

# Media and Gender Stereotyping and Promotions against Women in Selected Communities in Ogun State, Nigeria



Chioma Njoku, PhD<sup>β</sup>,  
Julianah Titilope Owoeye<sup>δ</sup>,  
Ngozi, Wellington<sup>μ</sup>  
&  
Owoh, Mmesomachukwu E.<sup>∞</sup>

## Abstract

This study examined “Media as an indispensable tool in promoting gender stereotypes and typecasting in selected groups in Ogun State, Nigeria. The general objective was to determine news framing and presentations of women in the media. The study employed a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire-based survey in selected communities in Ogun State -Magboro and Arepo. With a total population of 749,000 residents (500,000 in Magboro and 249,000 in Arepo), 384 questionnaires were distributed based on a calculated sample size using the online sample size calculator. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 and findings were presented in tables, frequencies, and percentages. Findings showed gender stereotypes in the media affect how society perceives gender roles. News presentations in the media demonstrate how women were typically portrayed as emotional and passive while men were portrayed as strong and logical. This demonstrates unequivocally how Nigerian mass media actively promotes gender stereotypes. Media outlets should promote gender parity in their coverage and portrayal by providing women's viewpoints and experiences an equal amount of weight. Public education on media consumption should be an integral part of media’s advocacies to be able to identify and oppose gender biases in media material.

**Keywords:** *Gender stereotypes, media, framing, news presentations, society*

## Introduction

The mass media has an important role in either validating or disproving gender stereotypes. Interestingly, the media across societies should be responsible for ensuring content balance, especially with gender stories. The need to harness topical and sensitive issues like gender balancing plays a relevant role in helping people determine opinions, principles, and beliefs as a pivotal traditional responsibility of the press. The media plays a significant role in the socialization process and being the only mouthpiece and

---

<sup>β</sup> Chioma Njoku, PhD; Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University, Lagos, Nigeria. [cnjoku@mtu.edu.ng](mailto:cnjoku@mtu.edu.ng)

<sup>δ</sup> Julianah Titilope Owoeye, Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University, Lagos, Nigeria

<sup>μ</sup> Ngozi, Wellington, Department of Mass Communication, Institution: Mountain Top University.

<sup>∞</sup> Owoh, Mmesomachukwu E., Department of Mass Communication, Mountain Top University, Lagos, Nigeria. [owohmmesomachukwu@mtu.edu.ng](mailto:owohmmesomachukwu@mtu.edu.ng)

intermediary requires ethical practices applications. Again, mass media representations influence the construction of gender identities and reinforce societal norms and expectations. When the media consistently portrays women in limited roles and reinforces gender stereotypes, it contributes to the normalization of these roles and limits the aspirations and opportunities for women globally, (Adeyemi, 2019).

Sadly, gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained in beliefs about the roles, behaviours, and attributes assigned to males and females. These stereotypes are perpetuated and reinforced through various media channels, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and online platforms. In Nigeria, media representations often depict women in stereotypical roles such as caregivers, homemakers, and objects of male desire, while men are portrayed as dominant, successful, and powerful characters, (Ojebode, 2018).

Media representations shape societal perceptions and beliefs, reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting women's opportunities. Understanding the role of media agencies in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes is crucial for developing strategies to promote gender equality and empower women in Nigeria. Ironically, it appears the portrayal of women in ways that conform to traditional gender roles and reinforce stereotypes is not paid conscientious attention by most media outlets. News framing role ought to focus on sensitive gender coverage and as custodians of moralities, media practitioners should endeavour to discharge their content news balancing with dignity that protects the interests of all. Negligence to controversies of gender roles by the media includes; limiting women's core roles to domestic settings, presenting women as dependent on men, or objectifying them for the male gaze and the like can only perpetuate and trigger more vacuum in gender inequality and restrict the possibilities for women's social, economic, and political empowerment actualization, (Olorunnisola, 2019).

The media, due to its key roles, has a responsibility to be intentional in creating constructive content and narratives that uphold traditional ethical values. There is a need for the media to act conscientiously in the proper representation of women holistically. It is pivotal to draw the attention of media professionals on issues and images of female gender degrades particularly when there are undeniable national and international movements of women's awareness. Ironically, it seems the press is tilting towards biased coverage in issues relating to women through various ways of news portrayal of women as minority groups or dependants. The press appears to be paying more attention to pessimism on vital women's agitations all over particularly on issues and representations in the society at large which is contributing to lots of falsehoods about women's identity crisis and negligence in different climes. Hence, the a need to redirect the cause of content equality and fairness on the part of the press to rethink what content stirs controversies about women and deliberately refrain from such issues with a more ethical journalistic approach.

