

**MARITAL STATUS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN MEDIA PRACTICE:
A STUDY OF MARRIED FEMALE JOURNALISTS IN OSUN STATE.**

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Abstract

Journalism practice over the years has been a herculean task meant to give detailed and proper account of happenings to people in the society, and both men and women have taken up this critical challenge. The role and impact of female gender cannot be underestimated in journalism practice. However opinions differ on the impact of marital status on professionalism in media practice. This study examines the influence of marital status on journalism practice with focus on married female journalists in Osun State.

The study was anchored on feminist muted theory with a sample size of 20 married female journalists and a descriptive survey design, the study found that religious belief, cultural orientation and the societal demands impact negatively on married female journalists. The study revealed that marriage and family life in the areas of child's bearing and taking care of home have negative impacts on married female journalist's ability to perform her duties.

The study recommends media policy and law that guarantee more support and resources to married female journalist and inclusive work place culture that value and respect all journalists, regardless of their marital status and gender.

Keywords: Marital Status, Married Female Journalist, Professionalism, Journalism, Influence, Osun State.

Introduction

The media is a yardstick for maintenance of peace and stability and this role is said to be taken by both men and women in the society as women are now seen as great contributors in the professional media works. Generally, the media plays a very pivotal role in the society and these roles are not limited to be taken by men alone but women

inclusive (Ngige, Adebola, and Ezendu 2016). The journalistic profession is taxed with stress and uneasiness which could be seen initially as a man's job but with the change on-going in the society, it is easily said that the profession has a lot of in flocks of women who are professionally trained and are doing constantly great in the discharge of their duties as media personnel.

According to Oyinade, Daramola & Lamidi, (2013), right from childhood, it is believed that it is the golden duty of a girl child to take care of the house, her husband and become a good mother and is constantly reminded of her role and duties later in the face of failure. This issue cuts across all cultures in Africa where the role of a woman is defined and fixed as some husbands would prefer their wives to take up jobs that would afford them the opportunity to take care of the home and pay more attention to family issues whereas some would desire them to be full house wives (Ogundoyin, 2020).

There is a common belief that during the creation, man was created first and that the woman who came later is said to be a companion and this has probably been the genesis of the role of the woman being subordinate to a man in every stratum of society (Ogundoyin, 2020). With this being said, most professions in the society have not in one way given the feminine gender the full privilege to serve in the best possible ways as many women are seen in the classrooms studying mass communication while men are seen on the field practicing the actual profession.

With marriage in place, most women are seen not to have the full commitment and passion, the zeal to work as Journalists in the media profession most especially in the broadcast line. The thought of taking a good care of the house and the family and the stress in the journalistic profession which include the dangers and obstacles are the things that led to the general believe that a married woman might not do well in the profession.

The popular saying that the role of a woman is in the kitchen began to take a new dimension in the face of the society as economic downturn has given rise to the need for women and married women to support their husbands in the provision of economic and monetary help in the house, these have consequently given the feminine folks be it married or not the assumed different positions as their male counterparts in all disciplines which has found its way to the media profession as well. Though this might not be in a bid to compete but be relevant and recognised in the society. This recognition has encouraged married women to take up various areas of job and professionalism which include journalism. According to Chambers as cited by Ogundoyin (2020), before the influx of women into the profession, they were treated as consumers rather than producers of news. As women became more educated, journalism became an attractive career encouraging women to get out of their confines of domestic duties but once they are married, it is believed that they might not be able to participate as they should due to the family life, time and will to perform well in journalism.

Objective of the Study

The study's main objective is to examine the influence of marital status on professionalism in media practice. However other definite objectives are to:

Investigate the level of married women involvement in journalism practice in Osun State.

Examine the challenges of married women practicing journalism in Osun State
To identify the reason why married women do not participate in journalism in Nigeria

Literature Review

The word professionalism is being seen by different people in different professions. It defined as competence or skill expected in the place of work or duty by a professional. Professional is a member of a profession or any person who works in a specified professional activity as this term also describes the standards of education and training that prepare members of the profession with the particular knowledge and skills necessary to perform their specific role within that profession. (Lewis, Kaufhold & Lasorsa, 2010),

In the media world, professionalism is a fundamental pillar of forming a sound public opinion that contributes to promoting citizens' participation in democratic life and the decision-making process (Tahat and Alhammad, 2020). This may come only through the production of media content that respects the foundations of professionalism based on neutrality, objectivity, pluralism, balance, and inclusiveness in the offering and adhering to these professional standards, which means that the media professionals have their responsibilities towards their communities, and their shortcomings negatively affect public life and leave room for spreading rumors and misleading and false news.

