

“Perspectives of Abuja and Keffi Residents on Radio Messages Addressing Domestic Violence against Women”

LAMAI, Ochanya Mercy,
Department of Mass Communication,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi
(Email: ochilamai.ol@gmail.com Tel: 07035968803)

Abstract

Domestic violence against women is a world-wide trend especially in developing societies. This phenomenon affects women politically, physically, socially and economically. In Nigeria, Abuja and Keffi Local Government Area are among other places that have witnessed one form of domestic violence or the other against women. One of the societal structures set up to fight this abuse is the mass media, and radio is one platform where domestic violence against women is reported. The crux of the study is to explore the awareness, types, extent and impact of radio messages on domestic violence using residents of Abuja and Keffi and the population. The research made use of the survey research method, and collected data from 300 participants through the deployment of the questionnaire instrument. Findings reveal among others that radio reports on domestic violence against women in Keffi and Abuja has been on a frequent basis, but such radio messages have not been able to reduce this abuse. From data gathered and evaluated, the study concludes that radio set the needed agenda on different types of domestic violence against women in the studied areas. However, despite the volume of radio reports on this phenomenon, most of the participants believe that these radio messages have not been effective due to the people's attitude towards resistance to change.

Keywords: Domestic, Violence, Radio, Messages, Women

Introduction

Domestic violence against women refers to abusive behaviour - physical, emotional, psychological, or economic, perpetrated predominantly by male partners within domestic settings (Brown & Williams, 1993). It occurs every day around the globe but is more prevalent in developing countries as developed countries have implemented laws protecting women. Women suffer every day from their male counterparts in the home, and over 95 per cent of domestic violence has the man as the assailant (Okemgbo, 2002; Ilika & Ilika, 2005). It is generally believed that the power within the home resides with the man. It is broadly the case that in most societies, social, economic, political, and inter-personal power remains with men. Thus, power is socially gendered (Purna, 1998).

This form of violence in extreme situations often results in death of the other party, in most cases, the woman. This occurs when the woman has been battered continually or maltreated in one way or the other. Smith et al (2018) as cited in Aina and Igyuve (2023) aver that economic reliance, cultural beliefs, and ineffective government policies, programmes and interventions have continued to add to the perpetuation of this violence, while cultural and religious justifications often obscure acts of violence against women, hindering efforts to combat such behaviour.

According to data from India, 32% of married women have experienced different types of domestic violence from their husband (Chandra, 2023). Similar data by the National Commission

for Human Rights, Pakistan indicates that in 2023, more than 90% of the country's women population have faced various forms of domestic violence in their lifetime.

Furthermore, the World Health Organisation (WHO) states that one in three women in Africa had experienced one form of domestic violence. For instance, the percentage in Ethiopia stands at 76.5% for lifetime (Guracho & Bifftu, 2018). In Ghana, study conducted by Demographic and Health Survey (2022) reveals that 33% of the women folks in the country, particularly those between the ages of 15 and 49 have been physically, emotionally, culturally and psychologically abused by their male partners.

The frequency of occurrence of domestic violence against women in Nigeria calls for concerns and efforts to deal with it. In Abuja and Keffi, evidence suggests that domestic violence remains a pervasive issue. Real-life incident such as the distressing experience of singer, Osinachi Nwachukwu as a victim of domestic violence, leading to her death, underscores the urgent need for advocacy efforts by the media, especially radio due to its characteristics, which include affordability, reach, accessibility, intimacy, among others. The media has been one of the societal instruments established to educate and enlighten people against domestic violence. Ekweonu (2020) contends that the media has the social responsibility and it is constitutionally empowered to who expose unhealthy practices of behaviours of people, the audience may, with time, learn to take the right attitudinal changes to suit the required behaviour expected of them. However, the effectiveness of the use of radio and other mass media channels in advocating against domestic violence in Abuja and Keffi remains uncertain.

