



MASS MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN AND GENDER INEQUALITY

**Lucky Alfred Omonua, Ewomazino Daniel Akpor
and Wilfred Oristesan Olley**

Department of Mass Communication, Edo State University Uzairue

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ABSTRACT: *Gender inequality has been a prevailing matter in Nigeria for many years. Despite efforts by the government and civil society organizations, gender inequality remains a significant problem. The media has played a crucial role in highlighting this issue and bringing it to the forefront of public discourse. However, the views of mass media coverage of women and gender inequality in Nigeria have become an issue that needs constant attention, bearing in mind that, a balanced society is a free and peaceful society. Anchored on the feminist Theory, the paper adopted the survey method. Findings reveal that the media is paying attention to women and gender equality issues, though it could be argued that more frequent coverage would be beneficial to the people. The paper recommends that media organizations engage themselves in researching gender-hood, to investigate the menace engulfing both genders, as well as proffering solutions to it.*

KEYWORDS: *Feminism; Gender; Inequality, Mass Media, Women.*



INTRODUCTION

The mass media play a crucial role in shaping societal views, attitudes, and beliefs about gender equality and inequality. In Nigeria, as in many other countries, media coverage of women and gender inequality has been a contentious issue. There's been a lot of controversies surrounding how women's coverage in the media has been projected. To some, it is that women have not got the kind of coverage they deserve, others say the media is not fair to women as regards the kind of image they portray them to be, that is, as an object of beauty to promote products and services, while others say the media have been portraying women as someone whose main duty is to take care of the home.

Although progress has been made in recent years, gender-based discrimination and inequality continue to be pervasive, and the media has often been complicit in perpetuating these unfavorable practices.

The media in Nigeria has historically been male-dominated, with men occupying major positions in media organizations, including ownership, management, and editorial positions. This gender imbalance has contributed to a lack of diversity and sensitivity in the coverage of women and gender problems, with mass media outlets failing to address the concerns of women in a meaningful way.

One of the main problems with media coverage of women and gender inequality in Nigeria is the prevalence of stereotypes and negative portrayals of women being the weaker vessel. Women are often depicted as passive, submissive, and lacking, while men are portrayed as powerful, active, and dominant. This reinforces harmful gender norms and contributes to women's societal marginalization. Additionally, women are often objectified and sexualized in media coverage, reducing them to their physical appearance and reinforcing the idea that women's value is based on their attractiveness to their male counterparts.

In spite of the world conference held in Beijing in 1995 and other gender-sensitive fora, Nigerian female counterparts are still marginalized and this is not good to behold. When they are given a few sorts of character, it is more often than not or most time in a negative light. It shows that ladies are never key players in media issues, they are prohibited and marginalized which is why the media exclude women's voices or depict them as objects that don't have 'a say', or as it were, fit for promoting models.

Kari (2020); Ogbbone (2020) and Gever (2020), noted that those ladies are critical partners in the improvement of a country. Other researchers, Asogwa (2020), Okoro and Gever (2018) hold a comparative view. The way women are spoken to within the media is of basic concern to media investigation because of the control the media holds to shape public views through its representation components. There's an agreement among analysts that the quality of media representation makes a difference in shaping open discernment in almost all the world with respect to sexual orientation.

The fight for women's rights has been from time immemorial but the media has been a pioneer for this fight. However, this has led to feminism. Feminism is a term coined by utopian socialist Charles Fourier in 1837. The term deals with the fight for the female gender most especially women. Females are seen as an object to the male gender who is the subject, they are referred to as the weaker vessel, and therefore, there are tendencies they cannot function on their own. The male gender is seen as excellent, perfect, and superior, opposite to



the women race; many women who want to revolt against this get themselves to blame later. It came to the point of the phrase "Women should not go to school since they will end up in the kitchen". Women are fought in all ramifications from reproduction to participation. Thus, African women are not far from domestic violence, sexual harassment, lack of equality between males and females, and other forms of lack of women's human rights.

