

EXPLORING THE BENEFIT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF READING HAUSA POPULAR ROMANCE GENRE: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract - This paper investigates the women readers of Hausa romance novels produce in Kano state northern Nigeria of West Africa. The fact the genre has been neglected, underestimated and faced a lot of criticism and accusation from popular romance scholars, literary stakeholders, social critics feminist literary scholars around the globe. Therefore, little research on the benefits and significance has not been carried out so far. Moreover, the study employed a qualitative approach using a purposive sampling strategy of selecting 8 women readers. The objectives of the study were (a) to identify the benefits of readership of the genre (b) to examine the significance of the genre in the heart of its readers particularly women. Data was collected through face to face interviews with selected readers who agreed to participate in the study. The interviews sessions took approximately 30-40 minutes for each participant responses were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The results revealed that romance genre readership played a vital roles in addressing gender issues and the transformation of their female identity, entertainment, social status, lifestyle choices, personal freedom and cultural consumption in the global contemporary societies.

Keywords - Hausa Romance Genre, Women Readers, Face To Face Interviews, Thematic Analysis, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

The production of Hausa romance genre is contemporary literary writing phenomenon written Hausa language particularly in Kano northern Nigeria. Therefore, authors were young male and female who wrote the books produce and distributed into the local markets in all cities and towns and other part of West Africa (Adamu, 2007; Furniss & Adamu, 2012; Malumfashi, 2011). The novels contains so many images/pictures at the front cover to attract the attention of its readers. However, due to its contribution in the production and cultural consumption in every society, romantic popular genres is still considered as an inferior, trashy type of cultural production and has received a lot of accusations and condemnation from literary critics, stakeholders, literary educators and feminist perspectives, still women readers patronize the production and readership of the novels (FordHam, 2014; Lee, 2008; Selinger, 2012; Sheehan & Stevens, 2015). In this paper we address the issue of its readership focusing on the benefits and significance of the romance genre.

This paper apply the reader-response theory in Hausa popular romance novels to explore the reading practices of women readers emphasizes the creative role of the reader. According to Reader-response theory emphasizes the creative role of the reader and according to its proponents, the literary and aesthetic experience of reading a novel or poem is the product of a dialogue between reader and text (Azmi, 2015; Chou, 2014; Davi, 2017; Kamblé, 2014; Larabee, 2014). The active and interpretive the nature of reader-response theory suggests that it would complement other modern trends in the readership of Hausa popular romance genre.

1.1. Rationale for the study

With rise in the production, consumptions of popular romance genre across the global, e.g, in northern Nigeria, there is need to explore the benefits and the significance of reading Hausa romance genre through a face to face interviews with women readers and shares their readership experiences, ideas as well as preferences. Thus, so far a little attention has not been given to reading practices in one of the second major two languages after Swahili in West Africa.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Recently, research has shown the influence of popular romance novels readership among female readers for their leisure, entertainment, ecstatic fulfilment and social change in the feminist perspectives across the globe (Bianchi & D'Arcangelo, 2015; Fernández, 2017; S. Moody, 2014; S. Moody, L., 2013; Ross, 2000; Veros, 2012; Wilhelm, 2016). This paper move towards understanding the reading benefits and significance of Hausa popular romance genre among female readers which challenged the notion of some literary critics and stakeholders saying that the novels has nothing to offer to its readers within and outside academic contexts. However, little or no attention has been paid to understanding their beliefs, ideas, preferences towards the development of contemporary popular culture. Therefore, existing research on popular romance readership particularly in northern Nigeria has been limited in several ways. Previous studies indicates that little is known about the Hausa language popular romance genre and its female readers to bridge the gap in the study of popular romance genre around the world. Therefore, the study intends to investigate to the following research questions:

1. What are the benefits do women readers hold about reading Hausa popular romance genre in Nigeria? 3.
2. What are the perceptions and significance of Hausa popular romance genre readership practices? 4.

II. METHOD

The aim of the study was to describe the benefits and significance of reading practices of Hausa popular romance genre in a natural setting (Schwandt, 1994). Therefore, the study applied the reader-response theory of (Rosenblatt, 1982) as main bases of this paper. In addition, (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015) explained that qualitative researchers are not understood simply as objective cameras for recording data, but rather interpret the data through the perspectives of their own subjectivities and intellectual backgrounds (Tracy, 2012) also reported that qualitative research as immersing oneself into the context being studied in order to make sense of it.

2.1 Sample

The participants were 8 women readers selected through a purposive sampling techniques from romance genre reading clubs in Kano, Nigeria as guided by (Patton, 2002). The group members were native Hausa speaking communities that shares that same linguistic, racial and religious background.

2.2 Data Collection

The data were collected through face-to-face interview session with each participant. The nature of the interviews was to understand in details about the women reading experiences through Hausa romance genre readership process. The interviews session took approximately 30-40 minutes for each participant and was audiotaped transcribed verbatim.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedure

This paper used thematic analysis to examine the women reading practices between members selected from different romance genre reading clubs. This allowed an in depth description of patterns within the data to be identified. A reader-response theory was adopted as theoretical frame work this could reflect the different meaning from the participants' reality and views (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, thematic analysis was data driven so that themes could be directly formed from the original data and a unique coding framework in relation to Parkinson's disease could be developed. The analysis was carried out in accordance with the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006). Messages were read several times to ensure thorough comprehension. Patterns within the data were coded and extracts from the original data were assembled into non-overlapping themes and subthemes. They were compared to the original

messages and further refined. Interpretation did not extend beyond the surface meaning of messages.

