

Ontological Analysis of Gender Disparity Factors in Nigerian Sports Journalism



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Abstract

The rise of female engagement in sports journalism in Nigeria represents a significant paradigm change. Despite the industry's expansion, these female sports journalists continue struggling to compete for roles and recognition in sports journalism within the Nigerian media landscape. To that end, this study looked into the factors that contribute to gender disparities in Nigerian sports journalism, as well as strategies for overcoming these obstacles and encouraging more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria. The study is based on the Glass Ceiling theory. The survey research method was used, and the target population was sports journalists working for six (6) purposefully selected specialist sports media organisations in Nigeria that provide twenty-four (24) hours of all-around sports content distribution. Using the total enumeration sampling technique (census study), the questionnaire was utilised to collect data from 246 purposively sampled respondents who were physically administered the instrument. All administered copies of the questionnaire were properly filled out, and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods (IBM Statistical Product and Service Solution, version 22). The study discovered that several factors contribute to the difficulties faced by female sports journalists, resulting in gender inequality and under-representation of women in sports journalism in Nigeria. These factors, however, are not only related to inequality but also to women's skill and lack of interest in the field of sports journalism in Nigeria, as well as other societal concerns that contribute to this gender imbalance. Furthermore, the study concluded that to encourage more women to practice sports journalism in Nigeria, Nigerian culture should promote gender-responsive inclusion in sports journalism rather than relying on stereotyped gender roles. Ambitious ladies interested in sports

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journalism in Nigeria may be more likely to follow this profession if they see their peers covering a variety of issues in various areas of sports journalism. The study recommends that sports media companies in Nigeria ensure that their female sports journalists are given equal job tasks as their male colleagues and that women in Nigeria should develop an interest in sports and media coverage of sports.

Keywords: *Sports journalism, Female sports journalists, Gender disparities, Gender role*

Introduction

Even though sports journalism has grown internationally, Nigerian women journalists continue to fight for respect and a place in the field. Studies by Suleiman, Aondover, & Maiwada (2023), Antunovic and Doczi (2023), Ogwuche & Olaseinde (2020), Petty and Pope (2019), Adebayo et al. (2019), Ogwuche et al. (2018), Agbo (2015), Schmidt (2015), Jurkowitz et al. (2013), Nielsen (2013), Ogugua (2013), and Gregory (2010) suggest that there is gender inequality and imbalance among those who work in sports journalism. This implies that a small number of female sports journalists are still vying for professional recognition and a position alongside their male competitors. Additionally, the increasing popularity of sports has benefitted just a small number of those who work in the media creation of sports programs, particularly women. Only a select few women in sports journalism have profited from the increased popularity of sports (Ogwuche, 2023; Keshkar *et al.*, 2019; and Ogwuche, Salua & Jimoh, 2018).

A review of related literature also reveals a paucity of studies that have attempted to examine the factors contributing to gender disparity as it relates to women in sports journalism in Nigeria and the solutions to these problems to encourage more women to pursue careers in the profession in Nigeria (Otufodunrin, 2020; Ogwuche *et al.*, 2018; Ogugua, 2013; Osinuga & Ogbonna, 2015; Adebayo, Falase & Akintunde, 2019; Schmidt, 2015). To this end, this is the gap this study filled.

Research Questions

Given the identified problem, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the factors that contribute to gender disparity in Nigerian sports journalism?
2. How can more females or women be encouraged to pursue careers in the profession of sports journalism in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Osazee-Odia and Nwokoro (2020) found that the argument regarding men and women as two distinct individuals was a recurring theme based on the postulates of the gender role theory. These gender roles reflect the expectations of individual performance as journalists in media organizations. Their study, "A Situational Analysis of Gender Inequality in Journalism Practice in Nigeria," was published in the journal *Situational Analysis*. Both male and female journalists have varied capacities regarding their standing and journalistic responsibilities, claim Osazee-Odia and Nwokoro (2020). More studies have demonstrated the discrepancy between gender and the media. This disparity shows that men and women are not equally represented in journalism. Dominance, non-parity, discrimination, underrepresentation, and segregation are all used to describe inequality while analyzing gender issues in journalism studies.

The patterns of gender disparity in journalism involvement and practice have been researched by academics and researchers such as Padovani, Raeymaeckers, & De Vuys

(2018), FordFoundation (2019), Osazee-Odia & Nwokoro (2021), Media Monitoring Africa by Radu & Chekera (2014), North, (2014), Ogwuche (2023), and Mustafa (2017). The works of North (2009), which analyzed the gender-journalism dichotomy using two different concepts, should also be highlighted to support the concerns about gender inequality in the media. Vertical segregation of gender, which entails differential advancement in the same work despite having identical qualities, is the first of these, according to Osazee-Odia & Nwokoro (2021). It also means that the journalism careers of media organizations will advance along different stratification trajectories for men and women.

