



Residents' Perception On The Role Of Mass Media Play In Promoting Gender Equality In Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

Onwuemene Irene Ogadinma

**Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku,
Delta State, Nigeria
09037288974**

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the perception of residents on the role of mass media play in promoting gender equality in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. Three research questions and three hypotheses were adopted for the study. The study adopted a survey research design. The target population of the study was 206,600 estimated residents from the three major towns of Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. Taro Yamene's formula was used to derive 399 respondents that served as sample of the study. However, 256 (64.16%) out of 399 copies of the questionnaires were filled correctly. Data were collected from respondents using structured questionnaire and analysed using frequencies, percentages and mean. T-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses. The result revealed that residents percept that media do not provide adequate attention female candidates for election, relegate women to supporting roles in politics and leadership, media report less of female politicians to maintain societal tradition. Even women who compete for and then win the top job are vulnerable to the media's personalizing proclivities. Mass media in the area of study promoted human rights of women. Media promoted gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance among women folks. However, it was noted that TV and radio did not initiate series on educational initiative that raises awareness about violence against women. The study recommended among others that government through the Gender Ministry should develop a deliberate policy aimed at making media institutions more gender sensitive in their programming especially in politics and human right.

Keywords: Gender equality, mass media, human rights

INTRODUCTION

The representation of women in the media in Nigeria has been the center of attention of much research in media studies. These investigations have focused on how women are seen by those who set the media agenda in Nigeria. The issue is borne out of the subordination of women by those who control mass media in Nigeria. Despite the worry, Nigerian women had contributed enormously to what is known as the family unit as they specialized in maintaining their households, rearing children and emotionally supporting their respective husbands. In spite of the hardship and degree of poverty that continue to ravage the country; women continue to contribute to the economy, educational, social, cultural, and political development of the country. The media hegemony continue to dominate the media establishment as men maintain their dominance and assert their control on the industry, thus creating an atmosphere of total dominance of the profession and continue to set 'limits and the extent' to which women are involved in the decision making process.

In general, women seem to be portrayed negatively in Nigeria media. One school of thought blamed the lack of representation in Nigeria media. The other argues that the misrepresentation of women is due to men dominating media echelon with no appreciation for women's role in the sustainable development of

media. However, there have been agenda that targets the improvement of women's careers in the industry have produced positive results in a number of settings. According to Amina (2012), the increasingly global and commercial structures of media institutions do not sit easily with the adoption of gender-sensitive measures. Omenugha (2011) indicts the Nigerian media on their politics of exclusion, noting that the Nigeria media is guilty of stereotyping and is caught in this web of discordant culture that continues to exclude women. She contends that leaders in the media industry continue to give women little voice, demean them through various forms of stereotypes, and increases their vulnerability, all of which now contributes to trapping women in the vicious circle of poverty.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly assigns a role to the media: section 21 directs that the media “shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people”. Sawant (2010) observe that “the mass media reach the largest section of the society directly or through secondary readership and viewership, regularly, constantly almost every hour of the day, and also intimately”. Apart from the twenty four hours news bulletins of the electronic media like television and radio, even newspapers are published at different hours of the day. With the advances in communication technology, the news can be collected from any part of the world.

The mass media in this regard serve to assist in the constant promotion of gender equality and empowerment by planning and mounting sustainable enlightenment campaigns for general awareness about the potential leadership quality of women and their role in sustainable development in developing countries. It is only the media that can serve to set the agenda towards the enforcement of gender equality and empowerment in all spheres for public debate, discussion, awareness, participation and help to mobilize the people. Mowlana (2014) seems to corroborate this when he stated that the mass media must provide a voice to the dissenter and the downtrodden freedom of speech, of the press, and of information, are vital for the realization of human rights.

Gender balance is obviously one of the most controversial issues in the public domain. The equal treatment of people, irrespective of gender, has for long been an issue of concern. It is the thinking of many, especially human rights activists, that people should be treated equally. It has been observed by the researcher that each time the issue of gender balance is raised in areas of Oshimili South LGA, people quickly swing the pendulum towards women while frowning at media portrayal of women. While that may not be entirely wrong, it is important to add that cases abound where men’s cruelty to women is trivialised, by either being under reported by the media or not reported at all.

The responses of the people of Oshimili may be dicey about the report of gender issues especially as some think that the culture of the people sees nothing wrong in the lopsided reported of the media. On the other hand, some persons seem to agree with the perception of the global world on gender equality. This implies that the perception of the people is not clear on the matter. It is against this justification; the study seeks to strengthen this problem by assessing the perception of residents on the role of mass media play in promoting gender equality in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess residents’ perception on the role of mass media play in promoting gender equality in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. The specific objectives are the following:

1. To examine residents’ perception on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics
2. To examine residents’ perception on role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights
3. To examine residents’ perception on role of media in promoting gender equality in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are residents’ perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics?
2. What are residents’ perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of human rights?

