The Impact of Motherhood on the Career Development of Female Journalists in Nigeria

By:
Ijeoma Okereke-Adagba

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I want to start first by thanking God who has enabled me to carry out this work. In all sincerity, there was a time I felt like giving up but God surrounded me with great colleagues and mentors who nudged me every step of the way.

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I want to thank the entire staff and management of the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) for giving me a platform to grow. I came there as an amateur, now I am a powerhouse. Everything I am today was made possible by God through CJID intervention.

Finally, I want to thank the entire team at WSCIJ, my mentor - Stella Din-jacob and my fellow sisters of the 2023 FRLP, you all made my dream come true. The support was massive.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to every mother out there who feels overburdened and less appreciated, be strong, you are doing an amazing job. Never let anyone tell you otherwise. Without us, the world would freeze. You ROCK.

INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is a life-changing experience that has a profound impact on various aspects of a woman's life, including her career growth. Nigerian women face unique challenges when it comes to balancing their roles as mothers and advancing in their careers, as highlighted by recent studies (Rowe et al., 2023) and Ibarra et al (2013). The studies revealed that organisational structures were originally developed to fit men's lives and situations, enabling non-family-friendly policies for working mothers to rise in their careers and making women work extra hard to be recognised.

These challenges are thought to arise from inadequate support for working mothers by employers, limited access to high-quality childcare, and cultural expectations that place women as primary caregivers. For instance, in China, women, who make up to 40% of the overall workforce in journalism, occupy roles with lower pay and less power (Wang, 2019). In Ghana, only female journalists working as regional correspondents tend to have more work-life balance, while those in the city are subjected to emotional stress, guilt and self-condemnation due to social obligations (Boateng et al, 2020). Research conducted by Ross & Padovani (2019) showed that women only occupy one-third of senior positions, and only 15% hold the position of CEOs in organisations surveyed in Europe. In Arab, there is a significant motherhood penalty in the middle-income range and a significant fatherhood bonus in the high-income range for women journalists and news managers (Melki&Hitti, 2021).

In a semi-structured interview conducted for sports female journalists by Organista & Mazur (2020) in Poland, female journalists must adapt to the patriarchal culture in sports newsrooms, making it hard for them to combine professional practice with maternal plans. In Nigeria, media editors claim that women journalists get the help they need but some of them take the system for granted and request frivolous concessions and considerations, branding them as 'excuse peddlers' (Tijani-Adenle, 2019). Consequently, these factors can impede career progression, decrease earning potential over time, and result in feelings of frustration and burnout (Mason & Ekman, 2007).

In addition, research has also shown that motherhood can have both positive and negative impacts on women's career development. For example, studies such as King, Botsford, & Huffman (2009) have found that some women experience career interruptions and fewer opportunities for advancement after becoming mothers. However, other research studies, such as McIntosh et al. (2012) and Tlaiss et al (2011), suggest that motherhood can provide women with valuable skills and perspectives, such as time management, multi-tasking, and problem-solving, that can enhance their career prospects.

Despite the volume of literature around the impact of motherhood across the world, as the world changes and continues to be impacted by globalisation and its attendant challenges and digital innovation, among others, there continues to be a need for real-time, contextual understanding of these challenges, especially in a clime like Nigeria where there's insufficient gendered data to drive policy interventions and influence decision-making.

This study aims to investigate the impact of motherhood on the career progression of female journalists working in Nigerian newsrooms. The term "journalist" encompasses a wide range of roles, such as reporters, feature writers, photographers, videographers, editors, news directors, bureau chiefs, section editors, online editors, sub-editors (or copy editors), presenters, producers, television news anchors, columnists, and others (North, 2016).

This report will attempt to examine the numerous challenges that Nigerian women in the media encounter due to their roles as mothers and examine the strategies they have employed to overcome these obstacles and achieve career advancement Additionally, it will suggest strategies that employers should adopt to enable working mothers in the newsrooms to balance motherhood and career.

The study will be significant in addressing the gap in the existing literature, which has primarily focused on the gendered nature of media production processes, gender-pay gaps, and the experiences of women in the news industry and not specifically, the impact motherhood has on career development of female journalists who are mothers working in the media industry. Furthermore, previous research has highlighted the existence of a "motherhood penalty" in various fields, including medicine (Hoffman et al, 2021), academics (El-Far et al, 2021; Eva et al,

2021), employment (Correll et al, 2007), and construction (Mbalenhle et al, 2011) and its impacts on the career decisions of women in general. However, other studies on this topic have primarily been conducted in the global North (U.S, UK etc.). Thus this current study seeks to provide 'original' insights into these issues by exploring the experiences of female journalists in the Nigerian news media industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Journalism has been described as a very demanding job, and this demand is heightened when marriage and motherhood are put into context. This is because the Nigerian culture has placed the burden of home and childcare majorly at the feet of women, making it very difficult to break the glass ceiling for women journalists working in the Nigerian news media (Tijani-Adenle, 2019). Globally, women's experience of journalism practice has been studied, and the results are always similar: "sticky floors, glass ceilings, gender pay gaps, unfair dismissal around maternity, lack of access to jobs or training, bullying, harassment and increasing violence" (Ran, 2015, p.53).

Female roles as mothers and wives, religious and cultural beliefs, and poor salary/wages are some of the critical factors impeding women mass communication graduates from adopting journalism-related careers (Ibrahim et al, 2021) despite surpassing their male counterparts in journalism schools (Apuke, 2016; Licia, 2021). This conflict is further exacerbated by limited access to quality child care, lack of supportive policies in the workplace, and cultural norms prioritising family over career. Feminist media researchers have long identified that women journalists are disadvantaged because they have to juggle family and career responsibilities together in an industry that does not grant adequate concessions for child care or family responsibilities and in which women journalists with children are sidelined to the soft beats or denied promotions (Organ et al., 1979; Lafky, 1991; Sieghart and Henry, 1998; Franks, 2013). Unlike the regular 9 am - 5 pm jobs, Journalism does not support the 'regular' child-care options available (Williams, 2010).

"It is unfortunate women's promotional opportunities are affected by their child or children, but I do understand and accept why; simply put, a person

can't be in two places at once, even if they want to be. It seems more women than men take on the primary carer role while still trying to be the peak performance journo she used to be. It can't work, and I think news managers sense that." [Quote from Louise North's Still a 'blokes club': The motherhood dilemma in journalism (2016c, p.325)].