Although scholars have conducted studies on media and domestic violence (Ihechu, Afulike & Udochukwu, 2023; Dauda, 2015; Yetunde, 2019; Adebimpe & Oduola, 2018; Aina & Igyuve, 2023; Ekweonu, 2020). In spite of existing research, little is known about how radio stations in Abuja and Keffi raise public awareness, engage and empower citizens to respond to domestic violence against women. Addressing this gap in knowledge regarding support messages by radio is important. Therefore, the focus of this study is to bridge the gap in knowledge by exploring the perspectives of Abuja and Keffi residents on radio's messages of domestic violence against women.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to assess the perspectives of Abuja and Keffi residents on radio messages addressing domestic violence against women.. The specific objectives are to:

1. To determine the level of awareness among residents regarding domestic violence cases reported by radio stations in Abuja and Keffi.
2. To identify the forms of domestic violence against women most frequently reported by these radio stations.
3. To evaluate the reach and frequency of radio messages on domestic violence in the selected cities.
4. To assess the perceived impact of these radio messages on residents' attitudes and behaviours concerning domestic violence against women.

Review of Literature

Understanding Domestic Violence

Domestic violence has been defined as a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is "used to exert power and control over an intimate partner.". Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence the behaviour of another person (Department of Justice, 2017). According to Minnesota Statute 518B.01 (2017), domestic abuse is an act committed against a family or household member by a family or household member. This act are: the physical harm or assault of a family or household member; the infliction of fear of physical harm, injury, or assault against a family or household member; and terroristic threats, criminal sexual conduct, or interference with an emergency call against a family or household member. This statute also defines who is considered to be a victim of domestic violence in Minnesota. A victim of domestic violence may include: current,

or former spouses; parents, and children; persons related by blood; persons who are currently residing together, or who have resided together previously; persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have ever lived together; a man and woman if the woman is pregnant and the man is alleged to be the father, regardless of whether they have been married or have lived together at any time; and a person involved in a significant romantic or sexual relationship.

According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence (2016), domestic violence is prevalent in all socioeconomic statuses, ages, sexual orientations, genders, religions, races, and nationalities. Every community is negatively impacted by domestic violence and its implications. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has created a list of potential risk factors to highlight the risk factors for perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2012), some risk factors include: witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child, substance abuse, limited economic opportunities, conflict and tension within an intimate partner relationship, male control over decision making and assets, societal acceptance of male domination and female subordination, lack of safe spaces for women, normalization of violence in the media and within the home, and lack of punishment for perpetrators of violence against women.

Review of Empirical Studies

Scholars have conducted studies on media and domestic violence issues. To start with, Dauda (2015) study investigated the role of mass media messages in addressing domestic violence in Nigeria, employing an ethnographic approach to gain insights into the messages disseminated through media channels. The research highlighted the potential of mass media to raise awareness about domestic violence and aims to discourage gender-based violence through targeted messaging.

Ihechu, Afulike and Udochukwu (2023) explored the role of the media in framing cultural practices against women in Nigeria and the challenges associated with addressing these issues. Employing a survey method with questionnaires for data collection and content analysis for studying frequency and framing patterns, the study revealed disparities in media coverage of cultural practices against women. While radio and television stations provided adequate coverage of these practices, newspapers exhibit a lower level of engagement with the topic. This disparity highlights the importance of media representation in shaping public discourse and underscores the need for increased awareness and advocacy efforts to address cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination against women in Nigeria.

Yetunde (2019) examined the context and content of dispute settlement interventions in selected television stations in Southwest Nigeria. Through in-depth interviews and content analysis, the study highlighted the positive impact of television dispute settlement intervention programs on promoting peaceful coexistence in the region. The findings indicated that most disputants perceive these interventions as effective in resolving family and business disputes, underscoring the valuable role of television stations in fostering social harmony and conflict resolution within Nigerian communities.

