



## Women's Representation in Nigerian Media: Between Progress and Persistent Marginalisation

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Despite increasing scholarly attention to gender and media studies in Nigeria, there remains inadequate understanding of whether recent developments in women's representation signify genuine transformation or merely symbolic progress. Persistent structural inequalities, patriarchal media practices, and limited institutional reforms continue to shape the representation of women in Nigerian media spaces.

**Objective:** This position paper examines women's representation in Nigerian media within the context of progress and persistent marginalisation. It seeks to evaluate whether recent gains in visibility and participation reflect substantive structural change or superficial advancement.

**Method:** The paper adopts a qualitative position paper approach, drawing on scholarly literature published between 2018 and 2026. It reviews global and Nigerian debates on gender and media, while critically examining institutional, cultural, and regulatory factors that sustain women's marginalisation in the Nigerian media industry.

**Result:** The study finds that although there has been visible progress in the number of women employed in Nigerian media organisations and the rise of feminist digital counter-publics, these developments have not fundamentally transformed the structural conditions that perpetuate unequal representation. Patriarchal norms, weak policy implementation, and gender-insensitive editorial structures continue to limit equitable representation.

**Conclusion :** The paper concludes that numerical increases in women's participation should not be mistaken for genuine structural transformation. Sustainable progress in women's representation in Nigerian media requires deeper institutional reforms capable of addressing entrenched gender inequalities within the industry.

**Unique Contribution:** This paper contributes to ongoing gender and media scholarship by distinguishing between symbolic progress and substantive transformation in the Nigerian media landscape. It further integrates contemporary feminist digital activism into discussions on media representation and structural inequality in Nigeria.

**Key Recommendation:** The paper recommends the adoption of intersectional policy reforms, gender-sensitive editorial policies, strengthened accountability mechanisms, and media literacy initiatives aimed at promoting equitable and accurate representation of women in Nigerian media.

**Key words:** Women, Media, Representation, Marginalisation, Nigeria



## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria occupies a good position in the global media landscape. As Africa's most populous nation and the continent's largest economy, it commands a media industry of extraordinary vitality and reach, encompassing over 500 registered broadcast stations, a prolific film industry Nollywood that is the world's second-largest by output, and a rapidly expanding digital media ecosystem that has attracted over 100 million internet users (Nigerian Communications Commission [NCC], 2023). Yet this expansive media environment has not translated into the equitable or dignified representation of the women who constitute approximately half of Nigeria's 220 million citizens. Instead, a substantial body of scholarship spanning the last decade documents persistent patterns of gender stereotyping, symbolic annihilation, sexualization, and editorial marginalization that reflect and reinforce the country's broader patriarchal social structures (Okunna & Omenugha, 2020; Aliyu, 2022).

The question of whether Nigerian media has made meaningful progress toward equitable representation of women, or whether the changes visible in recent years amount to little more than cosmetic adjustments to a fundamentally unchanged patriarchal architecture, is both an academic and a political question of considerable consequence. Media representation matters because it shapes public attitudes, normalizes social roles, influences policy, and either challenges or reinforces the systems of inequality that determine women's life chances. As Gill (2018) observes, media do not merely reflect social reality; they actively construct it, making the representational choices of editors, producers, and advertisers consequential well beyond the screens and pages on which they appear.

This position paper takes an unambiguous stand: the Nigerian media industry remains a site of persistent and systematic marginalization of women. Empirical evidence strengthens this position. Findings from the Global Media Monitoring Project revealed that women constitute only a small proportion of news subjects, experts, and sources in mainstream media coverage globally and within Africa (Macharia, 2021). The paper advances this position through a critical review of empirical scholarship published between 2018 and 2026, an analysis of the institutional and cultural factors sustaining marginalisation, an examination of recent developments including digital media and legislative initiatives, and a set of recommendations for meaningful reform. The paper draws on feminist media theory, intersectionality, and political economy of media as its primary analytical frameworks. However, many of these studies were conducted in different socio-political contexts, relied predominantly on descriptive approaches, or paid limited attention to the emerging influence of digital media platforms, policy reforms, and evolving legislative interventions between 2018 and 2026. Although some scholars have explored gender issues in African media broadly, few studies have specifically examined the intersection of institutional practices, cultural norms, and contemporary digital shifts within the Nigerian context. This theoretical and empirical gap creates the need for a more updated and multidimensional analysis of the problem. It is against this background that the present study undertakes a review of empirical scholarship published between 2018 and 2026, analyses the institutional and cultural factors sustaining marginalisation, examines recent developments including digital media and legislative initiatives, and proposes recommendations for meaningful



