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A Case Study of Nigeria on the Impact of Media Framing in Newspapers on the Electoral Success of Female Political Candidates.

By

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A dissertation prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of master's in journalism and public Relations.

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Declaration

I, Agnes Oluwatomì Showemimo, at this moment, certify that the content I am submitting for evaluation as part of the study program leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Media Communications is original to me and is based on my study and/or research. I have also given due credit to all the materials and sources that I used in its preparation. Additionally, I attest that I have never plagiarized not even from other students or copied someone else's work in whole or in part.

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The date is ____August 8, 2024____.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates how media framing in Nigerian newspapers affects female political candidates' chances of winning elections. This research uses the media framing theory as a theoretical framework to investigate how different frames affect public opinion and the outcomes of elections for women in politics. This research is

conducted in Nigeria, a nation with a complex sociopolitical environment and deeply embedded gender norms.

The primary methodology of the study is content analysis, which involves methodically going through newspaper stories to find standard frames that are utilised when covering female political candidates. A popular method in media studies, content analysis, enables the quantitative evaluation of media material and exposes biases, patterns, and trends in the way female candidates are portrayed (Krippendorff, 2018).

According to Robert Entman's (1993) expansion of Erving Goffman's (1983) framing theory, audience interpretation and comprehension are significantly impacted by the way media content is organised. In this situation, frames might draw attention to the qualities of female candidates while minimising others, which can affect how the public views them. The study focuses on a number of framing techniques, such as exemplars, catchphrases, metaphors, and portrayals, in order to identify the prevailing narratives in Nigerian publications.

The analysis is based on theoretical understandings from intersectional feminism and colonial/post-colonial studies. In order to comprehend the ongoing influence of colonial legacies on current gender dynamics in Nigeria, it is helpful to read Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Because of the influence of colonial history on media representations and societal standards, women are frequently marginalised in public spaces. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, written by Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí in 1997, not only critiques the imposition of Western gender categories on African cultures but also offers a crucial perspective on how these consequences are still reflected in media portrayals.

Furthermore, the media framing of female candidates is examined in light of overlapping identities, including gender, ethnicity, and class, via the lens of Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, as presented in *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (2017). Understanding the multifaceted biases that female candidates experience in the media requires an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 2017). This approach is informed by Emma Ming Wahl's examination of Black women in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (2021), which emphasises the unique difficulties associated with racialised gender stereotypes.

The results of this dissertation show that gender biases are frequently reinforced by media framing in Nigerian newspapers, which has a detrimental effect on female political candidates' chances of winning elections. Many frames highlight traditional gender roles or cast doubt on women's abilities and suitability for leadership roles. These frames hurt female candidates' chances of winning elections by contributing to a negative public opinion of them. By offering insights on how media practices may be changed to support female equality in political representation, this study adds to the larger conversation on gender and media in Africa. The study promotes policy measures and media changes that aid in the electoral success of female political candidates in Nigeria by emphasising the need for more equal and balanced media depictions.

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Nigeria, a multicultural country with a rich cultural legacy, has made significant progress toward democracy since returning to civil government in 1999. However, women still make up a disproportionately tiny percentage of elected posts, and the political landscape is still heavily dominated by men. Economic limitations, political party structures, and sociocultural barriers are some of the many factors contributing to this underrepresentation, which is a complicated problem (Eze, 2014).

The media, also called the "fourth estate," is essential in forming public opinion and determining how elections turn out (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The media has the power to influence political candidates' chances of winning elections by enhancing or decreasing their visibility through news reports, opinion articles, and commentary. Nigeria has a wide range of media outlets, including radio stations, newspapers, television networks, and internet platforms. Particularly when it comes to influencing political debate and public opinion, newspapers are essential.

According to Robert Entman's framing theory, media frames highlight and highlight particular features of a perceived reality, which in turn affects how viewers comprehend and interpret events (Entman, 1993). Newspapers in Nigeria frequently represent and uphold social standards, especially prejudices against certain genders. This study investigates the ways in which newspapers portray female politicians and the degree to which these portrayals influence these candidates' electoral outcomes.

Media framing has the power to both dispel and validate preexisting biases and stereotypes. The media frequently reinforces unfavourable perceptions about female political candidates in Nigeria, a country with deeply ingrained patriarchal customs. For example, women are often shown as emotionally unstable or less capable than men. These misogynistic portrayals have the potential to dissuade voters from endorsing female politicians and discourage female candidates from entering politics. This study examines the particular frames employed in Nigerian newspapers and their effect on female candidates' electoral performance by applying the framing theory.

Numerous studies have continuously shown how media framing can influence how the public views political candidates (Scheufele, 1999). According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), media framing of female candidates can impact voter choices and electoral outcomes by either reinforcing or challenging preexisting gender stereotypes. Despite recent significant media landscape expansion in Nigeria, the way female politicians are portrayed frequently fails to advance gender equality. Research has indicated that the media in Nigeria tends to sustain negative preconceptions about women in politics, such as highlighting their roles as housewives or putting more emphasis on their physical beauty than their political background (Olorunfemi, 2010). Women are underrepresented in political leadership, and this framing may be part of the reason.

In the past, men have dominated Nigerian politics, with women frequently occupying the background. Western gender norms were imposed during the colonial era, upending traditional African gender roles, which were often more flexible and equitable, as discussed by Oyèrónkṣ́ Oyēwùmí. In Nigerian politics today, gender dynamics are still influenced by this colonial past. Even with notable advancements in women's activity and education, the percentage of women in politics is still low. Systemic obstacles prevent women from running for political office because of the enduring patriarchal systems that were put in place during the colonial era.

The notion of intersectionality, as proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (2017), is crucial in comprehending the complex forms of prejudice that female political candidates in Nigeria encounter. The study of intersectionality takes into account the ways in which different social identities—such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class—intersect to produce distinct oppressive experiences. In Nigeria, discrimination against female political candidates is frequently intensified because of their ethnicity and gender. Black women are marginalized by racial and gendered stereotypes, as Emma Ming Wahl's analysis of Black women in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* demonstrates (Wahl, 2021). This study evaluates the visibility of female political candidates in Nigerian newspapers and how that representation impacts those candidates' chances of winning elections using an intersectional lens.

One paradigm for comprehending the long-lasting consequences of colonial gender norms on Nigerian society comes from Frantz Fanon's research on the psychological

effects of colonialism (Fanon, 1952). Pre-existing gender relations were upset, and a patriarchal order was established, which still exists today when Western gender roles were imposed during colonialism. To comprehend the media's role in sustaining gender biases, it is imperative to grasp this historical background. The purpose of this study is to identify the more fundamental sociocultural elements that influence how female political candidates in Nigeria are portrayed in the media by looking at colonial and post-colonial influences.

This study intends to close the knowledge gap by analysing how Nigerian newspapers frame female candidates during elections and the possible effects of such framing on voter perceptions and electoral outcomes. Research on the impact of media framing on the electoral success of female political candidates in Nigeria currently needs to be completed. This study adds to the expanding body of information on the relationship between gender, media, and politics in Nigeria by examining these topics.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Nigeria, female political candidates encounter substantial challenges that impede their electoral triumph, notwithstanding several endeavours aimed at augmenting women's involvement in politics. Women continue to be notably underrepresented in Nigerian politics despite a number of initiatives and laws intended to increase female political participation. Sociocultural norms, political institutions, and economic obstacles are some of the variables that impact this disparity. Nonetheless, media framing's influence on public opinion of female political candidates is one of the most critical but little-studied variables. Voter views and actions can be strongly influenced by media framing, which is the term for the presentation and interpretation of information in a specific way.

Women's chances of holding political office are impacted by the persistence of gender stereotypes and biases in the media, which is a significant public opinion influencer. The issue is with the framing of these media narratives, which have the power to either elevate or denigrate female candidates. Nonetheless, media framing's influence on public opinion of female political candidates is one of the most critical but little-studied variables. Voter views and actions can be strongly influenced by media framing, which is the term for the presentation and interpretation of information in a specific way.

It is imperative to comprehend the distinct frameworks employed by Nigerian newspapers and their consequences for the political representation of women. By examining the effect of media framing on the electoral success of female political candidates in Nigeria, this dissertation aims to close this gap and advance the conversation on gender and politics.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify which frames are most frequently utilized by Nigerian media to report on female political candidates.
2. To examine how these media frames affect how the general public views female candidates for public office.
3. To evaluate the effect of media framing on Nigerian female political candidates' electoral outcomes.
4. Investigate the relationship between media framing, gender biases, and colonial/post-colonial legacies in Nigerian politics.
5. To offer suggestions in order to promote greater gender equality in political representation and enhance media practices.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How are female politicians represented in Nigerian media?
- Is there a predominant frame/narrative/mode of representation used by Nigerian newspapers to cover female political candidates?
- Why are these modes of representation dominant?
- What is the impact of these modes of representation on female participation in Nigerian politics?

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are various reasons why this study is noteworthy. First off, especially in the context of Africa, it adds to the body of knowledge on media framing and its effects on politics and gender. Furthermore, it offers empirical perspectives that can

educate politicians, media professionals, and advocacy organizations on how to promote a more fair and just media landscape.

This dissertation seeks to assist in the pursuit of gender equality in Nigerian politics by examining the connections between gender, media, and political representation.

1.5.1. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

This work is essential because it adds to our theoretical knowledge of media framing, especially in the context of developing national electoral politics. This study clarifies how media narratives impact public views and electoral outcomes by utilizing framing theory (Entman, 1993). Moreover, by placing modern media practices in a historical context, the incorporation of colonial/post-colonial studies deepens the analysis. Frantz Fanon's investigation into the psychological ramifications of colonialism highlights the ways in which colonial legacies still shape contemporary socio-political processes (Fanon, 1952). Oyèrónké Oyēwùmí's work challenges the imposition of Western gender discourses on African societies, underscoring the significance of taking into account African viewpoints on gender (Oyēwùmí, 1997). This study provides a thorough analysis of the various obstacles faced by female political candidates by integrating intersectional feminism and addressing the intricate interactions between gender, ethnicity, and class (Crenshaw, 2017).

1.5.2 APPLICATION IMPLICATIONS:

This study has critical applications for female politicians, media professionals, and political campaigners. This study offers insights into how media representations might help or impede female political candidates' electoral success by pinpointing the precise frames employed by Nigerian newspapers while covering them. With this information, media professionals can create a more fair and balanced reporting environment that supports gender equality. Campaigners for political office can also gain from knowing how voter opinions are shaped by media framing, as this will help them create strategies that offset negative framing and emphasize the qualifications and characteristics of female candidates.

1.5.3. RELEVANCE OF POLICY

The study's conclusions are highly relevant to policy. Policymakers can create rules and norms that guarantee fair and impartial media coverage of all political candidates, regardless of gender, using the knowledge gathered from this research. Legislators may help level the playing field for female candidates and increase their prospects of winning elections by supporting media policies that support inclusivity and diversity. In Nigeria, where women are still disproportionately under-represented in positions of political leadership, this is especially crucial. Policymakers can help achieve gender parity in political representation by tackling the structural and systemic impediments that this research has brought to light.

1.6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The analysis of media framing in Nigerian newspapers and its effect on female political candidates' election performance is the exclusive focus of this study. Although the research offers significant perspectives into the Nigerian setting, its conclusions might not be universally applicable to other nations with dissimilar political and media environments. The study also concentrates on newspaper coverage, which might need to fully account for the range of media influences, such as social media, radio, and television.

1.7. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

An overview of the entire dissertation is given in the last section of Chapter 1. The following is an explanation of the upcoming chapters:

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature: looks at pertinent studies on media framing, gender and politics, and the history of women's political participation in Nigeria. It integrates theoretical frameworks such as post-colonial theory, framing theory, and intersectional feminism.

Chapter 3: Methodology - This chapter describes the research design in-depth, along with the procedures for gathering and analyzing data. It provides an explanation of how newspapers are chosen, how articles are sampled, and how analytical methods are applied to look at media frames.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings - The results of the newspaper article content analysis are presented in this chapter. It talks about the prevalent frameworks that were found and how they affect female candidates for public office. In light of the theoretical frameworks and body of literature already in existence, this chapter interprets the data. It investigates more general ramifications for comprehending the media's impact on gender and Nigerian electoral politics.

Closure & Suggestions in Chapter 5 - In order to improve women's representation in Nigerian politics, the last chapter highlights the principal conclusions, addresses the study's shortcomings, and makes suggestions for additional research and real-world implementations.

1.8. CONCLUSION

The background of the study, the problem statement, the research aims, the questions, the significance, the theoretical framework, the methodology, the scope and constraints, and the questions have all been reviewed in this chapter. The goal of this research is to advance knowledge of gender and politics in Africa by analysing the effect of media framing on the election performance of female political candidates in Nigeria.

The following chapters, which will go into additional detail on the literature review, study methodologies, data analysis, results and recommendations, will be provided in the ensuing chapters, which will go into further detail on the literature review, study methods, data analysis, conclusions, and suggestions.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section, relevant texts used in this thesis will be analyzed according to their respective authors, the relevance of these studies to the thesis, central arguments, how these arguments provide context for this thesis, comparative analysis, and research gaps.

