

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF NEWS STORIES:
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE
DAILY TIMES OF NIGERIA

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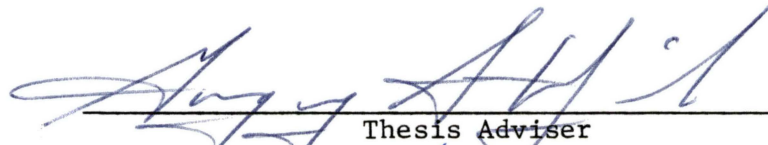
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PREFACE

This study is concerned with a content analysis of news stories in the Daily Times of Nigeria over a period of 18 months, from August, 1983 to February, 1985. The primary aim of this study is to show that the content of news stories in the Daily Times is male dominated, that there is a tendency to portray men as politician/public official than as professional in the news content of the Daily Times, that news stories about women are more likely to appear on the inside and middle pages of the Daily Times, and that news stories in the Daily Times are more likely to portray women in the human interest roles and activities than in any other roles. This study is also to encourage further research and empirical knowledge about the policies and directions of mass communications in Nigeria and also provide some data for research for studying the media and dealing with the public, especially the female members of the Nigerian society.

I wish to express my most sincere appreciation and thanks to my major adviser, Dr. Walter Ward, for his guidance and understanding, and most especially for his patience with me throughout this study. Many thanks and appreciation goes to Dr. Greg Stefaniak and Dr. Bill Rug for their guidance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The process of modernization and the demand of women today of equality, especially recognition, have presented the Nigerian mass media with a special challenge to include in their contents, the social, professional, and economic news affecting Nigerian women.

Nigeria occupies 924,522 kilometers of West Africa. It is one of the most populous countries in Africa with an estimated population of more than 80 million. There are more than 200 different ethnic groups in Nigeria, each speaking a different language and dialect. Three of these groups, the Housa, the Yoruba, and the Igbos, are the most populous with languages more widely spoken throughout the country by more than 50 percent of the population.

Nigeria is a member of the once powerful Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the sixth largest producer of crude oil in the world. The nation's economy rests mainly in oil, which accounts for about 95 percent of its earnings. This income accounted for 22 billion dollars in 1980, but only 9 billion dollars in 1983 because of the oil glut in the world market.

Nigeria currently is witnessing a proliferation of mass media institutions as a result of the increase in the social, economic, and political power of the country.

The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria has established state stations in each of the 19 states of the Federation, in addition to the already-existing stations previously owned by the four former regions of the country (the Eastern, Western, Northern, and Midwestern regions, respectively). Every state is encouraged to have a station of its own.¹

A National Television Authority (NTA) has been established and now has acquired all stations previously owned by the state governments. Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Information has set up public enlightenment centers in each of the states and is planning to establish information banks to assist media gate keepers in their jobs.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) has been developed and is currently running a pilot service. The directive given to the Agency (under decree 19 of 1976) was: (a) to seek, obtain, and otherwise receive through subscription, payment, exchange, or other means, international, regional, local, and other news, news material, and news features; (b) to distribute such news material and news features to subscribers against payment either in the form of fees or news exchange or on such other terms as may be agreed; (c) to present complete, objective, and impartial information, news or news material or features on any public or national interest within and outside the Federation; and (d) to report truthfully and fairly without prejudice to public and national interest, the views of all sections of the population of the Federation.²

The policy of NAN, based on the directive, is stated as follows:

The primary duty of the News Agency of Nigeria is to uphold the integrity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and promote harmonious relationships among the different groups in Nigeria. News and comments emanating from

the Agency must be truthful, honest, and fair but not jeopardize peace and harmony in the country.³

The Agency must bring enlightened opinion to bear in discussing national and international issues. It must positively influence public opinion and contribute to the evolution and formulation of correct national policies.⁴

According to a 1976 survey by Ogelvy, Benson, and Mather, an advertising agency operating at Lagos, the total circulation of 12 important Nigerian dailies is 686,000 copies.⁵ Among them, the Daily News has the largest circulation of 200,000 copies.

Press Origin in Nigeria

The missionaries were the first to introduce the press into West Africa. The first newspaper was the Nigerian Iwe Irohin Fun Anwon Ara Egba Ati Yoruba, meaning a paper of information for the Egba and Yoruba peoples. It was established in 1859 by an Anglican missionary, the Reverend Henry Townsend. It was bilingual, in English and Yoruba, with its contents centering on marriage announcements, church news, post office notices, trade reports, and attacks on slavery and the Portuguese-led slave trade.

The success of the Nigerian press during the past century, as Coker points out, can be recognized only in terms of its roles as a social service, a political weapon, a literary and historical chronical of events and a guardian and champion of the people's rights and liberties. As an industrial or commercial undertaking, the history of the press in Nigeria presents an almost unbroken chain of failures:

They (newspapers) lived chequered lives of varying spans ranging from a few months in several cases to as long as 40 years in the case of Lagos Weekly Records. Among contemporary units of the press, only the Daily Times (founded in 1925) can so far boast of uninterrupted and prosperous existence of over 35 years.⁶

This trend underscores the statement by Wilbur Schramm in his forward to Press in Developing Countries that "in developing countries, newspapers are born in idealism and live in frustration. Many, if not most, die in frustration."⁷