reform. The study therefore contributes to existing scholarship by addressing the identified gap in literature and offering a contemporary theoretical understanding of women's marginalisation in the Nigerian media industry.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this study is to examine women's representation in the Nigerian media industry within the context of progress and persistent marginalisation. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the extent and nature of women's representation and participation in the Nigerian media industry between 2018 and 2026.
2. Analyse the institutional, cultural, and structural factors responsible for the persistent marginalisation of women in the Nigerian media sector.
3. Evaluate recent developments, including digital media expansion and legislative initiatives, in addressing gender inequality and promoting meaningful inclusion of women in Nigerian media

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach based on the review of secondary data. Relevant materials, including journal articles, books, reports, policy documents, and online publications published between 2018 and 2026, were purposively selected for analysis. The study is anchored on feminist media theory, intersectionality, and political economy of media. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring issues relating to women's representation, institutional barriers, digital media developments, and persistent marginalisation in the Nigerian media industry.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Feminist Media Theory and Symbolic Annihilation**

The theoretical foundation of this paper draws primarily from feminist media theory, particularly the concept of symbolic annihilation first formulated by Gerbner and Gross (1976) and subsequently developed by Tuchman (1978), which holds that the systematic underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in media functions as a form of cultural erasure that signals the insignificance, inferiority, or deviance of women in social life. Contemporary feminist media scholars have extended and refined this framework to account for digital and interactive media environments (Döring et al., 2021), as well as the specific representational dynamics of postcolonial African media contexts.

Gill's (2018) concept of the 'postfeminist sensibility' is equally instructive for understanding the Nigerian case. Post feminism describes a cultural formation in which feminist ideas are simultaneously acknowledged and repudiated in which media content may appear to celebrate women's empowerment while simultaneously reasserting patriarchal norms through the commodification of women's bodies, the equation of liberation with consumption, and the displacement of structural analysis with individual self-improvement. Several scholars have



identified elements of this postfeminist dynamic in Nigerian media representations, particularly in advertising and entertainment content targeting urban, middle-class women (Obi-Ani et al., 2020; Nwosu & Aondover, 2022).

### **Intersectionality**

This paper also draws on Crenshaw's (1989) framework of intersectionality, which emphasizes that gender does not operate in isolation but intersects with race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, and other axes of identity to produce differentiated experiences of marginalization. In the Nigerian context, intersectionality demands attention to how the representation of women in media is further shaped by ethnicity and geopolitical zone, religion (particularly the Sharia-influenced media environment of northern Nigeria), class, and urban-rural location. Feminist scholars working on Nigerian media have demonstrated that the marginalizing tendencies of the industry fall disproportionately on rural women, women in the north, and women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, whose experiences are rendered almost entirely invisible in nationally circulating media (Bello, 2021; Ibrahim & Aliyu, 2023).

### **The Representational Landscape: Evidence of Marginalisation**

News Media: Invisibility and Trivialization consistently demonstrate that women are underrepresented as both sources and subjects of news coverage, and that when they do appear, they are disproportionately represented in 'soft' topics entertainment, lifestyle, fashion, and family while men dominate coverage of politics, economics, security, and governance (Abubakar & Mustapha, 2019; Okunna & Omenugha, 2020). The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2021), which conducts periodic global audits of women's representation in news media, found that women constituted only 24% of news subjects in Nigerian media in its most recent report, compared to a global average of 25% marginally below even the modest global benchmark and essentially unchanged from figures recorded a decade earlier.

Aliyu (2022) conducted a systematic analysis of front-page coverage in three leading Nigerian newspapers The Punch, Vanguard, and Daily Trust over a twelve-month period and found that female sources accounted for just 19% of those quoted in political stories and 22% in economic stories, while constituting 67% of sources in stories categorized as 'social.' Aliyu further noted a pattern of what she terms 'relational identification' the consistent identification of women in news coverage primarily through their relationships to men (as wives, mothers, daughters) rather than through their professional roles or personal expertise. This pattern of relational identification effectively subordinates women's identity and authority to their domestic and familial roles, even when their professional accomplishments are the ostensible subject of the story.