A similar article by Marcotte (2013) titled "Gender Inequality in Public Media Newsrooms" explains the presence of a gender split in which the percentage discrepancies between men and women in public media reveal the dominance of women. The percentage of female to male personnel in the public radio media was 38 percent (women) and 62 percent (men). In comparison, the percentage in the public television media was 44 percent (women) and 56 percent (men), according to Marcotte (2013).

Only 27% of the top media management roles were held by women, according to the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) (2011). Men held 73% of these jobs. Regarding the correspondent position, men occupied 64% of the jobs, while women occupied 36%. The 2019 Women Media Centre report also provides the most recent evidence of a lack of diversity or parity in journalism and other gender-related media professions. The study reveals deplorable representations of women in American media. The International Women's Media Foundation (2011: p. 15) states that.

The media in the 21st century is in a state of great disruption. However, despite all the changes, one thing remains the same: women's roles are significantly smaller than those of men in every part of news, entertainment, digital media, and sports journalism. North (2014) contrasts the vertical isolation of women in journalism practice with these differences in gender roles in the media. Additionally, McQuail (2005) asserts that the disparate representation of women in media journalism evaluates women differently than males, as stated by Padovani *et al* (2018).

The second is the horizontal segmentation of journalism. According to this division, journalists engage in practices that have earned them the title "journalist" within the media industry and society. Thus, the connection between gender diversity and news functions justifies assessing journalism's function. In public radio news, there were 44 percent of women and 56 percent of men, whereas, in public television news, there were 35 percent of women and 65 percent of men. Since there is media disparity in journalism practice, the author gives these examples (Osazee-Odia & Nwokoro, 2021).

More information about the connections between inequality and journalistic practice may be found in the 2017 Women Centre Reports on American media. The study identifies gender disparities in how various media cover news. In newspaper news stories, men are given by-lines in 62% of cases, while women are given by-lines in 38%. This favorable ratio for male journalists exemplifies the range of gender news coverage, with men featured more prominently on magazine and newspaper front pages than women. While males create cultural norms, they also have the power to change them.

According to Osazee-Odia and Nwokoro (2021), this gap in the literature has drawn the attention of media academics and researchers from other societies due to gender inequality. There is a tonne of data to suggest that women journalists in Kerala (India)

and Nigeria still need to catch up to their male colleagues. Women confront gender inequities in news production, and most news is reported from the perspective of men, claim Michael & Rajeev (2021). This viewpoint is supported by Osazee-Odia & Nwokoro (2021) and Nakacwa (2018). They say fewer women serve as correspondents for Nigeria's top media organizations.

Given the underrepresentation of women in the journalism profession and the lack of advancement of female journalists to the top management of journalism careers, as well as the studies of other researchers on the effect of the glass ceiling in journalism and career pros, Valsman (2011), Reuter.com (2018), and Azrak (2018) all agree that when considering the issue of gender inequality or gender imbalance, the effect of the glass ceiling is readily apparent.

To the typical Nigerian, studying mass communication at a Nigerian university is a female pursuit. This perception cannot be further from the truth, as the study of communication and media studies, or mass communication as it is commonly known in Nigeria, is dominated by women. In contrast, men dominate the actual practice of journalism in the media industry. This domination presents an absurdity regarding the career paths female journalism majors choose after graduation.

According to Chioma, Okere, Alao, Atakiti, and Jegede (2015), the majority of enrollees in journalism programmes in Nigerian colleges have been female since the discipline was established as a branch of mass communication studies in the 1960s. Studies such as Ekeli & Enobakhare (2013), and Smirnova (2013) have revealed that only a small percentage of these female pupils pursue journalism careers after graduation. Could this factor have contributed to a gender imbalance or gender inequality in Nigerian journalism? Because numbers also matter when seeking equality.

The prevalence of women in newsrooms and the chances and difficulties they encounter when pursuing a career in the media may be different outside of a Western context, though, such as in Nigeria and other developing countries. Notwithstanding legislation and an increase in women in key media jobs, males still predominate in newsrooms worldwide.

Analysing the literature on women in journalism reveals that each country has challenges that women journalists must overcome. In South Asia, for example, families' disapproval of a career in journalism and the challenge of safely getting home after a late-night shift were barriers, whereas, in Nigeria, cultural norms, religion, and societal expectations were barriers (Steyn & White-Jenson, 2011; Zuiderveld, 2017).

Five men work in journalism for every woman in Jordan due to the perception that the field is unsuited for women (Al-Najjar, 2013). Although women have recently been allowed to work as reporters and presenters, Middle Eastern research from 2004 found that few have managed to advance to senior positions in multinational media corporations despite particular challenges.