Fred Omu, in his Press and Politics in Nigeria 1880-1937, adds to Coker's statement in Nigerian Cortex, where dailies had lived half a century from 1880, nearly the same number, 13 daily newspapers, are now surviving from in the next half century (1937). Omu notes that "by the mid-thirties, no newspaper existed to crystallize and canalize the growing nationalist influences of the late interwar years."⁸

Press history in Nigeria serves as a history of Nigerian Nationalism. Editors and the nationalists were one and the same; and leading journalists were nearly always leading nationalists. Omu stipulated that

. . . the African press appeared to be a denial of Afrins' effective participation in government and their desire to influence the trend of events and to realize the dreams of the greater racial identity and dignity. There arose then the demands for political and national persuasion and propaganda.⁹

Major influences in the shaping of the Nigerian press have been colonialism, Christianity and, more recently, dynamic nationalism. Provincial newspapers were of little consequences in shaping the evolution of nationalist politics in Nigeria. As a result, nearly all influential newspapers were based in Lagos, the nation's capital

city. From the start, Lagos conferred status on newspapers because they were regarded as coming from the center of sophistication, the fountain of enlightened values, and taste that represented greatness. The same perception of Lagos, as a center of sophistication by newspaper managers, tends to remain until this day.¹⁰

There is a general tendency for editors to compete with Lagos-based newspapers for urban-based news content. This tends to make their provincial-based news irrelevant and of little effect.

In the history of Nigeria, there is an implied assumption that the press developed along with a more fundamental political change in the Nigerian society. The change still is going on while the press continues with its game of differential roles in both the civilian and military regimes. Some authorities hold that the strongest institution of colonial heritage is not the civil service, as is always assumed, but the press.¹¹ Nigeria, therefore, has its newspapers to fight the cold wars that eventually led to lifting the shackles of colonialism.

Objectives of the Study

This study starts the examination of the coverage of news stories about men and women and roles in which they are portrayed by the Daily Times of Nigeria. Charges of sexism have never been brought against the Daily Times or any other newspaper or magazine in Nigeria to make them refuse their formulas for news coverage of women. Increasingly unaware that Nigerian women occupy roles other than housewives and subordinates, editors appear to be making no

genuine efforts to re-define the contents of newsworthiness and to start portraying women in a broader range of roles.¹²

The impact, the scope and the benefits of mass communication on society are not lost on the Nigerian national instinct. This impact was discussed in a meeting convened by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in June, 1969 in Montreal. The experts at the meeting were asked to investigate the present state and organization of mass communications research and were also urged to study and research mass media as a social institution and mass communications as a social process. The process of modernization and the demand of women today of equality, especially recognition, has presented the Nigerian mass media with a special challenge to include in their contents social, professional, and economic news affecting the Nigerian woman.

The purposes to be served by this investigation are to confirm and encourage further research and empirical knowledge about the policies and direction of mass communication in Nigeria and also to provide data for research for journalists in studying the media and dealing with the public, especially the female members of the Nigerian society.

Most of all, this study attempts to show that the content of news stories in the Daily Times that concern women are more likely to appear on the middle and inside pages of the Daily Times, and that news stories in the Daily Times is more likely to portray women in the human interest roles or activities than in any other role.

Limitations and Assumptions

This study is limited by the scope of the investigation, especially due to lack of prior literature on this particular topic on Nigeria. The Daily Times was selected for analysis because it has the highest circulation and is the oldest existing newspaper in Nigeria.

The writer feels this study may not prove right all the hypotheses raised previously, but there is an assumption that the analysis of the content of news stories in the Daily Times will be sufficiently representative of the coverage of men and women and the roles and activities in which they are portrayed by several other newspapers in Nigeria.

Review of Literature

Some recent communication research has examined the functions as well as effects of the media on their Nigerian audience but not on the contents of the media. As Nigeria moves away from the traditional to the modern era, it seems the contents of her media should be studied, especially since more and more of her people are depending on the media for information.

De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach postulated that as the social system becomes more complex and the informal channels of communication become disrupted, members of the society become more dependent on the mass media,¹³ as is the case in Nigeria. The country no longer depends on the traditional method of communication, the beat and the sound of drums in the Eastern section, and King's messengers in the Western Northern, and the Mid-Western sections. The complexity is

evident in the many languages and dialects spoken in the country and in the different cultures apparent in the country. This is coupled with the ever growing Western ideologies first introduced by the British during the Colonial era.

Participation

The press is very important to Nigeria as a nation as well as to the people of Nigeria; despite the smallness, ethnic diversity, and language problems. It is important now to recognize that modern communication can help integrate people of all works of life into a fuller participation in the modern Nigeria. The complex modern Nigeria and her growing dependence on the media were brought into the constitution. Part of Section 32 of the Draft Constitution under "Fundamental Human Rights" reads:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and receive and impart ideas and information without interference: Without prejudice to the generality of Sub-section 1 of this Section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium or the dissemination of information, ideas, and opinion:

Provided that no person other than the government of the Federation or of a state or any other or body authorized by the President (head of state) shall own, establish, or operate a television or wireless broadcasting for any purpose whatsoever.¹⁴

Full explanation for the ban on public participation has not been given in any form. It is the author's view that this should be explored through research in the future. Unlike other industries, foreign investment in mass media is perceived as a political threat when it infringes upon the media.

There seems to be a concern that foreign operation and/or ownership of the media might sway public opinion at times.