Ogechukwu et al. (2022) delved into the multifaceted issue of violence against women and girls in Southwest Nigeria. Employing a descriptive cross-sectional design, the study utilised semi-structured interviewer-administered questionnaires and key informant interviews to explore the experiences of women and girls subjected to various forms of violence. The findings underscore the urgent need for collaborative efforts to combat violence against women, with education and punitive measures against perpetrators identified as key solutions to curbing this pervasive problem.

In a complementary study, Obarisiagbon(2019) shed light on the emerging trend of domestic violence against men in Southern Nigeria. Utilising a combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques, including the snowball sampling method for in-depth interviews, the research uncovers the existence of domestic violence against men, driven by motives such as

self-defense, provocation, infidelity, financial hardship, and alcohol abuse. These findings challenge traditional gender norms and highlight the importance of recognizing and addressing all forms of domestic violence within Nigerian society.

Meanwhile, Adebimpe and Oduola (2018) delved into the intricate interplay between domestic violence legislation and socio-cultural norms in the Oyo community of Nigeria. Through qualitative content data analysis and a review of YouTube videos and legislative documents, the study reveals how deeply entrenched socio-cultural beliefs and practices hinder the effective implementation of domestic violence legislation. The findings underscore the need for nuanced approaches that respect cultural sensitivities while promoting legal protections for victims of domestic violence.

Olajubu et al (2022) conducted a comprehensive examination of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among female undergraduates in Southwestern Nigeria. Through a cross-sectional study conducted across selected tertiary institutions in the region, the researchers utilize Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Questionnaires (SGBVO) alongside the Sociological Construct Questionnaire (SCQ) to gather insightful data on the prevalence, perceptions, and experiences of SGBV among female students. This meticulous approach enables a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of SGBV within the educational context and provides valuable insights for targeted interventions and support mechanisms aimed at addressing this pressing issue.

Osah and Opakunbi (2021) explored the pervasive phenomenon of domestic violence and human rights violations in Nigeria. Through a comprehensive examination of the legal, social, and cultural factors contributing to domestic violence, the researchers highlight the urgent need for policy reforms, legal protections, and social interventions to safeguard the rights and well-being of victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Additionally, Nmadu et al. (2022) conducted a cross-sectional study to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and prevalence of domestic violence among women in Kaduna, north-western Nigeria. Employing a descriptive cross-sectional study design and utilizing the Conflict Tactics Scale for data collection, the research provides critical insights into the prevalence of domestic violence in the region and examines the factors influencing women's knowledge and attitudes towards this form of violence. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics surrounding domestic violence in Kaduna and underscore the importance of targeted interventions to address this public health concern.

Together, these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence in Nigeria, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the problem and the need for holistic approaches that address individual, interpersonal, and societal factors. By exploring the relationship between personality traits, attitudes, and experiences of domestic violence, as well as assessing the prevalence and implications of intimate partner violence across different regions of Nigeria, these studies provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working towards the prevention and elimination of domestic violence in the country.

Theoretical Framework

The paper is guided by the agenda setting theory as it relates to the media. The theory, "agenda setting", can be traced back to the first chapter of Walter Lippmann's 1922 book *Public Opinion*. Lippmann argues that the mass media are the principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public. The theory was later added a fleshy explanation by Bernard Cohen in 1963, when he observed that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling the people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about. The world will look different to people differently". Cohen continues, "depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors and publishers of the paper they read". As early as the 1960s, Cohen had expressed the idea that later led to formalisation of agenda setting theory by McCombs and Shaw. The agenda setting theory works in such a way as noted by McCombs and Valenzuela (2007) that the repetition of messages about public issues in the news day after day, along with the pervasiveness of the mass media in our daily

lives, constitute a major source of journalism's influence on the audience. The incidental nature of this learning, in turn, helps issues to move rather quickly from the media agenda to the public agenda.