Despite these limitations, women have made significant inroads into news journalism's lower and middle ranks, creating gendered news hierarchies (Louise, 2014). This gendered hierarchy has been evidenced by the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Report (GMMP), which shows a significant decline of 42 percent of female reporters and presenters in the television medium from the year 2015 to 2020 in Nigeria newsrooms. One of the major challenges confronting the sector, like every other sector in Nigeria, is the lack of data; however, the media industry continues to lose women journalists who are in the child-bearing and rearing stages. Unlike men who do not have to choose between home and work, mothers in the media tend to keep their jobs for the sake of working and earning salaries (over 60 million Nigerians are unemployed) but cannot aspire to reach top management positions. This significantly impacts the status of women in the industry (Tijani-Adenle, 2019).

Again, with insufficient data to show the number of media organisations owned by women and the number of women working in the Nigeria media industry, available data indicates that women continue to remain the minority in newsrooms and news management structures, where only 33 per cent of managers are women globally (GMMP Report 2020). This gender gap has influenced how media editors perceive women journalists. Some downplay it by suggesting a lack of women in top jobs is 'unintentional' or not linked to gender bias per se but rather that women themselves decide that they don't want to work in a blokey culture (North, 2014). In a study conducted by Tijani-Adenle (2019), media editors see women as excuse peddlers once marriage and children come into the picture. They claim that women journalists get the help they need, but some of them take the system for granted and request frivolous concessions and considerations. One of the key informants (an editor) in the research speaks thus:

'We are thinking of limiting the number of women we are going to employ. Why? It is very obvious. Most of them will get married, and most of them will go on maternity leave for three months; who is going to cover it for them? So those are the things we've looked at, and we now resolved that okay, we are going to stop recruiting women for now. It is not that we are not going to recruit women anyway, but we are going to recruit more men than women*'.*

This is not to discard the fact that many media organisations in Nigeria have instituted paid maternity leave policies ranging from 3 - 6 months, but the fact that once these women return to work, they are either reassigned 'softer' roles or are not assigned tasks that they deserve. In addition, the rigid nature of the newsrooms where routines such as deadlines have been engrained makes women self-select away from advancement rather than over-commit - this childcare dilemma forces them to do so (North, 2014). These actions (and difficult choices) invariably take a toll on their career growth in the organisation.

"I don't think there is such a thing as balance because women always feel guilty. Even if you do something fifty-fifty, you split your time and your life so that you're giving your time in equal amounts to family and work - we are high-guilt creatures… it's just a matter of making it work' (Quote from Jacinda Ardern in Women and Leadership by Julia Gillard and Ngozi-Okonjo Iweala, 2020 p.197)

Recognising these glass ceilings, these women have fallen back to their support systems. These support systems include extended family relatives, paid caregivers (nannies/babysitters), friends and family members. It, therefore, means that only women journalists with understanding husbands and very strong support systems are able to keep their homes and progress professionally while in young marriages or with young children (Tijani-Adenle, 2019). Motherhood, in this way, is placed firmly in the domestic sphere, out of the labour force and therefore out of the 'choices' of organisations to support women who care for children as they do women and men who do not care for children (North, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

In undertaking this study, a quantitative research methodology was employed to answer the four overarching questions. Google Forms was used to develop an online questionnaire. This questionnaire, combining demographic data and closed-ended questions, was put out on Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp groups and Facebook. The researcher targeted female journalists who are mothers working in Nigerian newsrooms. The online questionnaire ran from 7th June - 4th July 2023.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study used a purposive sampling technique to select participants who meet the eligibility criteria. The online survey was specifically targeted at female journalists who are mothers working in the print, broadcast and online media industries in Nigeria.

SAMPLE SIZE

The data for this study were obtained from a sample of 112 participants. Due to the unavailability of publicly accessible information on the number of female journalists, particularly those who are mothers working in Nigerian newsrooms, the researcher was confined to the data collected from this survey, which is the first of its kind.

DATA COLLECTION

The research study employed an online survey as the primary method for data collection. The survey consisted of structured questions aimed at gathering quantitative data on the career development of women in the media industry following motherhood. To ensure alignment with the research objectives, relevant questions directly addressing the key aims of the study were incorporated into the questionnaire, serving as the instrument for data collection. For the sensitive nature of the topic being discussed, respondents' anonymity has been maintained throughout this report.

DATA ANALYSIS

All data collected have been cleaned, analysed and visualised in descriptive statistics.

LIMITATIONS

Lack of data indicating the total number of journalists in Nigeria, specifically the total number of female journalists.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the peculiar challenges experienced by Nigerian women in the media in managing the dual roles of motherhood and career development.
2. To analyse the impact of motherhood on the career advancement of Nigerian women in the media.
3. To identify organisational policies and practices in Nigerian media houses that either facilitate or hinder the career progression of women following motherhood.
4. To propose strategies and recommendations that news media organisations can adopt to enhance support for working mothers in the industry.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges faced by Nigerian women in the media when managing the dual roles of motherhood and career development?
2. How does motherhood impact the career advancement of Nigerian women in the media?
3. What organisational policies and practices in Nigerian media houses facilitate or hinder the career progression of women after motherhood?
4. What strategies and recommendations can news media organisations adopt to enhance support for working mothers in the industry?

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this session, responses from participants will be analysed based on the four research questions.

Demographic Data

Age

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
18 - 24 yrs	0	0
25 - 34 yrs	21	18.8
35 - 44 yrs	60	53.6
45 - 54 yrs	23	20.5
55 yrs above	8	7.1
TOTAL	**112**	**100**

Figure 1

Of the total respondents, 53.6 per cent are between 35 and 44 years old; 20.5 per cent are between 45 and 54 years old; 18.8 per cent are between 25 and 34 years old and 7.1 per cent are between 55 years and above. This implies that the majority of female journalists who are working mothers in Nigeria are young, agile and of child-bearing age. However, it is also essential to recognize the diversity within this group, which includes both experienced individuals with established careers and emerging talents who bring fresh perspectives to the field. This comprehensive understanding of the age distribution among working mothers in journalism allows for a more nuanced evaluation of their contributions and challenges in the Nigerian media landscape. Although the sample size of this research is small, it is important to note that the spread of respondents by age seems to agree with existing knowledge that less and less women stay in the journalism profession as they grow older.

