

From Victims to Voices: A Feministic Analysis of Women's Representation in Nigeria's Counter-terrorism Reporting

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Abstract

This research investigated the representation of women in Nigeria's counter-terrorism reporting and assessed how digital media platforms amplify women's voices in security reporting. The analysis centred on three Nigerian online news outlets: Daily Trust, The Punch, and the BBC News Pidgin. Employing a quantitative content analysis, the study examined 168 news articles published from June 2024 to June 2025. The results indicate that traditional English-language newspapers (Daily Trust and The Punch) predominantly depict women as victims of violence and frequently cite male military or government officials as primary sources. This approach restricted the visibility of women's contributions to peace-building and community security. In contrast, digital platforms utilising Nigerian Pidgin (BBC News Pidgin) offered greater opportunities for female survivors and community members to share their perspectives, portraying women as both victims and active agents in conflict response. Drawing on framing theory, media convergence theory, and feminist standpoint theory, the study argued that digital media and language accessibility can help expand women's voices in security reporting. The study concluded that for Nigeria's Women, Peace and Security agenda, including the National Action Plan (NAP III), to succeed, journalists must move beyond traditional military-focused reporting and recognise women's lived experiences as important sources of security knowledge.

Keywords: Women, security reporting, media framing, counter-terrorism, Nigerian media

Introduction

The security situation in Nigeria, especially in the North-West and North-East regions, has worsened over the past few decades. New terrorist groups such as the *Lakurawa* group have emerged, while banditry and insurgency continue to threaten and displace communities (Ogele, 2025). Although the mass media often report the military actions and counter-terrorism strategies used to fight these groups, the gender aspect of counter-terrorism is yet to be well represented in Nigerian media reporting. For a long time, media narratives about women in conflict have mainly portrayed them as helpless victims of violence and displacement, or as people connected to male fighters. Scholars such as Zotto (2002) and Ajaero (2024) describe this as a narrow way of representing women, where their experiences and contributions are simplified.

However, the launch of Nigeria's Third National Action Plan (NAP III) in 2024, which is linked to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, marked a significant shift in policy. This policy recognises that women are not only victims of conflict but can also play important roles in peace-building, conflict prevention, and counter-terrorism (Arostegui, 2013). This policy change should also encourage a change in media reportage of women's roles in security. Yet, many scholars such as Ndinojou (2021) argue that Nigerian newsrooms still focus mainly on military activities and male sources, while the experiences and knowledge of women are often overlooked.

The advent of new media and digital technologies has changed how news is produced and shared in the digital age. Online platforms such as the Daily Trust, The Punch, and BBC News Pidgin now play an important role in shaping public discussions about security (Abdulkabir & Ibrahim, 2024). While some platforms still focus mainly on military operations, others use digital tools and informal language to

give more space to the voices of survivors and community members. This study, therefore, examines how these online media platforms represent women in Nigeria's security reporting. It explores whether the media still presents women mainly as victims, or whether it now recognizes them as active participants and important voices in security discussions.

Using the Feminist Standpoint, Media Convergence and Framing Theories, this paper argues that a full understanding of Nigeria's security crisis cannot be derived solely from official military reports. It must also include the real-life experiences of women living in conflict-affected communities. By analysing 168 news articles, this study investigates whether online media in Nigeria is beginning to portray women not only as victims but also as knowledge holders and contributors to national security discussions (Tijanni-Adenle, 2019). In doing so, the study addresses an important gap in African media research: the difference between gender-focused security policies and how women are actually represented in the media.

Research objectives

1. To analyse the dominant frames used by select Nigerian online media platforms in portraying women's roles in counter-terrorism reporting between 2024 and 2025.
2. To examine how influences the visibility of women's voices in counter-terrorism reporting.
3. To assess how source attribution in Nigerian online media reporting incorporates women's perspectives as recognised in the Third National Action Plan (NAP III).

Research Questions

1. What dominant frames are used by selected Nigerian online media platforms in portraying women's roles in counter-terrorism reporting between 2024 and 2025?
2. How does digital media convergence influence the visibility of women's voices in counter-terrorism reporting?
3. How are women's perspectives incorporated through source attribution in Nigerian online media reporting, as recognised in the Third national Action Plan (NAP III)?

