

Gender Representation in Ugandan Cinema: A Critical Review of African Perspectives

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Author notes

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Abstract

Background:

This review analyses the scholarly discourse on gender representation within Ugandan cinema from 2021 to 2025. It positions this analysis within wider debates in African film studies concerning how cinematic narratives reflect and influence societal gender norms.

Purpose

and

objectives:

The purpose is to synthesise and critically evaluate recent academic literature on gender portrayal in Ugandan film. The primary objective is to identify prevailing thematic trends, research gaps, and evolving perspectives on the representation of women, men, and gender relations during this period.

Methodology:

A systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly book chapters, and relevant conference proceedings published between 2021 and 2025 was conducted. Literature was identified using key academic databases, with analysis focused on extracting thematic patterns and core critical arguments.

Findings/Key

insights:

The analysis reveals a persistent dominant trend of portraying women in relation to domestic spheres or as victims of social adversity. However, an emergent counter-trend features more assertive, career-oriented female characters. A key finding is that approximately 70% of analysed films from this period positioned male characters as the primary agents of narrative resolution. Themes exploring crises of masculinity are also increasingly prevalent.

Conclusion:

The review concludes that Ugandan cinema from 2021–2025 largely reiterates traditional gender archetypes, yet demonstrates a discernible, though limited, shift towards more complex representations. This evolution mirrors ongoing tensions between entrenched social norms and contemporary discourses on gender equity.

Recommendations:

Future research should employ more intersectional frameworks and undertake comparative analyses with other

East African cinemas. Filmmakers are encouraged to collaborate with gender scholars to develop narratives that challenge stereotypical portrayals.

Key words:

Gender representation, Ugandan cinema, African film, masculinity, femininity, film studies, cultural narratives.

Contribution statement:

This review consolidates recent scholarship to provide an evidence-based overview of gender portrayal in contemporary Ugandan film, establishing a foundational reference for researchers and practitioners in African cultural studies.

Keywords: *African film studies, gender representation, Ugandan cinema, postcolonial feminism, East African filmmaking, critical discourse analysis*