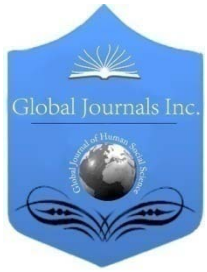
Volume 16 Issue 2
Originally issued as A1



Global Journal of human-social science: a
Arts & Humanities - Psychology
Volume 16 Issue 1 Version 1.0 Year 2016
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Gender Representation in the Editorial and Repotorial Staff of Newspapers in Nigeria

By Enwefah, Christopher
Redeemer's University, Nigeria

Abstract- The issue of gender misrepresentation and stereotyping still occupies center stage in social science discourse across cultures, though at varying degrees, and the mass media being strong tools for shaping government policies and public opinion have become an area of focus in this regard. The expectation is that a fair or balanced gender representation in the mass media is capable of addressing, perhaps to a large extent, the seemingly nagging issue of gender misrepresentation and stereotyping.

This is a content analysis study of four selected newspapers in Nigeria with a view to ascertain the ratio of male-female representation in editorial and reportorial capacities in newspaper journalism. The findings revealed that there is a huge male domination at both editorial and reportorial levels in the newspapers studied irrespective of the observed high number of female enrollments at mass communication and journalism schools in the country and across the world.

Keywords: gender representation, newspaper editor, newspaper reporter, journalism practice, media misrepresentation, media stereotyping, mass communication graduates.

GJHSS-A Classification : FOR Code: 170105



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2016. Enwefah, Christopher. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Gender Representation in the Editorial and Repotorial Staff of Newspapers in Nigeria

Enwefah, Christopher

Abstract- The issue of gender misrepresentation and stereotyping still occupies center stage in social science discourse across cultures, though at varying degrees, and the mass media being strong tools for shaping government policies and public opinion have become an area of focus in this regard. The expectation is that a fair or balanced gender representation in the mass media is capable of addressing, perhaps to a large extent, the seemingly nagging issue of gender misrepresentation and stereotyping.

This is a content analysis study of four selected newspapers in Nigeria with a view to ascertain the ratio of male-female representation in editorial and reportorial capacities in newspaper journalism. The findings revealed that there is a huge male domination at both editorial and reportorial levels in the newspapers studied irrespective of the observed high number of female enrollments at mass communication and journalism schools in the country and across the world. Consequently, the study suggested an empirical enquiry into the reasons for the yawning gap between the high number of female mass communication/ journalism graduates in the country and the number of female professional journalists, and also why the few who practice professional journalism do not advance to the top as their male counterparts do.

Keywords: gender representation, newspaper editor, newspaper reporter, journalism practice, media misrepresentation, media stereotyping, mass communication graduates.

I. Introduction

Journalism, which is the investigation and reporting of events, occurrences, issues, happenings, etc. in the society to a large audience, was the exclusive preserve of the men-folk at inception. And even as it became a profession, women were restricted by custom and law from access to journalism occupations, and faced significant discrimination within the profession until about the turn of the nineteenth century when women began to agitate for a right to work as professional journalists in North America and Europe.

The prescription of different roles for men and women by social norms, which sometimes throw up claims of primary and secondary roles, might have contributed significantly to the discrimination. Since most societies see men as breadwinners and providers for the family, they are assigned primary roles, while women are saddled with secondary roles of making babies and taking care of the home front. These roles determined to a large extent the kind of job men and women did, and to an extent, still do in the society.

In Africa and parts of the world where such traditional roles are so deeply rooted, the baby-making and home-making roles of women did not permit them to take up certain jobs or work outside the home. Journalism was one of such jobs and remained a man's job for years. The rigours associated with news collection and processing, working odd and unusually long hours, the many hazards of journalism, etc., probably did not help matters. Porter and Luxon (1935) as cited in Steiner (2007:14), saw newspaper work as '… so demanding that many women who can teach or do ordinary work cannot stand up under it. Its general tempo – with the deadline – fighting element always present – is such as to bar many women because of nervous temperament". Nevertheless, women had operated as newspaper owners, editors, reporters, sports analysts and journalists throughout the history of journalism.

