



**NLA University  
College**

**An analysis of media framing of women in politics:  
Media coverage of the female presidential candidates  
in the 2019 elections in Nigeria**

TAIWO OLUFUNBI GEORGE

Master's thesis in Global Journalism at NLA University College  
Fall 2023

Supervisor: Bjørg Marit Nyjordet



## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere:

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to critically assess how the coverage and framing of women in politics by the Nigerian media influenced women's participation in politics, specifically during the 2019 elections. Grounded in the agenda-setting theory, mediatization of politics, and framing theory, the study aims to unravel the disparities and challenges female candidates face in the Nigerian media landscape, focusing on their portrayal, visibility, and framing across various news outlets. Employing a mixed methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the research aimed to dissect the intricate patterns of portrayal in the media. Drawing from 73 meticulously scrutinized articles from prominent Nigerian media outlets, including Punch, Vanguard, Guardian, and Daily Trust, the study probed into crucial aspects: the nature of news content, the frequency of appearance, and the visual representation through photographs. The findings revealed a stark contrast with existing literature, showcasing a minimal use of gender frames, which signifies a progressive stride towards more equitable media coverage. Despite these positive shifts, disparities persisted, with female candidates receiving noticeably less attention both in terms of text and visual representation. Female candidates were predominantly featured in political news stories, especially related to the elections, with limited coverage in general news, feature articles, and editorials with little coverage on critical issues like Education, Health, and the Environment. Still, they were mentioned in stories related to Fashion, Family, and Women's rights. Moreover, there were varying tones in articles, with a predominantly neutral tone for female candidates. This research not only challenges prevailing gender biases but also advocates for more inclusive media practices. The study calls for heightened awareness among journalists, practitioners, and policymakers, emphasizing the need for balanced, diverse, and gender-responsive reporting, thus fostering a more inclusive democratic discourse in Nigerian media.*

**Keywords:** Media frames, Women, Politics, News, Media, Nigeria

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First, I thank the Almighty God for guiding me through this journey.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the board and personnel of NLA Mediehøgskolen Gimlekollen for providing me with this transformative opportunity almost free of cost. I sincerely appreciate all your hard work and effort in educating every student who has graduated from the college.

I am also grateful to my supervisor, Bjørg Marit Nyjordet, who I believe is the best person to have accompanied me on this journey. Her encouragement and patience are greatly appreciated, as are her insightful remarks and suggestions regarding this thesis. In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their unwavering support over this highly demanding academic year.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Joshua Ativie, for his unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey. I am indeed grateful for having you in my life.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of The Study

The mass media, through print or broadcast, carries out three traditional roles: providing information, offering editorial commentary, and setting the political agenda (Ayodele & Saheed, 2017). These functions have been recognized as important in the study of mass media's role in politics and society. According to Ayodele & Saheed (2017), the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of an election process and the governing body media has a significant and powerful impact on society as a whole.

Many people rely on the media to stay informed about current events, which is an essential part of democracy- the right and freedom of information (de Vreese, 2005). However, according to Stromberg (2015), there are two different perspectives on the role of media in democratic processes. One opinion is that the media is important because it provides information to voters, but it may introduce biases that force politicians to deal with certain issues. Additionally, scholars argue it may also encourage politicians to cater to voters' incorrect beliefs (Van Aelst et al., 2017; McNair 2017; Erikson & Tedin, 2019). However, this role has been shown to be positive if it improves political accountability (Stromberg, 2015). The other perspective is that the media takes advantage of voters' cognitive mistakes and uses propaganda to manipulate them, which is concerning because it may sway voters against their interests (Stromberg, 2015). For instance, when discussing media framing, Entman (1993, p. 55) said, "How can even sincere democratic representatives respond correctly to public opinion when empirical evidence to it appears to be so malleable, so vulnerable to framing effects?" (Stromberg, 2015).

Framing is the art of presenting information in such a way that it affects the perception of individuals or groups (Chong & Druckman, 2007). According to de Vreese (2005), framers can influence people's opinions and attitudes toward events and situations by using carefully chosen words, imagery, context, and emphasis. There are different stages involved in the framing process, such as frame building, frame setting, and the consequences of framing on an individual and societal level (de Vreese, 2005). According to de Vreese (2005), framing concepts have significant

potential in the communication process. Chong & Druckman (2007) also posited that framing involves developing a conceptualization of an issue or reorienting thinking about it. The authors also highlighted that an issue can have multiple implications depending on the perspective from which it is viewed (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Media framing describes the method through which journalists, news organizations, and other media actors convey information in a particular way, highlighting some elements while underplaying or ignoring others. Media framing can have a big impact on how the public perceives female politicians, which can affect their chances of winning elections and their overall political career. Though it has changed over time, media framing has continued to shape and have an impact on how women are represented in politics.

According to a *Vanguard* report from 2020, Nigerian women make up approximately half of the country's population and are essential contributors to both their families and society as a whole. Despite the significant roles they play and their sizeable representation, evidence suggest that the Nigerian society is yet to recognize the worth of women in politics. For instance, Oyinade & Daramola (2013) noted that Nigerian women have been challenging their societal roles since the country's independence and had formed a movement to fight for women's rights, which has brought their issues to the forefront. Unfortunately, till date, only a few Nigerian women have been able to participate in and win elections. According to a report published by the Statista (2022), since 2019, there have only been 29 women (or around 6% of all members) in the Nigerian National Parliament, which includes both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The number of men is however 440 (Statista, 2022). Nevertheless, compared to the cabinet from 1990–2003, there was a significant increase.

Consequently, gender politics has split the Nigerian political arena into two camps, one seeking to uphold traditional societal norms while the other strives to dismantle the patriarchal system. The Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development has acknowledged that a sexist and patronage-based political culture, along with gender-based economic and household disparities, are some of the obstacles preventing women from participating in governance, as reported by *Vanguard* (2020). *Vanguard* (2020) and Osei-Appiah (2019) reported that, although women play important roles in society, these roles have not yet received enough recognition. Cultural stereotypes, inappropriate use of religion and customs, and patriarchal societal structures have been blamed for this (Vanguard, 2020). In Nigeria, recognition of women's contributions to national advancement grew

in the 1980s. Osei-Appiah (2019) reported that the 1995 International Conference on Women in Beijing improved the effective participation of women in politics in Nigeria. However, Ayodele and Saheed (2017) opined that long-standing patriarchal systems that generate, uphold, and perpetuate these positions have contributed to the marginalization of female politicians in the political sphere. Studies on the media's coverage of female politicians, however, reveal gender biases that favor male politicians both in terms of number and quality. A gendered lens of marginalization and sexist reporting is used to view coverage of female politicians, while coverage of male politicians is typically issue-based and demonstrates their policy ideas (Osei-Appiah, 2019; Ayodele & Saheed, 2017). Therefore, increasing the visibility of female politicians is a kind of protest against these systemic limitations as it challenges the dominance of men in politics while acting as a benchmark to inspire more women to enter the field.

Egbon (2007) asserted that the press wields the power to impact society beyond just individuals. This influence may either benefit or work against a nation's political, sociocultural, and economic interests. Furthermore, it can extend to significant global issues and matters of great importance (Egbon, 2007). *Punch Newspaper, The Sun, Vanguard, The Guardian, Thisday, Daily Trust, and Tribune* are among the top newspapers in Nigeria, according to research by the African Journal of Computing and ICT (AJCI, 2019; Oliha & Arthur, 2014). Due to their level of dependability and accessibility to the populace, Chigozie (2013) had earlier ranked *Punch Newspaper* and *The Guardian Newspaper* as two of the top 10 most-read online newspapers in Nigeria. However, when it comes to the media's portrayal of women in Nigerian politics, Nigeria has become divided into two groups as a result of this type of media-sponsored gender politics, suggestive of the fact that the media has relegated women to supporting roles in governance and politics (Oyinade, Daramola, & Lamidi, 2013).

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Women participate in governance at a relatively low rate in the majority of African nations. In Nigeria, things are not much better. Furthermore, over the course of Nigeria's 20 years of unbroken democracy, men have held a higher percentage of elective political positions than women, creating a disparity. According to Oluyemi (2016), Nigeria has been recording low levels of women in both elective and appointive positions despite concerted efforts by non-governmental organizations to

increase the level of participation of women in politics in line with the declaration made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which called for 30% affirmative action.

The underrepresentation of women in political involvement was caused by the deeply embedded patriarchal practices in our society, many of which were evident from the pre-colonial era until the present. However, since democracy has been restored, women's political engagement in both elected and appointed positions has expanded. In Nigeria, the average proportion of women in elected and appointed positions has remained at 6.7 percent, which is much lower than the averages for the world (22.5%), Africa (23.4%), and West Africa (15%) (Oluyemi, 2016).

The political and social dynamics of Nigeria have seen significant social advancements made by women, but these advancements have not translated into equal political power or position. It is common knowledge that women play important roles as front-runners and organizers of electorates to canvass support for a candidate from their specific political party across political party systems (Oyinade & Daramola 2017).

Nigeria had 91 political parties as of 2019, up from 26 in 2015 as a result of the registration of new parties. This allowed more people to run for a variety of political posts, which led to the rise of many female candidates since the majority of the new parties gave political seats to female candidates.

Given the expansion of the political field brought on by the emergence of more women candidates from the newly registered parties, it could be expected that media coverage and reportage of women candidates would also increase.

To give an empirical basis for judgment on the trajectory of media coverage of women candidates in the 2019 general elections, this study is an exploratory thesis that looks into and analyzes the media coverage of women presidential candidate before the 2019 elections.

### **1.3 Gap in literature**

Studies with a Western focus still make up the majority of the research on women politicians and media coverage. Despite a large increase, little is known about non-Western contexts like those in Africa (Osei-Appiah 2019). As a result, there is a vast knowledge gap about how African media represent their female politicians. In light of this, this study's focus on Nigeria seeks to contribute



to reduce this gap. Using Nigeria as a case study, this research on media coverage of the female presidential candidate in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria draws on the agenda-setting theory and framing theory to investigate its critical and interrelated problems.

#### **1.4 Scope of study**

The examination of election-related news articles published in the daily *Punch* and *The Guardian Newspaper* editions for the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019 is the exclusive focus of this study. The period selected was the one that is closest to the first round of voting for the 2019 presidential election, which took place on February 23, 2019.

It should be noted that candidates nominated by political parties for elections cannot be removed within 45 days of the elections, by the rules of section 33 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended). Therefore, any candidate who was mentioned in the media during the chosen months of January and February 2019 was a legitimate candidate running in the elections and not just an aspirant. Therefore, the months of January and February 2019 marked the peak of the campaign season for candidates in the elections, which includes media-related activities (rallies, media engagement/interviews, and press releases).

The choice of newspaper was heavily influenced by two factors. The first is that both Newspapers, which have different readership strengths in southern and northern Nigeria, have a suitable national reach and a generally cutting edge.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

About the coverage and reporting of women in the Nigerian media, there have been numerous studies conducted. Finding out how women politicians were portrayed in the media during the 2019 elections is very important.

Therefore, it is anticipated that this study will make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge and that it will be valuable for further intellectual engagement by academic researchers, civil society, media, development advocates, and gender rights activists, especially to increase the participation of women in elective positions.

More importantly, using the 2019 elections as a benchmark, this study will significantly advance the advancement of strategic or deliberate editorial policies, to provide news platforms to engender the coverage of women in the reporting of politics and governance issues in future elections.

## **1.6 Research Aim and Objectives**

This research aims to critically assess how the coverage and framing of women in politics by the Nigerian media influenced women's participation in politics, specifically during the 2019 elections.

The following objectives are developed to address the research question and aim:

- 1) To examine the dominant frames used by named print news media organizations in their coverage of both male and female politicians during the 2019 Nigerian elections.
- 2) To critically assess the differences, if any, in the framing of male and female politicians by the Nigerian media during the 2019 elections, with a focus on identifying any gender-based biases or stereotypes.
- 3) To evaluate the visibility of female politicians in selected newspapers from the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019, as compared to their male counterparts, by analyzing the frequency of picture appearances, mentions in headlines, and the number of times their names appeared in the articles.
- 4) To analyze and compare the framing of stories (including news, reports, and interviews) about female candidates with their male counterparts during the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019 in selected newspapers, aiming to identify any distinct patterns or portrayals that may have influenced public perception and participation in politics.

## 1.7 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the dominant frames used by the named print news media organizations to cover both male and female politicians?
  - a) What are the differences if any between how the males and females are framed?
2. How visible were the female politicians in the named newspapers from the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019 as compared to their male counterparts considering the main subjects in the stories (news, reports, and interviews), and the number of picture appearances of both parties?
  - (a) How often were their pictures used in the headlines?
  - (b) How many times did their names appear in the articles?
  - (c) How much coverage did the women receive compared to the men and is there any visible pattern here?
3. How are stories (including news, reports, and interviews) about female candidates framed in the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019 in comparison with their male counterparts in these newspapers?

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1. Historical perspective of women in politics.**

The extent of women's active involvement in traditional political governance in Nigeria prior to the colonial era remains a subject of debate (Akinboye, 2004). Nonetheless, there were prominent women in the pre-colonial period, such as Queen Amina of Zaria, Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan, Moremi of the Ife Kingdom, Inikpi of Igalaland, Emotan, and Idia of the Benin Kingdom, as well as Omu Okwel of the Ossomari Kingdom. These women held significant political influence during that time. However, the advent of colonial rule brought about gender policies, economic interests, and entrenched patriarchal values, resulting in the reinforcement of gender inequality in Nigeria (Akinboye, 2004). The 1922 Clifford Constitution exemplified this by allowing Nigerians to be elected to legislative offices but prohibiting women from seeking such positions. The early political parties were predominantly male-dominated, and no woman secured any of the three legislative seats designated for Nigerians in the legislative council in 1922. This marked the beginning of male dominance in Nigerian politics and the marginalization of women from mainstream political participation (Ajayi, 2007).

Moreover, these patterns of marginalization persisted over time. The 2015 presidential election did not bring about a significant change in the unequal participation of women in Nigerian politics. Out of the 14 presidential contenders approved by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), only one was a woman—Professor Comfort Oluremi Sonaiya of KOWA. The vice presidential race also had a significant gender disparity, with 13 male candidates and only 4 women, including Anthony Faith Ologbosere of the African People's Alliance (APA), Hassan of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and Arabamhen Mary of the Peoples Party of Nigeria (PPN) (Ayodele & Saheed, 2017).

Political reports based on federal government data in 2019 indicated a significant increase in the percentage of women in elected positions between 1999 and 2007, rising from 2.3% to 7.8% across both houses of the legislature. However, these gains were reportedly lost during the 2011 election cycle (Osei-Appiah, 2019). In the 2015 elections, women constituted 5.6% of the lower house (20 out of 359) and 6.4% of the upper house (7 out of 109). After the 2019 elections, women's

representation in the Nigerian Senate increased slightly to 7.3%, and in the House of Representatives, it stood at 3.1%. However, no women were serving as state governors (Vanguard, 2020). Despite the fact that approximately 51 percent of women actively participate in voting during elections, they continue to be underrepresented in both elected and appointed positions in Nigeria. The overall political representation of women in the Nigerian government remains below 7 percent (Agbalajobi, 2010), falling far short of the 30 percent affirmative action target set by the Beijing Platform of Action. This persistent underrepresentation of women in politics remains a significant concern for Nigeria's political landscape.

## **2.2. The role of the media in elections**

In democratic societies, the media plays a crucial role in providing information, disseminating knowledge about the electoral process, and enabling citizens to express their opinions to the government (Bauer, 2013; Ayodele & Saheed, 2017). This medium shapes public opinion and raises awareness of social, political, and economic events worldwide, while also promoting discourse and fostering a healthy democratic culture (Ayodele & Saheed, 2017).

According to Singh & Pandey (2017), the media reflects and portrays society's functioning, making it an essential tool for keeping people informed in various formats like print, electronic, and online. It serves as the foundation of democracy, enhancing citizen participation and fostering democracy and development (Dimitrova et al., 2014). Access to adequate information dissemination is crucial during elections, with the media ensuring equal coverage for all participants in the electoral process (IIDEE, 2011).

The media's significance in democratic elections is emphasized by Omenugua (2014) and Ross & Comrie (2012), who highlights how it facilitates access, transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making, vital aspects of good governance. Arogundade (2019) stresses the importance of fair media coverage in electoral processes, as biased reporting may erode public trust and lead to low patronage of certain media sources. To maintain professionalism, the media must ensure comprehensive and unbiased reporting of election-related issues, presenting diverse perspectives without taking sides (Arogundade, 2019).

Overall, the media's role in providing impartial and balanced reporting is fundamental in democratic societies, as it empowers citizens, facilitates informed choices, and strengthens the democratic process.

### **2.3 The Concept of Media Frames**

According to D'Angelo (2017), the concept media frame is at the center of a dynamic research program in the field of communication. A media frame is a written, spoken, graphical, or visual message modality that a communicator uses to contextualize a topic, such as a person, event, episode, or issue, within a text transmitted to receivers by means of mediation (D'Angelo, 2017). The existing body of scholarly literature pertaining to media frames place much emphasis on the importance of gender frames, the depiction of individual characteristics and concerns, the tone of written pieces, visibility, and the methodology applied in research. While there are certain perspectives that converge, illustrating the pivotal function of media frames in influencing perceptions, there are also divergent viewpoints that present different outlooks, emphasising the intricate and diverse character of media framing (Bauer, 2008).

