

## **CAREER CHOICE IN JOURNALISM AMONG FEMALE MASS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS OF THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, ILARO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the choice of career in journalism among female mass communication students of the federal polytechnic, Ilaro. Survey research method was used with questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. 120 questions were administered and 108 were retrieved fully. Data was analyzed using SPSS (622). Cognitive theory was used for the framework. The study found out that majority of female mass communication students of the federal polytechnic, Ilaro do not have the intentions of making a career in journalism after graduation. Findings, also showed that female students of mass communication are discouraged from practicing journalism due to gender discrimination, religious and cultural beliefs as well as marital status. The study recommends that institutions offering mass communication encourage more female mass communication students to practice journalism as a profession after graduation. Gender discrimination towards female journalists should be abolished, while husbands should also encourage and support their wives who are graduates of mass communication in taking up journalism as a career.

**Keywords:** Career, Journalism, Mass Communication, Female, Marriage, Religion

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Journalism, arguably is a profession that is most widely sought after across the world. While it has been discovered also that most female prefer studying journalism as a course, the same cannot be said of them making career in the profession after graduation. Apuke (2016) cited in Patricia, Samuel, Celuwa, Fisayo, Ifeoluwa & Omolayo (2015) states that since the inception of journalism as an area of specialization in mass communication studies among Nigerian universities in the 1960s, enrollments have been largely populated by female students. However, further studies have equally revealed that only very few female students usually venture into the practice of journalism after graduation.

Journalism is the collection, preparation and distribution of news, related commentary and feature materials through the media such as pamphlets, newsletters, magazines, radio, television, billboards, internet and books. Journalism as a profession is an essential part of the society. Apart from news and information dissemination, it involves going extra miles in getting news worthy information by way of investigative and interpretative journalism in order to bring out hidden facts and information through the media to the people (Ali, 2010). Okoro and Chiweobo – Onuoha (2013) define journalism as a veritable tool for information dissemination, social mobilization and control. A means of educating the society and sensitizing them on very important issues affecting the lives of the people.

Historically, journalism as a course of study started in Nigeria in the early 1960s, with only two Federal Universities offering courses in journalism. While University of Nigeria, Nsukka started in 1961, the University of Lagos, commercial these programmes in 1967 with the introduction of Diploma in Mass Communication which allowed students to take courses in journalism (Wikipedia.org). Presently, almost all higher institutions of learning in Nigeria offer mass communication courses leading to the award of various degrees and certificates and well as diplomas at National and Higher levels up to Bachelor and Masters Degrees level. This is in a sharp contrast to what it used to be when candidates were reluctant to enroll in journalism as the preferred career choice as against courses such as Medicine, Accounting, Law and Architecture.

There is no doubt that journalism is a profession that needs both male and female gender. However, it has been observed that there are more female students studying mass communication than those practicing or aspiring to become journalists unlike their male counterparts. Various studies conducted across institutions offering journalism in Nigeria also indicate that there are more female students studying mass communication than their male counterparts. (Ali, 2010). Unfortunately, only a few of these female students follow through to make a career in journalism as it has been discovered that they prefer to have career in other areas of mass communication, such as public relations, advertizing, broadcasting, photo-journalism, news casting, news blogging and publishing.

According to Apuke (2016) in Gambo and Lenshie (2014), female gender in Nigerian is almost excluded in the discussion-making process. It is a known fact that women opportunities for participation are generally limited in Nigeria. This is central to the socio-economic and political organization of woman and sometimes, their total exclusion from the decision-making process at all levels in the society.

In recent years, media houses in the western countries have continued to have shortage of trained female journalists in various communication activities. The same could also be said of media houses in Nigeria as most of them have higher number of male journalist than female journalists. This, Ali (2010) posits that, "there has been an imbalance in the number of female and male trained journalists working with the media houses

### **1.1 Statement of The Problem**

It is a known fact that a very high number of female journalists are produced yearly from various institutions offering mass communication, not only in Nigeria, but globally. However, the degree of their involvement in the practice of journalism is still very low. Traditionally, many are of the view that a female journalist should be restricted to some areas of specialization in journalism owing to issue of discrimination and the tedious nature of the profession. Also, due to religious and traditional believes, coupled with matrimonial responsibilities, it has been observed that women may not be able to professionally function as journalists in our society. This study therefore opens up on choice of career in journalism among female mass communication students, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.

