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MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA: A FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study critically examines the media representation of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) in Nigeria. Using feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), it analyzes 30 discourses which are referred to as news articles and editorials from leading Nigerian newspapers namely the Sun, the Guardian, and, the Punch newspapers, published between 1st January and 31st December 2022. The study reveals that the media often perpetuate patriarchal norms, victim-blaming, and implicit biases, and also identify potential transformative representations that advocate for justice and gender equality. The research underscores the urgent need for ethical and gender-sensitive reporting that prioritizes survivor voices and challenges stereotypes

Keywords: Media representation, Gender-based violence, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, Public discourse, Nigeria, Patriarchy

Introduction

This study focuses on media representation of Gender-based violence against women in Nigeria from a feminist critical discourse analysis perspective. Gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) remains persistent in Nigeria, deeply entrenched in societal norms, cultural values, and institutional structures. The media plays a critical role in shaping public

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perceptions of GBVAW which can impact both policy responses and societal attitudes. According to Muluneh, Dessalegn, Stulz, Francis and Agho (2020), Gender-based violence against women in Sub-Sahara occurs at both the intimate partner level and non-intimate partner level and it is becoming so alarming. From Ibitoye (2022) perspective, she believes that patriarchy as an offshoot of gender inequality plays a significant role in accounting for sub-Saharan Africa's poor growth while Ochonye,Boniface,Abiodun,Sanni, Olufunke, Alamu, and Ogbonna, (2023) argue that the female sex workers in Nigeria are predominantly the victims of gender-based violence in Nigeria. To Fawole & Dagunduro,(2014), the main victims of gender-based violence are women with low income, who can hardly meet up with their basic needs hence they become vulnerable and easily exploited. Gender based violence stems from patriarchy and male dominance. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is of the opinion that gender-based violence against women is fierceness directed at a female gender because she is being referred to as a lesser being. Ogunode, Tsevenda, and Atim, (2024) say that violence against women can be categorized as a gender discrimination that stems from unequal status that exists between the male and female.

Gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and is one of the most significant human right violations. GBVAW encapsulates varieties of abuses against the female gender throughout their life span. Krantz and Garcia-Moreno (2005) argue that violence against women has been globally recognised as a public health problem and an important hazard factor for the physical and mental ill health of women.

WHO (2017) has it on record that global evidence illustrates that 30% of women have suffered from one form of violence to another ranging from physical, emotional, or sexual violence, which eventually causes psychological, health risks and death. Solórzano et al. (2020) emphasise that women should be protected against aggressors. The violence experienced by women occurs in two tiers, from the family and from society. This and many other factors culminated in the third and fifth goals of the United Nations (2017) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 3 & 5) the combined objective of which is to promote well-being, eliminate GBV, and to increase gender equity. According to Links (2012:32), the report from

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Gender Links for Equality and Justice provides three major reasons for perpetrating GBV, based on numerous research findings. These are:

- Rights of women are violated by cultural norms and practices.
- Sustained patriarchal societal standards lead to inequality in power relations between men and women. While the governments through the legislative arm are making efforts in attaining gender equality, it is yet to be achieved at the private domain of South African and Nigerian family lives and societies.
- Aside from other factors, certain individual factors such as alcohol and drugs intake, child abuse are also associated with GBV. Men who were abused as children are more likely to be violent partners.

Female oppression and subjugation is not peculiar to Africa. Fulu and Miedema (2015) maintain that the entire world is highly gendered. However, Mendieta (2010) asserts that there are variances in the exhibition of gender inequality all over the world. This implies that although gender issues exist globally, the way it is perpetrated in continents and countries differs. In Nigeria, while cultural customs and religious opinions affect gender issues, in the light of GBVAW it is a lack of trust in the judiciary and lack of resources to fight for justice that has prevented women who suffer from GBVAW from speaking out (DeKeseredy, 2011). In Nigeria, domestic violence has been one of the biggest barriers to women finding equality with men and it has been used as a tool for the subordination of women. These violences are manifested through verbal abuse, rape and sexual assaults, or forced marriages. Odimegwu (2001) argues that although violence against women is mostly under-reported, its high occurrence is considered a cultural norm both in developed and developing countries. This is corroborated by Arisi and Oromareghake (2011) who maintain that the cultural makeup of some African traditions subtly encourages the physical abuse of women. For example, in some parts of Nigeria, the Tiv ethnic group elevates and celebrates a man when he beats his wife. This cultural norm forces women to be silent while experiencing violence because of fear of being replaced with another woman since polygamy is culturally permissible. Hence, whatever the man says is final and must be strictly obeyed by the wife. This is a form of societal and cultural burden placed on women to endure whatever treatment is meted out to her by her husband. Though there are several legislations in place in Nigeria to curb the menace of Gender-based