Northern Nigeria presents a particularly acute variant of these representational challenges. Ibrahim and Aliyu (2023) examined gender representation in Hausa-language broadcast media in Kano and Kaduna states and found that women were almost entirely absent from political and economic news programming, appearing primarily in programmes devoted to domestic advice, Islamic guidance, and women's health. The authors situate this pattern within the intersection of patriarchal cultural norms, Islamic religious frameworks as locally interpreted, and the political



economy of northern media, which is dominated by male owners and editors whose programming choices reflect and reinforce conservative gender norms.

### **Advertising: Objectification and Stereotyping**

Nigerian advertising has attracted sustained scholarly criticism for its sexualization and objectification of women, its restriction of women to domestic and nurturing roles, and its appropriation of feminist language to sell products in ways that reproduce rather than challenge patriarchal norms. Nwosu and Aondover (2022) conducted a content analysis of 240 television advertisements broadcast on three major Nigerian channels NTA, Channels Television, and AIT found that women were portrayed primarily as homemakers and caregivers in 58% of advertisements, as romantic or sexual objects in 21%, and in professional roles in only 14%. Male figures, by contrast, were portrayed in professional roles in 49% of the same advertisements.

The skin-lightening product industry occupies a particularly prominent and ethically troubling space in Nigerian advertising. Adeyemi and Oyero (2021) analyzed advertising for skin lightening products in Nigerian print and digital media and found systematic messaging that equates lighter skin with feminine success, attractiveness, and social mobility messaging that simultaneously targets women as consumers and constructs a hierarchy of feminine value indexed to proximity to European physical standards. This advertising category, which is among the highest-spending in the Nigerian market, deploys imagery that degrades darker-skinned women while instrumentalizing aspirational feminism to sell products whose health implications are themselves a subject of medical concern.

Alcohol and personal care advertising in Nigeria have also been documented as a significant site of women's sexualization. Akinfeleye and Olatunji (2020) examined billboard and digital advertising in Lagos and found that women's bodies particularly sexualized images of women were disproportionately used to advertise products whose primary target consumers are men, a practice that treats women's bodies as instruments for attracting male attention rather than as belonging to autonomous persons. The absence of robust advertising standards enforcement by the Nigerian Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) means that such practices persist largely without sanction.

### **Entertainment Media and Nollywood**

Nollywood, Nigeria's internationally celebrated film industry, occupies a complex position in debates about women's representation. On one hand, it is a major employer of women in front of the camera, if less so behind it and has produced numerous films that foreground women's experiences, including their experiences of gender-based violence, economic marginalization, and social discrimination (Haynes, 2018). On the other hand, a substantial body of research demonstrates that Nollywood narratives frequently reproduce deeply conservative gender norms, portray women's ambition and professional success as threats to family stability, construct female sexuality as a source of social disorder, and deploy archetypes of the 'bad woman' the witch, the seductress, the ambitious career woman as cautionary figures whose punishment affirms patriarchal social order (Obi-Ani et al., 2020; Ekeanyanwu & Obiamiwe, 2021).



Ekeanyanwu and Obiamiwe (2021) analyzed 60 Nollywood films released between 2015 and 2020, finding that female characters were primary protagonists in 38% of films but were subject to a substantially higher rate of narrative punishment including death, abandonment, financial ruin, or spiritual retribution than male protagonists, particularly when their story arcs involved professional ambition, sexual agency, or deviation from expected domestic roles. The authors draw on feminist film theory to argue that these narrative patterns constitute a form of ideological discipline, using the pleasures of entertainment to naturalize the punishments that befall women who transgress patriarchal norms.

The rise of streaming platforms particularly Netflix's Nigerian originals and local platforms such as Showmax Nigeria has introduced new dynamics into this picture. Several high-profile streaming productions have featured complex female characters, addressed gender-based violence with greater nuance, and provided platforms for women directors and producers (Daniels, 2022). However, Daniels (2022) cautions that these developments remain concentrated in productions targeting affluent, urban, and internationally connected audiences, and that their representational progressivism does not characterize the broader Nollywood output that reaches the majority of Nigerian audiences.