Educational Qualification

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
Secondary certification	0	0
Bsc	47	42

ND/HND	15	13.3
Masters	47	42
PhD	3	2.7
TOTAL	**112**	**100**

Figure 2

Data in Figure 2 shows that 42 per cent of the respondents have a Master's degree; Bachelor's degree 42 per cent; ND/HND 13.5 per cent and PhD, 2.7 per cent. Female journalists have a minimum educational background of a first degree, which qualifies them to effectively practice their craft and contribute meaningfully to the Nigerian media landscape.

Medium

Media	**Frequency**	**Per cent**
Broadcast	51	45.5
Print	36	32.1
Online	25	22.3
TOTAL	**112**	**100**

Figure 3

The provided data reveals interesting patterns among female journalists who are mothers in Nigeria. The analysis shows that a significant proportion of these journalists work in the broadcast sector, consisting of radio and television stations. Specifically, 45.5 percent of the total respondents fall into this category. This finding indicates that broadcast media are a popular career choice for female journalists. It is unclear though if this is an indication of the medium's accommodation for female journalists. While 32.1 per cent work for print and 22.3 per cent work for online news platforms.

Number Children

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
1	24	21.4
2	36	32.1
3	30	26.8
4	17	15.2
5 and more	5	4.5
TOTAL	**112**	**100**

Figure 4

Out of all the surveyed individuals, 21.4 percent reported having only one child. Additionally, 32.1 percent of the respondents indicated having two children, while 26.8 percent reported having three children. Moreover, 15.2 percent of the participants stated that they have four children, and a smaller proportion of 4.5 percent revealed having more than five children.

A key observation from this data is that the majority of female journalists who are mothers, specifically more than half of them, have more than one child. Combining the percentages of respondents with two, three, four, and more than five children amounts to a total of 78.6 percent. This indicates that a significant portion of the population under study has more than one child. These insights can be valuable to potentially contribute to discussions regarding the peculiar challenges and responsibilities faced by working mothers in the journalism field.

Maternity Leave

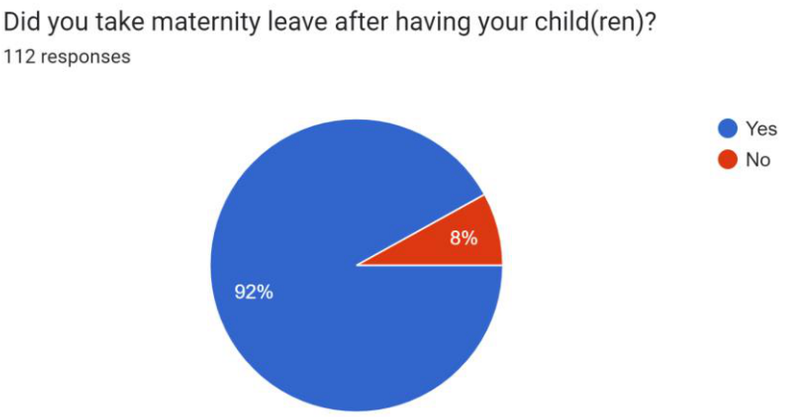

Figure 5

It is evident that a significant majority of the respondents, accounting for 92 percent of the sample size (103 individuals), and reported taking maternity leave after giving birth. This finding suggests that a substantial number of media houses have implemented maternity leave policies for their female staff members. This is a positive indication of progress towards acknowledging and accommodating the challenges faced by women during childbirth.

However, it is worth noting that 8 percent of the respondents did not take maternity leave. This finding is concerning considering the inherent difficulties associated with childbearing.

Length of Maternity Leave

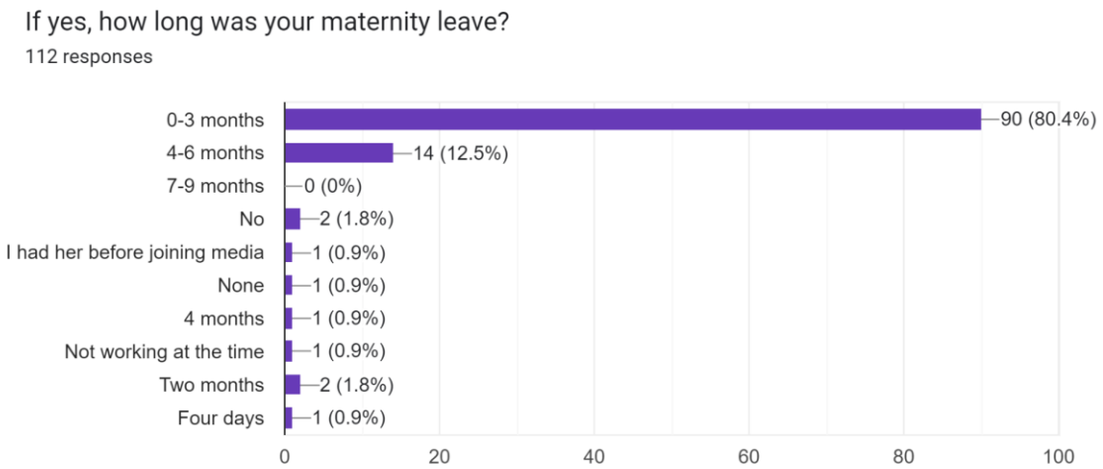

Figure 6

The graph highlights that a significant majority of respondents, comprising 82.2 percent, took maternity leave for up to 3 months, which is the statutory maternity leave period in Nigeria by law although the Federal Government announced 16-week maternity leave in 2018. This suggests that a substantial portion of media organizations have policies in place that support statutorily given maternity leaves. In contrast, 13.4 percent of respondents reported taking maternity leave for a duration of 4 to 6 months. This indicates that a smaller proportion of media organizations provide longer maternity leaves to their employees. Longer maternity leave periods have been linked to various benefits, such as improved maternal and child health outcomes, increased bonding time, and reduced stress levels for new mothers (Berelson, 2012).

Despite the predominance of maternity leave among respondents, there are a few outliers which could be an indication that there are media organisations that do not offer maternity leave to staff. One respondent said she had no day off after giving birth while another said she only took four days off work after the birth of her baby.

