Media Representation of Nigerian Women in the News: Evidence from Selected Newspapers

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine newspaper representations of women. To do so, the researchers examined four newspapers that were nationally circulated. The four newspapers examined were *Vanguard*, the *Punch*, *The Guardian,* and *ThisDay*. The duration of the study was three years (January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2017). The study sought to achieve three objectives and tested two null hypotheses. The design that was utilized to conduct the study was content analysis while data were collected through the use of a code sheet. In the analysis of the collected data, the researcher deployed simple percentages to describe and explain the outcome while a Chi-Square test of independence was used to test the hypotheses. The result showed that the volume of representation of stories related to women was poor. Additionally, the prominence of newspaper representation of women was less. The researcher recommends, among others, that journalists should improve representation of women.

Keywords: News, Newspaper, Nigeria, Gender representation

Introduction

The amount of research on gender and media in Africa has been predominantly on women's representation, participation, audience reception, and so on. Globally, studies have been carried out on women's representation in the media such as Johannessen's (2006) research which focused on how gender is constructed in newspapers and local television dramas in Tanzania. The media in Tanzania at that time increased coverage of sensational stories of women as victims of gender violence, sexual abuse, and presented women as gold diggers, among other things. This is capable of hindering women from active participation in society and development.

In a study by Meyer (2003) on Pentecostal film culture in Ghana, for instance, it was observed that in an effort to appeal to their audience of women, many of whom actively practice a Pentecostal brand of Christianity, Ghanaian filmmakers usually try to make films that suit their taste. Such films, therefore, celebrate the loving mother and housewife.

However, despite the world conferences held in Beijing in 1995, Nigerian women are marginalized in the news content of newspapers. When they are given some sort of identity, it is usually in a negative light. Agreeing with this assertion, Ukozor (2004) observes that women are never key players in media issues, women are excluded and marginalized and that the news media exclude women's voices or portray them as objects who do not have opinions or only fit for

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437

advertising models. Kari (2020) and Ogbbone (2020) and Gever (2020), however, note that women are important stakeholders in the development of a nation. Other scholars (Asogwa *et al.*, 2020, Okoro & Gever 2018; Nwabuzor & Gever 2014) hold a similar view.

The way women are represented in the media is of critical concern to media research because of the power the media holds to shape public views through its representation mechanisms. There is a consensus among researchers (e.g. Allan, 2004; Burke &Mazzarella, 2008) that the quality of news media representations helps to shape public perceptions about the world as well as those regarding gender. Gadzekpo (2011) recalled that interest in how gender is represented in African media had been renewed since the democratic transitions in the 1990s across the continent and has brought liberalization of the media. According to Gadzekpo, re-democratisation in Africa set in motion an unprecedented expansion in mass media—print, radio, broadcast, film, Internet, and mobile telephony. There is, however, the thinking that media representation of women reflects the patriarchal structure of the African society. Kumari and Joshi (2015) affirm that the content of media reflects the pattern of value in any society. Davtyan-Gevorgyan (2016) corroborates that one of the reasons for discriminatory images of women in media is the fact that media products, as a rule, are created by men, in men's tastes, and for men. Bignell (2004) avers that research looking at televised content also asks the question of who the producer of the message is. This question has opened many debates in the field of gender studies in which the main cause of women's marginalisation and negative representation in the media is believed to be the result of men being the producers of the messages or women producing messages using patriarchal frameworks.

Asiyanbola (2005) says that patriarchal has been defined as a system of men's authority which oppresses women through its social, political, and economic institutions, and that feminists have argued that in any of the historical forms that patriarchal society takes, whether it is feudal, capitalist, or socialist, a sex-gender system and a system of economic discrimination operate simultaneously. Asiyanbola further asserts: 'the establishment and practice of male dominance over women and children is a historic process formed by men and women, with the patriarchal family serving as a basic unit of organisation (p.3).' Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015) regrets that patriarchy has been deeply rooted in Nigerian culture, so much so that even children demonstrate patriarchal tendencies. Ezenwa-Ohaeto further maintains that patriarchy is accepted and widely practiced in Nigeria; its tenets have remained unprinted but have been actively governing people's lives in Nigeria over decades. These tenets which have overtly and covertly negatively impacted women, and indirectly men, have also impacted the socio-economic and political advancement of Nigerian society in general. Azodo and Eke (2007) hold that in traditional African societies, like Nigeria, a woman's place is seen to be in the home space, where she is limited to domestic functions and the bearing and rearing of children, while the man roams the wild looking for adventure in work and war (p. 3). Man is seen as the leader and head of the society, while the woman cares for and nurtures the family and the home. Dogo (2014) opines that from the time a child is born in the Nigerian society, he or she is cast in the role ascribed to the sexes by society. The children are therefore brought up in the awareness of societal gender roles and grow up to fulfill them. Such patriarchal structures are likely to reflect in news content.