Zuiderveld (2017) cites Byerly (2013, p. 13), who comes to the following conclusion:

three factors, legislation, neoliberalism (economic factors) and values and cultural attitudes to gender equality in society, have an overall impact on the everyday experience of women journalists worldwide. These factors, for example, involve whether there is parental leave available for both parents and subsidized childcare, as well as whether norms and values of the society regard journalism as a profession that is suitable for women.

Except for a few Scandinavian and Eastern European countries, women remain underrepresented in senior editorial and management positions globally, according to Zuiderveld (2017), although routinely outnumbering men in media. Since feminist media research gained popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, it has gradually become apparent that editorial standards and media content vary in different countries and regions, one of the factors driving women's underrepresentation in newsrooms. Gender has been a key concern for media scholars and the general practice of journalism in Nigeria and other African nations where women struggle to compete or exist in the media landscape. In Nigeria, only some women work in sports media.

Despite international efforts to uncover and analyse the gender logic and concerns of journalism, as Zuiderveld (2017) noted, most research on women and journalism has been conducted in Western countries. Research on gender and democratic transformation in Africa is expanding due to modernization and democratization movements. Many works on female journalists in an African context are also included.

These studies all demonstrate a conflict between conventional gender roles and the profession of journalism. The difficulties and barriers that women encounter in the day-to-day practice of journalism are generally rooted in the subordination of women. Women journalists in Tanzania voiced complaints in 1993 about their working conditions, which seemed to be rooted in the entire culture.

Few women worked in sports journalism and journalism in general in many African countries in the 2000s. Few male respondents from Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Zambia who participated in Aida Opoku-Mensah's 2004 poll had experience working with a female editor. The conflict between conventional gender norms and a journalist's career seemed to prevail. Women journalists talked about working in challenging conditions. Since there were social expectations on how women should act when interacting with men, it was easy for men to keep their positions of authority in the media since women appeared hesitant and soft. Opoku-Mensah concluded that a paradigm shift is necessary to achieve equal opportunities for women and men in African media, given that newsrooms are controlled by traditional gender norms usually present in African communities (Opoku-Mensah, 2004).

To comprehend the challenges and obstacles that women journalists face in an African context, feminist media researchers based in Africa have argued that there is a greater need for qualitative and comparative analysis of news production from a gender perspective in the global South (Opoku-Mensah, 2001; Gadzekpo, 2009; Bosch, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The Glass Ceiling theory was adopted as a theoretical foundation for this study. The theory was used to explain the difficulties faced by female sports journalists in breaking the barriers and factors created by male dominance in sports journalism in Nigeria, which negatively impacts the development and career growth of female sports journalists within the Nigerian media terrain.

Glass Ceiling Theory

Marilyn Loden proposed the glass ceiling idea back in 1978. The theory's core concept is that, despite playing an important part in today's workforce and breaking down barriers, many women continue to endure discrimination and are passed over for top jobs due to the "glass ceiling." This theory is pertinent to this study since few women in sports

journalism in Nigeria hold managerial roles, and they all face varied degrees of discrimination and inequality. According to Fritscher (2007), the glass ceiling is an unseen barrier that prevents women from reaching the highest echelons of a company. It also explains the pervasive opposition to minorities and women's attempts to climb to executive positions. Working women face unique career hurdles while attempting to move to top-level management roles and achieve equal treatment. The glass ceiling effect, or theory, is to blame here.

According to Firdausia *et al.* (2020), gender discrimination prohibits female employees from being promoted to higher positions, regardless of their abilities and accomplishments. The role of women in management and the glass ceiling at work have received increased attention in light of global concerns and trends among working women (Wesarat & Mathew, 2017; Rishani *et al.*, 2015). Numerous studies (Jackson, 2001; Tracey, 2006; Veale & Gold, 1998) show that women face vocational barriers, which might include both overt and covert constraints. Women have a harder time climbing the corporate ladder than men. Many countries have denied women equal work opportunities. Although economic, social, and cultural trends in the twenty-first century have increased women's participation in the media, the number of women in administrative and leadership roles remains relatively low, according to Imadolu *et al.*, (2020). The glass ceiling syndrome is a challenge for contemporary female employees in sports journalism in Nigeria, this is a barrier to any dividend provided by the profession of sports journalism to women in Nigeria.

The fact that glass ceiling syndrome does not appear to be a specific barrier for women and that it arises legitimately as a result of gender discrimination and inequality in the majority of civilisations makes identifying these barriers challenging, most especially in the profession of sports journalism in Nigeria. This theory is relevant to the study because the few women participating in sports journalism in the Nigerian media terrain encounter varying degrees of inequity and inequality, and none hold managerial positions in Nigeria's sports media environment.