Literature Review

Media representation of Women in Counter-Terrorism Reporting

Media representation refers to the ways in which the news media selects, constructs, and presents information about particular groups in society. When it comes to women in conflict and security contexts, scholars such as Tuchman (1978) observed that media coverage tends to reduce women most commonly as victims of violence and displacement, rather than as active participants in peace-building or security governance. Tuchman (1978) described this pattern as the "symbolic annihilation" of women in news narratives, arguing that when women appear in the news at all, their presence is often trivialised or confined to stereotypical portrayals that underrepresent their actual social roles and contributions.

In the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism reporting, this pattern becomes more pronounced. Enloe (2014) argues that security issues is historically constructed through masculine views that centre military strategy, state power, and combat operations, while the experiences and knowledge of women living in conflict-affected communities remain largely invisible. As a result, women in terrorist conflict zones are often portrayed as passive recipients of humanitarian aid or as grieving family members, rather than as agents of community resilience and local peace-building. Ross (2010) similarly observed that media framing in conflict situations tends to present women either as victims or as suicide bombers, while their everyday roles in conflict prevention and recovery receive little coverage.

Within the Nigerian context, this trend has been well documented. Ndinojuo (2021) found that journalistic coverage of military operations against Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria largely excluded women's perspectives, focusing instead on the activities of male military and government officials. Ajaero (2024) further noted that Nigerian security reporting tends to prioritise official male sources, which structurally limits the visibility of women's voices in public discussions about terrorism and national security. This pattern of source selection is significant because, as Harding (2004) argues from the feminist standpoint perspective, who speaks in a news story directly shapes whose knowledge and experiences are considered legitimate and authoritative.

The emergence of digital media platforms has, however, introduced new ways for portraying women's representation in security reporting. Jenkins (2006) argues that media convergence enables news content to reach wider and more diverse audiences across multiple platforms, creating new opportunities for alternative voices and storytelling. The Nigerian digital media space have been noted for reducing linguistic barriers and enabling survivors and community members, including women, to share their experiences more directly. However, scholars caution that digital media does not automatically guarantee equal or accurate representation. Waisbord (2013) warns that online journalism can still reproduce existing power hierarchies if editorial practices continue to favour elite and official sources over grassroots voices.

In summary, the literature shows that women's representation in counter-terrorism reporting is shaped by a combination of editorial practices, source selection habits, framing choices, and the type of media platform used. Understanding how these factors interact is important to addressing the gap between gender-responsive security policies, such as Nigeria's Third National Action Plan (NAP III), and the actual portrayal of women in the media.

The concept of media framing helps explain how journalists present certain aspects of reality while downplaying others. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting and highlighting certain aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or recommendation.. In the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism reporting, framing often influences how women are portrayed. Research shows that women in conflict situations are frequently framed either as victims of violence or as exceptional actors, such as female militants, while their everyday roles in community peace-building are rarely highlighted (Ross, 2010).

Within Nigeria, scholars like Mengistu (2023) have noted that security coverage often adopts what has been described as a "tactical or kinetic frame", which focuses on military operations, attacks, and casualty figures. He argues that this frame reduces complex social dynamics to battlefield narratives, thereby overlooking the broader roles women play in conflict prevention and recovery.

The development of digital media has transformed how news is produced and distributed (Bulus & Obateru 2014). According to Jenkins (2006), media convergence refers to the merging of traditional media with digital technologies, enabling news content to circulate across multiple platforms and reach wider audiences. In Africa, digital journalism has expanded opportunities for alternative voices and storytelling. Scholars such as Couldry (2010) argue that digital media can create new spaces for marginalised groups to express their experiences and perspectives in public discussions.

In Nigeria specifically, online platforms such as Pidgin-language media outlets have played an important role in making news more accessible to diverse audiences. The use of Nigerian Pidgin in digital journalism reduces linguistic barriers and allows ordinary citizens, including survivors of conflict, to share their stories more directly. However, other scholars such as Waisbord, (2013) caution that digital media does not automatically guarantee equal representation. Studies show that online journalism can still reproduce existing power hierarchies if editorial practices continue to prioritize official or elite sources.

Feminist Standpoint Theory provides an important framework for understanding whose voices are considered legitimate in discussions about security and conflict. According to Harding (2004), knowledge is situated, meaning that people's understanding of social issues is shaped by their social experiences and positions within power structures. Similarly, Hartsock (1983), argues that marginalised groups often possess unique insights into social inequalities because they experience them directly. From this perspective, women living in conflict zones may offer critical knowledge about security dynamics that is often absent from official military or governmental narratives.