Relating it to this study, radio as a medium of mass communication can influence people living in Abuja and Keffi regarding domestic violence against women. This, radio can do by persistently enlightening them about the causes and types of domestic violence, where to seek for assistance and what to do.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research method, employing a survey research design. According to Des-Wilson, Esiri, and Onwabere (2008), surveys focus on people and gather essential information such as beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations, and behaviours. Nwodu (2006) cited in Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016), notes that survey method allows the researcher to measure characteristics, opinions and behaviours of a given population, and this works on the premise that the population is too large for researchers to realistically observe the elements in the population. The choice of survey was therefore to enable the researcher sample the opinion of respondents on the subject of investigation.

The population of the study consisted of residents of Abuja and Keffi metropolis. Multistage sampling technique was utilised (stratification, cluster, quota and random sampling). Data was collected from 301 sample population spread across Kuje, Gwagwalada, Kwali, Abaji, Abuja Municipal and Bwari Area Councils as well as in Keffi town. The sample population was distributed as follows:

Kuje = 43
Gwagwalada = 43
Kwali = 43
Abuja Municipal = 43
Abaji = 43
Bwari = 43
Keffi = 43

A questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was considered appropriate as instrument for collecting data due to the perspectives that questionnaire can address a large number of issues and questions of concern in a relatively efficient way, with the possibility of a high response rate; ensures uniformity, free from bias, respondents have enough time to think and answer (Aryal, 2019). Five research assistants were employed by the researcher. Data were presented in using frequency charts and simple percentages method.

Data Presentation

The researcher administered 301 copies of questionnaire of which 279 were returned and found useful for analysis.

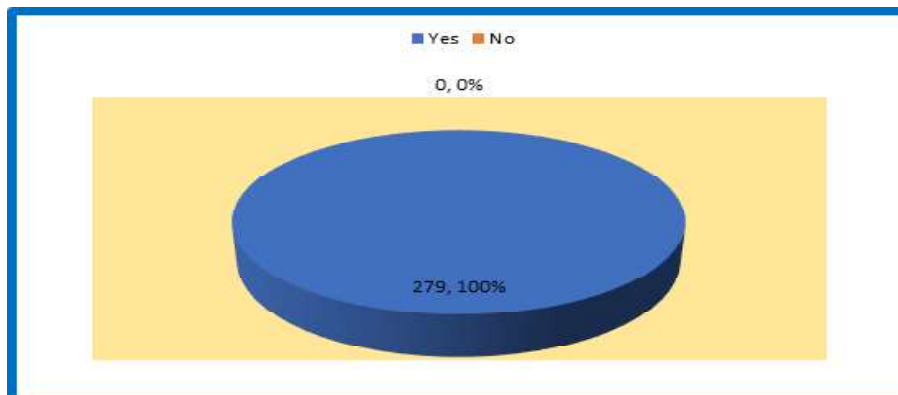


Figure 1: Heard Reports of Cases of Domestic Violence against Women on Radio

Finding in Figure 1 indicates a considerable level of awareness among the participants concerning domestic violence cases reported by radio.

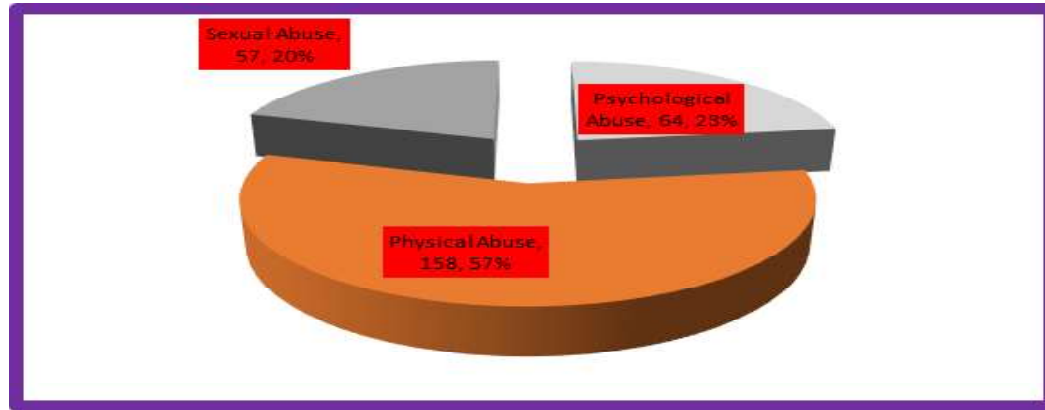


Figure 2: Main Types of Domestic Violence Reports Heard by the Respondents on Radio