Notably, these texts are Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí - *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (1997), Frantz Fanon - *Black Skin, White*

Masks (1952), Ngozi Nwosu-Juba - Intersectionality and Women's Political Participation in Nigeria (2020), Kimberly Crenshaw - On Intersectionality: Essential Writings (2017), Emma Ming Wahl - Black women in Fanon's black skin, white masks (2021).

Who are the authors, and why is their work relevant to this research?

- Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí is a renowned Nigerian gender studies scholar and a full Professor of Sociology at Stony Brook University. She is a Nigerian feminist, and her work on gender studies is proof of her contributions to the promotion of interests that border around the female gender. Specifically, she was famously quoted arguing that gender is a Western cultural construct that did not exist in the Yoruba society of Nigeria prior to British colonialism. Most of her work critically examines Western gender discourses from an African perspective. Her work is relevant to the understanding of the cultural context of gender in Nigeria, thereby challenging the imposing Western ideologies on gender. The central theme of the text "The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses" is that gender is a Western construct that does not necessarily apply to African societies, where social roles are more fluid and context-dependent. Her perspectives on these discourses in the context of this research are essential in the analyses of how newspaper outlets might embrace or reject the gender framework originating from Western societies, especially when reporting on issues that relate to female politicians.

Conclusively, although Oyěwùmí's work provides a foundational perspective on the disparity between the gender norms of Western and African societies, her work does not directly address media framing. Therefore, this research will be filling this research gap by applying her theories and perspectives to media analysis.

- Kimberle Williams Crenshaw is an American civil rights advocate, a leading scholar in critical race theory and the originator of the concept of intersectionality. She is a professor at the UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School, where she specializes in race and gender issues. Her book is relevant to this research as it is essential for understanding the compounding effects of race, gender, and other identities on media framing. The central theme of her argument points out that various forms of social groupings, such as race, gender and class, do not operate

independently but conjoin to create a complex system of oppression. In relation to this research, the concept of “intersectionality” is vital to the analysis of the Nigerian newspaper's portrayal of female politicians who may be experiencing multiple forms of bias or discrimination.

In summary, Crenshaw’s framework supports the need for an intersectional analysis in media studies. Still, it does not provide contextual insights into the media practices in Nigeria, a gap this research will address.

- Ngozi Nwosu-Juba is an experienced researcher who focuses on topics such as non-governmental leadership, gender, human rights, and organizational development. In the context of this research, like Kimberly, her work discusses intersectionality and female political representation in Nigeria. Although she is considered to be an emerging scholar, her work is directly relevant to this research topic because it critically examines how different forms of discrimination are used to influence or shape women’s political participation in Nigeria. The central theme of her argument is that intersectionality is crucial for understanding the multifaceted challenges women in Nigeria face, especially in politics. Spanning from socio-economic barriers to media bias. Her analysis will serve as a framework for the understanding of how intersectional discrimination translates to the media representation of women, an essential point in the study of media framing.

In summary, Ngozi’s work fits perfectly with the intersectional perspectives of this research. Still, there is a need for further empirical data on media framing and Nigerian women's participation in politics. Hence the need for this research.

- Frantz Omar Fanon was a French Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, political philosopher and Marxist from the French colony of Martinique. He is famously known for his works on decolonization, post-colonial studies, critical theory, Marxism and the psychology of oppression. His exploration of identity and race is relevant to this research as it provides an essential framework for understanding the intersectionality of race and gender in media imaging. The central theme of his work highlighted the internalization of colonial attitudes by black individuals and the resulting identity conflicts. In the context of this research, his work will aid in

the analysis of how female politicians in Nigeria are portrayed not only in terms of their identity as females but also through the lens of post-colonial identity.

Further comparative research reveals that there is a correlation between Oyěwùmí's critique of Western gender norms and Fanon's insights into identity, gender and race. The purpose of this study is to close the research gap that currently exists about the lack of particular gendered media framing.

- Emma Ming Wahl is a contemporary scholar who critiques Fanon's work through the perspectives of black women's experiences. Her work extends Fanon's theories specifically to address the intersection of race and gender for black women. She argued that black women experience a unique form of oppression that is both racial and gendered, thereby complicating their social and political representation. For this research, her perspectives are crucial for understanding the unique challenges faced by black female politicians in Nigeria, who are often subject to intersectional biases, as they provide additional nuanced perspectives on Fanon's work, intersectionality. Considering the fact that she did not address the media framing like her predecessor, this research will be looking to provide more insights on the media framing of identity, race and gender in order to fill the research gap.

2.2. FURTHER ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF RELEVANT TEXTS

A careful analysis of the given literature exposes more underlying issues to prove the importance of this research. From a cultural gender perspective, Oyewumi's work on Western gender norms highlighted the importance of considering media framing from a Nigerian cultural perspective. Crenshaw's intersectionality, Ngozi's work, and Wahl's extension of Fanon's work revealed the compounding effects of intersecting identities, which is evident in the biased treatment of female politicians in Nigeria. This will provide the framework for understanding the compounding biases that Nigerian women face in politics.

Fanon's insights into identity and decolonization from the post-colonial era are also crucial in helping us understand the broader effect of societal influences on the media framing of female politicians in Nigeria. Wahl's work on the uniqueness of black women's oppression is crucial in helping us to fully understand specific challenges faced by black women, which is relevant to the analysis of media framing in Nigeria.

2.3. MEDIA FRAMING: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Public perceptions and beliefs are significantly shaped by media framing, especially in the political sphere (Entman, 1993). Understanding how media framing affects women's political engagement is crucial in Nigeria, where gender inequality still exists (Oyewù mí, 1997). Taking into account the interconnections of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class, this research investigates how media framing in Nigerian newspapers affects the electoral success of female political candidates (Crenshaw, 2017). There is still a great deal to learn about how media framing impacts female candidates in Nigeria despite an increase in studies on the relationship between media and politics (Oyero, 2017). By shedding light on the challenges and possibilities faced by female candidates as a result of media portrayal, this study seeks to close that knowledge gap. This study aims to investigate how media framing affects public opinion and election results by looking at how women are portrayed in Nigerian newspapers.

A key idea in comprehending the processes of public discourse and opinion development is media framing. According to Entman (1993), it is the presentation and packaging of information by media sources that has a substantial impact on how viewers understand and perceive different situations. The purpose of this section is to examine the theoretical underpinnings and real-world uses of media framing in news creation, as well as its influence on public opinion. The theoretical foundations of media framing place a strong emphasis on how crucial it is to understand how news producers, editors, and journalists choose which facts to include and which to leave out of a news narrative. These decisions may have an effect on how the story is framed overall, which may affect how viewers view and react to the topic being covered. Media sources may significantly influence social attitudes, public discourse, and governmental choices by influencing public opinion (Agbalajobi, 2015).

Media framing research has evolved in recent years, covering a broader spectrum of elements that influence public opinion formation (Vraga et al., 2020). Research has begun to investigate the relationships that media framing has with individual-level traits, including past knowledge and attitudes (Arendt et al., 2021). This change emphasizes how important it is to take into account both the media's and each person's part when analyzing how framing affects public conversation. When it comes to real-world uses, media framing is evident in a variety of news production formats. For instance, news

organizations frequently use framing strategies to help their audience understand and be more engaged with complicated problems (Nagler, 2020). Nevertheless, this could unintentionally result in the endorsement of particular opinions or the strengthening of preexisting preconceptions (Brüggemann & D'Angelo, 2021). The strong impact of media framing on public debate is further demonstrated by the fact that media outlets occasionally purposefully use framing techniques to serve specific political or ideological goals (Benford & Sun, 2021).

To cultivate educated and involved citizens, we must remain vigilant in our observation and evaluation of the framing techniques that news organizations utilize as the media environment changes (Entman, 1993; McQuail, 2010). The examination of media framing provides an invaluable viewpoint for analyzing the impact of the media on public opinion and conversation. Researchers can get critical insights into how media outlets impact the public's awareness of important topics by closely examining the decisions made in the production of news material (Vraga et al., 2020).

Delving into political reporting as an example to better show the real-world uses of media framing. News organizations covering political campaigns may decide to highlight a candidate's personal life, policy ideas, or debate performance Nagler (2020). The public's perception of the candidates may be influenced in different ways by each of these perspectives. In contrast, a focus on policy recommendations may stimulate a more in-depth debate on the topics at hand. For instance, emphasizing personal life may influence the audience's opinion of a candidate's more surface-level qualities. According to Brüggemann and D'Angelo (2021), there is also a substantial influence on the audience's view of the issue from the word choice, picture, and tone used by a news reporter. Although the phrases "ambitious" and "power-hungry" both imply a strong desire for achievement, a reporter's choice to characterize a political candidate as either can leave the viewer with mixed feelings. In a similar vein, the use of visuals, including pictures of a politician mingling with fans or in contentious debates, can subtly influence how the audience perceives the candidate's personality and aptitude for leadership.

In summary, media framing is a crucial instrument for analyzing the intricate relationship between news creation and the construction of public opinion. Through an examination of the theoretical underpinnings and pragmatic uses of media framing, scholars may enhance their comprehension of the intricacies of modern journalism and its impact on moulding public discourse. In addition, recognizing the significant

influence media outlets have on this process emphasizes the value of responsible journalism and critical media literacy in developing educated and involved citizens (Entman, 1993).

2.4. FEMALE ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA

The issue of female electoral participation in Nigeria persists because women are disproportionately underrepresented in elective roles and decision-making processes, according to studies on gender and politics (Okome, 2016; Agbalajobi, 2015). This section will discuss the many obstacles and hurdles that women face while running for political office, as well as a careful examination of the present status of female electoral participation in Nigeria.

Women's participation in political offices is declining, according to recent statistics from Nigeria's 2023 elections (Adeoye, 2023), underscoring the persistent problem of women's underrepresentation in Nigerian politics. Despite continuous initiatives to advance gender equality and increase women's political involvement, this drop continues (UN Women, 2022). This problem stems from several sources, such as conservative social values, political party gatekeeping and culture, disparities in competitiveness between executive and legislative offices, and the compounded effect of women's novice candidature and insufficient campaign funding (Adeoye, 2023).

Given that women commonly face discrimination and exclusion inside party structures, political party gatekeeping poses a significant barrier to female electoral participation in Nigeria (Okome, 2016). Women have fewer opportunities as a result of this marginalization to win party nominations and run for office (Adeoye, 2023).

Furthermore, women's active participation in politics is hampered by conservative cultural norms and society in Nigeria, which upholds conventional gender roles (Agbalajobi, 2015). The underrepresentation of women in Nigerian politics is also a result of the different degrees of competition in legislative vs executive seats (Adeoye, 2023). Executive jobs like the governorship and the presidency are sometimes very competitive and need significant financial resources, which may deter women from applying for them (UN Women, 2022). Furthermore, it is challenging due to women's inexperienced candidacies and little campaign finance.

Adopting focused actions and policies that support gender equality and women's political empowerment is essential to addressing these issues and enhancing female election participation in Nigeria (UN Women, 2022). These actions might include implementing affirmative action plans, including quotas or reserved seats for women in elected positions, as well as developing women's political abilities via mentoring and training programs (Agbalajobi, 2015). In addition to these, governments, civil society groups, and the general public should work together to address the urgent problem of female voting participation in Nigeria. Nigeria can achieve gender equality and guarantee that women's perspectives are heard and appropriately reflected in decision-making processes by tackling the obstacles and difficulties that women encounter while seeking political office.

Furthermore, it is critical to recognize that the difficulties experienced by women in politics are intersectional. Social class, religion, and ethnicity are a few other variables that may make it more difficult for women to run for political office (Kimberly, 2017). For instance, since they have less access to resources and networks, women from disadvantaged ethnic groups or poorer socioeconomic origins may encounter extra obstacles. Policymakers and stakeholders may create more inclusive and successful initiatives to encourage female electoral participation in Nigeria by acknowledging and addressing these intersecting concerns. One cannot emphasize how crucial it is to create an atmosphere that supports women's political engagement. In addition to improving gender equality, increasing the number of women in politics also helps create inclusive and representative decision-making processes (UN Women, 2022). A broad range of perspectives and experiences being represented in political discourse can lead to more inclusive and equitable policy decisions.

Sustained assessment and modification of current approaches and policies will be essential to making significant progress as Nigeria continues to negotiate the challenging terrain of gender equality in politics (Emma, 2021). Stakeholders may cooperate to find and use creative solutions that successfully address the particular difficulties encountered by women in Nigerian politics by using lessons learnt from both local and global settings. Nigeria cannot achieve its goal of a fully inclusive and representative democracy unless it makes a consistent commitment and works together.

2.5.1. GENDER-BASED EXCLUSION IN MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE POLITICAL CANDIDATES IN NIGERIA

This section aims to analyze the current state of media representation for female political candidates in Nigeria while exploring the various challenges and biases they encounter. Women are often underrepresented and misrepresented in the media, particularly in the realm of politics, according to several studies (Agbalajobi, 2015; Endong & Obonganwan, 2015). The media representation of female political candidates in Nigeria has been a significant topic of discourse and concern in recent years.