It is important to note that labour laws in Nigeria, including such laws that guide on maternity leave, are typically binding on government institutions but much less so in privately owned organisations. Although the survey did not collect data on the nature of ownership of the media organisations respondents work in, examining the

adoption of labour laws especially by privately-owned companies would shed even more light on an issue like provision of maternity leave.

Challenges experienced managing the dual roles of motherhood and career development

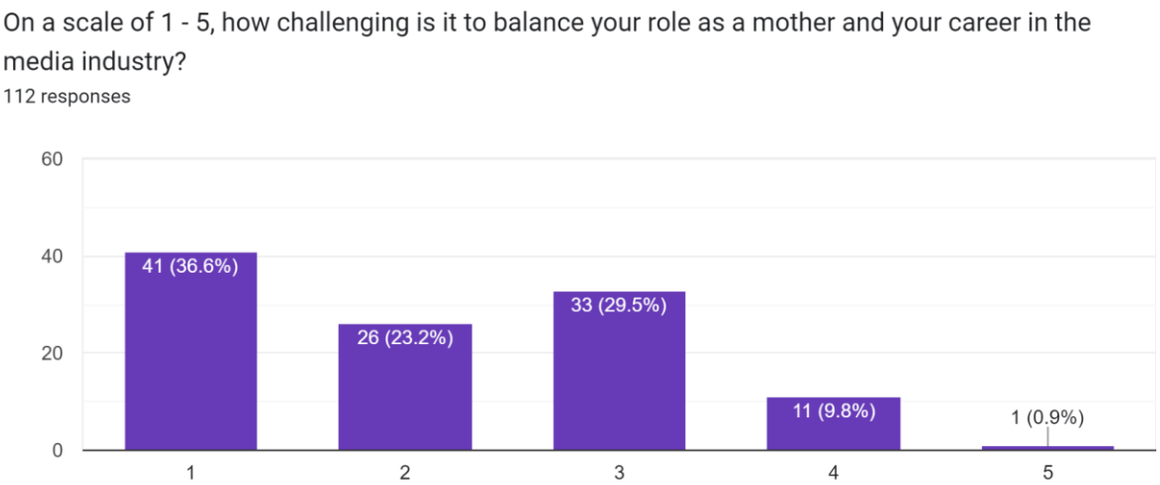

Figure 7

On a scale of 1-5 (One being very challenging and five, less challenging), participants were asked if it was challenging balancing the dual roles of motherhood and career development. The majority of the participants (36.6 per cent) said it was very challenging, followed by 23.2 per cent who said it was not so challenging, and 29.5 per cent were neutral. 9.8 per cent of the respondents said it is easier to manage both roles. Combined, 60.2% of respondents find it challenging to combine their caregiver roles with their careers. This number is significant enough and is likely one of the reasons why fewer and fewer women progress higher in their careers and would account for the very low representation of women in management positions in media organisations.

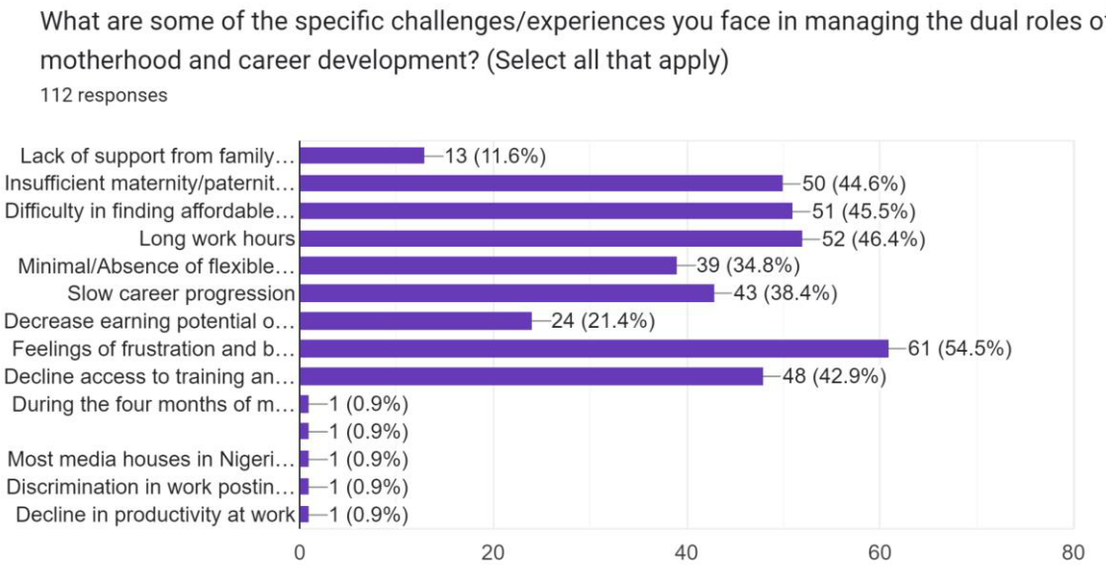

Figure 8

When broken down to specific challenges that make combining career and motherhood so challenging, a clearer picture emerges and is a further indication of why women may not progress upward in their journalism careers. 54.5 per cent of respondents identify feelings of frustration and burnout as a significant challenge.

That motherhood is a full-time job is commonly accepted knowledge, which means that for most journalists, they're combining 2 high-powered and highly demanding careers. That 46.6% of respondents identify long work hours and 45.5% identify inability to find affordable childcare services, only agrees with "frustration and burnout" as the most significant challenge identified by respondents. Whereas on the one hand, their journalism careers demand long hours, unlike regular 9 am - 5 pm jobs; their second careers also demand long hours which good childcare support might help with. Unfortunately, this is unaffordable for them because despite the intensity of the journalistic career, journalists are among the most poorly paid workers, especially in countries like Nigeria (Akinbobola & Charles-Hatt, 2021).

Journalists assigned to beats, male or female, are expected to deliver a particular number of stories from that beat, and if any story breaks from that beat that the journalist misses, for any reason, they will be queried.

Combining the job demands with an inability to afford good childcare, is a major challenge, especially for three-quarters of the respondents aged between 25 - 44 years and who have one to three children.

Another group of respondents (44.6 per cent) noted that the maternity/paternity leave given by their organisations is insufficient and there are no flexible work options (34.8 per cent) to enable them to find a balance. A significant number (42.9 per cent) said they no longer have access to and/or are not recommended for training opportunities and 38.4% say having kids slowed their career growth trajectories while 21.4 per cent experience decreased earnings over time.