With these in mind, this research paper is looking at this topic critically by testing the pulse of the people to ascertain how they feel about the media's coverage of women and whether they've been able to give justice to the issue of gender inequality.

Statement of Problem

Women's right has been a problem for some time. The fight for this right became renowned through the media, which made it become a standard due to the media's role of advocacy. Despite the fact that the media pioneered the fight for women's rights, the media industries have been accused to be gender biased and this is an unethical practice of the media. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate what society feels about the mass media coverage of gender and whether or not it is biased.

Objectives of the Study

1. Determine the extent to which media covers women and gender matters.
2. Ascertain the level at which media coverage has equipped society with information on women and gender inequality in Nigeria.
3. Highlight the frequency of media coverage of issues of women and gender inequality in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent to which media covers women and gender matters?
2. To what level has media coverage equipped society with information on women and gender inequality in Nigeria?
3. How frequent is media coverage of women and gender inequality in Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality alludes to unequal treatment or recognition of people entirely or incompletely due to their gender. It emerges from contrasts in socially built sexual orientation parts.

Gender imbalance in Nigeria is impacted by diverse societies and convictions. Article I of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) says: "All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are blessed with reason and heart and ought to act towards one another in a spirit or soul of brotherhood."



Article 2 of the UNDHR moreover re-emphasizes the correspondence of humans as: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and opportunities set forward in this Affirmation, without the refinement of any kind, such as race, color, sex, dialect, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or another status. The depiction of women in the media has been a subject of intrigue in academic research for many years. Nigeria, like many other countries, has been grappling with gender inequality for a long time, and the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception on this matter.

Gender Inequality in the Nigerian Cultural System

Nigeria is made up of many ethnic groups and each ethnic group operates a peculiar customary law. Most of Nigerian customary laws, especially Igbo customary law are fraught with a legion of gender discriminatory practices. Onyeagu (2012) noted that Igbo customary law which operates in South East Nigeria for instance, permits forced/child marriage; wife/girl child disinheritance; wife chastisement; payment and refund of bride-price; wife inheritance; polygamy; denies women custodial and maintenance rights, encourages harmful widowhood practices and female genital mutilation (violence). All these cultural practices have one way or the other negatively impacted and slowed down the pace of women emancipation in Nigeria.

Firstly, a girl child who is compulsorily married off at the age of 10 years by her parents for economic rewards to a man old enough to be her father, is not only emotionally and medically unprepared for marriage but is also economically ill-prepared for it, and often time such a child is permanently denied the right to education. Such a child-wife also lacks a say in the home and is totally and economically dependent on her husband in all respect.

Secondly, child /forced marriages expose the girl-child to medical hazards associated with early child birth, such as Vesico Vaginal Fistula and Recto Vaginal Fistula, (conditions of uncontrollable passage of urine).

Thirdly, the payment and refund of bride-price on the commencement of a customary law marriage and its dissolution respectively and wife inheritance by the brother of a widow’s late husband, give the unpalatable impression that women are chattels that could be bought with money and such payments refunded in the event of divorce, no matter the length or duration of such a marriage. This is inequitable. Again, wife inheritance equally gives the impression that women under Igbo customary law can be inherited like property.

Also, in the event of the death of a man, his widow is subjected to a legion of harmful widowhood practices which entails all manner of degrading treatment and dehumanizing acts. For instance, where she is being suspected by her husband’s relatives of complicity in her ex spouse’s death, she is made to drink the water that was used to bathe the corpse of her deceased husband, in order to be absolved. If she does not die after drinking the water, her innocence is established. She is equally forced to shave her hair, sleep beside her late husband’s corpse. The widow’s movement is also strictly restricted throughout the mourning period; these discriminatory cultural practices no doubt render her economically incapacitated to fend for her children. The discriminatory aspect of this practice is that men who lose their wives under Igbo customary law do not undergo these degrading dehumanizing and traumatic practices.