Objectives of the Study
The general objective of this study was to determine newspaper representation of Nigerian women in the news. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the volume of news stories about women published by the selected newspapers.
2. To find out the prominence given to news stories on women by the selected newspapers.
3. To ascertain the values that manifest in newspaper representations of women.

Research Hypotheses
This study tested the following hypotheses:

Ho1: Story type does not significantly predict newspaper volume of representation of women in the news.
Ho2: There is no significant relationship between news story type and the prominence of women in the news.

Literature Review
The Newspaper
Newspapers are largely regarded as sources of information to the general public. For centuries, newspapers have delivered news to the reading public, informing them of important events of the day. According to Abcteach (2008), a newspaper is a publication that is issued daily or weekly and includes local and international news stories, advertisements, announcements, opinions, cartoons, sports news, and television listings. It is an important method of making the public aware of everything that is happening in their local area and around the world. Abcteach adds that even with the advancements in computer technology, newspapers continue to be an important aspect of everyday life. It is important to know the sections of the newspaper and what information each one contains. The front page has the most important stories of the day. Each story has its own "headline" and a "by-line" with the name of the reporter who wrote the story. Every newspaper story must answer the following 5W's and H questions: Who is the story about? What is the story about? Where does the story take place? When does the story take place? Why is this happening? (This is not always possible to answer) How this story happened.

Although every news story cannot fit into a formula, there is a certain structure that is fairly common of all news stories (Abcteach, 2008): 1. The first paragraph gives the answers to the most important of the 5 W's and H. The second paragraph tells the rest of the 5 W's if they were not included in the lead. 2. The rest of the paragraphs elaborate on the information given in the opening and gives more information and details. 3. Background information is included if it is giving new information to a story that had been printed previously in the newspaper. Sometimes it gives information which is necessary to understand the story. 4. A quotation or a statement about the news story is often included in order to explain the importance of the story. 5. Details are provided about the story and are organized into paragraphs. Each paragraph provides one aspect of the story and the details are arranged in order of importance (Abcteach, 2008)

News as a Media Genre
News is one of the important media genres; according to Fuller (2017), "News is a report of what a news organization has recently learned about matters of some significance or interest to the specific community that news organization serves" (p. 6). Given the specific examples provided in Fuller's book, such as a vote in Congress on free trade and a deadly fire in the Bronx,

this definition, as with many others, seems to have the traditional "straight news" in mind rather than features or analytical news stories. Following Fuller's logic, if straight news is found to have dramatically decreased to a point that it is much less than half of the stories on the front page, this should require redefining news itself. Many scholars' definition of hard news is nearly identical to Fuller's characterization of the news, such as that in Tuchman (2016), Patterson (2000), and Shoemaker and Cohen (2006), in that they use the time dimension—urgency of dissemination—for the definition. That is, the importance of the time dimension is a criterion to distinguish news.

News is written for the purpose of communication and as a way of disseminating information to a large group of people. In order to be successful in their trade, news writers and editors are always mindful of the use of language, the medium through which the news is reported. Perhaps this is because communication between people (whether through the written medium or spoken medium) is not the only function of the language code; 'Language and other codes, most importantly language, have a cognitive role; they provide an organized mental representation for our experience' (Fowler 2007). Fowler (2007) again, while assessing the importance of language in the news, says news is a representation of the world in language because language is a semiotic code; it imposes a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented, and so, inevitably, news—like every discourse—constructively patterns that of which it speaks. News is a representation in this sense of construction; it is not a value-free reflection of facts (Fowler 2007: 4). Fowler (2007) concludes that each particular form of linguistic expression in a text—wording, syntactic option, etc.—has its reasons.