### **Structural Factors Sustaining Marginalization**

Research consistently demonstrates that Nigerian media organizations are characterized by significant gender imbalances in employment, and critically in editorial and managerial roles where content decisions are made. Omenugha and Okunoye (2021) surveyed of 18 major Nigerian media organizations and found that women constituted an average of 34% of total employees but only 19% of senior editorial positions and 12% of chief executive or director-general roles. The implications for representational politics are direct: editorial decisions about whose stories are told, whose voices are sought, and how women are framed are predominantly made by men, whose perspectives and priorities shape the content that reaches audiences.

The barriers to women's advancement in Nigerian media organizations are well documented. Omenugha and Okunoye (2021) identified the following as the most frequently cited by female media professionals: informal networking cultures that exclude women, sexual harassment and its normalization as a feature of newsroom culture, the structural incompatibility of long and unpredictable working hours with domestic responsibilities disproportionately assigned to women, the perception of women as less authoritative or credible sources of news on 'hard' topics, and the absence of formal mentoring structures for female journalists. These barriers are structural rather than individual, and they require structural rather than individual solutions.

### **Regulatory Gaps and Enforcement Failures**

The Nigerian regulatory framework for media content offers some formal provisions relevant to gender representation. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Code includes provisions against content that demeans or degrades women, and ARCON's advertising standards prohibit the use of women's bodies as mere decorative devices. However, enforcement of these provisions is widely acknowledged to be inadequate. Okafor (2022) conducted an analysis of NBC enforcement actions between 2015 and 2021 and found that of 312 sanctions imposed during this



period, only seven were explicitly related to gender-discriminatory content a figure that represents a dramatic under-reinforcement given the volume of content documented by researchers as violating relevant standards.

The gender composition of the regulatory bodies themselves is relevant here. As of 2023, the NBC Board comprised 11 members, of whom three were women a representation of 27%, concentrated in non-technical portfolios (NBC, 2023). The absence of sustained feminist advocacy within regulatory institutions, combined with the political connections of major media owners who may resist regulatory intervention, contributes to the persistent gap between formal standards and their enforcement.

### **Cultural and Religious Dimensions**

Any account of women's representation in Nigerian media must grapple with the cultural and religious contexts that shape both media production and public reception. Nigeria is a society characterized by significant diversity in cultural norms relating to gender, with substantial differences between its predominantly Christian south and predominantly Muslim north, as well as among its more than 250 ethnic groups. Attempts to address gender representation in media must navigate these cultural differences with care, avoiding both cultural imperialism the imposition of externally derived feminist norms on communities with different values and cultural relativism the use of cultural tradition as a justification for the perpetuation of practices harmful to women (Bello, 2021).

Bello (2021) argues persuasively that the tension between cultural specificity and universal gender equality norms in Nigerian media studies has too often been resolved in favour of an uncritical deference to tradition that effectively forecloses feminist critique. She contends that Nigerian feminist media scholarship must engage with cultural and religious norms not as fixed and homogeneous constraints but as dynamic, contested, and internally diverse frameworks within which women themselves exercise agency and articulate alternative visions of dignity and representation. This perspective which takes both culture and feminism seriously offers a more productive path forward than either the wholesale adoption of Western feminist media standards or the abandonment of gender analysis in deference to cultural sensitivity.

### **Areas of Documented Progress**

The most substantial and well documented area of progress in women's representation in Nigerian media is the emergence of digital media particularly social media platforms and online publications as spaces in which Nigerian women have constructed alternative representational frameworks outside the control of established media organizations. The proliferation of feminist blogs, Instagram accounts, YouTube channels, podcasts, and Twitter communities since 2018 has created a vibrant ecosystem of female produced content that challenges mainstream media stereotypes, centres women's voices and expertise, and generates public discourse about gender equality (Dosekun, 2020; Agboola, 2022).