2.5.2. GENDER-BASED EXCLUSION AND ITS PERSISTENCE

Gender-based exclusion in Nigeria functions through entrenched cultural norms and systemic biases that permeate various aspects of society, including the media. According to Agbalajobi (2015), Nigeria's conservative cultural norms and culture contribute significantly to the underrepresentation of female political candidates. Traditional gender roles often position women as subservient and relegated to domestic spheres, which impacts their visibility and portrayal in the public and political arenas. This exclusion is evident in how female candidates are often portrayed as lacking the necessary competence and strength for political leadership, as highlighted by Adeoye (2023). The study revealed insufficient media coverage of female candidates and incidents of gender-based hate speech, threats, and violence during elections. Women's integrity is frequently questioned, and they are portrayed as weak and incompetent, while male candidates receive more objective reporting.

Furthermore, Endong and Obonganwan (2015) argue that the lack of women in decision-making positions within media organizations exacerbates the problem. This absence ensures that the narratives around female political candidates are crafted primarily by men, who may unconsciously or consciously perpetuate gender biases.

2.6. CHALLENGES AND BIASES IN MEDIA REPRESENTATION

Several studies have documented the challenges and biases faced by female political candidates in Nigeria. According to Agbalajobi (2015) and Endong and Obonganwan (2015), women are often portrayed in ways that undermine their political legitimacy.

They are frequently depicted in terms of their marital status, attractiveness, or domestic roles rather than their political credentials and platforms.

Adeoye (2023) found that during the 2019 general elections, female candidates received less media coverage compared to their male counterparts. This lack of coverage is compounded by negative framing, where women are often depicted as unfit for political office. This negative portrayal can significantly influence public opinion and diminish the electoral prospects of female candidates.

2.7.1. THE NEED FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE

Gender-sensitive media coverage is essential, according to a UN Women study (2022). The study recommended that media outlets focus on the qualifications and skills of female political candidates rather than on harmful stereotypes. It promoted equal airtime and exposure for male and female candidates to ensure fair representation. This approach would help challenge prevailing gender norms and stereotypes, fostering a more equitable political environment.

2.7.2. INTERSECTIONALITY AND MEDIA REPRESENTATION

It is essential to recognize the interconnectedness of the issues facing women in politics. Factors such as social class, religion, and ethnicity can exacerbate the challenges faced by female political candidates (Frantz, 1952). For instance, women from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds or disadvantaged ethnic groups may face additional hurdles due to limited access to networks and resources. This intersectionality means that some women face multiple layers of discrimination, making their political journey even more challenging.

2.8. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

To overcome these obstacles and enhance the media presence of female political candidates in Nigeria, targeted interventions and policies supporting gender-sensitive reporting are crucial (UN Women, 2022). Initiatives might include developing standards and codes of conduct that ensure impartial and fair coverage of all political candidates and training programs for journalists on gender equality and non-discriminatory reporting.

The under-representation of female political candidates in the media is still a serious problem that calls for coordinated efforts and constant attention from the media, government agencies, and civil society. Nigeria must work towards attaining gender equality and ensuring that women's issues are adequately addressed in the media.

Encouraging women's participation in politics requires considerable effort. Gender equality and inclusive, representative decision-making processes are fostered when more women participate in politics (UN Women, 2022). A diverse range of experiences and perspectives should be represented in political discourse to produce more inclusive and equitable policy outcomes.

Nigeria is still navigating the challenging terrain of gender equality in politics. Lasting change in current practices and policies is necessary for actual progress. By applying knowledge from both domestic and global contexts, stakeholders can work together to identify and implement innovative solutions that effectively address the specific challenges faced by female political candidates in Nigerian media. Persistent dedication and collective effort are required for Nigeria to become the truly inclusive and representative democracy it envisions.

2.9. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

In this case study, *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, and *Vanguard*—three national newspapers—are used to analyze how female political candidates were portrayed in the media during the 2019 Nigerian general elections. The study attempts to determine the possible influence of media representation on public opinion and election results by contrasting the media frames used by different publications. Oloyede and Onyekachi's (2022) study examined how female candidates were covered in these periodicals and found that although women's presence in politics had increased, the way their candidacies were framed was frequently discriminatory. It was common for female candidates to be portrayed as unable or without the necessary background to hold public office. Additionally, their marital status and attractiveness were frequently highlighted, whereas their political platforms and credentials received less attention. Their study is relevant to this research because it provides empirical evidence on how female candidates were portrayed in Nigerian newspapers. It is essential for understanding media framing and its impact on electoral success. In the context of this research, their

findings underscore the need to address biased media portrayals of female politicians in order to create a more equitable political landscape.

In a similar vein, a content analysis by Adebayo and Ogwezzy (2023) demonstrated that female candidates were subjected to more adverse coverage compared to their male counterparts. They argued that the perpetuation of stereotypes and gender biases in the media could negatively sway public perception of female candidates, potentially influencing electoral outcomes. This analysis aligns with the purpose of this research because it provides more insights into the comparative coverage of female and male candidates and, as a result, highlights the gender biases as perpetuated by the media. Furthermore, their work reinforces the hypothesis that negative media framing can negatively affect the electoral success of female candidates.

Using editorials and op-eds that celebrated the accomplishments and talents of female candidates, Nwokolo (2021) outlined instances in which these candidates were presented in the media in a good way. Nevertheless, the number of these occurrences was lower than that of negative depictions, indicating that more than positive framing might be needed to offset the media's general unfavourable image of female politicians. Nwokolo's work is relevant to this research as it provides an avenue for positive media portrayals of female candidates while noting how scared they are. This gives a different and counterbalanced perspective on the subject matter. However, it ends up proving that the insufficient positive representations are an indicator of the overwhelming impact of media framing.

Olamide (2019) also examined how party membership and media ownership impact how female candidates are portrayed. According to the study, publications that have a strong preference for one political party over another may portray its female candidates more favourably while taking a more critical view of their male counterparts. Olamide's work is relevant to this research because it examines the interplay between party membership, media ownership and the portrayal of female candidates, thereby introducing the variable of political bias and its overall impact on media framing. This is crucial as it helps understand how political biases in media ownership and editorial policies can further complicate the media framing structure to influence electoral outcomes.

Following this, Chikere and Okereke (2020) conducted comparison research to examine how The Punch and Vanguard presented female candidates differently in the media. The Punch was deemed to provide more fair coverage, sometimes stressing the credentials and policy ideas of female candidates, even if both publications showed prejudice in their reporting. Vanguard, on the other hand, frequently questioned the qualifications and suitability of female candidates for political office, leaning more in the direction of negative framing. The comparative study of The Punch and The Vanguard provides more insights into differential media practices and their implications on female candidates, and that is why it is essential to this research, as it underscores the importance of editorial policies in shaping public opinions, which is directly relevant to the research objectives of analyzing dominant frames in specific newspapers.

Amadi and Eze (2021) investigated how public opinion and election results might be affected by media framing. They asserted that persistent negative media depictions of female candidates may erode public confidence in their abilities, leading to reduced electoral support. Conversely, positive media framing could enhance public perception and boost the prospects of electoral success for female candidates. Their study is relevant because it gives the researcher more insights into the effects of media framing on public opinions and election results and how it connects directly to electoral success. It provides empirical support for the hypothesis that media framing has tangible effects on electoral outcomes, revealing the importance of balanced and fair media coverage. Conclusively, this case study analysis of a selection of Nigerian newspapers revealed a complex landscape of media framing of female political candidates. Although there are instances of positive representation, the predominance of negative framing, perpetuation of stereotypes, and political biases underscore the necessity for increased gender sensitivity and balanced reporting in Nigerian media. Okorie (2020) also highlighted the need for Nigerian media to challenge prevailing gender norms and stereotypes actively, fostering a more equitable political environment. They suggested that media outlets should provide more comprehensive and unbiased coverage of female candidates, focusing on their policy proposals, qualifications, and track records rather than their appearance or personal lives. Okorie's advocacy for gender-sensitive and balanced reporting in the Nigerian media is vital to this research because it highlights the need to challenge prevailing gender norms and stereotypes. Also, his work aligns with this research aim of contributing to the present body of knowledge on

the relationship between media framing, gender and political representation, ultimately promoting a more equitable political environment.

2.9.1. CONCLUSION

This literature review highlights the critical role of media framing in shaping the political landscape for female candidates in Nigeria. While existing works provide valuable insights into the cultural, intersectional, and media-related challenges faced by women in politics, the review revealed that there is a need for focused empirical research on media framing. A significant obstacle to attaining gender equality in politics is highlighted by the analysis of media framing and its effect on female political engagement in Nigeria. The media's persistent underrepresentation of and prejudice against female candidates in Nigeria draws attention to a serious problem that obstructs women's political ambitions and electoral success. According to studies, female candidates have a wrong public impression and a decreased likelihood of winning an election because they are frequently portrayed as less capable and because the focus is placed more on their personal lives than on their qualifications and political agendas. Media organizations must implement more gender-sensitive reporting techniques to solve these issues. This involves presenting fair coverage that avoids damaging preconceptions and concentrates on the policy ideas and professional backgrounds of female candidates—putting training into practice. Implementing training programs for journalists and media professionals on gender equality and establishing guidelines for equitable reporting can foster a more inclusive media landscape.

It is also essential to acknowledge the intersectionality of the obstacles encountered by female political candidates. Elements including religion, social background, and ethnicity exacerbate the challenges faced by women in politics. Policymakers and other interested parties may create comprehensive plans that assist female candidates from a variety of backgrounds by tackling these intersectional concerns. In the end, media outlets, legislators, civil society, and the general public must work together to create an atmosphere that supports women's political engagement. Nigeria may take significant steps toward a more inclusive and representative democracy by opposing current prejudices and advancing equal representation. The present research advances the current conversation by offering valuable perspectives and tactics to improve the media portrayal of women in politics, hence facilitating a more equitable depiction of gender in Nigerian politics.

A more quantitative analysis of how specific media framing techniques directly impact the electoral participation of female candidates needs to be conducted. More research is also required to understand the unique cultural and political position of Nigeria that influences media framing and its compounding effects. Further comparative studies between Nigeria and other countries could provide deeper insights into the global perspectives of media framing and its impact on female politicians.

To bridge this gap, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on media, gender, and political representation in Nigeria, specifically the female politicians in the Nigerian Parliament. The findings will inform media practices, public policy, and societal attitudes, fostering a more inclusive and equitable political environment.

CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the study will focus on the research methods to be adopted. In this chapter, themes such as the research design, methods of data collection, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and data extraction will be considered. In order to answer the questions raised by this research, which are as follows:

- How are female politicians represented in Nigerian media?
- Is there a predominant frame/narrative/mode of representation used by Nigerian newspapers in covering female political candidates?
- Why are these modes of representation dominant?
- What is the impact of these modes of representation on female participation in Nigerian politics?

The use of a quantitative approach will be employed to respond to these questions. This is because the quantitative approach helps to understand the representations, narratives and effects of media framing on female political candidates. This form of data is particularly relevant to this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the content, context and nuances of media portrayals, as reaffirmed by Brannen, J. (2017).

Hence, there is a need to adopt a content analysis approach as the methodology of this research focuses specifically on three major newspapers: The Daily Trust, The Punch and The Guardian. This will be done through the systematic analysis of these publication's content in order to investigate patterns and biases in the media framing of Nigerian newspapers on the electoral success of female political candidates, especially during the 2023 general elections.

The Daily Trust, The Punch, and The Guardian are three significant Nigerian newspapers whose framing techniques are the subject of this research. This research examines news framing strategies in detail to highlight the subtle but important ways that media narratives affect female candidates' chances of winning Nigerian elections. Nigeria provides an exciting context for this investigation due to its varied political systems. The Punch, a magazine recognized for its independence, The Guardian, a newspaper with a history of influential journalism, and The Daily Trust, a widely read

newspaper known for its national coverage, offer a comprehensive sample for the study of news framing techniques.

3.2. CONTENT ANALYSIS AS THE METHODOLOGY.

According to Gheyle, N., & Jacobs, T. (2017), Content analysis is considered a systematic and objective method of analyzing the content of the communication. It involves coding and categorising text data to identify patterns, themes and biases. Riffe et al. (2019) supported the choice of this method because it enables researchers to quantify and analyse the meanings and relationships of certain words, themes or concepts within the media content, in this case, newspapers. The steps involved in creating a practical content analysis are coding, categorization, interpretation and comparison.

- **Coding:** This is the initial stage of selecting articles and systematically coding these articles with the goal of identifying recurring themes, patterns and frames. The categorization of these codes will be developed according to existing literature and refined through an iterative process.
- **Categorization:** The coded data will then be categorized into broader themes to facilitate the analysis. These categories may include representations of female candidates' qualifications, personal attributes, campaign activities and media biases.
- **Interpretation:** After the categorization, the data will be interpreted to discover the hidden patterns and biases in the media framing of female political candidates. Theoretical frameworks on gender, media representation, and political communication will guide the interpretation.
- **Comparison:** The findings from The Punch, The Guardian, and The Daily Trust will be compared to identify similarities and differences in their framing of female political candidates. This comparative analysis will help to highlight any partisan biases or differences in editorial policies.

3.2.1. BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS.

Content analysis is very relevant to this research and valuable in answering the research questions for several reasons, some of which are:

- Content Analysis allows for systematic evaluation of large volumes of media content, thereby making it an appropriate tool to possibly identify and quantify the presence of specific frames and narratives.
- Content Analysis provides an understanding of media representations, which is essential for gaining deeper insights into how female political candidates are being portrayed.
- Content Analysis enables the comparison of different media sources, and as a result, it helps to identify patterns and biases across multiple newspapers.