In spite of the fact that the data reveals that physical abuse and psychological violence are prevalence, it could be deduced from the data in Figure 2 that there still exist different forms of domestic violence in Keffi and despite some local and international conventions and laws against such practices.

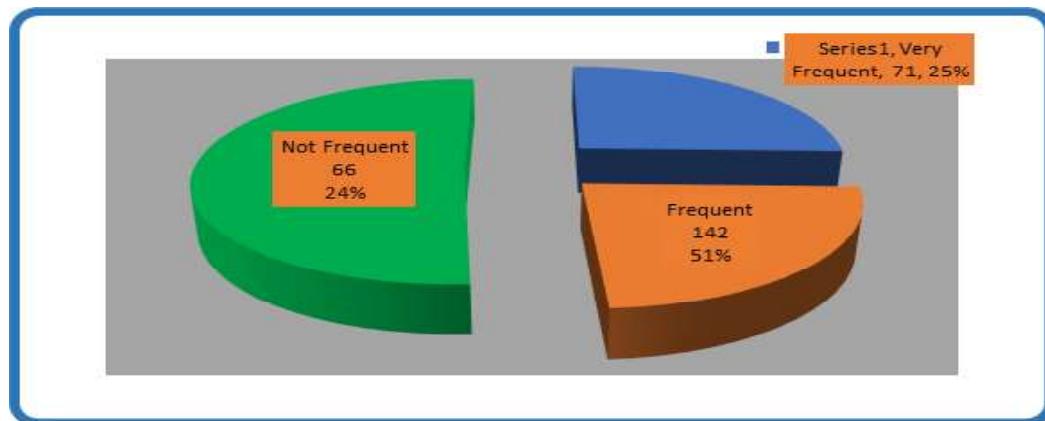


Figure 3: Frequency of Radio Stations' Messages on Domestic Violence against Women

The finding in Figure 3 thus suggests that radio reports on domestic violence against women have been on a high scale.

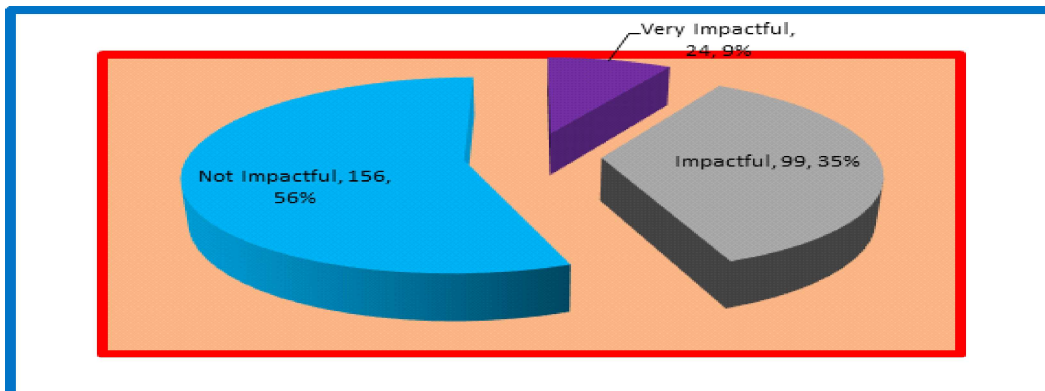


Figure 4: Impact of Radio Messages on Domestic Violence on the Respondents

Data in Figure 4 reveals that most of the respondents were not satisfied with radio's messages on domestic violence against women. This therefore suggests that this practice may continue to rise.