### **1.2 Objective of The Study**

In view of the problem discussed above, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives;

1. To ascertain whether or not marital status affect the choice of making career in journalism by female mass communication students of the FPI
2. To examine the choices available that appeal to female students of mass communication of FPI
3. To evaluate whether or not there's a discrimination against female journalists in the media industry in Nigeria.
4. To ascertain if religion, marriage, tradition and culture affect the choice of a female graduate of mass communication from practicing journalism.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. Does marital status affect the choice of making career in journalism by female mass communication students?
2. What are the choices available in journalism that appeal to female students of mass communication of Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro
3. Is there any discrimination against female journalists in the media industry in Nigeria?
4. How can religion, tradition and culture affect the choice of a female graduate of mass communication from practicing journalism?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Over the years, journalism as a profession has been seen as men's job due to its dominance by the men folk. So many factors have been attributed to why female folk are not fully involved in the practice of journalism. Umar (2015) defines journalism as the occupation of reporting writing, editing, photographing or broadcasting news or of conducting any news organization as a business.

The word "journalism" according to Umar (2015) is derived from the word "journal" which implies a daily register or a diary or a book containing each day's business or transaction. Journalism as a profession is not limited to a particular gender. Rather, it is a profession that is seen as suitable for both men and woman (Ememyeonu, 1991). But, most female prefer flamboyant roles in radio, television, advertising or public relations genres of journalism. This is where the idea of choice comes from for female graduates of mass communication in Nigeria.

Journalism is as media profession which offers a variety of career possibilities. In journalism, there are different career option opened to interested graduates to choose from. They include: Photo journalism, news reporting, sports writing, investigative and interpretative journalism, freelancing or newspaper columns, news blogging, advertising and public relations etc.

Aina (2004) distinguished some of the careers available in journalism: a reporter differentiate various career in journalism, stating that a reporter is a journalist who seeks out some information using researches and interviews. Whereas, investigative journalism requires a "keener news-sense" than the traditional reporting technique.

Ojomo (2008) described photo journalism as "telling a story with photographs-reporting with the aid of picture". Photo journalists are not ordinary photographers, they are professional photographers trained in the art of telling or reporting the news through the camera lens. In addition, we have sports presenters whose focus in all about reporting sporting automatics across the globe but nothing more. Same with political analysts, business analysts, health analysts, financial analysts and the new trend, the citizen journalism or news blogging news blogging is about using the internet network to report news activities and make it available to heterogonous audience as it happens through any form of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp etc.

In a study carried out by Ali (2010) to find out the attitude of female mass communication student towards journalism as a career, there's a general belief that although a very large number of female graduates of journalism are produced from different higher institutions in Nigeria, whereas, only few of them actually practice journalism as a career. Findings revealed that female mass communication students have a negative attitude towards journalism as a career. Apuke (2018) cited in Feri and Keller (1986) sampled 136 female full-time news anchors in a commercial television station. Majority of them emphasized the fact that even the audience would prefer asking their male counterpart for the latest "hot" story. Studies have however discovered that career development of female journalists are mostly affected by gender based issues. Ibraheem (2018) in Okunna (2006) states that gender relations in Nigeria, are characterized by a lot of imbalance to the disadvantaged of women. Tradition, religion, culture and other factors have continued to widen the gap of disparity between men and women thereby reducing women to play second fiddle roles or subordinate positions.

Also, there is also a barrier of between functioning as a female journalist and keeping your family well intact. Reep and Dambiot (1987) in Apuke (2016) examined the possible effects of the stereotypes on the carrier development of female journalists. The research found out from a study of 813 programmes where lead roles were played by women who were financially successful excited about their career, and could be completed in demanding jobs. It was also discovered that majority of their respondents paid their price by being less than perfect mothers and by lacking remove.

Okunna (2006) states that the media are male dominated in terms of subject matters, news and people who report. Akinfeleye (1996) says that "there are 52 journalism/Mass communication training institutions offering different programmers from Diploma to Phd and Degree in Mass Communication in Nigeria. As at 1996 Afinfeleye compiled

some of the institutions as University of Lagos, UNN, University of Maiduguri, Bayero University, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Akwa, Delta state University, Abraka etc. Nwodu (2005) in a study presented a data on the overall presence of women and men in the news, categories in three distinct ways as subjects, reporters and presenters.