However, it is essential to note that content analysis has its challenges. Some of these are listed below:

- The coding and interpretation of qualitative data are likely to be influenced by the researcher's prejudice and perspectives, even with conscious efforts to ensure objectivity.
- The presence of complex and overlapping themes in media content could pose a challenge to the accurate categorization and interpretation of data.
- When dealing with large volumes of data, content analysis can be time-consuming and resource-intensive.

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a systematic review technique, the goal is to evaluate how media framing in newspapers affected the election performance of female political candidates in Nigeria. According to Kitchenham and Brereton (2013), the systematic review approach makes it possible to thoroughly and rigorously examine the body of current literature to give the most significant evidence and insights into the study issue. Given that it draws from a range of data sources and that trends in media framing must be found to impact the electoral performance of female candidates potentially, this design is especially well-suited for the current research. The research onion framework developed by Saunders et al. (2019) provides direction for the methodological choices taken in this investigation. Interpretivism is the chosen philosophical perspective, starting with the onion's outermost layer. Additionally, the research onion designed by Saunders et al. (2019) is illustrated in Figure 1 to serve as a framework for the research methodology of this study. This method acknowledges the importance of personal interpretations and meaning-making about media framing and how it affects election results. The

interpretive position is consistent in comprehending the intricate relationship between media framing and female political candidates' electoral success.

Inwardly focused, a case study design was chosen as the research strategy. This relates to content analysis because a case study gives context-specific insights that are essential for interpreting the findings of the content analysis accurately. Also, the depth of analysis derived from case studies is vital for understanding the complexities of media representation. Case study design involves the incorporation of multiple data sources such as articles, editorials, and op-eds to provide a comprehensive view of media content, and it allows for triangulation (Cross-verifying information from different angles) all to ensure the holistic approach that enhances the reliability and validity of the content analysis. Yin (2018) also supports the strategy of using a case study design alongside content analysis by emphasizing that case studies are beneficial for exploring contemporary phenomena within their real-life context. Krippendorff (2018) notes that content analysis helps in systematically coding and categorizing texts to make valid inferences, which is similar to the case study's ability to identify patterns accurately through longitudinal analysis. The association between political outcomes and media framing can be determined using qualitative means. Statistical analysis can help identify patterns and movements in media framing and its correlation with electoral outcomes for female candidates.

For further analysis, qualitative analysis would be employed in the selected study plan, mainly thematic and discourse analysis, which are suitable for newspapers, articles, and media content. This is to examine the correlation between media framing and electoral outcomes using regression models and to quantify the prevalence of specific frames and stereotypes in the media portrayals of female politicians.

Krippendorff (2018) notes that content analysis helps in systematically coding and categorizing texts to make valid inferences. The association between political outcomes and media framing can be identified using qualitative means. Statistical analysis can help identify patterns and movements in media framing and its correlation with electoral outcomes for female candidates. This mixed-methods approach provides a more holistic understanding of the complex relationship between media framing and female candidates' electoral success in Nigeria.

Moving on, non-probability sampling and purposive sampling will be used in this systematic review. Patton (2015) highlights that purposive sampling is adequate when

researchers need to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest. Some critical inclusion criteria include media framing methods, female political candidates, and Nigerian newspapers. Furthermore, to guarantee relevance and trustworthiness, publications ought to have undergone peer review and have been released within the recent decade. To be more specific, this research will focus on the three major Nigerian newspapers: The Daily Trust, The Punch and The Guardian. These newspapers were selected purposely because they are among the most widely read and influential in Nigeria, thereby providing comprehensive coverage of political events. The logic behind this choice is so that the study can delve deeper into how leading media outlets portray female politicians, ensuring a robust analysis of high-impact sources. The study will review articles from a specific election period, in this case, the 2023 Nigerian general elections. The justification for this time frame selection is to provide a focused examination of media framing during a critical electoral period when media coverage is most intense and likely to influence the general public opinions and, ultimately, the electoral outcomes.

Articles that specifically cover female political candidates, including news stories, editorials, op-eds and feature articles, will be included in order to ensure that the study remains focused on the representation of female candidates and the specific frames used by the media, facilitating a targeted analysis of gender-based media framing. Furthermore, articles that explicitly mention female political candidates discuss their campaigns, policies, personal attributes or electoral performance. Also, articles that do not pertain to female candidates will be excluded since they do not provide a relevant framework for analysis.

The purposive sampling research approach guarantees that the sources chosen are incredibly relevant and rich in material required to answer the research questions. With the help of this technique, media framing techniques can be thoroughly and contextually analyzed, yielding insights that can be immediately applied to comprehend how they affect the electoral success of female political candidates in Nigeria.

According to Webster and Watson (2022), the usage of Boolean operators and keywords is crucial to narrow search results and ensure an exhaustive and focused data retrieval process. Gathering data entails a comprehensive search for scholarly papers that fit the inclusion requirements in pertinent academic databases, including EBSCOhost, JSTOR, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. To ensure an exhaustive and

focused process of data retrieval, Boolean operators and keywords are employed to narrow the search results. Qualitative techniques, such as discourse analysis, will be used to evaluate the relationship between media framing and the electoral performance of female candidates. These methods will help quantify the prevalence of different frames and themes to identify patterns and trends (Fairclough, 2023). The results of the study objectives and the larger theoretical framework are then analysed, offering insights into how media framing affects female political candidates' chances of winning elections in Nigeria.

In summary, the research onion, as illustrated in (fig. 1), guides the methodological design of this research by adopting an interpretive philosophy to understand media representations, using an inductive approach to develop insights from data, employing a case study strategy for in-depth examination, using qualitative methods for detailed content analysis, choosing a cross-sectional time horizon for focused analysis and implementing systematic data collection and content analysis techniques. Through the research onion guide, this research is ensured to have a comprehensive and transparent methodological design. Each layer of the research onions gives information and justification for the choices made at each stage of the research process. The structure of the onions enhances the credibility of the study, providing a clear rationale and coherence to the methodology.

3.4. Sampling and Sampling Techniques

This study aims to find out how media framing in Nigerian newspapers affects female political candidates' chances of winning elections. A purposive sample strategy will be used to investigate this subject efficiently. To ensure the acquisition of a comprehensive and diverse set of data, this technique enables researchers to choose instances or participants depending on their relevance to the study questions and objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is a suitable technique for this investigation as it concentrates on particular demographic traits that are most pertinent to the goals of the inquiry. Purposive sampling allows researchers to focus on specific examples that might yield the most informative data, as explained by Etikan et al. (2016). Choosing news stories and editorials that mainly address how female political candidates are portrayed will be made easier with the use of this strategy.

Three well-known Nigerian newspapers—The Punch, Daily Trust, and The Guardian—provided news stories and editorials for the study's population. These newspapers were chosen because they provide a broad readership, offer a variety of viewpoints on political problems, and represent several areas of Nigeria (Azeez, 2019). The fact that

all three publications are available online makes their content more accessible for data collection and analysis. This choice is in line with purposive sampling's maximization of the variation concept, which attempts to include a variety of viewpoints (Patton, 2015). Relevant articles that match the study subject will be chosen through purposeful sampling. In order to identify keywords, the following steps would be taken:

- Each research question will be analyzed to extract key concepts and terms. Keywords like “Media representation,” “portrayal,” “depiction,” and “coverage” are associated with the term “Representation.” The term “Female politicians” could be related to keywords like “female political candidates,” “women in politics,” and “women candidates.” “Media framing” could be broken down into keywords like “narratives,” “frames,” and “media bias.” The word “Impact” could be replaced with keywords like “effect,” “Influence,” “public perception,” and “electoral success.”
- Existing studies and theoretical frameworks will be examined to identify commonly used terms. “Gender studies” could be associated with keywords like “gender bias,” “gender representation,” and “sexism in media.” “Political communication” is related to keywords like “election coverage” and “political media”. “Intersectionality” is associated with keywords like “race and gender” and “multiple marginalisations.”
- Preliminary content analysis will be conducted on selected newspapers (The Punch, The Daily Trust and The Guardian) to identify recurring terms and themes. Keywords like “editorials,” “op-eds,” “news articles,” “headlines,” “campaign,” “election,” “candidate qualifications,” and “campaign activities” will be considered.
- Utilization of academic databases and search engines to refine and expand the list of keywords. Databases like JSTOR, Google Scholar, PubMed, and Scopus will be utilized. Search strategies like Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT), phrase searching, truncation, and wildcard searches will also be used.
- Synonyms and related terms will also be used to ensure a comprehensive search.

According to the breakdown, the keywords relevant to this research will be Media representation, Female political candidates, Women in politics, Media framing, Media bias, Election coverage, Gender bias, Intersectionality, Public perception, Electoral success, Political communication, Campaign activities, News articles, Headlines, Nigeria.

Following the identification of a pool of possible articles, the researcher will carefully review each one to ascertain whether or not it should be included in the sample. Articles that do not make a significant contribution to the research question will be disregarded. Until a sufficient number of insightful and pertinent articles have been chosen—that is, until data saturation—this iterative process will continue (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation guarantees that there are no redundant data and that the sample size is sufficient to capture the intricacy of the phenomena being studied thoroughly (Guest et al., 2016). The Punch, Daily Trust, and The Guardian were picked due to their considerable impact on Nigerian public opinion in addition to their regional representation. Azeez (2019) posits that these publications have a significant influence on the nation's political dialogue. The study intends to capture a wide range of media framing methods and their possible effects on the electoral performance of female candidates by looking at various sources. Articles will only be featured if they specifically cover how female political candidates are portrayed and how successful they are in elections. To ensure currency, the articles also need to be peer-reviewed and published within the previous ten years. This approach is supported by the guidelines for systematic reviews provided by Kitchenham and Brereton (2013), which emphasis the importance of maintaining standards of data quality.

Conclusively, sampling is a helpful strategy for this kind of research because it allows the investigator to concentrate on the most pertinent and instructive examples. The selected stories from The Punch, Daily Trust, and The Guardian will provide insightful information about how media framing affects female candidates' chances of winning elections in Nigeria. By ensuring a large and varied set of data, this approach offers a strong starting point for examining the connection between women's political engagement and media framing.

3.5. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Category	Inclusion	Exclusion	Justification
Key sources	Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, research	Book reviews, magazines, bibliographies, theses, conference	To provide a comprehensive examination of the literature, only

	reports, government publications	papers	sources that present rigorous, original research will be included. Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters ensure high-quality, reliable information. Research reports and government publications offer additional insights and data. Excluding book reviews, magazines, bibliographies, theses, and conference papers helps maintain a focus on well-established and thoroughly vetted research.
Language	English	Languages other than English	To ensure accessibility and understanding, only English-language sources will be included. This criterion avoids potential misinterpretations and translation

			issues that could arise from non-English sources, ensuring consistency and clarity in the analysis.
Years of publication	2014-present	Pre-2010	Focusing on recent works (2014-present) ensures that the research considers current trends, data, and perspectives. This timeframe helps maintain relevance and applicability, as media framing and electoral dynamics may have evolved significantly over the past decade.
Search Engines/Journal Databases	SCOPUS, ASSIA, Google Scholar, JSTOR	None	SCOPUS, ASSIA, Google Scholar, and JSTOR are selected for their relevance and comprehensive coverage of academic literature in the fields of media studies, political science, and gender studies. These databases

			provide access to a wide range of high-quality sources necessary for a thorough review.
Key terms	Media framing, electoral success, female political candidates, Nigeria, newspaper coverage	Studies focused on other countries, candidates who are not female, forms of media other than newspapers, and incomplete or inadequate data.	Geographic specificity focuses the research on Nigeria, considering unique cultural, social, and political factors. Including only studies on female political candidates ensures the study accurately assesses the impact of media framing on their electoral success. Focusing on newspaper coverage provides a transparent and manageable scope for analyzing media influence. Adequate data is essential to link media framing to electoral outcomes conclusively.
Search Strategy	Media framing, electoral success, female political	None	Key search terms include: 1) Media Framing and

	<p>candidates, Nigeria, newspaper coverage</p>		<p>Electoral Success, 2) Electoral Success and Female Political Candidates, 3) Female Political Candidates and Media Framing, 4) Nigeria and Electoral Success, 5) Nigeria and Female Political Candidates, 6) Nigeria and Media Framing, 7) Media Framing and Nigeria, 8) Electoral Success and Nigeria, 9) Female Political Candidates and Nigeria, 10) Media Framing and Electoral Success and Female Political Candidates.</p>
<p>Research Design and Methodology</p>	<p>Systematic review of interconnected factors such as media influence, political dynamics, gender biases, and cultural context</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>A systematic review is chosen for its rigour and comprehensive nature, offering a holistic overview of the topic and enabling evidence-based policy and practice</p>

			<p>implementations.</p> <p>This methodology synthesizes existing evidence, facilitates cross-study comparisons, and identifies research gaps, providing solid foundations for designing effective interventions and informing future research priorities.</p>
Analysis	Evidence synthesis, cross-study comparisons, identification of research gaps, policy relevance	None	<p>Systematic reviews help synthesize evidence, make cross-study comparisons, and identify research gaps. This method provides a comprehensive analysis that informs policy development, media practices, and future research endeavours, ensuring a robust understanding of the impact of media framing on the electoral success of</p>

			female political candidates in the context of Nigeria.
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3.5. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION.