This 'motherhood dilemma' has been identified in previous research around the world (Organ et al., 1979; Lafky, 1991; Sieghart and Henry, 1998; Franks, 2013). As Ross (2001) cited in North (2014) notes, 'For women considering having children in the future, the near impossibility of successfully combining family and career still seems an insurmountable problem' (p. 533). Except when they stay long enough in the profession to outgrow the phase where their families no longer depend on them for most of their needs (Tijani, 2019).

Like previous studies that showed that women with supporting partners and support systems find ways of navigating both roles, only 11.6 per cent of respondents identified an unsupportive partner as a challenge. The majority of the respondents believe that the organisational policies and practices such as insufficient paternity/maternity leave, long work hours, absence of flexible work options, and reduced access to training opportunities are the obstacles they have to surmount. Unfortunately, Nigeria has no clearly laid down policy that stipulates working conditions for mothers in the labour force, unlike countries in the global North. In Australia, under the Fair Work Act 2009, parents and others with disability are allowed to request flexible working arrangements including changed work hours or patterns and this can be negotiated with the employers (North, 2014). In Nigeria, this decision rests with the management of the organisation and the negotiating/lobbying skills of the employees.

Impact of Motherhood on Career Advancement

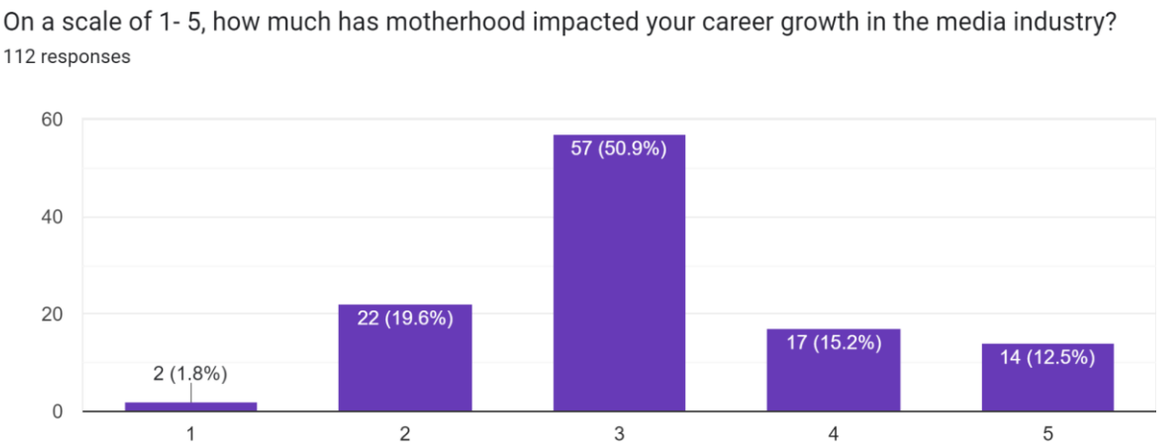

Figure 9

On a scale of 1-5 (One being negatively impacted and five, being positively impacted), participants were asked how motherhood has impacted their career growth in the media industry. Interestingly, most participants (50.9 per cent) are neutral or unsure. 21.4 per cent stated that motherhood has negatively affected their career growth as opposed to 27.7 per cent who strongly believe that motherhood has had a positive impact on their profession.

Contrary to this position of neutrality, a total of 81 (74.1 per cent) participants said they have had to decline work opportunities at one point or the other due to childcare responsibilities. Although women are said to be multi-taskers, dividing most of their time to get the best and because of this, those in the higher positions see them as being unable to devote themselves full time to the job, and this counts them out of senior positions. As a result of this, some women outdo themselves at work knowing full well that the so-called flexible rosters are not, in reality, flexible and certainly not sustainable (North, 2014).

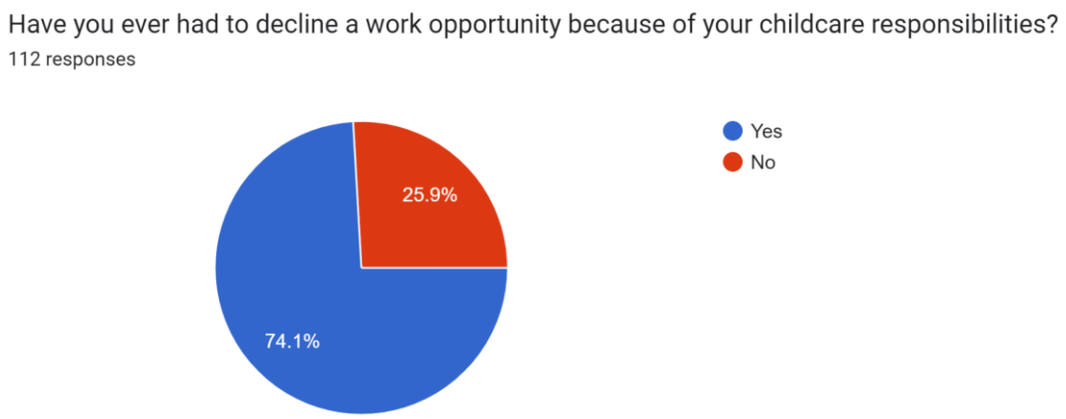

Figure 10

The result from this survey re-echoes Tijani's (2019) submission that the choices for women are like grabbing a double-edged sword, regardless of the part that touches, it hurts and more than half of the participants appear to agree with this position. This is why many young journalists devote their time and do as much as they can when they are single because they are aware (either consciously or unconsciously) of the challenges of maintaining work-life balance and the fact that they will be unable to achieve much when they are married (Tijani, 2019).

Organisational policies and practices that either facilitate or hinder the career progression of female journalists who are mothers in the newsroom

Only 25% of respondents say they get adequate support from their employers, whereas 44.6 per cent of respondents say that they have no support from their employers. 30.4 per cent are neutral on the question of support. Still, the significant number of women who believe that their organisations do not provide adequate support for mothers in the newsroom is an indicator that maternity leave alone does not suffice.