Gender frames in media encompass a range of factors, as highlighted by scholars such as Ette (2017) and Jaiyeola (2020). These frames include marital status, physical appearance, place of marriage, age, place of birth, and gender. The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society emphasizes certain categories such as marital status, physical appearance, and place of marriage, often leading to extensive discussions in media coverage (Ette, 2017). In examining media frames, it becomes crucial to consider the absence of outcomes under specific categories. For instance, the absence of outcomes under marital status and physical appearance categories during a particular season could be attributed to media prioritization of more pressing issues, reflecting evolving societal attitudes and journalistic choices. Holman and Schneider (2018) suggest that an essential factor in comprehending political ambition is the use of gender frame. They underscore the importance of intersectionality in investigating the manner in which gender and race cross to shape political representation. In contrast, the scholarly work conducted by Gever (2019) explores the difficulties presented by gender frameworks within the specific context of Nigeria's anti-open grazing law. According to Gever (2019), the influence of media frames on public debate is significant, as they have the potential to both shape and exacerbate conflicts, thereby highlighting the complex and

diverse nature of gender framing. The aforementioned divergent perspectives provide insight into the intricate interplay between gender frameworks and their influence on social dynamics.

Media frames also extend to personal traits, categorizing them as positive or negative, and are assessed through the tone and language used in articles. Positive traits may be highlighted to create a favorable image, while negative traits can lead to unfavorable portrayals. This framing technique, explored by Cappella & Jamieson, (1996), Jamieson & Capella, (2008) and Jamieson & Taussig (2017). showcases how picture appearance and language choices shape perceptions of political candidates, impacting public opinion. Furthermore, Media frames encompass the issues highlighted in news coverage, such as Economy/Business, Governance/Democracy, Politics, and others. The selection of specific issues within news narratives can influence public discourse and political agendas (Van Aelst et al., 2017). For instance, a focus on corruption or education can sway public opinion regarding political candidates' suitability for office. Bryant & Finklea (2022) assert the paramount importance of frames, contending that they exert a substantial influence on audience attitudes. Evers (2016), however, introduces an additional level into media coverage positing that frames encompass not just the presentation of issues but also underscore the intricate relationship between tone and content in shaping discourse. Both viewpoints recognize the significance of media frames, but they emphasize distinct aspects of their impact.

Ahmad (2022) in his research '*Analysis of Media Bias—Glenn Beck TV Shows: A Content Analysis*', asserted that media outlets framed Hillary Clinton's campaign by focusing on various aspects. According to Ahmad (2022), the media highlighted her policy positions, qualifications, and personal characteristics. However, gender-related issues also played a significant role in the framing. Ahmad (2022) further reported that the media coverage also emphasised physical appearance and family association, which are common stereotypes associated with women politicians. It is however worthy to note that Clinton was a former First Lady, U.S. Senator, and Secretary of State, which arguably brought significant political experience to her candidacy. For this reason, her campaign aimed to build on her qualifications while addressing various policy issues such as healthcare, the economy, and foreign relations. In a similar vein, Ross & Comrie (2012) contend that a meticulous, multilayered examination of print and broadcast news surrounding a general election (New Zealand, 2008), particularly coverage of Labour Party (Helen Clark) and National Party (John Key) leaders, reveals evident bias against the incumbent (a senior

female) in support of the challenger (a younger male), despite journalistic claims of impartiality. The visibility of the two leaders, as measured by column inches, their usage as quoted sources, and the tone and tenor of the news coverage are all indicators of this bias. Although there were few overt instances of discriminatory commentary, Clark's personal qualities, such as her age and gender, were subtly exploited on numerous occasions to undermine her ongoing qualifications for the top position (Ross & Comrie 2012).

The tone of media coverage, whether positive or negative, contributes significantly to framing (Ette, 2017). Positive or negative language choices can influence the audience's emotional response and perception of events or individuals. Ali & Gill's (2022) analysis of Hurricane Harvey coverage illustrates how tone impacts public sentiment and shapes the discourse surrounding natural disasters. Similarly, visibility in media frames refers to the prominence given to individuals, measured by factors like name mentioned in titles, frequency of name mentions in articles, and the use of images in headlines. Additionally, the type of story, whether news, opinion, editorial, or feature, determines the depth and context of the coverage. Jacobs & Meeusen's (2021) study on the visibility and framing of LGBT individuals in television news demonstrates how different story types can influence societal perceptions and acceptance. Iyengar & Kinder (2010) showed how media framing influences the way audiences perceive political actors and issues. Their findings suggested that uneven coverage can contribute to public misconceptions and reinforce gender stereotypes (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010). Norris & Lovenduski (1995) also noted that uneven media portrayals of candidates can discourage women from entering politics or seeking leadership roles. The research conducted by Bauer & Becker, (2015) suggested that male candidates were more likely to receive attention for a wide range of issues, thus contributing to their perceived competence across various policy areas. The authors suggested that framing women candidates in diverse roles, including policy experts and leaders across different domains, can counteract the "double bind" dilemma and expand public perceptions. The media can contribute to a more comprehensive portrayal of women capabilities by including women in general news stories, feature pieces, and editorials (Bauer & Becker, 2015).

This study will therefore examine the framing with the context of Gender frames, Personal traits, Issues covered, Tone of article, Visibility and Type of Study



## **2.4 The Media Framing of Women in Politics**

In a study conducted by Oyesomi & Oyero (2012) analyzing newspaper coverage of women's participation in the 2011 general elections in Nigeria, it was observed that The Punch and The Guardian, among other Nigerian newspapers, did not provide sufficient coverage of women's involvement in the election compared to their male counterparts. Out of the 464 stories analyzed, only 62 reports were focused on women's participation, accounting for a mere 9.1% of the total coverage, including the presidential, gubernatorial, and legislative elections.

The concept of media framing analysis can be traced back to Goffman's seminal essay "Framing analysis: An essay on the organization of Experience" published in 1974. Framing, as one of the media effects theories, is frequently used to examine how the media filter information and influence the public's response to various external stimuli (de Vreese, 2005). This theory suggests that the media can emphasize specific news stories through strategies such as selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2014), providing journalists with a rationale for presenting a story or topic in a particular manner. Bystrom et al., (2001) limited media exposure to female candidates in diverse contexts can perpetuate a narrow perception of their roles, expertise, and leadership abilities, while the extensive coverage of male candidates across various story types might also contribute to a more holistic public perception of their capabilities.

According to McQuail (2005), as cited in Olisa (2015), media framing can be studied in two ways: individually and through the media. The individual frame focuses on an individual's understanding of a particular situation and is often linked to Goffman's study on framing from 1974. On the other hand, media framing, which is more relevant to this discussion, involves the strategies, visuals, and language used by media outlets to present and interpret a specific topic. Media frames serve as working routines for journalists, enabling them to quickly categorize and organize information for effective transmission to their audience (Scheufele, 1999).

Various studies on women's participation in Nigerian elections have consistently shown that the media in the country does not provide adequate attention to the coverage of women candidates (Osei-Appiah, 2019; Oyinade & Daramola, 2017; Oyinade et al., 2003). Due to limited campaign finances, media owners and proprietors have been urged to allocate sufficient room or airtime to women politicians (Osei-Appiah, 2019). Insufficient media coverage during election campaigns, driven by profit motives of media owners, has been identified as a contributing factor to gender

disparity in Nigerian politics (Oyinade & Daramola, 2017). Oyinade et al., (2003) conducted a study on newspaper coverage of gender inequality in Nigerian media and found that newspapers included pictures of female-related stories without providing any context for such images. This lack of coverage also affected female politicians like Hon. Barrister (Mrs.) Ugochi Nnanna-Okoro, who was denied access to the state's radio station during the general elections of 2003 because she did not obtain permission from the state government.

Despite the global increase in the number of women holding political positions (Kasomo, 2014), there is compelling evidence that women politicians are *symbolically undermined* in media representation (Tuchman, 1978; Ette, 2017). Male politicians are more frequently featured as experts, panelists, and interview subjects in political news stories and discussion shows compared to their female counterparts. For instance, Kasomo (2012) observed that out of 18 female Members of Parliament in Zambia, only 6 were covered by a government-affiliated newspaper during the course of a year. Similarly, Katembo (2005) noted that only 26 female politicians, compared to 313 male politicians, were featured as news sources in the Sunday Times during the 2004 South African general election. Salem & Mejbri (2014) demonstrated how, despite expanded political access for women during the 2011 Tunisian revolution, their voices were conspicuously absent in local news reports, in contrast to international media that prominently featured Tunisian women's political activity.

Anyanwu (2001) highlighted that the Nigerian media, predominantly male-dominated, perpetuates bias and gender inequality within the organization. Women's issues are marginalized and obscured by the media's selective reporting of news. Despite calls for gender-responsive reporting, the media continues to focus on specific stories, neglecting the representation of women in prominent positions and elected seats, thus perpetuating the impression that women are disengaged from important matters. Anyanwu (2001) also criticized the media for featuring women's pictures on the cover page for their appearance but lacking substantive content where their voices should be heard, reinforcing the notion that women are indifferent to their surroundings.

Gender parity in political reporting was advocated by Ozoemena (2006), who highlighted that while gender itself may not inherently pose a social threat, the associated stereotypes have been successful in fueling debates within our culture. The findings of her study indicated a significant underrepresentation of women in news items, with males outnumbering females in published

stories. Ozoemena (2006) argued that this gender disparity in media coverage is primarily attributed to the dominance of men in controlling the media landscape. Male media professionals, often considered more qualified for tasks such as conducting exclusive interviews with influential figures, hold the authority to define news content and make hiring and firing decisions in the majority of media companies. The study also revealed a pattern of sidelining women in the media, with minimal appearances on top pages. The underrepresentation of women in newspaper stories compared to men was evident in the findings. Ozoemena (2006) concluded that this situation arises from the fact that male journalists shape the world's perception and understanding through their reporting, a reflection of societal structures where men hold central positions of power.

According to UNESCO (2012) research, the adoption of gender stereotypes in reporting creates mental barriers, limiting both women and men's potential, and perpetuating false impressions of the world and its possibilities. The media's significant influence on public perception of gender necessitates the avoidance of gender stereotypes in reporting. Highlighting societal impositions on gender roles, Oyinade et al. (2013) pointed out that women are often stereotyped as soft, caring, weak, and submissive, while being a feminist is wrongly equated to being anti-family. Conversely, men are expected to be aggressive and dominant. These imposed gender roles contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequalities in various aspects of society.

A study conducted by Dunu (2014) shed light on the backdrop of gender reporting by the Nigerian media, where she emphasized the "invisibility" of women's voices and pictures in media representation. Dunu (2014) identified several ways in which the media constructs women in politics, such as portraying them as individuals who have deviated from traditional gender norms by entering the public sphere. Women are often highlighted in the media when involved in scandals, controversies, conflicts, or when linked to powerful men. These portrayals often reinforce general themes that suggest politics is not suitable for women or that women in politics are not considered "good women" (Dunu, 2014).

Omenugha (2014) shared a similar view, urging the media to combat harmful gender stereotypes that hinder women's participation in politics. She emphasized the need for reporting on political and electoral issues from a "gender-sensitive perspective," focusing on preventing gender discrimination and promoting equal access and participation. Omenugha (2014) called for intentional inclusion of more women in reporting through empowerment reporting, which

identifies marginalized groups and provides them with reliable coverage. Addressing issues that deter women from seeking elective office, ensuring equal access to the media for both genders, and identifying cultural biases against gender equality are among the crucial steps to be taken (Omenugha, 2014).

To mainstream gender in political and election reporting, Omenugha (2014) proposed several initiatives for journalists and media organizations, including understanding women's perspectives and concerns, providing women politicians with platforms to discuss their issues, covering women candidates in electoral contests, and presenting viewpoints of voters. Balancing reporting on men's and women's achievements, conducting interviews with members of both political parties, and creating special programs and articles were also recommended as part of the effort to ensure gender mainstreaming in media coverage (Omenugha, 2014).

Yusuf (2014) emphasizes the media's responsibility to address any disadvantages women may face due to prior prejudice, ensuring equal representation of women in news stories. This requires treating participants equally as news providers and subjects (Yusuf, 2014, p. 29). Hannah Storm, CEO of the Ethical Journalism Network, in her paper titled "Bad News for Women," succinctly outlines media expectations in promoting women's issues. According to her, the media should depict society as it is and as it ought to be, which involves increased reporting on women, especially in male-dominated industries, and giving them equal attention as their male counterparts. This portrayal is crucial in presenting successful women as role models worth emulating, as visibility plays a key role in shaping societal aspirations (Storm, 2019).

The challenge of low media coverage of women is not unique to Nigeria but a global issue across various media platforms. Findings from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) in 2021 indicate a consistent underrepresentation of women in news coverage compared to men. Over two decades, the gender aspects of news media have only shown modest and gradual changes. Women constitute only 24% of news subjects, and even in issues significantly affecting women, the male voice dominates, with women's perspectives rarely heard (GMMP, 2015). The 2015 edition of GMMP further revealed a predominance of male journalists, as women accounted for only 24% of those featured in newspapers, television, and radio news. This discrepancy is evident in both traditional (print and broadcast) and new electronic media forms (GMMP, 2015). Research by Lawless & Fox (2005;2010) further underscores how limited media coverage of female candidates

can discourage women from pursuing political careers. According to Lawless & Fox (2010), the lack of media attention may convey a perception that politics is a male-dominated domain, deterring women from entering the political arena. Bauer & Becker's (2015) research highlights how media framing influences voters' assessments of candidates' qualifications and policy positions.

From the above, it is evident that the media's role in elections and the democratic life of a country is crucial, significantly influencing the advancement of women in the political sphere. However, while the media holds considerable power in shaping perceptions and promoting gender equality, these effects are not absolute (GMMP, 2015).

#### **2.4.1 Media Coverage of Female Politicians**

Some studies outside Nigeria have examined news coverage of female politicians, exploring various aspects such as the number of paragraphs allocated to them (Kahn, 1992; Devitt, 1999; Jalalzai, 2006; Lawless & Fox, 2005; 2010; Miller et. al., 2010), their frequency of appearance in the news (Andrews & Caren, 2010), and their prominence in news stories based on focus, headlines, images, and the type of news organization (Bystrom et al., 2001; Krijnen et al., 2011; Dan & Iorgoveanu, 2013). Additionally, studies have investigated whether female politicians were quoted in news stories (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Semetko & Boomgaarden, 2007; Vos, 2013; Hooghe et. al., 2015). Nevertheless, there is compelling evidence indicating a bias in favor of male politicians, with them receiving more attention and quotes in the media (Vos, 2013; Osei-Appiah, 2019; Banwart & Kearney (2022). However, results from these studies have shown this featuring of female politicians depends on factors such as the election setting, candidates, or news style (Wagner et. al., 2017). Bystrom et. al., (2001) limited media exposure to female candidates in diverse contexts can perpetuate a narrow perception of their roles, expertise, and leadership abilities, while the extensive coverage of male candidates across various story types might also contribute to a more holistic public perception of their capabilities.

Over the past two decades of Nigeria's uninterrupted democracy studies have focused on the media's coverage of female candidates in electoral contests. Despite efforts to achieve gender equality and fairness, women in Nigeria continue to face significant obstacles, with media portrayal of women in politics and seeking leadership positions being less favorable compared to their male counterparts. The media's role is crucial in shaping perceptions and influencing public

opinion, making it an essential instrument for promoting women's participation in Nigerian politics (Anorue et. al., 2012; Oyewole & Olisa, 2017).

Studies on media coverage of women in Nigeria indicate that barriers such as social, cultural, religious, and political stereotypes hinder gender mainstreaming. Reports from the 2011 African Media Barometer (AMB) highlight disparities in media coverage, with women running for public office receiving less attention than male candidates (AMB, 2011). The 2015 media monitoring report by the International Press Centre (IPC) and the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) reveals underrepresentation of women's voices in political discourse, with only 4.7% of total voices used as sources in media reports on election-related issues belonging to women (IPC & NPC, 2015). Moreover, coverage of Nigeria's 2015 general elections was found to be biased towards men (IPC & NPC, 2015).

Compared to their male colleagues, who were the sources of choice most of the time, female politicians, particularly candidates, received less attention. As over 90% of the political sources in the media outlets under observation were men, this did not demonstrate enough coverage of the elections that was gender supportive. While it was clear that media coverage was biased toward male politicians who were more visible in the race for electoral office at the federal level, coverage of female politicians was less prominent before the state-level elections when there were more female candidates as seen in the 2015 Nigerian Democratic Report (IPC & NPC, 2015)

Scholars and researchers who support feminism continue to bemoan how women are portrayed in the media. In contrast to their male colleagues, Oyesomi & Oyero (2012) found that newspapers did not adequately report on women's participation in the election. The study, which lasted 9 months (December 2010–August 2011), found that just 62 of the 464 tales that were studied focused on women's engagement, with the remaining 402 stories focusing on men. The fact that only 13% of news space was devoted to reporting on women while 87% of the same space was devoted to reporting on males demonstrates how little attention was paid to women's participation in elections. Banwart & Kearney (2022).