Political stability seems to be (and is) more important than political philosophy, and a developing country like Nigeria cannot afford the luxury of a clash of ideas or of interests while dealing with the more fundamental problems of food and shelter.¹⁵

Pressure is on the editors to conform, not to internationalize symbols but with national aspirations and needs, which happen to be the needs of inclusion and participation of both men and women of the country.

Role of the Media

Democracy or stability is more than a network of contending groups. Being a large group, Nigeria requires a communication network that will help insure internal cohesion, restore domestic values, and assist in the formation of a national public opinion on issues,¹⁶ that is, printing information affecting the lives of all people as well as casting them in roles that are respectable.

To an observer, it would seem the role of the media in Nigeria is correlated with the roles, activities, attitudes, and goals of high government officials.

This research is built on the notions that there is a role for the print media in Nigeria's information system; that there should be a fuller participation by the general public and the inclusion of their roles and activities in the news content and that more attention should be paid to news stories portraying women in their various roles and activities, and consequently in national development; that there have been some policy misjudgments and that some foreign habits have been inherited which are not being incorporated by the various editors to include in their news content

the roles and activities of those Nigerians who are not politicians or involved in the government activities.

One therefore is tempted to ask: What is the role of the print media in casting men and women who are economically and professionally active in the development of a country such as Nigeria in their news stories?

Contemporary thoughts in communication are that many of the characteristics associated with democracy depend on free access of all groups in a population to the channels of communications, both as senders and receivers of information. The media in Nigeria are made up of more than a network of contending groups who may not and cannot easily gain access, especially as senders of information independent of the thoughts and activities of the Federal or state government.

It was easier in the Colonial period to gain access as senders of information, but in the process, the plight of women and the non-politically active man's contributions received little or no attention, then or now.

The legacy of African press systems and the somewhat oppressive Colonial press, its perception as an agent of alienation, had convinced many Africans that it was highly important to have their own press to reflect their own opinions and desires.¹⁷

One could argue that the same thing might lead the men and women who are left out of the news to establish ownership. This could be done, as long as the government grants them the permission and as long as they perceive that there is a problem with the existing media. Mazrui attributes the historical violation of the African press to the passion for unity, which means the support of

the government in the modern Nigeria. His contention is that this theme very much affects the contents of newspapers in many African states.¹⁸

Knowledge, Functions, and Social Control of the Media

This systematic world in which everyone lives, demands that information be fashioned through mass communications, for it helps correct responses to challenges and opportunities which appear on the horizon and for people to reach consensus on social actions. Mass communications helps to transmit the culture of a society to its new members; it helps to entertain and sell goods and services.

The importance of knowledge as a basis for social power has been noted by many. But less well appreciated is the fact that control of knowledge is central to development and maintenance of power.¹⁹ The power and knowledge applied, still applies to those directly and indirectly involved in the day-to-day activities of the Nigerian government. It is the military during a military regime, and the politician in a civilian government. There is a variety and quality of the daily press reflecting the diversity and inequality of Nigeria itself. Dailies are unequally concentrated in a few cities--state capitals, and Lagos as the center.

The knowledge industry of which the media is a part, is no less important in socialization than in any other activity which may be peculiarly dependent upon communication. Neither participants nor observers can acquire or impress knowledge of their own. Everyone

seems to be at the mercy of the media to which they do not, of course, have equal access.

When information is fragmented as in Nigeria, and some other transitional societies, the culture is likely to be colored by a great amount of uncertainty instead of actions based upon reliable and shared information, the margin for imagination is widened to the point that decisions and policies are likely to be guided more by fantasies rather than realities.²⁰

The view about the operation of the press described in this paper could be labeled disillusionment. The press in Nigeria, as well as in other Third World nations, are considered a potential function of educating people to support the urgent national task for development, but it fails woefully. Evidence is all too easy to find that they are ineffective agents of action on behalf of the planners.²¹ Maybe it is past due to realize that it is time for the press to become agents of the remaining and the isolated members of the population with whom their performance might change for the better. The total population catered to is only 15 million, those in the state capitals, while the majority of the population--about 85 percent in the rural areas--are ignored.

Nigeria has shown considerable activity in university-level teaching on the mass media but only two universities (University of Nigeria Nsuka and the University of Lagos) still have full degree courses in mass communications. The Department of Theatre Arts in the University of Ibadan had offered some instruction on mass media for some students in its two-year undergraduate and one-year graduate diploma in drama, and for its three-year Bachelor's degree

in drama. None of the universities is offering media courses at the graduate level. Before this time, journalism training in the Lagos area was available through short courses organized by the International Press Institute since 1963.²²

Nigerian Women and the Tradition of Nigeria

Nigerian culture and legal system are basically the results of the influence of Muslim domination and Western Colonization. From the Fulanis, Nigeria got her Islamic laws and traditions, while the West introduced her to Christianity and the Western culture. To a great extent, the original tradition and culture of Nigeria either died naturally, became modified by one or the other two great influences, or was eradicated by legislation.

In tradition, men just have to be men and women have to know their place in society. Men have been leaders and docile, obedient, and controlled. Culturally, women are, through marriage, the vehicles of male procreation. Customarily, women are to be possessed by men as personal properties within the framework of the social family. Religiously, the women are cursed in childbirth and are subordinates of men. Constitutionally, all the choices belong to the men. The women have no choice but to accept their role as a functional instrument for the creation of the social unit that makes for the great society in which they are totally without status.