Research Method

This study adopted the survey research method to increase the validity and reliability of the expected research findings. The total population considered for this study is two hundred and forty-six respondents (246). These numbers comprise all the sports journalists working in the six (6) selected media organizations for this study, making this research a census study. The population was drawn from three (3) sports broadcast media outlets and three (3) sports print media outlets.

The broadcast media houses include two television stations and one radio station, which comprise *SuperSport Nigeria* in Lagos State, and the *Nigerian Television Authority Sport 24 (NTA Sport24)*, which is located at the *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)* headquarters in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). NTA Sports handles only the sports segment of the *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)* headquarters in Abuja. The selected radio station is *Sports Radio 88.9 Brila FM* with its headquarters in Lagos State, Nigeria, and its two functional satellite stations located in Abuja and Onitsha, respectively. The three (3) selected sports print media outlets for this study include *Sporting Life* newspaper, *Complete Sports* newspaper, and *SportingSun* newspaper. All of them are based in Lagos State, Nigeria.

SuperSport Nigeria and *Sports Radio 88.9 Brila FM* are privately owned sports broadcasters in Nigeria, whilst the *Nigerian Television Authority Sport 24 (NTA Sport 24)* is a government-owned sports broadcaster. The selection process was intended to include both government and privately owned sports broadcasters. Furthermore, the selection of these stations was based on the fact that they are the only 24-hour sports broadcasters in Nigeria with a sizable audience.

However, out of a total of six print sports media outlets in Nigeria that exclusively cover and report on sports, the three print media outlets were chosen for this study utilising the raffle draw method or fishbowl sample approach. They also report on regional, national, and worldwide athletic events.

The total enumeration or census sampling technique, which involves using the population of the study as the sample size, was adopted for the survey. The questionnaire was used to collect data. The study achieved a 100% response rate in the administration and retrieval of the research instrument. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the research questions and meet the study's objectives. The compiled quantitative data were descriptively analyzed using IBM Statistical Product and Service Solution (IBM SPSS) version 22

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

A total of two hundred and forty-six (246) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. All administered copies of the questionnaire were duly filled, completed, and returned, producing a 100% response rate.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section discusses issues such as years of experience, types of sports media organizations, gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, role, nature of the job, and membership in a trade union organization by sports journalists.

Table 1 Gender of Respondents

Gender Distribution of Sample of the Study of the various selected media

Media Organization	Number of Selected Respondents	Males	Females
Broadcasts Media			
SuperSport	48	36	12
NTA Sport 24	37	28	9
Sports Radio 88.9 Brila FM	115	79	36
Print Media			
Sporting Life	16	13	3
Complete sport	12	12	0
SportingSun	18	14	4
Total	246	182	64

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of responders in each of the selected sports media organisations. The research found that 182 (74%) of sports journalists are men, while 64 (26%) are women. This data reveals that there are more male sports journalists in

Nigeria, with 79 (32%) now practicing sports journalism; the bulk of them work at Brila 88.9 FM. Furthermore, the findings in Table 1 further suggest that there are more males than females doing sports journalism in Nigeria, since men or male sports journalists tend to apply more for positions and jobs in sports journalism in Nigeria. Furthermore, this situation is due to the demands of working in specialised media houses, such as sports media outlets, which require people who can work around the clock and leave their families at any moment for work. As a result of the findings in Table 1, men are significantly preferred over women as sports journalists, but they are not superior to women.

Section B: Factors Contributing to Gender Inequality in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

With the excitement that sports coverage generates in the media, it is believed that Nigeria's sports media should also create a safe working environment for all employees and establish regulations to reduce gender inequality or gender disparities among employees. While attempts are underway to implement these, there are still challenges that perpetuate and contribute to the gender imbalance in Nigerian sports journalism. This section investigates respondents' levels of agreement or disagreement with the factors contributing to gender imbalance among Nigerian sports journalists. All of the factors in this section were rated using a Likert scale.

Table 2 Sexual Harassment is a Factor Contributing to Gender Inequality in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	28	11.4
Agree	15	6.1
Neither agree nor disagree	47	19.1
Strongly disagree	30	12.2
Disagree	126	51.2
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

Regarding the Likert scale rating "Sexual harassment", the data in Table 2 shows that out of the total respondents, 28 respondents, representing 11.4%, strongly agree that sexual harassment is a factor contributing to gender inequality in sports journalism in Nigeria, 15 respondents constituting 6.1% also agree, 47 respondents representing 19.1% neither agree nor disagree and 30 respondents representing 12.2% strongly disagree with the statement, while 126 (51.2%) respondents disagree that sexual harassment is a factor contributing to gender inequality in sports journalism in Nigeria. It can be argued that while sexual harassment of female sports journalists in Nigeria is an offense that must be addressed, it has not progressed to the point of being classified as gender discrimination. This is so because in Nigeria, not all victims of sexual harassment are denied equal rights in sports journalism.