To investigate how media framing in Nigerian newspapers affects female political candidates' electoral performance, data will be gathered using online archival research and document analysis. This method will allow for the systematic and comprehensive collection of pertinent information from a variety of news stories and editorials, ensuring a rich and diverse data set for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data will be sourced from the digital archives of The Punch, Daily Trust, and The Guardian newspapers. Using their websites and search engines, historical data and trends will be examined, a technique instrumental according to Saunders et al. (2019). Boolean operators will help locate relevant articles using keywords such as "female candidates," "media framing," "electoral success," and "Nigeria."

Document analysis will be employed to review the selected articles thoroughly. Bowen (2019) describes this approach as systematically going over and assessing materials to extract pertinent data about the study's goals and issues. The analysis will focus on:

1. Overall Tone: Are the depictions of female candidates in the articles neutral, favourable, or unfavourable?
2. Framing Strategies: How are female candidates represented in the articles? Are there recurring themes, such as roles within the family, physical characteristics, or emotional qualities?
3. Contextual Data: What political issues or events are discussed in the articles? Are there connections between these issues and the framing of female candidates?
4. Implications for Electoral Success: Do the articles suggest any potential impacts of media framing on female candidates' electoral success?

Thorough notes will be taken, and the data will be organized according to the research questions and goals. This methodical approach will help identify patterns and trends in media framing techniques and their relation to the electoral performance of female candidates in Nigeria.

Integrating digital archive research and document analysis provides a robust approach for this investigation. Through the structured analysis of editorials and news stories

from The Punch, Daily Trust, and The Guardian, this methodology facilitates a comprehensive examination of media framing and its potential influence on the electoral outcomes of female political candidates in Nigeria.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

A thorough analysis of the body of research already available online will be done to determine how media framing in newspapers affects the electoral performance of female political candidates in Nigeria. A thorough and systematic evaluation of peer-reviewed books, research papers, journal articles, and other pertinent internet sources published between 2014 and the present will be part of this study process. There will be many phases to the systematic review to guarantee a thorough and objective study. Because of their comprehensive coverage and applicability to gender studies, political science, and media studies, the databases SCOPUS, ASSIA, and Google Scholar have been selected. To find relevant material, specific search phrases like "media framing," "electoral success," "female political candidates," "Nigeria," and "newspaper coverage" were combined in different ways.

The following were included in the review:

1. Studies that have been released in English.
2. Studies concentrated on the influence of media framing on Nigerian female political candidates.
3. Papers released between 2014 and the present guarantee their applicability today.
4. Novels and book chapters, as well as research reports that have undergone peer assessment.

The following were excluded from the review:

1. Publications written in languages other than English.
2. Research that was released before 2010.
3. Items that are not subjected to peer review, including conference papers, book reviews, magazine articles, and theses.

This research will examine how media framing affects female political candidates' electoral outcomes in Nigeria. The results will indicate how female candidates' visibility and favorability among voters are increased when positive framing, which highlights their accomplishments and competencies, is adopted. Accordingly, the result

will also emphasise how harmful framing damages a candidate's reputation and chances of winning an election through encouraging gender stereotypes or the emphasis on personal qualities over credentials. Using themed maps and bar charts, the results will be graphically displayed.

3.7. MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE DATA RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY.

Throughout the research process, specific steps will be taken to guarantee the accuracy and dependability of the data gathered for this study on the effect of media framing in Nigerian newspapers on the electoral performance of female political candidates. According to Gough et al. (2017), these quality assurance procedures are essential for preserving the integrity of the research and its conclusions.

1. Methodical approach to search strategy: To find pertinent stories from The Punch, Daily Trust, and The Guardian newspapers, a thorough search method will be used. To guarantee a comprehensive and focused search, a combination of filters, Boolean operators, and keywords will be used.
2. Explicit criteria will be devised to assess the appropriateness and relevance of publications for inclusion in the research. Explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria will also be defined. These standards will be centred on elements like language, period, and study subject.
3. Pilot testing: To fine-tune the data-gathering tools and techniques, a limited selection of articles will undergo a pilot test before the complete document analysis. This will guarantee the validity of the data-gathering procedure and assist in locating any possible problems or discrepancies (Saunders et al., 2019).
4. Inter-rater reliability: Several researchers will separately code a subset of the articles to reduce potential biases and guarantee uniformity in the document analysis. Cohen's kappa, or another suitable statistical measure, will be used to evaluate the inter-rater reliability (Bowen, 2019).
5. Thorough documentation: A systematic record of every step and decision made during the data-collecting process will be maintained. This will contain information on search tactics, inclusion and exclusion standards, and any modifications made along the way.

This study will produce accurate and legitimate data on media framing techniques in Nigerian newspapers and their connection to female candidates' election performance

by putting these quality assurance procedures into practice. This will, therefore, support a solid and reliable examination of the research question.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in any research study, and this study on the impact of media framing in Nigerian newspapers on the electoral success of female political candidates is no exception. Adhering to ethical guidelines ensures that the research is conducted responsibly and respectfully, protecting the rights and interests of all parties involved (Saunders et al., 2019). The following are important ethical factors for this study:

1. Privacy and access to data: It is imperative to adhere to copyright regulations and fair use principles while accessing and utilizing this information because the study entails the analysis of published newspaper stories. The study will not begin until all required permits to use copyrighted material have been secured.
2. Anonymity and confidentiality: While publicly accessible data is the main emphasis, it is still crucial to make sure the data is handled sensibly and privately. Any private data that may come up during the analysis will be encrypted and kept private.
3. To mitigate the possibility of researcher bias, measures will be used to guarantee that personal convictions and viewpoints do not impact the evaluation and comprehension of the data. This involves carrying out reflective activities, such as keeping a research notebook and talking with friends or colleagues about new ideas that come up (Gough et al., 2017).
4. Accountability and transparency: Every step of the study process will be meticulously recorded, and any alterations or difficulties will be openly communicated. This will support maintaining the validity and dependability of the study's conclusions.
5. This study on media framing and its effect on female political candidates' electoral success in Nigeria will be carried out professionally and ethically by taking these ethical issues into account at every stage of the research process. Respecting and safeguarding the rights and interests of all parties involved is ensured by following these standards.

3.9. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There might be several obstacles to this study on how newspaper framing affects female political candidates' election performance in Nigeria. First off, relying solely on a systematic evaluation of the body of literature limits the study's scope to previously published research, sometimes leaving out unpublished or non-peer-reviewed sources that might provide insightful information. The review's comprehensiveness may be limited due to the study's exclusive emphasis on English-language publications, which may leave out pertinent studies published in other languages. Publication bias is another drawback, as research with noteworthy results is more likely to be published, which might distort the results of the study as a whole. Consistency in concluding may need to be improved by the variations in research methodology throughout the included studies.

Additionally, the research mainly concentrates on contemporary articles (2014–present), which may leave out historical viewpoints that may offer a more thorough comprehension of media framing patterns. The study is based on secondary data, which could not accurately reflect the present state of the media and public attitudes due to the lack of primary data-gathering methods like surveys or interviews. The intricate political and cultural landscape of Nigeria may also make it challenging to extrapolate the research's conclusions to other areas or political contexts, which would restrict the research's overall application.

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section of the research, the results of the study are presented on the effect of media framing of female senatorial candidates on the electoral outcomes of senatorial elections in Nigeria. The results were derived from a systematic analysis of articles from the selected newspapers, namely, The Punch, The Daily Trust and The Guardian, to reach these conclusions. The research focused on identifying dominant frames used in the coverage of female senatorial candidates, which includes gender frames, character traits, issues covered, tone of articles, and type of story. Furthermore, the research compared these frames with those used for male candidates in order to identify any gender biases.

The study analyzed a total of 350 articles across the selected newspapers. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the 2023 Nigerian senatorial elections and their focus on the shorted candidates (Fig 1.1). These articles were collected and analyzed over four months leading up to the election month of February 2023. This period was carefully selected as it was considered the period that could capture the most relevant media coverage, which can influence public perception and, ultimately, electoral outcomes.

The distribution of these articles was done to ensure that there is a balanced representation of media coverage across different sources, hence why 120 articles from The Punch and The Daily Trust were used, while 110 articles were used from The Guardian. The sample size of these 350 articles includes both female and male senatorial candidates, as indicated in the diagram below, thereby providing a comprehensive dataset for analyzing media framing and its effects on electoral outcomes.

List of Selected Candidates for the Research.

Gender	Shortlisted Candidate Name	Candidate's Code	Political Party
Female	Remi Tinubu	Candidate A	APC
Female	Uche Ekwunife	Candidate B	PDP

Female	Betty Apiafi	Candidate C	PDP
Male	Ahmed Lawan	Candidate X	APC
Male	Dino Melaye	Candidate Y	PDP
Male	Smart Adeyemi	Candidate Z	APC

Fig 1.1 Table showing a list of selected political candidates

- Remi Tinubu is a seasoned politician and the current first lady of Nigeria. She received significant media coverage during the 2023 senatorial elections. Her campaign focused on women's rights, community development, and health (Eke, B. O. (2022)).
- Uche Ekwunife is a Nigerian politician representing the Anambra Central senatorial District. She is popularly considered the most active female senator in the House. Also, she is known for her leadership and experience in education and health policies (Onyekakie, G. K. (2022)).
- Betty Apiafi is a Nigerian Politician, economist, retired banker and educationist. She was elected to the Nigerian Senate for Rivers West Senatorial District in 2019 (Eke, B. O. (2022)). She is popularly known for her work and policies on issues that border around women's rights, alongside the significant media attention she had during the 2023 elections.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF DOMINANT FRAMES

In the following section, the research focused on identifying the dominant frames used in the coverage of female senatorial candidates. These defined frames include gender, character traits, issues covered, tone of articles, visibility and type of story.

1. Gender Frames: The research revealed that the use of gender frames was frequently employed with emphasis on marital status and physical appearance in relation to how she looks or how beautiful she is and her age. For instance, Remi Tinubu was often described in terms of her family background and appearance. Brooks, D. J., & Hayes, D. (2019) affirmed that gender framing is essential as it highlights the candidate's gender rather than their qualifications or policies. It actually exposes perpetuated stereotypes and biases and how they affect the perception of female political candidates by the electorate. Furthermore, Johnson-Odim et al. (1997) research shows that gender-based framing can either support a political candidate promoting gender equality issues

or undermine a political candidate emphasizing the traditional gender roles, especially in a patriarchal society like Nigeria where most women were relegated to household duties and other jobs considered fitting for a woman.

4.2.1. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF GENDER FRAMES: FEMALE POLITICAL CANDIDATES

In this section, the dominant gender frames employed to depict female political candidates will be analyzed in the context of the selected newspapers.

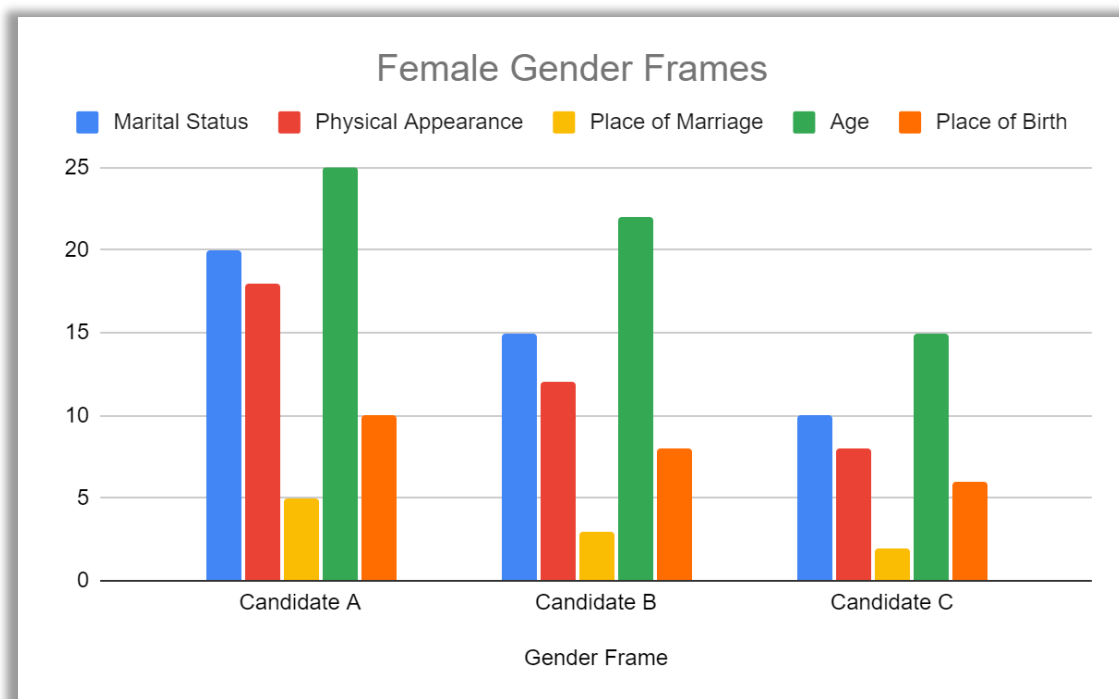


fig 1.1 Chart representing female gender frames

Considering (Fig 1.1), the following conclusions were reached:

- **Marital Status:** Female candidates were often discussed in the context of their marital status. Remi Tinubu was mentioned 20 times, Uche Ekwunife 15 times, and Betty Apiafi 10 times. Articles frequently highlighted their roles as wives and mothers, which can impact voter perception by reinforcing traditional gender roles.
- **Physical Appearance:** This is a typical frame with most female political candidates; Remi Tinubu was mentioned 18 times, Uche Ekwunife 15 times, and Betty Apiafi 10 times. Articles frequently highlighted their roles as wives and mothers; this does not necessarily speak to their fertility; it is simply to promote and present these

candidates as every other female gender, which can impact voter perception by reinforcing traditional gender roles.