In a study that looked at gendered portrayal of political actors in Nigerian print media, Eshiet (2013) found that the coverage of the cases was gendered, with the female Speaker's case being sensationalized, hyped, and trivialized in a study that looked at how *The Punch* and *The Guardian* covered the corruption allegations against two former Speakers of the House of Representatives (a

male and a female, respectively), during the 2007–2011 administration. The findings show that whereas *The Punch* and *Guardian* newspapers wrote a total of 198 and 155 stories on the female speaker over the course of 72 days, they only had 31 and 15 items to say about the male speaker, respectively, over 84 days. It should be mentioned that during the study's time frame, both the male and female speakers were allegedly accused of abusing their positions of authority. The male Speaker was accused of misappropriating funds while the female Speaker was accused of doing so in an N628 million contract scam involving the refurbishment of the official mansion of the House leadership. For the procurement of vehicles for the house leadership and standing committees, a N2.3 billion contract was made.

According to the study by Eshiet (2013), the male speaker's story had just 588 and 266 paragraphs in each of the two dailies, whereas the female speaker's story had 3,660 and 2,844 paragraphs, respectively. Regarding editorials, the female Speaker's story garnered three in each daily, compared to the male Speaker's receiving just one in *The Punch* and none in *The Guardian*. Similar to how the male Speaker's tale has only eight and six headlines, respectively, the female Speaker's story gets 58 and 53 headlines in each of the relevant dailies.

In another study, Enwefah (2016) found that there is a significant male predominance in the editorial and reportorial sections of Nigerian newspapers through a content analysis study of gender representations in four Nigerian newspapers. The study's findings indicated that newspapers had 75% male newsroom personnel compared to a 25% female newsroom staff. There were 7% women on the editorial team, compared to 93% men for the editorials. The results of the study by Enwefah (2016) served as a benchmark and provided insight into why media reports in Nigeria continued to be predominately written by men since this would inevitably show in the usage of men as sources in media reports. The reportorial and editing staff's male predominance echoes and supports the GMMP 2015 conclusion that "the journalistic gender lens in source selection is male-centered."

Furthermore, Ette (2017) examined the spatial representation of Nigerian women politicians in the news media during the 2015 general elections and noted that women not only had limited coverage but were also marginalized in political news, despite long-standing efforts for gender equality. Similarly, Ojebuyi & Chukwunwike (2018) conducted a study titled "Gender Bias in media representation of political actors: Examples from Nigeria's 2015 presidential election," which also

found significant disparities in media coverage of male and female presidential candidates during Nigeria's 2015 presidential election. The researchers attributed this imbalance to the media's tendency to prioritize reporting on male politicians over female politicians during election campaigns.

There are, however, a few studies that have compared other factors outside of the media's control to the low representation of women in the media. Researchers like Murrays & Syed (2010) have noted that in addition to media attention, other important characteristics that affect a politician's electability are their political party affiliation, ethnicity, gender, and financial clout. Additionally, Sarikakis (2013) stated in a study titled "Media and the Image of Women" that more women need to hold leadership positions in newsrooms if they want to see more diverse representations of women in media content, which goes hand in hand with the rise of women in these positions in the new media environments.

According to Endong & Obonganwan (2015), the media's content is reflective of the culture in which it operates, and it is influenced by various external forces, such as culture, religion, and education, which in turn shape the representation of women in the media. The study highlights that media content is often adjusted to align with societal beliefs and realities to appear realistic and emotionally appealing to the audience. The misrepresentation of women in the media is attributed to gender relations and other dynamics present in Nigerian society. The researchers suggest that to address women's stereotyping and misrepresentation in media content effectively, revolutionary social changes favoring women's emancipation should be initiated in the other ideological state apparatuses that have significant control over the media and its output (Endong & Obonganwan, 2015, p. 105).

In a similar vein, Ogwezzy-Ndisika & Faustino, (2017)'s study on the "scorecard of the 2015 general election" suggested that media organizations adopt the philosophy of gender-responsive reporting by putting in place policies that create more access to female candidates and politicians to give better projection to women's issues generally. Additionally, they noted that media organizations should ensure that their reports on electoral processes are more inclusive by improving their use of female experts and feminists as sources while also requesting commitment from female politicians and women-led organizations as sources for stories about the female gender and democratic governance. To make its communications policy more gender-sensitive, the



Nigerian government was advised by the research to set a minimum threshold for the representation of women's voices in political media reports.

According to a study done in Kenya by Siringi & Nduva (2018), the media's skewed coverage of female political leaders is predicated on how they interact with the outlet. The study concluded that women in public leadership needed to better connect with the media constructively and share information and personal perspectives when needed. It also noted that not all the blame for skewed media coverage could be placed on the media organization. According to the study, the media emphasizes the superiority of the masculine gender, as is advanced in patriarchal countries, rather than actively promoting the gender narrative. Siringi & Nduva (2018) concluded that the media in Kenya has selected gendered lenses as seen by the poor representation of important women in leadership.

## **2.5 Theoretical framework of the study**

### **2.5.1. Agenda-setting theory**

The agenda-setting hypothesis examines how the media has an impact on how a given subject is placed on the public's agenda. Additionally, the public agenda is the principal topic or issue on which the general public or members of society are most focused. McCombs & Shaw (1972) are the first to use the phrase agenda-setting theory. Furthermore, this theory describes the connections between the attention that the mass media places on a problem and the media audiences' or the general public's perceptions of that problem (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

The agenda-setting theory has been regarded as a crucial theory for studying mass communication as well as other related social science fields including political communication (Reese, 1991). According to the agenda-setting theory, the mass media that mass media are likely to "set the agenda" as it influences what the audience is thinking of, but not how they think of it. (Cohen, 1963). The audience's perceptions, values, priorities, and emphasis can all be influenced or contributed to by mainstream media. This theory suggests that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. The agenda-setting theory holds significant relevance within the scope of this research. Due to the mass media's influence, media audiences often establish their own opinions or concentrate on topics that they deem important enough to put on their mental agendas (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Figure 2.1 depicts the operational mechanisms of the agenda-Setting Theory. The media exercises its discretion in choosing a specific subject or "reality" that is occurring inside a given culture. They subsequently make the decision regarding the narrative's "frame" in order to influence public perception. Both the concept of "reality" and the manner in which the media portrays a particular topic contribute to the formation of individuals' "perception of reality." Therefore, it is possible to assume that the mass media is accountable for influencing and reshaping popular opinion and agenda. It is possible for the media to purposefully or accidentally affect the public's agenda or perspective (Iyengar & Kinder: 2010).

Between academics that support and disagree with Cohen's 1963 viewpoint, there is an ongoing discussion and the main questions surrounding media influence are how much and how directly the media affect public opinion. According to some recent research (Gross & Aday, 2003;

Matsaganis & Payne, 2005; McCombs & Shaw, 2005), personal factors may be able to lessen the effects of media agenda-setting on a person or audience.

These were largely influenced by the media listeners' underlying knowledge and comprehension of the topic or agenda that the media portrayed (Carter, 1996). Additionally, the facts they learned from the media are less likely to sway their beliefs (Matsaganis & Payne: 2005; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Furthermore, those who live distant from the information presented or who find it difficult to get information from the media cannot be influenced by the media in this way to create an opinion (Lippmann, 1922).

The theoretical framework facilitates comprehension of the manner in which media portrayal influences the collective perception of political figures, with a special focus on women engaged in the political sphere. Media organizations possess the ability to shape public attention and priorities through their selection of political individuals or problems to emphasize. The examination of the media's agenda-setting function in the context of the 2019 Nigerian elections can provide insights into the extent to which female politicians received fair and equal coverage in comparison to their male counterparts (McCombs et. al., 2014),

This study incorporates the utilization of agenda-setting theory to examine the selection of politicians and problems that received prominence in the Nigerian media. Through an analysis of the media's choice of subjects and themes, this study aims to evaluate whether female politicians were given equitable levels of attention and if their campaigns and policies were presented in a manner equivalent to their male counterparts. A comprehensive assessment of the visibility and representation of women in politics during elections necessitates a thorough comprehension of the media's influence on setting the political agenda.

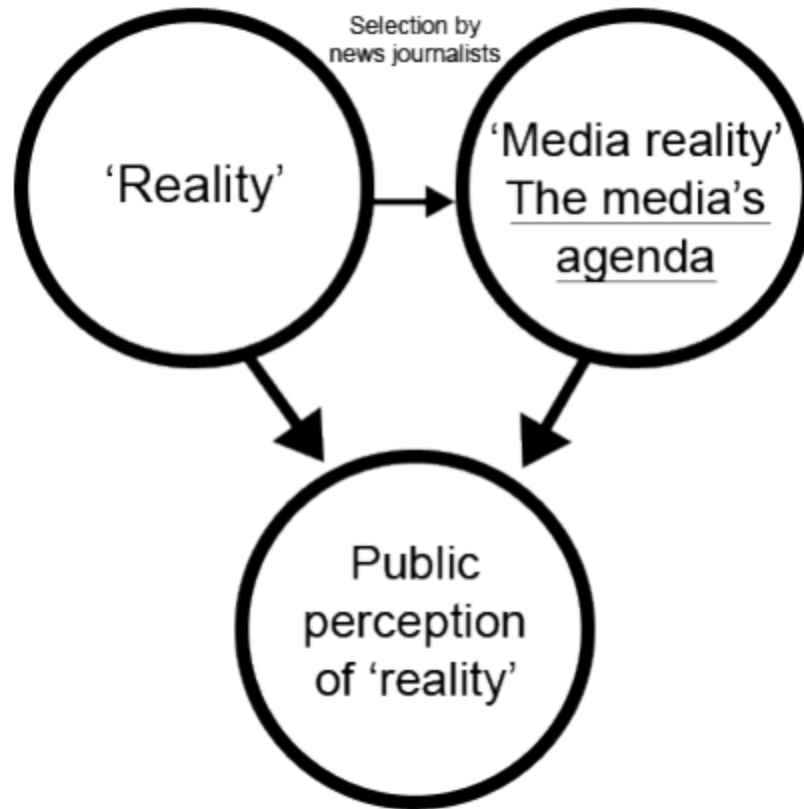


Figure 2.1: Agenda-setting theory

Source: Alonzo (2014)

### 2.5.2 Media Framing Theory

For many years, the media framing theory has been a key idea in communication and media studies. It asserts that media outlets can sway public attitudes by providing information in a chosen manner and constructing stories. The media framing theory's recognition of the impact of the media on public opinion is one of its main advantages. The agenda for public debate is defined in large part by the media, which plays a critical role in determining what is deemed significant and relevant. It is a potent tool for defining agendas because it can influence public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors by framing tales in specific ways (Entman, 1993).

According to Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007), the idea of framing in media communications is founded on the presumption that how a story is presented in news broadcasts can affect how the

audience interprets it. This suggests that society can be persuaded to interpret and understand an event in a particular way through the media's use of frames while reporting on events. Media framing can influence how society views particular problems, occasions, and people. It affects how consumers interpret wider sociopolitical reality as well as how they comprehend news articles in particular. Media outlets can quietly sway public perception by highlighting some features and downplaying others, which could have an impact on public policy and societal development (Gitlin, 1980).

In scholarly literature, framing has been defined by several researchers. Entman (2007) describes framing as the process of selecting specific fragments of social issues and giving them greater importance and prominence in communication contexts. According to Severin & Tankard (2001), media framing involves organizing news items through the use of selection, emphasis, inclusion, exclusion, and elaboration. Critical Media Review (2016) defines media framing as the specific vantage point or viewpoint from which a news item is presented. The concept of framing has some drawbacks including the ability to reinforce media bias which the media framing theory helps reveal. Media institutions and journalists frequently take specific ideological positions, whether deliberately or unconsciously, which results in skewed framing. The likelihood of open communication and understanding between various groups is constrained by biased framing because viewers are exposed to various narratives that support their preexisting beliefs (Iyengar & Kinder 2010).

According to Davie (2010), the foundation of framing theory is that the media draws attention to particular occurrences before contextualizing them. According to Ardèvol-Abreu (2015), Erving Goffman (1974) developed the idea and theory of framing in the field of sociology. Goffman explained a frame in communication studies as a social framework and as a mental schema that enables users to organize experiences from this sociological point of view. To fit within the parameters of news stories, media framing demands the selection and simplification of complex problems. This selection might result in the absence of critical background, decreasing the audience's access to accurate and in-depth information. As a result, media representations of events and situations may fall short of offering a complete picture, thereby leading to the perpetuation of misconceptions and misinterpretations (Tankard, 2001; Reese et al., 2001).

The media landscape has undergone considerable change as a result of the development of digital media and social networking sites. Audiences can now interact with several perspectives on the same subject because of the availability of a variety of diverse sources. This has called into question the conventional ability of major media outlets to set the agenda and casts doubt on the applicability of media framing theory in the digital era (Chadwick, 2017). The Framing theory, meantime, had developed over time and was now applicable to several facets of media and communications. The idea of framing is connected to the tradition of creating agendas, but it broadens the scope of the research by concentrating on the core of the current problems rather than on a specific topic.

Davie (2017) explains that framing theory in media is based on the idea that the media first draws attention to specific events or issues before providing context. The core concept of framing theory suggests that people's decisions on how they interpret information are influenced by the way it is presented to them, known as "the frame." Frames, which are abstract constructs, are used to shape and organize the meaning of messages. In the context of news and media, frames are commonly employed to structure the information being conveyed. These frames are believed to influence how the audience interprets the news, which can be seen as a form of second-level agenda-setting, as they guide the audience on both how to think about the topic and what to think about it (Davie, 2017).

Entman's (1991) framework, as cited by Arowolo (2017), outlines five common techniques for framing news stories: conflict, human interest/personalization, consequence, morality, and assigning blame. Conflict framing prioritizes disputes between parties rather than the choices made. Human interest/personalization focuses on putting a human face on the story, emphasizing personalities over other significant elements. Consequence framing considers the varied effects of decisions, including impacts on party unity, coalition stability, or a country's international reputation. Morality framing involves moral judgments, often tied to political actors' transgressions or questionable policies, as exemplified by Michael Moore's critique of the US Patriot Act and foreign policy. Assigning blame framing involves attributing responsibility, either for the root cause of a problem or its resolution, as seen in the global response to the Asian Tsunami, where discussions centered on criticizing local governments and emphasizing "global

responsibility" for finding solutions. These framing techniques serve as essential tools for media organizations to shape public perception of political events and individuals.

According to Arowolo (2017), the goal of news framing is to create a cognitive shortcut, oversimplify the news, divert attention from significant concerns, discourage audience members from thinking outside the box, and activate the audience's cognitively shaped audience's "magic bullet effect.". On the other hand, as Goffman (1974) describes it as "mental schemas" that audience use to make meaning and interpret. Nevertheless, the study places significant emphasis on media framing theory as a crucial framework for comprehending the portrayal of female politicians in the 2019 Nigerian elections by the media. Media outlets can frame political candidates in various ways, emphasizing different aspects of their personalities, policies, or backgrounds. The objective of this research is to utilize media framing theory in order to discern the prevailing frames employed by the media in depicting male and female politicians. This research entails a thorough examination of the language, imagery, and narrative methods utilized in media reporting. For instance, were female politicians predominantly seen via the lens of their appearance and personal lives, or were they presented as competent leaders with significant policy agendas? Through the analysis of framing techniques, this study aims to uncover potential gender biases and stereotypes, so facilitating a critical evaluation of the media's influence on shaping of public perceptions towards female politicians.

### **2.5.2.1 Framing as a Process**

Entman (1993) asserted that frames can be found in a variety of places, including the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. The framing concept has a lot of potential because it emphasizes how communication is a dynamic, ever-evolving process (de Vreese, 2005). It involves both frame-building, which is how frames develop, and frame-setting, which is how media frames interact with audience preferences (de Vreese, 2005). The framing process entails several steps, including frame-building, frame-setting, and the framing's effects on both the individual and the larger society (de Vreese, 2005).

The term "frame-building" describes the elements that affect the structural characteristics of news frames. This process is greatly influenced by both internal and external aspects related to

journalism. Additionally, social movements as well as journalists and elites (Tuchman, 1978) interact continuously to create frames. The frames that are visible in the text are the outcome of this technique (de Vreese, 2005).

The term "frame-setting" describes how media frames interact with people's past knowledge and predispositions. Firstly, news frames can influence how we learn about, interpret, and judge issues and occurrences. Secondly, this aspect of framing has received the most attention, frequently to examine how much and when audiences reflect and mirror frames that are made available to them in, for example, the news. Thirdly, the effects of framing can be imagined on both a personal and societal level. On a personal level, exposure to specific frames may result in changed attitudes about a problem. Finally, frames may help to shape activities like political socialization, decision-making, and group actions (de Vreese, 2005).