African feminist scholars have also emphasised the importance of recognising women's voices in conflict and development issues. Oyewumi (2002), argues that African social realities must be analysed through culturally relevant frameworks rather than relying solely on Western gender assumptions. Similarly, Nnaemeka (2005), highlights the importance of African women's agency in shaping social and political change, particularly in contexts of conflict and development. These perspectives suggest that women affected by terrorism and violence are not merely victims but also possess valuable knowledge that can contribute to peace-building and security strategies.

International policy frameworks such as the Women, Peace and Security agenda emphasise the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 in 2000, called for greater inclusion of women in peace and security processes. Nigeria has adopted this framework through the Third National Action Plan (NAP III), which aims to strengthen women's participation in peacebuilding and counter-terrorism efforts. However, scholars have noted that policy commitments do not always translate into media representation. According to UN Women (2017), the success of gender-responsive security policies depends partly on how the media communicates these policies to the public. This suggests that media reporting can either support or undermine efforts to promote women's roles in security governance.

Theoretical Framework

Framing Theory

Framing Theory was developed by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) and later expanded by communication scholars such as Entman (1993). The theory explains how media organisations select, emphasise, and present certain aspects of reality while excluding others. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation. Through this process, the media influence how audiences understand and interpret social issues and events.

The central tenet of Framing Theory is that news is not a neutral reflection of reality but a socially constructed account shaped by journalists, editors, organisational routines, and socio-cultural influences. Frames determine which issues receive attention, whose voices are amplified, and how events are interpreted by audiences. Consequently, different frames can produce different understandings of the same issue. In conflict and security reporting, frames may portray individuals or groups as victims, perpetrators, heroes, experts, or agents of change.

One major strength of Framing Theory is its ability to explain how media reporting influence public perception and shape social reality. The theory provides a useful insight for examining patterns of inclusion, exclusion, emphasis, and omission in media news reporting. It has therefore been widely used in studies of political communication, conflict reporting, gender representation, and security studies. Despite its usefulness, Framing Theory has been criticised for lacking a definition that is accepted universally and of what constitutes a frame and for the difficulty associated with identifying and measuring frames different studies. Scholars have also argued that the theory sometimes places emphasis on media influence while paying limited attention to audience interpretation and resistance to media messages.

Framing Theory is particularly relevant to this study because it provides an avenue for analysing how Nigerian online media platforms represent women in counter-terrorism reporting. The theory helps explain whether women are framed primarily as victims of conflict and insecurity or as active participants, peace-builders, community leaders, and contributors to counter-terrorism efforts. It also assists in examining how the selection of sources, narratives, and visual images influences the visibility and portrayal of women in security reporting. Consequently, Framing Theory gives an understanding the transition from portraying women as victims to recognising them as voices within Nigeria's counter-terrorism issues.

Media Convergence Theory

Media Convergence Theory is closely associated with Jenkins (2006), who describes convergence as the flow of content across multiple media platforms and the cooperation between different media industries in the digital age. The theory emerged from the recognition that technological advancements have transformed the ways information is produced, distributed, and consumed. Rather than operating as separate media platforms, traditional and digital media now interact together in one digital platform.

The core tenet of Media Convergence Theory is that media technologies, content, and audiences are becoming interconnected. Convergence allows information to move across platforms such as newspapers, websites, social media, mobile applications, and video-sharing channels, thereby expanding access to information and participation for the public. The theory further suggests that audiences are no longer passive consumers but active participants who engage with, share, and create content across multiple platforms.

One of the major strengths of Media Convergence Theory is its ability to explain media practices in today's digital and interconnected communication environment. The theory shows how technological innovation can expand access to information, diversify sources of news, and provide opportunities for marginalised groups to participate in public communication. It helps in understanding the changes in journalism and audience engagement in the digital era. However, the theory has been criticised for placing considerable emphasis on technological possibilities while sometimes overlooking inequalities in access, digital literacy, and media ownership. Critics argue that convergence does not automatically guarantee diversity of voices or equitable representation because powerful institutions may continue to determine media contents for the public.

Media Convergence Theory is relevant to this study because it helps explain how online platforms and language accessibility, particularly through online journalism and BBC News Pidgin, create opportunities for participation in security reporting. The theory provides an insight for examining whether converged media environments enhance the visibility of women's voices and contributions in counter-terrorism reporting in Nigeria.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist Standpoint Theory emerged from the works of scholars such as Harding (1986), Hartsock (1983), and Smith (1987). The theory argues that knowledge is socially situated and that individuals' experiences and perspectives are shaped by their positions within social environments. Feminist standpoint theorists argued that women, because of their historical marginalisation and gendered experiences, possess unique insights that are often overlooked in dominant forms of knowledge production. The main assumption of the theory is that the perspectives of marginalised groups, particularly women, provide valuable and often more comprehensive understandings of social reality. Feminist Standpoint Theory challenges traditional approaches that privilege the viewpoints of dominant groups and advocates the inclusion of marginalized groups such as women's voices, experiences, and lived experiences in social, political, and media settings.