The average Nigerian male thinks of women as useful conveniences to have around. Consciously or not, most Nigerians do not see how a woman could be anything else but that. Consequently, any woman who fails to be convenient is considered a nuisance. Indeed most men only become aware of women as 'useful' members of the

society when they are forced to do so by biological changes that usually occur at puberty. Just like most people take certain things for granted until they are disillusioned so have women been taken for granted within the context of the greater Nigerian culture, as purchasable commodities in a male world.²³

It is not uncommon in most Nigerian sub-cultures for people who defend women to be called "she/men" or just "remmene".

What should one expect from a society in which the ultimate degradation is to be called a woman. The background into which the Nigerian female is born spells her tradition and culture and dictates her life. Her father bought and paid for her mother, just as her grandfather bought and paid for her grandmother, and so will future (husband) lord and master buy and pay for her. This is how it has been, how it will be, and as far as all the men and most women are concerned, how it should be. It is the status quo and, as such, can neither be questioned nor challenged. It demands, and so far has received unquestioned obedience. Therefore, it has produced what today is known as the Nigerian woman, the most misused and abused creature in the world, second only to the beast of burden.²⁴

The Nigerian women are waking up to the realization that they are being oppressed, resulting in a crop of women's organizations, professional and otherwise. It is unfortunate, however, that most of the women who have realized that the traditional role of the woman in Nigeria is oppressive have failed to identify the nature of the oppression. Others fall short of the full realization of its results on the lives of individuals and groups, as well as its impacts on the society.

One woman writer says,

. . . having them critically examined and justified, the need of our ancestors for adopting polygamy is rather hard to applaud today's Nigerian (male) polygamist. One is not being unnecessarily unreasonable. If Nigerian males will openly declare to their wives that they may end up being polygamists, perhaps most of the animosity and bitterness that is openly displayed by wives who share a man, might be reduced.²⁵

Most men are even trying to take advantage of the oppressive position of the Nigerian woman by advocating the perpetuation of minimal participation. They talk about it on the radio, incorporate it into the television programs, in newspapers, and text books. A male correspondent wrote in 1983,

Women have long been involved in community development, although there is evidence that their participation has been proven minimal and secondary, it should not be forgotten that the roles of women are often dictated, determined, or limited by society and culture.²⁶

He went on to recommend that women can be given brief training in women's training centers and then be returned to their villages to disseminate their newly-acquired knowledge to the women folk.

Politics and the Nigerian Woman

As far as politics and public figures are concerned in Nigeria, the words have been strictly attached to the male population, thus leaving a large percentage of women who want to get into this profession adamant and reluctant.

The abundant resources of the men in Nigerian politics notwithstanding, the Nigerian woman can afford to state that there has not been a state of sanity in any phase of the politically male-dominated life in Nigeria. This statement is justifiable by

"looking at the very aggressive or even barbaric way politics is practiced in Nigeria."²⁷

The early Nigerian woman can be described as always having been free and liberated. The bread winner, courageous, and hard working. The early Nigerian woman was never really relegated to the background.

The advent of education and the influences of foreign ideas made the Nigerian woman corrupt and aware. Awareness, therefore, made her strong and competitive and never content. Obviously, the coming of the white man and the discovery of words like liberation, emancipation, and equal rights leaves today's Nigerian woman less content.²⁸

However, to be able to succeed in any profession in Nigeria or anywhere else, women will have to learn to deal with men who unfortunately have the notion that women cannot match their guts. The women, as well, have to battle the continuous feeling that men will always look down on them. This is not saying that the Nigerian woman has not become impressive in the political success of the country or professionally as well. There are women like Chief Mrs. Janet Akinrinade, a reputable commissioner in Plateau State, and a former Cabinet member of the former President Shagari's government. There also is Mrs. Babatope, a woman whose stance for women's equality earned the acclaim of "prominent person" in the House of Representation in the last civilian regime.²⁹

The Nigerian woman can make her presence felt not only through her full participation in politics but by going out and acquiring or setting up news media ownership.

The Nigerian woman today is calling for participation in the political and professional development of Nigeria. She wants to

be seen and heard. Of the 50 million women, about 55 percent of the 80 million Nigerian population, only three were in the House of Representation in the last civilian regime and one in the Nigerian Senate.³⁰

In the present military regime, there are only three women in the Constituent Assembly and only one mandatory "token" woman in every state executive counsel. This situation is a source of continuing distress and disappointment to this writer and should be for other Nigerian women who are concerned with complete emancipation of the Nigerian woman. "The Nigerian men, those congenial oppressors, are to blame for the sad and unnatural situation of the woman, for they hold power even though they do not entirely own it."³¹

However, all the blame should not be put on the men. In the last civilian government, only one woman ran for the Senate election, and won.

Years of "neglect" and relegation to the back seat of public affairs have rendered our women far too timid or inhibited to make a show of themselves in public over political or quasi-political matters.³²

When Justice Brennan said, "There can be no doubt that our nation has had a long and unfortunate history of sex discrimination," he could have been speaking of present day Nigeria, where women still are excluded from serving on jury duty.³³

Prior to the 1979 Constitution, women in Northern Nigeria were not allowed to vote on the same grounds that Section 39(2) was subject to in its original wording, that is, was "repugnant to morality."³⁴ By 1979 and 1983, the Moslem needed the vote of the

women in order to get hold of and to retain political power. Therefore, it is no more repugnant to morality for the Moslem woman to come out of purday in broad daylight in the bid to cast votes as long as she votes to keep a male in power.