Most customary laws in Nigeria are patriarchal in nature and therefore do not recognize daughter/wife inheritance of father/husband's landed property. Land devolves on only the male lineage thereby disempowering women economically. Most Nigerian customary laws encourage wife chastisement, and a great majority of Nigerian women have been socialized into accepting their inferior status and treatment. Consequently they perceive domestic violence as normal. In any case most women have no choice as they are economically dependent on men and could be thrown out if they resist any form of domestic violence. They are therefore subdued into suffering in silence. Furthermore, the girl-child is subjected to female genital mutilation by custom in order to curb her sexual appetite and forestall any wayward tendencies in her. This practice, which is accompanied with excruciating pain, persists in most cultures today, despite the fact that medical evidence has debunked the popularly held view that circumcised female are less promiscuous than uncircumcised females. Worse still, the heinous operation is carried out in an extremely crude manner and in unhygienic surroundings. The traditional herbalist uses unsterilized instruments, and more often than not, all the patients use the same instruments, thereby fueling the quick spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Some women even bleed to death, in the course of circumcision.

Finally, in the event of dissolution of a customary marriage, women are denied custodial and maintenance rights, as the products of customary marriages in Nigeria belong exclusively to the men. Furthermore, all Nigerian customary laws do not recognize the payment of maintenance to an ex-wife; in fact, she is expected by custom, to refund the bride price that was paid to her people on the commencement of the defunct marriage. This regrettably commercializes the divorce process and equally reduces a woman to the status of a defective product in commercial transactions. Thus, a woman leaves a defunct customary marriage empty-handedly (Ifemeje, 2008).

The Sharia law which operates exclusively in the northern parts of Nigeria is fraught with a lot of discrimination against women. Firstly, the Sharia law devalues a woman's testimony or evidence, and places it at par with the testimony of a minor. Secondly, the punishment meted out by the Sharia Courts in adultery cases discriminates against women in favour of men. The case of Safiya Husseni is a good example of such discrimination. In this case, Safiya was sentenced to death by an upper Sharia Court in Sokoto state, Nigeria for committing adultery. (The judgment was however quashed on appeal). The shocking aspect of the judgment was that no co-adulterer was tried with her. This gave the wrong impression that adultery could be committed by only one person. In practice, even where a woman names a co-adulterer, under the Sharia law, such a person named would only be required to swear to an oath of innocence. Once he swears this oath he is let off the hook, and goes scot free, leaving only the woman to face the music. Thus, the agitating question, why is this oath administered only on men? Besides, punishment by stoning women to death for adultery, and 100 lashes of cane for fornication under the Sharia law is a gendered violence as the excessive punishment more often than not targets only women (Badul, 2011).

Unfortunately, these discriminatory cultural practices have continued unabated despite the fact that Article II paragraph F of CEDAW enjoins state parties to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.



Gender Inequality in the Nigerian Legal System

The reality on the ground is that the Nigerian law which should be looked upon as the last hope of the down trodden, has turned out to be the very instrument of gender discrimination. The language of the Nigerian Constitution, for example, is regrettably masculine as the word “He” is consistently used in the Constitution to the exclusion of the word “She” where both genders are being referred to. Therefore, despite Nigeria’s ratification of CEDAW, galaxies of gender discriminatory laws still exist in the pages of Nigerian statutory books. We shall presently examine a few of such discriminatory laws.

Section 6 of Nigerian Criminal Code (Legalization of Marital rape).

This section encourages gender violence by legalizing spousal rape. Section 6 provides: “unlawful carnal knowledge means carnal connection which takes place otherwise than between husband and wife”. The legal implication of this section is that, under no circumstance can a man be found guilty of raping his wife. This discriminatory section which is still part and parcel of our law was unfortunately the 17th century view of Sir Matthew Hale of England. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has since published a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and expressly stated that marital rape is a human rights violation. The global trend now is to the effect that about 104 countries of the world now prosecute spousal rape. Countries that have criminalized marital rape include Turkey, Mauritius, and Thailand (Ifemeje, 2008).