Concerning women's monumental achievements in Nigeria and the world at large, it is sad to observe that proper recognition and acknowledgment of women's role as an integral part of society building is deliberately ignored. Rather than extolling their positive contributions, they are relegated to being almost insignificant from intellectually less in the academia, to almost nothing in the political sphere to just being seen and not heard specimens in some subtle undertones. Many other rising controversies span from assigning dominant domestic roles and childbearing abilities pushing them to merely surviving at the mercy of their male counterparts. Ridiculously, women are portrayed as

having a singular purpose of being mothers and caring for their husbands in some terrains. Consequently, accomplishments made by women are regarded as *unicorn* happenings, occurring in peculiar situations. Ironically, such accomplishments when made by men are deemed normal and not often worthy of significant note. It is against this backdrop that this investigation is conducted to ascertain how the media framing of women's issues has scored in the public domain and the narratives arising from such framing.

1. To determine the role of the media in promoting gender stereotypes in Nigeria.
2. To determine how the media frame issues of women in the media

Women-related issues are perceived to have received very little newspaper prominence. Daramola, Johnson, and Oladeinde (2013) agree that women are represented negatively in Nigerian media. They hold the mass media accountable for the misrepresentation of women.

A study on the portrayal of gender roles in Nigerian newspapers was conducted by Owolabi (2019). The study aimed to examine the representation of gender roles in Nigerian newspaper advertising. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant change in the portrayal of gender roles in Nigerian newspaper advertisements. The results affirmed that administrative roles are played by more males than females in Nigerian newspapers. Owolabi concluded that the role of gender is a "set of social expectations that determine how a person of one gender should behave, think and feel" (Oko-Epelle & Adelabu 2022).

In a study of Nigerian newspapers, Adeyemi and Akinbobola (2016) found that women politicians were often framed as "tokens" or "puppets" of male politicians, rather than being seen as independent actors with their ideas and agendas. In another study of newspaper coverage of the 2015 Nigerian presidential election, the study found that female candidates were often portrayed in gendered ways, with their appearance and behavior receiving more attention than their policies or qualifications. Male candidates, on the other hand, were more likely to be portrayed as competent and experienced. Women are often portrayed in traditional gender roles in Nigerian newspapers, such as being responsible for childcare, cooking, and cleaning. Men are portrayed as being responsible for providing for the family and being the primary breadwinners.

Violence against women is a serious issue in Nigeria, and the media has a role to play in shaping public attitudes towards this issue. A study by Nwanegbo and Obiyan (2019) found that women were often blamed for domestic violence, with men's behavior being excused on the grounds of stress or financial pressure. Unfortunately, the media often reinforces gender stereotypes that blame the victim for the violence. Sexual assault cases are often reported in ways that perpetuate victim-blaming attitudes towards women. Nigerian newspapers may describe the victim's clothing or behavior as provocative or suggest that the victim was somehow responsible for the attack.

Endong and Obonganwan (2015) opine that "this might well be the best strategy, if not the only one at this stage of our development in the Nigerian society to empower women through the media of communication - by getting them to tell their own story from their perspective".

### Methodology

The study used a quantitative method via a structured questionnaire-based survey in specific communities of Ogun State – Magboro and Arepo. These areas were chosen for their media presence and educated population, ensuring thoughtful participants' responses. With a total population of 749,000 residents; 500,000 in Magboro and 249,000 in Arepo (<https://www.citypopulation.de/>). A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed based on a calculated sample size using the online sample size calculator. The survey employed a purposive sampling technique, distributing 242 questionnaires in Magboro and 142 in Arepo. The collected data underwent analysis using SPSS version 27, with findings displayed in tables.

### Result and Discussion

#### Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

##### Demographic Information of the Respondents

In this section, data collected on demographic information of respondents are presented as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of the Demographic Information of Respondents.**

SN	Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	176	45.8%
2	Female	208	54.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
SN	Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	18-25 Years	56	14.6%
2	26-35 Years	88	22.9%
3	36-45 Years	130	33.9%
4	46-55 Years	69	18.0%
5	56 and above	41	10.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
SN	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	High School	36	9.4%
2	Bachelor's Degree	210	54.7%
3	Masters	108	28.1%
4	Ph.D	30	7.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The result of the study as presented in Table 1 shows the demographic information of respondents by sex, age range, and qualification. The result shows that there were 176(45.8%) male respondents and 208(54.2%) female respondents, this means that there were more females than males. The result also shows that 56(14.6%) of the respondents were within 18-25 Years of age, 88(22.9%) of the respondents were 26-35 years of age, 130(33.9%) were within 36-45 Years of age, 69(18.0%) were within 46-55 years of age and 41(10.7%) were 56 and above. On the qualification of respondents, the result shows that 36(9.4%) of the respondents had High School certificates,

210(54.7%) had Bachelor's Degree qualifications, 108(28.1%) had Master' certificates and only 30(7.8%) of the respondents were PhD holders.