Agboola (2022) examined the activities of five major Nigerian feminist digital collectives including Feminist Coalition, The Naked Convos, and various Twitter feminist communities and



found that they had succeeded in shifting public discourse on issues including sexual harassment, domestic violence, reproductive rights, and women's political participation, with documentable effects on mainstream media coverage and, in some cases, policy. The #MeToo moment found its Nigerian iteration in #ArewaMeToo and related campaigns that mobilized digital platforms to name and challenge the sexual harassment of women in media, academic, and professional contexts (Aliyu, 2022).

However, several qualifications to this optimistic narrative are necessary. Dosekun (2020) cautions that Nigerian digital feminism is significantly stratified by class, with meaningful participation in feminist digital publics requiring levels of internet access, literacy, and leisure time that are distributed very unequally across Nigerian society. The women whose voices are amplified in digital feminist spaces tend to be young, urban, educated, and English speaking a demographic profile that excludes the majority of Nigerian women, particularly those in rural areas, those who are older, and those who engage primarily in Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba rather than English. Digital media has not yet overcome the structural exclusions of legacy media; it has, at best, opened spaces for a relatively privileged segment of Nigerian women.

### **Legislative and Institutional Developments**

The period since 2018 has seen several legislative and institutional developments with potential relevance to women's representation in Nigerian media. The Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, initially enacted in 2015 and progressively adopted by additional states since then, includes provisions relevant to media coverage of gender-based violence, including restrictions on the identification of survivors. Okafor (2022) notes that media compliance with VAPP provisions has been uneven, with smaller outlets and online publications demonstrating lower rates of compliance than major newspapers and broadcast organizations, but that the existence of the legislative framework has provided advocacy organizations with a basis for engaging media organizations on responsible coverage of gender-based violence.

The Nigerian Press Council and several major media organizations have introduced gender editorial policies and guidelines in recent years. Channels Television, for example, introduced a gender equity policy in 2020 committing to increased representation of female voices as experts and sources across its programming (Okunna & Omenugha, 2020). The extent to which such policies have been operationalized in practice remains a subject of debate, and independent evaluation of their impact is limited, but their adoption signals at minimum an institutional acknowledgment of the problem of gender representation that was less common a decade ago.

### **The Paper's Position: Why Progress Is Insufficient**

The evidence reviewed above supports an unambiguous conclusion: while real and meaningful progress has been recorded in specific domains particularly in the digital feminist counter-public and in selected entertainment productions the overall representational landscape of Nigerian media remains one of systematic marginalization. The changes documented are insufficient to constitute structural transformation for several converging reasons.



First, the progress that has occurred is geographically, demographically, and economically stratified in ways that reproduce rather than challenge existing inequalities. The gains in digital feminist representation benefit primarily urban, educated, middle-class women. The improvements in streaming entertainment content reach primarily those with broadband internet access and subscription income. These are not trivial achievements, but they do not reach the majority of Nigerian women, whose media diet continues to be shaped by the unequal representational norms of legacy media.

Second, the institutional structures of the Nigerian media industry ownership concentrated among male elites, editorial leadership dominated by men, advertising economies premised on gender inequality remain essentially unchanged. Representational change driven by individual good practice or digital activism, without transformation of these structural foundations, is inherently fragile and limited in scope. As Ndlela (2020) argues with reference to African media systems broadly, structural inequality in media representation is a systemic rather than an incidental feature of media industries organized along patriarchal and commercially extractive lines, and it requires systemic rather than incidental remedies.

Third, the evidence suggests that some apparent progress conceals persistent or deepening problems. The adoption of postfeminist aesthetics in advertising which celebrates women's empowerment in the language of individual choice while continuing to sexualize and commodify women's bodies may represent a more sophisticated form of patriarchal representation rather than a departure from it (Gill, 2018; Nwosu & Aondover, 2022). Similarly, the increased presence of women as anchors and presenters in broadcast media does not in itself alter the patterns of source selection, story framing, and editorial prioritization that determine whose perspectives and experiences are legitimated in news coverage.

Fourth, the intersectional dimensions of women's media marginalization in Nigeria the particular invisibility of northern, rural, older, and economically marginalized women have received insufficient attention in both research and advocacy. Progress measured at the level of the 'average' Nigerian woman, or of the most visible urban professional, will systematically underestimate the depth of marginalization experienced by the majority of the population. An adequate account of progress requires attending to the full range of intersectional positions occupied by Nigerian women and to the specific representational needs of the most marginalized among them.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are advanced on the basis of the analysis above and in the spirit of structural transformation rather than cosmetic adjustment.