Frames can be both independent variables (IV) and dependent variables (DV) in framing processes. Furthermore, media frames, for instance, can be analyzed as the DV, or the output of the production process, which also includes organizational demands, journalistic practices, and elite discourse. Additionally, studying media frames as IV, or the antecedents of audience interpretations, is another option. Future studies would benefit from connecting aspects of news creation with the content (frame-building) and/or content with studies of uses and consequences (frame-setting), drawing on the integrated process model of framing. Thirdly, to avoid a proliferation of studies that look into frames that may be very appealing given their 'layman' character but don't offer any proof or discussion of the use of the frame in actual news broadcasts, there needs to be a link between production and/or impacts. Lastly, the drawback of such investigations is that we are unable to determine whether the frames are, in fact, "commonly observed in journalistic practice," as stated by Cappella and Jamieson (de Vreese, 2005).

Within the scope of this study, the concept of framing as a process that highlights the active role of media professionals in influencing the portrayal of female politicians to the public.

By conceptualizing framing as a process, this study aims to explore the underlying factors and cognitive processes that influence decision-making in the context of media coverage. The examination of journalists' decision-making processes in the selection and framing of stories pertaining to female candidates, as opposed to their male counterparts, offers valuable insights into the editorial decisions made by media organizations. This viewpoint facilitates a more intricate



comprehension of the various elements that contribute to the representation of women in politics by the media. It emphasizes the significance of journalists and editors in shaping narratives that have the potential to sway public sentiment.

### **2.5.3. Mediatization of Politics**

The expanding impact of media on political institutions, communications, and procedures is examined under the notion known as the “mediatization of politics” (Meyen et. al., 2017). It implies that the media has a greater impact on how politics is conducted nowadays and that political actors must change their tactics to accommodate this.

The theory of mediatization of politics looks at how media has a rising impact on political institutions, procedures, and communication. According to Stromback & Esser (2014), it contends that the media have a growing influence on contemporary politics, and political actors must adjust their strategies to meet those demands. Furthermore, the theory also calls attention to the overabundance of political and media spectacles that politicians’ stage to garner media attention and popular support. Events like these have the power to influence agenda-setting and public perception (Brugger, 2022). Political accountability may be improved through the media's capacity to examine and analyze political activities. As a result of ongoing monitoring and public criticism of politicians' acts, the possible repercussions of malfeasance have increased (Brugger, 2022).

According to detractors, the mediatization of politics idea tends to oversimplify the connection between politics and the media. It assumes that political logic is subordinate to media logic, which can diminish the significance of conventional political structures and decision-making procedures. (Esser & Strömbäck, 2012). While media outlets can improve political accountability, they are also subject to prejudices and vested interests. The way that political problems are framed and represented in the media can be influenced by media ownership, editorial choices, and the desire for ratings and profits (Bennett, 2012).

The evolving interaction between media and politics is better understood thanks to the mediatization of political ideas. It highlights how important the media is in influencing public perception, political communication, and image-making. To avoid oversimplification and to be aware of the possible dangers of media-centric politics, such as the trivialization of political

discourse and media bias, the theory must, nevertheless, be critically analyzed. Understanding the interaction between media and politics remains essential for promoting informed and democratic societies as political landscapes change in the digital age.

The application of this theory necessitates the acknowledgment that media coverage serves not just as a mirror of political events, but also plays an active role in shaping political reality. The visibility, portrayal, and reception of female politicians are closely intertwined with media dynamics. Through an analysis of the mediatization of politics within the specific framework of the 2019 Nigerian elections, this study aims to assess the impact of media narratives on the level of women's engagement in political activities. The comprehension of mediatization processes facilitates a thorough examination of the interconnections among media, politics, and gender, providing insight into the diverse ways in which media framing influenced the perception and involvement of women politicians in the election procedure.

## **2.6 Summary of Literature**

The literature review explored the topic of media framing of women in politics, with a specific case study focusing on the media coverage of the female presidential candidate in the 2019 elections in Nigeria. Several studies have been conducted to examine the representation and portrayal of women politicians in the media, revealing persistent gender disparities and biases in media coverage. Framing plays a significant role in shaping how the media presents information to the audience. It involves selecting and highlighting certain aspects of a story while downplaying or excluding others, influencing the audience's interpretation and understanding. This framing theory reveals the importance of understanding how media messages are constructed and the potential impact of framing on public perceptions.

Despite advocacy for gender equality, women continue to face significant obstacles in media representation, not only in Nigeria but globally. Studies have consistently shown that women are underrepresented in news coverage, and when they are covered, their portrayal is often marginalized or sensationalized. Male politicians receive more attention and are quoted more frequently, pointing to a bias in favor of male candidates. According to an analysis of relevant literature, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion by projecting and framing

women in media stories. When there is a lack of women's participation in politics and society, the media's insufficient visibility of women reinforces social norms that women are not as available and perpetuates a patriarchal reality. The media employs media framing principles by selecting, emphasizing, and elaborating reports primarily about men, thus marginalizing alternative perspectives and perceptions about women. However, within the context of media framing theory and the mediatization of politics, the media has the potential to initiate "frames" that include the voices of women to achieve a balance in media reporting of issues. Acknowledging that women are a minority and face disadvantages in social and political spaces, such a shift in media representation could impact how people perceive and view women as capable participants and leaders in society and politics.

The media's role in promoting women's participation in politics is crucial for achieving gender balance in political leadership. There is a call for media to adopt a gender-sensitive perspective in their reporting, offering equal coverage and representation to women politicians. Encouraging more women in reporting and providing platforms for female politicians to discuss their issues are some of the strategies suggested to address the media's gender biases.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights the persistent challenges of media framing of women in politics, particularly in the case of the 2019 Nigerian presidential elections. It underscores the need for more gender-inclusive and equitable media coverage to promote women's political participation and challenge prevailing gender stereotypes. By recognizing the influence of framing theory, media outlets can contribute to fostering a more inclusive and democratic political landscape for women in Nigeria and beyond.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology used for this study's research. It presents the research design, data collection methods and tools, and techniques for data analysis employed in the study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how female presidential candidates were represented prior to the 2019 elections. The mixed methods research approach was used in three phases, which provided the structure to measure framing news stories. First, quantitative data was collected by analyzing news stories in order to have an overview of how both male and female politicians were represented. However, to draw conclusions about the representation of female politicians, a more in-depth method was required. The information collected was then subjected to further analysis by using predefined frames for an in-depth examination. The quantitative study used framing analysis to explore the dominant news frames employed by the four (4) media houses – *Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Guardian*, and *Daily Trust* in the coverage of the politicians over a period of four months (November 2018-February 2019). This method was selected because framing influences how people view issues by influencing how they can be understood (Blankenship, 2011). In total 73 articles were analysed.

The study primarily investigates how the Nigerian press represents female politicians prior to the elections. The research questions seek to investigate the representation of women in relation to their male counterparts, in terms of news content, frequency of appearance, and photographs.

#### 3.2 Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique is three-fold.

- (1) Collection of quantitative data (frequency of coverage).
- (2) Frames were defined, and the newspapers were examined qualitatively using the defined frames.
- (3) Quantitative analysis of (2) to analyze frames.

### 3.3 Sampling

This section describes the population and sampling methods used in the study.

#### 3.3.1 Study Population

The study population included news articles, stories, editorials and interviews and magazine articles published by the four media houses, Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Daily Trust selected purposively. In total 73 articles were examined.

Anim (2020) noted that the media houses in Nigeria are very often influenced by their geopolitical affiliations and largely represent the interest of certain regions more than others. He noted the *Punch* newspapers represent the interests of the Southwest of Nigeria, while *Daily Trust* and the *Guardian* represent the North and the South respectively. Although the author did not mention *Vanguard* newspaper in his report, I selected the newspaper for its popularity in the Eastern part of Nigeria and because it is more accessible online than '*The Champion*' which the author mentions in his report. In addition, these newspapers were chosen because they are well-established, have a wide national readership, and are published in English. I was able to access all of the materials used online.

More specifically, the newspapers typically included national news editorials, opinion pieces, political news, editorials, and specialized sections features and other articles.

The study focused on the coverage of all 73 presidential candidates that participated in the 2019 elections. Their names and number of votes were obtained from the official report of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the institution which governs the electoral process in Nigeria. For each of these candidates, I began by doing a manual search (online) of their number appearances on each newspaper, over a period of four months, from November 2018-February 2019. The results were recorded in an excel file 1 where the quantitative results were recorded and analysed. This file contained the quantitative results (total number of appearances of each candidate) which were categorized according to their;

1. Number of votes (of each candidate)
2. Gender (of each candidate)
3. Geopolitical zones (of each candidate)

4. Newspapers (representing each geopolitical zone and colour-coded accordingly)
5. Geopolitical zones by newspaper (where each candidate is categorized under the newspaper representing their geopolitical zone)
6. Frequency of Coverage (FOC 1) (representing the number of times each candidate appear on each newspaper within the sample period and colour coded accordingly)
7. Frequency of Coverage (FOC 2)
8. Frequency of Coverage (FOC 3)
9. Frequency of Coverage (FOC 4)
10. Comparison by Gender (containing the summary of the analysis where the analysis was narrowed down to males vs females with the highest votes. See appendix 1)

The search was done by selecting a candidate's name and searching for it on a newspaper website (e.g [www.punchng.com](http://www.punchng.com)). The search results were then narrowed down to the desired period (November 2018-February 2019). The dates the candidate's name appears were then noted in excel file 1, so that the articles can be located easily for qualitative study. The timeframe was chosen due to resource and time constraints, and the period I believed the candidates would get the highest coverage being the period closest to the election. I obtained a total of 5662 articles published during this period (not counting those that were too large for the search engine). The FOC ranged widely from as low as zero for one candidate to as high as 2159 for another candidate, making no room for assumptions. This exercise, although laborious and time-demanding provided a much-needed overview all the candidates and their number of appearances in the newspapers.

For the qualitative analysis which involves frame analysis, a new file was created (excel file 2). This involves a more detailed and informative task which cannot be conducted on all 73 candidates and all over 5000 published articles. For that reason, I decided to limit the work area by selecting only 4 newspapers (the first 2 and the last 2) per month which were checked for each candidate because of those with very large results or frequency of coverage (FOC), making it a total of 16 newspapers per individual with a large frequency of coverage. Qualitative analysis was carried out on only 6 of the candidates 3 males with the highest votes and 3 females with the highest votes, because of the very wide range of the frequency of appearance. The shortlisted candidates can be seen in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Showing The shortlisted candidates.

<b>Shortlisted Candidates</b>		
<b>3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR FEMALE</b>	Code-Names	Party
ADESANYA-DAVIES MERCY OLUFUNMILAYO	F1	MAJA
EZEKWESILI OBIAGELI KATRYN	F2	ACPN
MAINA MAIMUNA KYARI	F3	NPC
<b>3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR MALE</b>		
FELIX NICOLAS	M1	PCP
ABUBAKAR ATIKU	M2	PDP
BUHARI MUHAMMADU	M3	APC

Appendix 2 shows the code book used for the qualitative analysis, containing the following categories:

1. Quantitative summary (of the six shortlisted candidates brought in from excel file 1)
2. F1 Punch (containing the frame analysis for F1- ADESANYA-DAVIES MERCY OLUFUNMILAYO carried out using information from Punch newspaper based in the categories explained in 3.2.2 below)
3. F1 Guardian (frame analysis for F1 carried out using information from Guardian Newspaper)
4. F1 Trust (frame analysis for F1 carried out using information from Trust Newspaper)
5. F1 Vanguard (frame analysis for F1 carried out using information from Vanguard Newspaper)
6. F2 Punch
7. F2 Guardian
8. F2 Trust
9. F2 Vanguard
10. F3 Punch
11. F3 Guardian
12. F3 Trust

13. F3 Vanguard
14. M1 Punch
15. M1 Guardian
16. M1 Trust
17. M1 Vanguard
18. M2 Punch
19. M2 Guardian
20. M2 Trust
21. M2 Vanguard
22. M3 Punch
23. M3 Guardian
24. M3 Trust
25. M3 Vanguard

### **3.3.2 Coding Categories**

Before the main analysis, the researcher developed a coding frame that consisted of both a coding schedule containing the values for each variable as well as a coding manual that contained the codes of the variables.

Furthermore, for these six final samples, the researcher did an in-depth investigation with certain variables (defined frames) which include;

- Gender frames
- Personal traits
- Issues covered
- Tone of article
- Visibility
- Type of Study



These categories are suited to the research questions about the dominant frames used by the named print news media organizations to cover both male and female politicians and the visibility of the female politicians in comparison to their male counterparts. They are also inspired by previous researches such as the work of D'Angelo (2017) Gever (2019) Van der Pas & Aaldering (2020) and Jacobs & Meeusen, (2021)

### **3.4. Analysis of Information**

According to D'Angelo (2017) identifying media frames involves using a content-analytical technique to locate the parts of a mediated text in which an individual or group is deemed to be contextualizing a topic. The data obtained from the examination of the content had both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The quantitative data was evaluated using a codebook and was presented in descriptive statistics (see appendix 3). Then qualitative research was done using framing analysis. Framing analysis is used as a tool to find out how messages are perceived by people (Ryan,1991) or as, a means by which the human mind perceives and understands the world (Bashatah, 2017). However, it is considered to be strongly abstract in nature (Ryan,1991) and for that reason is often combined with content analysis, as used in this research.

#### **3.4.1. Content Analysis**

For content analysis, this research adopted some steps outlined by McMillan (2000). After defining the research questions, the sample from which to select data was also defined and selected, followed by the identification of the frames which were then applied to the sample. After this, the resulting data was then coded, and this ended with the analysis and interpretation of the data.

First, for the newspaper data, a quantitative content analysis was suitable for assessing the collated data. The quantitative data were coded on the Microsoft Excel program, specifically by counting the number of news stories that each of the candidates appeared. First, the dates where they appeared were also recorded, however, for certain candidates like Muhammadu Buhari (the incumbent president) and Atiku Abubakar, a one-time vice president, the search results were too much, and the value was estimated by counting the number of articles per page multiplied by the

number of pages where they appeared. Both qualitative and quantitative coding was done electronically on 2 Excel sheets (named Quantitative workbook and qualitative workbook).

The first level of processing involved the use of simple mathematical techniques to get the frequency of coverage after which a comparison was done, and a summary was made from the data obtained. (See appendix 4).

For the qualitative analysis, the researcher decided to do a purposive sampling to obtain materials due to a large number of materials. 5 materials (per month) were selected for each of the 6 candidates (F1, F2, F3, M1, M2, M3). The selected newspapers were then studied comprehensively to see the defined frames.

### **3.4.2 Framing Analysis**

While some (Janssen, 2010) consider framing analysis to be very complex and labour-intensive, it is highly objective (Tankard et. al., 1991). Also, it is necessary to identify the frames before coding can take place. The specific frames identified are Gender frames, Personal traits, Issues covered, Tone of article, Visibility, and Type of Study, which were applied to the 6 samples (F1, F2, F3, M1, M2, M3).

**The gender frames** defined include (emphasis on) marital status, physical appearance, place of marriage, age, place of birth, and gender. The research studied each article to see where any of these were emphasized in relation to both male and the female politicians.

**Personal traits:** these were grouped into positive and negative and assessed using tone and language. Some of the traits assessed include the use of words such as iron lady, honest, emotional, knowledgeable, trustworthy, experienced, courageous, and controversial.

**Issues covered:** the researcher also focused on the type of issues discussed in the articles. Usually, an article would cover more than one issue at a time. The issues defined include Economy/Business, Governance/Democracy, Politics, Corruption, Education, foreign affairs, Health, Security, Development, Fashion/Lifestyle, Family, Peacebuilding, Women's rights, Environment, and Ethnicity.

**Tone of the article:** The tone of the article was also assessed whether negative or positive.

**Visibility:** Each candidate's position and visibility were also assessed to see if their name was mentioned in the title, the number of times the name was mentioned in an article, and if their picture was used on the headline.

**Type of story:** It was also necessary to see the type of story, in order to know if they were relevant to the elections. The frames defined here include News story (Others), Political news, Opinion, Editorial, Feature story, Soft news/issues.

The results can be seen in chapter 4 (Findings).

### **3.5 Limitations**

The limitations outlined in the research study point to several challenges faced during the investigation of media framing of women in Nigerian politics, specifically focusing on the 2019 elections. First, the issue of objectivity was acknowledged, given the inherent difficulty researchers face when reporting on their own country (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). To mitigate this, a combination of methods and analytical techniques were employed to enhance objectivity. Second, the limitation related to the sample was addressed, with the researcher opting for online materials due to mobility constraints. However, this choice posed challenges, such as uncertainty regarding the completeness of online materials, difficulties in interpreting certain elements due to online formats, and the limitations of search engines, making the research process time-consuming and laborious. Third, in terms of methodology, predefined frames were used for the framing analysis, which could potentially introduce bias. Despite the assumption that articles about female candidates would focus more on personal traits, the analysis revealed minimal references to personal traits for both male and female candidates. The decision to use predefined frames was made to handle the large sample size efficiently, ensuring uniformity for increased research reliability, even though it limited the exploration of emerging frames from the articles.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data of the study and the interpretation of the findings. The study sought to answer the following questions of the study.