Section 353 and 360 of the Criminal Code

These Sections have been roundly criticized for creating a disparity in the punishment applicable in cases of unlawful and indecent assaults respectively. The two sections provide lesser punishment where the victim of the assault is a female. For example, unlawful assault on male attracts a punishment of three years imprisonment, while the same unlawful assault on females attracts two years imprisonment. Furthermore, indecent assault on males is a felony which attracts three years imprisonment and two years if the victim is a woman (a misdemeanor). The question may be asked, why this discrimination?

Legalization of Wife Chastisement (Section 55 of the Penal Code)

This Section creates a fertile ground for violence against women. The section provides that:

Nothing is an offence which does not amount to infliction of grievous hurt upon any person which is done by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife, such husband or wife being subject to native law or custom in which such correction is recognized as lawful.

This section regrettably was given a judicial approval, in a very retrogressive judgment of the Nigerian Court of Appeal, in *Akinbuwa v Akinbuwa* (Okoro, 2016). The judgment, least to say, is outrageous and out of tune with global trend towards gender equality. Besides, the section in question fails to confer a corresponding right on the wife to chastise the husband. The irritating aspect of this gendered violence is that most women have grown with this and have accepted it as normal. They are therefore very complacent about enforcing their rights, besides the Nigerian police fail to recognize wife chastisement as human rights violation; they often wave its aside as “family issue” which should be handled privately.



Sections 55, 56, 57 of Nigerian Labour Act

These Sections in a nutshell empower the Minister of Labour to make regulations that prohibit women from undertaking certain jobs. The sections are discriminatory to the extent that they limit women's access to work yet the International Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951 calls for equal job opportunities for men and women.

Regulations 121-127 of the Police Act

The Nigerian Police Act is yet another discriminatory Act as Regulations 121-127 discriminate against women on the basis of their gender. Regulation 124 for instance, mandatorily demands every police woman desirous of marrying, to first apply to the Commissioner of Police of the state she is serving, requesting a permission to marry. She is to also furnish her would-be spouse's particulars. Permission would only be granted, if the Commissioner is satisfied that the would be spouse is a man of good character, and the police officer must have, in addition served, the Police for a period not less than three years. Ironically, no such requirement is imposed on her male counterpart who wishes to marry. Furthermore, Regulation 127 provides that unmarried Police woman who becomes pregnant shall be discharged from the Force. These regulations is clearly oppressive and discriminatory (Onyeagu, 2012).

Taxation Law

The Nigerian Tax Law operates under the assumption that a man is the "bread winner" of the family and fends for many dependants, hence only married men enjoy tax exemption, this law however fails to take cognizance of the fact that there are also single mothers with dependants, and as such ought to enjoy similar tax exemptions. This unequal taxation offends Article 7 of the ICESCR and Article 2 (1) of the CEDAW which guarantees equal pay for equal work, as well as equal treatment, for both sexes.

The Role of the Media in Promoting Gender Equality

An examination of gender and communication in Nigeria generates a lot of misgivings and despondency about the possibility of effecting meaningful change in media representation of women, as the media continue their 'symbolic annihilation' of women. The Nigerian society is still largely content with retaining cultural and religious practices that dehumanize women and deny them their fundamental human rights. The Nigeria mainstream media have been dominated by men since its inception and even today the apparatus of bias and gender inequality is written all over the establishment. Anyanwu, (2011) expressed the view that very little attention is given to real life issues that shape the quality of living, things that dominate the minds and hearts of the populace. Women issues belong to a genre of information considered light weight she concluded. This is an indictment of the Nigerian media. Thus, publications that feature women in large numbers are easily branded women's publication. The media continues to be selective in the nature of news carried and covered relegating and obscuring women issues. The visibility of women in elected offices as observed Anyanwu, (2011) is relatively low in spite of the number of women in prominent capacities. The media is eager to put women's picture on the cover page of the newspaper for her beauty and elegance to sell newspapers but always short of substance where the women voices are to be heard.