ENDNOTES

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⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰ Ugboajah, p. 17.

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¹² Susan H. Miller, "Women's and Men's Roles in News Photos," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. , No. (1974), p. 71.

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²⁵Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶Ibid., p. 6.

²⁷Mrs. I. C. Nzeako, "Women and Politics," The Voice of Nigerian Women, No. 1, June, 1983, p. 1.

²⁸Ibid., p. 1.

²⁹Ibid., p. 3.

³⁰Ibid., p. 3.

³¹Toby Garga, "Acada Women in a Fix," The Guardian, April 26, 1985, p. 11.

³²Ibid., p. 11.

³³Justice William Brennan, "Gathering News and Information," Mass Media Law, Don R. Pembrer (ed.). New York: William C. Brown Publishers, 1977, p. 312.

³⁴Dariya, April 30, 1984, p. 5.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

Many mass communication researchers have analyzed traditional contents as philosophical, artistic, religious, or contemporary attitudes, but this study is too limited to dig deep into this analysis.

Discussion of these factors may be possibly implied in the results and analysis of the data at the end of this investigation. However, the investigation did include the quality and quantity of the news stories in the Daily Times.

Selection of News Stories

To achieve the purpose of the study, the content of news stories in every sixth issue of the Daily Times from August, 1983 to February, 1985, 90 issues all together, were counted. Stories dealing with persons under the age of 16 were not counted. Stories in which the sex of the subject was not obvious were not counted and those stories in the Opinion Sections and those in the Time Search Sections also were not counted.

The study compared the number of news stories about men and women, the roles and the sections where these stories appeared. Roles were classified into five categories: (1) Politician/Public

official; (2) Professional; (3) Sports Figure; (4) Criminal; and (5) Human Interest.

Definitions of Roles and Categories

Politician/Public Official: Anyone portrayed in an official capacity as the holder of any elective, appointive, or salaried administrative position in the federal, state, or local government, or as a candidate for any such elective or appointive office. Included are salaried and unsalaried elective and appointive administrative positions, judges, all foreign political officials.

Professional: Anyone portrayed in some professional or vocational role. This includes artists, military officers, students engaged in academic activities, voluntary application of skills in a paying or non-paying position.

Sports Figure: Anyone portrayed in a professional or non-professional sports activity. Includes coaches and trainers.

Criminal: Anyone portrayed as arrested for, charged with, or convicted of any type of offense. Includes persons in custody or on trial.

Human Interest: Anyone not falling into any of the categories mentioned above and portrayed as having been considered by the media without deliberately intending to be considered as being newsworthy for one's activities. This includes accident victims, witnesses, and jurors.

This was broken down into only five categories to ensure quick and easy attainment of the number of news stories needed for the scope of this study. The choice of the five categories assured the

type of roles and activities to offer a fairly reasonable opportunity to obtain samples of news stories portraying both men and women in contemporary roles. However, the study was limited to only those five categories because there were and are almost no news stories portraying either men or women in such roles or activities as spouses, entertainers, activists, or otherwise.

The majority of the news stories are assumed to have been on Politician/Public Officials than on any other role in general, and for men in particular. It is also assumed that stories about women are more likely to appear on the inside pages and to portray them (women) in Human Interest activities more often than in Criminal, Political, Professional, and Sports Figures activities or roles.

The Chi Square test was therefore used to see if the above contentions are valid and if so, are they significant from indifference or chance, and if they are, how strong are they.

The author had three components to work with:

1. Over All and By Sex: Stories, regardless of section where it appeared and the roles in which the subjects were portrayed, were overlooked at this point. The concern was only for that total number of stories and the number of stories about men and women, respectively.

2. By Role and By Sex: Irrespective of section where these stories appeared, the total number of stories portraying men and women respectively in the five categories talked about on the previous pages were dealt with here (Human Interest, Sports Figures, Politician/Public Official, Criminal, and Professional).

3. By Section and By Sex: At this point, the author looked at the number of stories that made it to the Front Page, Middle, or Inside Pages, and the Back Pages with regard to sex.

Administration

Stories in 90 issues of the Daily Times of Nigeria were counted and, to avoid any unfair advantage, any story about anyone under the age of 16 was not counted. Stories where the sex of the subject was not obvious were not counted as well as those stories that dealt with both sexes, that is, stories where the content was about a man and a woman together or men and women together.

In analyzing the By Section and By Sex and the By Role and Sex, the news stories were extracted from the Over All and By Sex news stories leaving out those that did not fit into any of the five categories, especially since there were not very many of these particular kinds of stories to make a sixth or seventh category necessary.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

This study sought to determine if the contention that the content of news stories in the Daily Times of Nigeria is dominated by men. It was confirmed that there is a tendency to portray men as politicians/public officials than as professionals, that news stories about women were more likely to appear on the inside and middle pages, and that women were more likely to be portrayed in human interest activities or roles than in the roles of politician/public officials, sports figures, criminal or professional? Further, the investigator checked the strength of any significant relationships among sex, role portrayed, and media placement.

Analysis of the 4,306 news stories studied showed that the content of news stories in the Daily Times were indeed dominated by men; that most of the news stories dealing with women were concentrated on the inside and middle pages of the Daily Times. And, more women were portrayed in human interest roles and activities than in any of the other four roles and activities.

Overall and By Sex

Data confirmed the contention that the content of news stories in the Daily Times is dominated by men.