#### 4.1 Findings and Description of Frames

This section presents data collected from the frame analysis of both the male and the female candidates and presented in descriptive statistics. The shortlisted candidates can be seen in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Showing The shortlisted candidates.

Shortlisted Candidates		
<b>3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR FEMALE</b>	Code-Names	Party
ADESANYA-DAVIES MERCY OLUFUNMILAYO	F1	MAJA
EZEKWESILI OBIAGELI KATRYN	F2	ACPN
MAINA MAIMUNA KYARI	F3	NPC
<b>3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR MALE</b>		
FELIX NICOLAS	M1	PCP
ABUBAKAR ATIKU	M2	PDP
BUHARI MUHAMMADU	M3	APC

##### 4.1.1 Framing of the Candidates

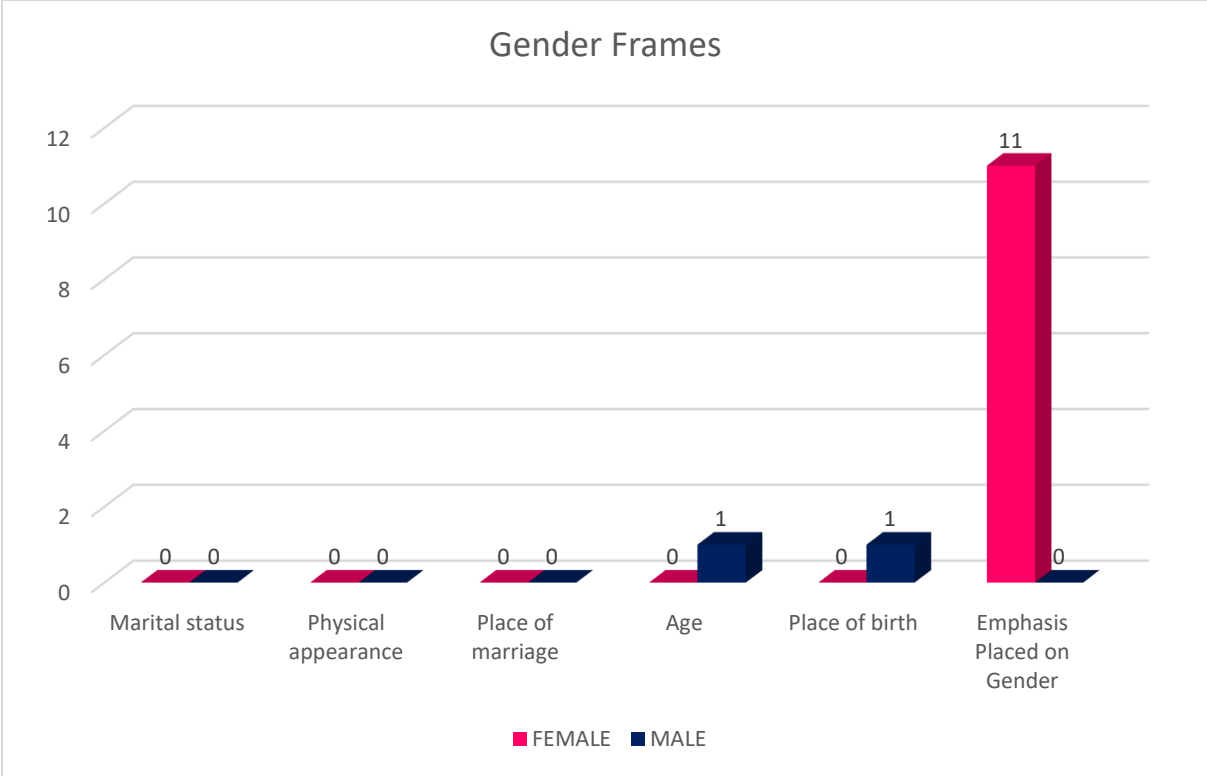
The section answers RQ 1 which says;

"What were the dominant frames used by the named print news media organizations to cover both male and female politicians?" a) what are the differences, if any between how the males and females are framed?

The pre-defined frames employed in this category include;

- Gender Frames, which include Marital status, Physical appearance, Place of marriage, Age, Place of birth, Emphasis Placed on Gender

The reason for choosing those categories (marital status, physical appearance, place of marriage) with zero outcomes is because in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, those are issues that are often discussed about women when they appear in the news. It is possible there are no outcomes under those categories because of the season we examined. Perhaps the newspapers chose to focus on more serious issues this time. As seen in figure 4.1, the most dominant frames used for the females in this category is an emphasis on their gender, while for their male counterparts, age and place of birth were more highlighted in the articles. However, considering the population examined (73 articles), the use of gender frames is minimal.



**Figure 4.1 Gender Frames**

## 4.2 Findings and Description of Visibility

This section answers RQ 2 which is based on the visibility of the candidates in the following sub-categories;

### 4.2.1 How often were their pictures used in the headlines?

The study shows that overall, the female candidates' pictures appeared less frequently in the articles than their male counterparts as seen in Figure 4.2.1.3. Obiageli Ezekwesili (F2) received more recognition in this regard because her picture appeared in all the articles assessed. This could have been because she has been in government for a while serving as former Minister of Education of Nigeria (2006–2007) and former Federal Minister of Solid Minerals of Nigeria (2005–2006), former vice president of the World Bank's Africa region (2007-2012) and had always been in the news for one reason or the other.

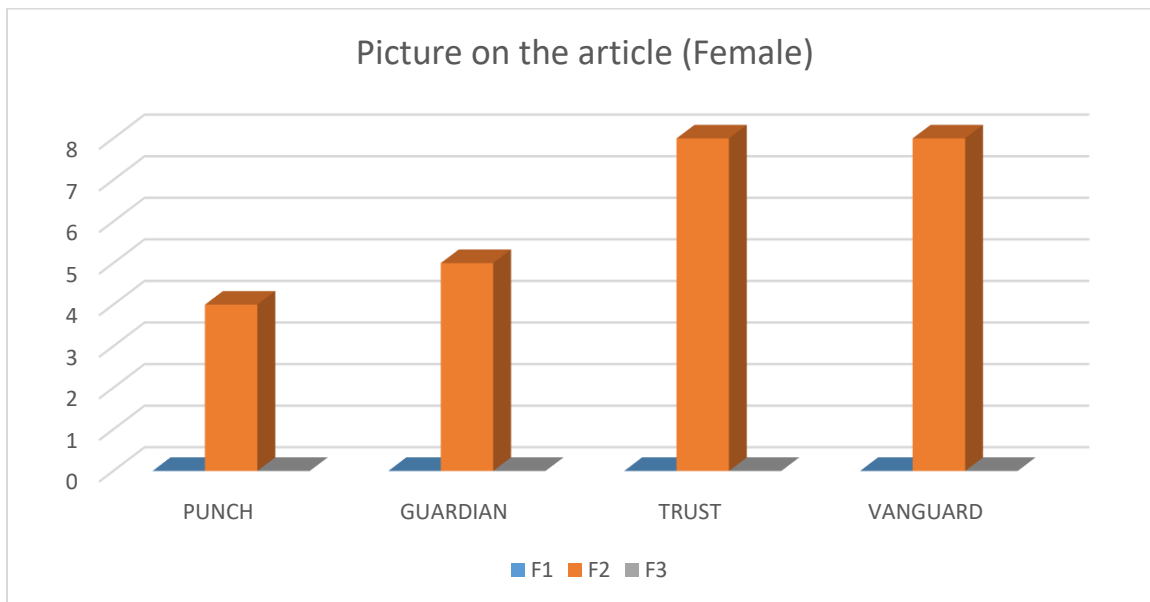


Figure 4.2. Picture on the article (Female)

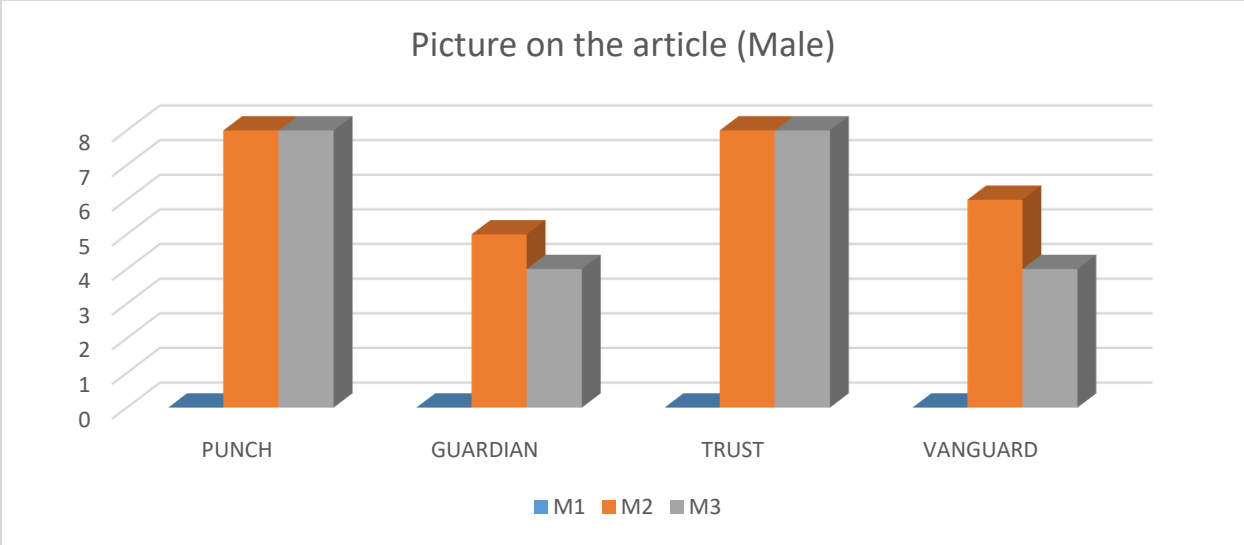


Figure 4.2.1 Picture on the article (Male)

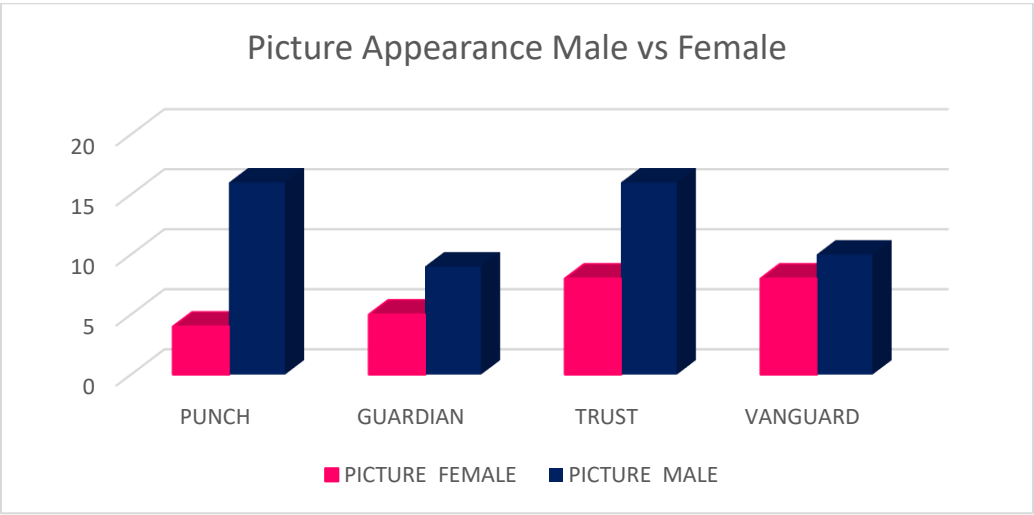


Figure 4.2.2. Male Vs Female

#### 4.2.2 How many times did their names appear in the articles?

In Punch newspapers, both the female candidates and their male counterparts were mentioned. For the period examined, Punch newspaper gave almost fair coverage to both genders in terms of the number of times each candidate's name was mentioned in the article, as seen in Figure 4.2.1. M1 (Felix Nicholas) was also invisible however, this could be because he is a first-time candidate who has not been in politics prior to that time. So, his lack of popularity has made him not to appear in the news so much prior to that time.

In Guardian newspapers, however, the men got more visibility in terms of the times their names were mentioned in the article. F2 was also mentioned in a interview as seen in fig This is similar to the results in both Trust and Vanguard, with F2 being the only female candidate that has a level of visibility close to the male candidates. It could be said in this regard that the women got a relatively poor amount of visibility.

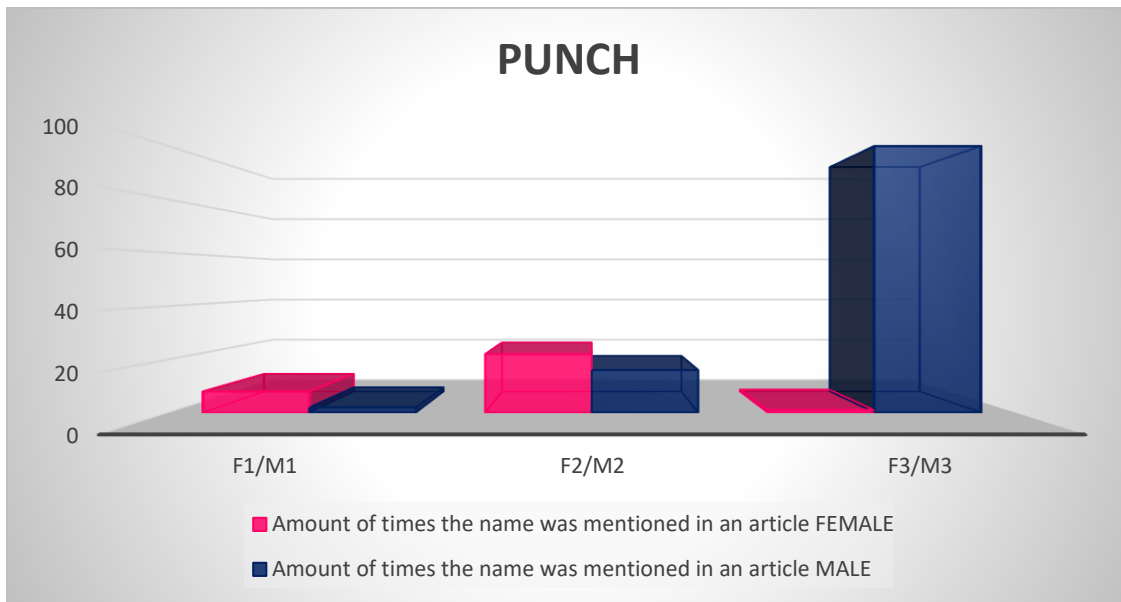


Figure 4.2.3 Appearance of Names (Punch)



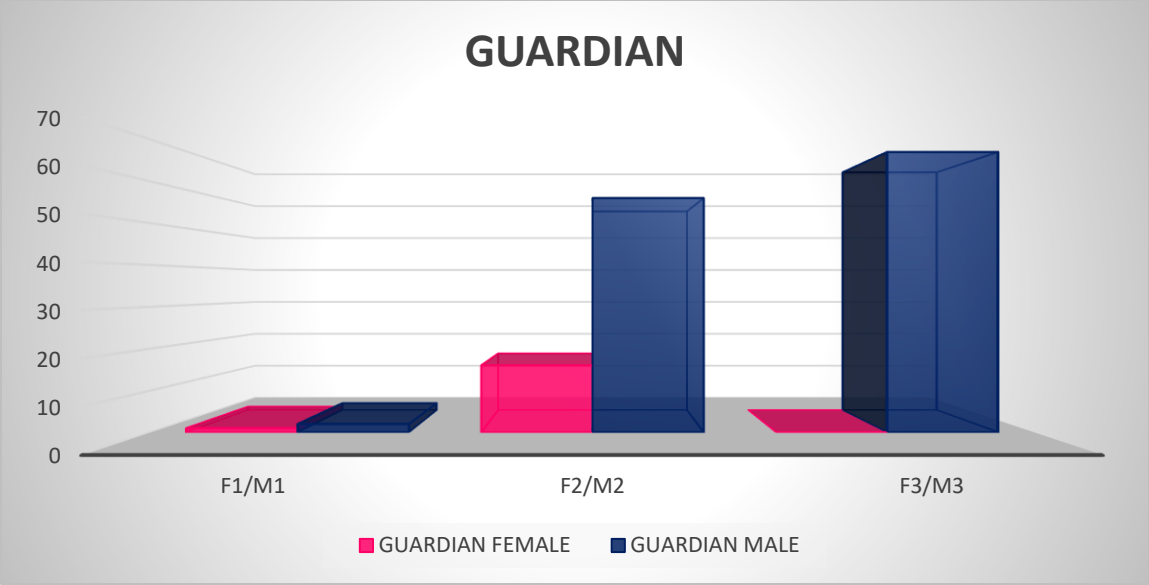


Figure 4.2.4 Appearance of Names (Guardian)