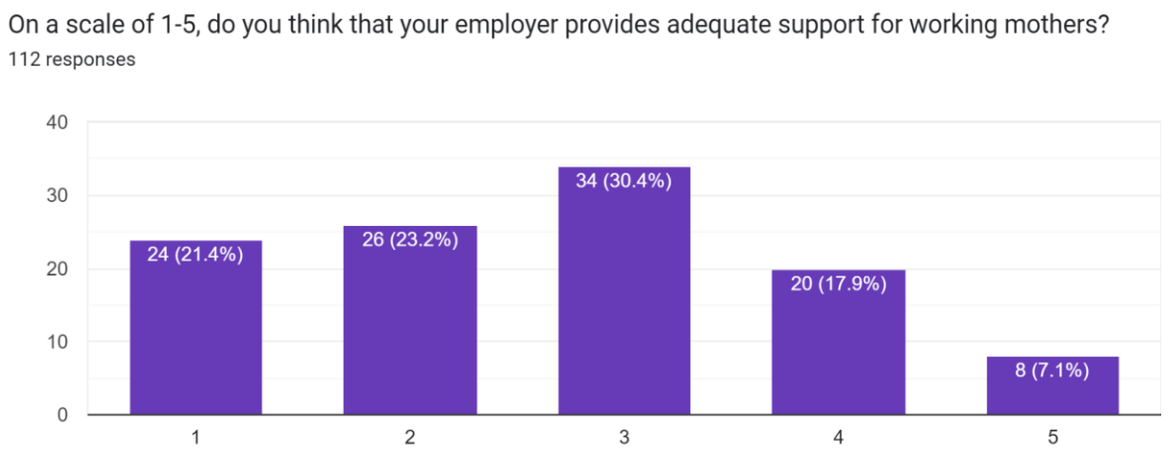

Figure 11

For respondents with adequate support from the employers, this support comes in various ways, including the provision of a creche/daycare, casual leave to attend to family issues and flexible work arrangements such as not working on weekends as captioned in the responses below:

"I'm allowed to go to the office when important things come up; otherwise I can work from home, and head to events or places of reportage without going into the office and also head back home, and they've also given me the opportunity to work only mornings and afternoons, rarely do I have to do any evening assignments"

"My media organisation has a creche which was built when a woman was the Managing Director of the organisation some 15 years ago because she knew the challenges female journalists face balancing home with work; we are eternally grateful to her"

"Opportunity to run morning shift for one year after delivery."

"There's an affordable childcare facility at the office premises where mothers keep their children so that mothers can be close to them. They go at intervals to breastfeed their babies."

"I am asked if it's convenient to cover some assignments before I get mandated to do them. This is unlike before when I'm just directed to go for job coverage"

One of the participants said she was transferred to her base so she can be close to her family while delivering on her work.

These concessions, however, cover only the 25% of women who receive support from their organisations. Also a number of these concessions do not appear to be institutionalised practices which means they can be taken away or left to the benevolence of a manager. Clearly media organisations in Nigeria still have a long way to go to integrate new or modify old policies to accommodate all staffers, especially female journalists and mothers in the newsrooms.

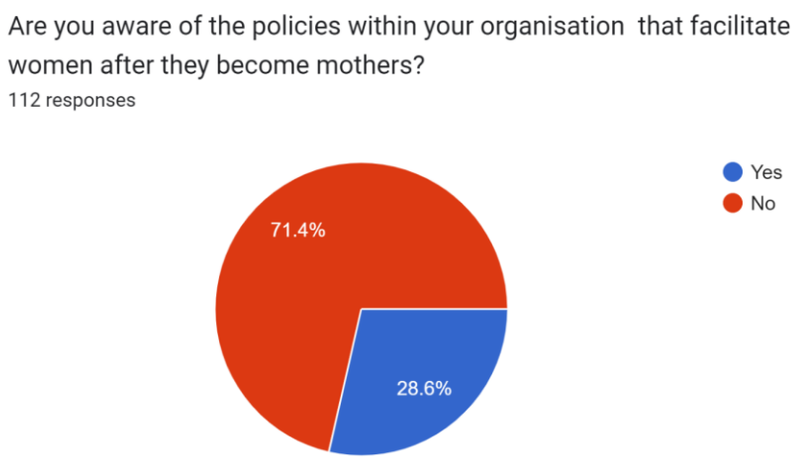

Figure 12

Participants were further asked if they were aware of any policies within their organisation that directly target female journalists with kids to facilitate their career progression (Figure 12) and the majority (71.4 per cent) said they are not aware. However, 28.6 per cent noted that they are aware of these policies, some of which include flexible work arrangements (34.8), affordable and accessible childcare options (18.8 per cent), paid maternity/paternity leave (16.1 per cent), as well as mentorship and development opportunities. (11.6 per cent).

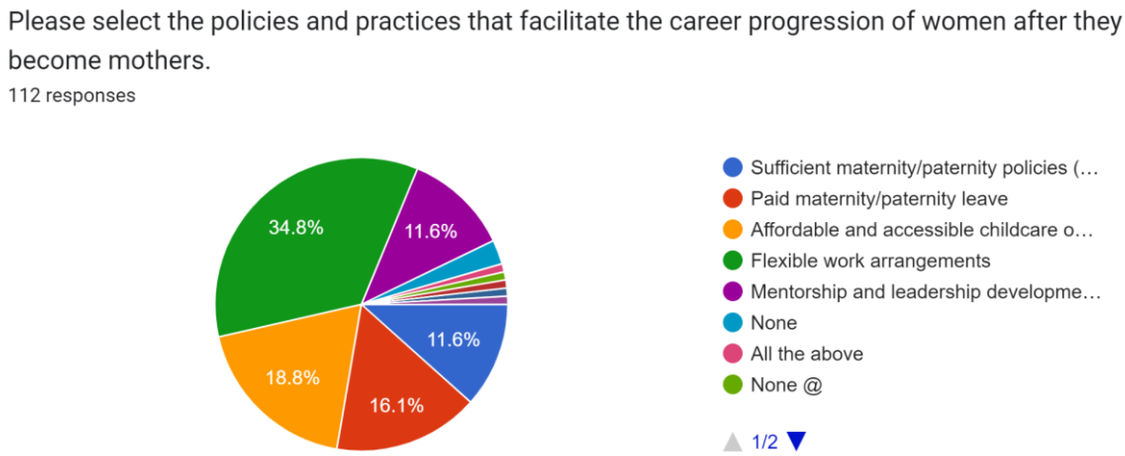

Figure 13

However, many of the respondents (77.7 percent) are also unaware of organisational policies that hinder their career growth (Figure 13).