Being married as woman in the African society is sometimes seen as a barrier to be a proper professional in any profession which includes journalism as they are seen as being engaged, busy and might find it difficult to balance between work and family as their family situations might influence their job and they might be distracted and find it difficult to concentrate and be very unproductive in the discharge of their duties.

Traditionally, women are expected to work at home which was considered most essentials for subsistence of the family life as marriage has taken then into another whole level of retention (Philip, 2017).

Women in Journalism

Previously, Journalism was simply viewed as a profession influenced and controlled by men in the past (Okunna, 1992; Franks, 2013). As it grew, women were restricted by custom, tradition, and religion from getting into the profession and those who dared were faced with significant discrimination both from the society and their families. In spite of this, a lot of women are not relenting in their efforts to get to the apex and desired positions like their male counterparts who are editors, reporters, sport analysts and journalists. Although, the profession is deeply characterized by gender segregation with women in the minority, they are still noticeable and found to be actively involved in journalism (Lachover, 2015; Gill, 2017; Franks, 2013).

Furthermore, Female journalists aspire to improve their status and to resist the culture of stereotype which has been the bane of the industry, by embracing areas that had been traditionally occupied by the male, such as hard news, crime and politics. Despite this effort, only a few of them have risen to the peak of the profession in Nigeria (Sanusi & Adelabu, 2015). Franks (2013) claims that female journalists are more unlikely than men

to achieve more senior and well-paid positions; women who do secure jobs at a senior level in journalism are more likely than men to be childless.

Challenges of Journalism and Married Women Participation

There is no profession without challenges and women in journalism are increasingly facing some form of challenges or the other which is vivid and not serving as a motivation on the job. In male-dominated societies, women journalists are confronted with the challenges of religious and cultural limitations that make the notion of inequality a natural concept existing between the male and the female genders, marriage and lifestyle (Lachover, 2005; Gills, 2007).

A woman's journalistic duty outside the matrimonial home is usually viewed as inappropriate which may leave room for suspicion of infidelity especially in the area of journalism where a woman is expected to work extra hours beyond the normal working time or have to travel to spend days, weeks or even months to get some stories covered. This affects marriages and can affect the professional output of women as their husbands would most times not understand the kind of job they are doing. This then draw a line between journalistic profession and their family.

Empirical Review

Professionalism in the Nigerian media practice have been discussed by different people and the issue of women in the media palace has also been seen as something worth researching as it affects the growth of the Nigerian media and women folks in the media industry. According to Akinfeleye, as cited by Hassan, (2020) professionals are homogeneous community whose members share values, identity and common value. According to Sanusi & Adelabu 2015 in their journal article "Women in journalism practices in Nigeria: from the Hood to the limelight" this address the issue that most women face in the media houses in Nigeria and how it can help in solving the issues.

Furthermore, Ude-Akpeh & Ukwella (2017) did an analytical survey on "professionalisation of Media Practice in Nigeria". Here, they focus on the reality of women and their effect in media houses as they seek to establish the reason why a female journalist is needed in the media palace.

Theoretical Framework

The research work is berth on the feminist muted group theory. The theory postulated that there are definite sets of individual who are silenced or quiet as it is believed that they have not much power to speak up and therefore they cannot stand for themselves but with the help of other supports. According to Miller, as cited by Ogundoyin (2020), the theory explains that the dominant group in a society (male) controls the various avenues of expression. She further stated that the theory exposes the fact that women have difficulty being accepted in and becoming part of an organisation whose rules were primarily made in a male-dominated society.

The word muted is explained as having a soft quiet and muffled sound as a result of being fitted with a mute. The Muted Group Theory was initially proposed by social anthropologists, Ardener & Ardener, in their book 'Belief and The Problem of Women'. This profounder of this theory elucidated that muted groups are those assemblies in the society that have no power nor voice and that they have serious acquaintance in difficulty

when communicating on issues in the society on the rationale that they have less power in being part of the decision making of the language they use.

It is noted by the theorist that power rests upon the majority. According to Ardener & Ardener as cited by Nangabo, (2015) for the affected to pass their recognitions to the society they should re-encode their thoughts and activities to make them comprehended in the general population circle. In vividly elucidating this theory to the general audience, it just implies that sure minority groups or rather aggregates that are seen to be minorities in the society think that it is difficult to communicate in a language that the majority has produced for the overall population. This is on the grounds that the language supports the creators over a second or outsider that uses that language. The idea of minority or majority can be based on sex, age, skin shading, and religion, spot of source or class. The minority is referred to as the muted group (Ardener & Ardener as cited by Nangabo, 2015).

This theory is said to have been relevant to this study as it looks at the challenges faced by women and married women in media outlets while they carry out their professional duty and how it affects journalism in Nigeria. Since rules are constructed in man-made language in Nigeria, it aids in defining, depreciating and excluding women (Griffin, 2013).