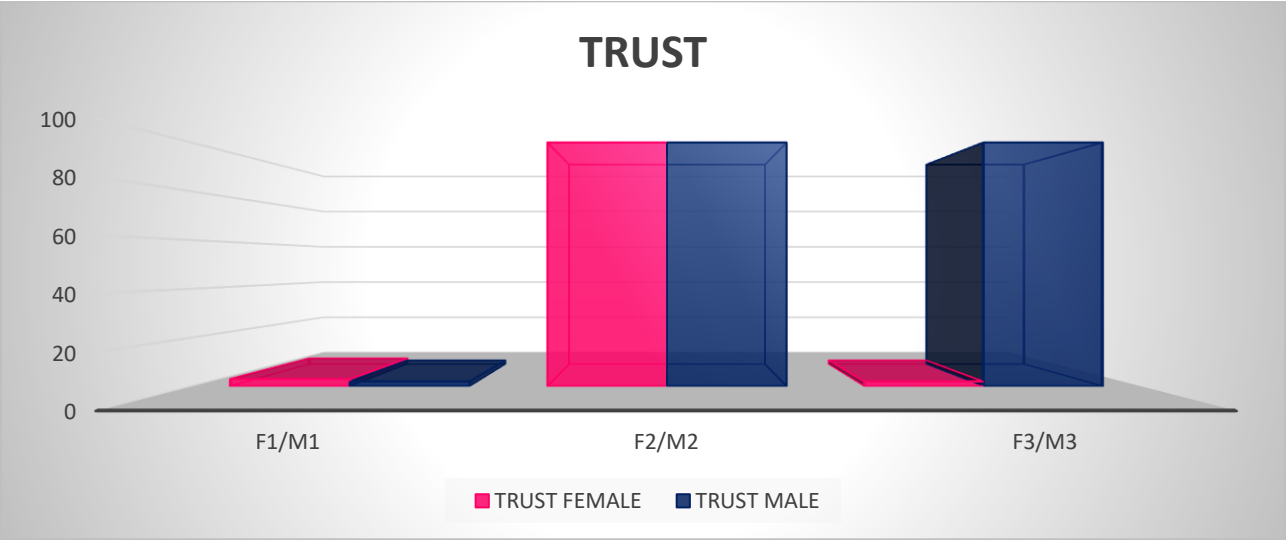


Figure 4.2.5 Appearance of Names (Trust)

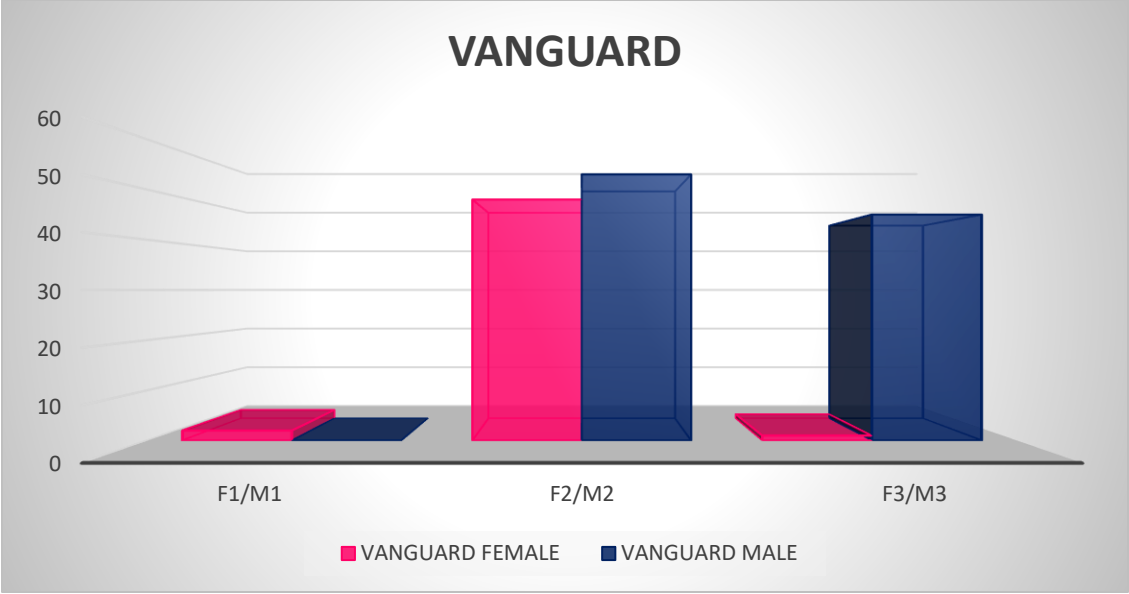


Figure 4.2.6 Appearance of Names (Vanguard)

areas?

It's not really about what I think; it's about the facts on ground. I worked recently with the European Center for Electoral Support, which is a subset of the European Union and in politics for instance, we found that although women account for a substantial number of the population in Nigeria and contribute to world development, they aren't enough women in leadership or political positions. It's not a Nigerian issue, it's global; we see that women have not been adequately represented in various fields across the board. The great thing is that it is all changing, we saw women make history across America by occupying various seats during the just concluded mid-term elections in the USA. Now in Nigeria, we have a number of women leading in various fields from media to banking. Plus, who could not forget to mention **Oby Ezekwesili** who is vying for the post of the next President of this country, believe it or not, a woman will be president of this country soon. It's inevitable, because the world has changed, and we are too capable to be overlooked.

Fig 4.2.7: Example of name appearance

*This interviewee, Idia Aisen was speaking about the woman with emphasis on the gender. Although she cited Oby as a leading woman, her emphasis was on the female gender being underrepresented. Making it as though that is why we need a female president.*

### **4.2.3 How much coverage did the women receive compared to the men and is there any visible pattern here?**

In terms of overall coverage, the result for the women is minimal compared to their male counterparts with the highest coverage for women being in Punch newspaper, and the lowest in Trust, while the male candidates got their highest coverage in Guardian newspaper and the lowest in Trust. The results are incomparable as there is a huge gap between the amount of coverage received by both genders.

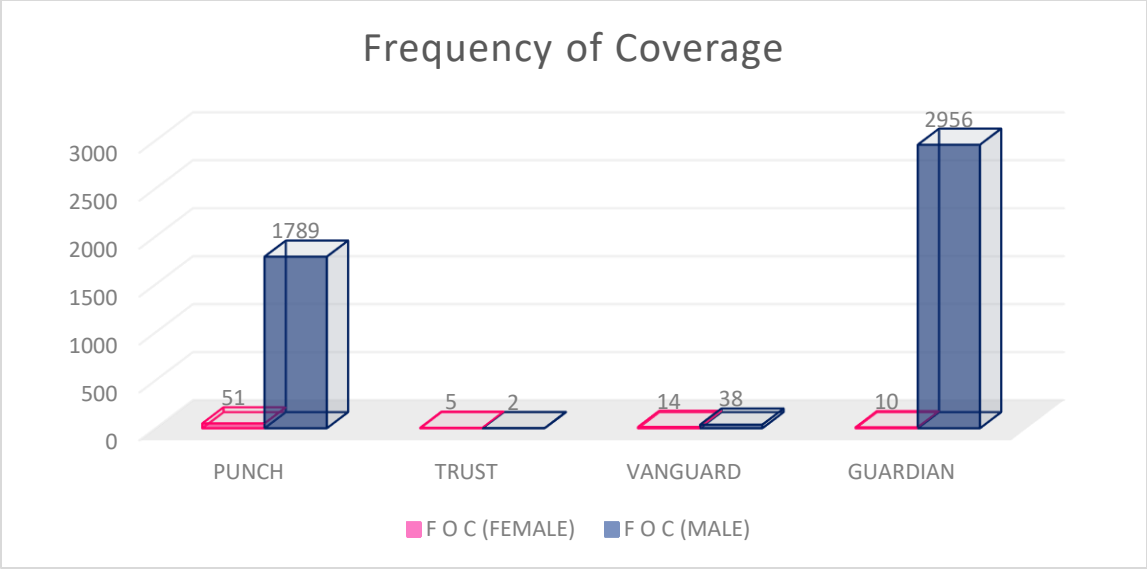


Figure 4.2.8 Frequency of Coverage

### 4.3 Framing of Stories

This section answers RQ 3 which is based on the framing of the stories in the following sub-categories;

#### 4.3.1 Type of Story

The charts (Figures 4.3.1 & 4.3.2) reveal that the female candidates got more coverage in the political news, which is mainly the majority of the news items during that period, considering that it is a period close to the elections. They did not get any mention in other news stories. In other words, the female candidates were only mentioned in news and articles that are focused on election issues. The women also got a similar amount of coverage in the Entertainment/Soft news and Opinion articles. Furthermore, they got no mention in the general news stories, feature stories, and editorials.

The male candidates on the other hand received richer coverage across the different types of stories, except for the Entertainment/Soft stories which are almost irrelevant to their pursuit, and opinion articles where they got the least coverage.

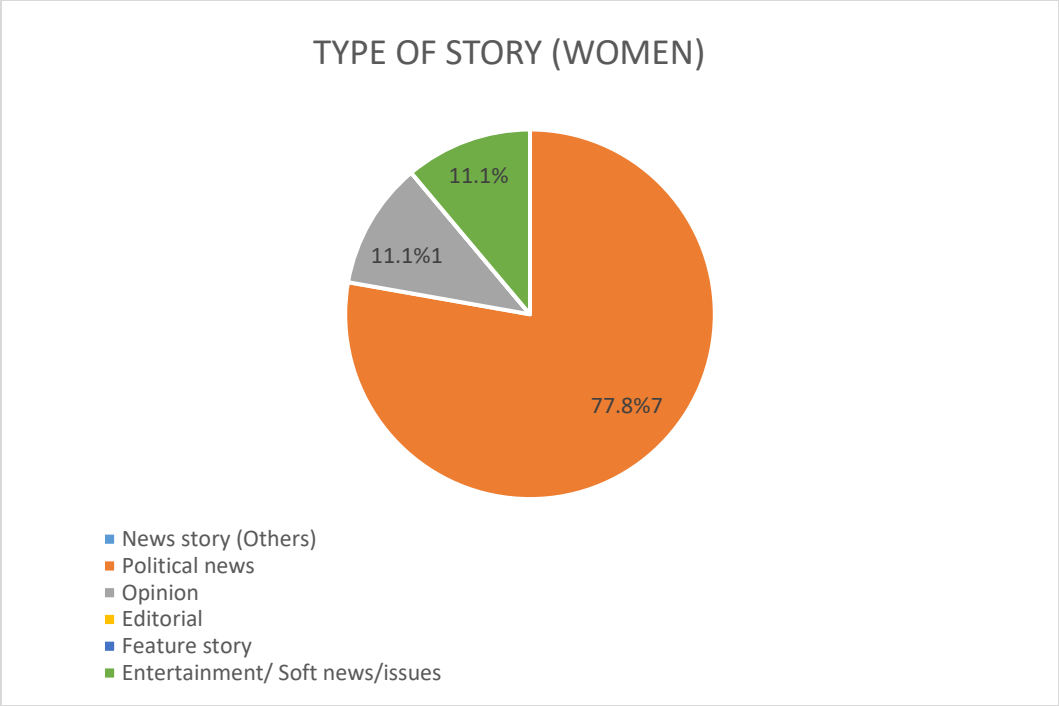


Figure 4.3.1 Type of Story (Women)

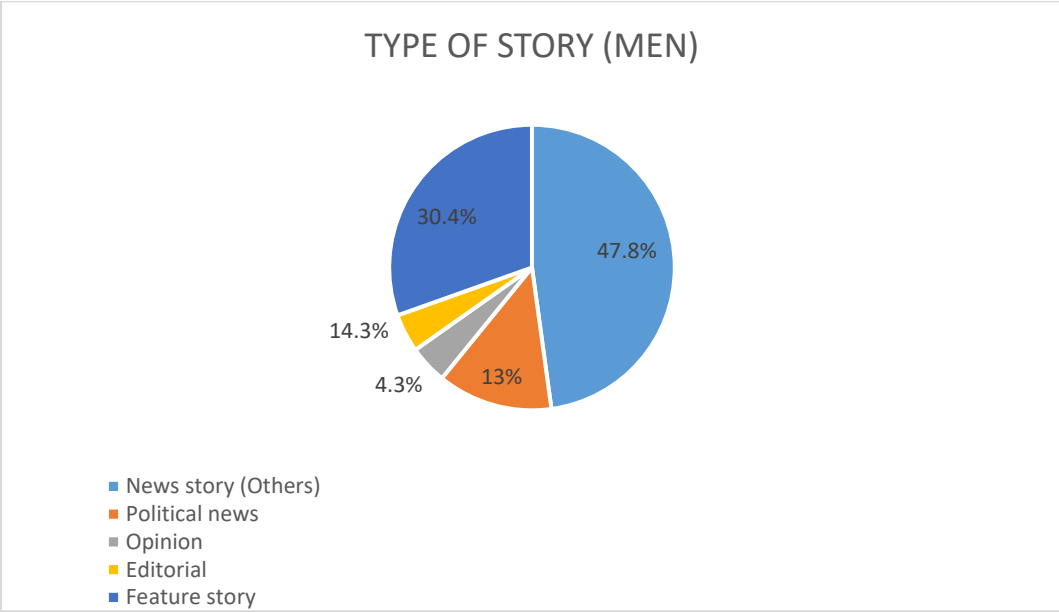


Figure 4.3.2 Type of Story (Men)

### 4.3.2 Type of Issue Covered

The study reveals yet another set of disparities between female candidates and their male counterparts. For both genders, the *issue of Politics* was more discussed in the newspapers examined, this is followed by Economy/Business and Governance. For female candidates, the newspapers examined covered less of key issues like Education, Health, and the Environment. This hints that most of the articles where the women were mentioned were focused mainly on political issues and most likely, the issues of the elections. Furthermore, the few places where the female candidates appeared more than their male counterparts are Fashion, Family, and Women's rights. Figure 4.4 shows the graphical representation of the issues covered.

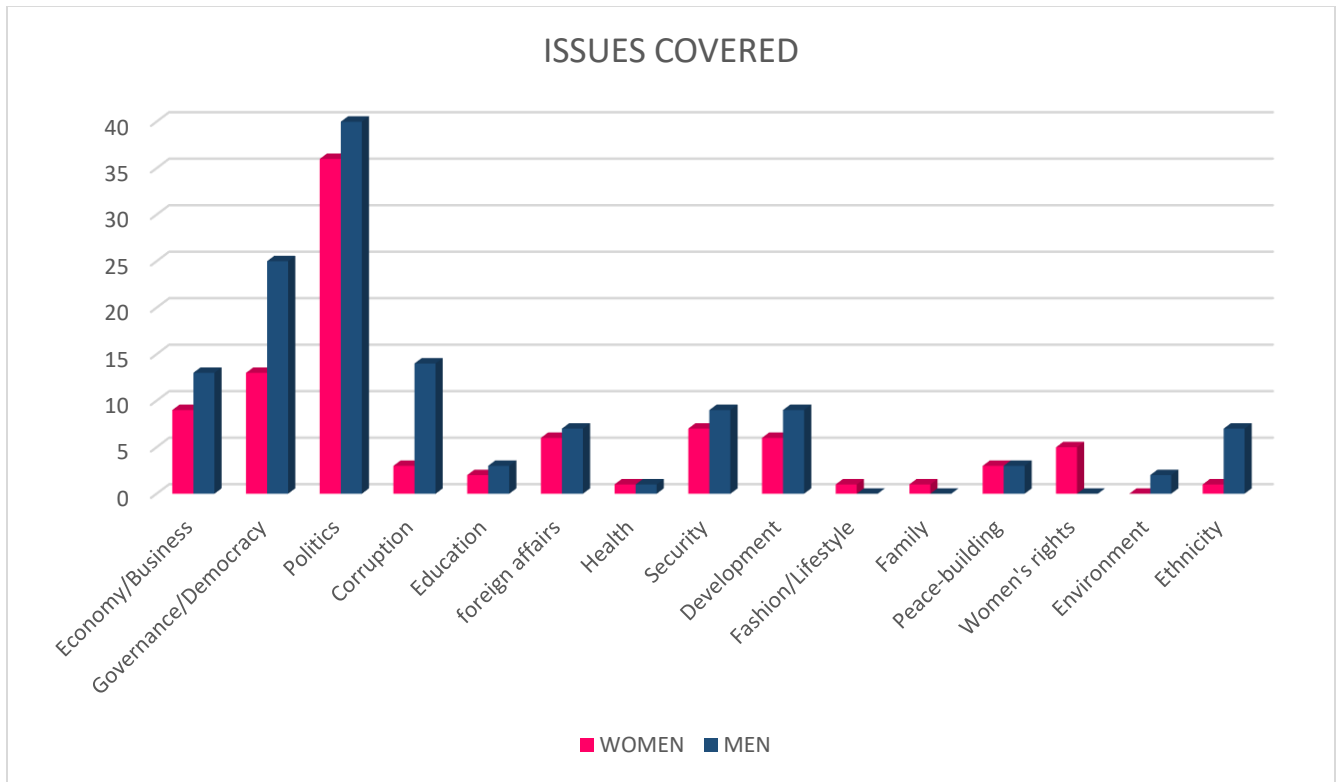


Figure 4.4 Type of Issues Covered

### 4.3.3 Tone of Article

This section uses the categories "positive", "negative", "neutral", and "mixed" to examine how the stories are framed. The study reveals for female candidates, most of their articles carry a neutral tone and following that are "mixed" and "positive".