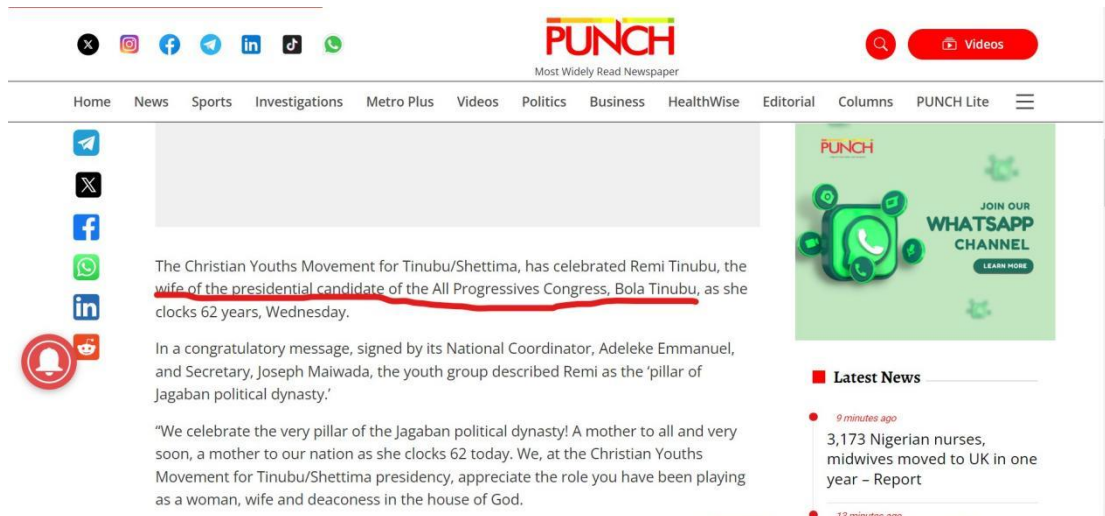


Fig 1.1.1 image showing punch depiction of Remi Tinubu as a wife

- **Place of Marriage:** The place of marriage is significant because, in many cultures in Nigeria, marriage can be a substantial aspect of an individual's identity, often tied to social and cultural expectations. Likewise, marriage helps establish connections and alliances with different regions; by discussing a political candidate's place of marriage, the media could suggest the candidate's political alliances or regional influences. The use of this frame also promotes gender narratives, shapes the public perception, and makes them more relatable to those who share similar common backgrounds as their place of marriage and birth. This frame has socioeconomic implications as it suggests the social standing or economic background of the political candidate and creates a fuller picture of such a candidate's life. Although this frame was less frequent, you can still notice it in some articles. Remi Tinubu had five mentions, Uche Ekwunife 3 times, and Betty Apiafi 2 times. This reflects more of an outlook on their respective personal lives rather than their political structure.
- **Age:** This was a significant frame for female political candidates. Remi Tinubu's age was mentioned 25 times, Uche Ekwunife had 22 mentions of her age, while Betty Apiafi had 15. This is relevant because it shapes perception that relates to experience and vitality.
- **Place of Birth:** This is significant because it gives insight into regional bias and representation as it reflects how some are given preferential treatment based on their region. Also, the media frame this to align with local sentiments as it provides

cultural context and local values that could be used to shape a candidate’s public image. In many political systems, regional representation is crucial as the place of birth can shed light on regional dynamics and the role of local identity in electoral politics. Ultimately, voters are likely to identify with candidates who share their regional background. For instance, a candidate with a place of birth in a region like Badagry, Lagos, is likely to hold much more influence as compared to someone born in Ikire, Osun state, even though both places are in Yoruba-speaking state. In this vein, Remi Tinubu’s place of birth was mentioned ten times, Uche Ekwunife had eight mentions, while Betty Apiafi had 6. This is used to reflect their connection to the locals and to show how authentic they are, as Nigerians fondly call “sons and daughters of the soil.”

Gender Frames: Male Political Candidates

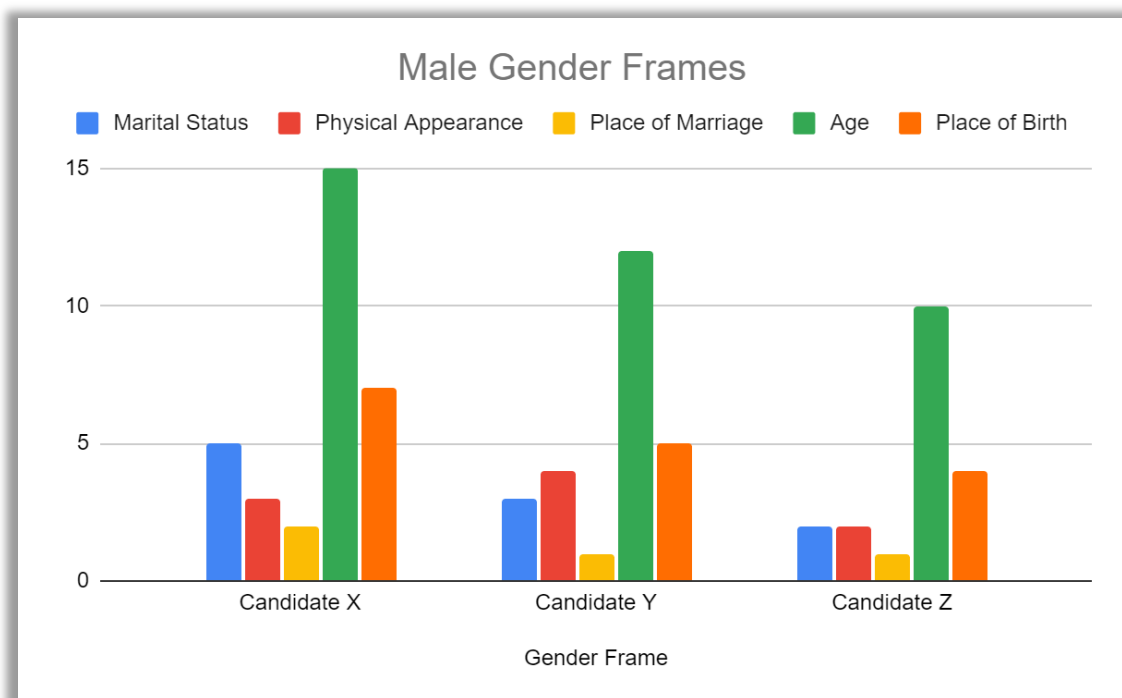


Fig 1.3. Gender Frames for Male Candidates.

The following conclusions were reached from Fig 1.3:

- **Marital Status:** Male candidates were less frequently discussed in terms of marital status, with Ahmed Lawan mentioned five times, Dino Melaye 3 times, and Smart Adeyemi 2 times. This disparity indicates a gender bias, as male candidates' personal lives are less scrutinized.

- **Physical Appearance:** Male candidates were mentioned less frequently in terms of physical appearance, with Ahmed Lawan 3 times, Dino Melaye 4 times, and Smart Adeyemi 2 times. This suggests that male candidates are judged more on their professional capabilities.
- **Place of Marriage:** This frame was rare for male candidates, with Ahmed Lawan mentioned two times, Dino Melaye 1 time, and Smart Adeyemi 1 time. Again, this highlights a gender bias in the framing of candidates.
- **Age:** was a frame used for male candidates but less frequently than for female candidates. Ahmed Lawan was mentioned 15 times, Dino Melaye 12 times, and Smart Adeyemi 10 times.
- **Place of Birth:** The place of birth was mentioned seven times for Ahmed Lawan, five times for Dino Melaye, and four times for Smart Adeyemi. This frame is used similarly for both genders, reflecting local connections and authenticity.

2. **Character traits:** Although most media outlets emphasizes traits such as appearance, emotional disposition rather than their political competence. This frame can distract the electorate from the candidate's policy positions and professional qualifications. However, most articles that were considered highlighted character traits such as integrity, compassion and leadership qualities. However, the tone used to describe both the female and the female candidates was considerably different, with female candidates being defined in a more stereotypical manner that is gender-relative.

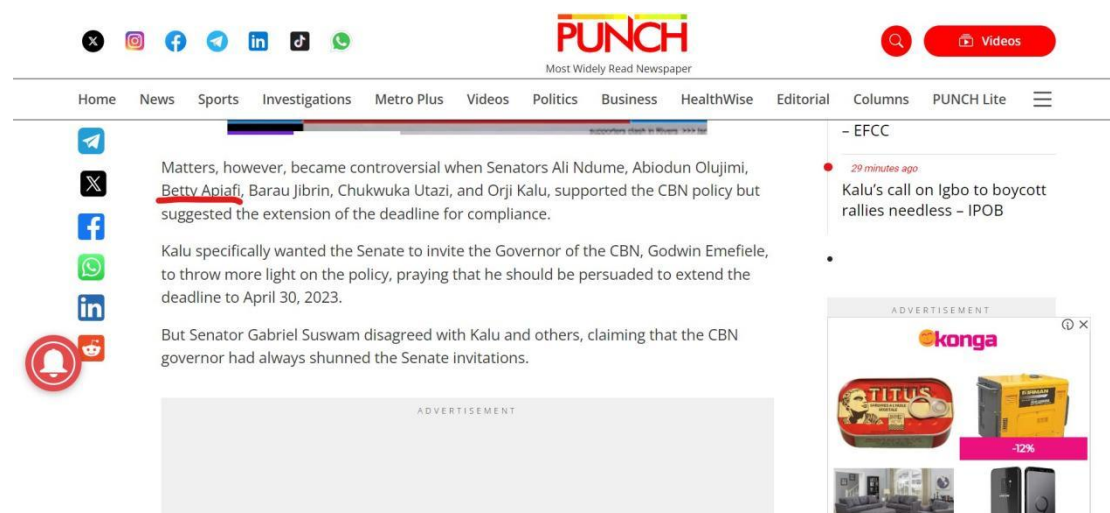


Fig 1.1.2 Example of an article showing Betty Afiafi's name in a setting termed "controversial"

3. **Issues Covered:** The specific issues discussed by media outlets can shape public perception of a candidate's priorities and expertise. These frames assess whether female

candidates are associated with “easy” issues (e.g., social welfare, education) or “difficult” issues (e.g., security and economy). These classifications are not based on the inherent importance of the problems but rather on the perceived complexity, technicality, and traditional association with gender roles. "Easy" issues are often seen as more straightforward, less contentious, and traditionally within the domain of women, such as social welfare and education, which involve caregiving and nurturing roles. In contrast, "difficult" issues are perceived as more complex, contentious, and traditionally within the male domain, such as security and economy, which involve leadership and decision-making in high-stakes environments.

Through the analysis, it was realized that most issues covered in the articles relating to female candidates were mainly issues relating to women’s rights, health, and education. This speaks to reproductive labour, the traditional gender domain of women. This is different from the male candidates, which borders around issues relating to the economy and security. Through the analysis of this frame, the research can reveal whether media biases exist in the relationship of female candidates with certain types of political issues, which influence voters’ expectations and support.

4. **Tone of Articles:** The tone of media articles (classified as positive, negative or neutral) is crucial as it helps shape the overall public image of candidates. The definitions of these tones are as follows:

- **Positive Tone:** Articles that discuss the strengths, achievements or generally positive traits of the candidate. Essentially, any article within the sample size that focuses on the candidate’s competencies, endorsements, and achievements to garner favourable public opinions falls under this categorization.
- **Negative Tone:** Articles that focus on criticisms, scandals, shortcomings, failures, hostile public or opposition opinions, controversies, or antagonistic content relating to the political candidate fall under this categorization.
- **Neutral Tone:** Articles that present unbiased information without any show of favouritism or bias towards positive or negative framing fall under this categorization. Basically, these articles focus on factual reporting, presenting all sides of the story and ensuring that journalistic integrity is maintained.
- **Mixed Tone:** Is any article with two or more tonality. It could be neutral and positive or positive and negative.

This frame is essential as it helps identify any hidden or unknown biases present in media reporting. As seen in the diagram below, the tone of most articles published on female candidates was mixed, with some articles being supportive and some others being critical. These variations were determined by the newspaper discussions, with Punch being more neutral, The Guardian newspaper being more supportive in comparison, and the Daily Trust being more critical.