Of the total 4,306 stories observed in the Daily Times during the 18-month period, only 323 or about 7.5 percent focused on women-- a significantly smaller percentage (chi square = 3,111.05, df = 1, $p < .001$). Stories showed a ratio of 12 to 1 for men.

This data did indeed confirm the point that the content of news stories in the Daily Times is dominated by men but they failed to tell us why. The author believes the reason is none other than who rules, or is ruling, the country, men or women. There is no distinguishing factor between the civilian and the military regimes. All members of the Supreme Military Counsel during the military regimes had been men and still are. There was only one female member in the last civilian Senate and only three women in the Constituent Assembly in the past military regime. The point here is that, even though one would think that because these women stood out in their political positions they should consistently be in the public eye and, as such, news worthy. But the reality is that the Nigerian editors do not see them as such and evidently more men (politicians and military personnel) are out there making more news in the eyes of the news reporters and news editors covering these news events and ultimately deciding which stories make it and which do not.

By Role and By Sex

There is strong evidence to support the contention that fewer women than men are portrayed in different roles, meaningful roles to say the least. The observed chi square of 182.9279 at df = 4 is significant at the .05 level. The needed chi square is 9.49 and an observed chi square larger than the critical 9.49 would occur by

chance alone less than five times in a 100 similar experiments.

From Table I we can see that in general, there are more news stories about men than there is about women. It therefore follows that more men than women will be portrayed in more roles and activities.

Either this is so because the Nigerian woman is not a news maker and as such is less likely than her male counterpart to engage in news worthy activities, or the Daily Times is biased in its news coverage of the Nigerian woman.

In all five roles and activities, news stories about men far outnumbered those about women (Table I).

TABLE I
BY ROLE AND BY SEX

Category	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Human Interest	462	92	554
Criminal	327	23	350
Sports Figure	313	16	329
Politician/Public Official	1,915	40	1,955
Professional	<u>1,022</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>1,078</u>
Total	4,039	227	4,266

For example, in the Human Interest news stories, 83 percent of the news stories were about men while a mere 16.6 percent were about women. Women did very well in this segment to say the least.

The only explanation for this may be that these are probably the stories that impressed the editor the most as far as news stories about women go. These stories probably did not pose any threat whatsoever to the editors nor did the editor feel that they might have the same effect upon their readers, who are, most probably, men, nine times out of ten.

Human Interest News Stories

The fact is that of all human interest news stories (554), less had women than men as main characters with a ratio of 5:1 (Figure 1).

$$\sqrt{\frac{\text{Male} \quad \text{Female}}{.833 \quad \times \quad .166}} = 1.58 \times 2 = 3.16$$

$$\frac{554}{554}$$

$$83.3\% \pm 3.16\% = 80.13\% \text{ to } 86.19\% \text{ at } \underline{95\% \text{ confidence}}$$

$$16.6\% \pm 3.16\% = 13.44\% \text{ to } 19.76\% \text{ at } \underline{95\% \text{ confidence}}$$

Figure 1. Human Interest News Stories

Criminal Activities and Roles

In the criminal roles and activities the percentage is 93.4 percent and 6.5 percent for men and women, respectively. This is understandable since most, if not all of the criminal activities involved politics or armed robbery. Because almost of the politicians, both in the civilian and military regimes, were men, it is logical

that the political crimes will be committed by men. Hence, more news stories about men in this category compared to women, with a ratio of 14:1.

Out of the 350 news stories in this category, only 23 were about women, leaving the remaining 327 to men (Figure 2).

$$\sqrt{\frac{\text{Male} \quad \text{Female}}{.934 \times \frac{.65}{350}}} = 4.16 \times 2 = 8.32\%$$

93.4 ± 8.32% = 85.08% to 101.72% at 95% confidence

6.5% ± 8.32% = 1.82% to 14.82% at 95% confidence

Figure 2. Criminal Activities and Roles

Sports Figure and Sex

Because football (soccer) is the most popular sport in Nigeria, the disproportional number of news stories about women in this category is partially explained. This, however, is not to say that there are no other sporting activities that women could participate in. The two most popular are table tennis and track and field events. The problem is that there are more men in these sports as well. I did not come across any news story in this category covered by a female sports writer which may also have an effect on this. The percentage is an outrageous 95.2 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. Nigerian women are yet to venture into the field of golf. Even though there are a few field hockey players, they are still to make

or get some coverage by the press. I believe that the most important point to be made is that the sport that gets the most coverage is football (soccer), which explains our percentage of 95.2 percent and 4.8 percent, a ratio of about 20:1.

Of the 329 sports news stories in which men were featured as sports figures and main characters, less were about women than men, 16 to 313, respectively (Figure 3).

$$\sqrt{\frac{\text{Male} \quad \text{Female}}{.952 \quad x \quad .48}}{\quad \quad \quad 325}} = 3.75 \times 2 = 7.5\%$$

$$95.2\% \pm 7.5\% = 87.7\% \text{ to } 102.7\% \text{ at } \underline{95\% \text{ confidence}}$$

$$4.8\% \pm 7.5\% = -2.7\% \text{ to } 12.3\% \text{ at } \underline{95\% \text{ confidence}}$$

Figure 3. Sports Figure and Sex

Politician/Public Official

Most of the politicians and public officials are men. It is logical, therefore, to say that most news stories in this category are about men. A very acceptable reason for the result of my test. More than 44 percent of news stories featured male political figures and public officials. This is probably because the Daily Times is a government owned paper. One must also realize that even when papers are not government owned, as pointed out earlier, the news contents are usually directed towards political events and political battles. The few women that ventured into politics and public offices got some coverage but were not treated as anything special

or sensational. There are not enough of these women to command more coverage. More importantly, there are no women in the managerial level. This helps explain 97.9 percent and 2.46 percent disparity between the news stories about men and those about women with a 48:1 ratio.