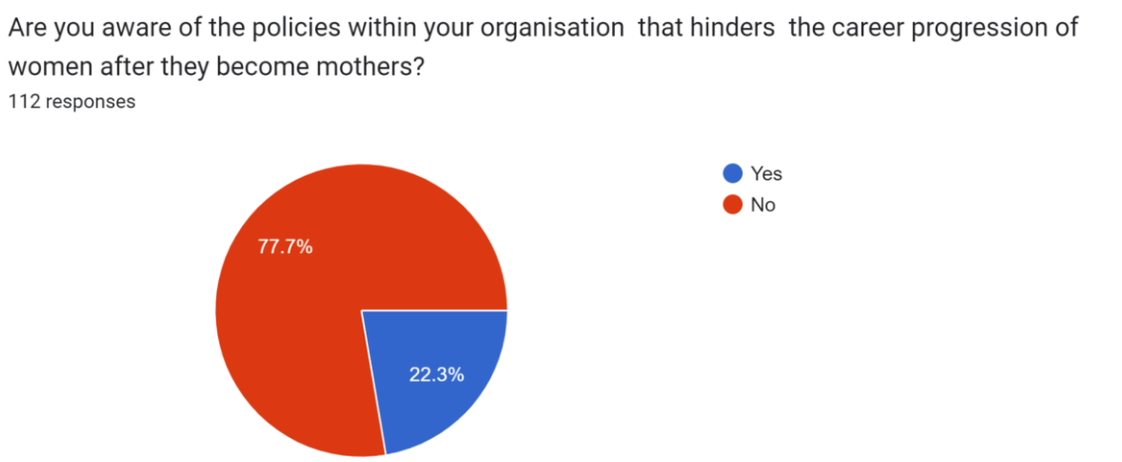

Figure 14

Only 22.3 per cent know the specific practices that hinder their career growth, most of which are unwritten as identified by respondents. They include long work hours (28.6 per cent), limited mentorship and leadership development opportunities (21.4 per cent), no affordable/accessible childcare services (18.8 per cent), and unpaid maternity/paternity leave (8 per cent).

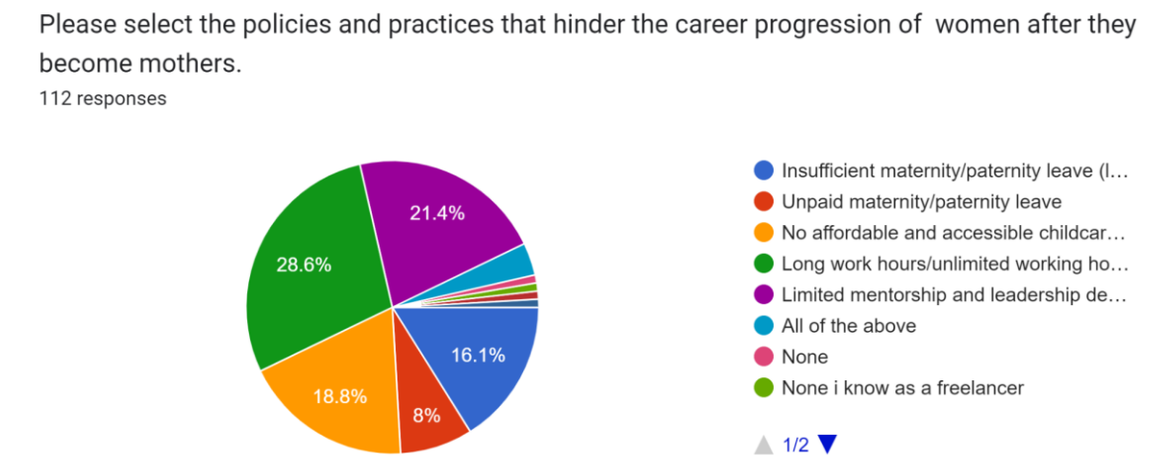

Figure 15

Strategies and Recommendations for News Media Organisations

In this category, participants were asked to recommend strategies and policies for news media organisations to adopt that support working mothers in the newsroom, and the following responses were received.

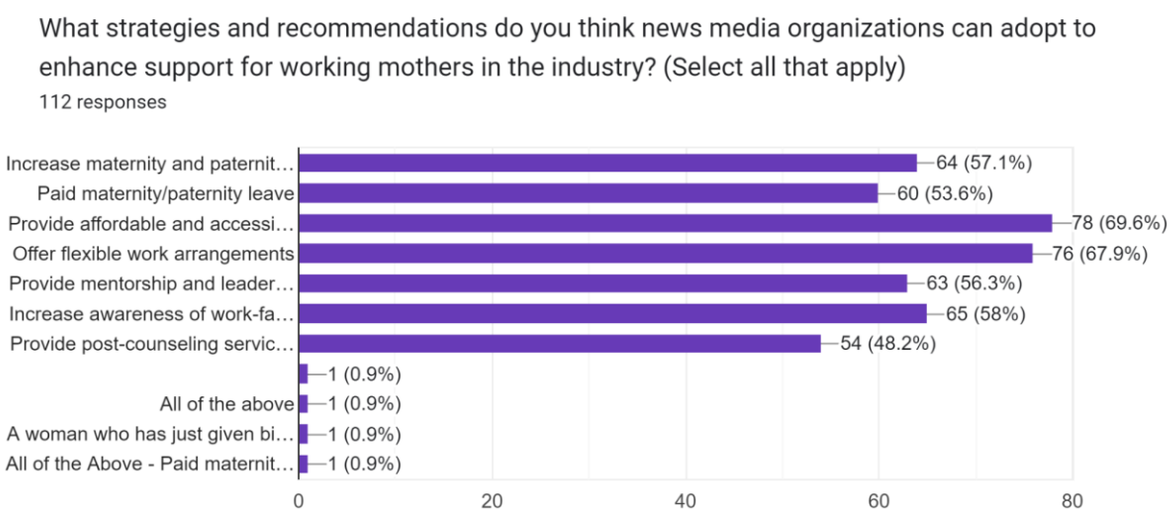

Figure 16

67.9 per cent of the participants recommended flexible work arrangements for female journalists who are mothers. One of the respondents noted,

"A woman who has just given birth should be allowed to work from home from the fourth to sixth month".