Newspapers and Women's Participation

Women can participate in newspaper at different levels such levels as readers, news sources, news writers, columnists, and cartoonists, among others. Newspapers have roles to play in the realization of the outcome of the Beijing conference of 1995. It was an international conference on women held between the 4th and 15th of September 1995 in Beijing, China with the sole aim of enhancing the welfare of women. Item 44 of the declaration states, "to this end, Governments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, are called upon to take strategic action in the following critical areas of concern."

The Beijing conference is a follow-up to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of the United Nations which was adopted on the 18th of December 1979 and entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981. Article 2 of the convention writes: "States parties condemn discrimination against women in all forms, and agree to pursue by appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating discrimination." The important point to note here is that the level of women's participation in newspapering in Nigeria has a close link with the Beijing declaration. A documentation of the achievements of women in Nigerian newspaper give an insight into the understanding of the vital role women can play in various spheres if given the opportunity.

Representation in the Media and Public Perception

The way the media in Nigeria represent women is likely to have a corresponding impact on public perception concerning gender mainstreaming. This is largely so because information is key when it comes to human perception and behaviour (Ale, 2020; Melugbo&Jemisenia 2020). Perception is the interpretation of messages.It is the meaning attached to what our sensory organs are exposed to. Perception is the first step in social cognition. It is the process of interpreting the

messages of our senses to provide order and meaning to the environment. Perception helps sort out and organize the complex and varied input received by our senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. The key word in this definition is interpreting. People frequently base their actions on the interpretation of reality that their perceptual system provides them with rather than on reality itself (Alan & Gray 2011). According to Alan and Gary (2011), there are three components to perception as follows: the perceiver, the target, and the situation.

The perceiver is the person who becomes aware of something and comes to a final understanding. There are 3 factors that can influence his or her perceptions: experience, motivational state, and emotional state. In different motivational or emotional states, the perceiver will react to or perceive something in different ways. Also, in different situations, he or she might employ a "perceptual defense" where they tend to "see what they want to see" (Alan & Gray 2011).

On the other hand, the target is the person who is being perceived or judged; "Ambiguity or lack of information about a target leads to a greater need for interpretation and addition." The situation also greatly influences perceptions because different situations may call for additional information about the target. The situation is based on the assumption that every instance of perception occurs in some situational context, and this context can affect what one perceives. The most important effect that the situation can have is to add information about the target, but the perception of the target changes with the situation (Alan & Gray 2011).

Media representation refers to the varying and evolving ways in which the media depicts or portrays both men and women in their contents (Huda & Ali 2015). In print media, the common ways of portraying gender are through written words and pictures. Therefore, the choice of words, manner of representation, location of stories, and choice of pictures and illustrations, among others, determine how to analyze print media portrayals of gender. Tazeen (2005) cited in Zia (2007) states "there is a patronizing tone in every printed feature, communicating a feeling of inferiority in women." Tazeen considers the image representation of women in media as weak, childish, dependent, gullible, irrational, and scheming. Regardless of their education and aims, their role in the society is that of a housewife who lacks intellect.

A global study conducted by the Global Monitoring Project (2010) revealed that only 24% of the people heard or read about in print, radio, and television news were found to be women. In contrast, 76% (more than 3 out of 4) of the people in the news were men. This indicates a significant improvement from 1995 when a study by the same Global Monitoring Project revealed that only 17% of the people in the news were women. However, despite a slow, but overall steady increase in women's presence in the news over the years, the world depicted in the news remains dominated by men. The result further showed that the proportion of women news subjects identified as workers or professionals over time have risen in some occupational categories.

However, the gap remains high especially in the professions as depicted in the news. Further, out of 25 occupational categories, women outnumbered men in only 2: news subjects presented as homemakers (72%), and those presented as students (54%). The picture seen through the news becomes one of a world where women are virtually invisible as active participants in work outside the home. As persons interviewed or heard in the news, the study reveals that women remain lodged in the 'ordinary' people categories, while men continue to dominate in the 'expert' categories. Women are inching closer to parity as people providing popular opinion in the news, at 44% of persons interviewed in the news in this capacity compared to 34% in 2005, revealed by the Global Monitoring Project study. The improvement notwithstanding, only 19% of spokespersons and 20% of experts were found to be women while 81% of spokespersons and 80% of experts in the news were men. 18% of women news subjects were found to be portrayed as

441

victims in comparison to 8% of men subjects. In contrast, women are now twice as likely to be portrayed as survivors than men. While the gap between the percentage of women and the percentage of men depicted as victims remains large, it has been narrowing gradually since 1995. Remarkably, in 2010, 6% of women in contrast to 3% of men were reported to have been portrayed as survivors. This is a reversal of the situation in 2005 (by the same GMP) when 4% of women compared to 8% of men were portrayed as survivors. For stories reported on television, radio, and newspapers, the percentage of those by women reporters was found to be exactly similar to that documented by the same GMP in 2005, which is 37%. The percentage of stories by women reporters across all three mediums combined rose until 2005.