violence against women in the country, there are still daily occurrences of GBVAW in all parts of the country. Violence Against Persons' Prohibition (VAPP) Bill which was signed into law on 24th May 2015 and it is also one of the federal-based laws targeting gender-based violence and abuse because it integrates relevant provisions of international human rights laws and principles.

Media have been identified as instruments that assist in promoting the feminist movement by increasing awareness of women's rights challenges, aiding efficient communication, assisting with organization, providing education on women's history and current events, and inspiring people to become promoters for greater equality in Nigeria. The media, which are usually understood to refer to the press, radio and television broadcasting organs have become veritable media for information dissemination in our global world. Newspaper, which is a major product of the print media, has a wide range of consumers and are circulated by print-house auxiliaries to a wide audience with different aspects being the point of attraction to the readers. Generally, newspapers perform so many functions and have lots of importance over all other forms of media such as the advantage of permanence and the impact of news framing on readers. According to Odenigbo, Chinweobo and Anyakoha, (2023), they say that Newspaper articles have an intense effect on the general opinion of people on Domestic Violence against Women hence the need for this study.

This study therefore seeks to contribute to knowledge on feminism and also examine the media representation of Gender-based violence against women in Nigeria from a feminist critical discourse analysis perspective. This study contributes to the growing body of feminist media scholarship by providing empirical insights into the role of Nigerian media in shaping narratives around GBVAW. It underscores the urgent need for ethical and gender-sensitive reporting that prioritizes survivor voices and challenges stereotypes. By highlighting the media's role in either perpetuating or dismantling oppressive narratives, this research offers valuable recommendations for journalists, policymakers, and advocacy groups working toward gender justice and equitable representation in media

Objective of the study

The definite, significant, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objective of this research is to critically examine the media representation of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) in Nigeria, focusing on how discourses in news

articles and editorials construct, reinforce, or challenge dominant discourses on violence against women. It seeks to uncover implicit biases, victim-blaming tendencies, and the reinforcement of patriarchal norms, as well as to explore potential transformative representations that advocate for justice and gender equality.

Theoretical Framework and methodological approach

This article uses the feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) as theoretical framework and methodological approach to analyse the discourses in the form of news editorials and reports on gender-based violence against women in Nigerian newspapers namely: The Sun, the Guardian and, the Punch. According to Jafri & Anwar, (2024), FCDA is a form of critical discourse analysis that is against the categorization of women being considered as subjugated while men are privileged in all ramifications. Peng, Wu and Chen (2022) opine that feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) creates a platform where gender issues can be revisited and debated through critical discourse analysis. This selection of FCDA is supported by Lazar (2005:145) who, as a proponent of FCDA, perceives the need for an unambiguous approach to "explicitly flag a feminist perspective to discourse studies as a research area". Lazar (2005) further argues that the need for FCDA arose to give a feminist perspective to the study of language and discourse. Lazar (2007: 141) explains that FCDA "with its focus on social emancipation of gender, is a bonding of feminism with critical discourse analysis and aims to advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements". As a result, for this study, FCDA is used to illuminate the unequal power relations between male and female gender, which cause society to consider one gender as superior to the other even in the media representation of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria.

The aim of FCDA, as described by Lazar (2007:142) is, therefore:

> *… to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities. Such an interest is not merely an academic*

> *deconstruction of texts and talk for its own sake but comes from an acknowledgement that the issues dealt with (in view of affecting social change) have material and phenomenological consequences for groups of women and men in specific communities.*

FCDA is one of the theoretical and methodological frameworks under the canopy term of CDA. It focuses on an actual conversational analysis of various restricted situations, which culminate in gender inequality. FCDA is employed as the theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis of the 30 excerpts of discourses as news editorials and reports for this research work because of its focus on social emancipation of gender and the manner in which it connects feminism with critical discourse analysis and aims to advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements (Lazar, 2017). Despite the fact that FCDA is a method of critical discourse analytical work, it is still unique and different from CDA because of its concentration on how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, negotiated and contested in representations of social practices, in social relationships between people, and in people's social and personal identities in texts and talk (Lazar, 2005).