In addition, 69.6 per cent of respondents suggested that employers should provide affordable and accessible childcare options for them. According to a research conducted by the African Women in Media titled "Barriers to women journalists in Sub-Saharan Africa", lack of policy consideration for childcare responsibilities and using childcare responsibilities as a reason to limit the progression and opportunities for women journalists were some of the challenges women experienced with their employers (Akinbobola & Charles-Hatt, 2021).

Like the health insurance scheme in most organisations that makes provisions for family members, employers should support female journalists with children by going into agreement with daycare providers for discounted fees for the staff or extra hours after school closes to enable the mothers to have time for work. Or, employers can increase the salaries of workers such that their monthly wage is not affected as a result of childcare services. Employers can also create space for creche/daycare with an experienced daycare service provider so that nursing mothers can be able to access their children promptly.

Some respondents suggested that employers should increase maternity and paternity leave (57.1 per cent), while others encouraged paid maternity/paternity leave (53.6 per cent). Although there is national and global legislation backing maternity leave entitlements in Nigeria, the legislation still has many loopholes. One such loophole is whether organisations may face penalties if they deny women their maternity leave rights and allowances (Okereke-Adagba, 2022).

Others recommended employers should provide mentorship and leadership development opportunities for women (56.3 per cent) and post-counselling service options for mothers who just returned from maternity leave (48.2 per cent). This could be peer-to-peer mentorship or professional psychosocial support for women in media.

Some researchers like Barnet (2004) have termed the 'glass ceiling' as a 'maternal wall' as many mothers tend to advance more slowly than women without children. More than half of the surveyed participants have emphasised the effects of gender-role assignment and lack of transparency in promotional opportunities in the newsrooms (North, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Combining the dual roles of motherhood and journalism comes with a lot of responsibilities and challenges. Some of these challenges include feelings of frustration and burnout, difficulty in finding affordable childcare, minimal/absence of flexible work options, declining access to training and capacity-building opportunities, and decrease earning potential over time among many others. These challenges significantly impact the career growth of many women in the media industry.

Over 70 per cent of these women say they have had to decline work opportunities at one point in time due to childcare responsibilities which require full dedication and commitment, like journalism. Most women are not aware of organisational policies in their newsrooms that facilitate the career progression of women after motherhood but seem to have a sense of some unwritten organisational policies that hinder their growth. Some of these policies include unpaid maternity/paternity leave, inaccessible/affordable daycare options, limited mentorship and development opportunities etc. There is a crucial need to incorporate flexible work arrangements in newsrooms. By implementing such arrangements, mothers can more effectively balance their responsibilities at work and home, enabling them to perform at optimum.

Media organizations in Nigeria must adopt gender-conscious approaches and policies specifically designed for female journalists, particularly those who are mothers. To foster an environment where women can thrive in their media careers, organizations must critically review existing policies and structures that disadvantage women.

Capacity building for women in media must be deliberate and intentional if gender equality is going to be achieved. It is important to encourage women to apply for competitive positions, opportunities and salaries rather than taking a laid-back approach to career growth.

In addition, civil society organisations focused on media development and innovations must begin to develop gender-conscious campaigns/strategies for promotion, leadership positions, development opportunities, work allocation, etc.

These strategies should be test-run in start-up organisations to assess the sustainability of such initiatives.

The Nigerian government must also ensure enforceability of the law patterning paid maternity and paternity leave so that media owners defaulting can be penalized.

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ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Age?
   18-24
   25-34
   35-44
   45-54
   55 and above
2. Educational Qualification?
   Secondary certification
   BSc
   ND/HND
   Msc
   Phd
3. What platform do you work for?
   PRINT,
   ONLINE,
   BROADCAST
4. How many children do you have?
   1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more

5. Did you take maternity leave after having your child(ren)? YES/NO
6. If yes, how long was your maternity leave?
   0-3 MONTHS
   4-6 MONTHS
   7-9 MONTHS

OTHERS

6. On a scale of 1 - 5, how challenging is it to balance your role as a mother and your career in the media industry?

   Very challenging - 1

   Less challenging 5

7. What are some of the specific challenges/experiences you face in managing the dual roles of motherhood and career development? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of support from family and/or spouse
- Insufficient maternity/paternity leave
- Difficulty in finding affordable childcare
- Long work hours
- Difficulty in finding a flexible work schedule
- Slow career progression
- Decrease earning potential over time
- Feelings of frustration and burnout
- Other (please specify)

8. **On a scale of 1- 5, how much has motherhood impacted your career growth in the media industry?**

   Negatively impacted -1

- Positively impacted - 5

9. **Have you ever had to decline a work opportunity because of your childcare responsibilities?**
   - Yes
   - No

10. **On a scale of 1-5, do you think that your employer provides adequate support for working mothers?**

- No support at all
- Yes full support

If yes, please describe the kind of support you received from your employer

11. Are you aware of the policies within your organisation or other media organisations that facilitate the career progression of women after they become mothers?

YES/NO

12. Are you aware of the policies within your organisation or other media organisations that hinder the career progression of women after they become mothers?

YES/NO

13. Please select the policies and practices that facilitate the career progression of women after motherhood.

- Sufficient maternity and paternity leave policies (over 6 months)
- Affordable and accessible childcare options
- Flexible work arrangements
- Provision of office creche or daycare for nursing mothers
- Mentorship and leadership development opportunities for women
- Others (please specify)

14. Please select the policies and practices that hinder the career progression of women after motherhood.

- Insufficient maternity/paternity leave (less than 6 months)
- No affordable and accessible childcare options
- Long work hours/unlimited working hours duration/irregular working hours
- No provision for office creche or daycare for nursing mothers
- Limited mentorship and leadership development opportunities for women
- Others (please specify)

14. What strategies and recommendations do you think news media organisations can adopt to enhance support for working mothers in the industry? (Select all that apply)

- Increase maternity and paternity leave
- Provide affordable and accessible childcare options
- Offer flexible work arrangements
- Creation of office creche or daycare services
- Provide mentorship and leadership development opportunities for women
- Increase awareness of work-family policies and resources
- Other (please specify)

15. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions related to the challenges faced by Nigerian women in media when managing the dual roles of motherhood and career development?

16. Will you be available for a follow-up interview, if yes, please provide your phone number and email.

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