Thus, across the world, there is high level agitation by women for not only greater inclusion and involvement at leadership and decision-making levels, but for a measure of balance in terms of male-female representation in virtually all facets of human endeavour. Although in recent years we have had a large number of women in the broadcast media all over the world serving in different capacities, but whether this scenario also features in the print media or not is the primary interest of this paper.

From the 1950s when only a handful of women ventured into and became active in Nigerian journalism, they were used more as women page editors till the 1960s. The practice changed in later years when they (women) began to assume different and more challenging roles as Features and Science Editors, even and Columnists. By the 1980s, there was an "unprecedented surge in the employment of women as journalists – reporters, subeditors, press photographers, women page editors and what have you" (Folarin, 1996).

Thus from the 1950s and the 1960s, women in Nigeria had launched an invasion into the areas of print and broadcast journalism, once regarded as men's preserves. The invasion reached a climax in the 1980s. They later launched associations such as the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) and Women In the Media (NIM) which in conjunction with the

Author: Department of Mass Communication, Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. e-mail: Chrisitetegbe@yahoo.com

© 2016 Global Journals Inc. (US)

National Council of Women Society (NCWS), have fought steadfastly to inculcate a public re-examination of the stereotyping of women in the media.

Going by the early efforts of women pioneer journalists in Nigeria to carve a niche for themselves and provide a platform for more women to embrace the profession and be accepted and respected by their male counterparts, a progressive rise in the numerical and leadership representation of women in the Nigerian print/broadcast media is expected if the goals for setting up the above named women associations is to be achieved.

II. Research Questions

The outcome of the loud unabated cry for equal, or at worse, 'fair' representation of women at decision-making levels in almost every sphere of life, especially in the field of mass media, needs to be examined. The media are very strong tools for shaping government policies and public opinions, and should require fair gender representation to help address such issues as gender misrepresentation and stereotyping. The major task of this study therefore, is to ascertain the male-female representation in the editorial and reportorial staff of newspapers in Nigeria. And to this end, the following questions are raised:

- Is there gender inequality in the editorial/reportorial staff of Nigerian newspapers?
- What is the proportion of male-to-female editors in Nigerian newspapers?
- What is the proportion of male-to-female reporters in Nigerian newspapers?
- What is the proportion of male-to-female columnists in Nigerian newspapers?

III. Literature Review/Germane Studies

Wolseley and Campbell (1943), in the widely used *Exploring Journalism*, explained that: "[Editors] are men and prefer to hire men. Moreover, many of them are convinced that journalism is a man's profession and that the woman who doesn't believe her place to be in the home should choose an occupation sheltered from the ugly realities that journalists encounter". Justifying editors' reluctance to hire women, Carl Warren (1951) posits: "A good many young women treat a job as a stopgap between school and marriage… whereas marriage and its economic responsibilities rivet a man more closely to his job. Some women who continue working after marriage often are absent because of illness at home, confinement periods or just for shopping" – Cited in Steiner, 2007:16).

Attempts at justifying the above notions about women's unfitness for journalism threw up the following conclusions by pre-world war II authors: Newsroom behavior was too crude for the feminine sensibility, or the work was too exacting. It had also been adduced that women lacked necessary knowledge and expertise, or male sources would not trust them. Furthermore, it was assumed that women were de-feminized by contact with men, or they wasted their training by marrying. And in addition, they had no sense of humour, or they did not take work seriously.

Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit (2003) observe that women are about one third of full time journalists at daily newspapers and are about the same percentage of women in all news media. The American Society of Newspaper Editors' (ASNE, 2005) figures show that in 2005, some two thirds, or 65.2% of newsroom supervisors were male, and 34.8% were female, only a shift improvement for women since 1999 (ASNE, 1999) – Nicholsin, 2007. Current statistics show that the percentage of women in daily newsrooms decreased slightly from 37.58% to 37.36%. This percentage has oscillated since 2001 when women made up 37.35% of newsroom professionals, about what they do now. (Media Report To Women, 2010). These statistics do not reflect Creedon & Cramer's (2007) finding which says women now constitute more than half of all college students and about 65% of all undergraduate student journalism and Mass Communication enrollments across the world.

In terms of positions held in newsrooms, APSE (2008) reports that men dominate: 64.8% of all supervisors are men. They are also 58.2% of all copy editors, 60.9% of reporters and 72.9% of photographers. APSE further reports that sports journalist jobs are overwhelmingly white and male in the U.S. And that women constitute a mere 6% of sports editors, 10% of assistant sports editors, 6% of columnists, 9% of reporters, and 16% of copy editors/designers. Bylines in the nation's top intellectual and political magazines are heavily male according to the result of an analysis by the *Columbia Journalism Review*, July-August 2005, of magazines published between October 2003 and May 2005. The analysis reveals that male-to-female byline ratios range from 13-1 at the *National Review* to 7-1 at *Harper's* and *The Weekly Standard* to 2-1 at the *Columbia Journalism Review*. According to the Women in Media Facts Sheet (2010), various studies of author bylines in political and general interest magazines reveal that the ratio of men to women writers is consistently disproportionate, with the men-to-women ratio ranging from 2-1 to as high as 13-1.

Women are most often found at the lower end of newspaper employment and in middle management (Hemlinger & Linton, 2002), and they have serious difficulty moving from managing editor to higher positions (Anold et al., 2003. Bilikisu Yusuf (1991) argues that although women have made a showing in journalism, they remain absent in the most effective positions of power in the establishment, which has

© 2016 Global Journals Inc. (US)

ensured a prolonged male dominated mass media that is unsympathetic to the women's cause.

Men and women have differing perceptions of the reasons for the lack of advancement of women in newspapers. Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of newspaper companies said women had not been in management pipeline long enough to reach the top and that it takes two decades for women to gain experience necessary to be a CEO (Hemlinger & Linton, 2002)-cited in Nicholsin, 2007:38). But women say the main reason they do not advance is that men prefer to promote other men who think and act like they do. They say women are excluded from formal and informal social networks (Hemlinger & Linton, 2002) – Nicholsin, 2007. Meanwhile, men say women need to be more decisive and assertive (Arnold et al., 2003) - Nicholsin, 2007.

However, women in recent years became editorial page editors of major newspapers, including the *New York Times*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and the *Boston Globe*. But those successes were blunted by the lack of female voices represented overall on op-ed pages. The percentage of female op-ed columnists for largest syndicates is 24.4%, a .7% increase from 23.7% in 1999 (Astor, 2005).

Patrisia Gonzales, a Universal Press Syndicate Columnist, said "Men make most of the decisions about who's hired as columnist or who's accepted as having "authority" to write. There are untold numbers of women and people of colour whose ideas are cutting edge and "out of the box", unfortunately, they rarely make it into the commentary pages on a regular basis (Astor, 2005) Nicholson, 2007. Carole Rich (2005) – in Steiner, 2007, claims that women are doing well in newsrooms and that in 2000, they (women) made up 25% of broadcast news directors and only 9% of newspaper management.

IV. Relevant Theory

The study was built on the assumptions of the Role theory. Role theory exposes the nuances surrounding issues of gender, especially as they pertain to gender discrimination, inequality and perhaps stereotyping. According to Shiman off (2009), "Gender role theory is grounded in the supposition that individuals socially identified as male and female tend to occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave." As a consequence therefore, individuals tend to tailor their behavior in conformity to socially and culturally prescribed roles by living up to the norms that accompany their roles. According to Eagly, Wood, and Diekman (2000), cited in Harrison and Lynch, Social role theory posits that behavioural sex differences spring from the different social roles inhabited by women and men, especially those concerning the division of labour. Thus men are assigned to labour tasks that are consistent with masculinity; jobs that require speed, strength, and ability to be away from home for expanded period of time, while women play the roles of mother, wife, and homemakers – Harrison and Lynch, 2005.