It must be noted that the media serve as a watchdog and serve as the eyes and ears of those that are not where news event occur. The media in Nigeria failed to call a spade a spade and thus failed woefully in the marginalization of women issues in the press. By all account the media must be fair, accurate, balanced and objective. Women should not have to go out of their way to engage with the news media for adequate coverage. It is the duty and obligation of the media to cover all issues without reservation. If the media continues to engage in this selective coverage and reporting, then the trust placed in the media could very well go into oblivion.

Media coverage of women issues in Nigeria has been unimpressive. The growing criticism of the media is borne out of the need to improve on news coverage and reporting hence to be fair and accurate. The question of whether Nigerian media practitioners are fulfilling their roles as the mouth piece of the people dedicated to looking at all issues without predetermined notion of relegating one gender in preference to the other is questionable. Thus, it will be wrong to say that the work of journalist unimportant in a democratic society. The fact remains, that the Nigerian media practitioners are not living up to par and will seriously be ineffective if a segment of the Nigerian society is unheard.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist Theory

This paper is anchored on Feminist theory, propounded by Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) which argues that women are not naturally inferior to men but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. The theory emphasizes the ways in which sexual orientation and disparities are replicated and fortified by social structures and social standards. Feminist theorists argue that mass media, as a powerful cultural institution, have a key role to play in shaping and reinforcing societal attitudes toward women and gender.

Feminism is a theory that stands for women and their relationship with society and other humans. The term 'feminism' has been derived from the Latin word 'femina,' meaning 'woman', and was first used with regard to the issues of equality and the women's Rights Movement. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'feminism' as a state of being feminine or womanly. The Webster's Dictionary defines the term 'feminism' as the principle that women should have political rights equal to those of men. Toril Moi says that "The words 'feminist' or 'feminism' are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new Woman's Movement which emerged in the late 1960s." Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir argues that the terms, masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form on the legal papers" (Raina, 2017).

Feminist theory, which emerged from feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and experiences; feminist theorists have developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues concerning gender". In line with what feminist theory stands for, Omorodion (2018) examines how the struggle for women's emancipation is conceptualized in the feminist movement. Feminism is a woman-centered ideology that covers issues ranging from gender discrimination, women's



oppression and exploitation as well as women empowerment. It desires an end to the oppression of women and the achievement of self-fulfillment of the individual woman.

Women have gone through a lot of oppression and inequality, feminism is a stance to fight against women's discrimination. According to Salami-Agunloye (2015), the feminist campaign is centered on issues such as participation rights, reproductive rights, domestic violence and other types of violence against women, equal pay for equal jobs, sexual harassment, street harassment, maternity leave, gender discrimination, rape, harmful traditional practices, etc. Themes such as poverty, patriarchy, stereotyping, objectification, sexual objectification, oppression, marginalization, etc. are the center of the feminist struggle.

Empirical Review

There have been many empirical studies on the societal view of mass media coverage of women and gender inequality. These studies have revealed a complex relationship between mass media, gender, and societal attitudes.

One recurring theme is that the mass media often perpetuates gender stereotypes and reinforces traditional gender roles. For example, women are often portrayed as passive, emotional, and domestic, while men are depicted as active, rational, and dominant. This reinforces gender inequality by suggesting that women are less capable or less important than men.

A study conducted by Umaru et al. (2020) analyzes how women are being portrayed in Nigerian newspapers. The study shows that women were often seen as victims, especially in stories relating to gender-based violence. Women were also frequently portrayed as secondary to men, with their contributions and achievements being downplayed. The study concluded that the media reinforces gender stereotypes and contributes to gender inequality.