The statistics for radio are noteworthy for the sharp rise between 2000 and 2005 (from 27% to 45% of stories reported by women), followed by a dramatic 8 percent point drop 5 years later. The negative change on radio between 2005 and 2010 accounts for the stagnation in the overall average statistic found in 2010 (GMP 2010). The result of the Global Monitoring Project further showed that 52% of stories on television and 45% of those on radio were presented by women. The average total number of stories on television and radio presented by women was found to be 49%, less than half of the total number of stories on both media combined, a 4-percent point drop since 2005 and lower than in 1995 when the statistic was 51%. Since the year 2000, the percentage of stories reported by women compared to those reported by men was found in the 2010 study to have increased in all major topics except 'science/health.' Nonetheless, stories by male reporters were found to continue to exceed those by female reporters in all topics. The changes range from 3 to 11 percentage points, the highest increase being in stories on 'celebrity/arts'. Men report 67% of stories on politics/government, 65% of stories on crime/violence, and 60% of stories on the economy.

The percentage of stories on science/health reported by women was found to have declined sharply between 2000 and 2005 from 46% to 38%, a decline that was followed by an increase to 44% in 2010 that nevertheless has not been sufficient to bring the proportion back up to the level noted over a decade ago. Stories by women reporters were reported to contain more women news subjects than stories by men reporters. This trend has persisted over the past 10 years. In 2000, 24% of news subjects in stories by women reporters were found by GMP to be women, in contrast to only 18% in stories by men reporters. As at 2010 study, the statistics was reported at 28% and 22% respectively.

The United Nations Population Fund (2009) cited in Edwards (2010) says that equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents; share responsibility for the home and children, and are completely free from coercion, intimidation, and gender-based violence both at work and at home. When this is lacking, it is called gender inequality. Edwards (2010) notes that gender inequality is measured using a wide array of indicators and proxy indicators. These are generally from an 'opportunities' or 'outcomes' perspective, and some key areas of measurement are health, education, employment, representation, and legal rights. In fact, the gender indices used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank are typically comprised of differences in life expectancy and education levels such as enrolments and democratic representation such as the proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women.

As part of efforts to promote gender equality, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Ministry of 'Women Affairs,' developed a National Gender Policy document. The aims of the

442

document are: commitment to gender mainstreaming as a development approach and tools for achieving the economic reform agenda; evidence based planning; value re-orientation and social transformation; recognition of gender issues as central to and critical to the achievement of national development goals and objectives, and a requirement for all policies to be reviewed to reflect gender implications and strategies as contained in the gender policy and implementation modalities specified in the National Gender Strategic Framework; realization that effective and results-focused policy implementation demands a cooperative interaction of all stakeholders; and promotion and protection of human rights, social justice, and equity (National Gender Policy, 2006, p.33). With the understanding of the quest by Nigeria to discourage all forms of gender inequality in line with international treaties, the positive representation of women in the news could be a way by which the media could support this goal.

Theoretical Framework

This study found expression on two theories: agenda setting theory and social construction theory. Agenda setting theory is attributed to Walter Lippmann in his 1922 classic, *Public Opinion*, which opened with a chapter captioned "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads" (Lippmann 1922, p.29). Lippmann says that the agenda of issues or other objects presented by the news media influence what the pictures in our heads are about. The theory was proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. McCombs and Shaw in a study popularly called *Chapel Hill* reported that the editors, in choosing and displaying news, pictures, etc., play an important role in shaping public reality. Two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting:

1. The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it.
2. Media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues in accordance with how the media present them.

