videos and does not include any interaction with human participation or collection of personal data

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Dr. Kelechi Uzoma Agoha conceived the study, including the design and also collated the data. Dr. Isabella Ifeoma Azogu and Dr. Judith Akunne Ume handled the analysis and interpretation of data. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

All data and materials analysed in this study were obtained from publicly accessible sources.

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