III. RESULTS

In this paper six themes were emerged, each with their respective subthemes, were identified from the data. Therefore, the first three major themes highlighted the benefits of the romance genre, while other three major focused on the significance of their readership practices.

3.1 Emerged Themes on the Benefits of the Romance Genre Readership

3.1.1 Romance Readership Provide us with Awareness of Primitive Hausa Culture on Ealier Marriage

As we all know romance novels are lucrative commodity that serves as a way of satisfaction, contentment, and pride, even though some stories focus on women enlightenment on how to cope with issues of polygamy on social interaction among her co-wives in Hausa traditional setting to live peacefully with their husband and the rest of the children.

3.1.2 Romance supported women's to develop a cordial relationship among the extended family in my community.

Reading the romance novels helped me to think critically on the issue of family affairs in our community in which guide us for practicing how to live in peace and harmony with other step mothers and as well as my step brothers and sisters. So reading the romance genre played a great role towards building a good relation among us in our reading clubs. Nevertheless, I can't stop reading the love story novels that were sales that they sell us everywhere. On one hand, I think that story novels enhances our culture and provides a forum that shaped our minds in various aspect of social change human development.

3.1.3 Romance novels are commercial, formulaic productions that educate the young women on the problem of harmful practices from the traditional setting

Reading the romance help us to know the effect of Hausa tradition practices such as women circumscitions which leads to deteriorating condition to their health and other psychological disorder cause them sudden death.

3.2 Emerged Themes on the Significance of Romance Genre Readership

I want to often sharing my personal experience of showing the significance of reading the genre I learn a lot in respects of transformation of women life for instance, educating female child from the rural areas of northern part of Nigeria.

3.2.1 Romances novels enlighten women with acknowledge against domestic violence for a better future.

I liked the way the romance authors write about the resistance of traditional practices of forced marriage against the wish of young girls to someone whom they don't want to marry or not wish to live as her husband as a result to such practices lead to their ran away of the girls to become prostitutes which is against the Islamic injunction and Hausa cultural norms. So reading the romance novels plays a vital role of changing the old traditions which enlighten those parents to allow their female children to complete their studies from secondary school up to the university level. I think we have to be objective in our views and comments on the role of romance novels in the life of every young women. As reader I always valuing the genre as a beneficial to my life I learn a lot from my reading practices because I know how to tackle the challenges of social norms and expectation after marital life experiences.

3.2.2 Romances challenge a harmful practices of force marriage against the wish of young girls.

Well reading romance genre is another achievement to my life even though some critics challenging its reading practices, I don't care about it because as a reader for a quite number of years I know the benefits of reading the romance genre. For instance, some authors focused their story on enlightening readers that tells a story of family affairs for teaching young girls how to be discipline to their parents, elders and other people in the society. To me reading the romance novels has a great impact in my life. At any time I read a good story written on challenging the traditional setting whereby some parents have the right to their female daughters for selecting them whom to marry instead of given them the chance to choose a husband to marry to avoid having problem at home.

3.3 Emerged Themes on the Significance of Romance Genre Readership

3.3.1 Reading the romance novels enhances our reading culture

As a reader of the romance novels we know that reading is social activities that helps us with emotions and satisfaction toward the literacy development it help me to improve my imagination as well as escape from unpleasant realities. Most of us noticed that reading the romance genre enhances our comprehension and vocabulary knowledge.

Firstly, as a reader I look at the front cover and read the title. If I know something about the author what people are saying especially women said about her and get an impression of the book. I took my time to read the first few pages if the author starts with some literary devices such as, metaphor, simile and irony I read all the information that is written to make me so

interested in the storyline such as characters role and events from the novel. The book reads a very small part but it's only got that one chance to succeed. Another benefit of reading the romance novels I learn from some information on tolerance, morality and traditional values.

IV. CONCLUSION

The main purpose in this study was to explore the benefit and significance of reading the popular romance novels by Hausa women readers. As the results of the present study indicated, reading the novels played a significant role to the readers for solving some primitive traditions especially marriage institutions and other social vices that affects the women lives in Hausa land. Although some literary critics condemn the reading practice due to that, still the women patronize the genre and shown the benefits of reading the romance genre that enhances their language skills ideas and understanding shows that has positive aspect in their hearts.

The romance genre studies has developed into a multifaceted discipline where shared interest and shared ideologies gain more significance. The readers were conversant with the context of the significant texts pertaining to its culture and society.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This paper opens up a possibilities for those who are interested in the study of popular romance novels, literary critics, stakeholders, researchers as well as literary educators with different genres around the globe. Another suggestion is the application of the reader-response theory which allow the women readers to interpret their personal responses and ideas which proved the value and significance of the genre according to their needs and interest.

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