**For Media Organizations:** Media organizations should adopt and implement binding gender editorial policies that establish measurable targets for female source inclusion across all content categories, not only in those traditionally coded as 'women's issues.' These policies should be subject to regular, independent audit and their results published. Newsrooms should implement structural reforms to address the working conditions particularly inflexible hours and the normalization of sexual harassment that constrain women's advancement into editorial leadership



roles. Training in gender-sensitive reporting should be mandatory for all editorial staff, with particular attention to the coverage of gender-based violence, political candidacy by women, and the use of women as expert sources.

**For Regulatory Bodies:** The NBC and ARCON must significantly increase the frequency and rigour of enforcement actions relating to gender-discriminatory content. This requires dedicated monitoring capacity, transparent complaint mechanisms accessible to civil society organizations, and graduated sanctions that provide meaningful deterrence. Both bodies should increase the representation of women, and specifically of women with expertise in gender and media, in their governance structures. The development of updated, evidence-based content standards that reflect contemporary understandings of gender representation including attention to intersectionality and the harms of postfeminist aesthetics should be a regulatory priority.

**For Government and the Legislature:** The federal and state governments should enact or strengthen legislation requiring gender impact assessments of media policy decisions and mandating that broadcast licensing processes include evaluation of applicants' gender diversity policies and records. The full adoption and enforcement of the VAPP Act across all Nigerian states should be prioritized, alongside complementary investment in media literacy programmes that build audience capacity to critically evaluate gender representations in media. Public media organizations, funded by taxpayers, should be required to meet higher standards of gender representation and should serve as demonstrative models for the industry.

**For Civil Society and Academia:** Feminist civil society organizations should continue and intensify their advocacy on media representation, including through the strategic use of social media campaigns, engagement with regulatory processes, and the production of independent monitoring reports that hold media organizations accountable. Academic researchers should prioritize intersectional and longitudinal research designs that illuminate the differentiated representational experiences of women across Nigeria's diverse regional, religious, and socioeconomic landscape. Collaboration between researchers and practitioners should be fostered through platforms that translate academic findings into actionable guidance for media professionals.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of this study is representation of women in Nigerian media is a site of contestation in which genuine but limited progress coexists with persistent and systematic marginalization. The incremental gains recorded in digital feminist spaces, in selected entertainment productions, and in the formal adoption of gender editorial policies are welcome and deserve acknowledgment. They demonstrate that Nigerian media is not impervious to change, and that the advocacy of feminist scholars, journalists, activists, and audiences has had real, if circumscribed, effects.

But acknowledging progress must not become a reason to understate the depth of what remains to be changed. The structural architecture of the Nigerian media industry its ownership concentration, its editorial hierarchies, its advertising economies, and its regulatory culture continues to produce and sustain patterns of women's representation that are inconsistent with the



constitutional commitments of the Nigerian state, the international human rights obligations Nigeria has assumed, and the fundamental principles of journalistic ethics and professional responsibility. The gap between aspiration and reality is not narrowing fast enough to satisfy the aspirations of the women whose lives, voices, and experiences are at stake.

This paper has argued that genuine progress requires structural transformation: the transformation of ownership and editorial leadership, the reform of regulatory institutions and their enforcement practices, the enactment of gender-sensitive media policy, and the sustained cultivation of media literacy and feminist counter-publics. These transformations will not occur without political will, institutional courage, and the persistent pressure of advocacy. The evidence reviewed here provides both the diagnosis and, in the recommendations offered, a direction for the cure. The question of whether Nigerian media chooses progress or perpetuates marginalization is, ultimately, a political question one whose answer will be determined not by the forces of history but by the choices of those with the power and the responsibility to act.

### **Ethical clearance**

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

### **Authors' Contributions.**

Mekowulu, Helen I., and Shaibu, Aladi Ruth conceived the study, including the design, and also collated the data, and Prof N., Okoro and Dr. B.C., Onuoha handled the analysis and interpretation, while all the author wrote the initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

### **Data availability statement.**

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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