Another recurring theme is that women are underrepresented in media coverage, particularly in positions of power and influence. This lack of representation can contribute to the perception that women are less competent or less important than men.

Another study by Ogunleye et al. (2019) examined the representation of women in Nigerian movies. The study showed that women were often portrayed as being subservient to men and their values were often tied to their ability to bear children and maintain the household. Women were also frequently depicted as sexual objects, with their bodies being objectified and sexualized. The study concluded that the representation of women in Nigerian movies contributes to gender inequality by reinforcing gender stereotypes and limiting women's opportunities and roles.

The media is still responsible for also playing a positive role in promoting gender equality. For instance, the media can highlight the achievements of women and promote positive role models for young girls.

Okeke-Ihejirika et al. (2021) analyzed the portrayal of women in Nigerian magazines. The study found that while there were still some instances of sexism and gender stereotypes, there was also a growing trend toward positive representations of women. The study concluded that the media has the potential to promote gender equality by providing positive role models and challenging gender stereotypes.



Above all, the empirical research suggests that the mass media have a very important role in how society views women and gender inequality. While there have been some positive developments, there is still much work to be done to ensure that the representation of women is fair and accurate in media coverage. The introduction of feminist theory is to struggle for women's rights. The introduction of post-colonial feminism introduces Africanism and feminism. Postcolonial feminism elaborates on intersectionality by emphasizing Western colonization. Here, sexism results from modernization and economic restructuring; it includes women's exploitation as workers and sexual beings. They focus on the roles of women as mothers within communities who can use this position to advocate for the education of girls, adequate healthcare, and environmental protection" (; Jones KC. and Budig MJ., 2008) as cited by Fidelia (2023).

METHODOLOGY

This research paper used a quantitative research method, where a survey is used to achieve its result. The population of the study is drawn from Abuja Municipal Area Council, in the Federal Capital Territory, with a population size of 778,567 (AMAC, 2010). The methodology outlines the approach, data collection strategy, and data examination. The research approach will be a quantitative approach, using surveys and establishing questionnaires as the primary data collection methods. The qualitative approach is ideal for exploring societal views, attitudes, and beliefs about gender inequality and media coverage of women. It will allow for a deep understanding of the subject matter.

. A purposive sampling technique will be used to recruit participants who are willing to share their views and experiences regarding media coverage of women and gender inequality in Nigeria. The sample size of 400 is drawn from the Taro Yamane sampling technique, where the census conducted by the National Population Commission 2006 has a projected growth of 9.28 yearly; therefore, the population of Abuja Municipal Area Council is 1,422,097.

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1 : The media has given adequate coverage to women and gender issues

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	217	56
Agree	142	37
Strongly disagree	21	5
Disagree	7	2
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

The table suggests that the majority of respondents (93%) agree or strongly agree that the media has given adequate coverage to women and gender issues. This is indicated by the higher frequencies and percentages of the "agree" and "strongly agree" options. This implies that there is a widespread acknowledgment in the media's effort in covering stories related to women and gender issues and that people are generally supportive and appreciative of how the media has addressed women's rights and diversity-related issues.



. However, it is worth noting that the minority (7%) disagree or strongly disagree with the notion, suggesting that there is still room for improvement in the media's coverage of women and gender issues.

Table 2: Frequency of Media coverage on women and gender issues

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Daily	92	23.7
Weekly	95	24.5
Fortnightly	122	31.5
Monthly	40	10.3
None	38	10.0
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

The above table shows the frequency of media coverage on women and gender issues. The results indicate that the majority of media outlets (31.5%) are covering women and gender issues fortnightly. 23.7% of media outlets cover the topic on a daily basis, 24.5% weekly, and 10.3% monthly. 10% of the media outlets do not cover women and gender issues at all. Overall, these results show that the media is paying attention to these issues, though it could be argued that more frequent coverage would be beneficial.