Social Construction theory was suggested by Gergen in 1985. It is a framework of knowledge of sociology and communication that investigates the understanding of the world. Social constructionism may be defined as a perspective which believes that a great deal of human life exists as it does due to social and interpersonal influences (Gergen, 1985, p. 265). The theory hypothesizes that all other aspects of humanity are created, maintained, and destroyed in our interactions with others through time. This suggests that the media, especially newspapers, have the capacity to construct reality about women through their news stories. Galbin (2014) says that through social construction, the social practices of all life begin, are recreated in the present, and eventually end. For psychotherapy, this view emphasizes the importance of the acquisition, creation, and change of emotional behavior, therapeutic ability, and ways of interpreting things and people. Because the genetic material of each race and region is different, as well as the cultural practice, then we say right from the start that there is no universal human nature.

What social constructionism shows to be important are the ways in which socialization and enculturation, amongst the people we have known, plus the current influence of those whom we now know, are the most active in shaping our mutual existence with others (Owen, 1995, p. 161). Social constructionism argues that true objectivity is absent in the human sciences because all methods require one set of subjective humans to rate another set of subjective humans. So, "the tool for knowing" is inevitably subjective people themselves. As regards the community of human

443

scientists, until a truth-claim is acceptably demonstrated to be a universal or local truth, then it must be held separate and used only with caution. However, many human scientists throw caution to the wind and put their belief and life force into provisional claims which are not shared by the whole community of workers. Social construction talk is all the rage, but what does it mean and what is its point? The core idea seems clear enough. To say of something that it is socially constructed is to emphasize its dependence on contingent aspects of our social selves. It is to say: This thing could not have existed had we not built it, and we need not have built it at all, at least not in its present form. Had we been a different kind of society, had we had different needs, values, or interests, we might well have built a different kind of thing, or built this one differently (Boghossian, 2001). Therefore, newspapers stories could construct images of women through the manner of representation in such stories. Such a construction may not necessarily be true of women, but a subjective view of such newspapers. Such social constructs in the media could be achieved through the utilization of words, pictures, or illustrations. Agenda setting and social construction theories were regarded as important because they offer information regarded as the role of the media in constructing issues related to women. For example, within the context of the current study, the media have a potential to construct women in a negative or positive light.

Methodology

We utilized a combination of content analysis and textual analysis to ascertain how they represent women in the news by assessing four selected newspapers. It was decided that content analysis was better because it helped the researcher to examine newspaper contents on the subject matter. Textual analysis was used to augment the content analysis by textual analyzing some stories on women. The four newspapers are *Vanguard*, the *Punch*, *The Guardian,* and *ThisDay*. These newspapers were selected based on the 2016 newspapers web ranking which ranked these newspapers as the top four in Nigeria. The study covered three years: from January 2015 ro December 2017. The duration was selected to determine the changing trend in the representation of women in the newspapers in the last three consecutive years. The researcher used constructed week to sample the newspaper issues. This was based on the result of Stempel (1952) who first reported that twelve issues from two constructed weeks could effectively predict a year. The researcher made constructed weeks technique (composite weeks) to select the sample editions. To implement the constructed week technique, the researcher stratified the 12 months period of study into four subgroups of three months each. The groups were labelled as groups A, B, C, and D. Group A was made up of January, February, and March. Group B was made up of April, May, and June. Group C was made up of July, August, and September while group D was made up of October, November, and December. One month was selected from each of the groups. To get a sampling fraction, the number of editions to be studied (144) was divided by the number of months (12) in a year. This means that 36 editions were studied per newspaper for the three years and 144 overall. Thus, 36 edition dates (days) were randomly selected from the constructed weeks, and the same dates were studied across the four newspapers to make analyses across the papers. This led to a total of 144 editions. The table below shows the implementation of the constructed week:

444

Table 1: Constructed Week for the Selected Newspaper Editions

	2015	2016	2017
January	10th 15th 27th	3rd 11th 27th	14th 22nd 30th
April	2nd 7th 30th	13th 18th 29th	4th 17th 26th
July	3rd 17th 26th	18th 22nd 29th	10th 19th 28th
October	13th 18th 27th	1st 7th 22nd	11th 22nd 30th
December	13th 22nd 31st	12th 20th 31st	1st 10th 28th

The unit of analysis for this study was news stories from the four newspapers selected. The following were measured in the study:

Volume of Representation
The following were used:
Full page: Stories about women that occupied a full page without any other story.
Half page: Stories about women that occupied only half of the page.
Quarter page: Stories that are just quarter of the page.