Table 3: Gender Stereotype is a factor contributing to Gender Inequality in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	55	22.4
Agree	42	17.1
Neither agree nor disagree	102	41.5
Strongly disagree	11	4.4
Disagree	36	14.6
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 3 shows that 102 (41.5%) respondents neither agree nor disagree that gender stereotypes contribute to gender inequality in Nigerian sports journalism. Looking at Table 3 again, we see that 55 respondents, or 22.4%, strongly believe that gender stereotypes contribute to gender inequality in sports journalism, and 42 respondents, or 17.1%, agree. This results in a total of 97 respondents, 39.5% of whom agree that sexual harassment contributes to gender inequality in the profession, compared to only 11 respondents, 4.4% strongly disagree, and 36 respondents, 14.6% disagree.

Table 3's data indicate that gender stereotypes are a contributing factor to gender imbalance in Nigerian sports journalism. Sports media organisations must pay attention to sexism and sexual harassment, which exist in many newsrooms in Nigeria's media landscape and sports journalism profession, making it difficult and sometimes dangerous for female sports journalists to go about their daily work. Furthermore, the findings in Table 3 indicate that women and female sports journalists in Nigerian media suffer more pressure than men or male sports journalists to look and dress in a specific way, particularly when working in television sports journalism in Nigeria.

Table 4: Perception of Female Sports Journalists in Nigeria about Themselves is a factor contributing to Gender Inequality

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	178	72.4
Agree	25	10.2
Neither agree nor disagree	20	8.1
Strongly disagree	20	8.1
Disagree	03	1.2
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

According to the findings in Table 4, 178 respondents (72.4%) strongly agree that the self-perception of female sports journalists contributes to gender inequality in Nigerian sports journalism, while 25 respondents (10.2%) agree, 20 (8.1%) neither agree nor disagree with the statement, and 20 (8.1%) strongly disagree with the Likert scale statement, while only 3 (1.2%) disagree. This finding implies that female sports journalists will not be given job tasks or other sports journalism-related activities if they feel they are less capable than their male colleagues, and that if they show a lack of

enthusiasm for their work, it may result in gender inequality in how their peers view them.

Table 5: Gender Wage Gap is a factor contributing to Gender Inequality in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	37	15
Agree	14	5.7
Neither agree nor disagree	22	8.9
Strongly disagree	134	54.5
Disagree	39	15.9
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 5 demonstrates that the majority of respondents, totaling 134 (54.5%), strongly disagree that the gender wage gap is a problem in Nigerian sports journalism and are content with the salaries paid to all sports journalists. This finding shows that most respondents do not feel the gender wage gap contributes to gender inequality in Nigerian sports journalism, as most media outlets in Nigeria have salary scales for their personnel. Furthermore, Table 5 shows that 39 more respondents, or 15.9% of the total, disagree that the gender income difference leads to gender inequality in Nigerian sports journalism. In comparison, just 37 (15%) respondents strongly agreed that the gender salary difference leads to gender inequality in Nigerian sports media, with another 14 (5.7%) agreeing, leaving only 22 (8.9%) hesitant. Based on these findings, we can aver that sports journalists in Nigeria are not compensated based on gender.

Section C: Ways of Encouraging More Women to Pursue Careers in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

It has been established that there are few women practicing sports journalism in contemporary Nigeria, and findings from this study suggest that there should be more interest among women in pursuing professions in sports journalism. This section analyses whether respondents agree or disagree with ideas for encouraging more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria. The factors in this section were measured using a Likert scale.

Table 6: Allowing Female Sports Journalists in Nigeria to Cover More Stories on Female Athletes can encourage more Women to Pursue Careers in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	78	31.7
Agree	118	48.0
Neither agree nor disagree	22	8.9
Strongly disagree	16	6.5
Disagree	12	4.9
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

The rise of female engagement in sports journalism in Nigeria represents a significant paradigm change in the field. To encourage more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria, which is entirely dominated by men in contemporary practice, the results of the analyses in Table 6 reveal that the majority of respondents, constituting 118 (48%), agree that media houses in Nigeria should give more time and space to covering more sports stories about female athletes or other female sporting activities that are to be anchored (presented) and written by Nigerian females. As a result, ambitious female sports journalists may find it easier to relate to the field when they see their kind being allowed to cover such themes.

The factors in Table 6 were examined using a Likert scale, and respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "Media companies should offer more time and space to covering more stories on female athletes anchored or written by female sports journalists." Table 6 shows that 78 respondents (31.7%) strongly support the proposal. This finding yields a total of 196 respondents, or 79.7% of all respondents, who believe that media outlets can encourage more women to enter the profession of sports journalism in Nigeria by devoting more time and space to covering more stories about female athletes anchored or written by female sports journalists. Only 22 (8.9%) of respondents were undecided, with 16 (6.5%) strongly disagreeing with the statement and 12 (4.9%) disagreeing.