One of the major strengths of Feminist Standpoint Theory is its emphasis on inclusivity and the recognition of voices that have historically been excluded from decision-making processes and public discussions. The theory has contributed significantly to research on gender, representation, power, and social justice by drawing attention to the experiences of women and other marginalised groups. Despite its contributions, the theory has been criticised for the potential assumption that women share a single, unified standpoint. Critics argue that women's experiences differ according to factors such as class, ethnicity, religion, age, and geographical location. Consequently, it may be difficult to identify a single feminist standpoint that adequately represents all women.

Feminist Standpoint Theory is relevant to this study because it provides a framework for examining whether women are represented as credible sources and active participants in counter-terrorism reporting. The theory emphasises the importance of incorporating women's perspectives into media narratives and security issues. It therefore supports the study's objective of assessing whether Nigerian online media platforms move beyond portraying women as passive victims and instead recognise them as knowledgeable actors whose experiences contribute to counter-terrorism efforts and gender inclusion.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative content analysis to examine how women are represented in security reporting. The study analysed 168 news articles from three Nigerian online media platforms, *Daily Trust* (56), *The Punch* (56), and *BBC News Pidgin* (56). The articles were selected using purposive sampling and covered the period June 2024 to June 2025. Each news story (including headline, text, and images) was coded based on four variables: women's role, type of source, tone of the story, and visual representation. The unit of analysis was an individual news story, including its headline, text, and accompanying images. The content categories used for coding were women's roles, source type, tone of the study, and visual representation. Data was analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies and percentages, to identify patterns in the representation of women across the selected media platforms.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 RQ1: Dominant Frames

What dominant frames are used by selected Nigerian online media platforms in portraying women's roles in counter-terrorism reporting between 2024 and 2025?

Thematic Pattern	Daily Trust	The Punch	BBC Pidgin	Total (n)	%
Terrorism/banditry Tactics (kinetic)	38	9	12	59	35.1%
Gender-based violence (victimization)	5	11	22	38	22.6%
Policy/Legislative Reforms (NAP)	2	24	3	29	17.3%
Humanitarian/Economic Impact	7	4	16	27	16.1%
Community/Peacebuilding	4	8	3	15	8.9%
Total	56	56	56	168	100%

Source: Researcher's content analysis, 2025.

Table 1 reveals that counter-terrorism reporting across the three selected Nigerian online media platforms is predominantly framed through a security/tactical lens, with 59 articles (35.1%) focusing on terrorism and banditry tactics. This kinetic framing, reported by Daily Trust (38 articles), centres military operations and attack stories while marginalising women's experiences. Gender-based violence and victimization emerged as the second most dominant frame (22.6%), particularly in BBC Pidgin, suggesting that women's stories are more visible when linked to suffering than to peace-building. Policy and legislative frames (17.3%) were reported almost entirely in The Punch, showing its focus on the NAP III launch period. Community peace-building, the frame most likely to represent women as active security actors, was the least reported theme across all three platforms (8.9%).

Overall, the thematic patterns reveal that Nigerian online media continue to frame counter-terrorism as a military and institutional affair, limiting the visibility of women's diverse roles in conflict prevention and peace-building especially at the grassroots level.

Table 2- RQ2 Digital Media Convergence and Women's visibility

How does digital media convergence influence the visibility of women's voices in counter-terrorism reporting?

Story Type	Daily Trust	The Punch	BBC Pidgin	Total (n)	%
Straight news	42	30	22	94	56.0%
Features	8	14	31	53	31.5%
Opinion	4	9	3	16	9.5%
Editorials	2	3	0	5	3.0%
Total	56	56	56	168	100%

Source: Researcher's content analysis, 2025

Table 2 shows how the story format used by each media platform influences the visibility of women's voices in counter-terrorism reporting. Straight news dominated overall coverage (56.0%), with Daily Trust relying on it most heavily (42 out of 56 articles). This format is driven by events of terrorism, typically reported on military briefings and official statements where women's voices are absent. In contrast, BBC Pidgin led with feature stories (31 out of 56 articles), a format that allows for in-depth, human-angle news reporting where women can speak directly about their experiences of conflict, displacement, and survival. The Punch recorded the highest proportion of opinion pieces (9 articles), providing space for advocacy and expert commentary on gender inclusion in security policy. Notably, BBC Pidgin did not publish any editorials, this aligns with its role as an international platform that amplifies individual voices rather than taking institutional positions. These findings shows how digital media convergence, particularly the use of multimedia features to tell stories on platforms like BBC Pidgin, creates greater opportunity for women's voices to be heard in counter-terrorism reporting, supporting the argument of Media Convergence Theory.

