



Gender- Behind-The-Camera: Women’s Career Experiences in Television Stations in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined the career experiences of women in behind the camera positions in television stations in Lagos State, Nigeria. Anchored on the Hegemony and Patriarchy theories, the study adopted survey, focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interview methods for data gathering. Samples for the survey, FGD and in-depth interview comprises 268 respondents, 6 participants each selected from the 6 sampled television stations and 2 participants each selected from the 6 sampled television stations in Lagos state respectively. The questionnaire, structured FGD guide and structured interview guide were used to generate the data used to answer the five research questions guiding the study. Results show that the respondents were more dominated in roles such as producer, reporter and editor, and women also dominate management roles in government owned television stations compared to the private owned television stations. Additionally respondents are perceived to be emotional (38.0%), sensitive (25.4%) and weak (23.9%). Results also shows that respondents are not promoted or appointed to managerial position in television stations based on gender, rather it is based on competence and efficiency. Results also shows that the major challenges facing respondents on their job are; late time closing hours, demands of home and work front, and the job been considered as too tedious/risky. The findings also revealed that these challenges will hinder respondents from attaining their career goals however the major prospect respondents have on the job is to get to the peak of their careers. Consequently, findings support tenets of Hegemony and Patriarchy theories.

Keyword: Career experiences; behind the camera positions; television stations, challenges and prospects.

1. Introduction

Women in the media in Nigeria are constantly faced with cultural stereotype that states what a man should do, and what a woman shouldn’t do. According to the International Federation of Journalists (2009) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2015), one of the greatest challenges facing journalists, both men and women, is to resist the culture of casual stereotype in our everyday work. Casual stereotype happens daily in our everyday tasks as journalists.

Traditional African society has stipulated clearly different roles for men and women and both sexes grow up knowing exactly what society requires of them. As Mattelart (1986, as cited in Amobi, 2011), argues that this division of labor finds expression in a definition of masculine and feminine qualities, transmitted, reinforced and rearticulated by the different institutions of society. Nigeria’s society and culture determines gender disparity and supports it totally. Irukwu (2000), explains that cultural, religious, social self-imposed beliefs, illiteracy, poverty and male ego are factors that promotes gender disparity.

Gender disparity and marginalization which dates back to the pre-colonial era finds its roots and continues to thrive in the African traditional culture. Even the Nigerian religion, (Christianity & Islamic) preaches submissiveness on the part of women. Traditional African society has stipulated clearly

different roles for men and women and both sexes grow up knowing exactly what society requires of them. Hence, the reason why MDG No. 3 and SDG No. 5 are targeted at achieving gender equality and women empowerment all over the world. International Federation of Journalists (2009) explains that Gender equality does not mean that women and men have to be the same, but their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. The international Federation of Journalists (2009), explains further that gender equality is a fundamental human right that focuses on equal treatment of men and women, and encompasses issues like equal pay, equal access to decision making bodies, employment, pensions, health care, promotions, maternity and paternity leave, and in Journalism, gender equality means fair gender portrayal, women not being pigeonholed as soft news reporter, and a gender equality environment for journalist working behind the camera in the media.

Krasilovsky, Margolis, & Stein, (2015), revealed that the ginormous challenges women-behind-the-camera face on a daily basis cannot be imagined. One of such challenge is when Mary Gonzales in Krasilovsky et al., (2015), revealed that as camera women working behind the camera, it's hard when you don't get the job not because of your lack in qualification, but because it is gender based. Roles in the behind-the-scenes of the media are distributed to the male gender because it is believed that they have what it takes to ensure the job is done, factors like height, weight and strength works in the favor of a male gender. .

In their book entitled 'shooting women behind the world around the world', Krasilovsky et al., (2015), revealed that most women behind the camera in media organizations didn't have it on the platter of gold as their male counterparts did. Krasilovsky noted that women were faced daily with discrimination, gender inequality, and sexism. Most of the women interviewed in the book revealed that they felt they had to be like a man to succeed in the camera world. They felt they had to dress like a man, behave like a man, talk like a man, act like a man, and be like a man to succeed in their chosen career paths. This is as society assigns roles for the male and female, and the media is of no exception to this. Despite these challenges faced by women behind the camera, there is a paucity of research available on this topic as most of the available relevant research focus on the representation of women in front of the screen in media stations and movie industry. It is against this background that the study examined the

career experiences of women working in behind the camera positions in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria.