V. Methodology

The research questions were answered using the content analysis research method to examine the editorial and reportorial staff of some selected national newspapers. Newspaper staffs were categorized into two – editorial and reportorial for the purpose of coding. Editorial staff was coded under male and female categories according to their names as they appeared on the newspaper pages, while reportorial staff was coded also under male and female categories depending on the names in the bylines. However, in order to drastically reduce the degree of error resulting from coding only the bylines, attempts were made to get the lists of editorial and reportorial staff of the media originations being studied, but none gave.

Four newspapers were purposively sampled using the dual criteria of spread and span of newspapers. A national newspaper is expected to have more staff strength than a regional one. This provides a wider spectrum for judging gender representation. Older newspapers may be more conservative in their employment patterns while more recent ones may be more liberal in terms of men-to-women composition. To this end, the following newspapers: *The Guardian*, and *The Vanguard* (older papers), *The Nation*, and *NEXT* newspapers to represent the new, were selected. Staff of each selected newspaper was coded seven days of the week (Monday through Sunday) in order to capture, to a large extent, all the reportorial and editorial staff of the newspapers.

VI. Findings and Results

The study threw up the following results which are presented and analyzed in four tables:

Table 1 : Male-to-Female proportion of newsroom staff in Nigerian newspapers

Newspapers	Newsroom Staff		Total
	Male	Female	
The Guardian	124 (78%)	35 (22%)	159 (n=100%)
The Vanguard	140 (83%)	28 (17%)	168 (n=100%)
The Nation	77 (75%)	25 (25%)	102 (n=100%)
NEXT	107 (79%)	28 (21%)	135 (n=100%)
Total	448 (79%)	116 (21%)	564 (N=100%)

© 2016 Global Journals Inc. (US)

Table 1 above shows that 79% of all newsroom staff in the newspaper organizations studied are men, while 21%, less than two third of newsroom personnel, are women. All four newspapers have at least 75% male newsroom staff composition as against a female newsroom staff composition not exceeding 25%.

Table 2 : Men-to-Women proportion of editorial Staff in Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Editorial Staff		Total
	Male	Female	
The Guardian	8 (100%)	-	8 (n=100%)
The Vanguard	7 (87%)	1 (13%)	8 (n=100%)
The Nation	17 (100%)	-	17 (n=100%)
NEXT	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (n=100%)
Total	40 (93%)	3 (7%)	43 (N=100%)

Table 2 above shows a 93% male editorial staff composition in the newspapers studied, while women represent only 7%. *The Guardian* and *The Nation* newspapers have 100% male representation at the editorial level.

Table 3 : Men-to-Women proportion of reportorial Staff in Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Reportorial Staff		Total
	Male	Female	
The Guardian	115 (78%)	33 (22%)	148 (n=100%)
The Vanguard	117 (84%)	22 (16%)	139 (n=100%)
The Nation	53 (69%)	24 (31%)	77 (n=100%)
NEXT	76 (81%)	18 (19%)	94 (n=100%)
Total	361 (79%)	97 (21%)	458 (N=100%)

Table 3 shows male domination of the reportorial staff in the papers studied with 79% male reporters, and less than one quarter (21%) of the reporters being women.

Table 4 : Men-to-Women proportion of Columnists in Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Columnists		Total
	Male	Female	
The Guardian	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	3 (n=100%)
The Vanguard	16 (76%)	5 (24%)	21 (n=100%)
The Nation	7 (87%)	1 (13%)	8 (n=100%)
NEXT	23 (74%)	8 (26%)	31 (n=100%)
Total	47 (75%)	16 (25%)	63 (N=100%)

In table 4 above, 75% of all the Columnists in the papers, that is three quarter, are men, while 25% are women with only *The Guardian* having more female (67%) than male (33%) columnists.