Discussion of Findings

Finding reveals that all the respondents were aware of domestic violence messages reported by radio stations in Keffi and Abuja. This implies that there has been effort by the broadcast media, especially radio to create the needed awareness about domestic violence against women in the studied areas. The finding here is in line with the position that the media possess the power to mould public perception on issues that are of interest to members of the public. Ekweonu (2020) corroborates that once the media exposes the bad practices of unscrupulous elements, media followers may, as time progresses, cultivate the habit of taking the right suggestions put forward by the media.

Further finding indicate the most reported cases of domestic violence types against women in Keffi and Abuja are physical, psychological abuses and sexual violence (see Figure two above). The finding here could be suggestive of the fact that the respondents have wide knowledge of the different kinds of domestic violence perpetrated against the women folks in the studied jurisdictions. Earlier study by Aina and Igyuve (2023) indicated that Facebook has been one of the dominant media platforms for revealing different types of domestic violence against women.

Additional finding revealed that domestic violence reports on radio in Keffi and Abuja have been on a frequent basis (see Figure 3). It further be deduced from the finding that radio is indeed one of the most used mass media to alter public opinions about issues in the society due to its wide reach and cheapness. The result here aligns with that of Ihechu, Afulike and Udochukwu (2023), which showed that radio and television stations provided adequate information, education and enlightenment on cultural practices against women. This also justifies the adoption of the agenda setting theory, which states that the repetition of messages about public issues in the news day after day along with the pervasiveness of the mass media in our daily lives constitute a major source of journalism's influence on the audience.

Furthermore, concerning the impact of radio messages on domestic violence against women, the result showed different views. 35% opined that the reports have been impactful, 9% contended that the messages have been very impactful, while most of the respondents, 56% (see Figure 4). This point to the narrative by some scholars that the media may set agenda on issues but the real change in attitude and practices lie with the individuals, groups and the society as a whole. The finding thus suggests that despite the fact radio reports have been on a frequent basis, domestic violence against women may continue to persist.

Conclusion

The thrust of the research has been on the perspectives of Abuja and Keffi residents on radio's messages of domestic violence against women. From data gathered and evaluated, the study concludes that radio set the needed agenda on different types of domestic violence against women in the studied areas. Above all, the results of the investigation underscore the significance of using radio for public education against domestic violence targeting women.

Recommendations

1. Radio and other mass media platforms should continue to educate the public on the dangers associated with violence against the womenfolk.
2. Collaboration between media industry in Nigeria and other key stakeholders who are fighting domestic violence against women is important to ensuring that communities who engaged in this form of practice are properly schooled on its dangers.
3. Another research can delve into the views of the public regarding domestic violence posts on social media platforms.
4. Study can also be conducted to content analyse newspapers reports on domestic violence against women and men.

References

- Aina, B. A. & Igyuve, A. I. (2023). Exploring perspectives of Abuja residents on Facebook reports of domestic violence against women in Nigeria (2022-2023). *International Journal of sub-Saharan African Research (IJSSAR)*, 1(1), 1-9.