Research Methodology

The study area of this research has to do with the particular location of the study which is one publicly owned television station and privately owned radio station in Osun State (OSBC & RAYPOWER FM).

The study adopted quantitative research method using descriptive survey design.

The population of this study consists of married female journalists in Osun State specifically in OSBC and RAYPOWER.

In the views of Ujo (2013) sampling technique specifies how elements will be drawn from the population. The sample for this study was (20), twenty drawn based on purposive sampling technique.

The research instrument used in the gathering of information for this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is a form containing a list of questions to be answered by a sample size in order to know the perception of people towards a particular issue (Adetoun, 2013).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presented below is based on a survey carried out on 20 female journalists working in the two studied radio stations in Osun State, Nigeria; OSBC and RAYPOWER. The questionnaire was given to 10 journalists from each media outlet during the course of this study.

Table 1: Age Range of the Journalists

Age Range	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentage)
18 -25yrs	3	2	5 (25%)
26 -35yrs	4	4	8 (40%)
36 -45yrs	1	3	4 (20%)
46 and above	2	1	3 (15%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

The table 1 shows that the majority of the journalists in both the OSBC and RAYPOWER radio stations are below the age of 35 years with the age range 26 – 35 years being the most frequent in each radio station.

Table 2: Journalism Level of the Journalists

Level of Journalism	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentage)
12 and above	1	1	2 (10%)
2-4	1	5	6 (30%)
5-8	5	4	9 (45%)
9-12	3	0	3 (15%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

The table shows that 45% of the respondents are between the levels 5 – 8 of Journalism, 30% between levels 2 – 4, 15% between levels 9 – 12 and just 10% above level 12. The table also shows that the journalists at OSBC are at generally at higher journalism than their counterparts at RAYPOWER with 50% of the journalists at RAYPOWER between the levels 2 – 4 of Journalism.

Table 3: Length of Service as a Journalist

Years of Service	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentage)
13 and above	1	1	2 (10%)
1-4	2	5	7 (35%)
5-8	3	4	7 (35%)
9-12	4		4 (30%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

35% of the respondents have been journalists for 5 – 8 years. Those who have been journalists just for 1 – 4 years also make up 35% of the respondents. It is also observed from the table that the Journalists at OSBC have spent more years in service than their counterparts over at RAYPOWER radio station.

Table 4: Years in Marriage

Years in Marriage	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentage)
4-6years	2	2	4 (20%)
11years and above	3	4	7 (35%)
1-3 years	5	4	9 (45%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

The data in table 4 shows that while all of the respondents are married, 45% are just in the first three years of their marriage, 20% are between years 4 – 6 and the 35% are above 11 years of marriage.

Table 5: Professional Qualification

Professional Qualification	OSBC	RAYPOWE R	Grand Total (Percentage)
Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON)	0	3	3 (15%)
Nigeria Institute of Journalism (NIJ)	8	6	14 (70%)
Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR)	2	1	3 (15%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

70% of the journalists are registered members of the Nigeria Institute of Journalism (NIJ), 15% are members of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and the other 15% are members of the Nigeria institute of Public Relations (NIPR).

Table 6: Females in journalism are intimidated by their male counterparts and this poses serious challenges and frustrations

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	4	2	6 (30%)
Disagree	0	4	4 (20%)
Neutral	3	1	4 (20%)
Strongly Agree	2	2	4 (20%)
Strongly Disagree	1	1	2 (10%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

50% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree that Females in journalism are intimidated by their male counterparts and this poses serious challenges and frustrations, 20% are neutral while the other 30% disagree or strongly disagree with the notion.

Table 7: Married women participate more in broadcast journalism

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	1	0	1 (5%)
Disagree	3	4	7 (35%)
Neutral	3	3	6 (30%)
Strongly Agree	0	1	1 (5%)
Strongly Disagree	3	2	5 (25%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

The data shows that 60% of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “Married women participate more in broadcast journalism”, 30% are neutral while 10% agree or strongly agree.

Table 8: Marriage and family life affect married women in journalism

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	7	4	11 (55%)
Disagree	1	0	1 (5%)
Neutral	1	0	1 (5%)
Strongly Agree	0	4	4 (20%)
Strongly Disagree	1	2	3 (15%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

75% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that married and family life affects the career of married women in journalism. Only 20% disagree or strongly disagree and 5% of the respondents are neutral.

Table 9: Married women face more problems while practicing journalism than married men

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	6	3	9 (45%)
Disagree	1	0	1 (5%)
Neutral	1	1	2 (10%)
Strongly Agree	1	5	6 (30%)
Strongly Disagree	1	1	2 (10%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

The majority of the respondents (75%) are in agreement with the belief that married women face more problems while practicing journalism than married men do. Only 15% disagree or strongly disagree and 5% are neutral.