Similarly, most of the articles where male candidates were covered have a neutral tone. However, unlike the female candidates, they got a relatively high percentage of articles with a negative tone and a relatively low percentage of articles with a positive tone.

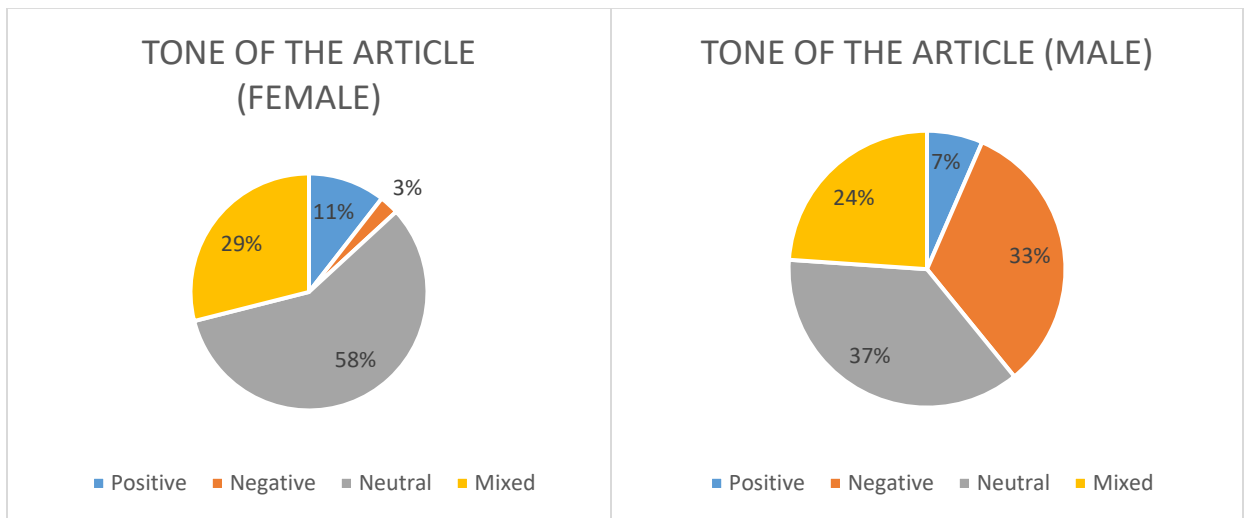


Figure 4.3.3 Tone of the Article (Female)

Figure 4.3.3.1 Tone of the article (Male)

## 4.4 Discussion of Findings

### 4.4.1 Dominant Frames Used by Media Organizations

This research aimed to uncover the dominant frames employed by print news media organisations in their coverage of both male and female politicians during the 2019 Nigerian elections. The findings reveal a notable disparity in the dominant frames used by the Nigerian media to cover male and female politicians during the 2019 elections. While gender was emphasized for female politicians, the coverage for their male counterparts focused more on age and place of birth. Interestingly, the use of gender frames for female politicians was minimal (as low as 0 appearance out of 16 articles for most of the candidates examined with the highest being 3 times out of 16 articles for Ezekwesili in Punch newspaper- see appendix 5), considering the examined 73 articles. While this finding disagrees with findings in literature such as the work of scholars such as Oyinade et. al. (2013) and Dunu (2014) who emphasize societal expectations and stereotypes related to gender roles in Nigerian media. Oyinade et. al. (2013) point out the prevalent stereotypes associated with women being perceived as soft, caring, and weak, reinforcing gender inequalities. Dunu (2014) highlighted the media's tendency to portray women in politics when involved in controversies, contributing to the perception that politics might not be suitable for women. The minimal use of gender frames in the studied articles could indicate a subtle shift in media portrayal, moving away from reinforcing traditional gender norms as state by Haraldsson & Wängnerud, (2019). The minimal use of gender frames for female politicians in the studied articles could be attributed to evolving societal attitudes and media efforts to combat harmful stereotypes. Yusuf (2014) proposed initiatives to promote gender mainstreaming in media coverage, emphasizing equal representation and providing platforms for women politicians.

This finding aligns with the Media Framing Theory, highlighting the media's power to shape public perception through the framing of political candidates (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Entman, 2007; Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Goffman, 1974). The gender frames used by the media play a pivotal role in influencing how female politicians are portrayed and perceived. This emphasizes the importance of understanding and critiquing these frames to promote gender equality in politics. Moreover, it emphasises the concept of mediatization of politics, which posits that the manner in which the media operates can substantially impact the political sphere, including the way in which women are portrayed in politics (Bennett, 2012; Brugger, 2022; Esser & Strömbäck, 2012; Meyen



et. al., 2017). The findings therefore validate the intricate relationship that exists between gender dynamics and media framing in political journalism.

The minimal use of gender frames might reflect a conscious effort by some media outlets to present female politicians in a broader and more substantive light, focusing on their policies and achievements rather than reinforcing traditional stereotypes. However, it is essential to acknowledge that this shift is gradual and might not be uniform across all media organizations. The minimal use of gender frames, particularly in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, signifies a positive step toward more equitable media coverage (Ette, 2017). Media outlets have the potential to play a significant role in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting women's active engagement in politics by directing attention towards policies and accomplishments. This transition is consistent with the worldwide initiatives emphasised by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2021) aimed at enhancing the presence and influence of women in the media.

#### **4.4.2 Visibility of the Candidates**

The analysis of candidate visibility in terms of pictures used in headlines and the frequency of their names mentioned in articles also provides significant insight into media coverage patterns. The finding that female candidates' pictures appeared less frequently in articles compared to their male counterparts suggests a potential gender bias in media visual representation. This observation aligns with existing research on gender disparities in media coverage (Osei-Appiah, 2019; Oyinate & Daramola, 2017; Oyinate et. al., 2003). Bystrom et. al., (2001) showed that media often reinforce traditional gender roles by emphasising the appearance of female candidates over their qualifications and policy positions. This phenomenon, known as the "double standard of appearance," can impact how female candidates are perceived by the public and might undermine their credibility (Ditonto, 2017). Lawless & Fox (2010) showed in their study that unequal media portrayal can influence public opinion and contribute to gender disparities in political representation. According to Bauer & Becker (2015), biased media coverage might also impact voters' evaluations of female candidates' qualifications and suitability for office.

Furthermore, the prominence of Obiageli Ezekwesili (F2) (Figure 4.2) in picture visibility might be attributed to her previous experiences or campaign strategies for media attention. Jamieson &

Capella (2008); Jamieson & Taussig (2017) and Cappella & Jamieson, (1996) emphasised that candidate image can play a crucial role in campaign communication. The scholars posited that candidates who strategically manage their image and engage with media might receive more visual coverage, irrespective of their gender (Jamieson & Capella, 2008). Comparing this study's finding with Hillary Clinton's candidacy in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election offered a global perspective as discussed by Ahmad (2022). Interestingly though, the same could be said about Obiageli Ezekwesili (F2), who had served as the Minister of Education of Nigeria (2006–2007) and Federal Minister of Solid Minerals of Nigeria (2005–2006) before she was appointed Vice President for the World Bank's Africa Region in 2007. She had both national and international experience under her belt prior to the elections. This could have influenced why she got a fair coverage above other women candidates. Also, the rise of social media has received credited with introducing new avenues for women politicians to shape their narratives and connect with constituents. Platforms like Twitter have allowed female candidates to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and directly engage with audiences (Ferré-Pavia, 2023). It is not particularly clear however, how this factor influenced the candidacy of Obiageli Ezekwesili (F2) or other candidates, as the scope of this research did not include social media examination.

In the case of Punch newspapers, both female and male candidates received a relatively fair amount of coverage in terms of the number of times their names were mentioned. However, in Guardian, Trust, and Vanguard newspapers, male candidates seemed to have received more visibility in terms of name mentions. The discrepancy in name mention frequency between female and male candidates across different newspapers suggests a potential gender bias in how media allocate attention to candidates. This finding echoes the findings of Eshiet (2013); Enwefah (2016); Endong & Obongganwan (2015); Ogwezzy-Ndisika & Faustino (2017); and Banwart & Keery (2022), which shows that media organisations have tendencies to provide more coverage to male candidates, thus affecting public familiarity and perception. The relatively fair coverage of both genders in the Punch newspaper might indicate a conscious effort to avoid gender bias, although the researcher could not obtain the gender policy for The Punch newspaper as at the time of writing this research. However, the skewed visibility in Guardian, Trust, and Vanguard newspapers, which form the majority, raises questions about whether unconscious biases or systemic gender norms influence media coverage allocation in general.

### 4.4.3 Coverage Discrepancies and Gender Bias

The findings of this research, where female candidates received notably less coverage compared to their male counterparts, reflect a broader pattern of gender bias in media representation and underscores a significant gender-based disparity in Nigerian media attention. This finding that female candidates received minimal coverage compared to males across all newspapers aligns with well-established research on gender bias in media coverage (Arogundade, 2019; Ayodele & Saheed, 2017; Dimitrova et al., 2014; Lawless & Fox 2005; McQuail, 2005; Olisa, 2015; Osei-Appiah, 2019; Oyinade & Daramola, 2017; Oyinade et al., 2003;2013; Singh & Pandey, 2017; Vos, 2013). Studies in the field of political communication, such as those by Lawless and Fox (2005), Osei-Appiah (2019); Oyinade & Daramola, 2017; have consistently shown that women are often underrepresented in media coverage of politics. Additionally, Ferré-Pavia, (2023) opined that the underrepresentation of women in political journalism can also perpetuate biased coverage. The gender-based disparities in media coverage can have several consequences for women's political participation. Osei-Appiah (2019) findings suggested that media visibility is a crucial factor in shaping citizens' perceptions and decisions about political candidates. Thus, when female candidates receive less coverage, it can contribute to lower name recognition, decreased familiarity with their policy positions, and ultimately, reduced support from voters (Osei-Appiah 2019).

Similarly, the findings of Lawless & Fox (2003;2010), Arogundade, (2019), and Dittmar (2016), suggested that unequal media representation, where female candidates struggle to garner the same attention and recognition as their male counterparts, can influence public perception, contributing to a lack of visibility and ultimately hindering women's political participation. In agreement with Lawless & Fox (2010) this finding how limited media coverage of female candidates can discourage women from pursuing political careers. This reinforces the importance of fair and equitable media coverage in promoting gender-balanced political representation.

The varying levels of coverage among male candidates, where the Guardian provided the most coverage and Trust provided the least, may suggest that media attention may not be solely dependent on gender but might also be influenced by other factors such as campaign strategies, political affiliations, or regional considerations. This variation reflects the complexity of media coverage and the interplay of multiple factors beyond gender (Ayodele & Saheed, 2017). Banwart et al., (2003) and Banwart & Kearney, (2022) opined that various factors such as the media's

historical and societal norms, as well as ingrained biases, contribute to the gender-based disparities in media coverage, which can shape how journalists and editors select and frame news stories. In his work, Ross & Comrie (2012) emphasised the media's responsibility to provide balanced and unbiased coverage of political candidates, which can contribute to more informed citizenry and a healthier democracy.

#### **4.4.4 Framing in Different Story Types**

The findings further highlight the disparity in how female and male candidates were framed across different types of news stories. The analysis reveals a contrast in the coverage received by female and male candidates across different types of news stories. Female candidates were predominantly featured in political news, especially those related to the elections, constituting the majority of their coverage. They were notably absent in general news stories, feature articles, and editorials. Additionally, female candidates received limited coverage in crucial areas such as Education, Health, and the Environment, signalling a significant gap in highlighting their perspectives on these vital issues. However, they were mentioned in stories related to Fashion, Family, and Women's rights, indicating a narrow focus on gender-specific topics. In contrast, male candidates enjoyed richer coverage across various story types, except for Entertainment/Soft stories, which were largely irrelevant to their political pursuits, and opinion articles where their coverage was limited. Moreover, male candidates were more prominently featured in diverse issues such as Politics, Economy/Business, and Governance, showcasing a broader spectrum of topics associated with their campaigns.

The finding of this study, that female candidates received more coverage in political news, particularly due to the period's proximity to the elections, resonates with the concept of "stereotype reinforcement" in media framing. In this context, female candidates' prominence in political news can be attributed to the election-centred focus. However, the significant discrepancy arises when comparing female and male candidates' coverage in general news stories, feature stories, and editorials. This divergence underscores the potential limitations placed on the coverage of female candidates beyond election-related contexts. The observed imbalance is consistent with the broader literature on gender bias in media framing, where women's roles are often confined to specific topics while men enjoy broader coverage (Ross & Comrie 2012).

The disparities observed in story types reinforce the media's role in shaping public opinion and contributing to the broader narrative about candidates' capabilities and suitability for office (Bauer & Becker, 2015). Media's framing choices have a substantial impact on public understanding and perceptions of political candidates. A balanced and diverse coverage of female candidates across various story types is crucial for enhancing their public image and overcoming gender biases. The findings of Iyengar & Kinder, (2010) suggested that framing plays a critical role in constructing candidate images and influencing voter evaluations. The authors opined that the unequal framing of stories can influence public perception and shape voters' attitudes, as the narrower focus of coverage for female candidates might hinder their ability to establish diverse and multi-dimensional public personas, thereby limiting their appeal to a broader spectrum of voters (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010).

The significant gender disparity in the coverage of key issues also aligns with McCombs & Shaw, (1972) conceptualization of media agenda-setting, where the media's selection and emphasis on certain issues can shape public perceptions. In this context, female candidates being predominantly covered in political news might limit the range of roles attributed to them, reinforcing traditional stereotypes that associate women generally with politics, rather than a diverse array of policy areas (Cohen, 1963; Matsaganis & Payne: 2005; Littlejohn & Foss: 2009; McCombs et. al., 2014).

The finding that female candidates received coverage in areas related to fashion, family, and women's rights underscores the potential reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Such coverage could inadvertently limit the scope of female candidates' coverage to issues stereotypically associated with women. This aligns with the emphasis by Tuchman (1978) and Ette (2017) that women politicians are *symbolically undermined* in media representation. Thomas et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of media reframing women candidates as experts in various policy domains to challenge these gendered portrayals. To address this, Bauer & Becker (2015) recommended framing women candidates as knowledgeable policy experts across diverse domains. According to Bauer & Becker (2015), media can by deliberately featuring women candidates in stories related to economy, governance, and other policy areas.

Also, the unequal framing of female and male candidates in various story types aligns with the broader literature on media's role in shaping public opinion. Iyengar & Kinder (2010) expressed that uneven coverage can contribute to public misconceptions and reinforce gender stereotypes.

The fact that female candidates received little to no coverage in general news stories, feature stories, and editorials raises critical questions about media representation's broader implications. Bauer & Becker, (2015) also stated that the media can contribute to a more comprehensive portrayal of women capabilities by including women in general news stories, feature pieces, and editorials. Bystrom et. al., (2001) earlier opined that limited media exposure to female candidates in diverse contexts can perpetuate a narrow perception of their roles, expertise, and leadership abilities, while the extensive coverage of male candidates across various story types might also contribute to a more holistic public perception of their capabilities. Norris & Lovenduski (1995) also asserted that the lack of coverage in general news stories and feature pieces might prevent the public from viewing female candidates as comprehensive leaders with broad expertise. Thus, the variation in coverage between female and male candidates can have consequences for political participation.

Furthermore, the tone analysis reveals that articles featuring female candidates predominantly carried a neutral tone, with mixed and positive tones following closely. On the other hand, male candidates also had a substantial proportion of articles with a neutral tone, but they received a higher percentage of negative-toned articles and a lower percentage of positive-toned ones. The prevalence of neutral and positive tones in articles featuring female candidates indicates a relatively balanced portrayal. The neutral tone suggests objectivity, while positive tones may highlight their achievements and contributions positively, enhancing their public image. This balanced approach fosters a more nuanced understanding of female candidates, potentially encouraging public support. Moreover, the findings resonate with the studies by Oyesomi & Oyero (2012), Eshiet (2013), Ojebuyi & Chukwunwike (2018), and others, which highlight the gendered nature of media coverage in Nigerian politics.

Findings about the tone of articles offer valuable insights into media framing, which refers to how media coverage can influence public perception by emphasizing certain aspects of candidates (Entman, 2007). The varying tone patterns for female and male candidates suggest distinct approaches in media coverage that can shape audience perceptions. The prevalence of a neutral tone for articles about female candidates might indicate an attempt at balanced reporting. However, the mixed and positive tones in coverage can also be indicative of framing that highlights their achievements and qualities, possibly to counteract gender bias. This aligns with research

suggesting that female candidates often need to prove their competence more than their male counterparts, leading to a focus on their qualifications and achievements (Bauer & Becker, 2015). The relatively higher percentage of articles with a negative tone for male candidates could reflect a more critical or scrutinizing approach in media coverage. This is intriguing because it contrasts with the common notion that women candidates face more negative coverage due to gender bias (Dittmar, 2016).

The negative tone for male candidates could stem from factors like their policy stances, campaign strategies, or personal controversies. However, the relatively higher percentage of articles with a negative tone for male candidates could reflect a more critical or scrutinizing approach in media coverage. This matters because the tone of media coverage can significantly impact how candidates are perceived by the public. According to Iyengar & Kinder (2010), negative coverage can lead to unfavourable evaluations of candidates. If male candidates are consistently covered with a negative tone, it could potentially impact their perceived suitability for office. Similarly, a predominantly neutral tone for female candidates might not adequately showcase their leadership potential and policy expertise.