**Media Consumption Habits**

**Table 2: Frequencies and Percentages of respondents on media consumption habits**

SN	Statements	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	How often do you consume media (e.g., television, radio, social media, newspapers, etc.) in a typical day?	Less than 1 hour	81	21.1%
		1-3 hours	268	69.8%
		3-5 hours	35	9.1%
		Total	384	100.0%
2	Which types of media do you consume most frequently?	Television	26	6.8%
		Radio	43	11.2%
		Social Media	255	66.4%
		Newspaper	60	15.6%
		Total	384	100.0%
3	Do you believe that the media you consume has an impact on your perception of gender roles?	Yes	307	79.9%
		No	77	20.1%
		Total	384	100.0%

The finding of the study as presented in Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of respondents on media consumption habits. The result shows that on how often the respondents consume media (e.g., television, radio, social media, newspapers, etc.) in a typical day, 81(21.1%) consume media less than 1 hour a day, 268(69.8%) consume media between 1-3 hours a day, and about 35(9.1%) consume media between 3-5 hours a day. This implies that the majority of the respondents consume media between 1-3 hours a day.

Results on the types of media respondents consume most frequently show that 26(6.8%) of the respondents choose television, 43(11.2%) use radio frequently, the majority of the respondents 255(66.4%) frequently use social media and only 60(15.6%) of the respondents frequently use newspaper. Lastly, on whether the respondents believe that the media they consume has an impact on their perception of gender roles, the result shows that 307(79.9%) of the respondents said, 'Yes' while the remaining 77(20.1%) of the respondents said 'No'. This shows that the majority of respondents believe that the media they consume has an impact on their perception of gender roles.

**Research Question 1:**

**To what extent does the media contribute to the promotion of gender stereotypes in Nigeria?**

**Table 3: Frequencies and Percentages of respondents on whether media promote gender stereotypes in Nigeria**

SN	Statements	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Do you believe that the mass media in Nigeria promotes gender stereotypes?	Yes	384	100.0%
		No	0	0%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>
2	In what ways do you believe that the mass media in Nigeria promotes gender stereotypes?	Portraying women as weak or submissive	170	44.3%
		Portraying men as dominant or aggressive	130	33.9%
		Using gender-specific language or stereotypes	60	15.6%
		Promoting unrealistic beauty standards	24	6.3%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
3	Do you believe that gender stereotypes in the media have an impact on society's perception of gender roles?	Yes	384	100.0%
		No	0	0%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>
4	If yes to question 3, how do you believe that gender stereotypes in the media affect society's perception of gender roles?	Limiting opportunities for women in the workforce	107	27.9%
		Reinforcing traditional gender roles	140	36.5%
		Contributing to gender-based violence	137	35.7%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The findings of the study as presented in 3 show the frequencies and percentages of respondents on whether media promote gender stereotypes in Nigeria. The result on whether the respondents believe that the mass media in Nigeria promotes gender stereotypes shows that all the respondents 384(100.0%) agree that the mass media in Nigeria promotes gender stereotypes.

Also, on how the respondents believe that the mass media in Nigeria promotes gender stereotypes, the result shows that 170(44.3%) believe that mass media portray women as weak or submissive, 130(33.9%) believe that mass media portray men as dominant or aggressive, 60(15.6%) said the mass media use gender-specific language or stereotypes and about 24(6.3%) believe that mass media promote unrealistic beauty standards.

The result also shows that all the respondents 384(100.0%) believe that gender stereotypes in the media have an impact on society's perception of gender roles. On how the respondents believe that gender stereotypes in the media affect society's perception of gender roles, the result shows that 107(27.9%) believe that it limits opportunities for

women in the workforce, 140(36.5%) believe that it reinforces traditional gender roles and about 137(35.7%) of the respondents believe that it contributes to gender-based violence.