Table 10: Married female journalists are not seen as important in the media jobs

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	2	4	6 (30%)
Disagree	3	4	7 (35%)
Neutral	3	1	4 (20%)
Strongly Agree	1	1	2 (10%)
Strongly Disagree	1	0	1 (5%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

There is a great divide amongst the respondents as regards the perceived importance of married female journalists in media jobs. 40% agree or strongly agree, while 40% also disagree or strongly disagree and 20% are neutral.

Table 11: Media laws protect married women more in broadcast.

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	1	3	4 (20%)
Disagree	4	2	6 (30%)
Neutral	1	1	2 (10%)
Strongly Agree	1	1	2 (10%)
Strongly Disagree	3	3	6 (30%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

60% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “Media laws protect married women more in broadcast”, 30% agree or strongly agree and 10% are neutral.

Table 12: Family circumstances or challenges would make it difficult for a married woman to thrive in journalism

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	3	3	6 (30%)
Disagree	1	1	2 (10%)
Neutral	2	1	3 (15%)
Strongly Agree	0	3	3 (15%)
Strongly Disagree	4	2	6 (30%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

The respondents are divided on the effect of family circumstances on the career of a married woman in journalism as 30% agree with the statement and 30% strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 13: Religious, cultural and social beliefs are major factors that affect married female journalist

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
FALSE	5	3	8 (40%)
TRUE	5	7	12 (60%)
Grand Total	10	10	20

60% of the respondents believe that religion, culture and social beliefs affect the married female journalists and her ability to carry out her responsibilities while 40% believe that these do not have any effect

Table 14: Being married affects female journalists negatively in the discharge of her duties

Row Labels	OSBC	RAYPOWER	Grand Total (Percentages)
Agree	2	5	7 (35%)
Disagree	1	0	1 (5%)
Neutral	4	1	5 (25%)
Strongly Agree	1	3	4 (20%)
Strongly Disagree	2	1	3 (15%)
Grand Total	10	10	20 (100%)

55% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that female journalists are negatively affected by being married, 20% disagree or strongly disagree and 25% of the respondents are neutral.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the research carried out using the two media houses (RAYPOWER and OSBC) in Osun state indicates that the majority of journalists believe or have seen in their experience that being a married female has an adverse effect on the career of a journalist. 60% of the respondents believe that marriage life negatively affects a female's ability to discharge her duties in the media house and 75% of the respondents agree that marriage and family life causes more problems for females and female journalist in journalism. The research also set out to identify the source of this negative impact (if any) on their careers and the responses gotten from the survey were helpful in identifying some.

Half (50%) of the respondents expressed their belief that female journalists were intimidated by their male colleagues and only 30% do not have that belief, this is believed to have been because they are not married or rigid enough to resist or face head on some challenges facing them. The perception of married female journalists is seemingly balanced as an equal percentage (40%) hold that they are not perceived as being of importance as the percentage hold the opposite position. 60% of the respondents also believed that the religious, cultural and social factors also negatively impact the careers of married female journalists. This implies that the Nigerian society is not conducive for a married female practicing journalism. This is emphasized by the belief among the majority of the respondents (60%) that the media laws here do not protect married females who are involved in Journalism.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The research conducted on two media houses in Osun state found that the majority of journalists believe that being a married female has a negative effect on their career. 60% of respondents believed that marriage negatively affects a female journalist's ability to perform her duties, and 75% agreed that marriage and family life causes more problems for females in journalism as it sees to the fact that they are mostly affected by the child's bearing, taking care of the home and other extended families businesses at home. The research also identified sources of this negative impact, such as intimidation by male colleagues and negative perceptions due to religious, cultural, and social factors. The majority of respondents (60%) also believed that media laws in Nigeria do not protect married female journalists as the laws do not recognize marital life in its dictates, indicating that the Nigerian society is not conducive for a married female practicing journalism.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that media companies in Osun state and Nigeria as a whole, take steps to address the negative impact that being a married female has on the career of journalists. This could include:

Providing more support and resources to married female journalists to help them balance their professional and personal responsibilities.

Implementing policies and procedures to prevent and address intimidation and discrimination against female journalists by their male colleagues.

Encouraging a more inclusive and diverse workplace culture that values and respects the contributions of all journalists, regardless of their marital status or gender.

Reviewing and revising media laws to ensure that they provide equal protection and opportunities for married female journalists.

Promoting awareness and education about the challenges and barriers that married female journalists face in the workplace, and working to change negative perceptions and cultural attitudes.

Providing training and mentoring programs for female journalists to help them build the skills and confidence they need to succeed in their careers.

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