Table 7: Sports Journalism in Nigeria should not be dominated by Males if Women are to be encouraged to Pursue Careers in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	53	21.5
Agree	31	12.6
Neither agree nor disagree	65	26.4
Strongly disagree	08	3.3
Disagree	89	36.2
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

According to Table 7, 89 respondents (36.2%) disagree with the Likert scale statement that men should not dominate sports media, with eight respondents (3.3%) strongly disagreeing. In contrast, 53 respondents (21.5% of all respondents) strongly agree with Likert's assessment that men should not dominate sports journalism in Nigeria. In comparison, 31 respondents, or 12.6% of the total, support the assertion. Furthermore, Table 7 shows that 65 respondents (26.4% of total respondents) do not agree or disagree with the statement. This finding implies that the majority of respondents do not believe that sports journalism in Nigeria should be dominated by men to encourage more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria, as when men are over-represented in this field of journalism, female interest in the profession is weakened.

Table 8: Building More Specialised Sports Media Houses in Nigeria can encourage more Women to Pursue Careers in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	196	79.7
Agree	23	9.4
Neither agree nor disagree	00	00
Strongly disagree	22	8.9
Disagree	05	2.0
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 8 analyses how establishing more specialised media firms focused on sports journalism can encourage more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria. The variables were scored using a Likert scale. According to Table 8, 196 respondents (79.7%) highly agree, whereas 23 respondents (9.4%) believe that more specialised sports media companies should be developed in Nigeria to boost job prospects for women in sports journalism. This statement elicited no doubtful or indecisive responses (0%). Twenty-two respondents, or 8.9%, strongly disagree, whereas five (2.0%) people disagree. This implies that the majority of respondents believe that developing more sports media outlets in Nigeria will provide women with greater opportunity to pursue careers in sports journalism. This finding will also inspire female journalism students to pursue a profession in sports journalism after graduation.

Table 9: Stopping the pressure on female sports journalists by religious views, economical restraints, and the need to comply with traditional gender roles would allow more women to seek professions in sports journalism in Nigeria.

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	44	17.9
Agree	102	41.5
Neither agree nor disagree	35	14.2
Strongly disagree	14	5.7
Disagree	51	20.7
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 9 shows that 102 respondents (41.5%) agree with the statement, 44 respondents (17.9%) strongly agree, 51 respondents (20.7%) disagree, and 14 respondents, or 5.7%, strongly disagree. According to the analysis and presentation in Table 9, a significant proportion of respondents believe that if women are not pressured by religious beliefs, socioeconomic constraints, or the need to conform to traditional gender roles, they will be encouraged to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria. This finding suggests that Nigerian culture should promote gender-responsive inclusion in sports journalism rather than stereotyping gender roles.

Furthermore, the data in Table 9 indicate that the ability to work for one-self in settings of dignity, safety, and fairness is crucial to women's well-being in Nigerian sports journalism. Ensuring that women in Nigerian sports media have this right is an

important goal in and of itself. Finding work in a field such as sports journalism is significantly more difficult for women than for men all across the world, particularly in Nigeria. The prevalent opinion is that when women are employed, they work in silent, sometimes low-quality, and vulnerable settings, regardless of their ability, and there is little prospect for transformation soon when deprived of the societal variables described in Table 9 above.

Table 10: Teaching Sports Journalism in Higher Institutions in Nigeria can encourage more Women to Pursue Careers in Sports Journalism in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	76	30.9
Agree	133	54.1
Neither agree nor disagree	02	.8
Strongly disagree	21	8.5
Disagree	14	5.7
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

The findings in Table 10 show that the majority of respondents, 133 (54.1%), agree and believe that sports journalism should be taught in Nigerian higher education institutions to encourage more women to seek professions in sports journalism. Furthermore, 76 respondents, or 30.9% of all respondents, strongly agree with this Likert remark, while 2 (0.8%) respondents were undecided, 21 (8.5%) respondents strongly disagreed, and 14 (5.7%) respondents disagreed with the Likert.

Table 11: Awareness Campaigns can be used to combat Gender Inequality in Sports Journalism in Nigeria.

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	127	51.6
Agree	104	42.3
Neither agree nor disagree	15	6.1
Strongly disagree	00	00
Disagree	00	00
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 11 reveals that 104 respondents (42.1%) agree with the statement, "Gender inequality in sports journalism in Nigeria can be tackled and addressed through awareness campaigns among sports journalists," with 127 respondents (51.6%) strongly agreeing. According to the findings in Table 11, none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that gender imbalance in Nigerian sports media may be resolved through awareness activities among sports journalists. Meanwhile, only 15 (6.1%) respondents were undecided.