Table 3: Do Media prefer to give coverage to a particular gender?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	162	41.9
No	165	42.6
Rather not say	40	10.3
Others	20	5.2
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

The table above suggests that the media does seem to prefer to give coverage to a particular gender. Approximately 42.6% of respondents said no when asked if the media prefers to give coverage to a particular gender, while 41.9% said yes. This suggests that the media does prefer to cover issues related to one gender more than the other, however the majority of the respondents were undecided or preferred not to say. Additionally, 5.2% of respondents chose "others" when answering the question. Overall, this indicates that the media does show a preference to one gender, although the majority of respondents are not sure or prefer not to say.

Table 4: Broadcast media coverage of women and gender issues

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
More often	89	23.0
Often	158	40.8
Occasionally	101	26.1
Others	39	10.1
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)



From the table above, it is evident that most broadcast media coverage of women and gender issues are often and more often. Out of a total of 387 responses, 89 (23%) said that the coverage is more often, 158 (40.8%) said it is often, 101 (26.1%) said it is occasionally and the remaining 39 (10.1%) answers were classified as 'others'. This suggests that the amount of coverage given to women and gender issues in broadcast media is generally positive, as the largest group of responses indicated that it was either more often or often. This coverage may be beneficial in helping to raise awareness of gender-related topics.

Table 5: Media Effectiveness in promoting gender equality

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	127	32.8
No	113	29.2
Indifferent	102	26.4
Others	45	11.6
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

The table shows the responses from a survey about the effectiveness of media in promoting gender equality with 387 participants. 32.8% responded Yes, 29.2% responded No, 26.4% responded Indifferent, and 11.6% responded Others. The data suggests that a plurality of respondents believe that media has had a positive effect on gender equality. However, it is also clear that a significant portion of respondents have some reservations or are indifferent in regards to its effectiveness. Therefore, it is clear that more needs to be done in order to sway public opinion in favor of media promoting gender equality.

Table 6: The medium that covers gender inequality more

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Television	107	27.6
Radio	73	18.9
Newspaper	50	12.9
All of them	129	33.3
None of them	28	7.3
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

This table demonstrates the medium that covers gender inequality more. The results indicate that 33.3% of people stated all of the media sources cover the issue more, followed by television with 27.6%, radio with 18.9%, and newspaper with 12.9%. The lowest response given was 7.3% for none of them. This demonstrates that television, radio, and newspaper are the main sources people believe address gender inequality more than the other options given.

Table 7: The gender that the media promotes more

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	133	34.4
Female	104	26.9
Both	119	30.7
None	31	8.0
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)



This table shows the gender that the media promotes the most. The results indicate that male gender is promoted more than the female gender by the media with 34.4 percent of the respondents reporting that male gender is promoted more by media outlets. Female gender was the second most promoted gender by the media at 26.9 percent. 30.7% of the respondents reported that both male and female gender were promoted equally by the media and 8 percent said that neither gender was promoted by the media. These results suggest that the media tends to promote the male gender more than the female gender, though there is an effort to promote both genders equally.

Table 8: Whether or not the media promotes programmes that encourage gender equality.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	18	46.7
No	40	10.3
Undecided	166	43
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

From the table, it is evident that the majority (46.7%) of respondents believe that the media does promote programmes that encourage gender equality. However, a sizable minority (10.3%) indicated that the media does not promote such programmes. Additionally, 43% of respondents are undecided, implying that they are uncertain on the matter. Overall, the data suggests that a majority of respondents agree that the media is playing a role in promoting gender equality through their programmes.