1.1 Research Questions

- What is the power structure in terms of positions occupied by women behind the camera in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?
- What is the perception about how women are treated behind the camera in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?
- To what extent does gender influence the appointment and promotion of women to managerial positions in the behind the camera positions in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?
- What are the challenges facing women working behind the camera positions in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?
- What are the prospects for women working in the behind the camera positions in the television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Gender

Gender goes beyond the biological construct of a man or a woman, rather, gender is defined by the roles given to both men and women. Attoh (2023) defined gender as the social construction of the expectations, behavior, privileges and constraints associated with those identified as male or female. Gender has become significant in the understanding of development and social phenomena especially in developing nations in view of the inequitable participation of men and women in the social organization of society. Similarly, Amobi & Oloruntola (2012), defined gender as a system of roles and relationships between women and men that are determined not biologically but by the social, political and economic context. Thus, society assigns functions, roles, and career choices based merely on gender, which Okunna (2004) describes as imbalance. This imbalance can be seen in our cultures and societies. For example, women are perceived to be better home makers than a man. Women are told that they are inferior to men and should remain within the confines of home-making and child bearing.

2.1.2 Behind-the-camera roles

From 1954, the date of the earliest systematic analysis of television's content, through 1975, researchers have found that males dominated the television industry, both in-front of the screen and behind the camera screen. Television has shown and continues to show two men for every woman, Tuchman (1978). Findings from Tuchman's studies indicated that in 1952 sixty-eight percent of the characters in prime-time drama were male, in 1973, seventy-four percent of those characters were male, and the scarcity of women on American television tells the world that women do not matter much in American society.

In Caroline Isber and Muriel Cantor's work titled the source of core programming in the Public Broadcasting System in. Tuchman (1978) which was a content analyses of television programming asked the question 'where are the women in public television?' and the reply gotten from content analysis studies was that 'the women are all in front of the television set'. This further explained that women were more likely to be seen on television sets, which is in front of the screen than behind the screen and camera.

2.1.3 Women's career experiences in the Television Industry

Wood (1994 as cited in Aromana 2016), explains that women are underrepresented either as media practitioners, object of news coverage or other subject matters that are important. This underrepresentation create an impression of non-importance, as women in media stations do not hold important and decision making roles. For women in media careers path, they are usually given the inferior seat that represents non-visibility unlike their male counterparts who are given more superior, important and decision making positions in media stations. Aromana (2016) also revealed that some of the decision making positions given to men are positions with importance, attention and power, therefore subjecting women to media segments that are of less importance such as lifestyle and entertainment. Aromana, 2016), revealed that women rarely get top positions in Nigeria, and the contributing factor to this underrepresentation of women as top media officers is the cultural definition of who should be the head. In a patriarchal society such as Nigeria, it is culturally expected that women be reverential, subservient and subordinates to men.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Hegemony Theory

Hegemony theory was propounded by an Italian communist theoretician, Antonio Gramsci, who modernized the concept of hegemony in the 1930s. The term 'hegemony' is derived from the Greek word 'hegemonia' meaning 'leader', 'state', 'dominate' or 'ruler'. Antoniades (2008), argues that there are two types of control that can be derived from hegemony theory; domination that is based on coercion; and hegemony that is based on consent. Hegemony, for Gramsci signifies the process through which the leading group / ruling class of a society transforms its own interests and values into 'common sense.

In relating hegemony theory to this study, culturally, women are placed to be homemakers while men go out to get the job done in Nigeria. The men go out to bring the fish, while the woman tend to the fish brought home. The dominant group in the African culture has always been the men. While the subordinate group remains the woman. The woman is taught to be led by the man, she is taught to be subordinate and submissive to the man, and to allow the man take hard task, while she settles for simple task that is similar to tending the fish while the man catches the fish. The television industry do not recognize women behind the camera. Most times, assigning roles to women behind the camera is avoided by television stations because the women are seen as too fragile to carry and operate the camera equipment. Thus, the behind the scene roles in television stations are seen as a male's exclusive job, while the on-screen roles are seen as women's job. These is perhaps because our culture says so.

3.2 Patriarchy Theory

Patriarchy theory has its origin from feminist theories which updated and expanded the understanding of patriarchy theory in the second half of the twentieth century, Steiner (2014). The word 'patriarchy' literally translates to the role of the male or father in a family or society. Bhasin (2006 as cited in Attoh, 2023) explains that patriarchy is used to explain a male-dominated family or society where the large household of the patriarch which include women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic staff are all under the ruler ship of the dominant male. Patriarchy is used to refer to the power relationship where men are leaders, and men rule the women. Patriarchy also connotes a system where women are subordinate and dominated my men,

In relating, patriarchy theory to this study, Nigeria is believed to be a patriarchal society, and all sectors in

Nigeria society are believed to be patriarchal in nature, the media is not left behind. In the media sector like all other sectors in Nigeria, the men rule and dominate the women. The women are given subordinate or lesser roles or roles 'fit for a woman' not because of their biology make up but solely because the society is patriarchal in nature. It is therefore in our culture for men to lead and women to be led. For example behind the camera roles are seen as roles fit for a man because it involves production, directing, cinematography and all other roles that determines a production which in turn should be a man's job because it defines the production, whereas roles in front of the camera are fit for a women because the roles in front of the came are defined by pretty faces and beautiful voices.