The results reveal that the majority of respondents agree with this viewpoint. The results of the analyses in Table 11 imply that the segregation and alienation faced by females in sports journalism in Nigeria can easily be tackled, curtailed, and addressed

through awareness campaigns among sports journalists, making the career path more appealing to females in sports journalism in Nigeria.'

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to investigate the factors that contribute to gender disparities in Nigerian sports journalism, as well as to propose strategies for encouraging more females to pursue professions in sports journalism in Nigeria. The study's findings were based on two research questions and achieved via quantitative analysis.

Research Question 1: What are the factors that contribute to gender disparity in Nigerian sports journalism?

According to the findings, despite attempts to provide a safe working environment and policies to minimise gender inequality in Nigeria's sports media, some variables continue to contribute to gender disparities among Nigerian sports journalists. Table 2 highlights the most common causes of gender imbalance among Nigerian sports journalists, including gender stereotypes and female sports journalists' perceptions of themselves. In contrast, Table 2 findings revealed that sexual harassment and gender salary disparities in sports journalism were not seen as key contributors to gender imbalance in Nigerian sports journalism. According to the results in Table 2, the majority of respondents (63.4%) disputed that sexual harassment is a significant contributor to gender inequality in Nigerian sports media, with 30 (12.2%) strongly disagreeing and 126 (51.2%) disagreeing. The findings indicate that, while sexual harassment is an issue that must be addressed in Nigerian media, no formal allegations of such have been published in the media houses sampled for this study. As a result, in the context of this study, it has not been identified as a factor contributing to gender imbalance, because it cannot be concluded that individuals sports journalists in Nigeria who have been sexually harassed in one way or the other irrespective of their gender, have been denied equal rights in Nigerian sports journalism. Furthermore, the perception of sexual harassment is subjective.

Furthermore, Table 3 shows that 102 respondents (41.5%) did not agree or dispute that gender stereotypes contribute to gender imbalance in Nigerian sports media. Fifty-five respondents (22.4%) strongly agree, while 42 respondents (17.1%) agree, for a total of 97 respondents (39.5%) feeling that gender stereotypes contribute to gender disparities in Nigeria's sports writing industry. Only 11 respondents (4.4%) strongly disagreed with this assertion, while 36 (14.6%) disagreed.

In Nigeria, gender stereotypes contribute to gender disparities in sports journalism, with 97 (39.5%) respondents agreeing and 102 (41.5%) disagreeing. This study reflects respondents' opinions that gender stereotypes lead to inequality in Nigerian sports journalism. The study's findings also suggest that gender stereotypes play a key role in gender imbalance in Nigerian sports journalism. Addressing sexism and sexual harassment in sports media companies, which are prevalent in many newsroom cultures across Nigeria's media landscape, is crucial. Gender bias in Nigeria's sports media makes it difficult and often dangerous for female sports journalists to do their duties. Female sports journalists in Nigerian media face more pressure than male sports journalists to meet specific standards, especially in televised sports journalism.

According to the findings in Table 4, the vast majority of respondents, 178 (72.4%), strongly believe that female sports journalists' perceptions of themselves contribute to

gender imbalance in Nigerian sports journalism. Another 25 people (10.2%) agreed with this statement. This research suggests that female journalists may be denied specific job assignments or other possibilities if they believe they are less skilled than their male counterparts.

Furthermore, Table 5 shows that 134 respondents (54.5%) firmly believe that the gender salary gap is not a serious issue in Nigerian sports journalism. The majority of respondents do not believe the gender wage gap adds to gender inequality in Nigerian sports journalism. Furthermore, 39 (15.9%) of respondents disagreed that the gender wage difference contributed to gender inequality in Nigerian sports journalism. Based on these facts, we may conclude that female sports journalists in Nigeria are not compensated differently from male journalists.

According to the replies obtained, several factors contribute to gender disparity and women's under-representation in Nigerian sports media. These causes are not only related to inequity but also to women's skills and lack of interest in the field, as well as other societal issues outside of sports journalism that contribute to the gender imbalance. This outcome is consistent with previous research by English (2016). To address sports journalism's ethical inadequacies, experts in the sector must work to counteract the frequently criticised unethical actions. According to English (2016), sports journalists must address the pervasive inadequacies that have harmed the profession's standards and eroded their credibility and status with media consumers and society as a whole for the benefit of society and women in sports journalism in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: How can women be encouraged to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria?

Few women practice sports journalism in Nigeria, and there is a lack of interest among women in pursuing careers in this field. In response to research question two, this section explores strategies for encouraging more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria.