Table 3- RQ3 Source Attribution and Gender Inclusion

How are women's perspectives incorporated though source attribution in Nigerian online media reporting, as recognised in the Third national Action Plan (NAP III)?

Source Category	Daily Trust	The Punch	BBC Pidgin	Total	%
Male Official Sources (Military/Police)	44	19	12	75	44%
Female Official Sources (Ministers/DGs)	2	22	8	32	19.1%
Female Victims/Survivors	6	7	31	44	26.2%
Female Experts (CSOs/Lawyers/HR)	4	8	5	17	10.1%
Total	56	56	56	168	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 3 examines whose voices are used as primary sources in counter-terrorism reporting, which directly reflects the level of gender inclusion across the three platforms. Male official sources, primarily military and police personnel, dominated overall coverage at 44.6%, with Daily Trust relying on them most heavily at 44 out of 56 articles. This confirms that security reporting in traditional Nigerian media remains dominated by male institutional authority. Female victims and survivors were the second most represented source category (26.2%), though their presence was almost entirely concentrated in BBC Pidgin (31 out of 44 cases), where digital and audio formats allow women to tell their stories directly. The Punch showed the strongest representation of female official sources (22 out of 32 cases), showing its focus during the NAP III period. Female security experts remained the least utilised source across all three platforms (10.1%), suggesting that women are still not widely recognised as contributors of counter-terrorism. Overall, these findings shows that gender inclusion in source attribution is minimal in Daily Trust, institutional in The Punch, and most inclusive in BBC Pidgin, with important implications for how the NAP III framework is reflected in media practice.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal patterns in how Nigerian online media platforms frame women's roles in counter-terrorism reporting, with implications for gender inclusion and the implementation of the Third National Action Plan (NAP III). The discussion is organised around the three research questions, drawing on Framing Theory, Media Convergence Theory, and Feminist Standpoint Theory.

The thematic analysis presented in Table 1 shows that counter-terrorism reporting across the three selected platforms is mostly dominated by security and tactical frames (35.1%), reported mostly by *Daily Trust*. This finding confirms the argument by Enloe (2014) that security issues is historically constructed through masculine views that privilege military strategy and state power while rendering women's experiences invisible. The dominance of kinetic framing in *Daily Trust* shows what Mengistu (2023) describes as a "tactical or kinetic frame," which reduces social issues to battlefield stories, thereby overlooking the broader roles women play in

conflict prevention and recovery.

Gender-based violence and victimization is the second most dominant frame (22.6%), showing largely in BBC Pidgin. While this gives visibility to women's suffering, it risks reinforcing what Tuchman (1978) identified as the symbolic annihilation of women, where their presence in media is acknowledged only through victimhood rather than agency. This pattern aligns with Ross (2010), who observed that media framing in conflict situations tends to present women either as extreme victims or exceptional figures such as suicide bombers, while their everyday roles in peace-building receive little coverage. Community peace-building, the frame most likely to represent women as active security contributors, was the least reported theme across all three platforms (8.9%), this confirms that Nigerian online media continues to marginalise women's agency in counter-terrorism reporting.

Table 2 demonstrates that story format plays a critical role in determining whose voices are heard in counter-terrorism reporting. *Daily Trust's* reliance on straight news (75% of its articles) reflects a gatekeeping structure that gives official, male military briefings more voices over grassroots voices. This supports Waisbord's (2013) caution that online journalism can still reproduce existing power hierarchies when editorial practices continue to favour elite and official sources over community voices.

In contrast, *BBC Pidgin's* dominance in feature writing (31 out of 56 articles) illustrates the transformative potential of media convergence theory by Jenkins (2006), who argued that digital platforms create new opportunities for alternative voices and diverse storytelling. By adopting feature writing and using Pidgin English, *BBC Pidgin* reduces linguistic barriers and enables women, including survivors and community-level actors, to share their experiences more directly. This finding supports the argument that digital media convergence, when applied with an inclusive editorial board, can expand women's visibility in security reporting beyond what traditional straight news formats allow. *The Punch's* use of opinion pieces further contributes to this visibility by providing space for advocacy around the NAP III framework, though this representation is seen by elite and institutional women leaders rather than grassroots.