Less women than men are portrayed as politician/public officials in news stories of this kind. Of the 1,955 news stories counted, only 40 were about women, while 1,915 were about men (Figure 4).

$$\sqrt{\frac{\begin{array}{cc} \text{Male} & \text{Female} \\ \hline .979 & \times & .204 \\ \hline & & 1,955 \end{array}}{1,955}} = 1.01 \times 2 = 2.02\%$$

$$97.9\% \pm 2.02\% = 95.88\% \text{ to } 99.92\% \text{ at } \underline{95\% \text{ confidence}}$$

$$2.04\% \pm 2.02\% = 0.02\% \text{ to } 4.06\% \text{ at } \underline{95\% \text{ confidence}}$$

Figure 4. Politician/Public Officials

The professional roles and activities which happens to have the second highest category for women, is the same for men. The percentage in this category is still in favor of the men, 94.8 percent and 5.19 percent, respectively. For example, for every 18 news stories in this category about men there was only one about women. This is probably because there are more of this type of news stories about men and the author believes this is another reason that women and news stories about them are not yet looked upon as being news worthy.

Returning to the significant chi square of 182.9279 at the .05 level at $df = 4$, much larger than the critical 9.49, the contention that more news stories about women are more likely to be in the human interest category is proven. This is probably because the subject in the news stories did not have to put themselves in the position to make the news and it is the responsibility of the reporter and editor to make the decisions on the news worthiness of these activities involving women.

Only 20 percent of the variation in this category is explained by sex alone. There has to be something more involved here. The observed chi square of 182.9279 would occur by chance alone less than five times in a 100 similar experiments. The other factor that could be responsible here includes the fact that the Daily Times is owned by the government. Men are involved in more news making activities and are more likely than women to be featured in news stories other than human interest news stories.

By Section and By Sex

The hypothesis that news stories about women are more likely to appear on the inside pages of the Daily Times is proven by a chi square test.

At $df = 2$ and at the .05 level, the critical chi square of 5.99 is far less than the observed chi square of 18.199101. A chi square as large as 18.199101 could occur by chance alone less than five times in a 100 similar experiments. This is probably because the editors do not believe that these stories are powerful enough to be anyplace else but the inside pages where they were found in this

investigation. Since most stories about women are more likely to be on human interest activities, the place for them is the middle pages of the Daily Times.

Of the 4,306 news stories in the 90 issues covered, 240 were about women and appeared on the inside pages. This is a mere 5.6 percent, but a large percentage compared with a .84 percent and 1.09 percent appearing on the front and back pages, respectively (Table II).

TABLE II
BY SECTION AND BY SEX

Section	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Front Page	354	36	390
Inside Pages	3,302	240	3,542
Back Page	<u>327</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>374</u>
Total	3,983	323	4,306

To check the strength of this finding, a C-coefficient test was run. The result was that only 6 percent of the variation was explained by sex alone. More than the sex of the subject was responsible for where news stories about her appear in the Daily Times. Some of the factors that may have contributed had been talked about in the early chapters. For example, ownership and

control of the press, especially the Daily Times, editorship of the paper, and the news worthiness of stories about women are all contributing factors. The main factor may have been the woman herself for not making herself newsworthy through participation.

Of the 390 news stories on the front pages of the 90 issues in this investigation only 36 were about women compared to the 354 about men, a 10:1 ratio. The reason is not very different from those given earlier. For instance, news stories about men generally dominated that of women, for every eight on men, there was only one on women. It follows, therefore, that there will be more news stories about men appearing on the front pages of the Daily Times.

On the inside pages, the ratio is an outrageous 14:1, even though this is the section where news stories about women appeared the most. Most news stories about men, 76.7 percent, appeared on this section as well which probably contributed to the less number of news stories about women (Table II).

As far as the back pages go, the story is not a totally different one. Men clearly dominated women. Of the 374 news stories, only 47 were about women, a not so close 7:1 ratio. Not very impressive at all.

Finally, as expected, the author found that most news stories about men tended to portray them more as politician/public officials than as professionals. Of the combined 2,937 news stories, 1,022 were on professionals, while 1,915 were on politician/public officials, with a 2:1 ratio.

This probably is because the people making the news that is thought more important are the politicians and public officials. The reason may not be the news worthiness of the professional male, but probably because the press is assuming the role of the watch dog; in this case watching the government and their activities, and reporting back to the audience. But the important thing to note here is that the difference was not overwhelming. The ratio was only 2:1, an almost equal chance.

There is conclusive evidence here that the content of new stories in the Daily Times is clearly dominated by men by a 12:1 margin.

Summary

Analysis of the news stories on the overall and by sex issue showed an overwhelming significance. Sex was not solely responsible for the finding. Out of 4,306 news stories, only 323 were about women, less than half of all news stories with a significant chi square of 3111.047.

On the By Role and By Sex segment, most news stories portrayed men in the political/public official activities and most news stories about women portrayed in human interest activities.