The need to highlight the feminist perspective and language in discourses arose after the third wave of feminism and this led to the conception of FCDA (Lazar, 2005), which contests the existing discourses on gender inequality as well as the gender hierarchy and focuses attention on all marginalised women and stereotypes. With the emergence of FCDA, there has been a noticeable transformation in the patriarchal system and traditional social orders. It focuses on all gendered discourses where women lack power and are being dominated. In addition, Parveen and Qadir (2019) identify that FCDA aims to question the pre-determined roles of women and acclimatised dominance of the male gender, in its belief that women can be loud, independent, and also make decisions on their own.

As a result, although FCDA challenges the position of women with regard to that of men, it goes further to reconstruct conditions that can bring women and men onto an equal platform by accepting the principles of dominant neo-liberal

philosophy in the context of gender emancipation and other social issues (Marling, 2010). FCDA is deemed suitable for this research work because of the study's interest in discourses to advance rich critical analysis of the complex works of power and ideology in supporting hierarchal gendered social order. FCDA is also curious about framing the social and lexical re-contextualisation of the existing gender frames and contesting the existing social practices regarding conceived gender expectations and aims to transform such practices.

The primary goal of using FCDA in this study lies in how it assists in reviewing gendered discourses, which sustain and reinforce a patriarchal social order. The study examines how, in the discourses, relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude, marginalise and disempower women as a social group even in media representation. In addition, Lazar (2007) claims that any work undertaken by critical academic feminists can be regarded as academic activism, which means raising critical awareness through research. FCDA constitutes a form of analytical activism, through its theorisation and analysis of gendered discourse practices. FCDA enables an understanding of how institutionally produced discourse can be employed to create transformation in society.

In addition, scholars have found FCDA to be useful in analysing a rich variety of texts and discourses from a feminist theoretical foundation, which is applicable to this article. Nussbaumer, Blankvoort and Farias, (2024) in their article "Challenging the gender binary in occupation-based research: A feminist critical discourse analysis of sex differences" use FCDA as the theoretical framework in the article. In the same vein, Jafri & Anwar, (2024) utilize FCDA in A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Speech Acts in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Selected Novels. Ernanda, (2023) also employed FCDA in her article "Challenging the patriarchal culture; Feminist critical discourse analysis of the Indonesian environmental heroines". Edwards and Milani (2014) also applied FCDA to a corpus of herbalist pamphlets, which are common, everyday texts found in (South) African cities, which promote the services of traditional healers, and which promise solutions to a plethora of ailments and life problems. The title of this work is *The everyday life of sexual politics: A feminist critical discourse analysis of herbalist pamphlets in Johannesburg*.

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In addition to these publications, Makoni (2013) in her article on *Women of the Diaspora A feminist critical discourse analysis of migration narratives of dual career Zimbabwean migrants* used FCDA to explore the establishment and maintenance of gendered ideologies and practices within the household of dual-career Zimbabwean migrants in the diaspora. Rizwan (2011) focused on the linguistic representations of masculinities and femininities in songs from a Hindi film using FCDA in her article on *Femininities and masculinities: A feminist critical discourse analysis of Hindi film songs*. Flowing from above, application of FCDA to media representation of GBVAW in Nigeria is the gap that this study intends to fill.

Research motivation and problem identification

This section aims to provide a better understanding of the purpose of the research and why the research was conducted. The research problem is the media representation of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria. Anunobi (2002) argues that women play an important role in the development of countries, hence all forms of discrimination against them need to be opposed. Although, Ejembi and Mnyim (2020) find that discrimination against females is a common phenomenon in most African countries including Nigeria, Stromquist (2014) opines that gender-oriented stereotypes exist in virtually all cultures, leading to increased violence, mental illness, reduced life expectancy and poor educational attainment for the marginalised gender. Hence, Bofu-Tawamba (2015) calls for more research on the current position of women in developing countries like Nigeria owing to their sub-standard position. As a result, this research intends to increase awareness on the media representation of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria.