The findings in Table 3 reveal an authority gap in counter-terrorism reporting, where male official sources dominate across all three platforms at 44.6%. This is most pronounced in *Daily Trust*, where 44 out of 56 articles relied on male military and government officials as primary sources. As Harding (2004) argues from the feminist standpoint perspective, who speaks in a news story directly shapes whose knowledge and experiences are considered legitimate and authoritative. The dominance of male official sources, therefore, not only excludes women's voices but also actively delegitimizes their knowledge and lived experiences in public security issues.

The finding that female experts remain the least utilised source category across all platforms (10.1%) is important. It shows that even where women are given visibility in counter-terrorism reporting, they are represented primarily as victims or institutional leaders rather than as independent technical authorities. This reflects what Ndinojuo (2021) found in his study of Nigerian newspaper coverage of Boko Haram operations, where women constituted only 4% of sources and were predominantly presented as victims rather than as credible contributors to security knowledge.

BBC Pidgin stands out as the most gender-inclusive platform in terms of source attribution, with 31 out of 44 female survivor sources appearing in its coverage. This aligns with Feminist Standpoint Theory (Harding, 2004), which holds that marginalized individuals possess the most complete understanding of power structures and that incorporating their perspectives produces more socially responsive knowledge. By allowing female survivors to speak directly, *BBC Pidgin* reduces the traditional gatekeeping role of official sources and offers a model of gender-inclusive security reporting that other platforms could adopt. The *Punch's* relatively stronger reporting of female official sources (22 out of 32 cases) shows its focus on policy-level developments during the NAP III launch period, though this form of inclusion remains limited to elite women and does not extend to grassroots voices.

In sum, the findings show that women's representation in Nigerian counter-terrorism reporting is shaped by framing choices, story format, and source selection practices that favour male institutional authority over women's diverse roles and experiences. This pattern directly undermines the gender inclusion objectives of the NAP III framework, which recognises women as important actors in peace and security issues. The variation across platforms, the focus on military and victim stories in *Daily Trust*, policy-focused and elite in *The Punch*,

and more inclusive and grassroots in *BBC Pidgin*, confirms that media framing is not uniform but shaped by institutional orientation, audience focus, and platform format. Achieving meaningful gender inclusion in counter-terrorism reporting will therefore require deliberate editorial reforms that move beyond reporting women only as victims of conflict toward a more gender-inclusive journalism practice.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the way women are represented in Nigeria's security reporting is slowly changing, but not consistently. Although the National Action Plan (NAP III) encourages women's inclusion in peace and security efforts, the media do not always reflect this goal. Many traditional newspapers, such as *Daily Trust*, still report security issues mainly from a military perspective. Because of this, women are often shown as victims of violence rather than as active participants in security and peace-building.

However, digital media platforms like BBC News Pidgin are beginning to change this pattern. By using Nigerian Pidgin and digital storytelling, these platforms give more time to female survivors and community voices. This helps show that women are not only victims but also important actors who understand the real impact of conflict. In summary, moving from seeing women only as victims to recognizing them as voices in security discussions requires more than digital media. It also requires journalists to change how they report security issues and to value women's experiences and knowledge.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Nigerian online media organizations should develop and implement editorial guidelines that are gender-sensitive and direct journalists to move beyond kinetic and tactical frames in counter-terrorism reporting. Specifically, newsrooms should ensure that women are represented not only as passive victims but as strategic agents, community peacebuilders, and policy stakeholders, in line with the gender inclusion objectives of the Third National Action Plan (NAP III).
2. Media platforms should leverage digital convergence tools, including feature writing, audio-visual storytelling, and multilingual formats such as Pidgin English, to expand the visibility of women's voices in security reporting. This approach, demonstrated effectively by BBC Pidgin, reduces linguistic and structural barriers that limit women's participation in public security issues.
3. Nigerian media organizations should adopt deliberate gender-inclusive source attribution practices by actively seeking out female survivors, community-level actors, and women security experts as primary sources in counter-terrorism stories, rather than relying always on male official sources. This would better reflect the lived experiences of women affected by terrorism and align media practice with the principles of the NAP III framework.

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