The recent trend and evolution of women's participation in sports journalism in Nigeria mark a significant transition. To encourage more women to pursue careers in sports journalism in Nigeria, where men currently dominate, the findings in Table 6 show that 48% of respondents agree that media outlets in Nigeria should devote more time and space to covering sports stories about female athletes or other female sporting activities, which should be presented and written by Nigerian female sports journalists. These findings are congruent with those of Truşcă and Teodorescu (2023) in Romania, who discovered that at the social level, the media, particularly sports media, should place genuine emphasis on the concept of physical exercise among women. They should take a specific strategy to covering female sports, such as airing contests and featuring great athletes. These positions further support the findings of Puertas-Molero et al. (2019), who proposed that to attract a larger female audience and meet new demands in the digital age for gender representation in sports journalism globally, sports media organisations should adapt their competition calendars to broadcast female matches as main events involving women. As a result, aspiring female sports journalists in Nigeria may be more likely to pursue this career if they see their peers covering similar sports issues and sporting events.

According to Table 6, 196 (79.7%) of respondents believe that media outlets in Nigeria can inspire more women to pursue careers in sports journalism by allocating

more time and space to stories about female athletes written or presented by female sports journalists. Table 7 shows that 89 respondents (36.2%) disagree, and eight respondents (3.3%) strongly disagree with the proposition that men should not dominate sports journalism. On the other hand, 53 respondents (21.5%) highly agree, while 31 respondents (12.5%) believe that men should not dominate Nigerian sports journalism. Additionally, 65 respondents (26.4%) did not agree or disagree with the statement. This shows that the majority of respondents believe that men should not dominate sports journalism in Nigeria, which could inspire more women to pursue jobs in the sector.

Findings from Table 8 show that 196 respondents (79.7%) strongly agree, whereas 23 respondents (9.3%) believe that establishing more specialised sports media firms in Nigeria would boost women's career chances in sports journalism. This finding suggests that creating or building additional sports media organisations in Nigeria may provide opportunities for women to enter the industry. It is essential to ensure that women in sports journalism in Nigeria have the right to work in dignified, safe, and equitable conditions. This study demonstrates that finding employment in sports journalism could be more difficult for women, particularly in Nigeria, based on some societal factors.

According to the findings in Table 9, more women in Nigeria can be encouraged to pursue careers in sports journalism if they are not pressured by some societal factors which include religious beliefs, economic limitations, or traditional gender roles. This incentive could come from gender equality programmes. Specifically, 102 respondents (41.5%) strongly agree to this, whereas 51 respondents (20.7%) disagree. These findings highlight the need to remove cultural barriers to women's engagement in sports journalism in Nigeria. The findings suggest that Nigerian society foster gender-responsive inclusion in sports journalism rather than relying on traditional gender roles. This finding is consistent with the Council of Europe's (2020) recommendation to develop measures for analysing gender imbalance in sports journalism and monitoring changes over a set time. The findings further promote the adoption and implementation of national gender equality indicators in sports media, with participation from relevant stakeholders. The development and implementation of national gender equality measures in Nigeria may inspire more women to pursue professions in sports journalism.

Further findings in Table 10 reveal that the majority of respondents (54.1%) agree, with another 30.9% strongly agreeing, that sports journalism should be taught as a course of study in Nigerian higher education institutions to encourage more women to enter this sector. Sports journalism is crucial in Nigeria, and with a growing interest among females in sports and media coverage of sports, teaching sports journalism in Nigerian higher education institutions has the potential to significantly increase women's interest in sports journalism. Creating awareness campaigns can also help encourage women to pursue jobs in sports journalism.

Conclusion

Despite the reality that sports journalism in Nigeria is primarily male-dominated, the number of women in the industry has steadily increased over the years. Female sports journalists in Nigeria confront several career hurdles due to the field's male-dominated nature, which extends to administrative roles. It is vital to mention that women's lack of interest in the field in Nigeria adds to male dominance and perceived inequity in Nigerian sports journalism.

Furthermore, much more work needs to be done to solve the gender gap in Nigerian sports media. To fight preconceptions and societal norms that prevent women from working in sports journalism, it is important to promote female participation. Nigerian media outlets should devote more time and space to reporting on female athletes and sports activities, which should be presented and written by Nigerian female sports journalists. By doing so, women interested in sports journalism will find the job more relatable. Furthermore, sports journalism in Nigeria should be free of male supremacy in order to attract more women to pursue jobs in this industry.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Sports media organisations in Nigeria should provide equal career opportunities for female sports journalists and promote training on current trends and practices. These equal job tasks will allow them to compete effectively with their male counterparts while also contributing to the progress of sports journalism in Nigeria.
2. Women in Nigeria should develop interest in sports and media coverage of sports. This will help them understand sporting activities, and may inspire them to pursue careers in sports journalism.
3. The National University Commission (NUC) should develop a sports journalism curriculum and authorise universities to establish departments. This new curriculum would encourage more women to pursue professions in sports journalism while also contributing to the development of sports in Nigeria.

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