My first motivation for embarking on this research topic was awakened as a result of the wide gender gap between male and female gender in Nigeria. It could be argued that Nigeria could have been more advanced if gender equality had been attained. If more women had been included in decision-making circles, African society would not have relied solely on men, so losing half of its efficiency and productivity (Anunobi, 2002). My second motivation for embarking on this research work is to advance the contribution of media representation in alleviating gender-based violence against women in Nigeria. Another notable motivation for carrying out this research work is to contribute to scholarship on media

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representation of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria from the Feminist critical discourse analysis perspective

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative content analysis of 30 discourses which are news articles and editorials from leading Nigerian newspapers namely the Sun, the Guardian and, the Punch newspapers published between 1ST January and 31st December, 2022. Using FCDA, the study examines textual and visual elements to identify recurring themes, discursive strategies, and ideological framings that influence public understanding and policy approaches to GBVAW. All the 30 news articles and editorials selected center on the media representation of gender based violence against women in Nigeria. 10 news articles and editorials were selected from each newspaper to make up the 30 discourses.

This study was designed using the content analysis method. The manifest content of the selected newspapers was assessed to establish the pattern and degree of coverage given to domestic violence against women in Nigeria . The contents were also analyzed to establish the media representation in the three newspapers with regard to gender-based violence against women in Nigeria. The selected newspapers are The Sun, The Guardian and The Punch Newspapers for a year period (January 1 2022 to december 31, 2022). Justification for the selection of these newspapers was the fact that they are national newspapers with the widest coverage in Nigeria and can be used to represent other national dailies in the country. Furthermore, the selected newspapers are not for specialized readers but rather target the general public. Since the papers are dailies, including their weekend editions. The total number of days in a year multiplied by three; 365 days ×1year and 3 newspapers= 1,095. The total population of the study, in this case, is 1,095 editions of the newspaper.

Analysis of this research work was influenced by feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2007), and a typology developed by Journall and Bendjama (2023) was utilized for the categorization of the discourses which are news articles and editorials culled from the three newspapers in Nigeria (Journall and Bendjama, 2023) . The headings for the four typology are: naturalisation, banalisation, delegitimization and desacralization. Based on the feminist epistemological framework, the data analysis process started with an open reading of the 30, the

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second stage entails the intense rereading of the discourses for similarities, oppositions, and absences followed by ordering, grouping and categorization of discourses according to the four typology as proposed by Journall and Nebdjama. Journall and Bendjama's typology uses an approach to feminist critical discourse analysis to study arguments aimed at de-constructing female gender through media representation in relation to gender-based violence against women in Nigerians. She identified four types of arguments (Naturalization, banalization, delegitimization, and desacralization).

Findings, Discussion and Recommendation

The findings of the study highlight the impact of media representation to gender-based violence against women in Nigeria. Explained below are the findings of the data analysis according to the identified four types of arguments (Naturalization, banalization, delegitimization, and desacralization).

Naturalization

Naturalization of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria is a frightening phenomenon and a typology of Journall and Bendjama analysis format for FCDA where the media contributes to making GBVAW seem normal or acceptable. This can be seen in how some Nigerian newspapers report on GBV cases.

- Trivialization of GBVAW - These newspapers restrain the severity of GBV by using euphemistic language or focusing on the perpetrator's actions rather than the victim's experience. For example, instead of using the term "rape," some articles in the selected newspapers make use of phrases like "alleged affair" or "romantic encounter gone wrong"
- Victim-Blaming-this is also an example of Naturalization in the media representation of GBVAW in Nigeria. This method implies that the woman is by some means responsible for the violence she suffered. This is seen in headlines that focus on the victim's manner of dressing, rude behavior, late crawling etc instead of emphasizing the perpetrator's actions.
- Lack of Representation - The media representation of GBVAW also contributes to naturalization by failing to represent, report and narrate GBVAW survivors' voices and stories adequately. This lack of representation can perpetuate the silence and stigma surrounding GBV, making it seem like an isolated issue rather than a widespread problem

- Reinforcement of Patriarchal Norms- From the selected discourses, it is being observed that newspapers reinforce patriarchal norms by portraying women as submissive, obedient, and nurturing, while men are depicted as dominant, strong, and protective. These stereotypes can perpetuate GBV by normalizing unequal power dynamics and gender roles

To stop naturalization, it's essential to promote ethical and responsible media representation on GBVAAW. This includes using sensitive language, prioritizing survivors' voices, and challenging patriarchal norms and stereotypes.