In the politician/public official category, out of a total of 1,955 news stories, there were only 40 news stories about women as main characters, and 1,915 news stories with men as main characters. The difference was more than 50 percent.

The difference in the professional category is just like the above. Out of 1,078 news stories, only 56 were about women and 1,022 were about men, a difference of more than 50 percent.

More news stories about women appeared on the inside pages of the Daily Times as did news stories about men.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that the content of the news stories in the Daily Times of Nigeria have a lot to do with the ownership and the control of that press, as well as the sex of the subjects. This finding is expected and predictable considering the fact that the press is government owned.

Even though the author had expected a domination by men of the news stories, she did not expect the total domination that existed. The author is not very disappointed or discouraged because there is hope that in the future, perhaps in 10 years from now, there could be a change in the content of the news stories of the Daily Times.

Nigeria is only a developing nation too busy at this time trying to solve her economic and political problems to worry about the content of news stories in the media. As the economic and political situation improves and as more women get involved in political and economic activities, we may perhaps see a better coverage concerning women in the news.

As the attitude of the reporter and editor changes, in regard to their definition of news worthiness of women's activities and roles, there will also be a change in this category. More importantly, the attitude of Nigeria as a nation should have to change.

Sectioning news stories about women will also improve depending on the amount of improvement in the other areas affecting the sectioning of news stories. That is, there has to be a general improvement and increase in the total number of news stories about women and their roles and activities.

Since sex of the subjects was significant in the findings of this study, the conclusion may be that sex may be used as an evaluating factor in future studies of this kind.

Recommendations

The finding that the content of news stories in the Daily Times is dominated by men in political/public official roles and activities should be a concern not only to the press but also to the civilians and government. The press should make an effort to put a little balance to the news content. Even though the press is government property, it does not mean that it should be used solely to report government activities.

There should be an increase and an improvement in the recruitment of competent reporters and editors whose primary reason for becoming media men and women will not be the use of the opportunity as a climbing ladder to political power or other activities.

As Michael Asaju noted:

. . . The language of modern graduate journalists reflects the yearnings and demands for high academic standards in the profession but . . . lacks the dynamism to face the ethics of the profession with courage. It is common knowledge that most of the graduate editors are in the category of senior journalists who mortgaged their consciences and the pride of the profession for wealth via the alter, or closer to the corridors of power.¹

Therefore, the press should be made more attractive to the dynamic type of professionals that the industry needs in Nigeria. If this profession is made more attractive and glamorous, there will be no need for editors and reporters, as well as other prospective newspaper owners, to seek favors or use the press as a stepping stone to political power. This could corrupt them in the end.

The author recommends that the Nigerian woman be aware that she is an equal partner in making her news worthiness apparent and convincing to the press. She should not be afraid to participate in political activities as well as sporting activities. The women should make themselves available to the press and one way of being able to do this is by getting involved in the game of the ownership of the press. Getting involved with the managerial and administrative part of the press is equally as important.

Nigerian universities and colleges should provide research facilities for work in media studies. The quality of journalism should be upgraded and journalism students should be made to have a balanced development of mass media in Nigeria.

Finally, the author recommends a follow up on this study. She will make a recommendation that a representative sample of news stories and newspapers be included to show any significant differences that might exist between different newspapers.

ENDNOTE

¹Michael Asaju, "Assessing Nigeria's Newspapers," West Africa, October 6, 1980, p. 1943.

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$$\begin{array}{r} 16 \\ 2 \overline{) 313} \\ \underline{32} \\ 2 \overline{) 64} \end{array}$$

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

MAP OF NIGERIA



△ = State Capitals

Source: Nigeria Year Book, 1977-1978, Daily Times of Nigeria, Ltd.

Figure 5. Map of Nigeria Showing States and State Capitals

APPENDIX B

BREAKDOWN OF NIGERIAN POPULATION
AND DAILY PRINT MEDIA FIGURES

TABLE III
POPULATION AND SIZE OF THE STATES OF NIGERIA

State	Population	Size in km ²
Anambara	3,571,072	15,770
Bauchi	2,193,674	61,814
Bendel	2,435,839	38,061
Benue	3,041,194	69,740
Borno	2,990,526	116,589
Cross River	3,600,000	29,164
Gongola	3,002,808	102,067
Imo	3,658,125	13,032
Kaduna	4,098,305	70,293
Kano	5,774,842	42,123
Kwara	2,309,338	73,404
Lagos	1,443,567	3,535
Niger	1,271,767	73,555
Ondo	2,727,675	18,165
Ogun	1,551,946	20,241
Oyo	5,158,884	42,862
Plateau	2,026,657	56,245
Rivers	1,800,000	21,172
Sokoto	4,538,808	94,588

Source: Nigeria Year Book, 1978-1978, Daily Times of Nigeria, Ltd.

TABLE IV
CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS

Name	Circulation (in thousands)
<u>Daily Times</u>	200
<u>Daily Sketch</u>	70
<u>Daily Star</u>	50
<u>Daily Express</u>	10
<u>New Nigerian</u>	80
<u>Nigerian Observer</u>	70
<u>Nigerian Tide</u>	36
<u>Nigerian Chronicle</u>	25
<u>Nigerian Standard</u>	15
<u>Nigerian Herald</u>	40
<u>Nigerian Tribune</u>	60
<u>Evening Times</u>	30

Sources: Nigerian Media Rates and Conditions,
as of January 1, 1967, compiled by
Ogilvy, Benson, & Mather, Lagos,
1980.

2

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