Duty	Females	Males	Females	Males	Total Subject
Presenter	69%	31%	42	19	61
Reporters	5%	95%	4	71	75
Subjects	17%	83%	42	206	248

The above table shows the number of females and males occupying the position of presenters, reporters and subjects in the media industry in Nigeria. However, gender equality could not be ascertained as data presented above indicates that greater number of female appears in the media as presenters than males. 42(69%) out of the 61 news presenters were females, while 19 (31%) were males. 4(5%) out of 75 reporters were females, while 71(95%) were males. Also 42(17%) out of 248 subjects in the news were females while 206 (83%) were males.

From the above, it could be seen that woman feel more comfortable as presenters than being reporters due to certain factors.

This study adopted social cognitive theory. The theory was propounded by Philip and Ziller (1992). Only social category theory has been observed to have similar modes of orientation and behaving which relate people in the same social category to such phenomena as mass communication in similar ways. The theory posits that “members of contemporary urban-industrial societies could be structured into social categories based on common characteristics into social categories based on common characteristics like social class, religion ethnic identity and rural residence, and that such categorization has implementations for mass communication message”. According to Ibraheem (2018) in Aina (2003), its origin stems from the need of advertisers for specialized audiences. It is assumed that the categories to which individuals belong provide them with similar frame of reference and cognition.

Agbo, Ojobor and Ezinwa (2008) also stressed that “members of a particular social category will select more or less similar communication content and will respond to it roughly in equal way”. Therefore, most female mass communication students, who belong to the same social category in the society, develop negative attitudes towards journalism as a career. As most of the female communicators are negatively affected by the discriminations from the society and their families, it implies that they have responded to the idea of not accepting the choice of journalism as a career.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative design. The survey method is employed. Survey is “a research method, which focuses on a representative sample derived from the entire population of study (Nwodu, 2006). This approach is very important as it deals with attitude towards making a choice and perceptions of respondents. The instrument of data collection is questionnaire. The population of the entire students of mass communication makes it impossible to study every female student in the department of mass communication, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. Therefore, a sample size was drawn. 120 respondents was selected randomly from the study comprising of 30 from ND1 (Full Time), 30 from ND II (Full Time and 60 from both ND I Part Time and ND II (PART Time) and 120 copies of questionnaire were distributed but only 108 questionnaires were duly filled and retrieved with a response rate of 90% and a rejection rate of 10%

### 4 DATA PRESENTATION

**Do you like journalism?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	90.7
No	10	9.3
Total	108	100.0

**Source: Field study, 2019.**

The table above shows that 91% respondents like journalism, while 10% doesn't like journalism. This shows an acceptance that female mass communication students like journalism as a profession.

**Table 2: Will you choose journalism as a career?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	20	18.5%
No	88	81.5%
Total	108	100%

**Source: Field study, 2019.**

The table above shows that 88% respondents of the students will not choose journalism as a career, while 20% will choose journalism as a career.

**Table 3: What aspect of journalism are preferable to you as a female student of mass communication, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
News casting	51	47.2%
News blogging	19	17.6%
News reporting	16	14.8%
Investigative journalism	05	04.6%
Advertizing and public relations	17	15.7%
Total	108	100%

**Source: Field study, 2019**

The above table indicates that 47.2% respondents prefer News Casting as a career, 19% prefer News blogging, 17% will go for advertizing and Public Relations. While 5% prefer Investigative journalism and 16% will go for News reporting.

**Table 4: How would you assess the moral standard of woman practicing journalism.**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
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Good	45	41.7%
Very good	56	51.9%
Undecided	7	06.5%
Total	108	100%

**Source: Field study, 2019.**

The table shows that 51% respondents believed that their moral standard is very good, while 41% good and 6% were undecided.

**Table 5: Do you think Journalism is strictly a male profession**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
True	20	18.5
False	70	68.5
Undecided	14	13.0
Total	108	100%

**Source: Field study, 2019.**

The table shows 68% false against Journalism as strictly a male profession, 18.5% respondents agreed it is a male profession, while 13% were undecided.