Delegitimization

Delegitimization is one of the four typologies of Journall and Bendjama analysis format for FCDA. Delegitimization in the context of media representation of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) in Nigeria, refers to the process by which the media undermines or challenges the legitimacy of GBVAW as a serious issue, often by questioning the validity of survivors' experiences, blaming the victim, or downplaying the severity of the violence. Some excerpts of the data show the following:

- Delegitimizing Survivors' Experiences: in some of the excerpts, it is observed that in the case of a rape allegation, the victim's credibility is questioned with a headline that casts doubt on the survivor's credibility (The Guardian May 5th, 2022 . In another instance, whereby a woman claims her husband abused her, but neighbors say she is lying. This implies that the neighbors are questioning the survivor's account in the news report. (The Punch, 1st February 2022)
- Blaming the Victim: findings further reveal that some headlines blame the victim's dressing for the rape saying, "Rape Victim's Dressing Attracts Unwanted Attention" (The Sun June 20th 2022). In another excerpt, it is recorded that "Woman Raped After Leaving Nightclub Alone", this news report implies that the victim was responsible for the attack because she was out alone at night.
- Downplaying the Severity of Violence: from the analysis, findings reveal that some newspapers downplay the severity of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria. Explained below are some excerpts are:

"Domestic Violence: A Minor Disagreement". This headline downplays the severity of domestic violence (The Guardian, March 12, 2022). "Husband Beats Wife, But She's Okay" - this news report minimizes the impact of the violence through the media representation (December 4, 2022).

One of the Consequences of delegitimization are reduced credibility of survivors which undermines their experiences. Delegitimization can also increase blame and stigma against survivors. And lastly, it can decrease support for survivors and reduce the likelihood of perpetrators being held accountable.

Banalization

Banalization is one of the four typologies of Journall and Bendjama analysis format for FCDA. The banalization of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) in Nigeria refers to the process by which the media represents GBVAW in a way that makes it seem ordinary, mundane, or unremarkable. According to Briziarelli & Risi, (2025), Banalization is a complex phenomenon that is employed to trivialize issues. In the same vein, Isin & Finn, (2024) believes that Banalization is an adjective to describe and lessen the effects of banalization. This can lead to a lack of public outrage, empathy, or action to address the issue. Some excerpts of the data show the following:

- Headlines that downplay violence: in some of the excerpts such as "Husband Beats Wife to Death Over Food" instead of "Man Murders Wife in Domestic Violence Incident" (Guardian, January 12, 2022), "Lover Boy Stabs Girlfriend Over Misunderstanding" instead of "Man Commits Violence Against Partner" (The sun, September 3rd, 2022). Findings reveal that the headlines with samples above downplay the violence against women in the media representation.
- Victim-blaming language: Findings also reveal that victim-blaming language is being employed in media representation of gender-based violence against women in Nigeria. Examples include "Woman Raped After Leaving Nightclub Alone" (implying the victim was responsible for the attack),"Housewife Stabbed by Husband for Not Cooking His Favorite Meal" (suggesting the victim's actions led to the violence) (The Sun, November, 12 2022)

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- Normalization of violence: It is further revealed from the findings that gender-based violence is being normalized in their media representation. Some excerpts from the data analysis below exemplify such. "Domestic Violence: A Normal Part of Marriage?" (The Punch, June 11, 2022). This headline implies GBVAW is an expected aspect of relationships and marriage. "Why Some Women Stay in Abusive Relationships" - this headline focuses on the victim's actions rather than the perpetrator's actions. (The Sun March 27, 2022)
- Sensationalism and exploitation- this implies focusing on the most extreme or shocking cases of GBVAW, rather than providing a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Some of the Consequences of banalization are desensitization when the public becomes less empathetic and less outraged by GBVAW incidents. The normalization of GBVAW can also lead to a lack of urgency and action to address the issue. Banalization can also contribute to a culture that tolerates or even condones GBVAW.