Generally, the overall assessment of the tone of these newspapers relating to female candidates revealed that mixed tone is the lowest, followed by negative tone, then neutral tone and finally, positive tone with the highest ratings. This is similar to the breakdown for their male counterpart.

Further Findings of Tone.

The tone of Punch's coverage was largely neutral (25 articles), with a mix of positive (40 articles) and negative (30 articles) tones. This newspaper portrayed her using neutral coverage, emphasizing her campaign activities mainly. She had about 70 mentions and 12 picture uses through the Punch's coverage of her campaign activities.

The Guardian's coverage was mostly positive (35 articles), with fewer negative (28 articles) and neutral (30 articles) tones. This newspaper was more supportive in its tone, with a focus on her policies and community work. The coverage of Betty Apiafi was supportive, with 80 mentions and 15 picture uses.

The tone of the story for The Daily Trust was mixed (17 articles), with a balance of positive (30 articles), negative (28 articles), and neutral (25 articles). The newspaper's representation of Betty Apiafi was mixed coverage, with some critical and supportive articles. She had 60 mentions and 10 picture uses.

4.2.2. THE FREQUENCY OF COVERAGE

In this section, the statistical analysis of the results will be discussed in the context of how frequently these female and male political candidates were portrayed in publications leading up to the Nigerian 2023 senatorial elections. Emphasis on overall coverage of these candidates and the type of stories.

CANDIDATE'S NAME	THE PUNCH	GUARDIAN	THE DAILY TRUST	TOTAL
Remi Tinubu	120	98	85	303
Uche Ekwunife	95	110	90	295
Betty Afiagi	70	80	60	210
Ahmed Lawan	200	180	150	530
Dino Melaye	170	160	140	470
Smart Adeyemi	150	140	130	420

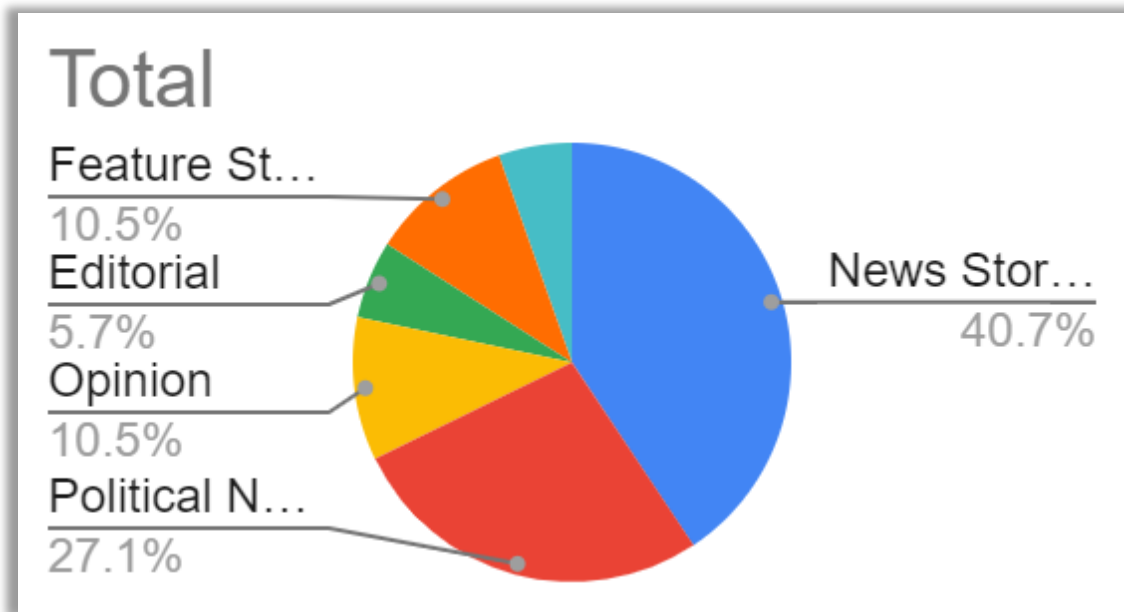
Fig 1.5 Table showing the overall frequency of all shortlisted candidates

Contextually, The Punch's coverage of Remi Tinubu was balanced since most reports published on her focused on her campaign and political achievements. The newspaper has a total of 120 mentions and 25 instances where her pictures were used. The articles drawn from the Guardian generally supported her cause by highlighting her advocacy for women's rights. In general terms, Guardian coverage of Remi Tinubu was supportive, with 98 mentions and 20 instances of picture use, unlike the coverage of The Daily Trust, which was more critical, with most of the reports questioning her capacity and experience. Remi Tinubu was portrayed in a more crucial outlook with 85 mentions and 15 picture uses.

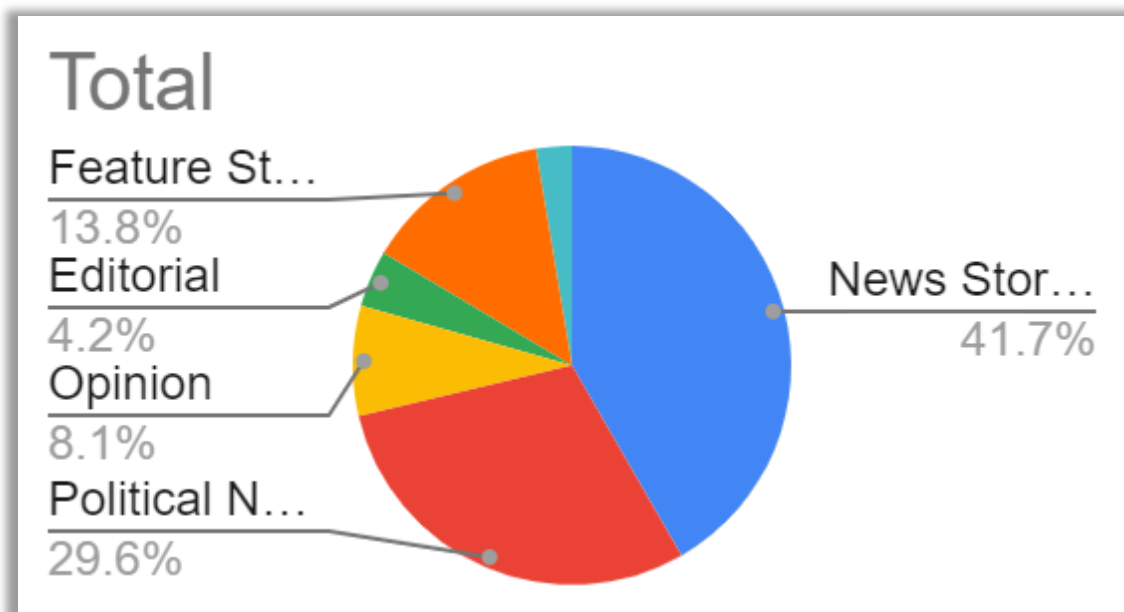
Comparatively, the frequency of coverage for male senatorial candidates was also analyzed. The results suggested that there is a gender bias in the media, especially given the fact that there is a higher frequency of coverage for male political candidates.

- **Type of Story:** Most of the reports about female candidates were mainly news stories or features with fewer opinions or editorials. Meanwhile, male candidates' reports were feature stories, news stories, editorials, opinions, and political news. For more context, Punch's portrayal of Uche Ekwunife focused more on her leadership qualities and past achievements. Uche Ekwunife had 95 mentions and 18 instances where her pictures were used. The Guardian, on the other hand, focused more on her background, her education and her previous policies on health and education. In this newspaper, Uche Ekwunife had 110 mentions and 22 picture uses. The daily trust employed a more critical tone, questioning her ability to

handle political pressure. The coverage of Uche Ekwunife was necessary, with 90 mentions and 12 pictures used.



1.5.2. Chart showing the type of story for male candidates



1.5.3. Chart showing the type of story for female candidates.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This research aimed to uncover the dominant frames employed by print news media organizations in their coverage of both male and female politicians during the 2023

Nigerian senatorial elections. The findings reveal a notable disparity in the dominant frames used by the Nigerian media to cover male and female politicians during the elections. While gender was emphasized for female politicians like Remi Tinubu, Uche Ekwunife, and Betty Apiafi, the coverage for their male counterparts focused more on policy issues and political achievements.

Interestingly, the use of gender frames for female politicians was substantial, with numerous instances highlighting their marital status, physical appearance, and personal lives (Fig 1.1) and (Fig 1.1.1). According to (Fig 1.1) in *The Punch* newspaper, Remi Tinubu's marital status was mentioned 20 times, and her physical appearance was discussed 18 times across 120 articles. This aligns with findings in the literature, such as the work of scholars like 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 media portrayal of female candidates is gradually changing, and there are signs of such a shift. For instance, In the *Guardian's* coverage of Ekwunife, there was more focus on her policies on health education with cheerful tones in 35 out of 110 articles analyzed. This implies that society is evolving in its attitudes and efforts towards combating stereotypes that can be considered harmful, thereby encouraging a more balanced representation, as suggested by Ellemers, N. (2018). 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). Agenda setting is used to achieve this; this is a situation where the media chooses issues to cover and how often such issues would be reported so as to signal to the public which issues are essential or not. Another way is through priming, which is technically when the media prepares the public to evaluate political candidates based on issues they have consistently pushed. Other means are emotional framing (the use of frames to evoke specific emotions), framing effects (provision of certain specific details and context in order to shape public attitudes, e.g. framing a protest as a fight for justice to evoke public support and also framing protest as a public disturbance that could be hijacked in order to elicit adverse reactions),

Character framing (the emphasis on a specific character of a candidate), Issue framing (the association of a candidate through consistent framing to a particular issue that represents public interest). Therefore, the gender frames used by the media play a pivotal role in influencing how female politicians are portrayed and perceived by the public and as a result the need to emphasizes the importance of understanding and critiquing these frames in order to promote gender equality in politics.

Moreover, it emphasizes the concept of the 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). This is to validate the intricate relationship that exists between gender dynamics and media framing in political journalism.

The 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, is noteworthy. 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 emphasized by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2021) aimed at enhancing the presence and influence of women in the media.

4.3.2. MEDIA COVERAGE ANALYSIS

The analysis of candidate visibility in terms of the frequency of their names mentioned in articles provides significant insight into media coverage patterns. Findings revealed that female candidates' pictures appeared less frequently in most articles than in their male counterparts. This suggests a potential gender bias in the aspect of visual representation in the media. This observation aligns with existing research on "gender disparities in media coverage," as seen in the works of Osei-Appiah, 2019 Oyinate and Daramola, 2017 and Oyinate et al., 2003.

Bystrom et al. (2001) showed that the media can sometimes reinforce traditional gender roles by introducing content that discusses the appearance of female candidates over their professional qualifications and achievements. For example, in the article “Remi Tinubu Advocates for Women’s Rights” from Punch, the media highlighted her fashion sense and physical appearance using phrases like “elegantly dressed” and “Known for her stylish outfits.” This is just one of the instances where emphasis was placed on her looks rather than her policies on women's rights or her professional achievement. (Punch, 2022).

This is known as the "Double standard of appearance," and it can affect how the public perceives female candidates and could affect their credibility (Ditonto, 2017). Lawless and Fox (2010) demonstrated in their study that biased portrayal of candidates can affect the public perception of these candidates and could lead to gender disparities in political representation. According to Bauer & Becker (2015), unequal media portrayal could also impact how voters evaluate female candidate's qualifications and suitability for the office they are running for.

Jamieson & Capella (2008), Jamieson & Taussig (2017), and Cappella & Jamieson (1996) emphasized that candidate image can play a crucial role in campaign communication. These 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 findings with Hillary Clinton's candidacy in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election offers a global perspective, as discussed by Ahmad (2022). Similarly, Uche Ekwunife's significant political experience, including serving as a member of the House of Representatives and a Senator, likely contributed to her relatively high visibility.

In the case of Punch newspapers, both female and male candidates received a relatively fair amount of coverage (Fig 1.5). However, in The Guardian and Daily Trust 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 research of Eshiet (2013), Enwefah (2016), Endong & Obongganwan (2015), Ogwezzy-Ndisika & Faustino (2017), and Banwart & Keery (2022), which shows that media organizations tend to

provide more coverage to male candidates, thus affecting public familiarity and perception.

The relatively fair coverage of both genders in Punch might indicate a conscious effort to avoid gender bias. However, the researcher could not obtain Punch's gender policy at the time of writing this research. However, the skewed visibility in The Guardian and Daily Trust, which form the majority of the analyzed samples, raises questions about whether unconscious biases or systemic gender norms influence media coverage allocation in general.

4.3.3. COVERAGE DISCREPANCIES AND GENDER BIAS ANALYSIS

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 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), and Oyinade and 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 perpetuate biased coverage.

The unequal representation in media coverage based on gender can have several consequences on women's participation in politics. Osei-Appiah (2019) affirmed this notion by suggesting that media visibility is an essential factor in influencing citizen's perceptions and their decisions about a candidate. Hence, when a female candidate receives less coverage, it can contribute to the candidate having low recognition, which by implication means that voters will not be able to familiarize themselves with the candidate's policy, thereby reducing the candidate's potential voters' support.