**Table 6: Do marital status determines the choice of journalism as a career for a female mass communication student?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	92	85.2%
No	16	14.8%
Total	108	100%

**Source: Field study, 2019.**

The table shows that 85.2% of the respondents agreed that marital status of a female determines the choice of journalism as a career. While 14.8% said 'No'.

**Table 7: Is there any discrimination against female journalism in Nigeria?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	85	81%
No	20	9%
Total	108	100%

Source: Field study, 2019.

The table shows that 81% of the respondents agreed there is discrimination against female journalists in Nigeria.

**Table 8: Have you ever been discriminated against as a female student journalist?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	90	83%
No	16	14.8
Undecided	02	1.85%
Total	108	100

Source: Field study, 2019

90% of the respondents said they have been discriminated against, while 14% have not been discriminated against. 1.85% were undecided.

**Table 9: Does religion affects the choice of journalism as a career among female mass communication students of the federal polytechnic, Ilaro?**

Option	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
True	94	87%	87%
False	10	100%(9.25)	9.3%
Undecided	04	2.7% (3.7)	3.7%
Total	108		100

Source: Field study, 2019

The table above indicates 87% of the respondents agreed that religion affects the choice of journalism as a career among the female mass communication students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. 9.3% believed otherwise and 3.7% were undecided.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From Table 2 based on the questionnaire, it is observed that the response from the respondents agrees that 98% prefer Journalism as a career while 10% do not like journalism. The observation from Table 2 shows that 82% of the respondents will not choose journalism as a career while the remaining 18.5% respondents will want to choose journalism as a career by choice. Table 3: suggested to the respondents that what aspect of journalism are preferable to them as female students of mass communication, federal polytechnic, ilaro. It is observed the 47.2% chose news

casting aspect of journalism, 17% chose new blogging, 14.8% prefer new reporting, 4.6% will go for investigative journalism and 15.7% prefer to do advertising and public relations aspect of journalism.

From table 4, it showed that 41.7% accepted the standard of women practicing journalism to be good. 51.9% acknowledgement the standard of women of practicing journalism to be very good 6.5% do not give their opinion on the standard of woman practicing journalism. Table 5: 18.5% of the respondents adjudged that journalism is strictly a male profession, 68.5% of the respondents also believed that journalism is not strictly a male profession while 13% were undecided.. Table 6: 85.2% agreed that marital status determines the choice of journalism as a career for a female mass communication student, 14.5% agree that marital status do not determine the choice of journalism as a career for a female student. Table 7: 81% respondents agreed that there is discrimination against female journalists while 20% respondents agreed that there is no discrimination against female journalism.

Table 8: from the table, it is observed that 83% of the respondents agreed that there is discrimination against female student journalisms on the ground of religion and cultural behavior, while 14.8% believe that female students of journalism cannot be discriminated against on the ground of religion, while 2% remain adamant.

Table 9: 87% agreed that religion affects the career choice in journalism among female mass communication students, federal polytechnic, Ilaro while 9.3% opined that religion do not affect the career choice of journalism among female mass communication students. 3.7% were undecided.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1 Conclusion

Religion and cultural belief also have a role to play in influencing the choice of female students of mass communication in choosing a profession like journalism. While some religions forbid a woman to carry out an interview in some places, some cultures see women working in any capacity as a taboo, especially when such a woman is married. Some employers of labour too, usually discriminate against women when it comes to employing journalists in the media industry. The existence of new media has also paved way for more women graduates of mass communication to practice through the use of internet to practice citizen journalism by operating news blogs without any discrimination or marital effect. While others prefer news casting and working as Public Relations personnel, another set of these female students would rather choose a career in advertising than venturing into journalism.

### 6.1 Recommendations

While all these are factors that have served as impediments to the choice of female mass communication, it is recommended that for more female graduates of mass communication, especially from the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro should be encouraged to practice journalism as a career. It is also recommended that husbands should support their wives into making a career in journalism. Also, religious bias as well as cultural beliefs should be jettisoned in order to encourage more women participation in the practice of journalism. There is a general belief that, 'what a man can do, a woman can do better', hence, employers of labour should stop discriminating against women in the industry by making provisions for employment and give them the necessary support in order to yield the needed result. Also, government should promulgate a law that mandates media owners to employ at least 40% - 50% of female journalists in their establishments in order to erode discrimination and encourage more participation.

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