**Research Question 2**

**How does the media frame issues concerning women?**

**Table 4: Frequencies and Percentages of respondents on the Media frame issues concerning women.**

SN	Statements	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Are you familiar with women-related issues discussed in the media?	Very familiar	215	56.0%
		Somewhat familiar	127	33.1%
		Not familiar at all	42	10.9%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
2	The media's portrayal of women is empowering.	Strongly Agree	49	12.8%
		Agree	54	14.1%
		Neutral	9	2.3%
		Disagree	245	63.8%
		Strongly disagree	27	7.0%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
3	The media's portrayal of women is stereotypical	Strongly Agree	113	29.4%
		Agree	224	58.3%
		Neutral	13	3.4%
		Disagree	34	8.9%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
4	The media's portrayal of women is objectifying	Strongly Agree	18	4.7%
		Agree	46	12.0%
		Neutral	9	2.3%
		Disagree	301	78.4%
		Strongly disagree	10	2.6%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
5	The media's portrayal of women is progressive.	Strongly Agree	39	10.2%
		Agree	150	39.1%
		Neutral	12	3.1%
		Disagree	153	39.8%
		Strongly disagree	30	7.8%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
6	The media's portrayal of women is balanced.	Strongly Agree	10	2.6%
		Agree	20	5.2%
		Neutral	13	3.4%
		Disagree	331	86.2%

		Strongly disagree	10	2.6%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The result of the study in Table 4 shows the Frequency and Percentages of respondents on the Media frame issues concerning women. The result on whether the respondents are familiar with women-related issues discussed in the media shows that 215(56.0%) of the respondents are very familiar, 127(33.1%) of the respondents are somewhat familiar and about 42(10.9%) of the respondents are not familiar at all.

Also, the result on whether the media's portrayal of women is empowering shows that 49(12.8%) of the respondents strongly agree, 54(14.1%) agree, 9(2.3%) maintained a neutral position, but a majority of the respondents 245(63.8%) disagreed and about 27(7.0%) strongly disagree. on whether the media's portrayal of women is stereotypical, the result shows that 113(29.4%) strongly agreed, 224(58.3%) agreed, 13(3.4%) maintained a neutral position and 34(8.9%) disagreed, the result also shows that on whether the media's portrayal of women is objectifying, 18(4.7%) of the respondents strongly agree, 46(12.0%) agree, 9(2.3%) are neutral, 301(78.4%) disagree and 10(2.6%) of the respondents strongly disagree. the result on whether the media's portrayal of women is progressive shows that 39(10.2%) strongly agree, 150(39.1%) agree, 12(3.1%) are neutral, 153(39.8%) disagree and 30(7.8%) of the respondents strongly disagree. lastly, the finding of the study on whether the media's portrayal of women is balanced shows that 10(2.6%) strongly agree, 20(5.2%) agree, 13(3.4%) maintained a neutral position, 331(86.2%) disagree and about 10(2.6%) of the respondents strongly disagree.

**Conclusions**

Essentially, media is pivotal in information dissemination and must critically utilize such power in balancing news on feminine topics. Gender issues are usually very sensitive and must be addressed appropriately by ensuring positive frames of women in the news are rationed to commensurate with the leads they generate daily. Mass media in Nigeria plays a significant role in promoting gender stereotypes. Women are often portrayed as weak, submissive, and victims, while men are depicted as dominant and aggressive, perpetuating traditional gender norms. Gender stereotypes in the media contribute to limiting opportunities for women, reinforcing traditional gender roles, and contributing to gender-based violence, The media's portrayal of women's issues often sensationalizes them, leading to a trivial or entertainment-oriented framing rather than addressing their underlying causes and solutions. The media's representation of women's issues lacks diversity, leading to a skewed understanding of these issues in society.

**References**

Adeyemi, T., & Akinbobola, A. O. (2016). The framing of female politicians in Nigerian newspapers. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 8(2), 225-241.

Adeyemi, F. A. (2019). Media influence on gender identity construction of female adolescents. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2), 1-1

Daramola, I. O., & Olushola, A. O. (2018). The representation of women in Nigerian newspapers: A content analysis of Punch and Guardian newspapers. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 10(1), 1-17.

Nwanegbo, C. J., & Obiyan, M. O. (2019). Domestic violence in Nigeria: A content analysis of three Nigerian newspapers. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 29(2), 81-99.

- Ojebode, A. (2018). Representations of Gender in Nigerian Newspapers: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 10(2), 157-175.
- Oko-Epelle, L. & Omowale, A. (2022). Portrayal of gender in Select Nigerian mainstream Newspapers. Vol. 4. 198.
- Olorunnisola, A. A. (2019). Gender stereotyping in Nigerian television commercials: A Content Analysis. *Gender & Behaviour*, 17(3), 13505-13520.
- Endong, F. P. C. & Obonganwan, E. E. (2015). Media misrepresentation of the Nigerian woman as a product of the society. *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 3(1), 101-106.
- Owolabi, T. O. (2017). Gender role attitudes among university students in Southwest Nigeria: The influence of gender, religion and ethnicity. *Gender & Behaviour*, 15(1), 8635-864.