4. Empirical Review

Extant literature search on the career experiences on women behind the camera in the factual content production in Nigeria revealed a lack of literature. However, the study used literature of women in front of the camera in Nigeria and abroad.

One of such studies that examined women in front of the media was that of Ogwezzy-Ndisika (2011), which examined Media representation of women: dimensions of its agency in the non-emergence of women political leaders in Nigeria. Using the content analysis method, the study found out that Mass Media occupy an increasing central place in the lives of women and men all over the world. They have contributed to social changes and developments, influencing people's opinions, attitudes, and relationships. But what do we see and hear in the media about women? The mass media tend to reinforce traditional attitudes and often present a degrading and humiliating picture of women which does not at all reflect changing attitudes in society, and especially, the changing roles of the sexes.

Another of such few studies in the area of women behind the camera titled 'Gender Equity in Behind-The-Camera Roles in Television Stations in Lagos Nigeria'. The study was conducted by Amobi and Akinuliola (2022). The study focused on the level of parity between the income of women working behind the camera in television stations in Lagos and that of their male counterparts, the extent to which women in television stations are promoted as against their male counterparts, and the extent to which women in television stations enjoy equal training opportunities as against their male counterparts. The study found out that women in television stations in Lagos Nigeria are equally paid, well promoted and also

exposed to training opportunities compared to their male counterparts.

Another study on women behind the camera in Nollywood industry was done by Amobi, Shaibu, and Akinuliola (2018), which was titled 'the power behind the camera: Representation of women in Nollywood agencies'. The study focused on the power structure in the agencies running the Nollywood industry, specifically interrogating the representation and challenges facing women behind the camera in selected key agencies in Nollywood agencies. The study found out that there appears to be an imbalance in the representation of women behind the camera in Nollywood industry and that, women have made a few forward leaps especially in the writing and video editing roles, where they appear to be dominating the Nollywood industry.

And recently, statistics has shown that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision making, for example, UN Women (2023) revealed that as of 1st of January 2023, 34 women serves as Head of States in 31 countries out of all the countries in the world, and women represents 22.8 percent of cabinet members in the world. Similarly, the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) reported that women consist of less than 34 percent of countries negotiating teams as the UN summit in Egypt, and it was found out that out of the 110 world leaders in a family photo of 2022 COP27 climate summit, just 7 were women, Stallard, (2022).

5. Methodology

Uyo (2002), defined research as a systematic attempt to obtain answers to meaningful questions about phenomenon or event through the application of scientific procedures. Tejumaiye (2003), defined research as a systematic way of investigating a phenomenon. This study employed the triangulation approach which according to Hammersley (as cited in Bryman, 2008), is the use of quantitative research to corroborate qualitative research findings or vice versa. The study used the survey and in-depth interview methods. The survey method was adopted to elicit answers from women behind the cameras television stations in Lagos state. In-depth interview was used to generate data from purposively selected female key players in the television industry. A thematic analysis of the outcome of the in-depth interviews will be matched with the opinions elicited from the survey and focus group discussion for a critical cross validation.

The population of this study comprised the 17 television stations in Lagos, (Media Registry List 2018). Using the multistage cluster sampling, six television stations were purposively selected based on the awards they have received and based on the fact that a government owned and private owned stations must be chosen, they are; Arise TV, Television Continental (TVC), Channels TV, Nigerian Authority TV 5, Nigerian Authority TV 10 and Lagos TV (LTV), three private stations and three government stations were selected. From the six stations, the women working behind the camera are 303 in total. The 303 women were used for the questionnaire, and from the 303 women, two from each stations were purposively selected for the in-depth interview. The two women selected for the in-

depth interview must occupy key positions in the television stations.

The research instrument for the questionnaire was a 25-item questionnaire and a 15-item structured interview guide which the researchers constructed and validated using face validity and peer-review techniques. Reliability of the instruments were ascertained using the test-retest method. The instrument was administered by the researchers, with the support of numerous research assistants who went physically to the television stations to meet the respondents.

The response rate was 88.4% because of all the 303 respondents, only 268 respondents fully and dully completed the questionnaire, however the in-depth interview was 100% response rate.

6. Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the power structure in terms of positions occupied by women behind the camera in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 1: Positions occupied by women behind the camera in television stations

Positions	Frequency	Percentage
Producer	78	29.1
Director	16	6.0
Director of Cinematographer/Photographer	3	1.1
Cinematographer/Photographer	20	7.5
Editor	27	10.1
Gaffer	7	2.6
Ingest Personnel	7	2.6
Production Assistant	21	7.8
Reporter	47	17.5
Research and Data	9	3.4
Script Writer	10	3.7
Sound Mixer	12	4.5
Studio Manager	11	4.1
Total	268	100.0

Table 1 shows the position with the highest number of respondents as producers representing 29.1% (29.1). Thus, findings imply that the most occupied position by women behind the camera is producer, followed by reporter and then editor.