VII. Conclusions

The study raised four questions in order to examine gender representation in the editorial and reportorial staff of Nigerian newspapers. The findings revealed a huge male domination of the editorial cum reportorial units of newspapers in Nigeria, which failed to mirror and justify the high number of female enrollments at mass communication and journalism schools across the world as thrown up by Creedon & Cramer's (2007) study. Rather it tries to corroborate the position of Carl Warren (1951) that many young women treat a job as a stopgap between school and marriage. The result also affirms the 2005 and 2008 findings of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASPE) which says men constitute some two third of newsroom supervisors.

All the newspapers studied, irrespective of number of years on the newsstands, showed about the same gender composition at all levels. This therefore opens a new vista for further enquiry as to what happens to the women after graduation from journalism and mass communication schools, and why the few who find their way into professional journalism do not advance to the top just as the men do. The findings of such enquiries would go a long way in addressing the issues of gender inequality and stereotyping in the media.

Recently published news industry research has stressed the importance of gender diversity and diversity broadly to the success of newspaper companies. The companies in the best position to draw new readers and increase circulation are the ones which tend to have greater diversity in race and/or gender, both in the workforce generally and in positions of influence (Readership Institute, 2004) – cited in Nicholson, 2007. Research findings suggest that diversity in those companies may help to ensure that news content is

© 2016 Global Journals Inc. (US)

more relevant to readers and that companies have more innovative and adaptive cultures. Meanwhile a number of other studies have tied the success of U.S. corporations to having a diverse workforce… (Lockword, 2005) – cited in Nicholsin, 2007.

References Références Referencias

1. Creedon, P.J. & Cramer, J. (eds.) (2007) *Women in Mass Communication*, 3rd ed. London: Sage Publications, Inc.
2. En.wikipedia.org (2010) *"In the work place",* http://-www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/gender_inequality. Retrieved 11/08/2010.
3. En.Wikibooks (2009) "*Sociological theory/role theory*", http://www.en.wikibooks.org/wiki/sociological_theory/role_theory. Retrieved 28/07/2015.
4. Folarin, A. B. (1997) *"Issues in the Nigerian Mass Media History".* Unpublished Work, Delta State University, Abraka.
5. Harrison L. A. and Lynch A. B. (2005) "*Social Role Theory and the Perceived Gender Role Orientation of Athletes".* www.link.springer.com. Retrieved 13/10/2015.
6. Mediareporttowomen.com (2010*) "Women pursuing media careers",* http://www.mediareporttowomen.-com/statistics.htm. Retrieved 11/08/2010.
7. Mediareporttowomen.com (2010) *"Women's portrayal on television entertainment",* http://www.mediareporttowomen.com/statistics.htm. Retrieved 11/08/2010.
8. Nicholson, J.O. (2007) *"Women in Newspaper Journalism (Since the 1990s)",* London: Sage Publications, Inc. Pg. 41.
9. Now.org (2010) *"Women in media facts sheet",* http://www.now.org/issues/media/women_in_media_facts.html. Retrieved 11/08/2010.
10. Shimanoff S. B. (2009) *"Gender Role Theory"* www.sagepub.com. Retrieved 13/10/2015.
11. Steiner, L. (2007) *"Sexed and Gendered Bodies in Journalism Textbooks",* in Creedon, P. J. & Cramer, J. (eds.) *Women in Mass Communication*, 3rd ed. London: Sage Publications Inc. pp. 15 & 16.
12. Yusuf, B. (1991) *"Mass Media, Women and Politics",* in Chizea, D.O. & Njoku, J. (eds.) *Nigerian Women and the challenges of our time*. Lagos; Malthouse Press Ltd.

© 2016 Global Journals Inc. (US)

This page is intentionally left blank

© 2016 Global Journals Inc. (US)