Prominence
This was measured using the following:
Front page: News stories about women that are located on the front page.
Back page: News stories about women that are located at the back of the newspaper.
Inside page: News stories about women that are located inside the pages of the newspaper.
Centre spread: News stories about women that occupy the centre spread.

News Values that Manifest in Newspaper Representation of Women.
The following news values were used for the study:
Oddity: News items that focused on unusual events.
Scandal: News items that focused on bad events.
Timeliness: News items that focused on current issues.
Conflict: News items that paid attention to conflict situations.
Tragedy: News event that paid attention to sad events and disasters
Celebrity: News items that focused on famous people.
Human interest: News items that focused on human interest.

The instrument for data collection for this study was the code sheet. The code sheet was developed by the researcher for the purpose of the study. The code sheet was in two sections. The first section contained information on instructions to the coders on how to code the data. The second section contained the actual code sheet with columns. The validity of the instrument was ascertained through the supervisor who examined it to ascertain its relevance. Also, two lecturers from the Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka ascertained the validity of the code sheet in line with the research objectives. The researcher determined the reliability of the study with the use of two coders who were randomly selected to do the coding. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005) suggested that a random selection of content samples for inter-coder reliability testing is appropriate. Wimmer and Dominick (2013) recommended that between 10-25% of the body of content should be tested. Therefore, the inter-coder reliability for this study

was carried out by randomly selecting 10% of the news items using Holsti's formula (cited in Wimmer& Dominick, 2006), as shown below:

$$R = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

Where:

M - The number of coding decisions which two coders agree.

N1 & N2 - The number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively. The calculation yielded inter-coder reliability of 0.85, an indication of high reliability.

The analysis of data for this study was done with the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Therefore, the researcher used simple percentage, mean, and standard deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-Square test of independence was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The analyzed data were then presented in tables and charts.

Results

The result of the study is presented in the tables below:

Table 2: Newspaper Volume of Stories about Women

			Volume			
			Full page	Half page	Quarter page	Total
Newspaper	*Vanguard*	Count	21	41	16	78
		% of Total	6.6%	12.9%	5.0%	24.6%
	Punch	Count	15	46	21	82
		% of Total	4.7%	14.5%	6.6%	25.9%
	The Guardian	Count	14	72	17	103
		% of Total	4.4%	22.7%	5.4%	32.5%
	ThisDay	Count	28	13	13	54
		% of Total	8.8%	4.1%	4.1%	17.0%
Total		Count	78	172	67	317
		% of Total	24.6%	54.3%	21.1%	100.0%

The results from Table 2 above revealed that most of the newspaper news items about women were on the half page. News items about women were hardly on the full page.

Table 3: News Values about Newspaper Stories on Women

			News value							
			Oddity	*Scandal*	*Timeliness*	*Conflict*	*Tragedy*	*Celebrity*	*Human interest*	Total
Newspaper	*Vanguard*	Count	6	7	7	4	14	9	31	78
		% of Total	1.9%	2.2%	2.2%	1.3%	4.4%	2.8%	9.8%	24.6%
	Punch	Count	55	6	6	5	4	4	2	82
		% of Total	17.4%	1.9%	1.9%	1.6%	1.3%	1.3%	.6%	25.9%
	The Guardian	Count	27	14	8	6	5	6	37	103
		% of Total	8.5%	4.4%	2.5%	1.9%	1.6%	1.9%	11.7%	32.5%
	ThisDay	Count	34	4	4	3	3	3	3	54
		% of Total	10.7%	1.3%	1.3%	.9%	.9%	.9%	.9%	17.0%
Total		Count	122	31	25	18	26	22	73	317
		% of Total	38.5%	9.8%	7.9%	5.7%	8.2%	6.9%	23.0%	100.0%

Table 3 above sought to ascertain news values that manifest in newspaper news items about women. The result revealed the dominance of oddity as a news value and human interest in that order.

Table 4: Prominence of News Items about Women

			Prominence				
			Front	Back	Inside	Centre spread	Total
Newspaper	*Vanguard*	Count	11	12	49	6	78
		% of Total	3.5%	3.8%	15.5%	1.9%	24.6%
	Punch	Count	9	13	39	21	82
		% of Total	2.8%	4.1%	12.3%	6.6%	25.9%
	The Guardian	Count	12	27	43	21	103
		% of Total	3.8%	8.5%	13.6%	6.6%	32.5%
	ThisDay	Count	14	9	26	5	54
		% of Total	4.4%	2.8%	8.2%	1.6%	17.0%
Total		Count	46	61	157	53	317
		% of Total	14.5%	19.2%	49.5%	16.7%	100.0%

The result from Table 4 above revealed that newspaper news items about women were largely placed on the inside pages. This indicates low prominence about news stories regarding women.