In the same vein, the findings of Lawless & Fox (2003; 2010), Arogundade (2019), and Dittmar (2016) suggested that unequal media representation, where female candidates struggle to attract the same attention and recognition as their male colleagues, can influence public perception, contributing to their lack of visibility and ultimately

hindering their participation in politics. In agreement with Lawless and Fox (2010), this finding discusses how limited media coverage of female candidates discourages women from pursuing political roles. This reinforces the importance of fair and equal media coverage in promoting balanced gender political representation. The varying levels of coverage among male candidates, where The Guardian provided the most coverage, and Daily Trust provided the least, suggested that media attendance is not just based on gender but might be influenced by other factors such as the candidate's campaign strategies, political affiliations, or regional considerations.

Campaign strategies relate to candidates with more active and visible campaign activities to gain more media attention; this could be done through active engagements with the media, constant press releases, and facilitation of interviews. This is similar to how Panagopoulos et al. (2019) described campaign strategies. Political affiliations, on the other hand, have to do with the influence and prominence of the party the candidate is affiliated with. Due to the popularity of these parties, the media may prioritize content relating to these candidates since they are likely to influence future policy and governance. In the same vein, Dalton, R. J. (2016) attested to the fact that most people vote for the party in the election, which shows how influential a political party can be in regard to electoral outcomes. On a final note, Marquis et al. (2011) explained that regional considerations have to do with situations where media outlets prioritize candidates based on their region. This could be because of the proximity or relationship of such media outlets with the candidate's region. Furthermore, issues of regional importance can drive more coverage as candidates with local interest tend to get more grassroots support and, as a result, are likely to be featured.

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. Ross & Comrie (2012) emphasized the media's responsibility to provide balanced and unbiased coverage of political candidates, which can contribute to a more informed citizenry and a healthier democracy.

4.3.4. STORY TYPES FRAMING ANALYSIS

The findings further emphasize the disparity in framing between female and male candidates across various news story types. According to (fig 1.5.2 and Fig 1.5.3) Female candidates were predominantly featured in political news, which technically is any news that allows voters to learn about the qualifications, policy positions, and actions of political figures. This is particular to those related to the elections and mainly campaign activities, making up the majority of their coverage. They were notably absent in general news stories, feature articles, and editorials. Furthermore, 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. For instance, the analysis of articles such as “Uche Ekwunife's Educational Reforms” and “Uche Ekwunife's Health Initiatives” indicate that while some issues were covered, these were specific and limited in scope. However, they were mentioned in stories related to fashion, family, and women's rights, indicating a narrow focus on gender-specific topics. Articles like “Remi Tinubu Advocates for Women's Rights” and “Betty Apiafi's Women's Rights Advocacy” exemplify this trend. In contrast, male candidates enjoyed more extensive coverage across different 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 that female candidates received more coverage in political news, mainly due to the period’s proximity to the elections, aligns with the concept of "stereotype reinforcement" in media framing. Stereotype reinforcement is a process in which the media consistently present certain groups or individuals stereotypically. To reinforce this, as mentioned by Okpokwasili, O. A., & Ekemezie, I. B. (2023), the media could consistently frame female candidates using traditional gender stereotypes to overshadow their political potential or capabilities. For instance, in the article titled “Christian Youth Group Celebrates Remi Tinubu at 62”, Remi Tinubu was described as the wife of the All Progressive Congress’ presidential candidate, which could imply that most of her achievements were tied to the progress or influences of her husband (Punch 2022). Female candidates' prominence in political news can be attributed to the election-centered focus.

However, a 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 highlight 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 framing choices significantly impact 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 and Kinder (2010) suggest that framing plays a critical role in constructing candidate images and influencing voter evaluations. The authors opine 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 multidimensional 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 and Shaw's (1972) conceptualization of media agenda-setting, where the media's selection and emphasis on specific 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) highlight the importance of media reframing women candidates as experts in various policy domains to challenge these gendered portrayals. To address this, Bauer and Becker (2015) recommend framing

women candidates as knowledgeable policy experts across diverse domains. According to Bauer & Becker (2015), the media can deliberately feature women candidates in stories related to the economy, governance, and other policy areas.

Additionally, the unequal framing of female and male candidates in various story types aligns with the broader literature on the media's role in shaping public opinion. Iyengar and Kinder (2010) assert 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 and Becker (2015) also state that the media can contribute to a more comprehensive portrayal of women's capabilities by including women in general news stories, feature pieces, and editorials. Bystrom et al. (2001) earlier opine that limited media exposure to female candidates reinforces these disparities.

CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the summary of the research findings will be presented to answer the research questions. The theoretical contributions, limitations, and recommendations of this research will also be discussed.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.

In this section, the research questions will be answered using the findings of this research and other literature that aligns with these findings. These findings were drawn from the media coverage of male and female politicians in months leading to the 2023 Nigerian senatorial elections with the aim of assessing patterns, biases and disparities

in the framing or portrayal. The summarized findings as they answer the research questions are as follows:

R Q.1: How are female politicians represented in Nigerian media?

According to the findings of this research, female politicians in Nigeria are represented through a gendered lens that focuses on their personal lives, marital status and appearances over their political qualifications, policies and achievements; this conclusion was also affirmed in the works of Ette, M (2017).

Further research revealed that most of the time, female candidates were featured in political news related to election campaigns but were rarely seen in general news, feature articles, and editorials. The focus topics, when covered, were mostly issues that are perceived to be related to women's traditional roles, like women's rights, fashion, and family, instead of broader issues like security, economy, and governance (Ross et al., 2013). Similarly, female candidates were given little coverage in critical areas like health, education, and the environment, thereby making it hard for them to give their perspectives on these issues.

R Q.2: Is there a predominant frame/narrative/mode of representation used by Nigerian newspapers in covering female political candidates?

Yes. Nigerian newspapers use a predominant mode of representation when covering female political candidates. As also stated by Oyeweso, S. (2014), emphasis was placed on the gender of these candidates, and they were considered based on issues relating to their gender rather than issues relating to the roles they were running for. Female Politicians like Remi Tinubu, Uche Ekwunife, and Betty Apiafi were frequently associated with issues related to women's rights, health, and education. The implication of this is that there will be no severe coverage for these candidates, thereby decreasing their chances of getting more attention from their voters.

R Q.3. Why are these modes of representation dominant?

These representations were dominant because of some factors like:

- Traditional Gender Roles: Media coverage often pushes this narrative by focusing on the female candidate's personal life, appearance, and issues relating to gender.

This is because it aligns with existing societal expectations and stereotypes that mainly associate women with social and family-related duties, roles or issues (Rohrbach et al., 2020).

- **Media Coverage Bias:** According to (Nacos, B. L., 2007), the gender bias perpetuated by the media shows that women are often limited to specific areas while men enjoy a broader form of coverage. These findings also uncovered these biases as the selected candidates were also confined to specific topics that are gender-specific.
- **Candidates' Campaign Strategies:** Perryman's (2019) work and research findings revealed that some candidates could choose to push certain narratives and stories in the media over others in their campaign strategies, and as a result, this could cause a disparity in their coverage

R Q.4. What is the impact of these modes of representation on female participation in Nigerian politics?

The impact of these modes of representation on female participation in Nigerian politics is significant as it shapes public perception, leading to narrow and stereotyped perspectives of female politicians (Mukundan, H.,2023). This could hinder their ability to create multiple persona in order to attract the attention of potential voters.

Schneider, M. C., & Bos, A. L. (2019) mentioned in their work that this representation could discourage women from participating in politics as the narrative somewhat suggests that most women are expected to be involved in domestic, family or issues relating to gender-specific roles rather than in leadership, political or governance.

Biased media framing can also influence voter's expectations and affect their level of support towards the candidates, thereby making it more challenging for them to gain credibility, legitimacy and, ultimately, their votes in the elections. This can result in a decreased chance of electoral success for female candidates, as stated by Hayes, D., & Lawless, J. L. (2015).

Conclusively, the overall assessment of the research findings is that the media plays a crucial role in shaping how female politicians are framed in Nigeria. The dominant frames used by these media outlets often reinforce traditional gender roles, and they contribute to the unequal representation of female politicians. The implication is that

public perceptions are affected, stereotypes are reinforced, and voters' expectations are influenced. To address these biases, more balanced and diverse media coverage must be encouraged to enhance the representation and participation of women in Nigerian politics (Okpokwasili, O. A., & Ekemezie, I. B., 2023).

5.3. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This research, like other research, has also contributed to the understanding of media framing, gender bias and political representation. Some of these theoretical contributions are:

- **Further Contributions towards Media Framing Theory:** As stated by media framing theory, the way media outlets present information shapes public perception and opinions. This research contributed to this by specifically confirming this within the context of the Nigerian political and media ecosystem. The research provides empirical evidence that female politicians are often framed differently from their male counterparts through the emphasis on their attributes and gender-specific issues over their professional qualifications, policies and achievements.
- **Further Support for Literature Based on Gender Bias:** This research also provides additional support for literature based on gender bias in media by demonstrating that traditional gender role narratives are pushed in the media coverage of female candidates. Female politicians are frequently associated with "soft" issues such as social welfare and education, while male politicians are more often linked with "hard" issues like the economy and security. This is in alignment with theories that suggest that the media plays a vital role in reinforcing traditional gender roles, stereotypes, and societal gender norms to decrease the perception of the public on female politicians as capable leaders in areas that relate to policy-making (Hajad et al., (2024) & Parichi, M., & Khan, K. (2016))
- **Practical Application of Agenda-Setting Theory:** This theory asserts that the media does not just shape or influence public perceptions but also sets the public agenda McCombs, M. E., & Guo, L. (2014). This research shows how the media's focus on specific topics for female politicians (e.g., women's rights, health) as opposed to male politicians (e.g., economy, governance) can shape the public agenda and discourse. This research uncovers how the media agenda-setting strategy contributes to the marginalization of female politicians in discussions beyond

gender-specific issues (Thujo, J. W. (2012), Atkinson, C. (2021) & Adcock, C. (2010)).

- Further Insights into Stereotype Reinforcement: This research provides further insights into the concept of reinforcement as it uncovers that female candidates' coverage around the periods leading to the election is often around their campaign activities, thus limiting their portrayal to election-related contexts. This shows that the constraints placed on female politicians from being recognized as capable leaders with expertise beyond gender-specific issues. This limits the perceived roles and capabilities of female politicians in the eyes of the public (Capozzi, S. L. (2020)).

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the theoretical framework that exists in the media, gender, and politics study. It also addresses the need to ensure that media biases are sorted to enhance a more equitable representation of female candidates, which is a catalyst for greater female participation in leadership and political roles. Through the extension and application of existing literal knowledge in media, gender and political studies, this research has also provided more insights toward the understanding of the challenges female politicians face and the role of the media in shaping public perceptions and opinions favourably towards these women.

5.4. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

In this section, the restrictions, limitations or barriers to the efficiency of this research will be discussed as follows:

- The research focuses on a specific set of articles from selected Nigerian newspapers during the 2023 senatorial elections. This limited sample size and scope may not fully capture the overall trends and nuances in media coverage of female politicians all across different time frames (In this case, only four months leading up to the election was considered), regions (Selected candidates do not represent the whole region in the country) or type of elections (Only senatorial candidates were considered which those not state governorship and presidential elections).
- The analysis performed in this media framing analysis involves some level of subjectivity in the interpretation of how these articles portray female and male politicians. Despite efforts to ensure that most of these results are standardized,

individual biases and perspectives could also influence the categorization of these frames. As a result, the consistency and reliability of data and its interpretations might be affected.

- This research focused on print newspapers, not including other influential media platforms such as television, radio, and social media. As a result of these exclusions, the overall picture of the media ecosystem and its impact on the representation of female politicians could be incomplete.
- The application of this research to other countries or other cultural contexts might be limited as this research was done from a context-specific to Nigeria's media and its ecosystem, culture, region and societal factors and how they all influence the media framing and public perception.
- The reliance of this research on existing articles and reports may affect its objectivity and accuracy as these articles could contain biases and limitations on how they are produced.
- This research is limited to a specific election period, and as a result, this limits its ability to analyze changes and trends in media framing over time. The longitudinal approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of how the media coverage of female politicians is evolving and how such evolution could tracked according to progress made.

In summary, the recognition of these limitations is vital to understanding the scope and context of the research findings. This also provides an avenue for future studies to know what to address in furtherance of the scope and context of this research. This could be done through the use of a large and diverse sample, the inclusion of multiple media platforms, and the use of longitudinal analysis.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research reveal significant gender disparities in media coverage of female political candidates, which can have an impact on the political ecosystem. These disparities have a cascading effect on the female candidates as they reinforce stereotypes, limit their public personas and also promote traditional gender roles and, as a result, influence their voters' expectations and support, which translates into electoral victories or failures.

Balanced and diverse media coverage is important for the enhancement of female politician's public image and for fostering an equitable political environment. The media outlets are expected to encourage as they hold more influence in shaping public perception, and their framing choices can encourage or discourage societal biases.

Therefore, media outlets must adopt more inclusive and equitable reporting styles by engaging female politicians in a broader range of issues and portraying them as capable, knowledgeable policymakers with relevant experience.

And expertise. As a result, female representation and participation in politics will increase, and this will help eliminate existing gender biases in the political space.

On a final note, although this research has shed more light on the current media representation of female politicians in Nigeria, there is still a need for further research, examination and actions to encourage gender equity in the media, especially as it relates to politics.

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