

1 Gender Representation in the Editorial and Repotorial Staff of 2 Newspapers in Nigeria

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6

7 **Abstract**

8 The issue of gender misrepresentation and stereotyping still occupies center stage in social
9 science discourse across cultures, though at varying degrees, and the mass media being strong
10 tools for shaping government policies and public opinion have become an area of focus in this
11 regard. The expectation is that a fair or balanced gender representation in the mass media is
12 capable of addressing, perhaps to a large extent, the seemingly nagging issue of gender
13 misrepresentation and stereotyping. This is a content analysis study of four selected
14 newspapers in Nigeria with a view to ascertain the ratio of male-female representation in
15 editorial and reportorial capacities in newspaper journalism. The findings revealed that there
16 is a huge male domination at both editorial and reportorial levels in the newspapers studied
17 irrespective of the observed high number of female enrollments at mass communication and
18 journalism schools in the country and across the world. Consequently, the study suggested an
19 empirical enquiry into the reasons for the yawning gap between the high number of female
20 mass communication/ journalism graduates in the country and the number of female
21 professional journalists, and also why the few who practice professional journalism do not
22 advance to the top as their male counterparts do.

23

24 **Index terms**— gender representation, newspaper editor, newspaper reporter, journalism practice, media
25 misrepresentation, media stereotyping, mass communication grad

26 **1 GenderRepresentationintheEditorialandRepotorialStaffofNewspapersin**

27 **2 Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:**

28 Abstract-The issue of gender misrepresentation and stereotyping still occupies center stage in social science
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31 fair or balanced gender representation in the mass media is capable of addressing, perhaps to a large extent, the
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34 reportorial capacities in newspaper journalism. The findings revealed that there is a huge male domination at
35 both editorial and reportorial levels in the newspapers studied irrespective of the observed high number of female
36 enrollments at mass communication and journalism schools in the country and across the world.

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

5 LITERATURE REVIEW/GERMANE STUDIES

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

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

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

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

66 Thus from the 1950s and the 1960s, women in Nigeria had launched an invasion into the areas of print and
67 broadcast journalism, once regarded as men's preserves. The invasion reached a climax in the 1980s. They later
68 launched associations such as the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) and Women In the Media
69 (NIM) which in conjunction with the J National Council of Women Society (NCWS), have fought steadfastly to
70 inculcate a public re-examination of the stereotyping of women in the media.

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

75 3 II.

76 4 Research Questions

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

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

87 III.

88 5 Literature Review/Germane Studies

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

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

102 Weaver In terms of positions held in newsrooms, APSE (2008) reports that men dominate: 64.8% of all
103 supervisors are men. They are also 58.2% of all copy editors, 60.9% of reporters and 72.9% of photographers.
104 APSE further reports that sports journalist jobs are overwhelmingly white and male in the U.S. And that women
105 constitute a mere 6% of sports editors, 10% of assistant sports editors, 6% of columnists, 9% of reporters, and
106 16% of copy editors/designers. Bylines in the nation's top intellectual and political magazines are heavily male
107 according to the result of an analysis by the Columbia Journalism Review, July-August 2005, of magazines
108 published between October 2003 and May 2005. The analysis reveals that male-to-female byline ratios range
109 from 13-1 at the National Review to 7-1 at Harper's and The Weekly Standard to 2-1 at the Columbia Journalism
110 Review. According to the Women in Media Facts Sheet (2010), various studies of author bylines in political and
111 general interest magazines reveal that the ratio of men to women writers is consistently disproportionate, with
112 the men-to-women ratio ranging from 2-1 to as high as 13-1.

113 Women are most often found at the lower end of newspaper employment and in middle management (Hemlinger
114 & Linton, 2002), and they have serious difficulty moving from managing editor to higher positions ??Anold et al.,
115 2003 ?? Bilikisu Yusuf (1991) argues that although women have made a showing in journalism, they remain absent
116 in the most effective positions of power in the establishment, which has ensured a prolonged male dominated
117 mass media that is unsympathetic to the women's cause.

118 Men and women have differing perceptions of the reasons for the lack of advancement of women in newspapers.
119 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of newspaper companies said women had not been in management pipeline long
120 enough to reach the top and that it takes two decades for women to gain experience necessary to be a CEO
121 (Hemlinger & Linton, 2002)-cited in Nicholsin, 2007:38). But women say the main reason they do not advance is
122 that men prefer to promote other men who think and act like they do. They say women are excluded from formal
123 and informal social networks However, women in recent years became editorial page editors of major newspapers,
124 including the New York Times, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and the Boston Globe. But those successes
125 were blunted by the lack of female voices represented overall on op-ed pages. The percentage of female op-ed
126 columnists for largest syndicates is 24.4%, a .7% increase from 23.7% in 1999 ??Astor, 2005).

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

133 IV.

134 **6 Relevant Theory**

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

146 V.

147 **7 Methodology**

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

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

162 8 VI.

163 9 Findings and Results

164 The study threw up the following results which are presented and analyzed in four tables: Volume XVI Issue I
165 Version I 19 (A)

166 Table 1 above shows that 79% of all newsroom staff in the newspaper organizations studied are men, while
167 21%, less than two third of newsroom personnel, are women. All four newspapers have at least 75% male
168 newsroom staff composition as against a female newsroom staff composition not exceeding 25%. Table 3 shows
169 male domination of the reportorial staff in the papers studied with 79% male reporters, and less than one quarter
170 (21%) of the reporters being women. In table 4 above, 75% of all the Columnists in the papers, that is three
171 quarter, are men, while 25% are women with only The Guardian having more female (67%) than male (33%)
172 columnists.

173 10 VII.

174 11 Conclusions

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

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

187 Recently published news industry research has stressed the importance of gender diversity and diversity broadly
188 to the success of newspaper companies. The companies in the best position to draw new readers and increase
189 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 ¹



Figure 1:

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 Communication enrollments across the world.

student journalists Mass

Figure 2:

1

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%)

Figure 3: Table 1 :

2

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%)

Figure 4: Table 2 :

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.

Figure 5: Table 2

11 CONCLUSIONS

3

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%)

Figure 6: Table 3 :

4

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%)

Figure 7: Table 4 :

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190 more relevant to readers and that companies have more innovative and adaptive cultures. Meanwhile a number
191 of other studies have tied the success of U.S. corporations to having a diverse workforce? (Lockword, 2005) -cited
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