Test of Hypotheses
The following Hypotheses were tested in this study:

Table 5: Chi-SquareTest Analysis of the Relationship between Story Type and Volume of Representation

Grouping	X^{2cal}	Df	Critical value	Decision
Story type	328.066	14	3.841	Sig
Volume of representation				

The result from the table above revealed that the calculated X^2 value (328.066) is greater than the critical value (3.841) at 14 degree of freedom (DF) and 0.05 confidence level. The first null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the researcher concludes that there is a significant statistical relationship between story type and volume of newspaper representation of women.

Table 6: Chi-SquareTest Analysis of the Relationship between Story Type and Prominence of Representation

Grouping	X^{2cal}	Df	Critical value	Decision
Story type Prominence representation	4.190	21	3.841	Sig

The result from the table above revealed that the calculated X^2 value (4.190) is greater than the critical value (3.841) at 21 degree of freedom (DF) and 0.05 confidence level. The second null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the researcher concludes that there is a significant statistical relationship between story type and prominence of newspaper representation of women.

Discussion of Findings
This study examined newspaper representations of women. Consequently, three objectives were formulated to provide direction for the study. The objectives were converted to research questions. Also, a total of two null hypotheses were tested in the study. It was also found that there is lack of volume on issues concerning women and less prominence was also given to women issues. The most prominent news value that manifested in newspaper news items concerning women was oddity. In other words, most of the news items were more interested in odd issues concerning women than other values like human interest and timeliness, among others. This result was similar to that of previous scholars (Brodolini, Giomi, Sansonetti & Tota, 2013; Mansoor 2013; Glavinic, 2010; MartinezSheperd, 2006).

The result of the null hypothesis testing also showed that there was a significant relationship between the story type and other variables like volume of representation, (p<0.05) and prominence of representation, (p<0.05). For example, *The Guardian* newspaper carried a story on its front page with the headline: 'EFCC recovers N6.5b in cash, properties.' In the story, attention was paid to the former minister of Petroleum, Alison Madueke, who was represented as corrupt, but in the same edition, positive stories about women were placed on the inside. One of such stories is that of the Managing Director of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Mrs. Ibim Semenitari, who was honoured for her good works. It was also noticed that apart from such a positive story placed inside the newspaper, it was on the quarter page, whereas that of Maduke was on a full page.

Another example is a story from *Punch* news where president Buhari was talking about ending recession. The story represented women as though they are the only people who are negatively affected by economic recession. Another example is a front-page banner headline by *Vanguard* newspaper which reads: 'For many months, I didn't know my husband had died -Lady Aguiyi Ironsy.' In that story, the wife of the late military leader was represented as helpless and unable to take care of her own self and the family in the absence of the husband. Overall, positive stories about women were not only few, but received less volume, poor prominence, and negative tone.

These results have theoretical implications. Concerning the agenda setting theory, the results suggest how newspapers highlight mostly the negative aspects of stories concerning women. The results also suggest that mechanisms of agenda setting like frequency and prominence are not observed in newspaper representations of women. The result equally has implications on the constructionist theory by providing perspectives on the type of social construction that manifests in newspaper news items on women.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Based on the result of this study, the researcher concludes that the volume of news stories about women published by the selected newspapers is low as most of the stories are on quarter pages. In addition, it is the conclusion of the current study that there is low prominence given to news stories on women by the selected newspapers. Finally, the researchers conclude that the news values that manifest in newspaper representation of news stories about women also reinforced the traditional gender roles in Nigeria. The researchers recommend the following:

1. Newspapers in Nigeria should improve their coverage of women by allocating more space to stories related to women issues.
2. There is the need for newspapers in Nigeria to give more prominence to issues related to women by placing such stories on the front pages of newspapers.
3. Newspapers in Nigeria should avoid presenting women in manners that encourage the existing patriarchal system in Nigeria.
4. Further studies should examine both TV and radio representation of women in the news. Such studies should also make a comparison between men and women.

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451

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