3. What are residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights

HO₃: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

METHODOLOGY

Area of the Study

Oshimili South Local Government Area is one of the twenty-five Local Government Areas making up Delta state. It is situated in the Niger Delta Region/the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. It has an area of 268 km² and an estimated population of 206,600 as at the 2016. Major towns include: Asaba, Oko and Okwe

Research Design

The research work adopted a survey research design. The method is appropriate for the study since a questionnaire was used in the collection of data for data that already exist.

Sources of Data

Primary source of data was used for the study. Questionnaire was used to elicit response from the subjects

Population of the Study

The population of the study is 206,600 estimated residents from the three major towns (Okwe, Asaba and Oko) that make up Oshimili South LGA. This is according to 2006 population census figure.

3.5 Sample Size

Taro Yamane's formula was used to derive three hundred ninety-nine (399) respondents used as sample for the study.

Taro Yamane's formula: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

Where: n= sample size required

N= number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

$$n = \frac{206600}{1 + 206600(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{206600}{517.5}$$

$$= 399.22$$

Aprox= 399 respondents

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study was able to select the 399 respondents using the three major towns that make Oshimili LGA known as Okwe, Asaba and Oko. For the purpose of this research work, the researcher made use of the purposive sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling method in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based on a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.

Method of data collection and validation of instrument

Structured questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. Three experts from Department of mass communication, Delta State University, Abraka were requested to review the questionnaire items to: determine the accuracy; relevance; clarity and total coverage of the content; determine the appropriateness of the instruction to the respondents; and evaluate the suitability and adequacy of the questionnaire in line with research variables.

Reliability of Data

The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha and the split-half technique. Trial testing of the instrument was carried out by using 20 residents from Oshimili North Local

Government. This population is different from the sample of the study. A coefficient value of 0.82 was obtained. The high coefficient suggests that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Items with mean score of 2.50 and above were agreed on while items with mean score of less were disagreed. Hypotheses were analyzed using simple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (N=256)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	129	50.39
Female	127	49.61
Age (years)		
Below 20	03	1.17
20 – 30	73	28.51
31 – 40	125	48.83
Above 40	55	21.48
Educational Level		
PhD	04	1.56
Masters	13	5.07
Bachelors/HND	75	29.29
NCE/OND	108	42.18
Others	56	21.87
Number of Children		
None	15	5.85
1 – 3	176	68.75
4 – 6	34	13.28
Above 6	31	12.11

The result in Table 1 showed that most (50.39%) of the respondents were male while 49.61% were female. Response on age that 77.34% the respondents were within age of 20 – 40 years, 1.17% were below 20 years and 21.48% were above 40 years. Response on educational level indicated that 1.56% of the respondents had PhD, 5.07% had Masters Degree, 29.29% had B.Sc/HND, 64.05% had NCE/OND certificate and other certificates. Response on number of children indicated that most (68.75%) of the respondents have between 1 – 3 children, 5.85% had no child, 13.28% have between 4 – 6 children, 12.11% have above 6 children.

Research Question 1

What are residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics?

Table 2: Summary statistics on residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics (N= 256)

S/N	Statement items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The media relegate women to supporting roles in politics and leadership	3.03	0.62	Agree
2	Media do not provide adequate attention to the reportage of election campaign by the few female candidates	3.59	0.74	Agreed
3	Media owners and proprietors do not provide adequate space or airtime to female political candidates	2.03	0.77	Disagree
4	Media report less of female politicians to maintain societal tradition	2.68	0.68	Agree
5	Women who compete for and then win the top job are vulnerable to the media's personalizing proclivities	3.78	0.81	Agree
6	Women's electoral success is compromised by a journalistic emphasis on personal and corporeal characteristics (trivialization)	2.01	0.86	Disagree

The result in Table 2 showed that statement items had a mean range of 2.01 to 3.78. Some of the mean were above the bench-mark of 2.50. However, items 3 and 6 had mean values below the bench-mark while items 1, 2, 4 and 5 were above the bench-mark value. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.62 to 0.86. This indicated that respondents were unanimous in their responses.

Research Question 2

What are residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of human rights?

Table 3: Summary statistics on residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of human rights (N= 256)

S/N	Statement items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The media has provided series of radio and television episodes to highlight intimate partner violence, date rape and sexual harassment	2.51	0.63	Agree
2	Media campaigns have targeted men specifically, aiming to challenge traditional concepts of masculinity associated with violence	2.31	0.72	Disagree
3	The TV and radio initiate series on educational initiative that raises awareness about violence against women and challenges men to speak out against it	2.06	0.74	Disagree
4	Mass media provides programmes that empower women and young people to take control of their lives and to promote women's rights and gender equality	3.31	0.78	Agree
5	Mass media campaign often highlight how men can be strong without overpowering others and aim to redefine masculinity	2.61	0.68	Disagree

The result in Table 3 showed that the respondents indicated disagreement with most of the identified indices for gender equality in awareness of human rights. The statement items had a mean range of 2.06 to 3.31. Most of the means were below the bench-mark of 2.50 while items 1 and 4 were above the cut-off point. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.54 to 0.78. This indicated that respondents were unanimous in their responses.