- Aryal, S. (2019). Questionnaire method of data collection. <https://microbenotes.com/questionnaire-method-of-data-collection/>
- Browne, A. & Williams, K. R. (1993). *Gender intimacy and lethal violence: Trends from 1976 through 1987*. Sage Publications Inc.
- Chandra, R., Srivastava, S., Singh, A., Mukherjee, S. & Patel, J. K. (2023). Locating perpetrators of violence against women in India: An analysis of married men's characteristics associated with intimate partner violence. *PLoS One*, 18(8), e0289596. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0289596
- Dauda, B. (2015). Mass media messages and domestic violence in Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*, Doi: 10.4314/AJPSSI.V18I1
- Des-Wilson, Esiri, M. & Onwabere, C. H. (2008). *JLS 714: Communication research* National Open University of Nigeria.
- Ekweonu, C. (2020). Newspaper coverage of domestic violence against women during COVID-19 lockdown. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of Communication and Media Studies*, 1(2), 453-563.
- Ghana (2022). Fast facts, GBV laws and policies in Ghana. <https://endgbv.africa/mapping/ghana/>
- Guracho, Y. D. & Bifftu, B. B. (2018). Women's attitude and reasons toward justifying domestic violence in Ethiopia: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *African Health Science*, 18(4), 1255-1266.
- <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence>
- Ihechu, I., Afulike, D. & Udochukwu, E. N. (2023). Cultural practices against women in Nigeria: The media frames and the challenges. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*. 06. 10.47191/ijcsrr/V6-i4-13.
- Ilika, A. L. & Ilika, U.R. (2005). Eliminating gender-based violence: learning from the widowhood practices elimination initiative of a woman organization in Ozubulu, Anambra State of Nigeria, *African Journal of Reproductive Health/ Reproductive*, 9(2) retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3583463> 3/3/2020.
- Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A., Zwi, A. B. & Lozano, R. (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva. World Health Organisation.
- McCombs, M. & Valenzuela, S. (2007). The Agenda-Setting Theory. *Cuadernos de Información*, núm. 20, julio, pp. 44-50 Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile Santiago, Chile.
- Nmadu, A. G., Abubakar, J., Tukur, D., Istifanus, A., Joshua, B., Amina, M. (2022). Cross-sectional study on knowledge, attitude and prevalence of domestic violence among women in Kaduna, north-western Nigeria. *BMJ Open*, Doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-051626
- Nsikan-Abasi S. N. & Mirriam C. D. (2016). Audience participation in and perception of AIT's current affairs programme "Focus Nigeria". *International Journal of Science Arts and Commerce*, 1 (10), 43-65.
- Obarisiagbon, E. I. (2019). Emerging trend in the culture of domestic violence against men in southern Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Doi: 10.30845/IJHSS.V9N3P7
- Ogechukwu, C., Ibekwe, A. J., Kareem, O. O., Akpoti, A. Y., Ogunromo, K. O. & Oluwatuyi, T. E. (2022). The experience of violence against women and girls in Southwest, Nigeria. *International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health*, Doi: 10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20220676
- Okemgbo, C.N., Omideyi, A.K. & Odimegwu, C. O. (2002). Prevalence, patterns and correlates of domestic violence in selected Igbo communities of Imo State'. *Nig. Afr. J. Reprod Health*, 6 (2), 101-114.
- Olajubu, R., Adeniran, A. O. & Akindele, O. (2022). Dialectic Appraisal of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Among Female Undergraduates in South Western Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Doi: 10.7176/rhss/12-20-05
- Osah, G. & Opakunbi, O. (2021). Domestic violence and human rights violations in Nigeria. protective and risk factors. <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/300-causes->

protective-and-risk-factors-.html

Purna, S. (1998). *Development practice and violence against women*. Taylor and Francis.

The United States Department of Justice. (2017). What is domestic violence?

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2012). Causes,

World Health Organisation. (2016). Violence against women: Intimate partner and sexual violence against women fact sheet.<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

Yetunde, B. T. (2019). Context and content of dispute settlement intervention in selected television stations in South West, Nigeria.

General Comments

1. Your 'background to the study' is not focused as it keeps meandering between radio messages (Advocacy) and reports (Objective coverage). You did not also clearly or implicitly state the problem in your background of the study, yet you did not have a section for statement of the problem. Please, review and improve.
2. You did not review literature on radio messages, yet it is central to your study. Also some empirical studies on radio programmes relating to awareness creation, dispute settlement or prevention of domestic violence may be tangential to your core focus on radio messages about violence against women in Abuja and Keffi.
3. Your data presentation is simplistic without depth of analysis, and full of overgeneralizations as well as unsupported assumptions.
4. The article is riddled with awkward phrasing and lack of clarity (poor sentence structures, Subject-verb agreement, article use, etc.). Some sentences are incomplete, or ideas are underdeveloped and several phrases are ambiguous or misused.