Desacralization

Desacralization is the last of the four typologies of Journall and Bendjama analysis format for FCDA. Simply put, desacralization, in the context of media representation of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) in Nigeria, refers to the process by which the media strips GBVAW of its emotional, moral, and cultural significance, often by portraying it as a mundane, ordinary, or justifiable act. Podoliaka, (2022) opines that desacralization is one of the strategies used by writers to make extraordinary things look ordinary. This is one of the elements of exhibitions of male dominance and gender inequality. It has been observed from the findings of this research work that some Nigerian Newspapers employ some tactics highlighted below to showcase incidences of media representation of GBVAW.

- Trivialization of Violence: trivialization of violence is one of the elements of desacralization. Some excerpts are "Husband Beats Wife for Not Cooking Dinner" (The Guardian, October 5, 2022) – This headline trivializes the severity of domestic violence in Nigeria. Another instance of headline is "Woman Raped by Neighbor, but Continues with Daily Activities" (The Sun,

November 4th, 2022) – This news report downplays the impact of rape on the survivor by trivializing the headline.

- Normalization of Violence: some excerpts of normalization of violence include, "Domestic Violence: A Normal Part of Marriage?" This headline shows that GBVAW is an expected aspect of relationships, "Why Some Women Stay in Abusive Relationships"_is a title that focuses on the victim's actions rather than the perpetrator's actions.
- Lack of Emotional Resonance: "Rape Victim's Family Demands Justice" (The Punch, August 21, 2022). This headline focuses on the family's demands rather than the survivor's experience. Another example is "Domestic Violence: A Growing Concern" (The Sun July 1st, 2022) This news report presents GBVAW as a statistic rather than a personal tragedy requiring utmost concern.

Some of the consequences of desacralization include reduction of empathy and understanding for GBVAW survivors. Desacralization can also contribute to a culture that tolerates or even condones GBVAW. It can also decrease the urgency and action required to address GBVAW.

Recommendations and conclusion

This study contributes to the growing body of feminist media scholarship by providing empirical insights into the role of Nigerian media in shaping narratives around GBVAW. It underscores the urgent need for ethical and gender-sensitive reporting that prioritizes survivor voices and challenges stereotypes. By highlighting the media's role in either perpetuating or dismantling oppressive narratives, this research offers valuable recommendations for journalists, policymakers, and advocacy groups working toward gender justice and equitable representation in media. Highlighted below are some recommendations

- Sensitive and responsible reporting: Media outlets should prioritize sensitive and responsible reporting on GBVAW, avoiding victim-blaming language and sensationalism.
- Context and analysis: Reporters should provide context and analysis to help readers understand the complexities of GBVAW and its impact on survivors.

- Amplifying survivors' voices: Media outlets should prioritize amplifying the voices and stories of GBVAW survivors, rather than relying on sensational or exploitative reporting
- Avoid Victim-Blaming Language: Media outlets should avoid using language that blames the victim or implies they were responsible for the violence.
- Prioritize Accurate and Sensitive Reporting: Media outlets should prioritize accurate and sensitive reporting on GBVAW, avoiding sensationalism and stereotypes.
- Ethical reporting: Journalists should adhere to ethical reporting standards, prioritizing survivor voices and avoiding victim-blaming language and imagery.
- Gender-sensitive training: Media outlets should provide gender-sensitive training for journalists, editors, and other staff to raise awareness about GBVAW and promote inclusive reporting practices.
- Diverse representation: The media should strive to represent diverse perspectives and experiences, including those of marginalized groups, to promote a more nuanced understanding of GBVAW.
- Context and analysis: Reporters should provide context and analysis to help readers understand the complexities of GBVAW and its impact on survivors.

This study contributes to the growing body of feminist media scholarship by providing empirical insights into the role of Nigerian media in shaping narratives around GBVAW. It underscores the urgent need for ethical and gender-sensitive reporting that prioritises survivor voices and challenges stereotypes. By highlighting the media's role in either perpetuating or dismantling oppressive narratives, this research offers valuable recommendations for journalists, policymakers, and advocacy groups working toward gender justice and equitable representation in media.

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