This finding thus reinforces the media's role in shaping public perceptions of candidates. Different tone patterns for female and male candidates can contribute to the perception of their qualities and capabilities. This aligns with Bauer & Becker's (2015) research, highlighting how media framing influences voters' assessments of candidates' qualifications and policy positions as earlier stated. To ensure equitable coverage, media organisations, particularly in Nigeria, should strive for a balanced tone across gender lines. Positive and negative aspects of candidates should be covered objectively, focusing on their policy proposals, qualifications, and leadership qualities rather than reinforcing gender stereotypes (Bauer & Becker, 2015).

Furthermore, this finding aligns with Goffman's Framing Analysis and the concept of Media Framing Theory, which emphasizes the media's power to filter information and influence public perception. The disparities in coverage across different story types and issues highlight the selective nature of media framing, shaping the narrative around political candidates. The prevalence of neutral tones, especially for female candidates, underscores the media's role in presenting information objectively. However, the presence of negative tones for male candidates

emphasizes the need to critically evaluate the media's framing strategies, as negative portrayals can significantly impact candidates' public image and electoral prospects.

Moreover, the findings resonate with the studies by Oyesomi & Oyero (2012), Eshiet (2013), Ojebuyi & Chukwunwike (2018), and others, which highlight the gendered nature of media coverage in Nigerian politics. The limited coverage in critical areas like Education and Health echoes the gender bias observed in media representations, underscoring the need for a more inclusive and diverse media landscape. Addressing these disparities is crucial for fostering gender-responsive reporting and promoting a more equitable representation of candidates, ultimately enhancing democratic processes in Nigeria.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings to show the summarized answers to the research questions. It also presents the theoretical contribution and recommendations of the study. The chapter will then conclude the study providing a closure to the dissertation.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

This study looked into the media coverage of male and female politicians during the 2019 Nigerian elections, aiming to assess patterns, biases, and disparities in their portrayal. The research addressed three key research questions, and the findings have been presented and analyzed in detail. The critical discoveries are summarized below, highlighting the key findings in each category, followed by a discussion of how these findings relate to the theories and literature emphasized earlier. Table 5.1 illustrates these findings.

**Table 5.1 Summary of Research findings**

Research Questions	Key Finding
<i>1. What were the dominant frames used by the named print news media organizations to cover both male and female politicians?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The use of gender frames for female candidates was minimal, considering the sample of 73 articles.</li></ul>

<p><i>2. How visible were the female politicians in the named newspapers from the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019 as compared to their male counterparts considering the main subjects in the stories (news, reports, and interviews), and the number of picture appearances of both parties?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female candidates received far less visibility compared to their male counterparts in terms of pictures used in headlines and the frequency of their names mentioned in articles.</li> <li>• Obiageli Ezekwesili (F2) received more recognition, likely due to her prior political roles and international experience.</li> <li>• Male candidates received more visibility in some newspapers, indicating a potential gender bias in media attention allocation.</li> </ul>
<p><i>3. How are stories (including news, reports, and interviews) about female candidates framed in the last quarter of 2018 to February 2019 in comparison with their male counterparts in these newspapers?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female candidates were predominantly featured in political news stories, with minimal coverage in general news, feature articles, and editorials.</li> <li>• They received less attention on crucial topics such as Education, Health, and the Environment.</li> <li>• The tone of articles for both male and female candidates was mostly neutral, but male candidates faced a higher percentage of negative tone, indicating potential biases in media portrayal.</li> </ul>

The dominant frames used by print news media organizations to cover male and female politicians revealed distinct patterns. Surprisingly, the use of gender frames for female politicians was minimal, indicating a potential shift away from traditional gender norms perpetuated by the media. This finding contradicts societal expectations and stereotypes related to gender roles in Nigerian media. The minimal use of gender frames suggests a positive step toward more equitable media coverage and reflects evolving societal attitudes and media efforts to combat harmful stereotypes. Media outlets have the potential to challenge gender biases and promote women's active engagement in politics by focusing on their policies and accomplishments, aligning with global initiatives promoting gender mainstreaming in media coverage.

The analysis of candidate visibility, encompassing the use of pictures in headlines and frequency of name mentions, uncovered notable gender biases. Female candidates' pictures appeared less frequently in articles than their male counterparts, reflecting a potential bias in media visual representation. The prominence of a female candidate, Obiageli Ezekwesili, in visual coverage could be attributed to her previous experiences and media strategies. Furthermore, the frequency of name mentions varied across newspapers, with male candidates receiving more visibility in Guardian, Trust, and Vanguard newspapers. The skewed visibility raises questions about potential unconscious biases or systemic gender norms influencing media coverage allocation.

Female candidates received significantly less coverage compared to their male counterparts across all newspapers, reflecting a pervasive gender bias in media attention. This finding aligns with established research indicating that women are often underrepresented in media coverage of politics, as shown by Osei-Appiah (2019) and Ayodele & Saheed (2017). Unequal media representation can influence public perception, contributing to gender disparities in political participation (Osei-Appiah 2019). The variation in coverage between female and male candidates underscores the need for fair and equitable media coverage to promote gender-balanced political representation.

The study revealed a contrast in how female and male candidates were framed across different types of news stories. Female candidates were predominantly featured in political news, while male candidates enjoyed richer coverage across various story types, including Politics, Economy/Business, and Governance. The limited coverage of female candidates in areas like Education and Health highlights the media's tendency to reinforce traditional gender roles and restrict female candidates to specific topics. This narrow framing can hinder their ability to establish diverse public personas and appeal to a broader spectrum of voters.

Additionally, the tone analysis revealed that articles featuring female candidates predominantly carried a neutral tone, with mixed and positive tones following closely. In contrast, male candidates had a higher percentage of negative-toned articles. These tone patterns can significantly impact public perception of candidates, emphasizing the media's role in shaping voter evaluations.

These findings resonate strongly with the Media Framing Theory and Goffman's Framing Analysis, emphasizing the media's power to shape public perception through selective framing of political candidates (Goffman, 1974). The disparities in coverage across different story types

underscore the selective nature of media framing, shaping the narrative around candidates and influencing public understanding and perceptions.

The findings also align with existing literature on gender biases in media coverage. The limited coverage of female candidates in diverse contexts perpetuates narrow perceptions of their roles, expertise, and leadership abilities. The unequal framing of stories reinforces traditional gender roles and restricts female candidates to specific topics, hindering their appeal to a broader voter base. The varying tone patterns for female and male candidates highlight distinct approaches in media coverage, influencing how candidates are perceived by the public.

### **5.3 Theoretical Contribution**

The present study makes significant theoretical contributions to the field of political communication, gender studies, and media framing, particularly within the African context. The research addresses a substantial gap in the literature, which predominantly focuses on Western perspectives, by delving into the underexplored terrain of non-Western contexts, specifically Africa, and more specifically, Nigeria. The study reveals that the use of gender frames for female candidates was minimal, contrary to existing literature's expectations. This discovery challenges the traditional gendered frames observed in Western media contexts, indicating a potential shift in media portrayal in Nigeria. This understanding enriches the existing theories by illustrating their adaptability and applicability in diverse cultural and political settings. Furthermore, this study contextualizes the unique challenges faced by female candidates within the sociopolitical landscape of Nigeria, offering a localized perspective on media dynamics. The research identifies that media coverage disparities were influenced not only by gender but also by factors such as candidates' prior political roles, campaign strategies, and regional considerations. This localized understanding emphasizes the multifaceted nature of media representation in Nigeria, providing valuable insights for policymakers, media practitioners, and scholars seeking to navigate the complexities of political communication in the country.

### **5.4 Limitation of Study**

Although this study offers significant contributions to the understanding of how the media covered female presidential candidates in the 2019 Nigerian elections, it has its limitations, like other studies. To begin with, it is important to note that the research exclusively examined print news

media, disregarding alternative media formats including television, radio, and online platforms, which may manifest distinct gender bias patterns. Moreover, the analysis was constrained to a particular temporal period encompassing the elections, which may have resulted in the neglect of enduring patterns or alterations in media portrayal. The study also focused on a specific subset of newspapers, and although every effort was made to incorporate a variety of sources, the results may not provide a comprehensive representation of the entire Nigerian media landscape. In addition, a comprehensive examination of the viewpoints held by journalists, editors, or media administrators, who might have contributed significant contextual insight into the identified biases, was absent from the study. In conclusion, the analysis predominantly concentrated on gender disparities and did not take into account other intersectional factors, including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, which might have an alternative impact on media representation. These limitations highlight areas for further research and emphasize the need for a more comprehensive and detailed examination of media representation of women in Nigerian politics.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

As a recommendation, journalists and media professionals should work actively to eliminate gender biases in their reporting. This may involve ensuring that male and female candidates are afforded equal visibility, avoiding the perpetuation of gendered stereotypes, and avoiding an exclusive emphasis on physical appearance or personal affairs. The media can support the development of a more inclusive political climate by providing impartial and balanced coverage. In a similar vein, media organizations ought to broaden their coverage by emphasizing the proficiency of female candidates in diverse policy domains, extending beyond conventional gender-specific subjects. The inclusion of female politicians in narratives pertaining to policy matters such as governance, the economy, and other areas can serve to challenge preconceived notions and bolster their credentials as all-encompassing leaders.

Additionally, it is imperative that governmental and regulatory organizations, with a particular focus on the African and Nigerian contexts, implement policies that guarantee gender parity in media portrayal. Potential measures to address gender biases in the media and ensure equitable coverage of male and female candidates during elections include the imposition of guidelines and penalties on media organizations that engage in such practices.

Further investigation is warranted into the intersectionality of gender in relation to socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. A more sophisticated understanding of media biases and their effects on various groups of women in politics can be obtained by taking into account the intersections of many identities. Moreover, they can conduct a comparative analysis of the portrayals of female politicians in the media within various cultural and political environments. The impact of cultural norms, political systems, and media environments on gender biases can be illuminated through comparative research, thereby contributing significant knowledge to international initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality in politics.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This study has illuminated critical aspects of media representation of female politicians in Nigeria during the 2019 general elections, unveiling significant disparities and providing valuable insights. The findings challenge existing literature, revealing a departure from traditional gender frames in media coverage, with a minimal use of gender frames observed in contrast to prior studies. This shift suggests a positive evolution in societal attitudes and media efforts to combat harmful stereotypes, indicating a step toward more equitable media coverage of female politicians. The study also highlighted disparities in framing strategies, with male candidates often being framed based on age and place of birth, while female candidates received emphasis on their gender. This contradiction with existing literature suggests a potential transformation in how Nigerian media portray female politicians, challenging traditional gender stereotypes.

Moreover, the research shed light on potential gender bias in media visual representation, with female candidates receiving noticeably less attention both in terms of pictures and name mentions. These disparities in visibility further underscore the challenges women face in achieving equitable media coverage in the political sphere. The substantial coverage discrepancies between male and female candidates across all newspapers align with established research on gender bias in media coverage, reaffirming the urgent need for more balanced and inclusive reporting practices.

The study's analysis of framing across different story types and issues revealed the selective nature of media framing, influencing public perception and candidate evaluation. Female candidates were predominantly featured in political news, emphasizing their roles in election-related contexts.

However, their limited coverage in general news stories and feature articles hindered the presentation of their diverse capabilities. Female candidates received limited coverage on critical issues like Education, Health, and the Environment, but were mentioned in stories related to Fashion, Family, and Women's rights. This emphasizes the significance of fostering gender-responsive reporting, which encourages a more holistic representation of female politicians that goes beyond traditional gender-specific subjects.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 (Comparison by Gender)

3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR FEMALE				FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE				
		NO OF VOTES		PUNCH	GUARDIAN	VANGUARD	DAILY TRUST	
1	<b>3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR FEMALE</b>							
2								
3	ADESANYA-DAVIES MERCY OLUFUNMILAYO	F1 MAJA	2,651	6	1	2	3	
4	EZEKWESILI OBIAGELI KATRYN	F2 ACPN	7,223	44	9	11	(TOO MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE)	
5	MAINA MAIMUNA KYARI	F3 NPC	10,081	1	0	1	2	
6								
7								
8	<b>3 HIGHEST VOTES FOR MALE</b>							
9	FELIX NICOLAS	M1 PCP	110,196	2	2	3	2	
10	ABUBAKAR ATIKU	M2 PDP	11,262,978	489	795	35	TOO MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE	
11	BUHARI MUHAMMADU	M3 APC	15,191,847	1298	2159	From page 3	TOO MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE	
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
21								

## Appendix 2 (Codebook for Qualitative analysis)

	February	February 21	January 21	January 2	December	December 2018
<b>1. GENDER FRAMES</b>						
Marital status	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical appearance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Place of marriage	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age	0	0	0	0	0	0
Place of birth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emphasis Placed on Gender	0	0	0	5	0	0
<b>2. Personal traits (like iron lady, honest, emotional, knowledgeable trustworthy, experienced, courageous and controversial)</b>						
Positive	0	0	0	2	0	0
Negative						
<b>3. Issues covered</b>						
Economy/Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Governance/Democracy	0	0	0	1	0	0
Politics	1	1	1	1	1	1
Corruption	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix 3 (Codebook for Quantitative analysis)

SN	NAME OF CANDIDATE	GENDER	PARTY	VOTES RECEIVED	REMARKS
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>					
45	ADEMOLA BABATUNDE ABIDEMI	M	NCMP	1,378	
38	FAGBENRO-BYRON SAMUEL ADESINA	M	KP	1,911	
72	ALI SOYODE M	M	YES	2,394	
61	GBENGA OLAWPEO-HASHIM	M	PT	2,613	
41	ADESANYA-DAVIES MERCY OLUFUNMILAYO	F	MAJA	2,651	
68	BALOGUN ISIAKA ISHOLA	M	UDP	3,170	
29	AWOSOLA WILLIAMS OLUSOLA	M	DPC	5,242	
55	MOSES AYIBIOWU	M	NUP	5,323	ONDO
13	DUROTOYE ADETOKUNBO OLUFELA	M	ANN	16,779	
1	OSITELU ISAAC BABATUNDE	M	A	19,219	
66	DA-SILVA THOMAS AYO	M	SNC	28,680	
3	OMOYELE SOWORE	M	AAC	33,953	
<b>SOUTH SOUTH</b>					
47	A. EDOSOMWAN JOHNSON	M	NDPC	1,192	
39	KRIZ DAVID	M	LM	1,438	DELTA
49	COM. ISHAKA PAUL OFEMILE	M	NEPP	1,524	EDO
24	DAVID ESOKA IFE IKAMLU	M	BNPP	1,648	EDO

## Appendix 4 (Quantitative summary)

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet titled 'TAIWO'S WORKBOOK QUALITATIVE'. The active sheet is 'QUANTITATIVE SUMMARY'. The data is organized into two main sections: 'VOTES FOR FEMALE' and 'VOTES FOR MALE'. Each section lists candidates with their names, parties, and various metrics including 'NO OF VOTES', 'FREQUENCY', and 'MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE'.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	
1	VOTES FOR FEMALE																				
2					NO OF VOTES	FREQUENCY	PUNCH	GUARDIAN	VANGUARD	DAILY TRUST											
3	F1	ADESANYA-DAVIES MERCY OLUFUNMILAYO	MAJA	2,651			6	1	2	3											
4	F2	EZEKWESILI OBIAGELI	ACPN	7,223			44	9	11	MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE											
5	F3	MAINA MAIMUNA KYA	NPC	10,081			1	0	1	2											
6																					
7																					
8	VOTES FOR MALE																				
9	M1	FELIX NICOLAS	M PCP	110,196			2	2	3	2											
10	M2	ABUBAKAR ATIKU	M PDP	11,262,978			489	795	35	MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE											
11	M3	BUHARI MUHAMMAD	M APC	15,191,847	ELECTED		1298	2159	pin page	MUCH FOR SEARCH ENGINE											
12																					
13																					
14																					
15																					
16																					
17																					
18																					
19																					
20																					
21																					



## Appendix 5 (Minimal use of gender frames)

AutoSave [Off] TAIWO'S WORKBOOK QUALITATIVE (Excel... - Saved to this PC) Search Taiwo George TG

File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Automate Help Acrobat

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles Cells Editing Sensitivity Add-ins Analyze Data

H2 28th November 2018

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1	EZEKWESILI OBIAGELI KATRYN																		
2	<b>1. GENDER FRAMES</b>	February	February 21	January 2	January 20	December	December	November	November 2018										
3	Marital status	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
4	Physical appearance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
5	Place of marriage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
6	Age	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
7	Place of birth.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
8	Emphasis Placed on Gender	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0									
9	<b>2. Personal traits (like iron lady, honest, emotional, knowledgeable, trustworthy, experienced, courageous and controversial)</b>	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0										
10																			
11	<b>3. Issues covered</b>																		
12	Economy/Business	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0										
13	Governance/Democracy	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0										
14	Politics	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1										
15	Corruption	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0										
16	Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										

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