Research Question 3: *What are residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State?*

Table 4: Summary statistics on residents' perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance (N=256)

S/N	Statement item	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Mass media conducts debates to sensitize women to participate in decision-making in the community	3.02	0.72	Agree
2	Programmes from TV and radio stations help acquire new knowledge and needed skills	2.84	0.90	Agree
3	Mass media understand how their audience thinks and so in their framing act that can help their audience to grow socio-economically	2.77	0.85	Agree
4	Mass media use communication to promote hard work, cooperation and coordination between male and female folk to boost the socio-economic activities in the community	3.81	0.66	Agree

The result in Table 4 indicates that the mean items had a range of 2.77 to 3.81. The means were above the bench mark of 2.50. The result indicated that mass media promotes gender equality by show casing women's socio-economic relevance. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.66 to 0.90. This indicated that respondents were close to one another in their responses or had a uniform perception.

Hypothesis 1

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics

Table 5: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics (N= 256)

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	t-tab	Decision
Male	129	2.72	0.81	1.92	1.96	Accepted
Female	127	2.29	0.76			
Total	256					

Table 5 presents the t-test summary analysis of the mean responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics. The data revealed that the t-value was less than the t-tab at 0.05 level of significance. With this result; the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

Hypothesis 2

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights

Table 6: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	t-tab	Decision
Male	129	2.56	0.71	1.89	1.96	Accepted
Female	127	2.79	0.66			
Total	256					

Source: Field Work, 2020

Table 6 presents the t-test summary analysis of the mean responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights. The data revealed that the t-value was less than the t-tab at 0.05 level of significance. With this result; the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. This

indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights

Hypothesis 3

HO₃: There is no significant difference between the responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

Table 7: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	t-tab	Decision
Male	129	2.59	0.71	1.99	1.96	Rejected
Female	127	2.89	0.66			
Total	256					

Table 7 presents the t-test summary analysis of the mean responses of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. The data revealed that the t-value was greater than the t-tab at 0.05 level of significance. With this result; the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Residents’ perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics

The result in Table 2 showed that the residents perceive that media do not provide adequate attention to female candidates for election, relegate women to supporting roles in politics and leadership, media report less of female politicians to maintain societal tradition. Even women who compete for and then win the top job are vulnerable to the media’s personalizing proclivities. This result implies that mass media do not effectively promote gender equality through politics in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. In line with the finding, Oyinade, Daramola and Lamidi (2013) reported that the media have scored below average, relegating women to supporting roles in politics and leadership. Also, Ajayi (2007) posits that the loop sided practices of media notably signal masculinity of politics and women’s alienation from the mainstream Nigeria’s politics.

Role of media in promoting gender equality in areas of human rights

The result in Table 3 showed that resident agreed that media provides series of radio and television episodes to highlight intimate partner violence, date rape and sexual harassment and also media that provides programmes that empower women and young people to take control of their lives. This implies that media in the area of study promoted human rights of women. However, it was noted that TV and radio did not initiate series on educational initiative that raises awareness about violence against women. In consonance with the finding, Endong and Obonganwan (2015) reported that media world in Nigeria seems particularly to be one of the areas in which relatively little is achieved so far, as concerns women empowerment and gender-equality. Unfortunately, it is only extreme cases of women’s rights violation which results in death or permanent disability that earns the media attention and the police interests (Allanana, 2013).

Residents’ perceptions on role of media in promoting gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA

The result in Table 4 showed that residents agreed that programmes from TV and radio stations help acquire new knowledge and needed skills, they also perceive that mass media understand how their audience thinks and so in their framing act that can help their audience to grow socio-economically. The residents agreed that mass media conducts debates that sensitize women to participate in decision-making in the community. The result indicated that the media promoted gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance among women folks. In line with the finding, UNESCO (2013) reported that women are becoming better organized with professional associations and other bodies to promote women

agendas. Although, it must be noted that in spite of the fact that women had made head-way in the media establishment and are becoming more and more prominent.

The results Table 5 and 6 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in politics and human rights in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State. This implies that both male and female residents in the area had same perception that media did not promote gender equality in politics and human rights. In line to these findings, Ayodele and Saheed (2017) reported that numerous studies in the area of female representation in election campaign in Nigeria have proven beyond doubts that the Nigerian media do not provide adequate attention to the reportage of election campaign by the few female candidates who contest in these elections. Another instance of inadequate media attention was in the case of Hon. Barrister (Mrs.) Ugochi Nnanna-Okoro, politician and former Peoples Democratic Party governorship aspirant in Imo state in 2003 general elections who was out rightly denied access to campaign on the state's radio station on the ground that she did not get approval from the state government (Nwankwo, 2005)

The result in Table 7 indicated that there was significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female residents on role of media in promoting gender equality in socio-economic relevance in Oshimili South LGA of Delta State

CONCLUSION

A look at the findings of this study reveals that Mass media in Oshimili South LGA did not effectively promote gender equality through politics but promoted human right to some extent. Media promoted gender equality in awareness of socio-economic relevance among women folks in the area of study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for various stakeholders to invest more resources in sensitizing journalists and media gatekeepers on gender
2. Government through the Gender Ministry should develop a deliberate policy aimed at making media institutions more gender sensitive in their programming especially in politics and human right.

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