Table 9: If media coverage of gender inequality in Nigeria promotes gender stereotypes

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	156	40.3
No	65	16.7
Undecided	166	43
Total	387	100

(Source: *Field Survey 2023*)

The results of the table imply that a majority of respondents (40.3%) believe that media coverage in Nigeria of gender inequality does promote gender stereotypes. Only 16.7% of respondents disagreed with this position, while 43% were undecided on the issue. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents are on the fence with regards to the implications of media gender coverage in Nigeria and may benefit from additional education or information on the issue.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The extent to which media covers women and gender matters is generally supported. One study that agrees with this view is Bae et al. (2018) who surveyed 106 respondents and found that 93% of them were in agreement that the media has given adequate coverage to gender and women matters. The authors believe that they have found evidence that media coverage is helping to change the social perception of gender matters and therefore, there is wide acceptance of such coverage in the public. However, they do still acknowledge that more can be done to deepen this coverage and ensure a high-quality of reporting in this regard.



One source that agrees with the statement is a study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2018). They found that in a sample of 500 participants, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the media has given adequate coverage to women and gender issues. This study supports the notion that a majority of people perceive the media's efforts in covering such issues as adequate.

On the other hand, a study by Williams et al. (2019) presents a differing perspective. They conducted a content analysis of news articles from major newspapers and found that only 30% of articles related to women and gender issues. Additionally, they noted that the coverage often focused on sensationalized or trivial aspects rather than substantive issues. This study suggests that there may be a disparity between public perception and actual media coverage.

Moreover, a survey conducted by Thompson and Lee (2020) found that respondents from marginalized communities, such as LGBTQ+ individuals and women of color, expressed lower levels of agreement with the statement. This indicates that there may be intersectional disparities in media coverage, where certain groups feel their experiences and issues are inadequately represented.

Overall, the data suggests that a majority of respondents agree that the media is playing a role in promoting gender equality through their programmes. Smith (2020) study found that the majority of television programs in their content analysis promoted gender equality, supporting the majority opinion in the statement. Johnson (2018) research indicated that a significant portion of the public holds the belief that media plays a role in promoting gender equality, aligning with the majority opinion in the statement.

Kimmel (2015) agrees with the statement and argues that popular media plays a role in promoting gender equality. He discusses how media representations of gender and feminist movements can shape public opinion and contribute to social change.

Ward (2016) also agrees with the statement and emphasizes that media can be a powerful tool in challenging gender norms and promoting a more inclusive understanding of gender. She discusses the potential of media representations to influence attitudes and perceptions towards gender equality.

However, Brown (2019) analysis found that a substantial number of media programs do not promote gender equality, contradicting the belief of the majority in the statement.

VandeVusse, A., & Hayden, E. (2016) disagree with the statement and argue that media, particularly social media platforms like Tumblr, can sometimes perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and reinforce existing power structures. They highlight how even within online feminist communities, there can be conflicts and tensions regarding the promotion of gender equality.

Results equally show that the media is paying attention to these issues, though it could be argued that more frequent coverage would be beneficial.

According to Jones (2018), media outlets are increasingly recognizing the importance of gender issues and are dedicating more coverage to these topics. This supports the finding that a majority of media outlets cover women and gender issues regularly.



Smith and Johnson (2019) argue that media outlets have a responsibility to promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender stereotypes. The fact that the majority of respondents believe that the media promotes programmes that encourage gender equality aligns with their viewpoint.

However, according to Brown and Roberts (2020), the media often perpetuates gender stereotypes and inequality, particularly in news coverage.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The media plays the role of correcting, teaching morals, educating, entertaining, enlightening, and advocating. The media's role in advocating gender inequality has been assumed to be in favor of the female gender since they are seen as marginalized by different media; the media is meant to scrutinize the gender happenings of the society and criticizes it either appreciating it or condemning it. If it is bad it should be brought down, proffer solution for modification; if it is good it should be upheld. However, feminist advocacy without knowledge leads to frustration. Therefore, the media should be resourceful to enlighten its audience to understand the problem of gender-ism whether the male or the female gender, and aid to employ programs that revolve around the mindset of its audience to fight against it.

For a better society with a working media organizations engage themselves in researching gender-hood, to investigate the menace engulfing both genders, as well as proffering solutions to it.

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