Research Question 2: What is the perception about how women are treated behind the camera in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 2: Perception of how women in behind the camera positions are treated in television stations.

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Fragile	19	7.1
Weak	64	23.9
Insecure	15	5.6
Not good decision makers	0	0
Emotional	102	38.0
Sensitive	68	25.4
Total	268	100.0

Table 2 presents that 38.0% (n102), respondents agreed that they are perceived to be emotional. Findings indicate that women behind the camera are perceived majorly as emotional, followed by sensitive and then weak.

Research question 3: To what extent does gender influence the appointment and promotion of women to managerial positions in the production chain in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 3: Extent to which gender influences the promotion of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions in television stations.

Extent to gender influence promotion	Frequency	Percentage
Likely	6	2.2
Very Likely	16	6.0
Neutral	45	16.8
Unlikely	180	67.2
Very Unlikely	21	7.8
Total	268	100.0

Table 3 shows that 67.2% (n180) respondents stated that it is unlikely for gender to influence the promotion of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions. The findings therefore indicate that gender does not in any way influence the promotion of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions in television stations.

Table 4: Extent to which gender influences the appointment of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions in television stations.

Extent to gender influence appointment	Frequency	Percentage
Likely	7	2.6
Very Likely	13	4.9
Neutral	46	17.1
Unlikely	172	64.2
Very Unlikely	30	11.2
Total	268	100.0

Table 4 presents the extent to which gender influences the appointment of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions in television stations. Generally, with the highest representation, 64.2% (n172) respondents stated that it is unlikely for gender to influence the appointment of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions. . The findings therefore indicate that gender does not in any way influence the appointment of women to managerial positions in behind the camera positions in television stations.

Research question 4: What are the challenges facing women working behind the camera positions in television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 5: Challenges women working behind the camera positions in television stations face.

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Demands of home and work front	117	83.2
Travelling schedules	0	0
Late time closing hours	136	96.9
Sexual harassment	8	3.2
Bullying	7	2.6
Total	268	100.0

Table 5 presents the challenges women working behind the camera positions in television stations face. Specifically, with the highest representation of 50.7% (n136) respondents indicated late night closing hours as the common challenge. The findings therefore indicate that the major challenge women behind the camera face in television stations is late night closing hours.

Research Question 5: What are the prospects for women working in the behind the camera positions in the television stations in Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 6: Prospects for women working in the behind the camera positions in television stations.

Prospects for women working in the behind the camera	Frequency	Percentage
More leadership positions	43	16.0
Getting to the peak of their careers	208	77.6
Getting international recognition/political appointment	17	6.4
Total	268	100.0

Table 6 presents the prospects for women working in the behind the camera positions in television stations.

With the highest representation of 77.6% (n208) respondents indicates that getting to the peak of their

career. The findings therefore indicate that the major prospect women behind the camera in television stations have is getting to the peak of their careers.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conscious of the SDG No. 5, which is targeted at achieving gender equality and women empowerment, this study examined women's career experiences in television stations in Lagos Nigeria. Based on the results the researcher concludes that women behind the camera positions in television stations are more dominated in roles such producer, reporter, and editor, and women are now been seen in non-management positions in television stations, also, women are majorly perceived as emotional, weak and then fragile, and women are likely to be assigned the lifestyle beat, and gender do not influence the promotion and appointment of women to managerial positions in television stations, also, women in behind the camera positions still face enormous challenges that can hinder the fulfilment of their career goals and dreams, despite these challenges, the major prospects of women behind the camera in television stations is getting to the peak of their career. The study therefore recommends:

Support from management for young married women: Young married women working behind the camera positions in television stations should not be discriminated against by the management and heads of departments.

Career growth trainings and seminars: Television stations should prioritise trainings, seminars and conferences for their staff, both local and international.

Mentorship: Women behind the camera positions should be encouraged to have mentors behind the camera. These mentors will encourage their mentees and show them how they did it by getting where they are today despite also facing some of the challenges they faced as a young woman in these positions.

More leadership positions: The board of management in television stations should give access to women to also hold leadership positions like their male counterparts in the same industry.

Mental health/other health challenges: Women in behind the camera positions are also advised to protect their mental health at all cost, because of the nature of their jobs.

Academic curriculum for Mass Communication students: The National Universities Commission (NUC) should liaise with the department of Mass Communication in Universities to encourage female students take courses like cinematography, audio and video console operations, production and other

lighting courses, so as the interest in pursuing a career in these areas can be built in them,

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